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# Iran Daily



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## Two major projects go online in SW Iran

Raeisi: Gachsaran petchem complex exemplifies resilience against sanctions

### National Desk

Two major projects, Chamshir Dam and a most domestically-manufactured petrochemical complex, were put into operation in the southwest of Iran on Monday in the presence of President Ebrahim Raeisi and his delegation.

On his visit to Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad Province, Raeisi inaugurated Chamshir Dam, the largest roller-compacted concrete dam in West Asia, which according to the Ministry of Energy, is the fifth

largest dam in Iran based on reservoir volume.

With a height of 151 meters, Chamshir Dam boasts a reservoir with a massive volume of 2.3 billion cubic meters. The adjacent lake stretches 48 kilometers in length and covers an area of 51 square kilometers at the normal water level.

The hydroelectric power plant associated with the dam consists of three large units, each with a capacity of 55 megawatts (MW), and two smaller (environmental) units, each generating

5.5 MW (totaling 176 MW). These units are efficiently connected to the national grid through the 230 kilovolt (KV) Chamshir substation.

In addition to the dam, President Raeisi also inaugurated the Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex, the largest industrial project in the southwestern province.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the president said that the Gachsaran complex, which is predominantly constructed by Iranian specialists, exemplifies the nation's resilience against anti-Iran

sanctions.

Emphasizing the significance of the petrochemical industry, Raeisi highlighted its role in processing oil and gas resources, which leads to the creation of substantial job opportunities and a robust production chain for manufactured products.

The Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex offers numerous benefits including the collection of gas burners, which contributes to a reduction in environmental pollution, discourages crude oil sales, and promotes added value

through the production process, the president said.

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji also said that more than 83% of the project was carried out by skilled local workers, resulting in significant cost savings of over 269 million euros.

Notably, this national plan receives an annual supply of 1.25 million tons of ethane feed through a 90-kilometer-long pipeline from the Bid Boland Gas Refinery in the southwestern Khuzestan Province.

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Chamshir Dam, the largest roller-compacted concrete dam in West Asia

Chamshir Dam, the fifth largest dam in Iran based on reservoir volume

Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex, the largest industrial project in southwest

Petrochem complex leads to collection of gas burners



## NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian,  
Omani FMs  
meet in  
Tehran

IRNA – Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his visiting Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi discussed a range of issues during a meeting in Tehran on Monday.

Bilateral ties and the latest regional and international developments were among the issues discussed in the meeting.

Iran and Oman enjoy good relations in many fields. Oman has long been an interlocutor in interactions between the West and Iran.

Late in May, Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said paid an official visit to Tehran at the head of a high-ranking delegation. During his stay, the two countries signed four documents to improve cooperation in various sectors.

Iran:  
Direct talks  
best way to  
settle  
Japan-Russia  
dispute

ISNA – The head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations said the best way to resolve the territorial disputes between Japan and Russia is direct negotiations between the two countries.

Kamal Kharrazi made the remarks in a meeting with the Japanese Ambassador to Tehran Kazutoshi Aikawa on Monday. Kharrazi underlined that Iran is opposed to any military intervention and violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries.

Called the Kurils by Russia and the Northern Territories by Japan, the string of volcanic islands is at the heart of a decades-long feud between the two countries that has prevented them from signing a formal World War II peace treaty.

The Iranian official also described the US non-compliance with the 2015 nuclear agreement as one of the main obstacles facing the expansion of relations between Tehran and Tokyo.

Iran: US efforts to block Iran's  
assets 'banditry'

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the US attempts to block Iran's assets in other countries is an example of "banditry" and stealing the assets of the Iranian nation.

Kanaani said that Tehran does not tolerate any US move, either directly or through third countries, to seize Iran's assets.

"We expect all countries to ignore such demands from the US government and to adhere to their responsibilities regarding other countries", Kanaani told a weekly press conference on Monday.

His comments came after the French Supreme Court rejected a US request to confiscate \$247 million in Iranian assets.

On June 28, the French Court of Cassation upheld a March 2021 verdict by a court of appeal that refused the US call for confiscating Iranian assets as per a US federal court verdict in 1998.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he urged the US to refrain from any "provocative" moves in the region, especially close to the coun-



IRNA

try's borders, stressing that Tehran reserves the right to take "deterrent measures" under international law.

Kanaani said that the US government's role regarding the issue of regional security has never been peaceful and constructive. "Iran monitors with sensitivity and accuracy any illegal and unconstructive

act that affects the security of the region, and it will ... pay special attention to any provocative and illegal moves, especially near its borders," he added.

Kanaani also warned that the Islamic Republic will use its "inalienable rights" in response to the US moves.

"Iran reserves the right to take due deterrent

measures under international laws, rules, and regulations given the capability of its Armed Forces in protecting the security of borders, as well as that of navigation and aviation in the Persian Gulf region," he said.

On Friday, a senior American defense official said the US will send F-16 fighter jets to the Persian

Gulf region this weekend in a bid to "protect ships" from "Iranian seizures".

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, claimed that the F-16s will give air cover to the ships moving through the strategic Strait of Hormuz and increase the US military's visibility in the area, the Associated Press reported.

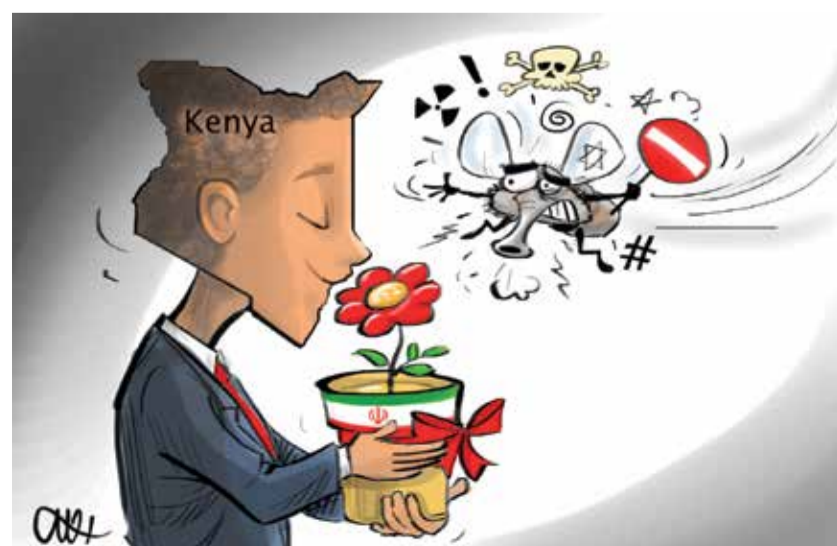
Two  
major  
projects ...

The petrochemical industry holds a vital role in Iran's non-oil economy, with petrochemical exports serving as the country's second-largest revenue source after crude oil. Currently, petrochemical exports constitute nearly 33% of Iran's non-oil export earnings.

The president also visited the nomadic area of Saqaveh Plain and was warmly welcomed by the nomads of the province.

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Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

Iran ready to back any regional  
initiative on Afghanistan: FM

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian announced Tehran's readiness to contribute to the advancement of regional initiatives on the issue of Afghanistan under the auspices of the United Nations. Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks during a meeting with Feridun Hadi Sinirlioglu, the UN secretary-general's special coordinator for the independent assessment process on Afghanistan, on Monday, Press TV reported. He said forming an inclusive government in Afghan-

istan and fighting against terrorism are important, emphasizing the need to support regional initiatives, particularly those offered by Afghanistan's neighbors, in order to resolve the challenges in the war-torn country.

"Afghanistan needs urgent solutions, and if the international community does not pay serious attention to the security challenges of this country caused by the movements of terrorist groups, its negative consequences would affect the

region and the world," the top Iranian diplomat said. Amir-Abdollahian further described Sinirlioglu's mission as "difficult," expressing hope that thanks to his experience, the UN official will have a more accurate assessment of the realities on the ground in Afghanistan and accomplish his mission successfully.

Sinirlioglu, for his part, presented his assessment regarding the developments in Afghanistan and the country's situation in various fields.

# Moscow halts grain deal after bridge to Crimea struck

Russia halted participation on Monday in the year-old UN-brokered deal which lets Ukraine export grain through the Black Sea, just hours after a blast knocked out Russia's bridge to Crimea in what Moscow called a strike by Ukrainian sea drones.

The Kremlin said there was no link between the attack and its decision to suspend the grain deal, over what it called a failure to meet its demands to implement a parallel agreement easing rules for its own food and fertilizer exports, Reuters reported.

"In fact, the Black Sea agreements ceased to be valid today," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call. "Unfortunately, the part of these Black Sea agreements concerning Russia has not been implemented so far, so its effect is terminated."

Russia said two civilians were killed and their daughter wounded in what Moscow cast as a terrorist attack on the road bridge, a major artery for Russian troops fighting in Ukraine, Reuters reported.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, the grain deal's sponsor, said he still believed Putin wanted it to continue. The Russian and Turkish foreign ministers would talk later on Monday, he told reporters.

"I hope that with this discussion, we can make some progress and continue on our way without a pause," Erdogan said.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said it would consider rejoining the grain deal if it saw "concrete results" on its demands.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy raised the prospect of resuming grain exports without Russia's participation, suggesting Kyiv would seek Turkey's support to effectively negate the Russian de facto blockade imposed last year. The blast on the road bridge to Crimea could have a direct impact on Moscow's ability to supply its troops in southern Ukraine, and reveals the vulnerability of Russia's own Black Sea infrastructure to devices such as sea-borne drones: small, fast remote-controlled boats packed with explosives.



Images showed a section of the road bridge had come down and traffic was halted in both directions, although a parallel railway bridge was still operational. Blasts were reported before dawn on the 19-km (12-mile) bridge, which Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered built after the reunification of the peninsula with

Russia in 2014. Kyiv gave no official account of the blasts but Ukrainian media quoted unidentified officials as saying Ukraine's Security Service was behind it. Ukraine has long maintained that the bridge was built illegally, and its use by Russia for military supplies makes it a legitimate target. It was last hit by a

massive explosion and fire in October.

Any interruption in exports from Russia's suspension of the Black Sea grain deal could drive up food prices across the globe, especially in the poorest countries. Ukraine and Russia are both among the world's biggest exporters of grain and other foodstuffs.



A view through a train window shows the section of a road split and sloping to one side following an alleged attack on the Crimea Bridge, that connects the Russian mainland with the Crimean peninsula across the Kerch Strait, in this still image from video taken on July 17, 2023.

● REUTERS

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israeli settlers attack Palestinian villages in WB



PRESS TV - Israeli settlers attacked several Palestinian villages and set a number of cars on fire across the West Bank on Sunday, while receiving protection from Israeli troopers. Settlers physically assaulted Palestinians during the late-night rampage at the entrance to the village of Beitin, located 5 kilometers northeast of Ramallah, broke the windshields of several cars and set fire to them, official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported citing local sources. According to the report the attack took place as Israeli soldiers stood meters away and watched on.

### Rights group urges help for migrants on Libya border



AFP - An Arab rights group called Monday for international help for 360 sub-Saharan migrants who Libyan authorities say were rescued after having been abandoned in the desert by Tunisian police on the border with Libya. The Cairo-based Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) said it welcomed Libya's reception of the migrants who had "experienced difficult humanitarian conditions" before being picked up by Libyan border guards.

## World reels from wildfires, floods as US, China discuss climate crisis



A view of smoke billowing from mountain of a raging wildfire in Tajarafe, on the Canary Island of La Palma, Spain, on July 16, 2023.

● REUTERS

Global temperatures headed towards alarming highs and extreme weather proliferated as the world's two biggest polluters, China and the United States, sought on Monday to reignite climate talks.

With scientists saying the target of keeping global warming within 1.5 degrees

Celsius of pre-industrial levels is moving beyond reach, evidence of the crisis was everywhere, Reuters reported.

A remote town in China's arid northwest, Sanbao, registered a national record of 52.2 Celsius (126 Fahrenheit).

Wildfires in Europe raged

ahead of a second heat wave in two weeks that was set to send temperatures as high as 48C. In the US, a quarter of the population fell under extreme heat advisories, partly due to a heat dome that has settled over western states.

"In many parts of the world, today is predicted to be the hottest day on record," tweeted Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organisation.

"The #ClimateCrisis is not a warning. It's happening. I urge world leaders to ACT

now." In a resumption of diplomacy on global warming between the two superpowers, U.S. climate envoy John Kerry met Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua in Beijing, urging joint action to cut methane emissions and coal-fired power.

"In the next three days we hope we can begin taking some big steps that will send a signal to the world about the serious purpose of China and the US to address a common risk, threat, challenge to all of humanity created by humans themselves," Kerry said, noting the proliferation of storms and fires.

"It is toxic for both Chinese and for Americans and for people in every country on the planet."

Prolonged high tempera-

tures in China are threatening power grids and crops and raising concerns about a repeat of last year's drought, the most severe in 60 years.

Typhoon Talim was gaining strength and due to make land at night along China's southern coast, forcing the cancellation of flights and trains in the regions of Guangdong and Hainan.

In South Korea, torrential rains left 40 people dead as river levees collapsed causing flash floods.

An anticyclone nicknamed Charon - who in Greek mythology was the ferryman of the dead - could cause Europe to break its highest recorded temperature of 48.8C, possibly on the Italian island of Sardinia.

Tourists in the Italian capi-

tal cooled themselves under giant fans set up outside the Colosseum and took turns to drink from a fountain near the Spanish Steps.

In Spain, temperatures could rise to as high as 44C in some regions. However, a forest fire on the island of La Palma in the Canaries that forced the evacuation of 4,000 people was being brought under control as temperatures fell, local official Sergio Rodriguez said in an interview on TVE.

The EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service says 2022 and 2021 were the continent's hottest summers on record.

As many as 61,000 people may have died in Europe during heatwaves last summer, with a repetition feared this season.

## Concerns about Iran's foothold in Africa



By Hassan Hanizadeh  
International affairs expert

OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

During President Ebrahim Raisi of Iran's recent visit to three African countries, namely Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, the Israeli media expressed concern and issued warnings regarding Tehran's growing influence on the African continent. Interestingly, just three

days after Raisi's trip, Israel's foreign minister also made a visit to Kenya, which further underscores the significance of the situation.

Under Raisi's government, Iran has pursued a pragmatic foreign policy over the past two years, successfully fostering regional convergence. One key development in this regard was the Tehran-Riyadh agreement, which played a pivotal role in de-escalating tensions in the region and replacing confrontation with cooperation. Through the imple-

mentation of this realistic policy of engagement, the Iranian government was able to enhance its standing and influence in the region. Concomitantly, this regional integration resulted in Israel facing increased isolation in the Middle East.

Israel had envisioned numerous plans to secure a strong foothold among regional Arab nations and expedite the so-called Abraham Agreement, which aimed to normalize relations with Muslim-majority countries of the region. However, these

endeavors have yet to bear fruit and have instead led to Israel's further isolation. It is therefore unsurprising that Israel views the current situation through the lens of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Raisi's recent tour of three African nations has paved the way for cross-continental collaboration between Iran and Africa. The African nations hold a generally favorable view of Iran and demonstrate respect toward it. This untapped continent presents a vast market ready to embrace

Iranian products. With a well-structured plan in place, the Islamic Republic has set an ambitious target of increasing its trade volume with the African continent, encompassing all 54 countries, to \$600 billion annually. This ambitious objective reflects Tehran's extensive strategies to establish a robust presence in Africa. Notably, these plans do not sit well with the Israelis, who fear that just as Tehran's policies have marginalized them in the Middle East, they may face a similar fate in Africa.

Simultaneously, Benjamin Netanyahu is grappling with internal challenges. His cabinet faces persistent protests from Israelis for its policies, with demonstrations lasting for 28 consecutive weeks. Additionally, the far-right cabinet has been subjected to extensive pressure and criticism from Western countries, particularly US President Joe Biden, further weakening its position and isolating the cabinet.

Hence, it appears that the Israeli foreign minister's prompt visit to Kenya, a

mere three days after the Iranian president's visit, stems from concerns regarding Tehran's growing influence and presence in African countries. The Israelis seek to impede Iran's cooperation with the African continent, which offers lucrative commercial and economic prospects. However, their endeavors seem to be ineffective in this realm as Iran possesses significant capabilities in energy, industry, services, and agriculture, all of which are of great interest to African nations.

# Hengam Island: Home to wild dolphins



Many people worldwide are familiar with the beautiful architecture and ancient past of Iran, but only a few know about its rich wildlife.

From cheetahs to dolphins, many animal species are endemic to Iran and can be observed while visiting the country. Hengam Island, in southern Iran, is one of the best locations for that. It's a small island famous for the many dolphins that inhabit the water part of the year. In this article we'll show you why you should definitely add Hengam Island to your travel list.

**Where is Hengam Island?** Hengam is a tiny island in the Persian Gulf, close

to Qeshm Island, Hormuzgam Province, two kilometers from Shibderaz village and Kandaloop port. Hengam extends in an area of 36.6km, so approximately the same size as Hormuz Island. However, the two islands are very different, surfiran.com wrote.

Hengam has only two small villages and almost no cars, which makes it particularly peaceful. With crystal clear waters and sandy beaches, the island's coast is a paradise for those who want to enjoy the beauty of the sea. In Iran, Hengam is well-known for one thing in particular: its dolphins. The sea shore hosts several species of dolphins that come for mating from fall

to spring. Among these species, the most commonly found in Hengam waters is the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, a small-sized dolphin with a long rostrum.

This species is unfortunately listed as "near threatened" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These dolphins usually live in small groups of five to 15 individuals, and are very playful. That's why they can be easily observed in the bay of Hengam.

If you decide to go on a boat excursion in Hengam to observe dolphins, here are a few facts to have in mind: Dolphins are talkative. They communicate with

a large variety of sounds and each dolphin has a distinctive whistle.

To breathe, dolphins need to come to the surface, but they have the ability to hold their breath for up to 10 minutes.

Like apes and humans, bottlenose dolphins are one of the rare species to be able to recognize themselves in a mirror. Research has demonstrated that they are highly intelligent animals.

When they sleep, dolphins turn off half of their brains and keep one eye open to stay alert and regulate breathing.

The beauty of Hengam resides in the fact that it has remained widely untouched, even though things are changing at a

fast pace. However, until now, most parts of the island are uninhabited, leaving plenty of space for the fauna and flora to flourish.

Besides dolphins, one of the most iconic animals of the island is its endemic gazelle. This species is called Jabeer, or Chinkara, also known as the Indian gazelle. This species can indeed be found in India, and also in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This beautiful animal is of small size, usually a 20 kilogram gazelle is about 65cm long. Both males and females have horns.

These gazelles live in arid regions, and thus are able to live on very few plants and water. Not only are they capable of not drink-

ing for long periods of time, but they also have the capacity to drink salty water. They are pretty shy and avoid human habitations, but in Hengam, you can easily observe them up close, as they roam freely in nature, far from houses and constructions. Other notable animal species on Hengam Island are the Egyptian lizard, and the Hawksbill Sea Turtles, also present on the shores of Qeshm Island, where they come to lay eggs from April to early June.

But even during the day, Hengam's shores can shine: on "Silver Beach," one of its most famous beaches, minerals make the sand grey, shiny and heavy. Unfortunately, in-

creasing visits from tourists and lack of protection have caused a decrease in the amount of silver sand.

## When and how to see dolphins on Hengam Island?

Dolphins are one of the main attractions of Hengam Island, a lovely spectacle. They are visible in Hengam as soon as the temperatures drop, around October, and until late March. The best time of the year to watch dolphins is in winter, during the mornings, when the probability of seeing pods is high. Of course, stay flexible as it also depends on the weather. In case of strong winds making a lot of waves, it's usually not possible to see dolphins.

## A great era in Iranian history

One of the characteristics of Iranian history is its clearly discernable periodization into large distinct sections, which are easily distinguished from one another and each of which displays a unique character. In the preceding millennia, individual periods had already been terminated or inaugurated by a national collapse. In this light we have to imagine the entry of the old Aryan population into the northeastern regions, a process which, together with the teachings of Zoroaster, gave the plateau for the first time a historically concrete form. In

a similar way the rise of the Median and then Persian-Achaemenid state signified an inner transformation, even if it triggered changes only within the Iranian population. Even more evident is the caesura introduced by Alexander the Great's invasion. In this case an element intruding from outside appropriated political power and was determined to make a bid for cultural leadership as well. It required a long, hard political struggle for the Iranian people to create their own national government in the guise of the Parthian state.

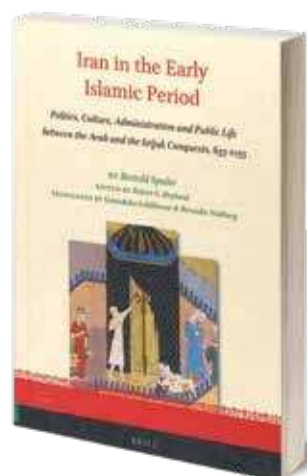
The demise of the Parthian state and the onset of Sassanid domination (224 CE) brought about another important internal change for Iran. This transformation had a linguistic dimension and was linked to the restoration of Zoroastrianism, which was able to hold its ground against Christianity and Manichaeism, and yet it did not, and did not wish to, eliminate the linguistic and cultural inheritance of the past in terms of language and culture, as had been the case in previous political ruptures. The Arab invasion of the lands settled by the Ira-

nians was therefore not a novelty within the context of the history of the Iranian plateau. Alexander's Macedonians and Greeks had been foreigners who had already succeeded in taking possession of Iran; The Iranian people had already therefore had to hold their own, nationally as well as culturally. However, the penetration of the Arabs meant more for Iran than previous ones. For the first and only time in the course of their history the Persians gave up the true heart of their oriental culture (and indeed any

culture): they gave up their religion in order to follow the teaching of the Prophet Moḥammad (PBUH). Thus, the great era in Iranian history that took place in the seventh century became the most important and truly decisive one in the long history of this people and its country. It divides the Middle Iranian period from the new Iranian one. It left its mark on the face of the people, and by asserting themselves as a national unit and an independent cultural entity, the Iranians had to re-define and delineate anew their whole being in the

symbols of this new faith of the God.

Such a renewal process does not happen in one day. The Persian nation needed several centuries in order to find its new self, to create a space for itself in the framework of the Islamic nations, and to find entry into the emerging community on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, whose constitutive element was Islam. By following this religion, Iran was able to spread parts of its ancient culture in a new guise far beyond the confines of the Persian language area.



The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, 'Chronological Overview of Political History', from a book entitled, 'Iran in the Early Islamic Period', written by Bertold Spuler, published by Brill.

# Déjà vu in Bahrain: Iran U21 beats Italy to regain world volleyball crown



Iranian players and coaching staff celebrate after the 3-2 victory over Italy in the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship final in Manama, Bahrain, on July 16, 2023.

● FIVB

## Sports Desk

Bahrain proved to be the promised land for the Iranian under-21 volleyball. Four years after Behrouz Ataei – now in charge of the seniors' team – had led Iran to a five-set victory over Italy in the Bahraini city of Riffa for a maiden title, the Asian powerhouse again came from behind to beat the European giant 3-2 (25-20, 23-25, 23-25, 25-16, 15-9)

to lift a second trophy at the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship in capital Manama. Iranian opposite Amirmohammad Golzadeh rounded off his MVP performance at the event by chipping in 20 points, while outside-hitter Pouria Hossein Khanzadeh, who joined the team midway through the competition after his Volleyball Nations League duty, contributed with 18

points – including five aces. Shayan Sephehrifard also finished in double figures for Iran, scoring 12 points. Alessandro Bovolenta had a game-high 21 points for the Italians, with Mattia Orioli finishing on 17. "We are a very good team. We know our potential, and some of our stars can join the senior team," Golzadeh said after the game. "I had also received the MVP award with the junior

team and now my goal is to get the prize with the senior team, along with the world title at the highest level. You cannot gain anything without pain," Golzadeh told Volleyball World. The Iranian young gun, who was the leading scorer in Manama with a total of 136 points – 107 successful spikes, 11 blocks and 18 aces – also took the Best Opposite prize and was joined by two other teammates in

the Dream Team.

Arshia Behnejad was named the Best Setter, while Mobin Nasri was the joint Best Outside Hitter – alongside Italian Orioli. Gabriele Laurenzano took the Best Libero prize, with his fellow Italian Filippo Bartolucci and Bulgaria's Lazar Bouchkov sharing the Best Middle Blocker award. The triumph in Manama came as a consolation for the Iranian fans, who had to

watch their national team suffer 10 defeats in 12 outings and finish third from bottom in the 16-team table of the preliminary round in the Volleyball Nations League last week. "This victory shows the strength of the Iranian volleyball," head coach Gholamreza Momeni-Moqaddam said after the match, while he was full of praise for his players. "Winning the world title is a great honor for the country and I'm proud of my players for that. They worked hard for two years and were rewarded for their relentless efforts. When you're trailing 2-1 against a team like Italy it would be so hard to get back in the game but that's what my players did, which indicates the determination and confidence of the team. They are the future of the Iranian volleyball," added Momeni-Moqaddam, whose team was the only unbeaten side in Manama.

For the Italians, who stepped into the competition as the defending champions, the silver in Manama was the eighth U21 World Championship medal. Earlier in the day, Bulgaria – beaten by Italy in the semifinals – came out on top against Argentina in straight sets (25-22, 28-26, 25-19) to claim the bronze medal.

## Iran crowned Asian U20 Greco-Roman champion



Amir-Reza Akbari (top) and Mohammad Morad Ashiri won two gold medals as Iran claimed the Greco-Roman title at the Asian U20 Wrestling Championships in Amman, Jordan.

● iwfiir

## Sports Desk

A clean sweep of 10 medals saw Iran march to the Greco-Roman crown at the Asian U20 Wrestling Championships in Amman, Jordan.

Iran bagged five gold medals as well as a silver and four bronzes to dominate the final standing with 205 points, followed by Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which tallied 180 and 170 points respectively.

On Sunday, Amir-Reza Akbari brought the curtain down on glittering campaign for Iran by outmuscling Uzbekistan's Damirkhon Rakhmatov 11-1 for the ultimate prize in the 97kg weight class.

Mohammad Morad Ashiri had won a first gold of the day for the country, thanks to a 7-0 hammering of Kyrgyzstan's Akyl Sulaimanov in the 60kg final.

In a first final showdown of the afternoon featuring the Iranian and Uzbekistani wrestlers, Ahoura Bouveiri came out on top against Ilyosjon Abdinazarov by a 6-1 victory to grab the 67kg gold. Meanwhile, Mohammad-Mehdi Miri had to settle for a silver in the 72kg contests after suffering a 4-2 defeat against Abdullo Aliev – also from Uzbekistan.

Yasin Yazdi bounced back from a last-four defeat against Kazakhstan's Islam Yevloyev to beat Zhen Nian Tian of the Chinese Taipei 9-0 and finish his campaign with a consolation bronze in the 82kg event.

Sunday's results came after the Iranians had collected double golds and three bronzes on the preceding night. Abolfazl Choubani outclassed Nurassyl Amanaly of Kazakhstan in the 87kg final, while Fardin Hedayati made a quick work of China's Wenhao Jiang, winning 11-1 for the 130kg gold.

A 9-0 victory over Turkmenistan's Abduvali Rahimbayev sealed the joint 55kg bronze for Ali Ahmadi Vafa, while Reza Qeytasi defeated the host's Hassan Saleem Naghouj 10-0 to leave the Jordanian capital with a 63kg bronze.

Alireza Abdevali claimed a third bronze for Iran in Amman, courtesy of a win against Kazakhstan's Dias Kaltay in the 77kg class.

# Alcaraz's 'dream' Wimbledon can signal changing of the guard

AFP – Carlos Alcaraz believes his "dream" Wimbledon triumph against Novak Djokovic can signal a changing of the guard in men's tennis.

Alcaraz ended Djokovic's run of four successive Wimbledon titles with an epic 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 victory in a final for the ages on Sunday.

The 20-year-old wore down Djokovic over four hours and 42 minutes of unrelenting drama on Centre Court, clinching his first Wimbledon crown and the second major title of his career.

After two decades of Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal dominating the sport, Alcaraz says his victory could be the start of a new era. "It's a dream. I'm 20. I didn't experience many moments like this. Making history like I did today, it's the happiest moment of my life," Alcaraz said. "Beating Novak at his best on this stage, making history, being the guy to beat him after 10 years unbeaten on



Carlos Alcaraz holds aloft the Wimbledon trophy after beating Novak Djokovic in the men's singles final in London, Britain, on July 16, 2023.

● ALBERTO PEZZALI/AP

this court is amazing for me. "It's great for the new generation to see me beating him and make them think they are capable of doing it as well. It's great for me, and the young players as well." When Djokovic won his first major at the Australian Open in 2008, Alcaraz was still three months shy of his fifth birthday. But with Federer retired and Nadal close to the end

of his glittering career, Alcaraz has emerged as Djokovic's biggest challenger. Alcaraz, who won his maiden Grand Slam title at the US Open last year, has replaced the Serb at the top of the world rankings and his Wimbledon victory may hasten the emergence of a new generation to replace the "Big Three". "Beating Novak, winning Wimbledon is something I dreamed about since I start

playing tennis," Alcaraz said. Djokovic was aiming for a record-equalling eighth Wimbledon title and could also have matched Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24 Grand Slam singles crowns. Instead, the 36-year-old leaves Wimbledon licking his wounds after being over-powered by the relentless Alcaraz. In an ominous warning to Djokovic, Alcaraz said his

All England Club win can provide a foundation for more success when they meet again.

## 'I grew up a lot'

"Probably before today I didn't think I was ready to beat Djokovic in five sets in an epic match like this, to stay good physically and mentally against a legend like Djokovic," Alcaraz. "I will remember this moment in other Grand Slams and think I am ready to play five sets against him. It probably changed my mind a bit." Alcaraz's previous clash with Djokovic had ended in defeat in the French Open semi-finals in June, when the Spaniard fell apart after suffering stress-related cramping. Learning from that painful loss, he held his nerve superbly this time. "I am such a different player since the French Open. I grew up a lot. I took lessons from that match. I prepared a little bit differently mentally," he said. "I handled the nerves better than I did at the French

Open. I fought until the last ball. It was a long match. The mental part allowed me to stay there for five sets.

"If I had lost the second set probably I couldn't have got the trophy, I would probably have lost in straight sets. That gave me a lot of motivation." Djokovic's frustration at Alcaraz's stubborn resistance boiled over when he smashed his racquet against the net post after being broken in the final set.

But the Serb had no complaints about the defeat and even labelled Alcaraz a combination of himself, Federer and Nadal. Asked about that glowing tribute, the ultra-confident Alcaraz said: "It's crazy that Novak say that. But I consider myself a really complete player. "I have the shots, the strength physically, the strength mentally. "Probably he's right. But I don't want to think about it. I'm the full Carlos Alcaraz, let's say."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Skoda returns to Iran's car market



**INTELLINEWS** – Cars made by Volkswagen's wholly-owned Czech subsidiary Skoda are set to re-appear on Iran's auto market after a four-decade hiatus. Five Skoda models are slated for Iranian showrooms following a revision of the Islamic Republic's car import regulations to allow imports of both used and new cars, Asbe Bokhar magazine reported on Sunday.

## Russia consents to Turkmenistan's joining INSTC



**TASS** – Russia gave its consent to Turkmenistan's accession to the agreement on the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The corresponding order was signed by Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. The International North-South Transport Corridor is a multimodal network spanning 7,200 kilometers of ship, rail, and road routes. It is designed to provide the shortest multimodal transportation route linking the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian and Baltic seas.

## Iran, Azerbaijan economic officials hold talks in Astara



**TASNIM** – The heads of the Iran and Azerbaijan Joint Economic Commission met in Astara on Monday to discuss bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest. Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash and First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev held talks as the heads of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Commission in the border city of Astara.

## Focus on renewables to help Iran overcome power shortage



## Economy Desk

Iran is among the top 10 countries in the realm of renewable energies, the chair of the Iranian Electricity Industry Syndicate

said Monday. Speaking at the second Renewable Energy Development Conference in Industries in Tehran, Payam Baqeri highlighted Iran's impressive capabilities in

renewables including its abundant solar radiation and wind corridors. "Apart from these advantages, the significance of embracing renewable energy lies in its clean and sustainable nature. To harness its potential fully, this form of energy should be maximally developed," Baqeri added, according to IRNA. However, with a predominant focus on thermal power plants, Iran's electricity portfolio faces an imbalance in its development. The shortage of gas in this sector poses a significant obstacle. Presently, Iran is grappling with imbalances in the electricity and gas sectors, which adversely affect the country. Baqeri stressed that the development of renewable energies offers a viable solution to overcome these problems. "By prioritizing the expansion of renewable energy sources, Iran can effectively minimize the electricity imbalance."

He regarded energy as the driving force behind the country's economic growth and suggested that renewable energies are the catalyst for overcoming electricity imbalances. 155 solar parks to be built. Addressing the same conference, a deputy of Iran's Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced plans to build five specialized solar parks in every one of Iran's 31 provinces in the near future with the primary objective of promoting renewable energies. Fathali Mohammadzadeh highlighted the ISIPO's commitment to creating a conducive environment for the development of renewable energy sources within industrial parks. Mohammadzadeh further pointed out that the rising costs associated with fossil fuels have led to an increase in expenses related to the construction of thermal power plants.

"Conversely, the construction costs of renewable energy plants have reached their lowest point," he added. In light of these circumstances, he stated, "Our endeavors are currently focused on generating 5,000 units of solar electricity across all industrial parks within the country."

1,000 MW solar plant under construction. The head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Electricity Efficiency Organization also took the floor to announce that Iranian Industries were constructing the largest renewable power plant. Mahmoud Kamani said an industrial company had undertaken the construction of the solar plant with a capacity of 1,000 megawatts. "The power plant would serve as a significant milestone in the development of renewable energy facilities nationwide," he added.

## Iran raises August light crude price to Asia

## Economy Desk

Iran has set the official selling price (OSP) of its Iranian Light crude oil grade for Asian buyers at \$3.15 a barrel above the Oman/Dubai average for August, an industry source with knowledge of the matter said on Monday. The June price is up 15 cents from the previous month, Reuters reported. According to the coun-

try's Seventh Economic Plan (2023-27), Iran's oil production capacity will reach from 3,838,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) to 4,450,000 bpd when the plan gets fully implemented. Hence, Iran's oil production volume will witness a 16-percent hike in this period. The Iranian Oil Ministry believes that the oil production capacity is a bargaining tool in both political and economic relations.

When President Ebrahim Raisi took office in August 2021, Iran managed to increase its oil production capacity to 3,838,000 bpd, which is more than that of the pre-sanctions period in spite of the tough sanctions imposed against the country. Iran's proven oil production capacity will reach 4,250,000 bpd while gas condensate production will hit 804,000 barrels per day.



SHANA

## Iran's global share of halal products below 1%



IRNA

## Economy Desk

Iran's stake in the global halal mega market stands at less than one percent, indicating a significant shortfall in this sector and substantial setbacks, the head of Iran's Institute of Standards said Monday. Mehdi Eslampanah added that previously, only

30 halal certifications had been granted in Iran. However, since the current government took office two years ago, over 1,000 halal certifications have been issued for a wide range of Iranian products, goods, and services, IRNA reported. Eslampanah said the Institute of Standards, which deals with stan-

dardization and certification, had placed considerable emphasis on marketing within the thriving halal market. The issuance of the halal certification aims to streamline the participation of companies and producers in target markets, he said. Eslampanah pointed to Iran's annual export of

halal products to Malaysia, which amounts to \$50 million. "With the necessary conditions in place, reaching an annual export value of \$500 million to Malaysia is within close reach," he said. Halal products have a dedicated customer base with sufficient purchasing power, and their export growth would undoubtedly contribute to Iran's economy.

## Iran's three-month steel output up 10%: ISPA

The statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) indicate that the country's steel production registered a 10.5 percent growth in volume in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 22) compared to the same period last year. According to the ISPA, 9,478,000 tons of steel were produced in the country in the first quar-

ter of the current calendar year, reported Tasnim News Agency. In the said period, the total production volume of crude steel products recorded a five percent growth, and the production of sponge iron registered an 8.2 percent hike compared to a year earlier. The report added that 5,957,000 tons of steel products were produced from March 21 to June 22.

Also, 3,413,000 tons and 2,543,000 tons of lengthy and flat steel products were produced in the country in the first quarter of the current Iranian year, respectively. According to the statistical report of the association, sponge iron producers produced 9,974,000 tons of this product in those three months, showing an 8.2 percent hike compared to the same period last year.



ISNA

# Iran's immense health-tourism potential

## Social Desk

Iran's health tourism sector has generated one billion dollars in foreign currency income, according to the vice president of the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education.

Speaking at an international conference and exhibition of hospitals and medical centers held on Monday, Saeed Karimi highlighted the advanced state of Iranian medicine, which he described as the best in the region, according to IRNA. "Currently, no patient is sent abroad to be treated, but we receive millions of foreigners in the country every year," he said.

Karimi noted that Iran has approximately 1,100 hospitals, 700 of which are state-run, and 250 are licensed to accept and provide medical services to international patients.

"We have 155,000 hospital beds that provide services to patients with the best equipment and treatment staff," he said, adding that the occupancy rate of Iran's hospitals is 70 percent, and the other 30 percent should be allocated to health tourism.

The deputy minister of health also mentioned the recent opening of two modern mega-hospitals — Mahdi and Ghadir — and the ongoing construction of similar facilities in major cities. These hospitals, he said, will not only provide treatment but also operate in the field of health care and health education, and can cater to foreign patients. The official emphasized that the majority of foreign patients' referrals are related to issues of infertility, obstetrics, gynecology, ophthalmology, cosmetology, orthopedics, and transplantation.

Mohammad Ali Mohseni Bandpei, a member of the parliament, echoed Karimi's sentiments, citing the country's specialized and experienced medical personnel, lower medical tariffs, and high-quality services as key advantages in attracting health tourists. Mohseni Bandpei also highlighted the government's efforts to boost health tourism, stating, "Within the country's first six development plans, health tourism did not have a strong presence, but in the bill



proposed by the government in the seventh plan, we have dedicated a special chapter to tourism."

He further stressed the need for domestic insurance organizations to increase their insurance relations with different countries that are going to send health tourists to Iran. "The establishment of insurance coverage can create a double incentive to treat foreign patients in Iran," he said.

Mohseni Bandpei also

revealed plans to attract more than 15 million tourists from different countries and for different purposes by the end of the Seventh Development Plan. He noted that Iran has a lot of potential in the field of health, having exported one billion Euros in the pharmaceutical sector, and can also be successful in the field of health tourism. Mehdi Karimi, head of the Policy Council of the Health Tourism Development Center of Islamic

Countries, also spoke at the conference, stating that Iran, despite sanctions, has been able to launch a good medical system in the West Asian region due to the country's size and facilities. He further emphasized the importance of developing medical centers and hospital cities for the growth of health tourism, noting that it could generate income equivalent to one-third to half of Iran's revenue from the sale of oil and gas condensate.

## Agricultural water consumption down by 27% in Lake Urmia catchment



IRNA

## Social Desk

Iran's wetlands protection plan has led to a significant reduction in water and chemical input consumption in Lake Urmia water catchment region, according to the sustainable agriculture coordinator of the plan, Mohammad Reza Akbari.

Agriculture, a major consumer of the nation's water resources, has been a particular concern in the catchment area of Lake Urmia. The wetlands protection plan, backed by the Department of the Environment and financially supported by the Japanese government since 2013, has been implemented in the provinces of West and East Azarbaijan with the goal of mitigating the conflict between agriculture and wetlands, IRNA reported.

The plan, which also covers satellite wetlands, has been carried out with the help of local communities, companies, and those involved in agriculture at the provincial level.

"To implement the establishment of sustainable agriculture in the target villages, capacity expansion measures should be carried out and followed by benefiting from cooperative approaches of farmers' trust to reduce water consumption at the farm level," Akbari said.

From 2013 to 2020, the plan covered 183 villages in West and East Azarbaijan, making changes at the local community and farm levels. After successful experiences in these villages, the plan expanded to Fars and Khuzestan provinces in 2022, adding 39 villages in West and East Azarbaijan, and 16 villages each in Fars and Khuzestan provinces. Since the project's inception, the Agricultural Engineering and Technical Research Institute of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad has been monitoring and evaluating data based on field observations of the farmers.

"We have seen an average of 27 percent reduction in irrigation water consumption, and between 25 percent and 40 percent reduction in chemical input consumption," Akbari said. Despite these reductions, agricultural production has increased by 16 percent, demonstrating the effectiveness of the sustainable agriculture practices implemented by Iran's Wetlands Protection Plan.

## Iran, Tajikistan aim to enhance cooperation in health sector



ISNA

## Social Desk

In a step towards bolstering collaboration on healthcare, the Minister of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education of Iran engaged in a joint meeting with his Tajik counterpart. The meeting, which aimed at promoting bilateral cooperation in health indicators growth, witnessed discussions between Bah-

ram Einollahi and Jamoliddin Abdullozoda, Tajikistan's Minister of Health, according to ISNA.

During the meeting, Einollahi highlighted the remarkable progress made by Iran's health sector following its Islamic Revolution. He emphasized the establishment of a comprehensive health network spanning all regions of the country. Furthermore, Einollahi un-

derscored Iran's successful efforts in eradicating polio through extensive nationwide vaccination programs. He emphasized that Iran possesses valuable experience in controlling infectious diseases, which can be shared with Tajikistan. Aware of the challenges posed by years of sanctions, the Iranian minister asserted that these obstacles have not only failed to impede progress but have actually spurred it.

In the field of health, Iran has developed short-term, medium-term, and long-term plans for specific engagements with Tajikistan, Einollahi pointed out. Moreover, he emphasized the need to streamline the procurement of Iranian

medicines in Tajikistan, which currently faces unusual pricing and hurdles due to bureaucratic inefficiencies. By removing these obstacles, Iranian medicines can be made available to the people of Tajikistan at reasonable prices.

Einollahi further emphasized that Iran possesses advanced laboratories and highly skilled scientists, whose expertise can contribute to improving health indicators in Tajikistan. Notably, Iran's scientific community has made strides in the development of highly advanced drugs, particularly in the area of tuberculosis therapy. Abdullozoda, the Minister of Health and Wellness of Tajikistan, shared his ad-

miration for Iran's achievements in healthcare during the meeting. He noted that his visit to Iran had provided valuable insights into various aspects of health, healthcare, and treatment. Tajik minister particularly highlighted the significance of dental and laboratory equipment, which he deemed worthy of attention. Expressing a desire to capitalize on Iran's experiences, Abdullozoda emphasized the potential for the transformation of Tajikistan's health sector through the exchange of Iranian expertise. He suggested organizing re-training courses for Tajikistan's medical specialists conducted by Iranian professors and exploring the

export of medicines and medical equipment from Iran to Tajikistan.

Currently, Tajikistan's medicine requirements are met through agreements with 11 Iranian pharmaceutical companies. Abdullozoda proposed further cooperation in pharmaceuticals, mentioning the potential for sharing Tajikistan's herbal and healing medicines with Iranian pharmaceutical specialists.

He also acknowledged Iran's self-sufficiency in meeting its medicinal needs and expressed Tajikistan's need for Iran's cooperation in implementing international agreements to address its medicine requirements.

## PIC OF THE DAY

Children are making the most of these scorching summer days. The beautiful, historic Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan has turned into a lively oasis for kids to splash and swim in the large pond. Their joyful laughter and endless memories created here will be cherished forever.



HADIEH MANIYAN/ISNA

## Global Release of 'Zalava' on Amazon



**HONAR ONLINE** – The Iranian film 'Zalava,' directed by Arsalan Amiri, has been released worldwide on the Amazon platform, along with its online release on domestic platforms such as Filimo and Namava. Produced by Samira and Rouhollah Baradari, the film has received significant acclaim, winning three Crystal Simorgh awards and garnering 10 Crystal Simorgh nominations at the 31st Fajr Film Festival. The exclusive distribution rights for the film in the United States and Canada have been acquired by Corinth Films, while Amazon has secured the rights to showcase the film on their Prime Video platform. Denmark's LevelK has acquired the global distribution rights for the film, which has also earned prestigious accolades including the FIPRESCI Prize and the Grand Critics Award at the 2021 Venice Film Festival. 'Zalava' has made its mark in the international film festival circuit, with screenings at more than 50 renowned festivals including Toronto, Rotterdam, Karlovy Vary, Gothenburg, and Sitges. The film is scheduled to be released in 14 additional countries later this year, further expanding its global reach and audience.

## 'Still Streaming' exhibition to open in Tehran



**ILNA** – The 'Still Streaming' exhibition, a retrospective of the reflection of the Ashura movement in contemporary visual arts, will open at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art on July 19, coinciding with the beginning of the lunar month of Muharram. The exhibition will feature 80 artworks by 35 artists, including pieces from the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art's collection and artworks from the art community. Art enthusiasts can visit the exhibition until September 13. 'Still Streaming' is a research-oriented event that presents this collection for observation and examination, free from any prejudice, to provide a platform for reinterpretation and contemplation.

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# Curtains down on 16th National Festival of Youth Music

## Winners announced

### Arts & Culture Desk

The 16th National Festival of Youth Music concluded with an online ceremony on Sunday evening, where the distinguished winners were announced and commended. The festival, which showcases the talent and dedication of young musicians, received a total of 1,792 applicants this year, including 652 females and 1,140 males. In his message to the festival, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, the Minister of

Culture and Islamic Guidance, emphasized the significance of music in Iran's cultural heritage. He praised the commitment of pioneering artists and the enthusiasm of young people in preserving and advancing this ancient art form, IRNA reported. "Our young artists, as the builders of our dear country's future, possess remarkable qualities such as love, enthusiasm, freshness, and purity," Esmaeili remarked. He highlighted the crucial role of music masters and the legacy bearers in guiding and nurturing the talents of these young musicians, ensuring the future progress of Iranian music. Hamidreza Ardalan, a festival official, provided detailed statistics about the different sections of the festival. This year, the festival included three sections: regional music, classical music, and *dastgahi* music. In the regional music section, 403



participants from 21 regions showcased their talents in 100 instrumental and vocal branches, while the *dastgahi* music section saw the participation of 1,112 applicants in various categories, including vocal and instrumental performances, composition, and mastery of the entire musical system. The classical music section attracted 277 applicants, demonstrating their skills across 12 branches. A total of 313 participants were selected as winners, with 192 winners in the regional music section, 93 in the *dastgahi* music section, and 28 in the classical music section. Among the winners, 76 were female and 237 were male, reflecting the diversity and talent within the young music community. During the event, Mah-

moud Salari, the Deputy Culture Minister, emphasized the importance of youthfulness and innovation in the performances and content of the National Youth Music Festival. He highlighted that the festival shapes the future vision and exploration of Iranian music, with the emerging artists becoming influential instructors and custodians of the Iranian music heritage. Mohammad Allahyari, the Director General of the Music Office, commended the significant number of young participants and enthusiasts in the festival. He noted that the festival not only provides a platform for young individuals but also allows experienced professors to receive valuable feedback on their works, contributing to their

growth and development. Representing the jury panel, Saeed Tehrani Zadeh and Marjan Qanbari-Mehr praised the progress and improvement they witnessed in the performances throughout the years. Tehrani Zadeh emphasized the festival's role as a producer and initiator, nurturing talented musicians who will shape the future of Iranian music. Ghanbari-Mehr expressed satisfaction and hope in observing changes in age criteria and increased abilities among participants, reflecting the festival's positive growth. The National Festival of Youth Music continues to play a pivotal role in promoting and nurturing young talents, shaping the future of Iranian music with its youthful energy, innovation, and artistic excellence.



# Iran to host 16th Mariwan Int'l Street Theater Festival

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is set to host the 16th Mariwan International Street Theater Festival from October 3 to 9, marking its return after a one-year break. Artists from Iran and around the world have been invited to participate in this event, announced Rahman Houshyari, the president of the festival. Reflecting on the previous year, Houshyari shared, "In late August and early September, we announced the festival's call for participation, which resulted in an impressive influx of about 170 submissions. These submissions were meticulously assessed and selected across various categories." Elaborating on the festival's structure, Houshyari explained, "This artistic event will encompass six exciting sections: Open, Traditional-Ceremonial, Children and Adolescents, Inclusive (specifically designed for individuals with disabilities), Innovative Performances, and a special section dedicated to Sacrifice and Mar-

tyrdom." Each section's works have undergone a thorough review and selection process led by a distinguished three-member jury. Emphasizing a notable feature of this edition, Houshyari expressed that in the international section of the 16th festival, "we have witnessed

an extraordinary level of enthusiasm among participating groups, particularly in producing exceptional works exclusively for the prestigious event." "We anticipate the presentation of approximately 11 performances from a diverse array of countries including Mexico, Italy, Mongolia, Egypt,

Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Afghanistan, Qatar, and Iraq. The detailed names and information of these groups will be announced separately." Houshyari stated that this year, his team has extended a special invitation to around 10 festival organizers from various parts of the world to witness

the extraordinary works showcased during the event. The aim is to facilitate artistic exchange and introduce remarkable Iranian groups to other countries. He added, "In recognition of the performance groups that expressed their interest in participating last year, we have

decided not to issue a new call for submissions this year. However, in the 'Festival of Festivals' section, we will proudly host selected groups from other renowned festivals." "Our approach in inviting artists for selection and judging their works has been to include experienced individuals, preferably with academic qualifications, while also maintaining a youth-oriented perspective to ensure a fresh and vibrant artistic atmosphere." Concluding his remarks, Houshyari underlined, "Mariwan, though a small city nestled in the westernmost part of the country, may not possess the same scale of facilities, equipment, and executive infrastructure as other cities. Nevertheless, the people and festival organizers, fueled by their love and enthusiasm for this extraordinary artistic event and their commitment to hosting outstanding performance groups, spare no effort each year to provide the best possible cultural, artistic, and tourism environment for its resounding success."

