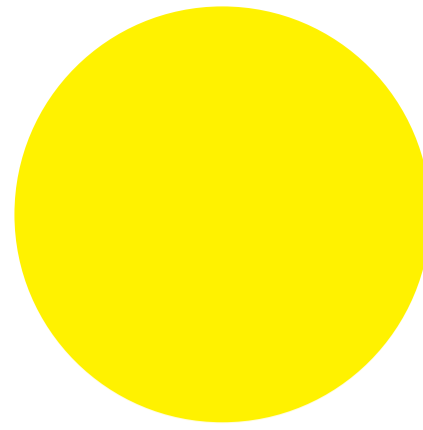


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Iranian conductor Arash Amini plays the violin as the National Orchestra performs works of several Iranian musicians after a hiatus of more than a year, at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, on June 22, 2023.
● AMIN JALALI/IRNA

JCPOA 'best possible' framework: **EU negotiator**



Russia calls for Western 'political will' to revive Iran deal

International Desk

The 2015 nuclear deal is the "best possible" option to resolve issues surrounding Iran's nuclear work, a senior European Union official said Friday amid renewed diplomatic efforts to bring back the tattered accord to life. "For the EU, JCPOA is the best possible, if not the only, framework to address the legitimate non-proliferation concerns of the international community on the Iranian nuclear program," EU mediator Enrique Mora tweeted, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Mora's tweet came two days after holding what he called "intense talks" with Iran's chief negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani in Qatar's capital Doha on "difficult" issues. Bagheri Kani called his talks with Mora in Doha "serious and constructive". Nabila Massrali, an EU spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said on Friday the Doha meeting was part of efforts for "keeping diplomatic channels

open" with Iran. Iran and other parties to the JCPOA – France, Germany, Britain, China and Russia – abandoned months of marathon talks to revitalize the deal in September without reaching an agreement. Iran wants the United States to lift all the sanctions it re-imposed and reinforced after walking out of the deal in 2018 and give firm assurances that it would not ditch the accord again. The West demands that Iran scale back its nuclear activities, which the latter increased in retaliation for the U.S. withdrawal, to the limits set by the JCPOA. On Thursday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov urged the U.S. to end its "gross violation" of the UN Security Council's Resolution 2231, which was passed to endorse the JCPOA. Ryabkov added that the troubled deal is "fully prepared" to be restored and the U.S. and European parties "just need to show political will" to resuscitate the JCPOA.

Iran's FM: Cooperation mechanism among Persian Gulf states more necessary than ever

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister said setting up a joint mechanism for dialogue and cooperation among all countries in the Persian Gulf is more necessary than ever, as he wrapped up a three-day tour of Persian Gulf Arab neighbors. While welcoming an initiative proposed by the UN chief about a meeting of the top diplomats of the Persian Gulf countries in New York, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian proposed the idea of forming a "Dialogue and Coop-

eration Assembly" with the participation of all Persian Gulf countries, the details of which will be presented to them in the near future. Amir-Abdollahian noted that people of the Persian Gulf region deserve a better and more prosperous future and that Tehran is determined to redouble its efforts for this purpose. He made the remarks in a message posted on his Instagram account after he wrapped up a three-day trip to the UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait to improve relations with neighbors and secure

the region. He described the meetings with the countries' officials as "positive and constructive". In the UAE on Thursday, he discussed "bilateral relations and ways to enhance cooperation" in a meeting with President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi. He later met with his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed. The two top diplomats placed a premium on the need for the promotion of cooperation between the

two neighbors as they discussed issues of mutual interest, regional developments, and expansion of bilateral relations. Iran and the UAE also signed a major agreement to cooperate on air transport services. The agreement will help Iran and the UAE expand their aviation connections in order to boost trade and tourism opportunities in the two countries. "In the framework of economic and commercial cooperation, we will have very good news for our beloved

nation and the people of these four countries in the future," he said. "The cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the countries on the southern coast of the Persian Gulf has entered a new chapter. In each of these countries, we have seriously put bilateral issues on our agenda," he added. The trip followed stops in Qatar, Kuwait and Oman – the latest in a flurry of diplomatic moves by Tehran to improve relations with neighbors and secure the region.



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UN slams Israel's use of advanced military weaponry in Jenin

The violence in the occupied West Bank "risks spiralling out of control", according to the United Nations human rights chief who condemned Israel's use of deadly force in a raid in the Jenin refugee camp that killed at least seven Palestinians, including children. Israeli forces stormed the Jenin refugee camp on Monday to arrest two Palestinians. What followed was a 20-year first: the use of helicopter gunships in the occupied West Bank, with the gunships pummeling the

camp and, in addition to the deaths, injuring 91 people. The UN's Volker Turk made the remarks on Friday, warning that the situation was deteriorating sharply due to the use of heavy weaponry, urging Israel to stop the violence. "This week's violence in the occupied West Bank risks spiralling out of control, fuelled by strident political rhetoric, and an escalation in the use of advanced military weaponry by Israel," Turk said in a statement. He added that the raid was a "major intensification of



● AFP

the use of weaponry more generally associated with the conduct of armed hostilities, rather than a law enforcement situation". He called the air strikes with helicopter gunships a "major intensification of the use of weaponry more generally

associated with the conduct of armed hostilities, rather than a law enforcement situation". Turk called on Israel to abide by international law, also adding that the current situation serves "only to drive Israelis and Palestin-

ians deeper into an abyss". A day after the deadly raid, Palestinian gunmen killed four Israeli settlers at a petrol station between the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Nablus. Hours after that shooting, Israeli settlers stormed through Palestinian towns, torching property and smashing cars, killing one Palestinian man. A large-scale military incursion on the Jenin camp has happened in the past as well. In 2002, 52 Palestinians were killed in a raid.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Leader asks intelligence bodies to increase cooperation



MEHR - In a message to the joint meeting of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and the IRGC Intelligence Organization on Thursday, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed the need for cooperation between the two institutions at all levels. "If they want to fight for God, their jihad is to implement this understanding in all ranks. Today, although there is serious understanding at the top of these two institutions, the real effort is to implement this cooperation and understanding at all levels," said Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

U.S. House moves to make Iran sanctions permanent



IFP - The U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee has unanimously passed a bipartisan bill to make the 1996 sanctions against Tehran permanent, sending it to the full House floor for a vote. Tehran says Washington does not seem to have the necessary political will for continuing the negotiations in Vienna to revive the nuclear deal, urging the United States to drop its addiction to sanctions.

Iran has mastered complex defense technologies: IRGC commander

IRNA - Commander of IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh said that Iran has mastered all advanced technologies in the defense industry. General Hajizadeh added that the range of the domestically produced Fatih missile, a hypersonic ballistic missile unveiled earlier this month by the IRGC Aerospace Force, can be increased to 2,000km, from its current range of 1,400km.



A Kurdish woman visits the graves of her relatives who were killed in Saddam Hussein's 1988 gas attack on the Iraqi town of Halabja in an effort to stop the advances of the Iranian forces. **AFP**

Two Dutch firms on trial for aiding Saddam's chemical attacks

A court in The Hague says it will deliver a verdict in August after five Iranian nationals sued two Dutch firms for supplying chemical weapon components to Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq during the 1980s. Iranian victims of chemical weapons, used by the regime of the Western-backed Iraqi dictator during the 1980s war on

Iran, say the two firms Melchemie (now known as Otjiaha) and Forafina Beleggingen (formerly known as KBS Holland) supplied Iraq with chemicals between 1982 and 1984 and were aware that their substances were being used to manufacture mustard gas, Press TV reported. Meanwhile, the firms deny the allegations, claiming

the chemicals were intended for agricultural pesticide use, according to the Dutch daily de Volkskrant. Billionaire Hans Melchers, the former owner of Melchemie, was summoned to appear in The Hague court on June 22. Melchers is accused of directly participating in the supply of 1,850 tons of thionyl chloride, a raw

material for mustard gas, to Iraq during the war. He denies the accusations, but his then company was sentenced in 1987 with a fine and a conditional closure for "intentionally" circumventing a ban imposed by the Dutch government to prevent the export of materials that could be used for manufacturing weapons to Iraq.

KBS Holland also faces a lawsuit for supplying Iraq with TDG, another component used in the production of mustard gas. The five claimants suffered lasting injuries from mustard gas attacks during the war. They endure respiratory issues and disability due to damage to their lungs, eyes, and skin. "These people's lives were

destroyed," the victims' attorney Liesbeth Zegveld said, adding "These Dutch companies share a part of the responsibility for that." During the 1980-88 war, the Iraqi army continuously employed chemical weapons against Iranian combatants and civilians, leaving tens of thousands dead on the spot and many more suffering for years to come.

MP: Iran's diplomatic flurry dwarfed JCPOA revival talks

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

An Iranian lawmaker said the government's policy to expand ties with neighbors and other countries around the world has considerably improved Iran's economic situation and played down the significance of talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal. "The development of ties with different countries has positively affected Iran's status. Considering such a situation, Iran does not need to attach significance to the JCPOA revival talks," Ahmad-Hossein Fallahi told Iran Daily in an exclusive interview. He added that Iran continues negotiations on the restoration of the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but will not link the country's fate to the talks. "Iran has decided not to close the door to negotiations with the West. But it will never cross its principles and red lines," Fallahi said. The JCPOA was reached between Iran and the major world powers in 2015. But, former US President

Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew his country from the agreement in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions against Iran. Diplomatic efforts to revive the deal have not yielded results over what Tehran calls Washington's failure to make political decisions and provide guarantees that it will not exit the accord again. Fallahi said Iran's cooperation with the IAEA and talks with the West does not mean that the Islamic Republic will back down from its demands. He said Western countries are willing to continue nuclear talks with Iran amid Tehran's efforts to forge close relations with regional and trans-regional blocs. The MP said Iran's approach toward BRICS has benefited the country and worked to the detriment of the West. BRICS consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The significance of this group and its leading role in the world economy has caused sever-

al countries including Iran to show their tendency to join the trade and economic organization. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian attended the BRICS foreign ministers' summit in South Africa earlier this month. He held several meetings with participating nations' top diplomats. Amir-Abdollahian said the BRICS members have welcomed Iran's potential accession to the powerful bloc. Fallahi explained how Iran's joining of blocs such as BRICS can help the country wean its economy off the greenback. "Currently, parts of our talks with the West pertain to connecting to SWIFT to be able to have access to US dollars. But, BRICS de-dollarization initiatives will drive the US dollar out of the market and obviate the need for connecting to SWIFT," he said. He added that countries that have ditched the US dollar in their financial transactions do not need SWIFT and have been able



to improve their economic situation. The Belgium-based Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Communications (SWIFT) has imposed severe restrictions on Iran's access to the global financial system due to US sanctions and pressure. Further in his remarks, Fallahi touched upon the recent détente between Iran and Saudi Arabia. "I think Saudis have realized that the US does not have a lot of clout in the region anymore. Hence, they have decided to cooperate with Iran," he said. Fallahi said Iran will co-

operate with Saudi Arabia as long as the Kingdom respects mutual interests and values. The two Persian Gulf countries have been promoting their ties since they signed a Chinese-brokered rapprochement deal in March. Tehran and Riyadh cut ties in 2016 following Saudi Arabia's execution of a prominent Shia Muslim cleric. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud traveled to Iran last week and held talks with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and President Ebrahim Raeisi.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran slams UN rights report as biased

Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations Office in Geneva slammed a "biased" report by the world body on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic, saying it is based on anti-Iran media propaganda. Ali Bahraini made the remarks on Wednesday in an address to the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council, during which UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada al-Nashif presented the secretary general's latest report on Iran, according to Mehr news agency. Covering the period from August 2022 to April 2023,

the report alleged that there is "a worsening human rights landscape in Iran coupled with the chronic lack of meaningful and effective avenues for the population to voice grievances or indeed to seek remedies". Bahraini rejected the report as "politically motivated, biased, and unfair," arguing that it "did not contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights". He also dismissed the claim about Iran's "limited" implementation of recommendations of human rights mechanisms, saying such accusations "highlighted the biased and one-sided opin-

ions of the report". "Iran was committed to promoting and protecting human rights and interacted and cooperated with the United Nations human rights mechanisms," the envoy asserted. He further criticized the report for turning a blind eye to the illegal sanctions imposed on the Iranian nation. "The unilateral measures enacted on Iran impacted all areas of the Iranian people's lives. The imposition of these measures against the Iranian nation was a crime against humanity, which was neglected by the report," Bahraini said.

Rich nations pledge to unlock billions of dollars for climate fight

Multilateral development banks like the World Bank are expected to find \$200 billion in extra firepower for low-income economies by taking on more risk, a move that may require wealthy nations to inject more cash, world leaders said on Friday.

The leaders, gathered at a summit in Paris to thrash out funding for the climate transition and post-COVID debt burdens of poor countries, said their plans would secure billions of dollars of matching investment from the private sector, Reuters reported.

An overdue pledge of \$100b in climate finance for developing nations was also now in sight, they said. Many in attendance, however, said over the two-day summit that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were increasingly ill-suited for tackling the most pressing challenges and needed a broad revamp.

"We ... expect an overall increase of \$200b of MDBs' lending capacity over the next ten years by optimizing their balance sheets and taking more risks," the summit's final statement obtained by Reuters said.

"If these reforms are implemented, MDBs may need more capital," it added, recognising in a final

summit document for the first time that wealthy nations may have to inject more cash.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, whose country is the largest shareholder of the IMF and World Bank, had said ahead of the summit that development banks had to first squeeze out more lending themselves before the possibility of capital increases was considered.

The final summit document called for each dollar of lending by development banks to be matched by at least one dollar of private finance, which analysts said should help international institutions to leverage an additional \$100b of private money in developing and emerging economies.

The announcements mark a scaling up of action from the development banks in the fight against climate change and set a direction for further change ahead of their annual meetings later in the year.

However, some climate activists were critical of the results.

At the summit, the United States and China – long at odds on how to tackle debt restructurings for poor countries – sought to strike a more conciliatory tone after a landmark deal was reached on Thursday to



restructure \$6.3b in debt owed by Zambia, most of it to China.

"As the world's two largest economies, we have a responsibility to work together on global issues," Yellen said on a summit panel shared with Chinese Premier Li Qiang among other leaders.

However, differences remain. China – the world's largest bilateral creditor – has been pushing for lenders like the World Bank or the IMF to absorb some of the losses, which the institutions and Western countries oppose.

"China is ready to be engaged in debt relief efforts in an effective, realistic and comprehensive manner in keeping with the principle of fair burden sharing," Li said.

The summit statement said there was a "good likelihood" of finalising this year a \$100-billion climate finance pledge to developing countries.

Many of the topics discussed in Paris took up suggestions from a group of developing countries, led by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, dubbed the 'Bridgetown Initiative'.

"We leave Paris not with speeches simply, but a commitment to get down into the granular details to make sure that what we agree here can be executed," Mottley said at the summit's closing panel.

The \$100 billion pledge falls far short of poor nations' actual needs, but has become symbolic of wealthy countries' failure to deliver promised climate funds.

"If we can't shape the rules in this time like others before, then we will be accountable for what potentially can be the worst re-



World leaders and finance leaders attend the closing session of the New Global Financial Pact Summit, in Paris, France, on June 23, 2023.

● LEWIS JOLY/POOL/ AFP via GETTY IMAGES

NEWS IN BRIEF

France estimates up to 35k heat deaths since 2014

AFP – Between 30,000 and 35,000 people have died from the effects of summer heat in France since 2014, the country's public health agency said in an estimate released Friday.

Although heat deaths are often associated with the elderly, "a significant proportion – one-third – were of people aged under 75," Sante Publique France (SPF) found in a study.

France has seen more frequent heatwaves in recent years, especially in 2019 and 2022, as the effects of climate change make the phenomena more frequent – without it being possible to directly attribute any individual episode to global warming.

Financial crime watchdog adds Croatia to 'grey list'



REUTERS – The FATF international financial crime watchdog on Friday said it had added EU member state Croatia to its so-called "grey list" of countries under special scrutiny, adding that Cameroon and Vietnam were also added to the list.

The move makes Croatia the only EU country on the list, which also includes the United Arab Emirates, Panama and Mali, and comes in response to deficiencies in the country's prevention of money laundering and terrorism financing.

Greece holds final party rallies ahead of vote



AFP – Greece on Friday entered the final day of campaigning the weekend's national election, with conservative frontrunner Kyriakos Mitsotakis aiming to consolidate the gains he made in last month's inconclusive ballot.

This poll is being held under a different system, meaning he stands to gain a larger share of seats in parliament if he repeats – or betters – his May performance, as polls suggest he will.

UK hospital doctors to stage longest strike in NHS history



● DANIEL LEAL/AFP

Hospital doctors in England on Friday announced the longest strike in the history of the state-funded National Health Service (NHS), in an ongoing row over pay.

Junior doctors – those below consultant level – will walk out for five days from 7:00 am (0600 GMT) on July 13 until the same time on July 18, the British Medical Association said, AFP reported.

The stoppage – just after the NHS marks its 75th anniversary – follows a 72-hour strike this month in opposition to the government's refusal to budge on its offer of a five-percent pay increase.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman said the new strike was "extremely disappointing." "It puts patient safety and our efforts to cut waiting

lists at risk," he told reporters, insisting the government's offer was "fair and reasonable".

But medics say they have seen a 26-percent pay cut in real terms in the last 15 years, as salaries have failed to keep pace with inflation.

They want pay restored to 2008-2009 levels but the government says this would mean an average pay award of about 35 percent this year and is too costly.

Robert Laurens and Vivek Trivedi, who jointly chair the BMA junior doctors' committee, said the government seemed intent on letting the NHS "decline to the point of collapse".

They highlighted a BMA survey that said more than half (53 percent) of the nearly 2,000 junior doctors who responded had

received offers to move abroad in the past four months. The government of South Australia state had even paid for advertising trucks to be sent to picket lines offering better pay if doctors emigrated, they claimed.

Laurens and Trivedi said the government was refusing to reopen talks on pay, forcing them to stage "the longest single walkout by doctors in the NHS's history".

The strike could be averted if the government comes up with a "credible offer" on pay restoration, they added.

A series of strikes by doctors, nurses and other medical staff over below-inflation pay rises and conditions has hit patient care, forcing the cancellation or rescheduling of appointments.

Russia says bars entry to more EU officials over fresh sanctions

Russia said Friday it was barring entry to more European officials in response to the EU's decision to slap new sanctions on Moscow over the conflict in Ukraine.

"In response to these unfriendly actions, the Russian side has significantly expanded the list of representatives of European institutions and EU member states who... are prohibited from entering the territory of our state," the foreign ministry said in a statement, AFP reported. It did not specify the number of officials that were being sanctioned or give their names.

The European Union this week agreed an 11th package of penalties against Russia over its large-scale "military operation" in Ukraine, including measures aimed at clamping down on evasion of restrictions already in place. "We confirm that any unfriendly actions taken by Western countries will continue to receive a timely and adequate response," Russia's Foreign Ministry added.

Ukraine is in the early stages of its most ambitious counterattack since Russia's full-scale operation in February 2022 and says it has retaken eight villages, its first substan-

tial gains on the battlefield for seven months, Reuters reported.

Ukraine's armed forces have halted a Russian offensive towards the cities of Kupiansk and Lyman in the east of the country, and are advancing in the south, a senior Ukrainian defence official said on Friday.

"We had very fierce battles in the Kupiansk and Lyman directions, Maliar told Ukrainian television. But Russia still holds swathes of territory in eastern and southern Ukraine, and Ukrainian forces have yet to push to the main defensive lines that Russia has had months to prepare.

Reuters said it was unable to verify the situation on the battlefield. Each side says the other has suffered heavy losses since Ukraine began its counteroffensive, and Moscow has not acknowledged Ukraine's recent military gains.



● REUTERS

Giveh-bafi, a prevalent handicraft in Zanzan Province



IRNA



yjcr



yjcr

Iranica Desk

The northwestern province of Zanzan is a main center of handicraft production in Iran. Archaeological findings also testify to the antiquity of the handicraft industry in the province.

Giveh-bafi is a handicraft which is very prevalent in Zanzan Province. *Giveh* is a kind of soft, comfortable, durable, handmade shoe that is common in several parts of Iran, IRNA wrote.

Experts believe that in the past, *giveh* was produced in many Iranian cities with a dry climate. The craft of *giveh-bafi* displays a combination of male and female art, unlike embroidery, for example.

Presently, the craft is still alive in a few Iranian cities including Zanzan.

The craftspeople and experts of the province believe that modern methods should be

employed to preserve the art and prepare conditions for producers to sell their works to other provinces of the country, and even export them to foreign countries.

Soghra Mohammadi is an artist who has been involved *giveh-bafi* for 30 years. She said she has presented various ideas to make the industry flourish and profitable in the province.

"I went through a lot of ups and downs to achieve success. I am happy that our craft has become more popular among the public now," she said.

She continued that she is making efforts to make *giveh-bafi* of Zanzan Province a brand to encourage tourists to buy this traditional footwear as a souvenir, stressing that improving the designs and diversifying the colors is a prerequisite for achieving this target.

"*Givehs* of Zanzan are woven

using a crochet hook," she said, adding that the method is different from those employed in other parts of the country."

Mohammadi said that she uses embroidery and painting arts on *givehs* to make them more attractive for customers, pointing out that, currently, a large number of artists are involved in the craft and the market is saturated with this type of product.

She said that *giveh* can only be used in the first six months of the year, however, the period is longer in regions with a warm climate.

The artisan continued that a limited number of individuals wore *givehs* in the past, while presently the use of the traditional shoe is more prevalent among people.

She called for the officials at the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organizations and other relat-

ed bodies to support the craft and prepare conditions for the *giveh* producers to introduce their products.

Deputy Head of Zanzan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Seyyed Mikaeil Mousavi said that *giveh* is a kind of summer footwear, which is lightweight, durable and suitable for long walks.

He added that the top of *giveh* is made of cotton, while its sole is made of leather.

He said that the art of *giveh-bafi* has recently flourished again and a large number of people wear these shoes for their long walks.

Mousavi noted that about 3,000 *giveh* weavers are active throughout the province, adding that a prominent artist produced 16,000 pairs of *giveh* per month, which has been the highest number in the province.

Kubachi wares

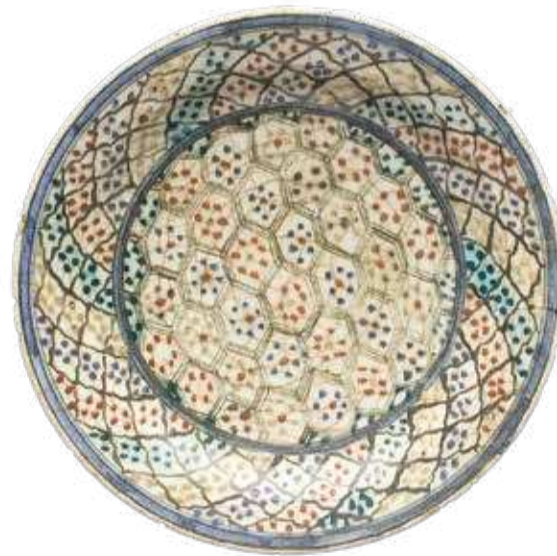
The name "Kubachi" will be familiar to most students of Islamic art as well as to ethnographers dealing with the complex demographics of Daghestan in the Caucasus. The fact that hoards of art pottery were discovered in the homes of mountain villagers in the late nineteenth century has cast a mystique over these wares, clouding our understanding of their significance. Kubachi lies some 60km southwest of the Caspian town of Derbent in the north Caucasus, in the autonomous republic of Daghestan, formerly within the Soviet Union. Situated above the treeline, the village lands do not offer the possibility of extensive agriculture.

Houses make the best possible use of the sloping land. The multi-storey traditional stone houses climb the hillside of Kubachi, their balconies serving as roofs for the houses below. Streets consist of a series of steps winding up the hill between houses. It is difficult to imagine how such a village came to possess large collections of luxury tablewares.

Although some pottery still remains in the homes of the villagers, huge quantities were purchased by European, Armenian, and Russian agents from the 1870s on. The vessels arrived in museum collections toward the end of the century and during the first decade of the twentieth century. Even though their Kubachi origins may not have been recorded, they are easily identified by their having a series of holes drilled in the foot-ring, through which a cord was threaded for hanging in the houses of the village. Many even retain these cords. Safavid pots recovered in Iran itself, such as those purchased by Sir Robert Murdoch Smith for the Victoria and Albert Museum in the late nineteenth century, seem to be devoid of such holes. Most vessels found at Kubachi also show a crackling of the glaze as well as an oily substance or "varnish" on the surface, as observed by Brocklebank in 1931.

All scholars except the very first to see these wares

have doubted that the villagers of Kubachi actually produced them or even that they came from a nearby source, such as Derbent. Some of the wares from this site had already been acquired for the collections of the Royal Ontario Museum by 1907. Dikran Khan Kelekian brought back large quantities of objects from Kubachi and mentioned the pottery in his publication of 1909. While accepting a local provenance for all this pottery, he nevertheless warned that it raises many questions that will never be resolved without excavations in Daghestan and Iran. The major questions posed by the ceramic material were set forth by Arthur Lane in the article entitled, "The so-called 'Kubachi' Wares of Persia," in the *Burlington Magazine* (1939). The title itself reveals his opinion about the provenance of the wares, namely, that none of them was made in Kubachi. He pointed out that similar types have been purchased in Iran, and that the figural style was unquestionably



that of the court of Shah Abbas of Isfahan of the early seventeenth century. An Iranian source for the pottery was far more likely than a remote mountain village. Lane hypothesized a Tabriz origin for all the wares, including those that did not belong to the polychrome slip-painted group. Since then little interest has been shown in this assemblage despite its preponderance in museum collections and the attractiveness of some of the groups. Only the three

or four fifteenth-century pieces that bear dates have received attention. They are presumed to represent the earliest phase of a single workshop. On stylistic grounds alone the pottery found at Kubachi ranges from the mid-fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century and possibly later. Petrographic analysis — and occasionally inscriptions — show that the Kubachi aggregation is not the work of a single pottery centre.



Most of the Kubachi vessels with dated inscriptions are painted in black under a clear turquoise glaze and range in date from 1468 to 1495.3 They have a Neyshabur petrofabric. A dish painted in blue on white and dated 1473-1474 reveals a Mashhad provenance in its inscription. One of the largest groups found at Kubachi originated in the Turkman and early Safavid workshops at Tabriz. Kubachi seems to be the only source for whole ves-

sels from the Tabriz workshop, while vessels with Neyshabur and Mashhad petrofabric have been found in Iran. However, sherds with a Tabriz petrofabric have turned up in excavations at Ardebil (unpublished). These are mostly from dishes, painted in cobalt blue under a clear glaze or black under a transparent turquoise or green glaze. Kubachi aggregation are diverse, comprising products of Neyshabur, Mashhad, and Tabriz.

AFC U17 Asian Cup: Iranian young guns on the verge of World Cup berth after South Korea win



Sports Desk

Iran is 90 minutes away from securing a place at November's FIFA Under-17 World Cup after a 2-0 victory over South Korea saw Hossein Abdi's boys march into the last-eight round of the AFC U17 Asian Cup in Thailand – a first knockout spot for the 2008 champion since 2016, where Iran finished as the runner-up. Having been held to a goalless stalemate by Qatar last time out, Iran started right on the front foot against Thursday's opponent as Abdi's team needed the maximum points to overtake the South Koreans for a top-spot finish in Group B.

The brave start paid off as two goals inside 90 seconds gave Iran a morale-boosting lead for the rest of the way against the team that came into the contest on the back of a tournament-high 10 goals, thanks to a 6-1 thrashing of Qatar a comfortable four-goal victory over Afghanistan.

Nima Andarz broke the deadlock in the 18th minute when his low drive from inside the box went underneath goalkeeper Hong Seong-min into the net. A minute later, Esmail Qolizadeh's backheel touch picked up Mahan Sadeqi, whose superb left-footed effort found the top corner to round off an

Iran's brilliant counter-attack.

The young winger became the sixth Iranian to find the back of the net in Thailand – no other team has had more different scorers.

"I told my South Korean counterpart before the kickoff that this is an early final and I believe it was probably one of the best games so far in the tournament," Abdi said after the game.

"That's the way we need to play in every match. Our gameplan was to harm them with quick attacks and score the first goal. We also managed to keep them at bay in every aspect of their game. I'm proud of what my players did to-

night," added the Iranian.

The result came after Iran had wasted a load of chances against Qatar and Abdi was thrilled to see how his team responded to the frustrating draw in style. "I've been a coach long enough to know how to help the players recover both mentally and physically in these kinds of situations. It was hard to handle their stress for the game against South Korea as they are only a bunch of 16-year-olds and could easily be overwhelmed by emotions. "I want the players at this age to enjoy the game. The result is not all that matters but it is important for them to give it all out for their best performance," Abdi

added.

Thursday's triumph means Iran will play Yemen, which finished second to Thailand in Group A, in Sunday's quarterfinal, while South Korea will face the host, which won the group with a perfect record.

"The players are so happy. When you analyze South Korea you see what a great team they are so it is normal for my players to be excited about the result. But we have a tough game ahead of us and anything can happen in there. We need to prepare properly, while enjoying the contest with a different tactic," Abdi said.

The four semifinalists of the tournament will qualify

Iranian players celebrate a goal during a 2-0 victory over South Korea in the AFC U17 Asian Cup in Pathum Thani, Thailand, on June 22, 2023. **FFIRI**

IOC strips IBA of recognition as governing body



UESLEI MARCELINO/REUTERS

REUTERS – The International Boxing Association's (IBA) recognition as the global body for the sport was stripped on Thursday by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) due to its failure to complete reforms on governance, finance and ethical issues.

The IOC's extraordinary session, held online on Thursday, rubber-stamped an executive board recommendation by 69 votes to one to withdraw the IBA's recognition.

The IBA, which called the decision "a tremendous error", had tried to have it blocked through an urgent appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, sport's highest court, which rejected the appeal on Tuesday.

The IOC had previously suspended the IBA in 2019 over governance, finance, refereeing and ethical issues and did not involve it in running the boxing events at the Tokyo Olympics.

Boxing is part of the Paris 2024 Olympics but the qualification bouts and the competition are being run by the IOC and not the IBA, as was the case at the Tokyo Games in 2021.

Other issues such as a sponsorship deal with Russian energy giant Gazprom that was terminated in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine further complicated the position of the IBA, which is led by Russian businessman Umar Kremlev.

"The IOC has made a tremendous error by withdrawing its recognition of the IBA, revealing its true politicized nature," the IBA said in a statement. "We have successfully implemented all recommendations outlined by the IOC in its roadmap."

"Despite the challenges, the IBA remains committed to the development of boxing, the preservation of its independence, and the organization of official tournaments and World Boxing Championships at the highest level."

"We possess the legal right to do so, and we are prepared to defend it before any appropriate authority," the IBA said. While the IOC regularly removes or adds sports to the Olympic Games programme to make them more attractive to younger audiences, it is extremely rare for the Olympic body to strip an international sports federation's recognition.

The IBA's actions have led to the creation of a breakaway group called World Boxing and several countries have left the IBA to join the new organisation.

"All national boxing federations now have a critically important decision to make if they want boxers from their country to have the opportunity to compete at the Olympic Games at Los Angeles and beyond," World Boxing said in a statement.

Rice keen to join Arsenal despite City interest



THE GUARDIAN – Declan Rice remains keen to join Arsenal despite Manchester City planning to enter the race to sign the West Ham midfielder.

Arsenal's first two bids for Rice have been rejected, leaving Mikel Arteta at risk of missing out on his top target. City have the financial wherewithal to meet West Ham's asking price of at least £100m, and it would be hard for the 24-year-old to turn down the chance to play for Pep Guardiola.

Rice spoke to Guardiola towards the end of last season and City are planning for life without Ilkay Gundogan, who has decided to join Barcelona on a free transfer. However, the treble winners are not short of options in central midfield. They are close to signing Mateo Kovacic

from Chelsea and have Rodri and Calvin Phillips to play in central midfield.

Rice would be more likely to start regularly at Arsenal and his preference remains to stay in London. The England international became a father last year and is extremely close to his family. Rice also admires Arteta's football and Arsenal should not have any problems when it comes to personal terms.

Arsenal's problem remains agreeing a fee. Their first offer was £60m plus £15m in add-ons and that was followed this week by a bid of £75m plus £15m in add-ons. West Ham were unimpressed with Arsenal's attempt to spread the £75m payment over five years and unhappy with what they deemed a series of unrealistic add-ons.

West Ham want the guaranteed portion of the fee to be paid in fewer instalments to boost their financial position. The expecta-

tion remains that Rice will join Arsenal for a fee that could top £100m once add-ons are taken into account. There were indications on Thursday night that the transfer was rumbling towards a conclusion, though suggestions Arsenal have lodged their third bid have been denied.

Arsenal will need to make Rice their record signing. Arteta wants more physicality in midfield and is also targeting Southampton's Roméo Lavia, who is valued at £45m. Arsenal are close to completing an initial £60m deal for the Chelsea forward Kai Havertz, who is due to have a medical. Havertz is expected to be unveiled next week. Arsenal are prepared to make room for Rice by selling Granit Xhaka, who has an offer from Bayer Leverkusen, and Thomas Partey. There is interest in Partey from Saudi Arabia and Juventus and he would prefer to stay in Europe.

JUSTIN SETTERFIELD/GETTY IMAGES

NEWS IN BRIEF

Eurozone economic growth slows sharply in June

AFP – Eurozone economic activity worsened in June to a five-month low, hit hard by a fall in industrial production, a keenly watched survey showed on Friday.

The eurozone entered a technical recession at the start of the year, according to official figures published earlier this month. But inflation remains well above the European Central Bank's target of two percent, which will keep pressure on the Frankfurt-based body to keep raising interest rates despite the stagnant economy.

Shipping emissions tax still stuck in port

CNBC – Efforts by France to build a consensus for a global carbon tax on the shipping industry failed to produce significant results at a summit in Paris on Friday.

French President Emmanuel Macron put the item on the agenda of the two-day Summit for a New Global Financing Pact which brought together around 40 heads of state and government.

Turkey's lira sinks to record low

REUTERS – Turkey's lira weakened as much as 3.3% to a record low on Friday, extending losses a day after the central bank's large rate hike failed to assure markets that President Tayyip Erdogan was abandoning his long-held unorthodox policies.

The lira touched a record low of 25.74 against the dollar at 1006 GMT, down some 27.3% this year, and was at 25.6480 at 1039 GMT.

Iran's crude output up by 350K barrels per day in 2023: IEA

Data from the International Energy Agency (IEA) show that Iran's crude oil output has increased by about 350,000 b/d since the beginning of 2023, in spite of U.S.-led sanctions targeting the country's oil sector.

"Despite tough financial restrictions, Iran managed to increase crude oil output by about 130 kb/d in 2022, to an average [2.55] mb/d," the IEA said in its latest report dubbed Oil 2023, IRNA reported.

The report argued that Iran remains a "wildcard" for world oil mar-

kets, and if it is released from sanctions, production could ramp up gradually by roughly 900 kb/d, to reach the capacity of 3.8 mb/d.

Higher exports and domestic throughput pushed Iranian crude production up to around 2.9 mb/d in May 2023, it added.

Last week, Reuters reported that Iran's crude exports and oil output hit new highs in 2023 since former U.S. president Donald Trump in 2018 exited the Iran nuclear accord and re-imposed sanctions aimed at curbing oil exports.

Minister: Completion of unfinished projects on agenda**Economy Desk**

Iranian minister of cooperatives, labor, and social welfare said that completion of unfinished projects is on the agenda.

Speaking in a ceremony for the beginning of the construction operation of a clinic in Ardal of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Solat Mortazavi noted that, with the

emphasis laid by President Ebrahim Raeisi, the completion of unfinished projects is on the agenda of the incumbent administration, according to mcls.gov.ir.

"The government had promised to create one million job opportunities last [Iranian] year, which was fulfilled, and for the current year, one million job opportunities are ex-

pected to be created."

The minister also urged speeding up the projects under construction in the cities of the province.

"The current government has taken great steps in the field of housing as Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province is one of the leading provinces in the field of housing and employment in the country," Mortazavi said.

**Iranian firms double their presence in business fairs in Moscow**

A Russian official announced that the number of Iranian companies attending business and trade exhibitions in Moscow has doubled during the first five months of 2023 compared to the same period last year.

Acting Director General of Russia's EXPOCENTRE Alexey Vyalkin said at a preliminary meeting held in Moscow that the increased presence of Iranian firms in fairs in Moscow indicates a willingness to expand trade ties with Russian trade partners, IRNA reported.

Vyalkin made the comments in a preparatory meeting ahead of the second edition of Tehran-Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) exhibition. He underlined that Iran and Russia have exchanged some important trade delegations this year to upgrade the level of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Like Iranian companies that are willing to have access to the Russian market, the Russians are after having increased presence in Iran and in other Asian countries, Vyalkin added.

He said that Moscow supports the participation of Russian companies in the Tehran EAEU exhibition slated to take place in early December this year. Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali, who was present in the meeting, invited companies in Russia and in other Eurasian states as well as companies from countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Persian Gulf region to take part in the exhibition.

Iranian, Algerian economy ministers hold talks in Vienna

The economy ministers of Iran and Algeria held talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna on Thursday, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum.

During the meeting, Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ehsan Khandouzi highlighted the policies adopted by the administration

of Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi on the development of economic relations with Muslim countries, reported Tasnim news agency.

"Given the great interest of the Algerian side, it was agreed that the topics of discussion would be thoroughly investigated by expert teams of the two countries by the

end of the current month, to increase trade and investment between the two countries," the Iranian minister said.

Iran and Algeria enjoy high potentials and capacities, especially in the economic field, to boost their level of cooperation, he emphasized.

In the meeting, the two

sides also agreed to pave the ground for the approval of topics of economic cooperation.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is an inter-governmental forum with 21 members in the Pacific Rim that promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

SUBJECT: Tender Notice

Call for International Tender No: 1402

SAIPA AZIN COMPANY, the major automotive manufacturer of seat parts in Islamic Republic of Iran intends to purchase the following Items:

Item	Commodity	Quantity
1	Isocyanate	2400T
2	Polyol	1600T

In this regard all capable and qualified suppliers and manufacturing companies are invited to participate in this Tender.

Qualified companies may collect Tender Documents from saipa azin co. with the following address:
No. 12, Golestanak Blvd, 14th km of Shahid Lashgari Road,
P.O. BOX: 13865-346 Tehran – Iran
Tel: +98 (0)44922228 / Fax: +98 (0)21 44922207

Website: www.saipa-azin.com/tender
E-Mail: info@saipa-azin.com

Tender Closing Date : July 20th, 2023

Priorities: ① Being manufacturer or major supplier
② Having experience in similar project;
Saipa azin reserves the right to accept or reject any of proposals to this Invitation to tender without further obligations.

As country battles 5.5-fold increase in obesity rates,

Iran makes strides in bariatric surgery



Social Desk

The director of the obesity clinic at Rasoul Akram Hospital, Dr. Shahab Sha-

habi, has underscored the potential of bariatric surgery to treat not only obesity but also related health complications. He esti-

mates that approximately four million Iranians are in need of this life-altering procedure. Shahabi highlighted the

escalating global obesity epidemic, and noted that advancements in laparoscopic bariatric surgery, which began in earnest

from 2000 onwards, have been swift and significant, particularly in the realm of surgical equipment and techniques, ISNA

reported.

Gastric bypass and other weight-loss surgeries – known collectively as bariatric surgery – involve making changes to your digestive system to help you lose weight. Bariatric surgery is done when diet and exercise haven't worked or when you have serious health problems because of your weight.

"Iran has made substantial strides in bariatric surgery in recent years," Shahabi said. "We have pioneered several new surgical techniques in this field."

Shahabi emphasized the importance of research and evidence-based practice in all areas of medical science, including bariatric surgery. He stressed that obesity often leads to serious health issues such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, fatty liver disease, sleep apnea, and back pain, all of which can be mitigated through successful bariatric surgery.

As a faculty member of Iran University of Medical Sciences, Shahabi point-

ed out that obesity is a global issue and a leading cause of death, which is preventable. He cited Ministry of Health statistics indicating that two-thirds of Iranians are either overweight or obese, a figure that has increased 5.5-fold over the past four decades.

Regarding insurance coverage for bariatric surgery, Shahabi explained that in Iran, the procedure is covered for individuals with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above. However, he noted that the International Federation of Bariatric Surgery lowered the BMI threshold for surgery to 35 in its 2022 constitution, reflecting the procedure's proven effectiveness.

When asked about the reversibility of bariatric surgery, Shahabi stated, "Depending on the surgical method used, there is a 10-30 percent chance of obesity recurrence, primarily due to lifestyle changes. It is crucial that patients modify their lifestyle post-surgery."

Tehran's network of beggars, working children should be confronted



Social Desk

The CEO of Tehran Municipality's Social Services and Partnerships Organization, Ahmad Ahmadi Sadr, has issued a stern call to action for responsible institutions to address the pervasive issue of child labor and begging networks in the city. This plea comes amid growing concerns over the exploitation of children's financial vulnerability and familial poverty by unscrupulous profiteers.

In a recent interview with a radio broadcast, Ahmadi Sadr lamented the current state of child labor and street organization in Tehran. He highlighted the unfortunate reality that children are often coerced into these illicit networks due to a variety of factors, including the exploitation of their families' financial hardships. Despite the fact that child labor is deemed illegal, Ahmadi Sadr noted that the punitive measures in place are insufficient to deter these practices.

● ISNA

Ahmadi Sadr referenced a report by the parliament's research center, stating that the State Welfare Organization has attempted to prevent working of the children 32 times. However, he argued that without stringent laws and with Tehran's open-door policy towards neighboring cities and countries seeking to profit from the street economy, "These efforts are doomed to fail, even if the plan is implemented 320 times."

The official further criticized the lack of a unified management system to address social damage in Tehran. He expressed frustration at the repeated implementation of the prevention plan, which has been attempted 32 times, yet the problem persists.

Ahmadi Sadr revealed that the Tehran Municipality has proposed a plan to the relevant organizations and institutions. He clarified that while it is not the Municipality's responsibility to organize labor children, they have nonetheless presented a plan aimed at identifying talent, empowering, and educating these children.

He concluded by urging that the network of beggars and child labor profiteers be confronted with the seriousness it deserves, once and for all.

Bookshop to replace a restaurant in Tehran: An auspicious oddity

Social Desk

The prominent Shafaq Book House, which had temporarily ceased its operations in Tehran's Sa'adat Abad neighborhood, is set to resume activities at its new location on Valiasr Street according to manager Mohammad-Taqi Haqbin.

Haqbin revealed that the store had been searching for a suitable new space since April, after the building's owner requested they vacate the premises. The 370-square-meter site on Valiasr Street, formerly occupied by a restaurant chain for 15 years, proved to be an ideal location, IBNA reported.

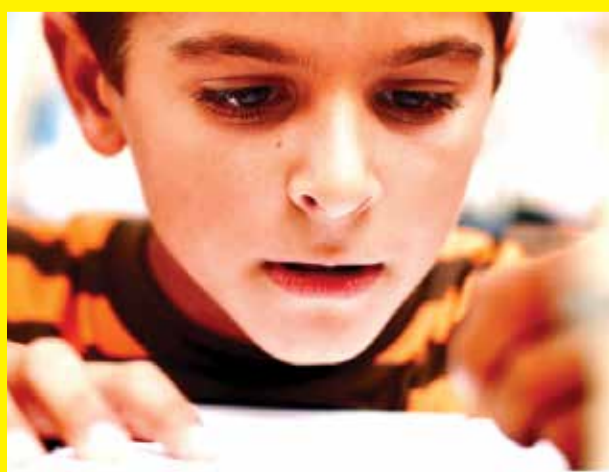
Commenting on the unusual nature of a bookstore replacing a restaurant in Iran, Haqbin noted that it is more common for bookstores to be converted into eateries or cafes. He added that preparations are already underway to equip the new Shafaq Book House location, with a grand reopening celebration for book lovers scheduled by the end of July.

Haqbin also underscored the importance of government support for the new generation of bookstores, calling for special facilities and assistance to ensure their continued success amid increasing operational expenses such as water, electricity, and gas. He pointed out that older generation booksellers often own their store locations, while younger booksellers must contend with additional rental costs.

Lastly, Haqbin provided an update on the expansion of bookstore space in the country, with an estimated 5,000 square meters being added to storefronts this year through the efforts of private sector activists.



● IBNA



American kids' math ability has gone backward by decades

American 13-year-olds continue to struggle academically in the wake of the pandemic, especially in mathematics, according to official data out recently.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a project that has been monitoring test scores since 1969, tested students in late 2022, finding reading and math scores significantly dropped compared to late 2019, according to Agence France-Presse. Average math scores have risen

significantly since the assessments first began, but have now dropped to levels last seen in 1990, with declines more pronounced among lower-performing students.

"US students are struggling across the board. Educators, policymakers, and families need to work together urgently and decisively to address this generation's learning needs," said Beverly Perdue, National Assessment Governing Board chair.

The assessment, which relies on nationally representative samples, revealed several additional concerns, including that the number of 13-year-olds who said they read for fun hit an all-time low. Just 14 percent read for fun every day, down three points from 2020 and 13 points from 2012.

Among lower-performing students, 42 percent said they never or hardly ever read for fun. Absenteeism was also up, with the percentage of students who

missed five or more days doubling since the last assessment. Research has shown shuttering schools during COVID-19 lockdowns hit those from lower-income families and ethnic minorities the hardest.

The pandemic also worsened learning outcomes, including increases in students seeking mental health services, school violence and disruption, cyberbullying, and nationwide teacher and staff shortages.

Oscars new requirements for best picture



VARIETY – The Academy's Board of Governors approved new theatrical release requirements to be eligible for the best picture Oscar beginning at the 2025 ceremony.

In addition to the one-week qualifying run in one of the six U.S. markets, beginning with movies released in 2024, a film must meet additional areas regarding its theatrical release to be nominated and win the highly coveted best picture statuette.

They include: Expanded theatrical run of seven days, consecutive or non-consecutive, in 10 of the top 50 U.S. markets, no later than 45 days after the initial release in 2024.

For late-in-the-year films with expansions after Jan. 10, 2025, distributors must submit release plans to the Academy for verification.

Release plans for late-in-the-year films must include a planned expanded theatrical run, as described above, to be completed no later than Jan. 24, 2025.

Non-U.S. territory releases can count towards two of the 10 markets.

Qualifying non-U.S. markets include the top 15 international theatrical markets plus the home territory for the film.

These changes do not affect any film contending in the 2023 calendar year and won't go into effect until Jan. 1.

● License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)
● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453
● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88930684
● ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5
● Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com
● Website: www.irandaily.ir
newspaper.irandaily.ir
irandaily@icpi.ir
● Email: irandaily@icpi.ir
● Printing House: Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Address: #22, Hosseini-Rad Alley, South of Shahid Mottahari St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran



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Iran Daily

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7322 ● Saturday, June 24, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages

Over two million people went to cinema in one month: *Data*



Arts & Culture Desk

Despite having various holidays, scorching temperatures, and the burdensome school exam season, cinemas experienced

a remarkable increase in the number of its viewers, with a 2.15 million individuals flocking to theaters during a one-month period commencing on May 22 and concluding on June 22.

According to IRNA, a total of 19 newly produced films from the present year and seven holdover films from the previous year were showcased during this timeframe, re-

sulting in an astonishing 64,876 showings. The highest-grossing film, much like the preceding two months of the ongoing year, was the comedy masterpiece entitled 'Fos-

sil,' skillfully directed by Karim Amini, captivating the attention of a remarkable 1.14 million moviegoers.

Following suit, securing the second position in the box office rankings was yet another comedy by Amini, titled 'Shahr-e Hert' (City of No Laws), making its debut on June 7. Despite its tardy release, the film managed to amass an impressive viewership of 276,000, placing it firmly in second place.

In the course of this period, 'Two-Person Song' garnered the attention of 162,000 movie enthusiasts. Notably, an intriguing observation emerged from the screenings during this timeframe, involving the film titled 'Private Meeting.' Despite its limited presence across theaters in comparison to other cinematic offerings, Omid Shams' film managed to captivate approximately 40,000 viewers, securing substantial box office revenue when juxtaposed with holdover films from the previous year.

Illegal excavators looting 2,000-year-old site in Iran



Arts & Culture Desk

Seven years ago a team of Iranian and Italian archeological experts carried out archeological excavations in an ancient site in southwestern Iran.

The site is called Kaleh Chendar and is located near the city of Izeh in Khuzestan Province.

The archeological team was able to discover a large collection of Elymai tombs, dating back 2,000 years, along with prayer platforms and the remains of residential spaces.

The archeologists could not return to this ancient site to complete their explorations. So they urgently restored everything they found and buried many parts of their findings in the ground so that they would not be damaged. But their efforts failed to keep unauthorized excavators away from the site.

These illegal excavators seized the opportunity and carried out dig-

ging operations in the region. They destroyed some of the findings of the archeologists and attempted to steal two big tomb stones which weighed around 1,000 kilograms. Shepherds and herdsmen also confirm their presence in the ancient site of Kaleh Chendar.

The ancient site has been abandoned, and there are no guard posts or petrol units around it, which paves the ground for illegal excavators to continue their activities.

The Shami statue was discovered in Kaleh Chendar some 80 years ago. One of the main surviving works of Parthian art, it is currently held in the National Museum of Iran.

Depicting a man, the bronze statue is 1.94 meters high. Some scholars believe that it was made by Greek or Roman sculptors. Others argue that it was produced in Palmyra (Syria), or by an artist from this city. It is also believed that the statue was made in Susa (in modern day Iran).

Elymais was an ancient Parthian vassal state located east of the lower Tigris River and usually considered part of the larger district of Susiana. It incorporated much of the area of the biblical region of Elam, approximately equivalent to the modern region of Khuzestan Province, Iran. The heart of the kingdom centered near the mountains of Lorestan, near modern Behbahan and Izeh, where the local dynasty left inscriptions in a form of Aramaic.

Iran, Uganda keen to expand tourism cooperation



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Uganda are demonstrating a profound interest in expanding their bilateral tourism relations, as expressed during a meeting between Muhammad Tezikuba Kisambira, the Ambassador of the Republic of Uganda to Iran, and Iranian officials.

The Ugandan envoy conveyed his belief that his country possesses exceptional capabilities to attract Iranian tourists, highlighting Uganda's pristine nature and mountainous terrains, which offer excellent opportunities for hiking and trekking.

Moreover, the Ugandan ambassador in Iran emphasized the simplified visa acquisition process in his country and assured the presence of favorable security conditions for tourists visiting Uganda.

In support of strengthening ties, Hassan Mirzakhani, a provincial official, acknowledged the influen-

tial role of 54 independent African nations in international decisions, signifying the importance of these countries in fostering political and economic relations.

He underscored the Islamic Republic of Iran's stance as a friend and supporter of African nations, striving to expand interactions through diverse frameworks.

The deputy coordinator further emphasized the substantial potential and favorable prospects for enhancing bilateral relations between Iran and Uganda.

Recognizing Markazi Province as one of the most significant provinces in Iran, he asserted its unwavering determination to promote robust ties with Africa.

To facilitate mutual cooperation, it was noted that Uganda, being a prominent nation in East Africa, could serve as a gateway for Iran to enter these markets. Moreover, Markazi Province expressed readiness to organize an exhibition showcasing the capabilities of the province in the capital of Uganda.

With hopes of finalizing a comprehensive memorandum of understanding, it is expected that the primary framework for cooperation with Uganda will be established and subsequently signed in Tehran, as expressed by Mirzakhani.

Ali Joudaki, head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that the Ugandan ambassador has demonstrated a keen interest in establishing capacity-building initiatives within the province.