



EXCLUSIVE

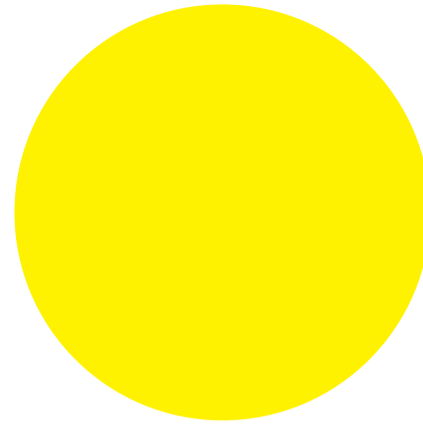
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Iran to welcome Vietnamese speaker



By **Abed Akbari**
CEO of Tehran International Studies and Research Institute

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

The President of the National Assembly of Vietnam Vuong Dinh Hue leads a high-level parliamentary delegation on an official visit to Iran from August 8 to August 10 at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf. The visit of Speaker Hue to Iran holds significant impor-

tance as it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Iran. It demonstrates Vietnam's regard and desire to strengthen relations with Iran, in particular, and with Middle Eastern countries, in general. Vuong Dinh Hue has held important positions within Vietnam's political system such as the minister of finance, head of the Economic Commission of the Communist Party of Vietnam's Central Committee, deputy prime minister, and secretary of the Hanoi Party Committee.

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Iran indigenizes parts manufacturing for pressure-boosting stations: IGTC

Economy Desk

Iran is self-sufficient in manufacturing 750 main parts of gas pressure-boosting stations, announced managing director of the Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC). Speaking at a press conference on Saturday, Gholam-Abbas Hosseini pointed to new technology-based firms' cooperation with IGTC, adding that the country has also indigenized manufacturing two types of gas turbines, Shana reported. The IGTC is making the optimum use of homegrown equipment and products, underlined the IGTC head. According to the official,

the company is now using Iranian-made oil and air and gas filters. Stating that the country's gas transmission capacity is now at one billion cubic meters per day, Hosseini added that 50 percent of the repair operations have been completed, as the IGTC is preparing for stable gas transmission during winter days.

"From the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21) to August 1, a sum of 98 billion cubic meters of gas have been transferred to consumers, which indicates an increase of four billion cubic meters compared to the corresponding period of the preceding year."

Sri Lanka FM invites Iranian investors

Speaking at a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart in Tehran on Saturday, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka Ali Sabry said his country is eager to attract investment from Iran, praising Iran for its progress under the pressure of sanctions. Describing his country as the gateway to East Asia, Sabry said, "I invite the Iranian companies to pay attention to Sri Lanka. Two-thirds of growth in the future will happen in Asia. We call on your (Iranian) companies to make investments in our country (Sri Lanka)."



IRNA

"We want to have good relations with Iran. We are also keen to see more Iranians traveling to Sri Lanka," the foreign minister added, Tasnim wrote. For his part, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian noted that Sri Lanka's role as the new chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) would provide a suitable opportunity for Iran's cooperation with the other member states.

Baku, Ankara's firm stand; Tehran's disagreeing hand Zangezur extends beyond a mere corridor



By Ebrahim
Beheshti
Staff writer

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan lent his support to the pursuit of peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia at a news conference with his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov Ankara on Monday. Hakan, however, noted that the opening of the Zangezur corridor would be "of great importance" in maintaining regional stability.

Despite the cessation of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan on November 10, 2020, and the subsequent signing of a peace deal with Russian mediation, conflicting interpretations of the agreement's terms by Baku have exacerbated ongoing divisions between the two neighbors. Azerbaijan staunchly contends that the restoration of the Zangezur transportation corridor under its control is essential to facilitate access to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Region.

In term 9 of the peace agreement, it is explicitly stipulated that "All economic and transport connections in the region shall be unblocked. The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the security of transport connections between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to arrange unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles and cargo in both directions. The Border Guard Service of the Russian Federal Security Service shall be responsible for overseeing the transport connections".

The focal point of this paragraph is unequivocally on the unblocking of transport routes between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. It does not involve ceding ownership of these pathways, notably the Zangezur corridor, to the government in Baku.

During the trilateral talks in 2021, Armenia conveyed its willingness to participate in the

revitalization of the Soviet-era railways that historically linked Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. However, Baku interpreted this as Yerevan's acquiescence to relinquish control over the Zangezur corridor, a proposition firmly contested by Armenian authorities. While Yerevan officials are amenable to discussions about opening transit routes and granting Azerbaijan access to Nakhchivan, they are steadfast in their assertion that these corridors will unequivocally remain under Armenia's jurisdiction and authority.

On May 30, Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia, Mher Grigoryan, issued a categorical response to Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev's remarks concerning the Zangezur corridor. Grigoryan definitively stated, "Engaging in talks with any nation regarding the construction of specific corridors is out of the question. We have reiterated numerous times that this is a non-negotiable boundary. This subject will not be entertained. The oversight of all road infrastructure will vest within the Republic of Armenia."

Baku seeks to change borders

The strategic pursuits championed by Azerbaijan, bolstered by Turkey's support, appear poised to usher in a consequential transformation of geographical boundaries within the South Caucasus region. This unfolding scenario has drawn the attention of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey, both of which hold vested interests in the outcome.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, while returning from a trip to Baku on June 14, conveyed to reporters a sentiment shared by Azerbaijani authorities: Iran's stance concerning the opening of the contentious corridor "upsets" both Turkey and Azerbaijan. Erdogan maintained that Iran's position should ostensibly align with the interests of Azerbaijan and Turkey, as collaborative efforts between these nations to establish transit corridors would inherently serve Iran's own benefits. Strikingly, Erdogan pointed to Iran,

rather than Armenia, as the main obstacle impeding the resurgence of the Zangezur corridor.

Erdogan's assertion pivots on the notion that Tehran's reservations are not directed against the revival of the Zangezur corridor or Azerbaijan's access to Nakhchivan, but rather stem from opposition to border realignments. The mechanics of these border modifications are nuanced: currently, and in preceding years, commercial trucks traversing between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan or Turkey must cross Iranian territory. Additionally, owing to Turkey's historical tensions with Armenia, Turkey's passage to Azerbaijan is contingent on transit through Iran. The strategic Nakhchivan region lies to the southwest of Armenia, while the Syunik Province to Armenia's south, abutting Iran, serves as a demarcating buffer between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan.

Azerbaijan, in tandem with Turkish backing, seeks to assert control over the southern sectors of Armenia's Syunik Province, effectively molding the Zangezur corridor. The underlying consequence of this endeavor would entail the practical dissolution of the shared boundary between Iran and Armenia. Underpinning this proposed transformation, the present dynamic wherein Azerbaijan relies on Iranian thoroughfares to reach Nakhchivan or Turkey, would be inverted. Should the Zangezur corridor materialize according to Azerbaijan's envisaged parameters, Iran would find itself compelled to traverse Azerbaijani territory for passage to Armenia and, by extension, Europe. Tehran vehemently rejects this purported stratagem orchestrated by Baku, buttressed by Ankara, foreseeing it as a subversion of established borders by any means.

Iran's clear warning

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution, underscored a resolute stance during a meeting with Erdogan in Iran on July 19, 2022. He said that any endeavors aimed at obstructing the border linkage between Iran and Armenia would encounter Iran's vehement opposition. In discussions with Russia's president, Ayatol-

lah

Khamenei reiterated that the Islamic Republic would not tolerate any policies or initiatives that culminate in the closure of the Iran-Armenia border.

As a result, it emerges that neither Armenia nor Iran stands in objection to the resuscitation of conduits to facilitate Azerbaijan's access to Nakhchivan. Their collective stance pivots on the precondition that these routes remain under the aegis of Yerevan's control, rather than Baku's. The rationale underlying this viewpoint resides in the trajectory of these routes traversing Armenian territory. In essence, the thrust is for facilitating access without necessitating alterations to existing borders.

What is Turkey after?

The question naturally arises: What impels Turkey's steadfast commitment to this particular course of action? The implementation of this blueprint would bestow upon Turkey an unfettered access to Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan, obviating the need to go through Iran and Armenia. A comprehensive analysis by Iran's national broadcaster offers insight into Turkey's multifaceted motives. Among these objectives are "the augmentation of arms sales to Azerbaijan, securing access to cheaper energy from Azerbaijan, containment and neutralization of regional rivals, actualizing Pan-Turkic aspirations, and the orchestration of cohesion within the so-called Turkic world".

Turkey envisages itself as a vanguard of the so-designated Turkic-speaking nations, driven by neo-Ottoman ideals. Crucially, the Syunik Province looms as an impediment obstructing the geographical continuum of this Turkic realm. The proposed implementation of the Zangezur initiative effectively bridges the Turkic-speaking nations.

In 2009, the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), formerly called the Turkic Council or the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, was established during a summit in Nakhchivan. The OTS, encompassing permanent members Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan, with Turkmenistan as a potential addition, is founded upon the principles of bolstering friendship, security, and mutual trust among the

Turkic nations.

In an analytical piece, the Institute for East Strategic Studies casts a skeptical eye on Erdogan's endeavors to assume the mantle of an elder brother within the fraternity of Turkic-speaking nations.

"The aspirations of pan-Turkic ideology have fallen short. Despite the emergence of distinct identities, political autonomy, and economic pursuits among the Central Asian Turkic nations, a sense of kinship with Turkey has not materialized. Rather than a revered older brother, Turkey is predominantly viewed as an indispensable economic partner. Solely Baku engages in concerted cooperation with Ankara, owing to shared economic and political interests. However, this common ground remains elusive when it comes to the Central Asian countries."

Ali-Akbar Velayati, a prominent figure in Iran's diplomatic echelons and an advisor to Ayatollah Khamenei, has recently penned an op-ed that probes beneath the surface of Turkey's insistence on the Zangezur corridor's establishment, discerning motivations that transcend the contours of pan-Turkism discourse.

Velayati contends that this pursuit serves as more than a mere symbol of Pan-Turkic aspirations, extending from Istanbul to China's Xinjiang Province, thereby sketching an "imaginary world" of Pan-Turkism. He takes into account the expansive purview of Turkey's entanglements within NATO and posits that the realization of the Zangezur corridor could potentially culminate in the emergence of a corridor, figuratively encircling Iran from the north and enveloping Russia from the south.

Velayati argues that the establishment of this corridor, rather than primarily nurturing trade and collaborative ventures, could inadvertently set the stage for an augmented and purposeful NATO presence in northern Iran and southern Russia.

Iran's legitimate concerns

Ali Bigdeli, an expert Caucasus affairs, shared his insights in an interview with Iran Daily, offering a perspective that underscores skepticism toward NATO's potential presence in the Caucasus region. "NATO will never become an

Asian entity," he asserts.

Bigdeli further contends that the Zangezur corridor, a crucial component of the Turkey-Azerbaijan collaboration, contradicts Iran's national interests, characterizing its execution as a blow to the "prestige" of the Islamic Republic. He says the corridor would effectively curtail Iran's land route connectivity to Europe and Russia. Turning to Turkey's insistence on forging the corridor, Bigdeli perceives it as Erdogan's last recourse, subsequent to the failure of alternative strategies in preceding years. At Erdogan's ascent to power, Turkey aspired to European Union accession. However, former French president Francois Hollande killed the aspirations, opining that the EU was not hospitable to Muslims.

"After facing this setback, Erdogan embarked on a mission to Arab nations, aiming to rejuvenate the concept of Ottomanism. However, his efforts fell short due to resistance stemming from his alignment with the ideologies of the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, Erdogan's focus has now shifted toward an alternative path, namely, the "Trans-Caspian" project. This endeavor aligns with his ambitions for seamless access to Central Asia and Turkic-speaking nations."

Bigdeli underscores that the project's fruition is intrinsically linked to the establishment of the Zangezur corridor.

The Zangezur corridor, as championed by Baku and Ankara, extends beyond the scope of a mere conduit between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. Tehran and Yerevan, exercising their sovereign prerogatives, challenge its establishment and the associated border alterations, as these imperil their respective national interests. This perspective is echoed by Mohammad Pakpour, commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps' Ground Forces during the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, who reinforced Iran's commitment to respecting neighboring countries' territorial integrity, emphasizing that any changes in border geopolitics transgress the Islamic Republic's red lines.



Ancient minarets of Isfahan in need of more attention



main Persian architectural structures which have been used for various purposes throughout history. "They sometimes served as a beacon helping caravans find their way, or as a place for delivering news, calling to prayer or guarding the city". This valuable heritage, which has lost its previ-

Chehel Dokhtaran minaret
shahrmajazi.com

ous function, can turn into tourism attractions. Najjar-Arabi said, unfortunately, adequate attention has not been paid to these structures, some of which even lack a sign board.

He added that Chehel Dokhtaran minaret, built in 1112 CE, is among the few which belong to the Sel-

juq era. The tower, which remains abandoned, is in such poor condition that many people don't even know its name. The expert said that exquisite, unique, and distinctive brickwork decorations can be seen on each part of the minaret.

It is the fifth oldest minaret in Iran, on which there is a big window facing the qiblah (the direction of the holy Kaaba, the sacred cube at Mecca, toward which Muslims turn in prayer). This feature does not exist in other minarets of Isfahan. There is a spiral staircase in the minaret, which leads to the top of it. This minaret, which is 21 meters high, can be seen from a far distance, but it is difficult to reach it through the maze of winding alleys and narrow streets.

Najjar-Arabi added that cars and motorcycles pass a few steps from this minaret, and they may run into it at any moment.

He continued that Sareban minaret, with exquisite inscriptions, is a 900-year-old structure decorated with amazing brick and tile works.

Sareban literally means "cameleer," indicating that this minaret was built to serve as a beacon for caravans heading toward Isfahan. It is one of the tallest and most beautiful minarets in Iran. Unfortunately, however, the alleys leading to this minaret are not blocked, thus, cars and motorcy-

Sareban minaret
iranroute.com



Iranica Desk

The ancient city of Isfahan, the capital of the central province of Isfahan, hosts numerous historical monuments, writing about which creates a sweet feeling. Chehel Dokhtaran and Sareban minarets, located

in the Juybareh district, are beautiful brick towers dating back to the Seljuk era. Unfortunately, a large number of people, even those living in Isfahan, have no knowledge of these ancient towers.

Mehdi Najjar-Arabi, an Isfahanologist, said that minarets are among the

ous function, can turn into tourism attractions. Najjar-Arabi said, unfortunately, adequate attention has not been paid to these structures, some of which even lack a sign board. He added that Chehel Dokhtaran minaret, built in 1112 CE, is among the few which belong to the Sel-

cles pass it at a short distance. Managing Director of Renovation Organization of Isfahan Mohammad Ali Izadkhasti said that thanks to their function, the minarets were more important to the people in the past; however, a large number of them have been left unat-

tended, and have not been used even as tourist attractions. He noted that a plan to preserve the minarets has been placed on the organization's agenda. Izadkhasti added that the area surrounding the minaret will be transformed into an urban space and

vehicles will be prohibited from passing through it. He believes that local people can preserve the historical monuments in the best possible manner, because this not only would help introduce the minarets as tourist attractions, but also generate revenues for those living in the area.

Small and large water storages

Most of the rivers in Iran are seasonal because of irregularity and lack of rainfall. In most places, there aren't even any rivers and seldom does it rain there. Our ancestors faced this natural phenomenon and tried to find a way out, called "Economic water storage." There were two types of Economic water storages in our country:

Domestic water storage tanks

Before establishing pipeline water distribution system, there were two separate water tanks in every house, one for drinking water and the other one for gardening. There are many people who still remember those and perhaps some types exist so far. Drinking water storage tanks were generally sealed and they were very careful during construction and made them water tight with con-



A large water storage tank with air traps near desert

crete. They took water by a tap, which installed some how above the tank floor.

Supplying water for storage it was a decorative structure. Domestic storage tanks were recharged with water from rivers, infiltration galleries, springs and sometimes rain during the weeks. This type of water supply is still common in some villages, which have no pipeline water distribution system yet.

Large water storage tanks in desert or villages

There were some covered tanks with considerable capacity for caravans, villages or old palaces in desert, dry plains, hot and dry regions in the south of the country. Most of these tanks have been destroyed but some of them are still usable. The structures of these tanks are very interesting for the passengers.



Old ice houses, made of sun-dried bricks in Kashan

These tanks are cylindrical and buried under ground. At the top of the tanks, there is conical ceiling with ventilator at the center. Sometimes they installed a number of ventilators around the top as air traps. For taking water, there were stairs extended as far as the floor of the tank. The taps installed just above the floor. The width of stairs was somehow the people with pail,

bucket, jar or water skin could pass each other very conveniently. They usually installed 2 or 3 taps for taking water. It is not necessary to describe the structure of air-traps, which could be seen in the central cities, especially in Kashan and Yazd. But it should be mentioned that the operation of these air-traps were somehow that those large water storage tanks were ventilated

well and water got cool enough even in the hot days of the summer. There were many of those water storages at the edge of desert and caravan roads. Some of those small desert tanks didn't have any taps. The structure of those tanks as mentioned above, are very interesting. The lower section had a cylindrical shell and the top had a conical one. The capacity of this kind of water tanks could be about 300 to 3,000 M3 (the diameter of cylinder could be up to 20 meters. If the depth assumed 10 meters, the max capacity would be 3,000 M3). In some regions the water tanks had higher capacity up to 100,000 M3. The construction of these kinds of cylindrical water tanks without pillars were impossible. So they had to construct the middle pillars in one or more rows to support dome and the barrel shaped ceiling.

There are many - ruined stores in the country, which look like conical water storage tanks, used for ice storage. They called them "ice-house". They supplied ice for the residents of the cities and villages nearby in hot days of summer in the past. The procedure for ice making was very interesting. Beyond tall walls, they leveled a piece of land and let the water cover the whole land to a certain depth during the cold nights of winter to freeze. The purpose of tall walls was to protect the ice land from sunshine during the day. Then they added water every night, but the depth of water should not be more than a few centimeters each night. So icemakers had to level the ice land very carefully. When the thickness of ice became to 30 to 40cm, then they broke the ice to pieces and stored them in the cylindrical storages.

The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled "Small and Large Water Storage Tanks in Ancient Iran", from a book entitled, "Water and Irrigation Techniques in Ancient Iran", written by Gholam Reza Kuros and Majid Labbaf Khaneiki, published by Iranian National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage. The photos were taken from the book.



By Hamideh Hosseini
Staff writer

The world of Iranian cartoons and caricatures has a rich history that dates back to pre-revolutionary times, with only around 20 cartoonists before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, including non-professional artists numbering up to 40. However, in the wake of the revolution, a groundbreaking trio of cartoonists from the University of Tehran's College of Fine Arts, namely Asghar Kafshchian Moqaddam, Mohammad-Hossein Niroumand, and Massoud Shojai Tabatabai, formed the chicory (a bitter but healing plant) group that laid the foundation for numerous firsts in the world of cartoon.

The following text is an exclusive interview with Shojai Tabatabai, the editor-in-chief of Iran Cartoon website and a prominent cartoonist.

He is the program development of the first Geekartoon cartoon contest in Greece in 2006. He was among the jury members of various cartoon festivals and contests namely the International Caricature Competition in Syria, China Guangxi International Cartoon Contest, Aydin Dogan in Turkey, Piracicaba in Brazil, and San Antonio cartoon contest in Cuba. These visionary pioneers collaborated to create the first expert-level caricature publication titled 'Kayhan Caricature', establish the first Iranian House of Cartoon, and launch the world's first expert-level cartoon and caricature website. Additionally, they organized the inaugural cartoon biennial, providing an unparalleled platform for Iranian artists to showcase their talents on the international stage.

Connecting artists worldwide

Fast forward to the new

derie. Moreover, the website serves as a launchpad for global cartoon competitions, while meticulously analyzing and examining standout works within the field. With an extensive gallery of educational films and thousands

international events. In a celebrated move, Iran Cartoon took center stage during the 15th edition of the Fajr Festival of Visual Arts. The platform published a book of the year, showcasing the bests of the bests of the

world's leading cartoonists, whose average age hovered around 60. The masterpieces were later displayed in a visually stunning art exhibition. The Iran Cartoon website's impact goes beyond the

Humanitarian impact

The platform's significance is further demonstrated through its humanitarian approach. In the aftermath of the tragic death of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned while

trying to reach the Greek island of Kos, Iran Cartoon swiftly organized the International Aylan Cartoon & Illustration Exhibition, which saw the participation of 202 artists from 40 countries. Iran Cartoon's pivotal role

Communication with artists from around the world is facilitated through a comprehensive data bank, along with various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, and phone numbers. Latin

Iran Cartoon: A global hub of artistic expression, inspiration

of images, the platform is a treasure trove of artistic inspiration.

At the core of its mission, the Iran Cartoon website continually connects with artists worldwide, facilitating international cartoon contests and exhibitions. Renowned artists and lecturers are frequently invited to visit other countries.

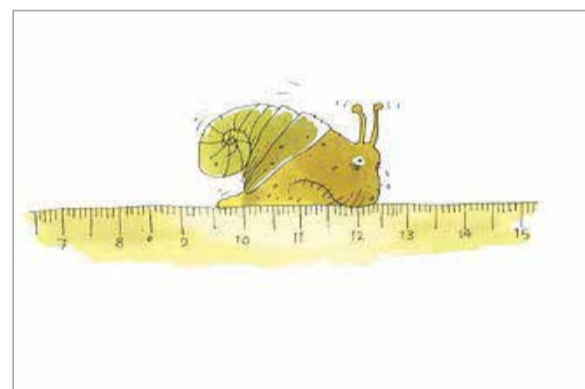
Global reach

The significance of Iran Cartoon transcends borders; the website attracts over 12 million visits each year, with June recording an impressive 12 million visits and July not far behind with over 10 million visits. On a daily basis, the website welcomes a staggering minimum of 372,000 visits and a maximum of 430,000 visits, illustrating its global influence. Indeed, artists from nearly every corner of the world, encompassing



American and Far East artists are mainly reached through Facebook, while those less active in virtual spaces are engaged via email. Artists seeking recognition approach the platform through the official email of Iran Cartoon, with careful consideration of their backgrounds before inclusion.

The website is not merely a platform for cartoons but an international center that fosters communication among domestic and international cartoonists. The diverse range of cartoons reflects the interconnectedness of world events, often touching on humanitarian subjects like what has happened in Myanmar, Yemen, Palestine, and Syria. In response to the issue of Daesh, Iran Cartoon hosted two competitions that attracted submissions from an impressive 65 countries, showcasing the website's proactive approach.



realm of art appreciation. It plays a crucial role in responding promptly to world events through art, providing artists with an outlet to express their reactions to pressing issues. For example, in response to the Qur'an burning incident, artists from across the globe expressed their outrage, leading to the creation of a powerful 65-piece exhibition titled 'Fire against the Light.'



Changing perceptions

Iran Cartoon has shown a remarkable ability to respond promptly and creatively to global events that demand attention. When George W. Bush's statement labeled Iran the center of wickedness, the website of the American syndicate Cagle opened a section titled "War with Iran," provoking Iranian artists to create cartoons responding to American sol-



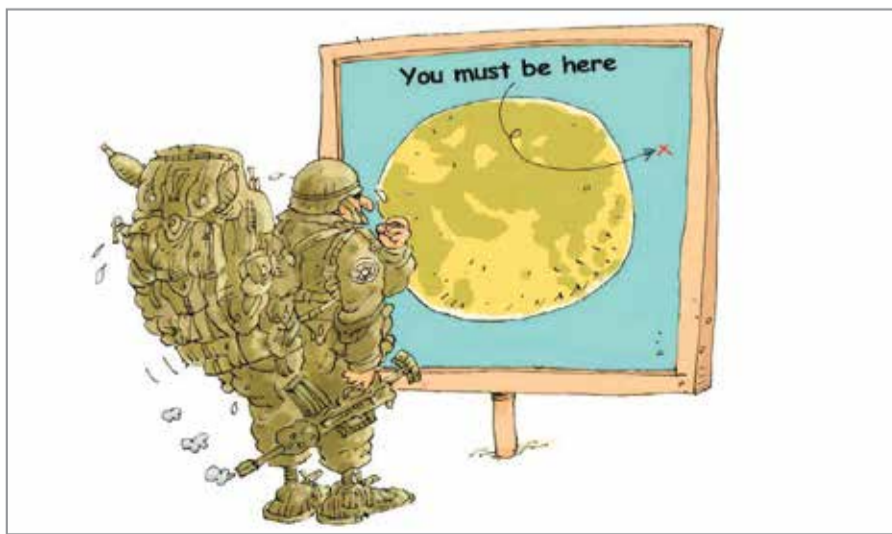
millennium, and the Iran Cartoon website emerged in 2000 with a mission to introduce Iranian cartoonists to the world, delivering content in the English language. In due course, the platform expanded its reach, launching the Persian section with an IR domain, transforming the website into the renowned "International Center of Iran Cartoon." Now, the website's latest triumph is the 'Fire against the Light' exhibition, captivating audiences both physically and virtually from July 26 to August 5.

The Iranian Cartoon website remains a dynamic and up-to-date resource, providing the latest news and information on the world of cartoons and caricatures. Its impressive roster includes prominent domestic and international artists, allowing them to shine and fostering a spirit of creative camaraderie.

200 countries, explore the website, making it a truly international hub for artistic expression.

When it comes to online searches for "cartoon contest," Iran Cartoon reigns supreme, topping the list among 300 million search results. Even notable competitors like The New Yorker and European Cartoon Center (ECC) from Belgium are unable to claim the top spot. This feat underscores the paramount importance of the Iran Cartoon website in the world of cartoons and caricatures.

Organizers of global cartoon contests universally recognize the platform's significance and approach Iran Cartoon for publishing crucial event details, including dates, venues, and rules and regulations. Indeed, the website has solidified its reputation as the preeminent platform for



extends beyond its own borders. The website once received a request from the Belgian ECC to submit cartoons and caricatures. The response was overwhelming, with numerous Iranian works surpassing Belgian submissions. Iran's prominence in the cartoon realm places it among the top three countries globally, alongside Brazil and Turkey, further elevating the stature of international competitions that feature Iranian artists. Some competitions even seek Iran Cartoon's expertise in selecting competent jury members. With a robust server capacity of 500 gigabytes and over six million pages, the website boasts several galleries, particularly in its English version. On a daily basis, Iran Cartoon showcases 200 to 300 works, providing a diverse array of artistic expressions.

diers' advice. While initially expecting hostility and wickedness, Cagle was met with thoughtful responses from Iranian artists, leading to a positive change in American perception.

In conclusion, Iran Cartoon stands as a testament to the power of artistic expression to unite the world, providing a platform for artists from diverse backgrounds to share their vision and respond to world events creatively. With its unwavering commitment to fostering artistic talent, addressing global issues, and promoting dialogue through art, Iran Cartoon continues to be a global force in the world of cartoons and caricatures. Its role as a facilitator and problem solver underscores the impact of art in shaping perceptions and fostering understanding across cultures and borders.

Caspian Sea faces alarming shrinkage amid river inflow blockage



National Desk

The head of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE) warned about the decrease in the water level of the Caspian Sea, attributing it to the blockage of river inflows into the Caspian Sea by neighboring countries.

Due to the blockage of river inflows into the Caspian Sea by neighboring countries, particularly the Volga River, the water level of the sea is steadily decreasing, Ali Salajegheh said on Saturday.

The DoE official said that based on some statistics and data, there has been about one meter of recession in the Caspian Sea in the past five years. If this situation persists, the northern sea of Iran could face an average annual recession of up to 20 centimeters, he added.

He expressed hope that neighboring countries will reach an agreement and release the water rights,

allowing water to reach the Caspian Sea.

Experts specializing in environmental matters have identified the primary cause of the Caspian Sea's water level decline. Reduced water inflows from the Ural and Volga rivers are a significant contributing factor. Factors such as escalated water consumption, water retention for power generation, and inadequate rainfall in the region have led to the reduction of river inflows from these vital sources.

Concerns about the decreasing water level have also been voiced by other coastal countries of the Caspian Sea including Kazakhstan, reflecting the shared apprehension over the environmental challenges faced by the region.

Despite repeated warnings from experts and officials about the severity of the situation, effective measures to address the crisis have not been implemented thus far.

Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran corridor to increase Central Asia attractiveness: Uzbek president

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has underscored the significant role of the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran corridor in the development of Central Asia and increasing the attractiveness of the region.

"The development of the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran corridor and the active use of the potential of the Trans-Caspian route provides the possibility of increasing the attractiveness of Central Asia as the transit center of the 'East-West' and 'North-South' international corridors," Mirziyoyev said on Saturday, according to PressTV.

He made the remarks in a tripartite meeting with the presidents of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov and Emomali Rahmon, in Ashgabat. He underscored the expansion of ties between the regional countries, saying, "Joint transparent policy, unity and solidarity of the countries of the region leads to real results."

The Uzbek president also said the volume of trade exchanges and cooperative transactions, including in the fields of industries, agriculture, energy and logistics, has increased multiple times. According to Mirziyoyev, "acceptable decisions" would be made as a result of a mutual understanding on bilateral and regional issues.

The Uzbek president called for greater cooperation in areas such as the use of advanced water-saving technologies and renovation of irrigation systems, digitalization of water

management processes, and joint development of infrastructure for collecting and storing flood waters. "A close and fruitful cooperation between the countries of Central Asia has been established in the energy sector, including in the field of export and transit of energy resources," he said.

The Uzbek president also proposed the joint creation of favorable conditions for international transportation, acceleration of digitalization and increase in the efficiency of checkpoints.

He also underscored the importance of coordinating efforts and mutual support of the initiatives proposed by regional countries in the international arena under the framework of the United Nations. Uzbekistan plans to continue to support projects aimed at ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the Central Asian re-

gion, Mirziyoyev said.

In a meeting via video conference on Tuesday, the representatives of Iran, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan discussed the prospect of creating an international transit corridor.

The representatives discussed the issues of speeding up the signing of the agreement between the governments of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran regarding the corridor and the reduction of international road transport fares through Iran's territory.

They examined the possibilities of using Bandar Abbas and Chabahar ports for the export and import of goods, as well as the development of the international transport corridor of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Iran.

 A freight train crosses an Iranian border checkpoint into Turkmenistan in this file photo.



Iran, Pakistan call for further cooperation in tourism



National Desk

Iran and Pakistan called for more efforts to expand cooperation between the two neighboring countries in tourism.

On Friday, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Ezzatollah Zarghami and Pakistani President Arif Alvi held a meeting in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad.

During the meeting, the two sides committed to improve cultural relations between the countries, especially in the tourism field.

In a statement, the office of Pakistan's president said both officials expressed their shared desire to strengthen cultural and people-to-people ties between the two nations.

President Alvi said that Pakistan highly values its relationship with Iran, which is based on historical, cultural, and religious ties.

The Iranian minister traveled to Pakistan to attend a tourism meeting of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation.

Meanwhile, a Pakistani tourism brand called "Salaam Pakistan" was unveiled in a ceremony attended by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Zarghami.

IRGC Navy enhances combat capabilities with AI-equipped missiles

National Desk

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has successfully integrated artificial intelligence technology into its missiles, empowering them with cutting-edge capabilities, IRGC Navy Chief Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri revealed. The IRGC Navy also took delivery of sophisticated homegrown missile systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and armaments featuring state-of-the-art technology

suited for electronic warfare during a Saturday ceremony attended by IRGC Chief Commander Major General Hossein Salami, Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, and other top-brass military figures, IRNA reported.

"By incorporating these specialized defense systems and equipments, the IRGC Navy has taken a significant and effective step in enhancing its naval combat capabilities," said Tangsiri.

The new military gears have been

developed by military experts at Aerospace Industries Organization (AIO), a subsidiary of the Iranian Defense Ministry and a leading high-tech complex headquartered in Tehran, the Marine Industries Organization, the Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO), Iran Electronics Industries (IEI), and Iranian knowledge-based firms.

Various types of reconnaissance and combat drones, as well as different types of armored command

and logistics vehicles, surveillance systems, and electronic warfare systems were among the new homegrown armaments.

The IRGC Navy also took delivery of different types of cruise missile launcher trucks, radar and command systems, and several hundred cruise and ballistic missiles, with ranges between 300 and 1,000 kilometers.

In remarks at the event, Rear Admiral Tangsiri noted that the new cruise and ballistic missiles

are furnished with artificial intelligence, have longer ranges, can be prepared for launch instantly, destroy the enemy's electronic warfare systems, and hit designated targets from various directions.

The commander also explained that the new drones have longer flight endurance, are armed with larger and heavier munitions, can be used in electronic warfare, detonate mobile targets, and strike naval targets with great pinpoint accuracy.

Iran to welcome...

He has also been a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam since April 2016. He was elected as the President of the National Assembly of Vietnam on March 31, 2021.

During the visit, Speaker Hue will meet and hold talks with the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi, and his Iranian counterpart on various important topics related to legislation, economy, trade, science and technology, people-to-people exchanges, and witness the signing of important cooperation documents. He will also deliver a speech on Vietnam's foreign policy at the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) and participate in the Vietnam-Iran Business Forum.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party and the National Assembly, Vietnam is undergo-

ing significant changes. Once one of the poorest countries in the world and ravaged by war, the country has now emerged as a developing nation, with a GDP of \$409 billion in 2022 and a scaled economy ranked 37th in the world. Vietnam has gained further international prestige through two successful non-permanent membership terms in the United Nations Security Council (during 2008-2009 and 2020-2021).

The National Assembly of Vietnam has actively participated in and made significant contributions to the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, supporting the development of its member countries, contributing to the protection of justice and peace, and implementing Vietnam's policy of multilateralization and diversification of foreign relations since the Doi Moi (Renovation) period, which

was initiated in 1986 and led by the Communist Party of Vietnam. To date, the National Assembly of Vietnam has established relations with over 140 parliaments worldwide.

Following its policy of openness and international integration, Vietnam has consistently recognized the Middle East as an important region with significant economic potential where it can forge good political relations with the regional countries including Iran. The two countries officially established diplomatic relations on August 4, 1973, following the signing of the historic Paris Peace Accords. Vietnam was one of the first countries to send congratulations and recognize the Islamic Republic of Iran on February 13, 1979, just two days after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Iran opened its Embassy in Hanoi in 1991, and Vietnam opened its Embassy in

Tehran in 1997.

Over the years, the two countries have maintained friendly political and diplomatic relations, exchanging nine visits by their presidents and speakers of parliaments. These visits have continued to nurture and create favorable conditions for both sides, under which they exchanged experiences of undergoing development and strengthened the ties between their peoples.

The parliamentary relationship between Vietnam and Iran has been emphasized and developed well in recent years. Speaker Hue and Speaker Qalibaf have exchanged congratulatory letters on the occasion of national holidays and inaugurations. The two sides regularly exchange high-level delegations, with the most recent visit being made by the Deputy President of the National Assembly of Vietnam Tran Quang Phuong to Iran in Decem-

ber 2022.

In the field of politics, the two countries have established a joint-governmental economic commission, which held nine sessions to coordinate cooperation on various issues. They have also organized seven political consultations at the deputy ministerial level, with the most recent one taking place in March 2022. Both sides frequently support each other in international organizations and forums, particularly at the United Nations, to uphold multilateralism, build a multipolar world order, respect the sovereignty and legitimate interests of nations and peoples, respect international law, refrain from threatening or using force in international disputes, and ensure that no one is left behind. In the economic field, the bilateral trade turnover has reached approximately \$100 million per year in recent years. Both coun-

tries enjoy strengths that can benefit and complement each other. Specifically, some of Iran's strengths lie in its energy sector, oil and oil-related products, mining, machinery, and construction, while Vietnam has advantages in exporting agricultural products, textiles, footwear, and electronics. Therefore, it is essential for the two countries to continue cooperating to explore their potential and better serve the livelihoods of their people.

Given the complex international and regional situation, Speaker Hue's visit to Iran once again demonstrates Vietnam's independent, self-reliant, multilateral, and diversified foreign policy. It holds great significance in promoting and deepening the Vietnam-Iran relationship, exploring economic cooperation potentials, and contributing to taking the bilateral relations to a new phase of development.

Iranian girls finish third in Asian youth weightlifting



● IRNA

Sport Desk

Iranian girls finished on the third podium in the youth contests of the Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships in Delhi, India.

The host country collected 690 points to pip Uzbekistan to the title by two points, with Iran – represented by seven weightlifters at the youth event – tallying 488 points, – courtesy of three golds as well as four silver and bronze medals apiece.

Ghazaleh Hosseini headlined the list of the Iranian medalists in Delhi by making a clean sweep of top-spot finishes in the 64kg weight class – the first Asian weightlifting golds of the age category for the country.

Haniyeh Sharifi took the clean & jerk silver and total bronze of the class.

La'ya Karimi rounded off her 71kg campaign with three medals – the snatch and total silvers plus the C&J bronze.

Asal Kadhodaie added a couple of 76kg snatch and total bronzes to Iran's medal count, while Ghazal Hosseini grabbed a snatch silver thanks to an 80kg lift in the 59kg weight class.

Iran settles for taekwondo team silver in World University Games



● taekwondo.ir

Sport Desk

The final day of the taekwondo competitions at the Summer World University Games saw Iran take the kyorugi silver in Chengdu, China.

The four-man team – comprising Alireza Hosseinpour, Mirhashem Hosseini, Mehran Barkhordari, and Arian Salimi – suffered a 52-40 defeat against South Korea in the final showdown.

Iran enjoyed a glittering taekwondo campaign in the Games, bagging 13 medals – including four golds.

Nahid Kiani (women's -53kg), Mehdi Haji Mousaei (men's -54kg), Hosseinpour (men's -58kg), and Hosseini (men's -74kg) all walked away with the ultimate prizes of their respective weight classes.

New suitor for Taremi as Spurs table €24m bid: Report

Sport Desk

The latest twist in Mehdi Taremi's transfer saga suggests that Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur is considering a move for Porto's talisman.

Portuguese daily sport newspaper O Jogo wrote on Friday that the Tottenham "is willing to pay €24 million" for the Iranian.

However, O Jogo added Spurs' offer could be turned down by Porto, which has tagged the prolific striker with a €30 million asking price, while Taremi, 30, could also reject the bid, as the London-based outfit will play no part in the European competitions in the upcoming season after an eighth-place finish in the domestic league in the previous campaign.

Several reports in recent months had suggested that Taremi, whose contract at Porto expires next summer, would join Milan, but a deal fell through when the Seire A giant signed Nigerian Chimerenka Chukwueze from Villarreal.

O Jogo wrote the most likely scenario for Taremi's future at the moment is a Porto contract renewal, with the negotiations getting under-



● MIGUEL RIOPA/AFP

way in September.

A remarkable campaign saw Taremi bag 31 goals in 51 outings across all competitions for Porto last season, while providing his teammates with 12 assists. Having joined the Dragons

from Rio Ave in 2020, Taremi netted 22 goals to finish as the Primeira Liga's leading marksman, though Porto had to settle for a runner-up spot behind Benfica in the Portuguese top flight before lifting the

Taça de Portugal trophy for a second successive season. Former Persepolis striker also scored five goals in seven games to help Sergio Conceicao's side win the Champions League group before being knocked out

by Inter in the round of 16. Tottenham, meanwhile, is reportedly in the market for a new number nine as the club's all-time top scorer Harry Kane, who has one year left on his contract, is edging closer to a switch to

Bundesliga champion Bayern Munich.

Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy is eager to cash in on the England captain this summer rather than let him leave as a free agent in July 2024.

Fritz says climate protests 'annoying' after match suspended

REUTERS – World number nine Taylor Fritz said climate activists need to find a better way of protesting instead of "annoying" sports fans by interrupting events, after his Washington Open match against Andy Murray was briefly halted on Friday.

Play was stopped during the opening set of the American's 6-7(2) 6-3 6-4 victory when protesters threw large tennis balls with flames printed on them onto the court. Some of them unfurled

banners in the stands calling on tournament sponsors Mubadala and Citi to stop funding the fossil fuel industry.

"I get they're protesting, but there's just got to be a better way to do it," Fritz told reporters.

"I don't understand how people are going to get behind a cause when you're ruining everyone else's good time. Like, it doesn't really make sense to me."

Climate change protesters similarly interrupted play at Wimbledon last

month, releasing orange ticker-tape mixed with jigsaw puzzle pieces during two matches.

"It's annoying, obviously, when they do it. It's ruining everyone's time. Everyone wants to watch the tennis. I jokingly said, 'Honestly, this makes me want to go fly on jets more,'" Fritz said with a smile.

"I think they're supporting a good cause, but the way they're doing it... Who's going to want to listen when they're just annoying everybody?"



Taylor Fritz hits a forehand against Andy Murray on day seven of the Washington Open Washington, D.C., US, on August 4, 2023.

● GEOFF BURKE/USA TODAY SPORTS

Arteta considered Arsenal future after missing out on title



● PETER CZIBORRA/ACTION IMAGES

BBC – Mikel Arteta considered his future as Arsenal manager after last season's title disappointment until deep "reflection" persuaded him to stay put. The Gunners led the Premier League by five points before consecutive draws with Liverpool, West Ham and Southampton proved costly. Arsenal's next game was a heavy defeat at City, who went on to win the title by five points from the London side.

"The first few weeks, very tough," said Arteta, looking back at his summer.

"The first thing you have to do is look in the mirror and understand – is there something that you should have done better or differently? If that is the case

then learn from it. "Judge yourself – 'are you still the right person to drive the club, the team, forwards in the way that you want and do you have that energy and that belief that you want to do it?'"

"It took a big reflection, but the answer is yes and I feel with a lot of energy and positiveness." During the title run-in, Arsenal led 2-0 at Liverpool and West Ham before being held to draws, with winger Bukayo Saka missing a penalty when his side were 2-1 up against the Hammers.

Arteta then needed two late goals to salvage a 3-3 draw against a Southampton side who went on to be relegated, before sliding to a telling 4-1 defeat at City.

Asked what was the difference between City and his team, Arteta said: "Momentum. In the key moments when it should have gone one way – and in many situations in the season it went for us – it didn't go for us."

"You are talking about a team that if they need to win 25 games in a row, they have the capacity to do that, so the last thing that they need is momentum and belief and we gave them that. "They were key moments when we just weren't ruthless enough, clinical enough, didn't have the luck or we made certain mistakes that allowed that to happen. We have to recognise that as well."

Arsenal will play City in the Community Shield today.

The pros and cons of vending in Tehran subway for women: Study



IRNA

Social Desk

The story of women working in the subway reveals their resilience and determination to pursue personal, family, and career aspirations despite facing numerous challenges. These women have managed to navigate the social-moral hazards, disrespect, and threats present in their external environment while vending within the subway.

As the subway lines expand, an increasing number of women join the ranks of underground vendors in Tehran. Consequently, one can encounter these hardworking women at any time of day or night within the capital's subways.

Observers note that this trend intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many women have unique narratives from this period that have been documented in reports and research

conducted on this subject. One such study is titled, 'The Narratives of Vending Women Working in Tehran Subway amid the Coronavirus Pandemic,' mainly authored by Sediqe Piri from Allameh Tabataba'i University's Department of Sociology, and others. The research aims to answer questions regarding the experiences and hardships faced by female retail workers operating within subway stations during the COVID-19 pandemic. In what follows, we will explore excerpts from this insightful study.

Subway as a safe haven

As more women enter traditionally male-dominated sectors of the labor market, they face heightened challenges. In addition to heavy workloads and low wages, issues such as job insecurity and limited prospects plague this workforce. However,

one particular challenge that stands out is the unsafe and inappropriate atmosphere within work environments, especially concerning sexual harassment and disrespect – both in terms of behavior and language. These distressing experiences have been reported by participants in the research. They range from verbal forms of harassment – which predominantly manifest as sexual advances – to explicit offers or threats of dismissal or demotion for non-compliance. These challenges serve as compelling reasons for women, including those with higher education qualifications, to seek employment opportunities within the subway system.

Discomfort and physical strain in the subway

Working in the subway environment presents various challenges for women,

ranging from dealing with crowded spaces to interactions with officers. Additionally, female subway vendors often recount experiences of discomfort and physical hardships due to the weight of their equipment, lack of resting places, and constant stair climbing at different stations.

Contemptuous treatment by others

Unfortunately, women working in the subway are frequently subjected to disdainful treatment from their families, passengers, and even subway officials. This negative attitude stems from societal judgment surrounding their occupation and work environment.

Ongoing conflicts within the subway

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing economic difficulties faced by households, research-

ers have witnessed a rise in vendors – especially female vendors – in the subway system. These individuals encounter daily acts of violence perpetrated by colleagues and passengers alike. In numerous cases, their goods and belongings are confiscated as well.

Advantages of vending in subway for women

During interviews with these women, researchers discovered narratives that shed light on why they perceive vending within the subway as preferable compared to other spaces. Key reasons include a sense of personal space and security along with flexible employment opportunities.

One of the notable benefits is the flexibility offered by subway vending regarding working hours, selling various products or services independently. For women juggling studies or household responsibilities alongside childcare duties, this flexibility becomes a significant career advantage.

Conclusion

The majority of participants involved in this research are divorced or have spouses who struggle with disabilities or addiction issues. Many also have children whose educational expenses have increased due to the impact of COVID-19. Some engage in hawking activities within the subway alongside their partners. Consequently, their livelihoods heavily depend on these endeavors which entail unwanted social, economic, and psycho-

logical consequences resulting from successive shocks.

Considering such vulnerable circumstances prevailing throughout their lives during the pandemic period highlights how deeply it has affected both business operations and personal lives. Notably, the findings indicate that micro social capital and relationships, primarily at the family level, have played a crucial role in mitigating this pervasive insecurity for some women through support from parents who assist with childcare.

Despite the challenges faced by women working in the subway during these trying times, which have made their professional lives arduous, many remain resilient in pursuing their personal, familial, and career aspirations. They consistently take proactive initiatives within both work and family environments. Engaging in vending activities within the subway system – with all its associated difficulties and risks – serves as an avenue to escape social-moral harm, disrespect, and threatening external circumstances.

The primary objective of these women's endeavors is to generate income while escaping absolute poverty. Their earnings contribute towards household expenses and supporting their families. For some individuals, working in subway offers a perceived sense of safety – a platform that can help them achieve their dreams by reducing various costs – leading them towards a more promising future in their chosen careers.

Rajaie-Shahr prison shut down for good

Social Desk

Rajaie-Shahr prison in Karaj, Alborz Province, was completely evacuated and closed.

As part of the implementation of the approvals in light of the Chief Justice of Iran Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje'i's visit to Alborz Province earlier this year regarding the relocation of Rajaie-Shahr prison, approximately half of the prisoners had been evacuated by Tuesday, July 1, 2023. As of Saturday, August 5, 2023, all prisoners from Rajaie-Shahr have been transferred to Qezel Hesar prison and Rajaie-Shahr prison has been closed, Mashregh News reported. Following the prisoner transfer from Rajaie-Shahr prison, located in one of Alborz Province's prime locations, it has now been completely vacated and shut down.

Iran's Prisons' Organization is currently engaged in follow-ups and actions to finalize an agreement with Alborz Governorate for the complete transfer of Rajaie-Shahr prisoners.

One of the aspects emphasized by the Chief Justice during his tenure has been relocating prisons from city centers to suburban areas outside urban environments. During a visit to Khorasan Razaavi Province in 2022, the Chief Justice inspected the Mashhad Central Prison and ordered its prompt relocation to the city's outskirts. The Prisons' Organization has taken steps toward accomplishing that directive as well.

The action aims at improving citizens' well-being and comfort by distancing prison environments from the society.

Injured cheetah sighted near Turan reserve

Social Desk

The director of Wildlife Protection and Management of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE) has reported an incident involving an injured cheetah in the habitats around Turan reserve, in Semnan Province, north-central Iran.

Gholamreza Abdali stated that upon receiving the news, DoE officers from the Turan reserve were immediately dispatched to conduct a thorough search for the cheetah. Abdali added that currently, environmentalists are observing the injured cheetah from a safe distance. He further mentioned that it is necessary to investigate and examine the health of this particular cheetah.

Abdali further pointed out that a veterinary team has been deployed to assess the situation. He emphasized that any additional updates regarding this cheetah's condition will be provided later.

Climate change a threat to Pakistan's security



By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

Climate change poses a significant threat to Pakistan's security, as highlighted by recent events. In late June 2023, monsoon rains resulted in the tragic deaths of 117 individuals, including children, with an additional 55 fatalities occurring in July. The worst affected region was Punjab Province, where the majority of deaths occurred. The destructive impact of the rains and floods has also led to the damage of over 450 houses and injuries to more than 230 people. The meteorological department has issued warnings of potential floods in urban areas of Balochistan and

Sindh, as well as a fresh warning of a mountain storm in Punjab's Dera Ghazi Khan District. Last year, Pakistan experienced devastating floods and disease outbreaks that claimed the lives of nearly 2,000 people and submerged a third of the country. The United Nations Meteorological Organization (WMO) has reported that climate change has contributed to an increase in droughts, floods, and extreme heatwaves worldwide. Glacial melting and rising sea levels, which have been ongoing for thousands of years, were projected to reach record levels in 2022. These changes have resulted in the loss of over 2,000 lives and affected a total of 33 million people, with eight million individuals being internally displaced.

The UN report also highlights that extreme weather conditions have forced a significant number of people to migrate, exacerbating the situation for the 95 million people already being homeless globally. According to UN Secretary General António Guterres, despite Pakistan's contribution of less than one percent to global greenhouse gas emissions, the country is disproportionately affected by climate change caused by human activities. In 2022, the province of Sindh, governed by the People's Party, suffered the most damage from flood disasters. It is shocking to know that the international community has largely overlooked this issue, leaving the burden of relief on the federal and provincial governments of Pakistan. The affected population

continues to rely on international assistance and their own governments for support. The adverse effects of global climate change on Pakistan also have implications for the country's security. The devastating floods in Pakistan have forced over 650,000 families to migrate, with 7.9 million people being displaced. Even after a year, these individuals continue to endure inhumane living conditions. According to UNICEF, climate change could result in a nine percent loss of Pakistan's annual GDP, significantly increasing the number of people living below the poverty line. Unseasonal rains have also severely impacted agricultural production, posing a serious threat to food security in the country. In 2021, Pakistan ranked 92



REUTERS

out of 116 countries on the Global Food Insecurity Index. Failure to address food insecurity and mitigate the harmful effects of climate change in a timely manner could jeopardize Pakistan's security.

Pakistan heavily relies on the Himalayan glaciers as a vital source of water, with 23 percent of its GDP derived from the agricultural sector. However, these glaciers have experienced more mass loss since 2000 than during the entire 20th century, which Pakistan must be concerned about. During Imran Khan's government, a tree planting

campaign was initiated, garnering global recognition. However, the campaign has stalled since the end of his tenure. Restoring damaged forests, which have suffered greatly due to illegal logging over the past 75 years, is imperative for Pakistan's future.

Pakistan possesses the potential to construct a large dam at Kalabagh, which could mitigate the devastating effects of floods and safeguard Sindh. However, the Kalabagh Dam project remains suspended due to political disputes. It is essential for Pakistan to prioritize this inevitable issue.

IUST faculty members condemn desecrations of Qur'an in Sweden, Denmark



Faculty members of the Iran University of Science & Technology (IUST) strongly condemned recent Quran-burning incidents in Sweden and Denmark.

In a statement, IUST faculty members called for serious reactions of diplomatic bodies of Islamic states to the desecrations of the Qur'an.

They emphasized the necessity of unity of the entire Islamic Ummah in safeguarding the sanctity of Islamic principles and beliefs with the highlighted role of international organizations and Islamic organizations.

The statement also urged serious and effective follow-up by the governments in Islamic countries and related organizations to make their efforts to hand over and try the perpetrators to the judicial system of Islamic countries as a legal measure to prevent the repetition of such sacrilegious acts.

Following the desecrations of Qur'an in Sweden and Denmark, millions of Muslims took to the streets of Iran and other Muslim-majority countries to voice their strong condemnation of the desecration.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called a recent desecration of the Muslims' holy book in Sweden as a bitter, conspiratorial and dangerous incident, calling for the maximum punishment for the perpetrator. Ayatollah Khamenei said in a message on Saturday that there is a consensus among all Islamic scholars that the perpetrator of the crime should face the maximum punishment.

On July 20, Salwan Momika, a Sweden-based Iraqi refugee, desecrated the Muslim holy book during a demonstration outside the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm amid strict protection provided by the Swedish police.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that the Swedish government should hand over the perpetrator to the judicial systems of Islamic countries.

"The Swedish government should also know that by supporting a criminal, it has taken a battle formation against the Islamic world and attracted the hatred and enmity of Muslim nations and many of their governments," he said.

The sacrilegious move prompted protests across the Muslim world. People in many countries staged massive rallies to condemn the blasphemous act.

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'Fire against the Light'

In an exhibition in Tehran, artists condemn the boldness of those who desecrated the Qur'an and burned copies of the holy book in Sweden, Denmark.

