



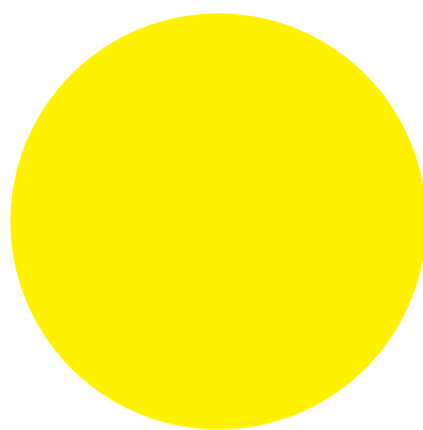
EXCLUSIVE
Iran aims to breed 500m ornamental fishes annually

2 >



EXCLUSIVE
The Good Doctor

7 >



Iran Daily



NATO provoked Ukraine war: **FM**

4 >

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (L) meets with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the latter's official residence in Tokyo, Japan, on Monday, August 7, 2023.
 • mfa.gov.ir

Journalism in journalists' words

Iran's national Journalist Day, celebrated annually on August 8, serves as a reminder of the importance of the profession and all the sacrifices people in media make — from working long, odd hours to being subjected to other forms of mental and physical hazard — so that the public could stay on top of events and informed on various subjects. For the occasion, we asked the staff of Iran Daily to each write a paragraph that summarizes their ideas and feelings about the job.



News stories have been more or less the same throughout history. Floods hit somewhere, someone kills another, or a new president is elected. People don't like to read stories with the same structure they have seen for centuries. This makes it hard for us journalists, who should be creative in our jobs.
Javad Mohammad Ali - International Desk

Page 8 >

Gov't prioritizes energy diplomacy: **NIGC**

Economy Desk

The current Iranian government has attached great importance to energy diplomacy, announced Head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Majid Chegeni.



SHANA

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, the official said two rounds of negotiations have been conducted to extend the gas contract with Iraq, as Iran's gas export contract to Turkey is valid by 2026, Shana reported. "Talks also have been conducted with Turkmenistan for the import of gas, and the debt has been paid to the country in three installments," Chegeni noted.

Page 2 >

Iran begins registering parliamentary candidates

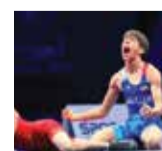
Iran on Monday began registering candidates for parliamentary elections in March. Candidates for the 290-seat parliament have a week to pre-register online, the first step in a months-long process, according to AP. But each will eventually have to be approved by the Guardian Council, a 12-member clerical body, half of whom are directly appointed by Iran's Leader. Iran has held regular presidential and parliamentary elections since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Over 7,000 candidates were disqualified ahead of the last elections in 2020 — about half of those who had tried to run.

Zanjan Province's villages ready to host tourists



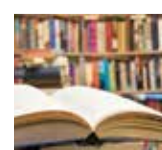
3 >

Wrestling U17 Worlds: Freestyle crown seals title double for Iran



6 >

Iran's Book Capital nominees announced



8 >

NEWS IN BRIEF

Aramco Q2
profits drop 38%

AFP - Oil firm Saudi Aramco on Monday announced profits of \$30.08 billion for the second quarter, a sharp fall from the same period last year when prices surged after Russia invaded Ukraine.

The 38-percent year-on-year decline "mainly reflected the impact of lower crude oil prices and weakening refining and chemicals margins", the largely state-owned company said in a statement published on the Saudi stock exchange.

Novak: Global
oil demand to
grow by
2.4m bpd

TASS - The global oil demand has recovered after the coronavirus pandemic and will grow this year by 2.4 million barrels per day (bpd), Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak.

"By the way, we see now the maximal growth of the demand; the record-high indicators. We have recovered after the pandemic above the 2019 level of oil consumption globally. This stands at 102.4m bpd. In other words, incremental growth will be about 2.4m barrels a day," Novak said.

HSBC official
apologises
for saying UK
'weak' over
China

REUTERS - HSBC's head of public affairs apologised after reportedly saying that Britain had been "weak" for going along with U.S. demands to curtail business dealings with China.

Sherard Cowper-Coles, a former diplomat, told a closed-door event in June that Britain would often bow to the demands of Washington and should look after its own interests.



By Sadeq
Dehqan
Staff writer

Despite its relatively short history, Iran's ornamental fish breeding sector has experienced notable strides, transforming into a lucrative and expanding industry.

Capitalizing on Iran's conducive capabilities for ornamental fish breeding and the establishment of numerous breeding centers, the nation's annual production of these exquisite fish has surged from a modest 2.3 million specimens to an impressive 323 million over the past decade.

In tandem with production, the export of ornamental fish has witnessed a similar trajectory, although subject to fluctuations attributed to various factors. Over past years, the export of these captivating aquatic creatures have oscillated due to a range of causes, leading to a variance in earnings from \$150,000 to approximately \$3 million.

In 2017, the export value reached \$2.8 million, sustaining this positive trajectory until an unfortunate setback precipitated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, Mohammad Hassan Elahi, the head of the Iran Fisheries Organization's ornamental fish department has told Iran Daily that in recent times, the export of ornamental fish has once again regained its prior growth momentum. He expressed optimism regarding the forthcoming years, anticipating a favorable uptick in ornamental fish exports. Iran's ornamental fish predominantly find their way to neighboring countries, encompassing Arab

Iran aims to breed 500m
ornamental fishes annually

IRNA

nations along the Persian Gulf, Central Asian countries including Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, as well as neighboring territories such as Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Noteworthy for their aesthetic allure and superior quality, Iran's ornamental fish also enjoy a market in Western and European countries, with a portion of Iran's exports being re-routed through other nations.

Elahi believes, despite the spike in exports, there remains a perceptible gap from the desired pinnacle. He says exporting ornamental fish to distant locales should be done by air which needs specialized equipment, yet the

requisite infrastructure for air exports remains wanting. Consequently, Iran's neighboring countries continue to serve as the primary destination for its ornamental fish trade.

The IFO and the Agricultural Parks Company are now working together to boost both production and quality of ornamental fish breeding. This endeavor involves the establishment of ornamental fish farming parks across the nation. At present, the country hosts a total of 1,635 ornamental fish farms, with a dedicated workforce of more than 12,000 individuals engaged in these breeding centers.

Elaborating further, Elahi underscores Iran's preeminence as a key player in ornamental fish production and breeding within the Middle East. As part of a strategic vision, there is a concerted ambition to increase annual ornamental fish production to a remarkable 500 million fish within the next five years. Currently, a diverse spectrum of 115 ornamental fish species is cultivated in Iran, mainly comprising imported species that have been acclimatized and cultivated over previous years. Elahi elucidates that the routine entails the annual propagation of five to seven imported ornamental fish species within the country's breeding

centers. Globally, the ornamental fish industry commands an estimated market turnover of around \$30 million. This sector is witnessing growth in congruence with the expanding urbanization worldwide, coupled with a growing inclination to incorporate elements of nature and wildlife into apartment living environments. Elahi expounds on Iran's competitive advantages in the realm of ornamental fish breeding. He says the nation's lower water, electricity, and gas costs, relative to many other countries, position Iran favorably to provide facilities conducive to ornamental fish breeding.

The ornamental fish industry encompasses a comprehensive ecosystem of both large and small-scale farms, aquatic plant cultivation, workshops dedicated to aquarium tools and accessories production, as well as ornamental fish maintenance services. This industry, in addition to its economic benefits, holds significant potential for generating ample employment opportunities. Simultaneously, the relatively modest capital requirements for establishing ornamental fish production centers render this business particularly suitable for home-based enterprises, including women who manage households.

Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant's output exceeds 60b kw/h: AEOI



IRNA

Total electricity produced at Iran's only nuclear power plant after some 12 years of activity has reached 60 billion kilowatt hours (kw/h), according to the country's nuclear chief.

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said that the electricity produced at the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) has enabled Iran to reduce its consumption of oil for power generation purposes by 90 million barrels, Press

TV wrote. Eslami made the announcement in a meeting with members of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee. Authorities announced in late August 2022 that BNPP's output had reached 50 billion kw/h. That means that the plant has been working a capacity of 1.14 gigawatts (GW) per hour over the past year, which is near a full capacity of 1.024 GW and above its nominal

capacity of 0.915 GW. It comes despite the fact that the plant has been facing some technical difficulties because of foreign sanctions on Iran. AEOI officials have said over the past year that the plant is increasingly relying on Iranian technicians and engineers for many overhaul programs. Eslami said that Iran seeks to increase its nuclear power generation capacity to 20 GW, with plans to launch new nuclear plants, including phases 2 and 3 of the

Bushehr facility. He said new companies have been set up and land plots have been acquired in five provinces with access to seas or major rivers to expand Iran's nuclear power sector. Legislations adopted by the Iranian Parliament requires the AEOI to increase Iran's nuclear electricity generation capacity to respond to a growing demand in the country that has already passed peaks of 73 GW this summer.

Gov't prioritizes energy ...

Negotiations have also been held regarding the gas trade with Russia and Oman, the NIGC head said, adding that European countries are interested in importing gas from Iran through Turkey. Last [Iranian] year, the country set an increase of over 16% in natural gas

exports to Turkey and Iraq, as a 22 percent of rise was registered in LPG exports to Iraq, he noted. "The cost of optimization is much lower than the cost of investment. Most of our energy-intensive industries use old technologies, with a consumption of more than four times the global average."

All over the world, methods are used for using the minimum amount of energy, but the laws related to savings are not observed in Iran, Chegeni said, stating that the consumption pattern must comply with global standards, which is a cross-sectoral issue and requires the cooperation of the ministries of roads

and industry. "According to the upstream plans for the country's gas refineries, the infrastructure of the supply network has also been developed, as now 1,253 cities and 39,699 villages are connected to the national gas network." The annual gas consumption of power plants of the

country is about 75 billion cubic meters, which is equal to approximately 32 percent of Iran's total consumption, Chegeni said, adding that the industrial sector receives 71 billion cubic meters annually (31 percent), while the home sector consumes 63 billion cubic meters of gas annually (27 percent).



SHANA

Zanjan Province's villages ready to host tourists

Iranica Desk

Tourism villages are among the most important destinations chosen by travelers, especially nature lovers, throughout the world. Thanks to their specific and unique attractions, these villages draw a huge number of those who travel to spend a few hours in peace and quiet and get away from the cities' hustle and bustle.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) understands rural tourism as "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products, generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture and sightseeing.

This industry, with its significant potential, allows the economy of the rural areas to prosper and helps generate jobs and create revenues for villagers. Thus a comprehensive plan should be devised to prepare conditions for the rural people in Iran to present their commodities to visitors and produce value-added benefits, IRNA wrote.

Based on the Sixth Economic Development Plan, 400 Iranian villages are identified as tourism targets, of which the share of the northwestern province of Zanjan is 15.

Abbas Mohammadi, deputy head of Zanjan Province's Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, said that several tourism villages have been identified in the region in cooperation with the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization and the Management and Planning Organization. He said that a specific budget is provided every year in support of this type of action.

"Darsajin, Quzlou, Khorjahan and Laar are the names of the tourism villages having valuable historical textures," he noted, pointing out that Golabar-e Sofla, Khoein, Viyar and Anjalin are villages for which specific tourism plans have



Darsajin village
uspace.ir



Golabar-e Sofla village
hamdelizanjan.ir



Quzlou village
hamdelizanjan.ir



Khoein village
tripyar.com

been devised. The official noted that the people living in these tourism villages should try to preserve the historical textures of their

villages in the best possible manner. "The villagers can economically benefit from the arrival of tourists; for example, a number of eco lodges have been

established in Darsajin village, hosting many tourists from across the country, which helps generate revenue for its residents".

Mohamamdi continued that the Seventh Economic Development Plan also has stipulated that more villages be recognized as tourism targets in the province.

Deputy Head of Zanjan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Davoud Abyan noted that rural tourism is one of the key opportunities in terms of potential growth for rural areas, noting that special attention is paid by the organization to the issue.

"Thanks to their untapped potentials, valuable historical textures, unique natural landscapes as well as old traditions and customs, the villages play a significant role in attraction of tourists to the province," he said.

He noted that the organization will make its best efforts to identify the villages which are suitable to be recognized as tourist destinations, and draw up proper strategies to introduce them to people all over the country.

The official said that Qozlu village has been identified as an ecotourism destination, pointing out that steps have been taken to preserve the traditional architectural style of the village and also introduce its souvenirs to visitors.

He called for related organizations to get more involved in the recognition and preservation of the province's tourism villages and facilitate the process of building eco lodges and offering related training courses for the villagers.

He believes that each rural house can be turned into an eco-lodge, saying tourists act as agents introducing the attractions of the village to other people, especially through social media platforms.

"Fortunately, everyone came to believe that preventing the migration of rural people to urban areas and paying attention to agricultural tourism can lead to economic prosperity in villages and prepare conditions for the villagers to benefit from having a fixed income resource," he continued.

Ancient cities of Qumis and Bastam

One part of the principal road between the present-day settlements of Abbasabad [on the east] and Lasgird [on the west] was included by the Arab geographers in the region of Qumis. In the tenth century, Qumis came within the framework of the possessions of the Buyid Dynasty who, however, paid part of the revenues from this region, as well as from the neighboring Rey —200,000 dinars in all—to the Samanids.

Clearly, this political boundary was purely artificial and therefore underwent frequent modifications. At the time of the Arab conquest, the eastern portion of Qumis was part of Khorasan. In the eastern part of Qumis, between Abbasabad and Shahrud, there seems never to have been any important settlements. Here the last spurs of the Khorasan's mountains descend into the

plain; the road passes by the foothills and occasionally through them.

These gradually diminishing ridges offered a suitable corridor for Turkmen raids, which ceased only with the conquest of Etek by the Russians. Until that time, it was considered unsafe to cross this stretch without an armed escort; twice a month small military detachments would depart, one eastward from Shahrud, one westward from Mazinan; the two would meet in the village of Miyandasht and exchange their roles; there is in Miyandasht an old caravanserai built by Shah 'Abbas the Great and a new one constructed in a fortress like fashion from fired brick.

There is a fertile stretch along the river Shahrud, which

flows from the snowy mountains of Shah Kuh, a branch of the Alborz Mountains that separates the Caspian coastland from the Iranian plateau, and that reaches here a height of 13,000 feet. The town of Shahrud itself was never of any great significance in the past, and is not mentioned by the tenth-century geographers.

The town of Bastam, situated somewhat above Shahrud in the same fertile river valley, has had greater historical importance. It is believed to have been founded in the sixth century by Bastam, governor of Khorasan, Qumis, Gorgan, and Tabarestan, who in the time of troubles tried



Remains of Qumis
ivius.org

to seize the throne. In the ninth century, one of the first Sufi sheikhs, Bayazid (more correctly Abu Yazid Bastami) lived there; at the time of the Arab geographers, Bastam was a modest but prosperous town.

The existing edifice of the sheikh's mausoleum, like other old buildings of Bastam, goes back to the fourteenth century. A detailed description of the mausoleum, together with a drawing of it, is in Sanf al-Dawla's book. Inside the building, at a passage from one part to another, is an Arabic inscription indicating the date of the construction. The mausoleum is in the southwestern corner of a courtyard that is flanked by a few other build-

ings; among these is a mosque that is believed to antedate Bayazid's mausoleum. This mosque is flanked by a minaret distinctive in that it moves when people stand on its top. The tower is built with very thin bricks and leans slightly sideways: this does not adversely affect the solidity of its structure.

Near the mausoleum is also an edifice in which a dried mummy is kept. A passage leads from this courtyard into a madrasa, in it there is a beautiful arch with an inscription indicating the date of the construction: 1313. From among the older monuments of Bastam, the Friday mosque (built in 1316) is also noteworthy.

Mausoleum of Bayzid Bastami
top-travel.ir



The above is a lightly edited version of chapter entitled 'Qumis and Gorgan', from a book entitled, 'An Historical Geography of Iran', written by W. Barthold and published by Princeton University Press, Princeton.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Raeisi marks
Journalist's
Day

president.ir - Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi expressed appreciation for the efforts of journalists in portraying the progress and measures taken in the country on Monday, on the occasion of the national Journalist's Day - August 8. During his visit to the IRIB headquarters, Raeisi described the role of the media as very effective and important.

Tehran
rebukes
British claims
against IRGC

PRESS TV - Iran has chided British Home Secretary Suella Braverman for leveling accusations against the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), saying the UK is in no place to make such "baseless" claims against the anti-terror force.

"The UK is not in a position to make accusations against the IRGC, with the UK's dark history in West Asia, which has caused deep instability in the region, as well as its role in covert and overt support of terrorism," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said at a weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday. The remarks came after a source close to Braverman alleged that the threat from the IRGC was now the biggest security risk facing Britain.

Denmark's
envoy
summoned

TASNIM - Danish ambassador to Tehran Jasper Vahr was summoned by Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in protest at the desecration of the Holy Qur'an in the Scandinavian country.

"This morning, Denmark's ambassador to Tehran was summoned... to the Foreign Ministry to protest against the repeated acts of desecration of the Holy Quran," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said at a press conference on Monday.

"He has been asked to immediately convey Iran's protest to his government," Kanaani said, adding that Iran expects Denmark to take responsible measures that would prevent the recurrence of such sacrilegious acts.

NATO provoked Ukraine war: **FM**

Tokyo echoes West's baseless claim



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (c) answers questions at a press conference in Tokyo, Japan, on Monday, August 7, 2023.
● mfa.gov.ir

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian highlighted the country's efforts towards a political settlement to the Ukraine crisis, blaming the conflict on the US-led NATO military alliance and its provocations.

"We consider NATO and its provocations among the root causes of the war and crisis. We continue our efforts to stop the war and make the parties focus on a political solution," he said on Monday at a press conference in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, according to Press TV.

In February 2022, Russia launched what it called a "Special Military Operation" in Ukraine partly to prevent NATO's eastward expansion after warning that the military alliance was following an "aggressive line" against Moscow.

Since then, Western countries have been fueling

the flames of the war with their unchecked delivery of weapons to Ukraine.

They, however, accuse Iran of providing Russia with military equipment including drones for use in Ukraine, an allegation categorically rejected by Tehran.

During a meeting with Amir-Abdollahian in Tokyo on Monday, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi urged Iran not to provide Russia with weapons for its war against Ukraine, echoing a claim which was once again denied by the Iranian foreign minister as "completely wrong and incorrect."

Amir-Abdollahian said that Tehran's defense cooperation with Moscow has never involved the use of Iranian drones or weapons in the Ukraine war, as Russia itself is one of the world's biggest arms producers and exporters.

Hayashi also called on Iran to take "constructive responses" to the war, with the two agreeing to contin-

ue "close communication" over issues affecting the Middle East, Japan's Foreign Ministry said, according to the Japan Times.

The Iranian foreign minister also expressed Iran's objection to the arming of any party to the Ukraine war, saying the flow of American and Western weapons to the former Soviet country will stoke insecurity and instability there and cause further deaths and destruction.

The Ukrainian side shunned a meeting with an Iranian military delegation in Warsaw, Poland, and it provided no acceptable documents in a later meeting in Oman, Amir-Abdollahian added. Later on Monday, Amir-Abdollahian also met with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Japan holds this year's presidency of the Group of Seven nations, which have maintained economic sanctions on Russia. Tokyo aims to leverage its traditional friendship with Tehran to help end the war.

Among 36 strongest
naval forces,
Iran Navy ranks 19

National Desk

Iran ranks 19th in the world's annual strongest naval forces list, with a score of 50.3.

According to the World Directory of Modern Military Warships (2023) list, Iran's Navy has surpassed Canada, Brazil, Australia, Greece, the Netherlands, Ukraine, and Belgium, securing the 19th position globally. The Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has earned a score of 50.3, based on its 66 active units up until November 2022.

This includes 25 submarines, seven frigates, three corvettes, 12 offshore patrol vessels, and 10 amphibious assault ships. Notably, Iran does not possess aircraft carriers, destroyers, or cruiser warships within its naval fleet. In this classification, the average age of Iran's warships has also been announced as 32.6 years. The ranking takes into account various factors, such as the total number of naval vessels and submarines, as well as vessel age, logistical support,

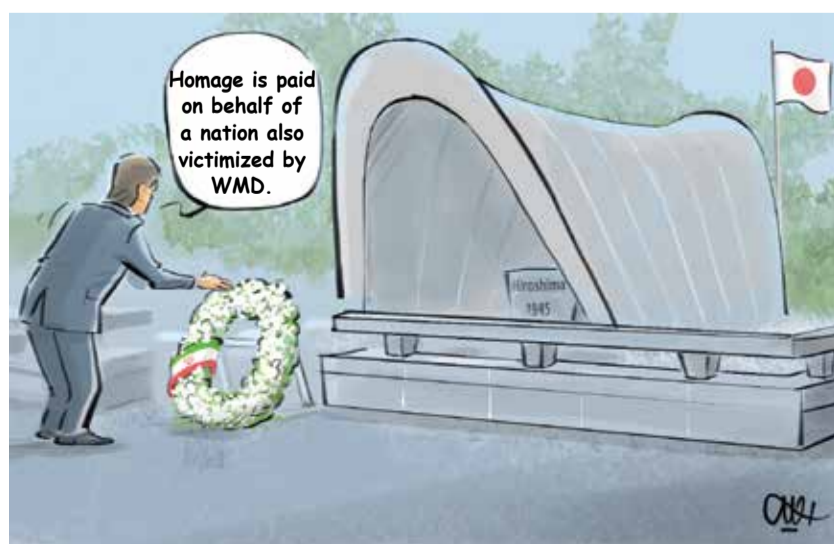
offensive and defensive capabilities.

This ranking primarily focuses on larger naval vessels, excluding smaller ships, patrol boats, and historical ceremonial vessels. Additionally, it assesses the balance within each country's naval forces, considering the diversity of assets and their concentration in specific regions.

The ranking distinguishes between different classes of combat ships, encompassing smaller vessels, frigates, destroyers, and larger cruisers. Each naval force is assigned a "Real Value Ranking" to facilitate comparison among them. As of the 2023 ranking, the top 20 naval forces in the world are as follows: the United States, China, Russia, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, India, France, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Italy, Taiwan, Egypt, North Korea, Algeria, Bangladesh, Spain, Germany, Iran, and Australia.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Pakistan shelves
Iran gas pipeline project: **Report**

International Desk

Pakistan has temporarily shelved the multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline project to import cheap energy from Iran, apparently under pressure from the US, which has imposed sanctions against the country over its nuclear program, according to a media report on Monday.

The development came as Pakistan struggles to put its cash-strapped economy in order, with the help of the International Monetary Fund, which agreed to provide \$3 billion in loan, moneycontrol.com reported.

This is while the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson said Tehran and Islamabad agreed to strengthen multifaceted cooperation, especially in the commercial and economic sector.

In her weekly briefing on Monday, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch referred to Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's constructive visit to her country, saying significant alignments between the two sides covered a broad range of matters, including regional communications and combating Islamophobia, leading to an agreement to strengthen their multifaceted collaboration in trade, economy, energy, culture, and the arts, IRNA reported. Last week during his three-day visit, Amir-Abdollahian emphasized the need for the completion of the project, saying it would definitely serve the national interests of the two countries. The pipeline project was initially conceived as an India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, but later India left it and it became a bilateral project between Pakistan and Iran.

The Dawn reported that Pakistan had issued a notice of "Force Majeure and Excusing Event" to Iran to suspend its contractual obligation on completion of the multi-billion-dollar Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project because of external factors outside Islamabad's control.

Pakistan has expressed its inability to pursue the project as long as US sanctions on Iran remain in place, or Washington tacitly green-lights Islamabad to go ahead with the project that has been in cold storage for almost a decade despite acute energy shortages in the South Asian nation of 240 million people, the paper reported.

"Pakistan has issued a Force Majeure

and Excusing Event notice to Iran under the Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement (GSPA), which resultantly suspends Pakistan's obligations under the GSPA," according to a written testimony Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik has given to the National Assembly. In a policy statement placed on the floor of the lower house of Parliament, the minister also put on record that Iran disputed the notice of force majeure and excusing event.

The statement came in response to questions from lawmaker Muhammad Jamalud-Din from Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Party, who wanted to know if the government of Pakistan had a target completion date for the cross-border energy project, and whether fines were due in case of delays and if other regional nations were enhancing trade relations despite UN sanctions.

"The Iran Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project is stalled due to international sanctions on Iran," said Malik, clarifying the project activities will begin once sanctions on Iran are removed and there is no threat that State Owned Entities would be hit by sanctions. At the same time, the petroleum minister also conceded that Pakistan's notice of force majeure and excusing event and Iran disputing its validity could only be finally settled through international arbitration, should Iran take this matter to arbitration.

As a consequence, "the exact amount of penalty, if any, is subject to the outcome of the arbitration to be determined by the arbitrators," he said. Tehran has completed its side of the 1,150-kilometer pipeline. Pakistan had committed to completing its side of the project by January 2015. However, in February 2014, then Pakistani petroleum minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi told Parliament that the Iran-Pakistan project was "off the table" due to international sanctions.

Officials said Pakistan had requested Washington earlier this year for a way out to help overcome energy shortages but had not yet received any response.

The Iranian pipeline was aimed to supply 750m cubic feet per day of gas, although it was vehemently opposed publicly and diplomatically by US authorities, particularly when Pakistan and Iran signed framework agreements and GSPA in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

Niger closes airspace as it refuses to reinstate president

Niger closed its airspace on Sunday until further notice, citing the threat of military intervention from the West African regional bloc after coup leaders rejected a deadline to reinstate the country's ousted president.

Earlier, thousands of junta supporters flocked to a stadium in Niamey, the capital, cheering the decision not to cave in to external pressure to stand down by Sunday following the July 26 power grab, according to Reuters.

The coup, the seventh in West and Central Africa in three years, has rocked the Sahel region, one of the poorest in the world. Given its uranium and oil riches and its pivotal role in a war with terrorists, Niger holds importance for the US, Europe, China and Russia.

Defense chiefs of the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) have agreed a possible military action plan, including when and where to strike, if the detained president, Mohamed Bazoum, is not released and reinstated by the deadline. ECOWAS leaders are scheduled to meet on Niger coup on Thursday.

"In the face of the threat of intervention that is becoming more apparent ... Nigerien airspace is closed effective from today," a junta representative said in a statement on national television on Sunday evening.

He said there had been a pre-deployment of forces in two Central African countries in preparation for an intervention, but did not give details.

Niger last week revoked military cooperation agreements with France, which has between 1,000 and 1,500 troops in the



country. Sunday's television broadcasts included a roundtable debate on encouraging solidarity in the face of

ECOWAS sanctions, which have led to power cuts and soaring food prices. The bloc's military threat has triggered fears of fur-

ther conflict in a region already battling the deadly insurgency that has killed thousands and forced millions to flee.



Children walk past burned cars outside the headquarters of Nigeria's President Bazoum's Nigerian Party for Democracy and Socialism in Niamey on August 7, 2023.

AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Syrian soldiers killed in Israeli airstrikes



AP — Israeli airstrikes hit areas around Damascus early Monday, killing at least four Syrian soldiers, Syrian state media reported.

Syrian state television, citing a military source, said four other soldiers were also wounded while the strikes caused "some material damage."

Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on Syria in recent years, but it rarely acknowledges them.

Thousands protest Bangladesh Qur'an burning



AFP — Thousands of people mounted furious protests after dozens of copies of Muslims' holy book, Qur'an, were burned in Bangladesh, leaving several officers injured, police said Monday.

Police said they fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse a crowd of "at least 10,000 people" overnight from Sunday to Monday as they tried to attack the two men accused of destroying the holy books, police officer Ajbahar Ali Shaikh said.

The two men were arrested in the northeastern city of Sylhet and claimed they had burned the books as they were "very old and some had printing mistakes".

14 dead in China floods



REUTERS — Fourteen people were reported to have died over the weekend in the Chinese city of Shulan due to flooding caused by Typhoon Doksuri.

Northeastern China, Beijing and Hebei Province have seen heavy rainfall and floods since the typhoon made landfall in southern Fujian Province two weeks ago.

The deaths in Shulan, in northeastern Jilin Province, add to the more than 20 who died last week in Beijing and Hebei. Authorities have yet to provide an overall death toll for the entire country.

China asks Philippines to remove grounded ship in South China Sea

China told the Philippines on Monday to remove its grounded warship from the Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea after blocking two Manila supply ships with water cannons over the weekend as both sides asserted their claims of the area. The Philippines accused the Chinese coast

guard of blocking and water-cannoning a Philippine military supply ship on what it said was a routine troop rotation and resupply mission on Saturday for the Philippine warship, a rusty World War II-era American ship that a handful of troops live aboard, according to Reuters. China said it had earlier

told Manila not to send ships to the Second Thomas Shoal and not to send "construction materials used for large-scale repair and reinforcement" to the warship after it learned of this recent supply plan, the Chinese coast guard said in a statement on Monday. The Philippines in

1999 intentionally grounded the warship to stake its claim to the Second Thomas Reef, a submerged reef that is part of the Spratly Islands. China over the weekend said it had "indisputable" sovereignty of the area and urged the Philippines to stop infringing activities in this waters.



Russia-US goals gap; a barrier to peace

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

In the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, a meeting took place on August 5 and 6, centered on deliberations on the war in Ukraine and viable pathways to attain lasting peace. This gathering drew the participation of envoys from more than 30 countries, but Russia did not have any representatives. The crucial question that arises is whether one can harbor optimism regarding the meeting's potential success in ending the Ukraine conflict.

To gain further insights into this matter, Iran Daily sought the insights of Mahmoud Shouri, an expert on international affairs. Shouri holds a dim view of immediate prospects for peace, and his reasoning hinges upon the substantial disparity in the demands posited by Russia and NATO, spearheaded by the United States. These substantial gaps create a substantial hurdle that impedes any positive outlook for near-term peace.

Iran Daily: Can one envision a constructive outlook regarding the effectiveness of gatherings like the Jeddah meeting in bringing an end to the Ukrainian conflict?

Shouri: Such optimism appears elusive, particularly when considering the immediate horizon. The intricacies of the Ukrainian crisis remain enmeshed and the prospects for resolution in the near future are dim. Consequently, on initial assessment, the Jeddah meeting might appear to be a futile endeavor. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that these diplomatic undertakings are vital for charting a course toward a solution. Drawing from historical precedent, such convocations have the potential to steer crises toward eventual peace.

Shifting the focus to the objectives of the meeting's organizers, it becomes evident that one of the primary aims is to forge consensus or arrive at a conclusive stance among the world's influential nations with regards to addressing the Ukrainian



conflict. This collective effort could serve as a stepping stone toward cultivating a pathway to future tranquility. However, the absence of Russia casts a shadow over these discussions, introducing an element of one-sidedness. Consequently, harboring expectations of immediate positive outcomes from this assembly would be unrealistic.

What do you perceive as the primary hindrances to achieving peace? Is it Russia's unwavering stance, reluctant to relinquish its positions? Or is it Russia's apprehension that Western parties, particularly NATO, fail

to provide the necessary security assurances? Alternatively, could the issue be attributed to Europe and the US, who might view the perpetuation of the conflict as a means to further weaken Russia for their own strategic advantage?

The complexities at play encompass multiple facets. On one hand, Moscow's outlook appears entrenched, as it discerns limited potential for realizing its objectives or addressing its demands through such diplomatic gatherings. On the opposing front, the NATO alliance, under the US leadership, is reluctant to bring the conflict to an immedi-

ate end. In essence, the overarching predicament resides within the profound chasm that separates the aspirations of the opposing factions. Consequently, it appears that forums like the Jeddah meeting may fall short in bridging this considerable gulf, hindering meaningful convergence between the divergent aims of the involved parties. Despite this, the Jeddah meeting and analogous assemblies could serve as a platform, paving the way for broader talks that encompass Russia's active participation.

Wouldn't it be more prudent for Russia and the US to engage in direct bilateral talks, rather than convening meetings involving a multitude of nations? Why has this avenue not been pursued thus far?

The reality lies in the fact that Russia and the US-led NATO, have yet to arrive at a consensus that bilateral talks would yield a viable solution or fulfill their respective objectives. The crux of the issue, however, stems from a deeper division between the core

aims of the two factions. Put differently, the groundwork for dialogue at the leadership level – that is, between the heads of Russia and the US – has not been adequately laid.

Could the Russia-Ukraine conflict influence the US Democrats' prospects in the forthcoming 2024 presidential election, positively or negatively?

In the context of the US presidential election, the prominence of domestic matters has reached such heights that foreign concerns may not wield the same degree of impact. My assessment revolves around how the outcomes of the impending US presidential election could potentially shape the trajectory of the war in Ukraine conflict. Should the Republicans secure victory, a recalibration in the nature and extent of US aid to Ukraine becomes plausible. The partisan shift could translate into a withdrawal of the robust support that the Biden administration extended to Ukraine. This, in turn, might emerge as a pivotal determinant in the course of the Ukrainian war.

Arsenal removed 'mental block' with City win, claims Ramsdale



Arsenal keeper Aaron Ramsdale saves from Rodri to help Arsenal beat Manchester City in the shootout and win the Community Shield at the Wembley Stadium, London, Britain, on August 6, 2023.

● MICHAEL REGAN/
GETTY IMAGES

THE GUARDIAN – Aaron Ramsdale hailed the removal of a “mental block” after Arsenal ended their long losing run against Manchester City with a shootout win in the Community Shield. Arsenal had lost all three meetings with last season’s title rivals but snatched victory from the jaws of defeat when Leandro Trossard cancelled out Cole Palmer’s goal in the 11th minute of added time. Ramsdale was pivotal to their 4-1 shootout win, saving from Rodri, and said the psychological barrier that has dogged them has now disappeared.

“For us it’s a statement,” he said. “It’s a marker to know we can go and beat Man City in a big game when it matters. I’m not sure what it will be like this season but that mental block is gone. We’re ready to push on now.” Trossard’s strike was heavily deflected off Manuel Akanji but Ramsdale embraced the stroke of fortune. “We’ve been working hard for two years,” he told ITV. “We haven’t had luck, which was probably needed in previous seasons. We’ve stuck at it. It’s worked today.”

Mikel Arteta welcomed Ramsdale’s sentiment. “If Aaron feels it this way, great,” he said. “It’s [about] what the players feel when they are there and they are convinced they can beat any team. We knew the challenge, especially because of their maturity and how often they play finals, but today we showed a real resilience and determination to win and fight the game.” Pep Guardiola expressed dissatisfaction about the amount of time added to the 90 minutes. Trossard was afforded his scoring opportunity because of treatment given to Thomas Partey and Kyle Walker for a clash of heads during the additional period. Guardiola felt the eight minutes initially signalled was excessive and questioned the new rules that seek to offset time-wasting by adding lost minutes to the end of a half. “We have to get used to it,” he said. “I had the feeling that there didn’t happen much to [merit] eight minutes but it’s a question for the international board [IFAB]. Now games will be 100 minutes, that’s for sure. And if there are seven goals, tomorrow morning I’m still here playing.”

Wrestling U17 Worlds: Freestyle crown seals title double for Iran



Iran’s Ahoura Khateri celebrates his 11-0 victory over Armenian Gor Buniatyan in the freestyle 45kg final at the Wrestling U17 World Championships in Istanbul, Turkey, on August 6, 2023.

● UWW



Sport Desk

A total of six medals, including a couple of golds, across 10 weight classes saw Iran claim the freestyle title at the Wrestling U17 World Championships – days after the country had been crowned the Greco-Roman champion in Istanbul, Turkey.

Having missed out on a podium finish in the previous two editions of the freestyle event, Iran topped the table with 156 points – 30 clear of last year’s champion USA – with Japan in third on 106 points.

Ahoura Khateri was in a league of his own in the 45kg weight division as he picked up where he had left off in the Asian U17 Championships in June, which saw the Iranian prodigy storm to the gold without conceding a single point.

Khateri again rounded off a dominant run in Istanbul in emphatic fashion, out-muscling Armenia’s Gor Buniatyan 11-0 in the final showpiece.

The young gun secured a leg lace and rolled the Armenian out of bounds to open the scoring before taking a 6-0 lead into the break.

Khateri then secured wrist control, ducked under and grabbed the waistlock to score in the second period and walk away with the ultimate prize.

Khateri’s triumph proved to be the sole victory for Iran in three gold medal show-downs on the final day of the competitions.

Sajjad Pirdayeh defeated opponents from the Czech Republic, Puerto Rico, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan for a place in the 60kg final, only to suffer a 4-1 defeat against Akito Maehara of Japan – a second major silver for the Iranian after his runner-up finish in the Asian Championships.

Abolfazl Hosseini also had to settle for a silver medal in the 71kg contests.

Stepping into the event as the Asian champion, Hosseini eased passed the Japanese and Turkmenistan’s

wrestlers before running riot against Russian Islam Kazharov, participating as a neutral athlete, in the semi-finals.

However, a 4-1 setback against American Ladarion Lockett brought Hosseini’s campaign to a disappointing end.

Tohid Nouri, meanwhile, capped the 92kg event with a consolation bronze as he bounced back from an 11-0 defeat against Georgian Sandro Kurashvili in the last-eight round to overpower Genki Hoki of Japan 12-2 and share the third podium with Kazakhstan’s Samir Dursunov.

Kurashvili went on to come out victorious (10-0) against the host’s Eyyup Cetin for the gold.

Sunday’s results came a day after the Iranians had bagged a gold and a bronze medal in the freestyle contests.

Also a reigning Asian gold medalist, Sina Khalili made a quick work of Russian Magomed Alibakharchiev

in the 65kg final, using his speed and strength for successive takedowns en route to a 10-0 victory.

Sam Sayyar recovered from a semifinal loss to American Paul Kenny to defeat Turkmenistan’s Azymberdi Ashyrgulyyev 10-0 and stand on the third podium of the 48kg class – alongside Joseph Bachmann of Puerto Rico – while Kenny edged Japanese Yamato Furusawa for the coveted gold.

Four Iranians left Istanbul empty-handed but their results played a decisive role in the overall standings. Amir-Mohammad Navazi (51kg) and Amir-Reza Teymourizad (55kg) finished fifth in their respective classes, earning 10 points apiece for the country, while seventh places for Abolfazl Rahmani (80kg) and Abolfazl Mohammadnejad (110kg) added another 16 points to the squad’s tally.

The freestyle crown followed a second successive Greco-Roman title for Iran in the U17 Worlds.

The Iranian squad collected one gold and silver apiece as well as double bronze medals to gather 113 points and beat Azerbaijan, which won two golds, to the winner’s trophy by five, while Georgia stood third with 96 points.

Payam Ahmadi defeated Asian champion Shakhzod Ruziokhunov of Uzbekistan 4-0 to claim the 48kg gold, while Ahmadreza Mohammadian took the 71kg silver after a 6-5 loss to Greek wrestler Arionas Kollitopoulos.

Alireza Amiri (45kg) and Amirhossein Abdevali (110kg) added double bronzes to Iran’s medal haul in Istanbul.

The team of the Individual Neutral Athletes, represented by the Russian wrestlers, won two golds, three silvers, and five bronzes in the Greco-Roman competitions – coupled with one gold, one silver, and five bronzes in the freestyle contests – though their results was null and void in the medals table.

Mbappe barred from PSG’s first team training amid contract stand-off

BBC – Kylian Mbappe did not train with the Paris St-Germain first-team squad when they stepped up preparations on Monday for the start of the Ligue 1 season.

Mbappe has been in a contract stand-off with PSG amid a desire to join Real Madrid.

The club’s all-time leading goalscorer is refusing to sign a year’s extension to his contract which ends next summer.

PSG therefore want to sell the France forward now and secure a transfer fee rather than let him go for nothing.

As a result, Mbappe was left

out of PSG’s touring squad for their pre-season trip to Asia.

He subsequently refused to meet with representatives of Al-Hilal, who made a world record offer to bring him to the Saudi Pro League.

PSG begin their French title defence at home to Lorient on Saturday and it is understood Mbappe will train with the ‘loft’ group rather than the ‘A’ training group, which is players who could feature for the first team.

PSG sources say their most recent attempt to broker a solution to the situation was to offer Mbappe a guaranteed sale clause in

his contract for the end of this season. This offer was rejected.

After years of underachievement at Champions League level with their ‘galactico’ model of signing superstar players, PSG are now going down a different path and are understood to be close to completing a deal for Benfica’s Goncalo Ramos. The 22-year-old scored a hat-trick for Portugal at last year’s World Cup in Qatar and has attracted interest from numerous top European clubs.

PSG are expected to pay 80m euros (£69m) for the forward.



● GONZALO FUENTES/REUTERS

The Good Doctor



Mahdieh
Qazvinian
Staff writer

Dr. Bahram Razin, a 78-year-old specialist in infectious diseases, has been providing free treatment to patients for the past 40 years at his office located in the Safa'iye neighborhood of Shahr-e Rey. Razin resides in the Mirdamad neighborhood of Tehran and drives his trusty 2011 Pride car model to work every day, arriving promptly at six in the morning. Razin's philosophy is one devoid of material attachments; he even named his apartment after his wife. At the age of 60, he purchased this house and now lives amongst neighbors who don't even know his name and are unaware of his medical endeavors. However, within Shahr-e Rey, Razin is well-known and sees a minimum of 50 patients daily during two shifts — one in the morning and one in the evening. The esteemed doctor has three daughters; two are married while one remains a college student. Surprisingly, none have followed their father's footsteps into medicine. His wife is also retired from her profession as a teacher. Alongside practicing medicine, Razin serves as a professor at Shahid Beheshti University where students recognize him for teaching "love and ethics". Expressing great satisfaction with the people residing in Shahr-e Rey, whom he holds dear, Dr. Razin states that "infectious diseases tend to affect those living underprivileged lifestyles" more frequently than heart disease or other ailments do — a primary reason why he established his practice specifically within this community to provide aid and assistance to those most in need including Afghan nationals residing there. Razin's office is housed within an unassuming single-story building covered by foliage that conceals its sign from view intentionally — an indication of his modest nature. Upon entering the building, visitors find themselves greeted by a small three-room hall filled with numerous individuals seated on chairs — with additional people waiting outside.

Stairs lead from the doctor's room down to the basement where three more rooms are located: one for outpatient surgeries, another serving as a resting area for the doctor, and a third room filled with shoes and clothes — an intriguing sight that captures attention.

A charity center

When asked about the purpose of collecting shoes and clothes, Razin explained that they are gathered to be given to needy patients who visit his clinic. It is not just a medical facility but also functions as a charity center. The doctor stated that they have established a fund specifically dedicated to covering the costs of medication and treatment for underprivileged patients, supporting them throughout their entire recovery process. Razin emphasized the financial struggles faced by patients who cannot afford medical expenses such as consultations, medications, laboratory tests, and imaging procedures. This led him to initiate the fund — with a designated bank account — where benefactors and ordinary individuals gradually joined forces to help cover these costs. Astonishingly, even people from economically disadvantaged areas in the south of the city have contributed up to one million tomans (\$20,000) despite their own financial hardships.

When questioned about his modest lifestyle and philanthropy, Razin attributes it to his religious beliefs and his father's wishes. Before departing for England on a scholarship opportunity for further specialization in infectious diseases, his father advised him with profound words that would hopefully help him find prosperity in this world and the hereafter.

His father also entrusted him with a small property located in one of Tehran's deprived neighborhoods upon graduating from university: "Serve the people residing there," were his father's instructions.

Upon returning from England, Razin honored this wish by establishing his clinic



for the underprivileged, all the while visiting impoverished villages and settlements. Driven by a personal sense of satisfaction, he treated individuals afflicted with infectious diseases during times when such ailments were widespread. He would prepare medicines at his own expense with assistance from other doctors. During the 1960s era alone, he managed to save numerous lives otherwise doomed by these illnesses. During the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran, he courageously served at field hospitals situated near active battle zones before eventually returning to Tehran, where fulfilling his father's legacy brought him immense joy. Presently, Razin's focus extends beyond imparting scientific knowledge to students. He places equal importance on teaching them morals and ethics.

Patients are no source of income

In his view, the most significant threat to the medical community lies in the financial relationship between patients and doctors — a concern he actively addresses by offering free treatment and establishing a system that eliminates any monetary transaction between him and those seeking care. "I hope for a future where doctors no longer perceive their patients as mere sources of income," Razin expressed with sincerity. The doctor-patient relationship he fosters extends beyond the conventional boundaries of a medical office — it is characterized by friendship and support. "Sometimes, my clients visit me not because they are sick, but to seek advice and assistance with loans or job opportunities. I try to engage in conversations with my patients during treatment, pro-

viding them an opportunity to discuss any problems they may have. These interactions cultivate friendships, and over the course of 40 years, I have formed connections with all my patients and residents within the neighborhood." It might be hard to believe, but through his guidance and counsel, Razin has managed to prevent several couples from parting ways — some even found themselves getting married as a result.

The doctor firmly believes in the positive outcomes generated by his acts of kindness. He attributes this success to what he calls "the collective prayers" offered on his behalf by countless individuals. His sole capital consists of good health and a contented heart — a reflection of a lifetime dedicated to serving his patients. "At 78 years old, I am grateful that I remain free from disease. Having loving children and good sons-in-law is more than enough for me."

Razin's patient base extends far beyond urban dwellers. People from various cities across Iran such as Ahvaz, Dezful, Nahavand, Qom, Tehran, and Karaj also seek out his expertise for examinations. In contrast to some doctors who negotiate higher fees for home visits, Razin willingly visits sick and vulnerable individuals in their homes without seeking any compensation. During the challenging days brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, since he cared deeply about public welfare, he devotedly provided home-based care, attending primarily to those who were severely ill.

Financial challenges In addition to his clinic, Razin earns an income through a teaching position at Shahid Beheshti University. Al-

though not substantial, he believes that it is sufficient for him to lead a modest and healthy life.

"My sense of abundance stems from the grace and mercy bestowed upon me by God — not from the bank accounts of sick and needy individuals who have traveled from near and far in hopes of finding treatment within my office. Here, not only are needy patients exempt from examination fees, but also their entire treatment expenses are covered by a fund established within this very office."

Every day, Dr. Razin's office experiences a recurring cycle of expenses related to medication preparation, diagnostic tests, hospital admissions, and more. Masoumeh, the doctor's secretary, affirms his unwavering dedication to serving underprivileged and needy individuals.

"There are times when the expenses of the office exceed the income generated for that day due to treatment costs for patients. When I share this with the doctor, he smiles and reminds me of how many people are praying for both of us," she says.

Despite any financial challenges faced by the clinic, Masoumeh expresses contentment with her salary and describes working with the doctor as a source of tranquility.

"Razin's office serves as a beacon of hope for citizens from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Around 60 percent of his clientele comprises individuals from these countries. Even those struggling with addiction find support here; at times they receive financial assistance from Dr. Razin himself," she says, adding, "The doctor has personally funded several rehabilitation programs for addicts."

Strong testimonies

Hakimeh, one of Razin's

patients who hails from Afghanistan but resides in the same neighborhood testifies: "The doctor is an angel; I don't recover anywhere else except in his office."

Hakimeh also shares that even her father received effective treatment from him despite suffering from mental illness. Elaheh echoes Hakimeh's sentiments: "My sister-in-law is undergoing surgery today. She had an abdominal rupture that no other doctor was able to diagnose except Dr. Razin. During the days of the coronavirus pandemic, the doctor reached out to every resident within our community — truly becoming our savior. He is just and considers only God."

Habibeh, responsible for administering injections at the clinic enters with a smile on her face. She perceives this clinic as a university where she can learn ethics directly from Dr. Razin while gaining valuable work experience alongside him.

"I found my life's path in this office. My major was psychology, but now I come here with love and am studying to obtain a nursing degree again. The genuine relationship between the doctor and his patients has been truly inspiring for me," Habibeh says.

During our conversation with Razin, a fifty-something-year-old foreign woman entered his room. She described her pain while he listened attentively. He then proceeded to write a prescription for her and asked her to wait momentarily inside the room. Razin descended the stairs of his office only to return holding a package of frozen meat and gave it to her.

"It is the vovte of Imam Hussein (PBUH)," he said. He then provided her with some money from the fund specifically designated for purchasing medication.

All is set for Arbaeen pilgrimage

Social Desk

Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development hosted a press conference regarding Arbaeen trips attended by ministry deputies, members of the media, and various national news agencies.

During the press conference held on Monday, August 7, Reza Nakhjavani, head of Iran Airports Company, shared updates about the company's preparations for Arbaeen air travel. He stated that out of the 53 airports under their purview, nine are operational for international flights.

"There are 35 airports at air borders equipped to handle international calls," he said.

Additionally, he highlighted that 25 airports across the country have confirmed their readiness to facilitate Arbaeen trips.

Nakhjavani further revealed that this year Arbaeen flights will be operated from a total of 25 airports.

"Last year, there were a combined total of 291 departures and return flights transporting approximately 42,000 pilgrims each way," he said.

Assuring attendees about infrastructure improvements at these airports, Nakhjavani also emphasized his company's commitment to serving pilgrims who choose to travel partway by plane and continue their journey via other modes of transportation.

Furthermore, the presence of dedicated processions at border airports was mentioned as an effort to enhance services offered during this period. Nakhjavani expressed determination in providing even better services compared to last year through coordinated efforts with other relevant organizations.

Continuing with updates from the meeting, the head of Civil Aviation Organization of the country disclosed that prices for flights between Tehran-Najaf and Tehran-Baghdad stood at \$280, while Mashhad-Najaf and Mashhad-Baghdad routes were priced at \$330. Additionally, the director general representing Road Traffic and Transportation Organization announced that around 7,000 buses would be operating during Arbaeen days. He further detailed plans devised by his organization aimed towards bridging any gaps in bus availability for Arbaeen. These arrangements included collaborations with organizations, institutions, and neighboring countries to procure additional buses on a rental basis.

In another announcement, the CEO of the national railway company, stated that a direct rail line from Khorramshahr to Shalamchek will be introduced specifically catering to Arbaeen pilgrims. He emphasized that transfers would be available round-the-clock and free of charge.





Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Vietnam are set to commemorate a significant milestone in their bilateral relations as they come together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties. This momentous occasion will be marked with the Vietnam Cultural Days, an event scheduled to take place from August 9 to 11 in Iran.

The Vietnam Cultural Days are meticulously organized under the auspices of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), which aims to foster and strengthen cultural exchanges between the two nations. A delegation of 70 esteemed Vietnamese government and cultural officials will grace the occasion, adding prestige and significance to the celebrations. Among the notable attendees will be Vuong Dinh Hue, the esteemed National Assembly Chairman of Vietnam, who will be participating in the event.

Throughout the cultural extravaganza, Iran will have the privilege of witnessing a vibrant showcase of various aspects of Vietnamese culture. Visitors and participants alike will be treated to an array of cultural exhibits, including traditional handicrafts, captivating displays of traditional clothing that reflect Vietnam's rich cultural heritage, and enlightening collections of books and photographs that beautifully depict the country's tourist attractions, cultural legacy, and historical landmarks.

In addition to these fascinating exhibits, the Vietnam Cultural Days will also shine a spotlight on the captivating world of Vietnamese cinema. Attendees will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the captivating stories brought to life on the silver screen through the screening of Vietnamese films. Among these, the highly acclaimed 'Story of Pao,' directed by the talented Ngo Quang Hai, promises to captivate audiences with its compelling narrative and artistic brilliance.

The event is expected to serve as a platform for cultural exchange, fostering deeper understanding, and strengthening the bonds between Iran and Vietnam. As attendees engage in the rich tapestry of Vietnamese culture and artistic expressions, they will gain valuable insights into the shared history, values, and traditions that unite these two nations.

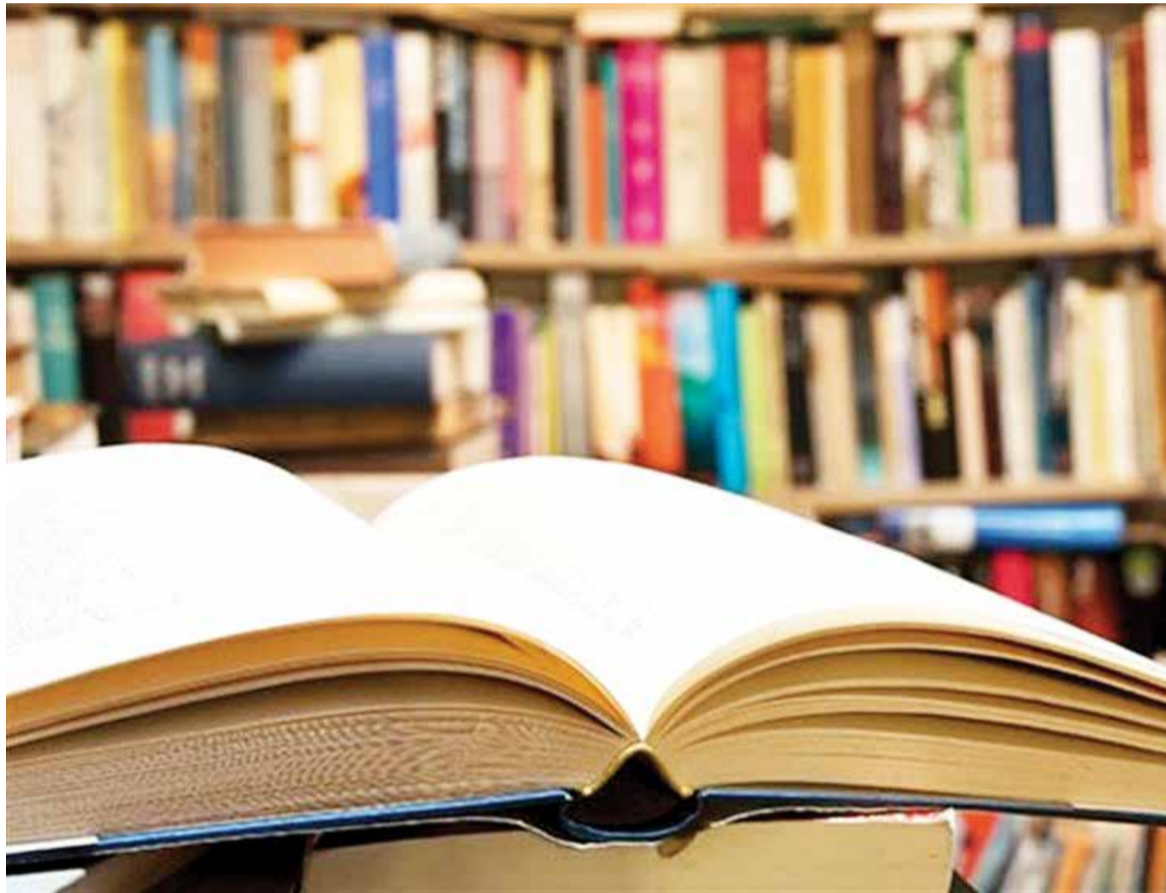
The Vietnam Cultural Days in Iran not only mark a moment of celebration and appreciation but also pave the way for a future filled with enhanced cultural cooperation and harmony between these two friendly nations. This event stands as a testament to the enduring power of cultural diplomacy and its potential to forge lasting friendships across borders.

- License Holder:
- Managing Director
- Editor-in-chief
- Int'l & National Desk
- Economy Desk
- Sports Desk
- Iranica Desk
- Arts & Culture Desk
- Social Desk
- Language Editor

Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)
Ali Kakadezfuli
Mostafa Shirmohammadi
Javad Mohammad Ali, Zohreh Qanadi,
Ebrahim Beheshti, Amir Mollae Mozaffari
Reza Abesh Ahmadlou, Sadeq Dehqan
Amirhadi Arsalanpour
Leila Imeni
Hamideh Hosseini
Ali Amiri
Ali Mehran

Address: #22, Hosseini-Rad Alley, South of
Shahid Motahari St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran
● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453
● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88930684
● ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5
● Advertising Dept. Tel: +98 21 88500617
& Email: irandaily@iranagahiha.com
www.irandaily.ir
newspaper.irandaily.ir
irandaily@icpi.ir
Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Iran's Book Capital nominees announced



Arts & Culture Desk

The selected cities for the final stage of Iran's 8th edition of Book Capital were revealed. During a press conference at-

tended by Iran's Deputy Culture Minister Yaser Ahmadvand and Ismail Janalipour, director general of the Office of Assemblies, Guilds, and Cultural Activities of the

Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the 12 cities were disclosed. The nominated cities include Oz and Sadra (Fars Province), Semnan (Semnan Province), Qazvin

(Qazvin Province), Karaj (Alborz Province), Shahin Shahr and Meymeh (Isfahan Province), Rabor (Kerman Province), Fuman (Gilan Province), Sabzevar (Khorasan Razavi Province), Amol (Mazandaran Province), and Urmia (West Azarbaijan Province).

Janalipour highlighted that Iran's Book Capital has undergone some changes in this edition and noted that 105 cities participated in the competition, with the final 12 reaching the final stage after evaluation by judges. Prior to the event, efforts were made to revitalize the network of book-loving cities and extend its reach to other urban and rural areas. In this edition, cities and villages were categorized based on their level of development, ensuring a fair selection process considering their capacities and future plans.

Ahmadvand said that more than a hundred cities took part in the competition, with 76 completing the registration process. The widespread interest from 24 provinces demonstrates the significance of books across

the nation. The closing ceremony is scheduled to take place on August 15 at Azadi Tower. This edition places a strong emphasis on diverse programs and facilities planned by official bodies, as well as the active participation of the public. The goal is to foster a new wave of enthusiasm for books in these cities, enabling them to implement their proposed plans to their full potential.

The chosen cities will receive special facilities and support, including priority in program implementation, educational and cultural courses, library upgrades, author support, and book festivals, courtesy of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Ahmadvand stressed that selected cities must prove themselves worthy of the Book Capital title in this competitive event, demonstrating a strong dedication to promoting reading. While the ministry aims to provide maximum support, the true potential of these cities lies in their capacities, a source of pride for all involved.

Journalism in journalists' words

Similar to many media outlets worldwide, the political leanings of media owners can significantly impact the perspectives of journalists and their ability to freely express their thoughts and insights. This phenomenon often leads to a situation where news reporting might be influenced or biased based on the agendas of those who run the media. This can raise concerns about the objectivity and impartiality of the information presented to the public.

Zohreh Qanadi - National Desk

Social media platforms, where users can share their own photos and footage of a newsworthy incident, are posing a major threat to professional journalism. While this phenomenon has its own pros as it gives leeway to people for sharing their firsthand opinions and breaks the monopoly of media giants, the cons could spell disaster for journalists, potentially

pushing many of them out of work. Adding to the issue, the rapid emergence of artificial intelligence is also rendering many media people useless.

Mostafa Shirmohammadi - Editor-in-chief

In Iran, journalists face several challenges, including the lack of media literacy, leading to the spread of fake news and a loss of credibility. The absence of a well-defined media system allows unqualified individuals to enter the field, hindering proper training and understanding of journalism. Moreover, the lack of a unified media system and strong regulation poses risks to the essence of journalism. Addressing these issues requires prioritizing media literacy, improving training programs, and establishing a strong regulatory framework to maintain the profession's integrity and vital role in society.

Hamideh Hosseini - Arts & Culture Desk

When the esteemed Iranian journalist and famous constitutionalist Mirza Jahan-gir Khan - a.k.a. Jahan-gir Khan-e Sur-e Esrafil - was brutally murdered in the presence of the then king of Iran in June 1908, the dangerous nature of the profession was there for all to see. Although the incident dates back to more than 100 years, the recent savage killing of the Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi with knives and axes in October 2018 inside the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, reiterates the solemnity of the dangers facing journalists everywhere. It all reminds me of a line by the revered 12th century Iranian poet Attar of Nishapur: "The man of the field must walk through pools of blood." In 2022, Reporters Without Borders reported that between 2003-2022, around 1700 journalists worldwide were killed. If you add to this already horrific number those journalists who are in prison all over the world,

the hardships of the job will be evident even more. All in all, journalism is a passion melded with never-ending excitement. The uttermost need of journalists is to provide them with safety.

Ebrahim Beheshti - Staff writer

It's been almost a decade that I've been working in print media - although it's only a little more than a year that I'm a journalist *per se*. What urged me to pursue this career path was, first and foremost, my love for the written word and the power it holds in enlightening the mind and propagating knowledge. What civilization we humans have - at least for now - depends heavily on the written words of thinkers, researchers and investigators who did not settle for commonly accepted versions of truth, and,

therefore, further expanded the boundaries of human understanding.

Ali Amiri - Social Desk

It takes two tolls, being a news reporter. There's the obvious troll under the bridge, demanding you to listen to and recount a never-ending list of tragedies and misfortunes just to give you a "safe" passage into the next day. And then, there's a subtle toll you must pay for traveling with a companion who reminds you of all the times you crossed the

bridge on a loop that gets longer the more you stay in the business. Sometimes you just want to yell at your companion, "Yes, I know I've heard the same story before. Yes, I know little was done to fix it. And yes, I know I'll probably hear it again someday. Would you get desensitized so I can keep working?" For those who ask, that's how we get by. We get desensitized but still report the story with the same level of care and urgency so you, who are not hopefully bogged down by such metaphorical characters, won't get desensitized.

Amir Mollae Mozaffari - International Desk

