

Nuclear Signal

Kharrazi raises possibility of nuclear policy change



Iran, Iraq extend gas deal for another 5 years

TEHRAN - The head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said the gas contract between Iran and Iraq, which would finish on June 20, 2024, has been extended for another five years, Mehr News Agency reported.

Majid Chegeni made the remarks on the second day of the 28th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024), which is underway at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Iran agreed to export its gas to neighboring Iraq for another five years, he stated.

Currently, the two countries have good relations in the field of energy, and the officials of both sides are willing to strengthen these relationships, he emphasized.

Iranian firms invited to cooperate in oil, gas projects of Iraq

On the sidelines of the Iran Oil Show, the head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) also held a specialized meeting with senior managers of Iraqi oil companies during which the Iraqi side invited Iranian firms to partake in the country's oil and gas projects. ▶ Page 4

Tehran asserts U.S., EU prioritize Israeli regime over human rights

TEHRAN- Iran says that the current suppression of pro-Palestine student demonstrations in the West shows that the U.S. and Europe prioritize their backing for Israel over their commitments to uphold human rights.

In a post on X on Thursday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said that "violent and brutal suppression of student protest movements in America and Europe against the war crimes of the Zionist regime continues with intensity."

"It is clear that the commitment to unconditionally support the Zionist regime has precedence over the human rights commitments of the United States and some European countries," he added.

Kanaani went on to stress, "After this, the public opinion of the world does not value the false slogans of the U.S. and Europe about human rights, because they have sold not only human rights, but also the basic rights of their citizens for a cheap price to some war criminals."

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators have taken to college campuses across Europe, following the lead of U.S. institutions where students have established encampments to call for an end to the Israeli attack on Gaza, only to be met with repression, suspension, and imprisonment.

In the second day of protests over the Israeli genocide in Gaza, Dutch police broke up a pro-Palestine demonstration at the University of Amsterdam on Thursday, leading to the arrest of dozens of students. ▶ Page 2

The pro-Palestinian protests show the real face of American "democracy"

By Stanislav Bachev

TEHRAN- The latest protests among college students in the US in support of the Palestine cause are a necessary part of the big puzzle of revealing the true face of American democracy and internal problems and political dependencies.

Usually, it takes time for a process to become visible to the public and perceived for what it is. Sometimes peeling off the mask of hypocrisy requires sacrifice and when the sacrifice coincides with the right historical time on the bigger global scale the result is fundamental. One world order has come to its logical end, but it is not a moment, but a process. Now the world has grown ready to understand and let go of the false understanding for the "American dream".

Ten or twenty years ago it was impossible to imagine that the greatest democracy in the world would hunt or arrest students applying their constitutional rights for expressing their opinion. Although it would be true 20 years ago,

Behind U.S. warning of Israeli arms suspension

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Since the Israeli occupation regime launched its relentless bombardment against women and children in the Gaza Strip, the United States provided unequivocal support for Tel Aviv.

From day one on the evening of October 7 when the Israelis began airstrikes, the U.S. offered military, political, diplomatic and media support. The stance of America has stood at odds with the majority of the international community.

Over the past seven months, only the U.S. vetoed UN resolutions aimed at ending the Israeli military's daily massacres of women and children in Gaza. Washington shielded the Israelis from sanctions and other punitive measures when the international community was calling on Biden to use American leverage against the Israeli occupation and end the Gaza genocide.

Now, the Biden administration has shifted its public position over the genocidal Israeli war on Gaza, but why the sudden change?

Britain's complicity in Gaza war

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- A leaked report has thrown a spotlight on Britain's active complicity in Israel's genocidal war on Gaza.

Since Israel launched war on the Gaza Strip on October 7, the eyes of the world have been fixed on Washington's unequivocal political and military support for Israel.

But findings by Declassified UK, a news website focused on British foreign policy, have revealed that London has also been working hand in glove with the Israeli army which has slaughtered nearly 35,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip over the past seven months.

According to information obtained by Declassified UK, the Royal Air Force (RAF)--Britain's air and space force--has flown 200 surveillance flights over Gaza in support of Israel since December 3rd.

According to the revelations, all the British spy flights have taken off from RAF Akrotiri, the UK's sprawling air base on Cyprus, and have been in the air for around six hours. They show that the RAF has likely gathered about 1,000 hours of surveillance footage over Gaza.

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Unpacking a BBC report

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - In recent days, the BBC published alleged documents classified as "confidential" belonging to the Islamic Revolution Guards. According to the British media, these documents included the names of the alleged killers of the young Nika Shakarami, as well as the officers responsible for covering up the case.

According to the BBC, after Nika Shakarami was detained and transferred to the back of an unidentified van, one of the agents sexually assaulted her while sitting on top of her.

The problem with the narrative presented by the BBC is that the information provided is riddled with forgeries and lacks credibility for various reasons. Several Iranian experts have explained that the journalists ▶ Page 3



Iranians vote in parliamentary runoff as Leader calls for strong voter turnout

TEHRAN - Iranians show up in large numbers for a pivotal second-round runoff election to finalize the lineup of the country's parliament.

With Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, calling for a strong voter turnout, citizens in 22 constituencies nationwide embarked on the task of choosing 45 representatives from a pool of 90 candidates. ▶ Page 2

Yemen's presence at 35th TIBF as special guest deepens cultural relations between two nations

TEHRAN-The pavilion of Yemen, the special guest of the 35th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) opened on Thursday at the Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla (prayer grounds).

The opening ceremony was followed by a session titled "The Perspective of Cultural Interactions between Yemen and Iran," where the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili said: "The launch of the 35th TIBF comes at a time when nearly 7 months have passed since Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the defeat of the Israeli hegemony." ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq seeks to de-escalate tensions with Iran

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

In a note, Kayhan discussed the recent visit of President of Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani and wrote: The Kurdistan authorities of Iraq concluded that by talking and getting closer to Tehran, they will reduce the threats of Tehran targeting them. This is similar to what happened in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where they moved towards de-escalation in order to protect themselves from the threats that may be directed at them by Iran. During Barzani's visit, the Iranian authorities asked him to prepare the basis for the "full implementation of the security agreement," a demand that can be interpreted as the expulsion of parties and people against the Islamic Republic from Iraq. Probably, one of the goals of the recent trip is to try to deepen relations, after the reduction of tensions and to prevent the repetition of the events of recent years because they have brought nothing but insecurity to the Kurdistan Region. The proximity of the Kurdistan Region to Iran increases the influence of the Islamic Republic in political, military, economic, and security equations.

Shargh: The need of Arab countries to Iran to ensure the security of the region

In an article, Shargh dealt with an initiative put forth by Jassim Al-Budaiwi, the Secretary General of the GCC, and said: This initiative emphasizes the expansion of security discussions for common environmental challenges, energy transfer, food security, and regional and interregional communication programs. Although it is not stated directly, cooperation with Tehran is necessary to realize the goals of this prospect. The members of the Cooperation Council know that none of the big projects they have in mind can be realized in the shadow of the confrontation with Iran. The recent confrontation between Iran and Israel has doubled the importance of constructive interaction with Iran. Although European capitals and the EU have diplomatic relations with Tehran and other regional actors, the United States is still trying to counter or restrain Iran by forming regional alliances. Therefore, one of the critical aspects of this prospect is to strengthen "economic cooperation between the countries of the region" and Iran's participation in this dialogue is very important to ensure the success of the

prospect.

Arman-e-Melli: Tehran and Cairo on the path of developing relations

In a commentary, Arman-e-Melli discussed the efforts to develop Iran-Egypt relations. The paper said: Tehran and Cairo are two Islamic capitals that have low-level diplomatic relations with each other for a long time. These two countries have been trying to restore bilateral relations for some time after the countries of the region tried to get closer to each other, something that is not only for the benefit of the two countries but also for the benefit of the countries of the region and even the Islamic world. These two countries are trying to gradually remove the obstacles to establishing relations with each other. Although this project was stopped to some extent after the Al-Aqsa Storm, Iran and Egypt were somehow trying to solve the Gaza issue in different ways. Tehran tried for a ceasefire, and Egypt, along with the countries of the Persian Gulf, has been trying to provide the grounds for a ceasefire between the two parties involved in Gaza from the first day until now. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that although the efforts to establish bilateral relations have been sidelined, the two countries are now showing their strength to each other in the Gaza issue.

Ham Mihan: The new order against America

In an analysis, Ham Mihan pointed out the strengthening of alignment between Beijing, Moscow, Pyongyang, and Tehran. It wrote: Iran apparently intends to show the recent China-Russia-Iran naval exercise called the "Maritime Security Belt" in the northern Indian Ocean as a growing alignment. Moreover, North Korea has sent a high-level economic delegation to Iran and has made efforts to strengthen relations with countries opposed to America. North Korea and Iran also help Russia. Although there may be ideological and strategic bases for close relations between Beijing, Moscow, Pyongyang, and Tehran, there is little evidence that these countries will be able to create a coherent global order, or even now they can carry out complex coordinated military operations. In order to prevent the creation of an anti-American Eurasia coalition, Washington has put the politics of division on the agenda and has to reform its already tense strategic position.

Ex-FM: Is the world better off without Iran nuclear deal?

TEHRAN- Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has launched a critique of U.S. President Joe Biden's handling of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, labeling it as "reckless lawlessness" reminiscent of his predecessor's errors.

Taking to Twitter, Zarif highlighted the history of the deal, emphasizing Trump's abandonment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018, which, he argues, exposed the U.S.'s disregard for its international commitments.

"6 years ago, Trump left the JCPOA—proving that the U.S. does not honor its commitments. Despite slamming the U.S. withdrawal as a gigantic mistake and pledging to rejoin the Iran Nuclear Deal, Biden has pursued Trump's reckless lawlessness. Netanyahu and odd accomplices made sure he would. Is anyone better off today without the JCPOA being implemented?" Zarif said.

In addition to withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, former U.S. President Donald Trump also highlighted concerns about Iran's defense capabilities, signaling intentions to curb its missile program.

Employing sanctions as a tool, Trump's administration aimed to maximize pressure on Iran, hoping that these measures would effectively constrain Iran's defense capabilities.

Despite pledges from the Biden administration to reengage with the JCPOA, progress has been slow, with Tehran expressing doubts about Washington's sincerity.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has underscored the need for the U.S. to demonstrate genuine commitment to reviving the agreement, citing "a lack of political will" on the part of the Biden administration.

In September 2023, during the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian

engaged in discussions with American experts on the sidelines of the event. He expressed optimism regarding the potential revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, emphasizing the importance of genuine commitment from the U.S. administration as a prerequisite for progress.

He called Iran's policy regarding the deal "an international agreement," reiterating, "If the U.S. administration is serious, the [nuclear revival] negotiations can be concluded in a short time and then all the parties will return to the JCPOA and their full commitments."

He further criticized the U.S. administration for pursuing a contradictory approach to Tehran with "fundamental" differences in what the White House practices and what it preaches.

Meanwhile, Iran continued to fulfill its obligations under the JCPOA, even after the U.S. withdrawal.

Recent developments, including a prisoner swap and the release of frozen Iranian funds in South Korea, provided some glimmer of hope for diplomatic progress. However, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi emphasized the need for tangible actions from the U.S. to build confidence and facilitate further negotiations.

On August 10, 2023, Iran and the U.S. freed 10 prisoners - five Iranians and five Americans - after the U.S. government unblocked the transfer of \$6 billion in frozen Iranian oil funds held in South Korea. The Iran nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is a landmark accord reached between Iran and several world powers, including the United States, in July 2015. Under its terms, Iran agreed to dismantle much of its nuclear program and open its facilities to more extensive international inspections in exchange for billions of dollars worth of sanctions relief.

Iranians vote in parliamentary runoff as Leader calls for strong voter turnout

From page 1 ► The polling stations opened promptly at 8 a.m. local time (0430 GMT) on Friday in 15 provinces, signaling the start of a critical electoral process. In Tehran, the political hub where stakes are particularly high, voters were tasked with electing 16 representatives from a competitive field of 32 candidates.

While final results are scheduled for release on Monday, early indications from smaller constituencies are expected to trickle in before then, offering initial insights into the electoral landscape.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei wasted no time in showcasing his dedication to the democratic process, casting his ballot at a polling station in Tehran within minutes of the voting commencement. Emphasizing Iranians' civic duty, he underscored the pivotal role of participation in shaping the nation's future, stating, "Every person who desires Iran's progress has a national duty to participate in the election."

Stressing the significance of the second round, Ayatollah Khamenei urged widespread voter engagement, asserting that a strong turnout



would strengthen the parliament and provide greater opportunities for national advancement.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi also hailed the people's participation in the parliamentary runoff election in the country, saying that he hopes the vote will help form a strong parliament.

Raisi made the comment after casting his ballot in the second phase of the parliamentary election at a mosque in Saleh Abad town, southwest of Tehran.

"One of the prides of the Islamic

Republic is that our system is based on the people's vote and the formation of all institutions in the country is based on the people's choice. Some other countries pretend to be a democracy and talk about balloting but the system of the Islamic Republic works practically," the Iranian president underlined.

He also pointed to the enmity toward Iran, saying the reason behind enemies' hatred is that they see the nation's trust in the Islamic Republic.

"I hope that with the people's vote,

Israeli genocide in Rafah will spell another human disaster in region: FM

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian warned on Thursday that Israel's plans to carry out a long-awaited all-out military offensive against Rafah, which is home to 1.5 million displaced Palestinians, would result in another human disaster in the region.

Amir Abdollahian made these remarks in a phone conversation with Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres.

"In continuation of the policy of terror and genocide, the Zionist regime is now trying to cause another human disaster in the region by closing the Rafah and Karem Abu Salim border crossings," Amir Abdollahian added.

He went on to say that Israel wants to make it impossible for anyone on the outside to settle the conflict.

He underlined that the U.S. has to put pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to accept a ceasefire proposal from Egypt and Qatar.

Otherwise, the top Iranian diplomat warned, there would be dire consequences for those who support the war if the U.S. allows the Israeli regime to continue committing atrocities in Rafah.

"Now it is the White House that must choose between showing the will to put pressure on the Israeli regime to stop the war and dragging the region into a new and different level of crisis and

tension," Abdollahian pointed out.

Amir Abdollahian praised the UN chief's efforts to put a stop to Israel's war and the slaughter in Gaza at other points in his remarks.

He declared that Iran will keep working to put a stop to Israel's war crimes in the Gaza Strip and contribute to the establishment of long-term security and stability in the region.

The UN should take a more active role in putting an end to the conflict and arrange a meeting in front of powerful nations to explore potential measures to assist Palestine, the Iranian foreign minister said, endorsing Hamas's decision to accept the proposed truce proposal.

For his part, Guterres applauded Iran's sensible actions and stances toward bringing about security and peace in the region.

He stated that the UN has always taken a strong stand on the necessity of bringing an immediate stop to the conflict in Gaza and establishing a ceasefire.

In order to bring an immediate truce to the conflict raging in Gaza and the surrounding area, he said, the UN would keep up its pressure on Israel and maintain ongoing talks with the U.S. and other powerful nations.

The head of the UN reaffirmed that the body will keep working to open the Rafah and other border crossings as soon as possible.

Referring to his ongoing discussions with

high-ranking officials in Egypt, Qatar, and Jordan, Guterres urged all sides to concentrate their efforts on finding solutions to end the conflict and carnage in Gaza.

On Tuesday, Israeli troops took control of the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza, a vital lifeline for aid to enter the territory. Israeli officials said it was the first step towards a full-scale assault on Rafah.

"Europe needs to speak up for justice in Palestine issue"

In another post on X on Thursday, Amir Abdollahian called on European nations to speak out in favor of justice for the Palestinian people, citing the matter as a crucial test for the validity of the principles that Europe professes to uphold.

"On this special day all who worked for peace and prosperity for Europe should be mindful on the peace and security all over the world," Amir Abdollahian wrote. He made reference to the ongoing crimes committed by Israel in Gaza, emphasizing that the situation there is "heavy on the conscience of humanity" and represents a "crucial test for the legitimacy of values namely human rights and dignity" that Europeans so proudly claim to be fighting for.

The Iranian foreign minister said, "Europe must raise its voice for justice on the issue of Palestine."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tehran asserts U.S., EU prioritize Israeli regime over human rights

From page 1 ► Videos seemed to show demonstrators being struck by riot gear-clad cops. Hundreds of people yelled, "Shame on you!" as the video appeared to also show cops hauling some students away.

While students at Ghent University in Belgium continued to occupy the university, demonstrators at Utrecht University took over a building in protest.

Protests and camps persisted on Spanish universities all around the nation. A non-profit organization that represents 77 Spanish institutions announced that its members will examine their relationships with Israeli research facilities and universities and, if necessary, stop them.

The demonstrations on campuses coincide with mounting

pressure on EU leaders to react to Israel's attack on Gaza.

Also, in another post on X on Thursday, Kanaani showed reaction to the U.S. plan by members of Congress in both parties, adding that Tehran will retaliate against the United States following rumors that U.S. senators are drafting legislation that would punish officials of the International Criminal Court if they issue arrest warrants against Israeli officials.

"This is a shameful and worrying act," the spokesman said.

"The goal of a group of representatives of U.S. Congress in threatening and pressuring the prosecutors and judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is to provide immunity for war crimes and genocide by the officials and military commanders

of the Zionist regime," he added.

Kanaani said, "This ugly intervention will create a dangerous trend that is contrary to the goals and philosophy of the International Criminal Court in penalizing and punishing war criminals."

"Global silence in the face of such threats hinders the execution of justice and the continuation of crimes against the Palestinian nation and impunity for its perpetrators," he continued.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Michael McCaul revealed that the legislation is being worked on, despite repeated warnings from pro-Israel members of Congress that the ICC faces repercussions from the U.S. if it proceeds with the warrants.

According to reports, U.S.

senators have vowed to "personally target him, his family, and his court staff" if ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan issues arrest warrants for senior military leaders and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Zeteo website reports that Khan was threatened with severe consequences in a letter from twelve members of Congress if he proceeded to issue arrest warrants against the leaders of the Israeli occupation.

The signatories stated that harsh consequences would follow if the ICC issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders since it would be seen as a challenge to both U.S. and Israeli sovereignty.

The report also stated that the signatories ended with the warning, "You have been warned."

Commander emphasizes educating youth on Sacred Defense principles

TEHRAN- A high-ranking commander within the Iranian Army has underscored the importance of directing the new generation's attention toward content creation in the domain of Sacred Defense.

During his visit to the 35th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, emphasized the need to impart values to the youth through diverse means.

Admiral Sayyari stressed the significance of ensuring that the current generation comprehends the journey towards Iran's stability and authority.

Reflecting on the bravery and sacrifices made by Iranian youth during the Sacred Defense era, he pointed to the loss of 2,500 martyrs who laid down their lives to defend the nation.

The Sacred Defense refers to the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

Addressing attendees at the book fair, Sayyari posed a critical question: Are today's youth cognizant of the challenges faced by the Islamic Republic, including threats to its sovereignty and national security aimed at undermining its revolutionary values?

In conclusion, the admiral emphasized the necessity of implementing forward-looking strategies to engage more young people in content production related to the Sacred Defense.

Nuclear signal

Kharrazi raises possibility of nuclear policy change

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – In the past five years, Western powers have repeatedly lost chances to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as they seem to believe that with or without a deal, Iran is unlikely to move towards making drastic changes to its nuclear doctrine.

However, recent statements by senior Iranian officials suggest that Western policymakers may be mistaken in their belief that they can pressure Iran without prompting it to change gears.

When Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA in 2018, global leaders and U.S. Democrats alike warned that the move would undermine a historic agreement that prevented Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons at least in the foreseeable future.

Washington's European allies and signatories to the JCPOA established INSTEX, a mechanism designed to mitigate the impact of U.S. sanctions. Presidential candidate Joe Biden pledged to rejoin the deal upon taking office.

Upon Biden's election, multiple negotiations were held to revive the nuclear agreement. Iran's demands were straightforward: reinstatement of the JCPOA and guarantees against future U.S. withdrawal.

But several rounds of talks later,



the U.S. has not returned to the JCPOA and the INSTEX, which never even worked, was dismantled.

Western powers viewed the negotiations as an opportunity to impose additional conditions on Iran. While the JCPOA solely addressed Iran's nuclear program, the U.S., the UK, Germany, and France sought to expand its scope to include Iran's missile and drone capabilities. They believed that Iran's economic vulnerability and occasional domestic unrest would compel it to accept these new demands.

Meanwhile, despite Washington's official and Europe's de facto withdrawal from the deal, Iran has tried to keep the air clear about its unwillingness to pursue nuclear weapons. Though the country ended up enriching uranium at higher levels

than agreed in the JCPOA, it alleviated concerns about its potential development of nuclear weapons by staying in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA) which inspects Iran's nuclear sites more vigorously than anywhere else in the world.

Western powers have interpreted Iran's compliance with the JCPOA as a sign that the agreement should only be revived and pressure on Iran should only be eased if Iran agrees to further curtail its capabilities. Capabilities that are legitimate and essential for a nation facing threats from terrorist groups and forces backed by Israel.

Iran could decide to turn the tables

Iranian officials have been receiving backlash back home for

their adherence to the JCPOA in the face of Western non-compliance. Critics argue that Israel's growing aggression and its recent threats to use nuclear weapons against Gazans have rendered Iran's previous stance untenable. They advocate for an accelerated nuclear program to strengthen Iran's deterrence against Israel, arguing that the consequences would not be significantly worse than those Iran is already experiencing.

Recent statements by senior Iranian officials suggest that this view is gaining traction within the Iranian leadership.

“We have no decision to build a nuclear bomb, but should Iran's existence be threatened, there will be no choice but to change our military doctrine,” said Kamal Kharrazi, an adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Thursday.

Previously, a senior IRGC commander also warned that Tehran could change its nuclear policies if Israel continues to threaten to attack Iran's nuclear sites.

These remarks have yet to elicit significant concern in the West. However, just as Iran's direct attacks on Israeli positions in the occupied territories surprised many observers, the country could decide to alter its nuclear doctrine if it concludes that the JCPOA has become permanently defunct.

Unpacking a BBC report

From Page 1 ► responsible for the investigation have a very limited understanding of the structure and functioning of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps or have intentionally altered some data.

The criticism of the supposed exclusive by the BBC should not be interpreted in any way as a call to refrain from investigating what happened or from condemning those members of the security forces allegedly involved in any type of abuse. Instead, it should be understood as an attempt to spotlight the BBC and the lack of rigor in some of its investigations related to Iran.

In the BBC reports, there is mention of an investigation into the death of Nika Shakarami and the subsequent interrogation of several members of the Revolution Guards. According to the internal structure of the Revolution Guards, all investigations into the actions of its members, as well as those of the Basij auxiliary force, fall under the responsibility of the Information Department of the Revolution Guards. However, in the documents presented by the BBC, there is no mention of any name of the person in charge of the Information Department as the author of the investigation.

What does appear in these documents are several names of police force officials. For

example, one of the names mentioned is that of the supposed Commander of the Special Brigade of the Metropolitan Police of Tehran, Sayyed Reza Mousavi.

The problem with this information is that, on the one hand, the relevance of the Commander of the Special Brigade of the Metropolitan Police of Tehran in an internal information matter of the Revolution Guards is not understood, given that the responsibilities of this brigade are mainly operational and not related to information. On the other hand, at the time of the events narrated by the BBC in October 2022, the commander of this unit was Ahmad Noor Ali, and not Seyyed Reza Mousavi, as can be seen in the published documents. At that time, Reza Mousavi was the head of the Amir al Momenin Special Forces Unit and not, as mentioned, the commander of the Tehran Police Special Brigade.

According to the internal regulations of the Revolution Guards, when an investigation is opened, as in this case, it is led by the number two of the Information Unit of the Revolution Guards, and furthermore, this is carried out in the facilities of the headquarters of the Information unit. The presence of the same deputy director of Information of the said headquarters is necessary. However, his name does not appear in

any of the documents provided.

Another aspect that has drawn the attention of Iranian experts is the issue of the time dedicated to the supposed internal investigation. According to the BBC itself, the provided data are the result of 1600 hours of investigation (approximately 70 days). The documents mention 5 or 6 accused individuals, implying that around 300 hours would have been spent on interrogating each of these accused. All of this amidst a security crisis in the country, where the norm, from the perspective of the Iranian state, would have been to deploy all its members on the streets instead of dedicating them to internal affairs.

While the previous point is purely speculative, the truth is that several of the documents presented by the BBC mention a supposed “Confidential Secretariat,” tasked with preventing the dissemination of news related to the investigation. The issue with this Confidential Secretariat is that it does not exist within the organizational structure of the Revolution Guards.

On the other hand, the documents published by the BBC are supposed to be the originals of the Revolution Guards' internal investigation, but they lack both a date and a registration number.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran, UAE hold 10th joint consular commission meeting after decade-long pause

TEHRAN – Iran and the United Arab Emirates have resumed their joint consular commission meetings in Abu Dhabi after a decade-long pause.

Representatives from both nations tackled a range of topics, including consular affairs, legal issues, law enforcement collaboration, maritime transportation, and transit concerns.

Chaired by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alireza Bikdeli and UAE's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Khaled Abdullah, the meeting

was attended by officials from the judiciary, police, Iranian Red Crescent Society, and various related organizations.

This gathering marks the continuation of diplomatic efforts following the 9th joint consular commission held in Abu Dhabi on December 24, 2014.

Bikdeli also met with Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to discuss enhancing consular cooperation between the two nations.

During this meeting, Bikdeli stressed that Iran prioritizes building comprehensive relations with its neighbors under its neighborhood policy.

He highlighted the importance of people-to-people interactions in strengthening ties and noted that consular meetings aim to foster these connections and resolve issues affecting citizens of both nations.

The UAE's Minister of State echoed this sentiment, expressing the UAE's commitment to improving relations with Iran and supporting increased consular cooperation.

years, the operations of Al-Aqsa Flood and True Promise have accelerated the process of destroying the Zionist regime, and the world will soon be saved from the harm of this cancerous tumour,” he explained.

Major General Mousavi highlighted the significant impact of these operations, noting that they have reshaped global dynamics. He emphasized that the army is committed to its duties, remaining vigilant against threats and preparing for future challenges.

“The world is divided into before and after these two operations, just as the Al-Aqsa Flood and Gaza resistance have guided the world

towards a new direction, the True Promise operation has also created a new strategic movement in the world.”

In mid-April, Iran launched numerous drones and missiles towards the occupied territories in response to an attack by the Israeli regime on Iran's diplomatic premises in Damascus. The air defense systems of Israel, the U.S., the UK, France, and Jordan worked to intercept Iran's projectiles. However, aerial footage and videos captured during the attack reveal that Tehran successfully struck the military bases it had aimed for. Iranian officials have confirmed that positions from the occupied Golan Heights to the Negev Desert have been destroyed.

Persepolis to meet Havadar in a decider

TEHRAN – Persepolis will continue their quest to reclaim top spot in the Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) when they face Havadar on Matchday 27. Osmar Vieira's side currently sit one point behind arch-rivals Esteghlal and are hoping to close the gap with a victory in this crucial encounter.

Havadar: A formidable opponent

While Persepolis might be considered the favorites on paper, Havadar have emerged as a strong and transformed team under the guidance of head coach Masoud Shojaei.

The team are unbeaten in their last seven PGPL matches and have climbed to 11th place in the table, comfortably clear of the relegation zone.

Seeking redemption after Hazfi Cup exit

Persepolis, the reigning PGPL champions and last season's treble winners, face a daunting task in their remaining four matches of the season. The team were eliminated from the Hazfi Cup and are now solely focused on retaining their PGPL title.

Osmar Vieira's men will be deprived of the backing of their fans in the match against Havadar as the Iran Football League Organization has decided to hold the match behind closed doors and without spectators at the Dastgerdi Stadium in Tehran.

Saturday clash between Persepolis and Havadar is a pivotal one in the title race. A win for Havadar would blow the title race wide open, allowing Esteghlal to solidify their lead at the top. Persepolis, on the other hand, will be desperate for all three points. They not only need to beat Havadar but will also be keeping a close eye on Esteghlal's match against Foolad, hoping for a slip-up from their rivals to keep their own championship dreams alive.

Head-to-head record

The historical rivalry between Persepolis and Havadar favors the former. In their last five meetings, Persepolis has claimed three victories, one draw, and one defeat. Havadar's last win over Persepolis came in the second leg fixture of last season.

Besiktas monitoring Feyenoord's Jahanbakhsh: report

TEHRAN – Feyenoord winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh has been reportedly linked with a move to Besiktas.

Feyenoord managed to win convincingly last Sunday when it visited FC Utrecht.

During the match, a scout from Besiktas watched 23-year-old midfielder Mats Wieffer but he also monitored Iranian international Jahanbakhsh.

It is said that Jahanbakhsh himself is not interested in a transfer to the Turkish league.

Jahanbakhsh has shown interest in playing in a Bundesliga side.

Osmar Loss shows interest in remaining as Persepolis coach

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team Brazilian coach Osmar Loss said that he is interested in continuing with the Iranian team.

He was appointed as head coach of Persepolis in January until the end of the season.

“We have four important matches until the end of the season and after that the club will make decision on my future but I like to remain as the team's head coach,” Osmar said in the press conference.

Persepolis will meet Havadar on Saturday in Tehran's Dastgerdi Stadium.

The team sit seconds in the Iran Professional League (IPL) table, one point behind Esteghlal.

Para athlete Masjedi dies at age of 35

TEHRAN – Iranian shot putter Rashid Masjedi passed away due to tongue cancer at the age of 35 on Thursday.

He was diagnosed with tongue cancer and underwent surgery in Isfahan's Milad Hospital Thursday morning but passed away several hours later.

Masjedi had won a gold medal in shot put and a bronze medal in discus throw of the 2022 Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China.

The Para athlete was preparing to win a medal in the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris.

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

Shahrdari runners-up at FIBA WASL-West Asia

TEHRAN – Al Riyadi successfully defended its FIBA WASL-West Asia League championship after beating Shahrdari Gorgan, 100-78, in the winner-take-all Game 3 of the Final, Wednesday night at a packed Stade Nouhad Nowfal in Zouk Mikael.

Thon Maker came back after missing Game 2 due to an injury and proved to be the difference anew, scoring 10 of his 23 points in the second quarter alone to lead the breakaway. He also collected 12 rebounds and 4 blocks to win his first title in the pan-regional tilt.

Elmedin Kikanovic also finished with 23 points alongside 5 rebounds as the veteran center helped the Lebanese powerhouse set the tone early in the first quarter.

Amir Saoud produced 17 points, 2 rebounds, and 4 rebounds. The starting backcourt tandem of Wael Arakji and Jonathon Simmons, meanwhile, delivered 12 points apiece.

Al Riyadi and Shahrdari, which were also the protagonists of the inaugural West Asia Final, will represent the Sub-Zone League along with third-placer Sagesse in the FIBA WASL Final 8.

Iranian women referees to officiate at 2024 CAFA U15 Girls

TEHRAN – Iranian referees Mahsa Ghorbani and Bahareh Seyfi will officiate at the CAFA U15 Girls Championship.

Ghorbani will participate in the tournament as a referee and Seyfi will be there as an assistant.

Ensieh Khabbaz Mafinejad will also serve as a match commissioner.

The CAFA championship will be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from May 21 to 25.

The tournament will bring Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan together.

The CAFA U-15 Girls Championship is an international football competition contested by the Central Asian Girls under-15 national teams of the CAFA member associations.

The competition began in 2017, with Uzbekistan winning the inaugural competition.

Esmailnejad reaches agreement with Skra Belchatow

TEHRAN – Iranian international opposite spiker Amin Esmailnejad has reportedly reached an agreement with Polish volleyball team Skra Belchatow.

The 28-year-old scored 286 points for his Italian club Rana Verona in the 2023-24 season.

Skrea was going to sign Tine Urnaut but failed to reach agreement with the Slovenian player.

Esmailnejad will accompany Iran volleyball team in the 2024 Volleyball Nations League.

Operations ‘Al-Aqsa Flood’ and ‘True Promise’ hastened Israel’s downfall: commander

TEHRAN – The Iranian Army's Commander-in-Chief, Major General Abdul Rahim Mousavi, has stated that operations “Al-Aqsa Flood” and “True Promise” have hastened the downfall of the Zionist entity which is oppressing and harming children.

In a press release in Mashhad on Thursday, Major General Mousavi emphasized that the two operations have expedited the demise of the Zionist entity. He expressed confidence that the world will soon be free from the negative impact of this malignant presence.

“The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said in the past that Israel will not see the next 25

Iran, Iraq extend gas deal for another 5 years

From page 1 ► In this meeting, NIOC Head Mohsen Khojstemeher discussed the areas of cooperation between the two countries with the Iraqi delegation, which was comprised of Director General of the Oil Pipelines Company Ali Abdul Kareem Al-Moussawi, Director General of Basra Oil Company Bassem Abdul Karim and heads of some other major companies.

The Iraqi delegation said that the proximity of the two countries is a great opportunity for the Iraqi oil industry.

Emphasizing the respectable neighborliness of the two countries, Khojstemeher considered it appropriate to use the potentials of the Iranian private sector in Iraqi oil projects.

In addition to 1,500 Iranian firms, 250 companies from 12 countries have taken part in Iran Oil Show 2024, whose motto is “Petroleum industry, production leap, and

technological optimization”.

Participants from the upstream, intermediate, and downstream sectors of the oil industry, along with associations and unions of oil industry equipment manufacturers, and first-time producers NTBFS are showcasing their achievements in the Iran Oil Show 2024, which is the most important Iranian event related to the oil industry.

Inaugurated on Wednesday, the exhibition will be open to visitors at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground every day from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (0530 to 1230 GMT) until Saturday.

The Iran Oil Show provides great opportunities for businesses, manufacturers, suppliers, commercial media, and other activists in related sectors to showcase their latest products, services, achievements, technologies, and business ideas.

Iran exports £200m goods, services to UK in 2023

TEHRAN – The UK Department of Trade and Industry said the country's import of goods and services from Iran in 2023 exceeded £200 million, showing a 15.5 percent growth compared to a year earlier.

According to the latest statistics of the department, the total value of the trade exchanges between Iran and the UK in 2022 topped £389 million, and the figure reached £423 million in 2023, registering an 8.7 percent growth compared to a year earlier.

The United Kingdom exported £222 million worth of products to Iran in 2023, the report

said, adding that this European country imported £201 million worth of goods and services from Iran in this timespan.

The UK export of products to Iran in 2023 registered a 3.3 percent growth compared to a year earlier while the UK import of products from Iran registered a 15.5 percent hike, the report added.

The UK exported £12.5 million of medical and pharmaceutical products to Iran in 2023 and imported £4.2 million of fresh fruits and vegetables from Iran in this period.

Iran-US trade doubles in Q1 2024

TEHRAN – The official data of the United States show that the country's trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran has doubled and grew more than 100 percent in the first quarter of this year.

According to IRNA, the U.S. Bureau of Statistics announced in its latest report that the trade exchange with Iran reached \$277 million in the first three months of 2024, registering an increase of 103 percent compared to the same period last year.

Based on the mentioned data, the trade between the two countries stood at \$13.6 million during January-March 2023.

The two-fold growth in Iran-U.S. trade in the first quarter of 2024 followed a steady rise in trade exchanged between the two sides in the previous year which saw eight percent

Energy consumption in Iran twice world standards, says official

TEHRAN – Managing director of the Iran Fuel Conservation Company (IFCO) Hosain Abniki, says energy consumption in Iran is more than double the world standards.

Speaking in a press conference on the sidelines of Iran's International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024), running in Tehran, he said that management and optimization of fuel consumption was the only way forward to deal with the problem.

He told the reporters that the oil sector was the backbone of Iran's economy because it feeds the entire national economy adding “All other sectors of the economy are dependent on the oil industry and that is why any change in the oil sector will have an impact on any other sector.”

“Fortunately, since the 13th administration took office, many efforts have been made in view of boosting oil and gas production and exports even though we have not been able to manage fuel consumption despite the existence of adequate potentials to do so,” the IFCO head said.

“Today, energy intensity in our country is not satisfactory because our fuel consumption goes beyond double the world standards, which has led to huge imbalances in the energy sector. In fact, energy consumption in

our country is estimated to be equivalent to 7 million barrels of oil per day.” He added.

He further noted that the capacity to optimize fuel consumption is equivalent to 3.5 million barrels of crude oil per day which is mainly due to overuse of energy in sectors like construction, transportation, etc.

Considering this situation, management, and optimization of energy consumption are the only ways ahead to remove imbalances, Abniki announced.

According to him, the establishment of an organization for optimizing energy consumption, under the provisions of the 7th development plan, is a requirement; “which in itself will be a great leap forward but is not enough.”

He noted that “there are other means available for management of fuel consumption including the formation of an energy optimization fund, launching an optimization and environment market, especially for management of gasoline and gasoil consumption and issuance of the first gas conservation certificates at energy bourse.

Culture is another factor that can play an important role with regard to reducing fuel consumption and we pursue it as well, Abniki concluded.

Tehran to host Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Commission soon

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash said the meeting of the Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee will be held in Tehran in the coming weeks.

Bazrpash, who heads the Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee made the announcement after a meeting with the chairman of the Iran-Turkey Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The official said Turkey is an important country in the region and has established good relations with the Islamic Republic in all areas, IRIB reported.

Given the policy taken by the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi regarding the development of relations with the neighbors, Iran is determined to facilitate the trade exchanges between traders of the two countries, he said.

Bazrpash noted that Iran and Turkey have forged extensive trade relations through the four border terminals of Sero, Razi, Bazargan, and Kouzehrash.



Considering the situation of the two countries in accessing European markets and high seas, the officials in Tehran and Ankara have targeted an annual \$30 billion trade, Iran's Transport Minister added.

He went on to say that Turkey is a very safe route for Iran to access the European markets, adding that the completion of the construction operation of the International East-West International Corridor and South-Northwest Corridor can create unique opportunities for the

growth of transit.

The chairman of the Iran-Turkey Parliamentary Friendship Group, for his part, highlighted Turkey's resolve to reach an annual \$30 billion trade with Iran and increase the number of tourists between the two countries from three million to five million people per year.

Kayhan Turkmenoglu expressed hope that bilateral trade and economic relations would develop more than ever.

The trade exchanges between

Armenia to build a new highway leading to Iran



TEHRAN – The Armenian government has announced that it is going to borrow \$254 million from the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to build a 24-kilometer

section of a new highway leading to the Iranian border.

The planned 60-kilometer road will be constructed in the southeastern Syunik province bordering Iran. It will connect the provincial towns of Sisian and Kajaran through a much shorter route. This will in turn shorten travel time between the two neighboring countries.

The new Sisian-Kajaran road is to be cut through mountainous terrain, hence, the high cost of its construction.

Work on the road's first, southern section is

slated for completion in 2032.

Last October, the government awarded a \$215 million contract to a consortium of two Iranian companies to upgrade a 32-kilometer road stretching from the Armenian-Iranian border to the Kajaran mountain pass, the highest in Armenia. About two-thirds of the road is to be expanded and modernized while the remaining 11 kilometers will be built from scratch over the next three years.

The contract was signed in Yerevan in the presence of Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash.

Iran's oil production up by 60% in 2.5 years: Oji

TEHRAN – Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji says the country's oil production has increased by 60 percent in the current government starting August 2021, Shana reported.

The minister made the remarks in the opening ceremony of the 28th International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition, better known as Iran's

Oil Show 2024.

The gas production, in the current government, has grown by 54 million cubic meters, he said.

Over 220,000 barrels have been added to the country's refining capacity, he said, adding that Iran has added 10 million metric tons of petrochemical production to its

capacity in the said period.

The 28th International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition is known as one of the paramount energy events in the world.

This exhibition which will be held on May 8-11, 2024 in Iran's capital, Tehran, is one of the largest and most comprehensive

assemblies in the world's oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical industries.

Over 1,500 domestic and 250 foreign companies have attended the exhibition, including foreign companies such as Russia, China, Germany, France, Japan, Canada, Italy, Turkiye, Belarus, India, Austria, and Argentina.

African states welcome collaboration with Iran on oil, gas projects

TEHRAN – The ambassadors of Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, and Burkina Faso in Tehran discussed the updates about their countries in the energy field, expressing their readiness to collaborate with Iran in a meeting dubbed “Perspective of Oil and Gas Industry in Africa”.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 28th Iran International Oil, Gas, ?Refining and ?Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024) in Tehran on Thursday.

Speaking at the meeting, Kenyan Envoy in Tehran Mohammed Joshua Gatimo Aguta said the only gas reservoir in Kenya which has a 3,000-ton capacity is made by an Iranian company. “We need a reservoir of 60,000 tons.”

“Kenya has favorable opportunities for investment. We have allocated an area of 60,000 hectares for establishing a free trade zone as we hope to be completed by 2050,” the ambassador noted.

This Kenyan diplomat expressed his hope that in the near future, the African country will not only use gas for domestic and industrial

purposes but also use it to extract other resources. Kenya can establish favorable cooperation with Iran under the framework.

Salion Niang Deing, the Senegalese ambassador in Tehran said in the meeting his country is interested in technical and engineering services from Iran as Iranian engineers enjoy good experiences in downstream and upstream industries.

“In addition to being ready to cooperate with state-run sectors, Senegal invites Iran's private sector for cooperation in the field of oil and gas,” the envoy added.

Also speaking at the meeting, Muhammad Tezikuba Kisambira, Ugandan ambassador in Tehran, stated that more than 6.5 billion barrels of oil are the country's crude reserves, of which 1.4 billion barrels can be extracted now.

We are now developing a production line for oil export, and we are also building a refinery. Our priority is to work more in the field of refining, but due to the financial limits we have, we have to work with other countries

Iran, Poland private sectors discuss bilateral cooperation

TEHRAN – The heads of the chambers of commerce of Iran and Poland have explored ways of increasing the level of cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries in an online meeting.

Speaking during the meeting, Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh urged the need for holding specialized exhibitions in both countries to help mobilize the trade potentials for more enhanced interactions.

Noting that Iran and Poland enjoy high

potentials for cooperation, he stressed that the level of exchange between the two countries is far below these potentials.

Referring to the U.S. sanctions on Tehran, Hassanzadeh said that the chambers of commerce of Iran and Poland can focus on economic activities to give a boost to bilateral trade cooperation in spite of the sanctions.

He also touched upon Iran's plans to defuse the effects of sanctions, noting that major trade delegations from different world countries attended Iran Expo 2024 in the Iranian capital last week where they got

further familiar with Iran's export capabilities.

In the meantime, President of the Polish Chamber of Commerce, Marek Kłoczko, said that the trade potentials of Iran and Poland are much bigger than the existing levels.

He also stressed the need for provincial cooperation between the two countries while acknowledging the restrictions for financial transactions due to U.S. sanctions on Tehran.

Kłoczko invited the Iranian economic actors to travel to Poland so as to discuss the grounds for economic cooperation.

Britain’s complicity in Gaza war

UK spy planes supply intelligence to the Israeli army in disguise of locating captives

From page 1 ► A day before conducting the mission, Britain’s Defense Ministry announced that the country’s army would carry out surveillance flights over Gaza to help locate captives held by Hamas.

Over 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. More than 100 captives were freed following a swap deal in late November. Dozens of Israeli and foreign captives remain in Gaza.

“In support of the ongoing hostage rescue activity, the UK Ministry of Defence will conduct surveillance flights over the Eastern Mediterranean, including operating in air space over Israel and Gaza,” the ministry said in a statement on December 2.

“Surveillance aircraft will be unarmed, do not have a combat role, and will be tasked solely to locate hostages...Only information relating to hostage rescue will be passed to the relevant authorities responsible for hostage rescue,” the statement added.

Nonetheless, the assertions have raised serious doubts.

On February 13, a British Shadow R1 plane landed in the Israeli city of Beersheba in the Negev desert, which is home to the Israeli Air Force’s Nevatim base, Declassified UK revealed.

The investigative news outlet said the spy aircraft stayed there for two hours before flying back to the UK base in Cyprus.



It added that a British spy flight was in the air when three Britons were killed in an Israeli strike on aid workers in Gaza on April 1st.

They were among seven staff members of the World Central Kitchen workers who were killed in the attack in Gaza. They were delivering food to hungry Palestinians in the besieged territory where famine is spreading rapidly. The Israeli killings of the aid workers sparked international condemnation.

Defense Secretary Grant Shapps has been questioned by British lawmakers whether his department would release the footage that the spy drone has recorded but he has parried all the ques-

tions.

Undoubtedly, around 1,000 hours of surveillance footage that has been recorded by the UK spy planes include the videos of the atrocities that Israel has committed in Gaza.

It stands out a mile that Britain’s refusal to share the footage is aimed at covering up Israel’s atrocities in the Gaza Strip.

Israel stands accused of committing genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Israel has rebuffed the United Nations’ top court ruling which ordered the regime late January to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and

any acts of genocide in Gaza.

Israel has escalated its deadly war campaign in Gaza since the ICJ issued the ruling. Growing war crimes committed by Israel have raised speculations that the international Criminal Court (ICC) is set to issue arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and some other senior Israel officials.

The UK has criticized Israel for killing Palestinian civilians in Gaza but it has provided the regime with huge amounts of weapons which have been used in the war on the besieged territory.

This brings to light Britain’s hypocrisy and double-dealing.

According to Declassified UK, Shadow R1 spy plane can supply intelligence for “target acquisition”.

Hence, Britain’s claim of using the surveillance flights to locate captives is just a smokescreen to distract attention from its complicity in Israel’s crimes in Gaza and avoid accountability for its role in perpetuating the regime’s human rights violations.

If the UK was sincere, it would release the footage its aircraft has recorded.

Britain like the United States regards Israel as its main ally in West Asia. What matters to Washington and London is preserving Israel and their crocodile tears for Palestinian civilians are just aimed at appeasing domestic opposition to the bloodbath that the regime has unleashed in Gaza.

Declassified UK reveals that the British military has flown 200 spy missions over Gaza in support of Israel.

Behind U.S. warning of Israeli arms suspension

Timing of U.S. statements raise questions

From page 1 ► **What has been said?**

Biden told CNN that if the Israeli military goes into Rafah “we’re not going to supply the weapons and artillery shells used.”

The U.S. president made clear that Washington will continue to ship weapons to Tel Aviv, but there will be some limits.

The remarks come on the backdrop of reports indicating the same and senior American officials making similar comments that the U.S. will halt some weapons to Israel but this was the first public statement by the president himself.

Validity

The White House and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government are the staunchest of allies.

Biden had previously used a loophole to quietly send more than 100 arms shipments to Tel Aviv throughout the war on Gaza, so it is impossible to verify if the U.S. administration will indeed block some weapons or whether this is a PR move.

Global focus on how much control the U.S. can exert on the occupation regime is growing.

This could be an attempt by both Tel Aviv and Washington to show that the Israelis don’t take orders from America.

The Israeli regime is also embroiled in cases involving genocide and war crimes at the top UN courts, which is something Biden wants to avoid being tagged along with.

Truce agreement

A U.S.-drafted truce deal was recently offered to Hamas via Qatar and Egypt. The same text

was also provided to the Israelis, who accepted it.

Tel Aviv expected Hamas to reject the proposal but Hamas accepted the agreement, which included the main terms the resistance group was seeking.

This took Netanyahu’s cabinet by surprise and Tel Aviv quickly reversed its position by rejecting the truce, which is believed to have caused some friction between Netanyahu and Biden.

U.S. domestic politics

The U.S. presidential election in November is proving to be a major driving force for Biden to see the Israeli war on Gaza come to an end.

If the war ends, the pro-Palestine American student movement will also end. The violent crackdown on students has reignited global debate on America’s human rights record.

Biden is also concerned about losing battleground states such as Michigan over Gaza, which could end his presidency.

Biden thought he had a truce agreement in place but the Israelis appear to have jeopardized it.

Rafah “red line”

To ease public dissent at home, the U.S. president declared the Israeli ground invasion of Rafah as his red line.

The Israeli military has entered Rafah where half of the Gaza population, 600,000 of them children, have taken shelter.

If Biden failed to act it would have made him look extremely weak as his poll numbers have

already plummeted.

Israeli military stockpile

The Israeli military is believed to have a large stockpile of U.S. weapons, despite unleashing a record amount of ammunition against the Gaza Strip. Biden made sure that Israeli arms depots were overloaded with offensive weapons.

The same bombs that have killed 35,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children.

Battle of Rafah

The concern among Israelis – if Biden does follow up on his pledge to halt some U.S. arms – is if the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) have enough American arms for the battle of Rafah.

A quick analysis shows the number of bombs and artillery shells used by the IOF in northern Gaza explains why the U.S. was shipping more. The Israeli army was depleting its stocks faster than the U.S. was dispatching.

In Khan Younis, the IOF used several battalions that withdrew under fire on April 7 after four months of fighting with the Palestinian resistance forces. The battle took longer than northern Gaza.

Rafah’s location on the Egyptian border would naturally make it an ideal area where Hamas would set up its logistical, governmental and welfare bases.

To eliminate Hamas in Rafah, judging by the failure to do so in northern Gaza (where the IOF is back fighting against Hamas) and Khan Younis, it would take upwards of seven months of fighting.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

UN backs Palestinian bid for membership

The United Nations General Assembly has backed a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member by recognizing it as qualified to join and recommending the UN Security Council “reconsider the matter favorably”.

The vote by the 193-member General Assembly on Friday was a global survey of support for the Palestinian bid to become a full UN member – a move that would effectively recognize a Palestinian state – after the United States vetoed it in the UN Security Council last month, Al Jazeera reported.

The assembly adopted a resolution on Friday with 143 votes in favor and nine against – including the US and Israel – while 25 countries abstained. It does not give the Palestinians full UN membership, but simply recognizes them as qualified to join.

The General Assembly resolution “determines that the State of Palestine ... should therefore be admitted to membership” and it “recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favorably”.

CNN: Whistleblowers detail abuse of Palestinians in Israeli prison

Three Israeli whistleblowers working at the Sde Teiman desert camp, a holding site for Palestinians detained during Israel’s invasion of Gaza, have claimed to have witnessed a series of abuses by the military, including prisoners being restrained, blindfolded, and forced to wear diapers, CNN reported.

“We were told they were not allowed to move. They should sit upright. They’re not allowed to talk. Not allowed to peek under their blindfold,” the Israeli whistleblowers said of the prisoners.

According to the sources, guards were instructed to enforce silence by shouting “uskot” (Arabic for “shut up”).

The whistleblowers paint a picture of a facility where doctors sometimes amputated prisoners’ limbs due to injuries sustained from constant handcuffing; of medical procedures sometimes performed by underqualified medics earning it a reputation for being “a paradise for interns”; and where the air is filled with the smell of neglected wounds left to rot.

One whistleblower described “a routine search when the guards would unleash large dogs on sleeping detainees, lobbing a sound grenade at the enclosure as troops barged in”.

UN: About 110,000 people flee Rafah

About 110,000 people have fled Rafah in southern Gaza and food and fuel supplies in the area are critically low, a United Nations official said.

All crossings into southern Gaza remain closed, cutting off supplies and preventing medical evacuations and the movement of humanitarian staff, said Georgios Petropoulos, an official for the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs working in Rafah, the Guardian reported.

Around 1.3 million Palestinians — over half Gaza’s population — had sought refuge in Rafah.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned that hundreds of thousands of people are facing “an extremely chaotic situation” as they try to flee Israel’s Rafah offensive.

“The food and water and medical supplies situation is critical and if this continues, then we move towards catastrophic, or even more catastrophic, consequences from the situation that we now see,” ICRC spokesperson Jason Straziuso told Al Jazeera.

He said the ICRC is “constantly asking” Israeli officials to allow access to humanitarian goods following the shutdown of the crossings.

Hezbollah hits Israeli military positions

Fighters from the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement have carried out a strike against Israeli military positions in the northern side of the occupied territories in response to brutal aggression against the Gaza Strip.

Lebanon’s media outlets reported that Hezbollah fighters targeted on Friday a group of soldiers in the al-Malkia post, causing casualties in the targeted area, Press TV reported.

The development came a day after the Israeli military announced that a soldier had been killed in a Hezbollah mortar and missile attack on an army position in Malkia on Wednesday.

The slain soldier was named staff sergeant Haim Sabach, 20, of the so-called border defense corps’ 869th combat intelligence collection unit. Another soldier was lightly hurt in the attack, the Israeli military added.

The Hezbollah resistance group claimed responsibility for launching anti-tank guided missiles and mortars from Lebanon at Israeli military positions in the Malkia area.

In return, the Israeli military said it had carried out several waves of strikes against Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon.

Study: Nearly all Gaza campus protests have been peaceful

An independent non-profit body that tracks political violence and political protests around the world found that 97% of campus demonstrations over the war in Gaza that have taken place in the US since mid-April have been peaceful.

An analysis of 553 US campus demonstrations nationwide between 18 April and 3 May found that fewer than 20 resulted in any serious interpersonal violence or property damage, according to statistics from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (Acled), according to the Guardian.

Over the same period, Acled documented at least 70 instances of forceful police intervention against US campus protests, which includes the arrest of demonstrators and the use of physical dispersal tactics, including the deployment of chemical agents, batons and other kinds of physical force.

Nearly half of the campus protests that Acled categorized as violent involved protesters fighting with law enforcement during police interventions, according to the group’s data.

Russia attempts ground offensive into Kharkiv

Ukraine sent reserve units to the border areas of the northeastern Kharkiv region, seeking to shore up its defenses against intensifying Russian attacks.

Ukraine’s Defense Ministry said Russian forces sought to break through Ukraine’s defense line in Kharkiv at approximately 5 a.m. local time, but were beaten back, CNBC reported.

Oleh Syniehubov, head of Ukraine’s Kharkiv region, said “the armed forces of Ukraine confidently hold their positions” and “not a single meter has been lost.”

In a separate post, Syniehubov said that “massive” Russian shelling in the Kharkiv region had killed at least two people and injured five others.

Meanwhile, Russia’s said its troops repelled a counterattack of the assault group of the 118th mechanized brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces near Rabotin in the Zaporozhye region and inflicted fire damage on the manpower and equipment of four Ukrainian brigades.

From page 1 ► too, nobody would dare to stand up to it, or to make it public. Now, when the American world order is coming to an end and the US hegemony is successfully challenged, when the country itself is entering its first period of imperial crisis in the course of its short history, the internal tensions rise and the government struggles to suffocate them.

The student movement against Israel’s actions in Gaza became the needed pivotal moment to show the dependencies of the American authorities. A senior college professor was arrested by the police for trying to record the protest and make it public. More than a hundred student arrests were made in a single night. - For the unprepared viewer such statements would be more appropriate for countries which the US qualifies as authoritarian, but in reality they are an American reality.

Nowadays can be easily compared to the Mc-

Carthy era of political repressions, but the truth is that US society is in a much deeper internal crisis and the comparison with the Cold War confrontation is too soft. In order to be correctly comprehended it must be explained through different levels of the internal crisis. At one level are the bipartisan dependencies from donors – economic, religious, ethnical, etc. The US government and the two major parties are practically too dependent by the Israeli lobby, which funds each political campaign. It is worth remembering the case of Cynthia McKinney, the African-American to represent the state of Georgia in the House, for six terms in the US Congress. She became famous for her bravery in support of unpopular causes for the US government like the support for the Palestine cause, long before it was viral and a vital part of the process for reshaping the global security architecture, what it became in late 2023.

In the foreseeable future the US is about to

face another problem which is going to create another level of internal confrontation, and a much deeper one. If the Black Lives Matter movement from 2020 showed the uncured racial problem from the 19th century and the battle for the memory and history, the future is going to show the religious aspect of the crisis. There is a huge Muslim diaspora in the US, along with a growing Latino population, and the almighty Israel lobby. The US is creating preconditions for a full-scale internal conflict far beyond the traditional understanding for a civil war based on political confrontation. Right now the US government is abusing the first thing which created the American dream – the freedom of expression, freedom of thinking and what created the might of the young American nation – The Melting pot of different people blending into a single nation. The US society and state are facing great troubles ahead, which are going to be further accelerated after the presidential election.

Desert tourism: hidden gem lies in South Khorasan



TEHRAN – Believed to be among the hottest spots on Earth, UNESCO-listed Rig-e Yalan, situated within Iran's Lut desert, is a diamond in the rough which could shine bright as a touristic destination, according to experts.

One of the local officials, during a meeting dedicated to planning South Khorasan's desert tourism event (Glorious East), highlighted the undervalued capacities that lies within the region.

"Desert yields a wonderful allurements," Alireza Abbaszadeh noted. "Which [its charm] is no less than the sea [nautical tourism]."

Pointing to Rig-e Yalan as one of the hottest spots on earth, the official highlighted the hidden touristic potential within the region.

Abbaszadeh further elaborated that these capacities need to be introduced to tourists.

Outlining the unrecognized aspects of the desert tourism, he added that: "While everyone has seen the sea at least for once, desert expedition is somehow neglected."

Moreover, the provincial broadcasting director-general, Alireza Ayenehdar, emphasized that South Khorasan is teemed with cultural capacities.

He also expressed the local media's readiness to serve as a platform to showcase the region's rich culture and capabilities.

Historical earthenware unearthed in downtown Isfahan

TEHRAN – Some historical earthenware has recently been unearthed in a serendipitous find when workers excavated the floor of a bank nestled within the bustling grand bazaar of Isfahan.

"Workers discovered 13 pottery objects while they were collecting the floor space of a branch of the Bank Melli Iran situated on the main thoroughfare of the historical bazaar of Isfahan, the spokesperson for the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Isfahan province, explained on Thursday.

"The location of the bank which is situated near Ashraf gate (a Safavid era place), raises the possibility of the projects to date back to the Safavid era," Shahram Amiri said.

"The bank officials had requested the renovation and reconstruction of the bank building some time ago, and it was during the process of collecting the bank's flooring and excavating for groundwork yesterday that these pottery pieces were discovered."

Amiri emphasized that the historical significance of these pottery pieces has been confirmed, and there is a possibility of discovering more pottery as the operation continues.

"Experts from the Historical Directorate confirmed the historical nature of these pottery pieces, but the exact period to which they belong will be determined by laboratory analysis conducted by the Heritage Laboratory in the

Turkey reopens ancient church with prized mosaics to Muslim worship

Turkey has opened the ancient Chora church, one of Istanbul's most celebrated Byzantine buildings, to Muslim worshippers after it was used as a museum for more than 70 years, making it the second such major conversion under President Tayyip Erdogan.

Erdogan, a champion of pious Muslims in Turkey and head of a party with Islamist roots, turned Istanbul's world-renowned Hagia Sophia from a museum into a mosque in 2020 in a ceremony attended by tens of thousands of people.

That move was criticised by church leaders

Ayenehdar further elaborated that the province, being home to many historical and cultural sites, boasts a great potential to be presented to a wider extent.

Mentioning the South Khorasan desert as a site which should take center stage in tourism agenda, the official pinpointed that the provincial broadcasting is all set to collaborate with expert content creators across the country.

"South Khorasan is a cultural heritage province, boasting remarkable capacities," Ayenehdar winded up. "Which should be presented to the domestic and inbound tourists through media."

The Lut Desert is located in the southeast part of Iran among three provinces of Kerman, Sistan-Baluchestan, and South Khorasan.

With never-ending dunes and plains, beautiful clear skies and rich cultural heritage that dates back more than 7000 years, Lut Desert (or Dasht-e Lut) is a paradise for visitors, blending geotourism, adventure tourism and cultural tourism all in one place.

One of the hottest places on the Earth's surface, with a maximum temperature of 70°C (158°F), the land was considered barren and inhospitable for years. But the beautiful yellow corrugated ridges of the desert hide a unique ecosystem with seasonal rivers, rare birds, lizards, and insects.

Lut Desert was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2016. It was inscribed based on criteria VII to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; and VIII to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.

coming days," the official added.

In another accidental discovery made weeks ago, construction works unearthed an array of ruins and relics in Isfahan, which according to archaeologist Ali Shojaei Isfahani may date from the early Islamic era to the Qajar epoch. The discovery was made on the Kamar-Zarrin passageway during a routine urban project.

The ancient city of Isfahan is celebrated not only for its magnificent historical monuments but also for the life-giving presence of the Zayandeh-Rood River, which has long graced the city with its original beauty and fertility.

Isfahan has earned the enduring moniker of Nesf-e-Jahan, translating to "half the world," signifying that to behold it is to behold half the world. During its zenith, it stood as one of the largest cities in the region, boasting a population of nearly one million.

The serene azure tiles adorning Isfahan's Islamic edifices, coupled with the city's grandiose bridges, provide a striking juxtaposition against the arid expanse of the surrounding Iranian countryside. At the heart of the city lies the vast Imam Square, renowned as Naghsh-e Jahan Square, meaning "Image of the World," a monumental testament to urban planning. Constructed in the early 17th century, this UNESCO-recognized square spans an impressive 500 meters by 160 meters and hosts some of the most captivating sights in Isfahan.

and some Western countries, who said reverting Hagia Sophia risked deepening religious rifts. Erdogan said this was interference in sovereign rights and that he was determined to protect Muslims' rights.

The original Chora, or Kariye, church dates back to the 4th Century and was turned into a mosque by the Ottomans. It became a museum in 1945 and Erdogan signed an order in 2020 converting it back into a mosque. It reopened on Monday after restoration.

(Source: Reuters)

Minister inspects Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari attractions

TEHRAN – On Thursday, the Iranian tourism minister arrived in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, where he toured several key historical sites and participated in a regional tourism commission.

Ezzatollah Zarghami had stopovers within the province to evaluate the state of heritage sites on the Farrokhsahr's national day.

The minister inspected several historical and cultural landmarks, including the Zaman-Khan bridge in Saman, Chaleshtar Castle, and the centuries-old Horeh bridge.

Highlighting his visit was his participation in the provincial tourism meeting, where future initiatives for boosting local tourism were discussed.

The minister also attended ceremonies commemorating the national days of Farrokhsahr and Hafshejan, indicating a strong focus on regional cultural promotion.

During his visit, Zarghami specifically visited the historic Zaman Khan Bridge, a registered national monument, dating back to the Safavid era, which is renowned for its architectural significance and historical value.

Moreover, his other stopover was at the Horeh Bridge, which was



reconstructed during the Pahlavi era on the ruins of an older bridge and is celebrated for its beauty and use of local stone materials.

In a press conference, the minister shared news about the ongoing tourism projects in the region, revealing that the [Iranian] President [Ebrahim Raisi] had ordered the allocation of significant banking facilities to advance tourism infrastructure, particularly for projects that are over 80% complete.

"This funding initiative is part of a broader strategy to stimulate investment in the tourism sector," Zarghami further elaborated. "Recognized as a highly profitable and sustainable field."

Additionally, the minister un-

derscored the importance of maintaining and promoting Iran's cultural diversity in the face of globalization.

He stated that cultural events and national celebrations are key to preserving Iranian identity and thwarting cultural uniformity.

As part of his concluding remarks, the minister emphasized the ongoing restoration of Farrokhsahr Castle and the drafting of over 1,800 cultural events into the national calendar, aiming to promote national pride and joy.

Chahrmahal-Bakhtiari as one of the various destinations in the west side of Iran, the ones which are generally lesser-known to potential sightseers and vacationers,

Relics found in Hamedan date from Ilkhanid era, official says

TEHRAN – Assessments suggest that relics recently found in Hamedan date from the early Islamic era, particularly from the Ilkhanid epoch (1256-1335), a local official said on Friday.

The discovery was made during a pedestrianization project on Baba Taher Street in the ancient city of Hamedan, Hamirdeza Heidari said.

The official said that the ruins were found buried approximately 1.5 meters beneath the surface... and according to academic tests they date from the Ilkhanid era and some other epochs of the Islamic era.

"While excavating at a depth of 1.5 meters at the beginning of Baba Taher Street, a wall, which is apparently part of an ancient building, was unearthed," Heidari noted.

"Our colleagues in archaeology are meticulously working on this artifact to precisely determine its historical relevance."

Historically known as Ecbatana, Hamedan held a pivotal position in ancient times, serving as one of the paramount centers of the ancient world. Though few relics from antiquity remain, extensive portions of the city center are dedicated to ongoing archaeological excavations, providing insights into its storied past.

Notably, Hamedan is renowned as the final resting place of the Tomb of Avicenna, honoring the legacy of the revered Islamic scientist. Additionally, visitors marvel at attractions such as the Ali Sadr Cave and the ancient inscriptions of Ganjnameh, attributed to the Persian rulers Dar-

ius and Xerxes.

Situated on a lofty plateau, Hamedan's origins trace back to the urbanization efforts of the Medes, Assyrians, Persians, and Parthians. While it may no longer rival its legendary status of ancient times, the city remains steeped in cultural richness, a testament to its enduring heritage.

One of the province's striking features is its seamless blend of cultural heritage and natural splendor. Visitors are treated to picturesque landscapes, traditional eateries, verdant public gardens, bustling outdoor markets, and, above all, the warm hospitality of its inhabitants. Hamedan continues to captivate visitors with its timeless allure, offering a glimpse into the tapestry of Iran's ancient history.

UNESCO-listed Sassanian landscape to undergo restoration

TEHRAN – Fars's tourism chief has announced plans to restore the UNESCO-registered Sassanid Archaeological Landscape, which is situated in the southern Iranian province.

Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi publicized the scheme in a familiarization tour of the iconic Qal'eh Dokhtar and Palace of Ardashir, two integral components of this historical ensemble, organized for journalists from Iran and abroad.

Speaking on the sidelines of the journalists' visit to the ancient sites in Firuzabad, Sabet-Eqlidi highlighted the significance of recent initiatives to organize, renovate, and conserve these historical landmarks.

The official emphasized that beyond mere maintenance, the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape requires rigorous protection.

In 2018, the UN cultural body added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran – titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region"-- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble comprises eight selected archaeological site components in three geographical contexts: Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan.

Detailing the forthcoming restorations, Sabet-Eqlidi outlined a three-phase approach. The first phase involves de-cluttering and revitalizing the worn-out furnishings to enhance the aesthetic appeal and integrity of the landscape.

"Subsequently, the second phase will focus on organizing administrative and residential spaces, followed by the third phase, which will entail designing accessible pathways to the heritage sites," he added.

Furthermore, Sabet-Eqlidi pointed out specific enhancements, including the construction of a

new prayer hall, the repair of cable cars, and the establishment of sanitary facilities near the historical complex of Qal'eh Dokhtar. He underscored efforts to ensure architectural consistency between restoration works and the original design of these sites.

Expressing satisfaction with the progress, particularly in the repair of cable cars, Sabet-Eqlidi noted that expedited access for maintenance workers has been facilitated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official praised the implementation of top-tier lighting systems at the Qal'eh Dokhtar historical site in Firuzabad. Moreover, he revealed plans to extend this lighting scheme to illuminate the adjacent mountain, enhancing the visual spectacle of the historical landmark.

Sabet-Eqlidi reaffirmed the commitment to preserving and showcasing the cultural heritage of Fars Province, inviting local and international visitors to experience the rich historical legacy of the Sassanid era.

The property includes fortification structures, palaces, reliefs, and city remains dating back to the earliest and latest periods of the Sassanid Empire, which extended across the region from 224 to 651 CE. Among the sites are the military headquarters and first capital of the dynasty founder Ardashir Papakan, and a city with architectural structures of his successor, the ruler Shapur I. In Sarvestan, a monument dating to the Early Islamic period illustrates the transition from the Sassanid to the Islamic era.

KV-EMBASSY OF INDIA SCHOOL TEHRAN

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PRINCIPAL

Services in adolescent empowerment centers to be enhanced

TEHRAN – Adolescents Well-being and Empowerment Centers, known as MASERRAT, in Mashhad and Kermanshah cities have revised and reviewed their protocols to make sure the adolescent girls receive the most efficient and high-quality services.

In 2022, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the anti-narcotics headquarters and the Anti-Narcotics Coordination Council, supported the establishment of two pilot Adolescent Girls Psychosocial Wellbeing and Empowerment Centers in Mashhad and Kermanshah, with a focus on social harms reduction and prevention of drug use among at-risk adolescent girls.

Adolescent girls aged 10-19 who are participating in well-being and empowerment programs supported by UNICEF will benefit from a significant improvement in the quality of services provided, the UNICEF website reported on May 6.

These changes resulted from a consultative workshop to review and modify the protocols.

The protocols include a wide range of procedures and measures based on which services such as healthy lifestyle, psychological health support, social and life skills, increased meaningful participation, prevention from drug abuse, social harms, and risky behaviors, as well as increased resiliency and self-care.

In this workshop, held from April 29 to May 1, participants from UNICEF, anti-narcotics headquarters, provincial drug control coordination councils in Kermanshah and Khorasan Razavi along with representatives of teenage girls and local service provider NGOs discussed the



existing protocols' developments and challenges.

So far, 2,900 teenage girls have benefited from well-being and empowerment support in these two centers, supported by both UNICEF and the anti-narcotics headquarters.

In the next step, the revised protocols will be finalized and after the approval of the anti-narcotics headquarters and provincial drug control coordination councils, it will be communicated to the centers in Kermanshah and Khorasan Razavi, for implementation.

In May 2023, experts, social workers, psychiatrists, and outreach volunteer peers of two centers in Kermanshah and Mashhad were trained on the provision of more efficient services to adolescents in a workshop organized jointly by UNICEF, the anti-narcotics headquarters and Khorasan Razavi Provincial Anti-Narcotics Coordination Council.

The four-day workshop, held in Mashhad from May 21-24, 2023, was aimed at addressing the technical needs of the staff who work closely with at-risk adolescent girls and enhancing their capacity, knowledge,

and skills in the referral of adolescents to the centers.

The training included self-care skills, effective communication, considerations on working with adolescents with special needs, including refugees, as well as mapping and planning for outreach.

It also included sessions on advocacy, an important aspect of a successful community-based approach.

UNICEF's recent services

Following the destructive floods that hit Sistan-Baluchestan province in February, 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.

UNICEF has also delivered ten water tankers and over 3 tons of percholine 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 humanitarian response to the flood-affected communities in Sistan-Baluchestan, children and families in the affected villages of Dashtiari district will receive 2900 hygiene packs.

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

'Protect insects, protect birds'

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN –Each year the World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated on May 11 to raise awareness about the importance of migratory birds and the need to protect them.

Migratory birds play an important role in ecosystems globally by controlling pests, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds.

The day is celebrated twice a year, both on the second Saturday of May and October.

The May celebration focuses on the spring migration, while the October celebration focuses on the fall migration.

This year it will be celebrated on 11th May and 12th October.

The theme for the 2024 annual celebration is 'Protect insects, protect birds'.

It focuses on the crucial relationship between migratory birds and insects, highlighting their interdependent existence and the threats both face.

Insects are essential sources of energy for many bird species, not only during the breeding seasons but also during their extensive journeys, and greatly affect the timing, duration, and overall success of bird migrations.

Along their migration routes, birds actively seek out insects in fields, forests, wetlands, and various habitats during stopovers. The timing

of bird migration often coincides with peak insect abundance at stopover locations, supplying nourishment for birds to replenish their energy reserves before continuing their journeys.

Iran hosts over 5% of world's wintering birds

Iran hosts more than five percent of the world's migratory birds in 450 sites in winter, the Department of Environment's director for natural environment and biodiversity has said.

Encompassing numerous wetlands, reservoirs, and diverse water bodies, Iran welcomes millions of migratory birds every year. It is a wintering home for more than 1.8 million birds of 166 species, IRNA quoted Hassan Akbari as saying.

"Every year some 30 to 40 million birds are counted all over the world and the related statistics are recorded in the International Waterfowl Census (IWC) database," he added.

The collected data and related analyses have significant scientific value in protecting wetlands, beaches, and biodiversity, he noted.

Iran joined the international census of wintering water birds as the first West Asian country at the same time as European countries in 1976.

In the early years, the counting of water birds was limited to the species that could be hunted including swans, geese, ducks, and common terns. Since 1987, other aquatic birds have been

added to the list.

Pointing out that in the past 6 decades, the counting of wintering water birds in Iran has been a priority of the Department of Environment, he added, "Thanks to favorable geographical conditions, climatic diversity, wetlands, and aquatic habitats, including the Caspian Sea in the north, the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea in the south, Iran hosts millions of migratory and wintering water birds yearly."

Iran is considered the most important country providing valuable wintering habitats for birds on their migration route from Siberia to the Nile. Over 10 million migrant birds are estimated to take this route.

The annual census for migratory birds in Iran begins in the middle of the Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22-January 20) and ends in the middle of the month of Bahman (January 21-February 19) in more than 450 sites in 30 provinces with the help of headquarters, provincial experts and professional birdwatchers of non-governmental organizations.

In the last three decades, over 8.1 million birds were counted on average, which is about five percent of the world's population of migratory birds and more than 16 percent of the population of migrant birds taking the route from Siberia to the Nile.

IFRC seeks to boost co-op with IRCS

TEHRAN – The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) has expressed willingness to expand collaboration with the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

Holding a meeting on the sidelines of the 34th preliminary conference between the IFRC and Red Crescent, Razieh Alishvandi, the IRCS director for international affairs, and Xavier Castellanos Mosquera, the IFRC undersecretary general for national society development and operations coordination discussed ways to enhance cooperation.

During the meeting, Alishvandi elaborated on IRCS capabilities in various fields of sanitary, treatment, rehabilitation, rescue and relief, logistics, education, volunteers, youth, climate change, crescent houses, mass gathering management, textile production, medical organizations, and many other things.

Castellanos Mosquera, for his part, acknowledging that the IRCS is one of the strongest members of the IFRC, said the IRCS could be a role model for other societies.

"Hygiene and medical services provided during Arbaeen and Hajj pilgrimages and other mass gathering management are totally unique," he said.

The official went on to ask the IRCS to share its expertise with IFRC by holding a webinar session and proposed the IFRC managers of different sectors, particularly logistics, and health, visit the IRCS medical equipment, artificial organ and prostheses production, and pharmaceutical companies, as well as rehabilitation centers to learn more about the IRCS experiences and knowledge.

"Despite the fact that the information of the Iranian Red Crescent Society has not yet been fully registered in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent health map, the range of services provided by the organization at the national level has placed it among the top societies compared to 107 national societies that have registered their information, Castellanos Mosquera noted.

He also suggested the full membership of the IRCS in a think tank which is formed to investigate the adverse impacts of sanctions.

If all the national societies register the required information in the health map, it will be much easier to identify potential areas of cooperation between national societies, especially in the production and pharmaceutical sectors, which will actually bring about greater integration among international societies to provide more effective humanitarian services and reduce the effects of sanctions.

34th Intl. conference to be held

The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent brings together representatives of the parties to the Geneva Conventions, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, the IFRC, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), every four years.

The International Conference is a non-political forum for dialogue on humanitarian matters of common interest and has a long-standing role as one of the key international meetings for dialogue on the strengthening of disaster laws, policies, and plans.

Every International Conference since 2007 has adopted a resolution relevant to disaster law, including several resolutions that adopt or endorse guidance documents developed by IFRC Disaster Law.

The 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent will be held Between October 28-31, in Geneva, Switzerland under the theme, Navigate Uncertainty – Strengthen Humanity.

IRCS is a top organization nationally, internationally

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) is recognized as one of the five prominent societies worldwide thanks to its wide range of activities and great achievements both



nationally and internationally, Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the IRCS, has said.

He made the remarks on Tuesday on the occasion of the World Red Cross Day which is celebrated on May 8.

The day celebrates the spirit of humanitarianism and recognizes the individuals who make a difference in their communities.

A total of 300 ambulances and 600 rescue vehicles have been purchased. It is planned to add 1,500 more rescue vehicles to the IRCS fleet, Kolivand stated.

Equipping mountain rescue bases, providing insurance for rescuers, and increasing their incomes were among the other measures to enhance the services.

"The Iranian Red Crescent Society has also been active and successful in international missions like helping earthquake victims in Syria and Turkey which made the organization receive the Turkish government's award for its sacrifice and help," he further noted.

The official attributed the organization's achievements to the unwavering dedication of volunteers, whose number has already reached 3 million.

Initiatives to develop and empower Crescent houses in remote, deprived areas and enhance prevention and education programs are other parts of the society's effort to expand its services.

The IRCS offers public education and relief services courses in universities, schools, seminaries, and barracks to improve the whole society's resilient in the face of disasters.

Health, treatment, and rehabilitation are another part of the IRCS activities, the IRCS hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics meet the medical and therapeutic needs of thousands of citizens every day.

The IRCS medical centers abroad are reputable worldwide. Soon, the Red Crescent Medical Center will be opened in Tajikistan

As a humanitarian organization, the IRCS is trying to alleviate the suffering of the people involved in accidents, emergencies, and conflicts.

The most important issue these days is to help the victims of the war in Gaza.

So far, with the help of the people, 10,000 tons of health and medical items have been collected and delivered to the people in need in Gaza.

Referring to cooperation with knowledge-based companies, Kolivand said, "Today, collaborations with knowledge-based firms have resulted in advancements in manufacturing orthoses, prostheses, artificial organs, and new medications, with plans to extend cooperation to rescue and relief efforts as well.

Iran is IFRC's strongest member in region

In July 2023, Hossam Elsharkawi, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), referred to Iran as the strongest member in the region.

"Among the 192 national Red Crescent and Red Cross societies around the world, the Red Crescent of the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been one of the most important and strongest societies and a reliable member of the Federation."

The quick and effective presence of the Iranian Red Crescent Society in the rescue operations and then providing relief to earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria last winter shows the good preparedness of the IRCS in response to natural disasters, the IFRC official highlighted.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran reopens schools under strict health protocols

Over 15 million students attended schools nationwide on Saturday for the new school year under strict health protocols to protect teachers, staff, and students against the coronavirus pandemic.

The opening bell of the new academic year was rung symbolically by President Hassan Rouhani at a girls' high school in downtown Tehran.

Mohsen Haji Mirzaei, Education Minister, symbolically attended the virtual festival.

More than 15 million students started the new school year in 116,000 schools across the country, Haji Mirzaei stated.

بازگشایی مدارس با پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی

بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را با رعایت پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی آغاز کردند.

زنگ آغاز سال تحصیلی به صورت ارتباط تصویری در مراسمی به دستور رئیس جمهور در دبیرستانی در تهران نواخته شد.

محسن حاجی میرزایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را در ۱۱۶ هزار مدرسه آغاز کردند.



MAY 11, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:19 Dawn: 3:24 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:01 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* Sale Sharifi is putting his latest paintings on view in an exhibition at Bavan Gallery.

Entitled "Hidden Murmurs," the exhibit will run until May 27 at the gallery located at 7 Abdo off Lareztan St. off Motahhari Ave.

* Hamid Asadzadeh, Ali Ansari, Marjan Hekmati, Banafsheh Motevali, Zeinab Fatemi and several other artists are displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Binesh Gallery.

The exhibit named "Reflections" will run until May 19 at the gallery that can be found at 22 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave.



* A collection of paintings by Shahnaz Fotuhi is currently on display in an exhibit at Shamis Gallery.

The exhibition titled "Fleeing Moment" will run until May 21 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Daniali St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

* Ech Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mahsa Karimi.

The exhibit entitled "And We Have Preserved" will run until May 24 at the gallery located at 10 Mirza Taraj opposite Dowlat St., Shariati Ave.

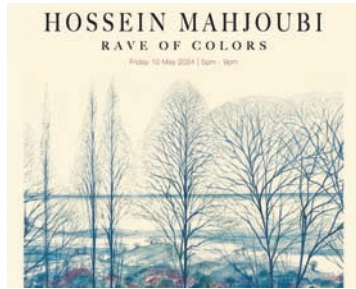


* Sohrab Gallery is hanging a collection of paintings by Hayedeh Zarinbal in an exhibition entitled "Entwined".

The exhibit will run until May 20 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.

* Farbod Morshedzadeh is showcasing a collection of his latest paintings in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery.

The exhibition named "The Court of Squalor" will run until May 22 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



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

The exhibit titled "Rave of Colors" runs until May 21 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

* Emkan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Faruq Mohtaji.

The exhibit will be running until May 19 at the gallery that can be found at No. 3, Second Alley, Mirza Shirazi St.



* Javid Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists including Mehdi Hosseini, Bahram Dabiri, Davar Yusefi, Javad Nobahar and Ahmad Nasrollahi.

The exhibition named "Seven" runs until May 20 at the gallery that can be found at 17 Zartosht St., Vali-e Asr Ave.

Photo

* Matin Mousavi is showcasing his latest photo collection in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery.

Entitled "In Search of Lost Places," the exhibit runs until May 22 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

Yemen's presence at 35th TIBF as special guest deepens cultural relations between two nations

From Page 1 ► "In these circumstances, no cultural event in the Islamic world should take place unless it commemorates this significant event. Therefore, the special guest at this year's edition of the book fair needed to be chosen from among the pioneers of struggle, jihad and martyrdom and Yemen was selected for this reason," ISNA quoted him as saying.

"Today, Yemen has taught the lesson of resistance and jihad to all Muslims worldwide and to all the oppressed people in the world. The Yemenis have disrupted the equations of the global arrogance and Zionism," the minister stressed.

For his part, Yemen's Deputy Culture Minister Muhammad Haidareh expressed gratitude to Esmaili for the invitation and said: "Iran has proven that it has deep cultural and civilizational roots. We witness this fact and the unity among Muslims here at this fair."

"After the advent of Islam, Iran and Yemen shared many cultural commonalities. We all have one



Prophet, one Quran, and one Qibla, which are of great importance," he added.

"Another common factor that strengthens the bond between the two nations is the issue of Palestine. Iran and Yemen have prioritized Palestine as their main concern in the Islamic world and will continue to do so."

Also speaking at the session was the Yemeni Ambassador to Iran Ebrahim al-Dailami. "Yemen's participation in the exhibition is an excellent example of good cooperation that will deepen cultural relations between the two nations," he said.

"The future of cultural ties between the two countries is very

bright, and we should strive to sign and implement cultural and social agreements. We can also make use of Iran's artistic and cinematic experiences in Yemen," he noted.

Having launched on May 8, the 35th TIBF, with the slogan "Let's Read and Create," will run through May 18 at Imam Khomeini Mosalla in central Tehran.

Composer Mehdi Vojdani blends tradition, innovation in new regional music arrangement

TEHRAN-Iranian composer and orchestra leader Mehdi Vojdani has recently unveiled an innovative arrangement of regional music.

The piece "DONDOBAY", based on the music of North Khorasan province in northeast Iran, was recently released with a unique orchestral arrangement, ILNA reported.

Vojdani shared that he arranged the piece for a quartet of two violins, a viola, and a cello, aiming to preserve its original structure and essence.

He also integrated elements of the region's music and culture into the arrangement, capturing the essence of North Khorasan's traditional dances and rhythms.

"We all know that besides the music performed with traditional North Khorasan instruments, there are also dances like the wood dance, and I tried to create an arrangement that would allow us to perceive the rhythm and dances with a modern harmony."

The music of North Khorasan is well-known throughout Iran as it has been a cradle of culture and civilization from ancient times, he emphasized.

Due to its vast geographical range, this region has been rich in music and culture, and verbal culture such as epic poetry collections has thrived there, he explained.

The music of North Khorasan, including its dances, and various styles are crucial due to the ethnic groups like Kurds, Turks, Turkmen, and the wide range of dialects present in the region and the diverse music styles found in this region reflect its importance, he stated.

Vojdani highlighted the significance of incorporating elements of folk and local music into classical and contemporary compositions, drawing parallels to composers such as Beethoven and Brahms who drew inspiration from regional sounds.

The main source of classical and

contemporary music composers comes from local, folk, and the melodies and tunes of that time, he added.

He expressed his belief that reimagining folklore music from different regions with modern arrangements could pave the way for a new era in Iranian music, showcasing captivating compositions that resonate with audiences.

Vojdani emphasized his modern approach to arranging pieces while maintaining a global perspective, choosing classical instruments to convey a broader geographical range. By infusing classical instruments with regional melodies, he sought to create a contemporary sound that transcends traditional boundaries and connects with listeners on a universal level.

"Personally, I wanted to arrange the pieces in a modern way, to see their geography more globally. Thus, I included the instruments in the quartet, which are completely classical instruments," he concluded.

Yasmina Reza's "Art" to be performed at Iranshahr Theater

TEHRAN-The play "Art" written by the French writer Yasmina Reza will begin its performances at Iranshahr Theater in Tehran from mid-May.

The play, translated and directed by Alireza Koushk-Jalali, will go on stage on May 16, Honaronline reported.

The comedy, which raises questions about art and friendship, concerns three long-time friends, Serge, Marc, and Yvan.

Serge, indulging his penchant for modern art, buys a large, expensive, completely white painting. Marc

is horrified, and their relationship suffers considerable strain as a result of their differing opinions about what constitutes art. Yvan, caught in the middle of the conflict, tries to please and mollify both of them.

Sam Kaboudvand, Mohamad Sedighi-Mehr, and Armin Rahimian are the three actors of Koushk-Jalali's play.

At the beginning and end of the play, and for most of the scenes set in Serge's flat, the large white painting is on prominent display. It focuses on the meaning of art and friendship, to both the man who

bought the painting and the two friends who come to see it.

The Tony Award-winning play "Art" premiered in 1994 at Comédie des Champs-Élysées in Paris and went on to win the Molière Award for Best Author.

The play subsequently ran in London in 1996 and on Broadway in 1998. The London production received the 1996-97 Olivier Award and Evening Standard Award.

In the past 30 years, the play has been produced internationally and translated and performed in over 30 languages.

Yasmina Reza, 65, is a French playwright, actress, novelist and screenwriter best known for her plays "Art" and "God of Carnage". Many of her brief satiric plays have reflected on contemporary middle-class issues.

Koushk-Jalali, 66, is an Iranian theater director and playwright. Currently, he resides in Cologne, Germany, where he has also staged several plays.

"Art" will be performed until June 21 at Iranshahr Theater located in Artists Park on North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street.

Antal Szerb's best-known work "Journey by Moonlight" hits bookstores

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the novel "Journey by Moonlight" written by the Hungarian author Antal Szerb has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Farnaz Haeri has translated the book into Persian and Now Publications has published the book, Mehr reported.

First published in Hungary in 1937, Szerb's book is the consummate European novel of the inter-war period.

A major classic of 1930s literature, the book is the fantastically moving and darkly funny story of a bourgeois businessman torn between duty and desire.

In the book, Mihály has dreamt of Italy all his life. When he finally travels there on his honeymoon with wife Erszi, he soon abandons her in order to find himself, haunted by old friends from his turbulent teenage days: beautiful, kind Tamas, brash and wicked Janos, and unforgettable Eva.

Journeyming from Venice to Ravenna, Florence, and Rome, Mihály loses himself in Venetian back alleys and in the Tuscan and

Umbrian countryside, driven by an irresistible desire to resurrect his lost youth among Hungary's Bright Young Things, and knowing that he must soon decide whether to return to the ambiguous promise of a placid adult life, or allow himself to be seduced into a life of scandalous adventure.

"Journey by Moonlight" is an undoubted masterpiece of Modernist literature, a darkly comic novel cut through by desire and death, which traces the effects of a socially and sensually claustrophobic world on the life of one man.

Antal Szerb (1901-1945) was a noted Hungarian scholar and writer. He is generally considered to be one of the major Hungarian writers of the 20th century.

As a student, he published essays on Georg Trakl and Stefan George, and quickly established a formidable reputation as a scholar, writing erudite studies of William Blake and Henrik Ibsen among other works. Elected President of the Hungarian Literary Academy in 1933 - aged just 32 -, he published his first novel, "The Pendragon Legend" (which draws upon his personal experience of living in

Britain) the following year.

His second and best-known work "Journey by Moonlight" came out in 1937.

He was made a Professor of Literature at the University of Szeged the same year. He was twice awarded the Baumgarten Prize, in 1935 and 1937.

In 1941 he published a History of World Literature which continues to be authoritative today. He also published a volume on novel theory and a book about the history of Hungarian literature.

Given numerous chances to escape antisemitic persecution (as late as 1944), he chose to remain in Hungary, where his last novel, a Pirandellian fantasy about a king staging a coup against himself, then having to impersonate himself, Oliver VII, was published in 1942. It was passed off as a translation from the English, as no Jewish work could have been printed at the time.

Szerb was deported to a concentration camp late in 1944, and was beaten to death there in January 1945, at the age of 43.