



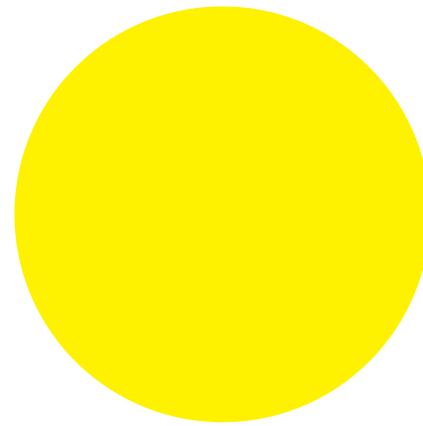
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Iran Daily



irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7365 • Thursday, Aug. 17, 2023 • Mordad 26, 1402 • Muharram 30, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages



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Ukrainian servicemen, the front line near Bakhmut, Ukraine, on March 8
● AFP/SERGEY SHESTAK



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Appointment of Saudi envoy to Palestine kills two birds with one stone

By Ebrahim Beheshti

Staff writer

Saudi Arabia introduced an ambassador to Palestine for the first time on Sunday. Iran Daily has discussed this issue as well as its relation to the normalization of Saudi-Israeli ties with Seyed Ali Nejat, an expert in West Asian affairs, and a researcher at the Scientific Research and Middle East Strategic Studies Center in Tehran.

IRAN DAILY: The appointment of a Saudi ambassador to Palestine

caught many by surprise. How should we evaluate Riyadh's action?

Nejat: I've reviewed the viewpoints of numerous experts and analysts in the Arab world and noticed their astonishment as well. The question arises: Why hasn't Saudi Arabia had an ambassador to Palestine until now? Even Israelis were taken aback as Riyadh had not coordinated with them. Both sides are inclined toward normalizing relations. However, Israel seeks normalization without granting special privileges to Saudi Arabia. [Page 2 >](#)

China's oil imports from Iran set to hit decade-high in August

Chinese imports of Iranian oil are running at the highest level in at least a decade, according to data intelligence firm Kpler. The world's biggest oil importer will take about 1.5 million barrels a day of crude from Iran this month, according to an estimate from Kpler. That compares with an average of 917,000 barrels a day in the first seven months of the year and would be the highest in the Kpler figures that go back to 2013, Bloomberg reported. Iran has been ramping up oil exports this year with most of the shipments heading to China.

Meanwhile, Iran's oil exports have recently jumped to a five-year high of 1.4 million bpd, and the Islamic Republic is looking to boost its oil production to 3.5 million bpd by the end of September. The easing of a probe by Beijing into imports of bitumen mixture also appears to be speeding the passage of cargoes through customs, according to traders who are involved in the market. A jump of around a fifth in global benchmark Brent crude since late June is raising demand for the cut-price oil, much of which is bought by independent refiners clustered in Shandong Province.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran to
compensate
families hurt
by 2022 riots:
MP

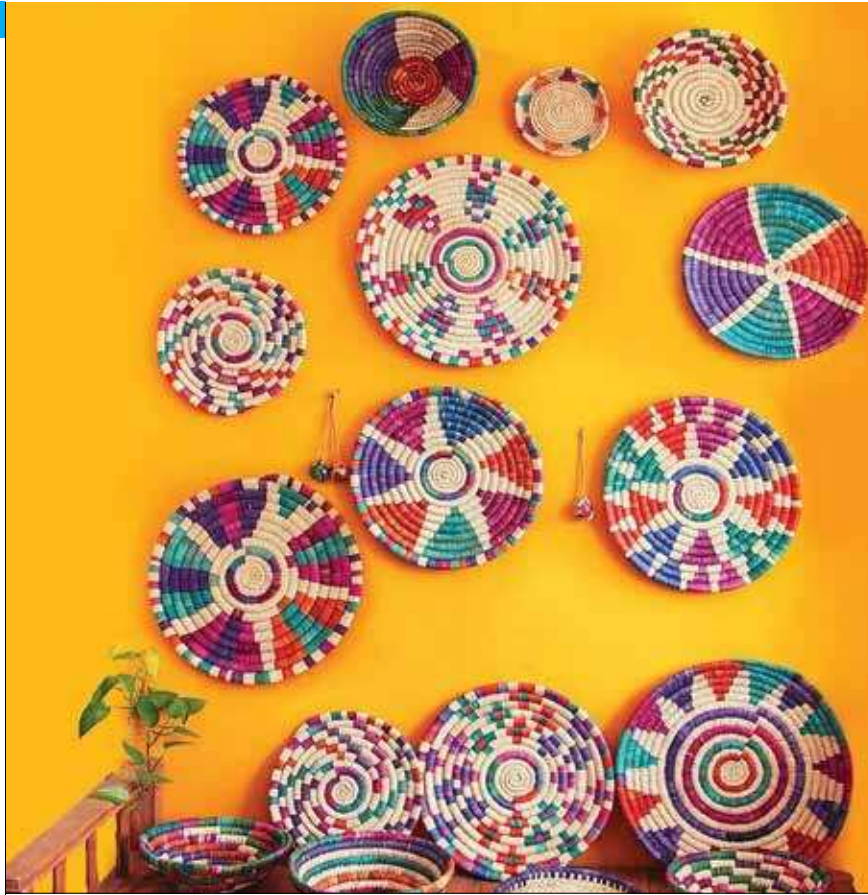
IRNA - The chairwoman of the Iranian Parliament's Human Rights Committee, Zohreh Elahian, said that the damage inflicted on those whose rights have been violated during the 2022 riots is to be compensated. Elahian said Wednesday that the recent meeting of Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi with members of a committee aimed at investigating various aspects of the 2022 riots.

Report
unmasks
Shiraz terror
attack gunman

TASNIM - New information indicates that the main element behind a recent deadly terrorist attack on a religious site in Shiraz, southern Iran, had joined Daesh (ISIL or ISIS) in Turkey and received training in Afghanistan. The Tajik national who carried out the fatal attack on Shah Cheragh Shrine on Sunday has been identified as Rahmatollah Norzov, alias Salman Islomiyar. The Iranian security forces are planning to deal a heavy blow to the network that may have assisted the gunman inside Iran.

Terrorists
ambushed
soldiers in
Niger, killing 17

REUTERS - Niger's junta on Wednesday said 17 of its soldiers were killed in an ambush by insurgents, the deadliest attack since a July 26 coup. The ambush took place on Tuesday about 60 km from the capital Niamey, in a southwestern area that borders Burkina Faso, the defence ministry said, adding that 100 attackers it referred to as "terrorists" were killed. Niger, like other countries in West Africa's Sahel region, has been struggling for years to contain an insurgency by groups linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State that have killed thou-

Dezful, Kashan cities
recognized by WCC

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism, Ezzatollah Zarghami, announced that the cities of Dezful and Kashan have earned a prestigious accolade from the World Crafts Council (WCC). These cities have been registered by the WCC for their exceptional contributions to the world of traditional craftsmanship. Dezful earned distinction for its mastery of kapubafi, a unique handicraft prevalent in southern Iran. Kapubafi involves weaving wicker baskets from palm

leaves and adorning them with vibrant colored yarns. Kashan, on the other hand, secured its place on the global handicraft map for its expertise in traditional textiles, IRNA reported. Zarghami highlighted the meticulous evaluation process, thorough documentation, and on-site inspections that supported the registration of these cities. He underscored that this recognition comes with both a responsibility and an honor, urging a concerted effort to further develop these

crafts. Kapubafi, an art form rooted in palm tree waste, was elaborated by Zarghami as a testament to the beauty, durability, and practicality of these artifacts. This craft avoids excessive spending on imported raw materials, thereby contributing to economic resilience. The announcement marks an important milestone, as Iran's tally of world-recognized handicraft cities and villages now stands at 13, including Dezful and Kashan.

Appointment of Saudi ...

Establishing relations with Saudi Arabia holds **Page 1** > para - mount significance for Israel, as it breaks down barriers of resistance from other Islamic and Arab countries to engage with Israel.

Saudi Arabia has important conditions for this endeavor, which have been covered recently in the media. Do you believe that the United States and Israel would agree to these conditions?

Saudi Arabia has three major conditions. One involves the agreement of the US and Israel for Saudi Arabia to become a nuclear state. Another is the signing of a security agreement with the US, acting as a guarantee from the United States to defend Saudi Arabia. The third condition relates to Riyadh and Palestine, involving the realization of the idea of forming two states. Appointing an ambassador to Palestine at this juncture serves to prepare public opinion in Saudi Arabia and the Arab world to accept normalization. This is because,

according to polls, 50% of Saudis are against normalization, believing that the normalization of relations between Bahrain, the UAE, and Israel has not benefited Palestinians in any way and not brought any specific advantage to these countries.

Moreover, the appointment of an ambassador also conveys a message to the Palestinian people that Saudi Arabia stands alongside them, and normalization doesn't entail abandoning support for the Palestinians.

What do you think about the Israeli regime's reaction to Riyadh's conditions as well as the appointment of an ambassador to Palestine?

The conditions that are related to the Israeli regime is Saudi Arabia's development of its own nuclear program and the formation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. The Israelis are not happy with these conditions. Recently, Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid said that they are opposed to Saudi Arabia's uranium enrichment on its soil. Israel's foreign minister, Eli Cohen,

has clearly said that he is against the formation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. It seems that Saudi Arabia announced its ambassador to Palestine after this remark. The Israelis believe that there is no link between normalization with Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian issue. They are offering the establishment of economic relations as well as security and military cooperation against Iran. But the Saudis know that the promises of Israel and the US in this case have not gone beyond statements, and none of them have been implemented. For example, regarding the normalization of Israel's relations with the UAE, the Americans did not fulfill their promises and, finally, they did not sell the advanced F-35 fighter jets to the Persian Gulf Arab country. On the other side, the Palestinians have welcomed the Saudi move. They believe that Saudi Arabia's decision to appoint an ambassador is a historical step and, in fact, it is a move to promote its diplomatic relations with Palestine before normalization

with the Israeli regime. Of course, the opinion of Palestinian resistance groups is different.

Will Saudi Arabia retreat from its demands and accept the US's and Israel's conditions?

No. Riyadh is seeking normalization. It doesn't want to enter the negotiations from a position of weakness and without securing concessions. Basically, the appointment of the ambassador was a signal and even a serious warning to Israel that Saudi Arabia is not the UAE. Riyadh has sent a message that it will sit at the negotiating table with Israel when Tel Aviv recognizes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Saudi Arabia now believes that it is in a good position. A recent thaw in relations between Tehran and Riyadh has also promoted Saudi Arabia's position.

Will normalization pose a threat to Iran?

Yes, this agreement can be a threat to Iran in any form, and that is why Tehran is against it. Iran and Israel are enemies and have threatened each



other many times. The Israelis want to challenge Iran's support for Palestine with normalization with Arab countries. Another concern of Iran is that normalization with Saudi Arabia will not be limited to this. Normalization with Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain means Israel's vast presence in the Persian Gulf, which is not in Iran's interests. The purpose of normalization is altering the balance of power in Palestine to the detriment of the resistance axis and Iran's allies in Palestine. Therefore, although Saudi Arabia and Israel are seeking to normalize relations, it does not seem possible in the short term.

Majdi Khalidi (R), diplomatic adviser to Palestinian Authority President, and the new Saudi envoy to the Palestinian authority, Naif bin Bandar Al-Sudairi on August 12, 2023, in Amman, Jordan
● TWITTER

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran FM: Recent deal tests US

Iran's foreign minister says a recent agreement with the United States that led to the release of Iran's frozen assets is a new test to see whether Washington would honor its promises. "The release and transfer of our country's assets from South Korea is part of the realization of the honorable diplomacy emphasized by the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution," Hossein Amir-Abdollahian wrote in a post on his social media account, according to IRNA. "Of course, this phase of

the agreement is also a new test for America," he said. Amir-Abdollahian further stressed that the diplomatic efforts of the incumbent government to lift the sanctions and bring all sides to their international commitments towards Iran will continue. Last Thursday, Iran's Foreign Ministry announced that the process of releasing billions of dollars of Iran's assets, which had been illegally blocked by the United States for several years, has begun.



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian
● IRNA

Giveh-weaving craft still alive in Ilam Province

Iranica Desk

From the very beginning of life, human beings realized that in order to avoid the dangers of nature, they should use footwear and this was actually one of their most basic stages of thinking about survival. *Giveh* is an Iranian traditional footwear made by craftspeople, using very simple and primitive tools. *Giveh-bafi* (*giveh-weaving*) has been common in the western province of Ilam for a long time. The production process of *giveh* is divided into three phases: 1. Making the sole, known as *ajideh*; 2. Weaving the upper part; 3. Sewing the upper part to the sole, chn.ir reported. These phases can be done either entirely by a craftsman, or separately by three skilled workers. In the past, the sole of *giveh* was made from the skins of animals, such as cows, which required much patience and skill. However, presently, most *givehs* are manufactured using ready-made plastic soles. For making *giveh*, cotton thread is used to prevent feet from sweating in the summer. Moreover, since some nomads live in areas which are rocky and hard to pass, they can wear *givehs* as a strong shoe. For weaving women's *givehs*, manufacturers use colorful silk threads to diversify them and create beautiful

designs.

Although manufacturing *giveh* still continues in parts of Ilam Province, due to the low final price of this footwear, getting involved in this field of handicraft production, which needs a lot of effort and time, is not economically viable, and this has created many problems for craftspeople.

Presently, a few people are engaged in *giveh-weaving* in the province, most of whom produce only custom-made shoes. They also sell part of their products in the local, provincial, and national exhibitions and some handicraft stores.

The craft of *giveh-bafi* displays a combination of male and female art, unlike embroidery, for example. Some craftspeople and experts believe that modern methods should be employed to preserve the art and prepare conditions for producers to sell their works to other parts of the country, and even export them to foreign countries.

Giveh is light, cool, durable and suitable for walking and daily use at work, university, and due to its beautiful and attractive designs, it is suitable for pairing with all kinds of fashionable clothes. Due to the presence of pores in the fabric, it has good ventilation, which prevents sweating and foot odor.

1000-year-old tower of Savadkuh in danger of destruction



ealiya.com

Iranica Desk

Lajim Tower in Iran, which dates back 1000 years, located in Lajim village in Savadkuh, Mazandaran Province, is damaged.

The most iconic part of this building, the dome of the tower, has reportedly been destroyed due to a tree growing nearby. Recently, published photos of this monument caused concern among fans.

The tower is 18 meters high, with a round shape. While the exterior design is simple, the stand of the dome is decorated with an archway and the entrance door is in the eastern part of the building.

This monument is prominent among historical works, mostly because of containing one Kufic and one Pahlavi epigraph. Based on the Kufic script epigraph found in the dome, the builder of the structure is Kia Esmail Abolfars Shahriar ibn Abbas, and it was erected in 1022 CE.

These two epigraphs indicate that kings not only paid attention to the art of the Islamic era, but also to the calligraphy common in that time.

This historical heritage is known as one of the two old sepulchral towers in Mazandaran, along with Rasket Tower, and was registered on Iran's National Heritage List on July 9, 1932.



Gorgan in ancient time

In antiquity, Hyrcania encompassed the eastern portion of modern Mazandaran; by the time of the Arab geographers, however, the border between Tabarestan, as Mazandaran was then called, and Jurjan or Gorgan passed not far to the west of Astarabad.

In terms of climatic conditions, the area between the Alborz, Gorgan, and the Caspian coast differs fundamentally from Khorasan; here, as in other Caspian regions of Persia, precipitation is very high, so that the region has lush vegetation.

James Baillie Fraser, a Scottish travel writer, who reached the banks of the Gorgan coming from Bojnurd

on the east, relates in glowing terms the impression that the change made on him.

The earthen walls and flat earthen roofs of Khorasani dwellings, whose color fully corresponds to that of the soil, were replaced by constructions that were built chiefly of wooden pales held together with clay, and which had wooden floors; household utensils were also made from wood. On the other hand, the humidity that condenses in the forests makes the climate of this region quite harmful to the health. Further-

more, the country is totally open to inroads by nomads from the north, against whom fortifications were built as early as Sassanid times.

The Arabs conquered Gorgan much later than Khorasan (in fact, only in 717 CE). Until the conquest of Gorgan, travel through Qumis was considered unsafe, and even the governors of Khorasan appointed by the caliph usually preferred to take the southern route through Fars and Kerman; only Qutayba b. Muslim, in 705, realized the journey through Rey and Qumis. In the time of the Arab geographers, Gorgan was the capital of the local dynasty of the Ziyarid dynasty, whose founder, Mardawij b. Ziyar (928-935 CE) conquered a part of Persia and was beginning to dream of a restoration of the throne of the Sassanids when he was killed by his slaves.

His successors had to submit to the mightier dynasties of the Buyids, the Ghaznavids and ul-

imately the Seljuks; in the second half of the eleventh century, the dynasty was annihilated by a sect of the Ismaeilis or Assassins.

The city of Gorgan thus no longer had any political importance after Mardavij, but it remained, judging from descriptions by the Arab geographers, the largest city of the Caspian regions.

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn al-Ishtakri, a 10th-century travel author and Islamic geographer, speaks with enthusiasm of the fertility in this land, where the growing of crops of warm as well as cold climates converged, where it snowed in winter but where nonetheless palms could grow.

Gorgan, together with Tabaristan, was also renowned for its silk.

The city of Gorgan, Jurjan in Arabic, straddled the river of the same name; the river divided it into two parts, Shahrestan and Bakrabad, which were linked by a bridge. Shahrestan was on the right bank, Bakrabad on the left.

As early as the tenth century, the city went into a decline caused by chronic wars between the Samanids and the Buyids, a struggle in which the Ziyarids kept submitting to whichever side was winning. To the epoch of the Ziyarids also pertains the tomb of Qabus bin Vushmgir, the Ziyarid ruler of Gorgan and Tabaristan, built in 1006-7, the edifice has been described by several geographers.

The harbor of Abaskun served as the port of Gorgan; it was probably situated at the estuary of the Gorgan river on the site of the present-day settlement of Giimushtep. Alongside Abaskun, Astarabad is also mentioned, not as the trading center that it is today, but as a manufacturing town; the inhabitants were renowned for their mastery in silk weaving. Today only woolen rugs were woven in Astarabad, but more widely known are other kinds of industry that did not exist there in the Middle Ages, in particular, soap boiling and the manufacture of gunpowder.

[Tomb of Qabus bin Vushmgir](http://tasnimnews.com)
tasnimnews.com

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.

Ukraine

The New Victim

Unmasking dual roles: US 'security aid' to Kiev sheds light on American companies' involvement in global conflicts

The American arms industry stands as one of the world's most lucrative sectors, with the West holding sway over 75% of the global arms market. In this domain, the United States commands a staggering 54% share of the \$531 billion global arms sales, while Europe claims 21%. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine has been speculated by some intellectuals to serve as a catalyst for revitalizing the Western arms industry, which has seen a slump since the aftermath of the 2003 Iraq war.

Despite facing challenges related to quantity, both NATO and the United States seem poised to overcome these hindrances through the introduction of strategic weaponry into the Ukrainian conflict. Amid this backdrop, the United States has notably extended substantial support to Ukraine throughout the duration of the conflict. In a recent move, Washington has unveiled plans to dispatch what it terms as "new security assistance," a package valued at \$200 million. This aid encompasses a range of provisions, including air defense munitions, artillery rounds, supplementary mine-clearing equipment, and bolstered anti-armor capabilities.

Obtaining advantages is the top priority of the United States

The United States sends billions of dollars in aid to beneficiaries around the world annually in pursuit of its financial, economic, and security objectives, significantly more than any other nation. U.S. foreign aid was based on various priorities of the Biden administration, including combating climate change, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and countering hostile governments in 2022; and Ukraine has now received the most US foreign aid, since the Ukraine crisis in February of the same year. This is the first time that a European country since the Truman administration (one of the US presidents after World War II) allocated huge sums of money for the reconstruction of the European continent (showing the Europe's dependence on the United States)

through the Marshall Plan after World War II, has taken the first place. The Biden administration and the US Congress have given Ukraine more than \$75 billion in aid since the war began, including financial, military, and humanitarian assistance, according to Kiel Institute for the World Economy (the German research institute). These sums will help a wide range of Ukrainian people and institutions, including refugees, law enforcement and independent broadcasters; although most of these contributions have been related to military affairs. Many other countries, including notably the majority of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members and the European Union, are offering large aid packages to Ukraine.

How much has America helped Ukraine?

The Aid is provided mainly through bills of credit. This chart only covers the aid to Ukraine; therefore, it does not include all of the United States' war-related expenditures.

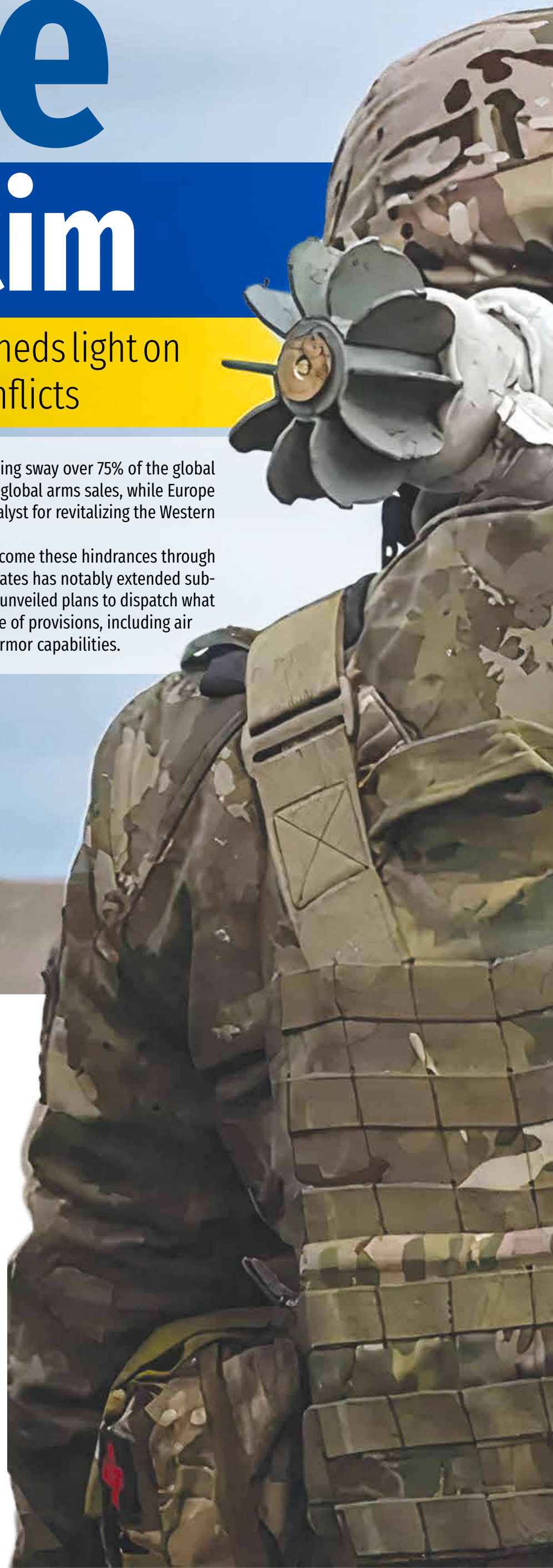
The majority of this aid has gone towards providing weaponry, instruction, and data. According to many Western experts, the United States and its allies' military support was crucial to Ukraine's defence and counteroffensive against Russia.

NATO allies are particularly wary of being drawn directly into hostilities, which would dramatically increase the risk of nuclear war. However, as the conflict has intensified, several donor nations have given up on their earlier hesitation to supply Ukraine with more advanced equipment like combat tanks and cutting-edge fighter jets. The US declared in May 2023 that it would permit its European allies to give Ukraine F-16s built in the US in the following months. The Biden administration has committed to give Ukraine a long list of defence tools, including Abram's combat tanks, anti-aircraft missiles, coastal defence vessels, and cutting-edge radar

and surveillance systems, 17 months into the conflict. The Biden administration decided to give Ukraine cluster munitions in July, despite the fact that most nations forbid their use.

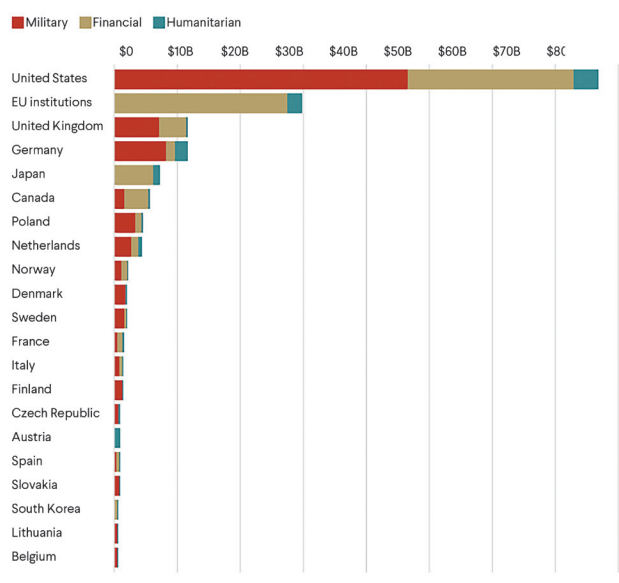
Forty-Seven Countries Have Provided Military Aid to Ukraine

Countries providing military aid to Ukraine as of July 2023



U.S. Aid to Ukraine Far Exceeds That From Other Countries

Bilateral aid from the top 20 donor countries and EU institutions as of May 31, 2023

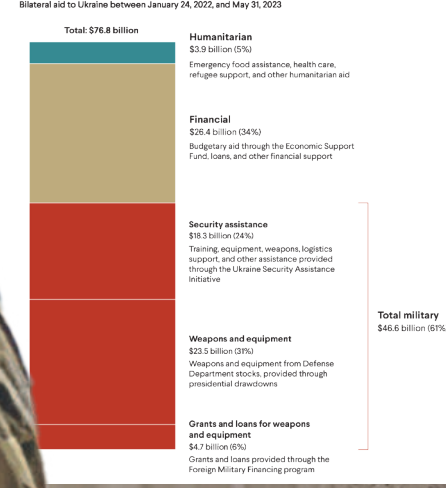


How Ukraine Is Tapping the U.S. Arsenal

U.S. security assistance between January 20, 2020, and June 27, 2023

- Infantry arms and equipment**
 - 10,000 Javelin anti-armor systems
 - 70,000 other anti-armor systems and munitions
 - 1,700 Stinger anti-aircraft systems
 - 4,000 TOW missiles
 - 35,000 grenade launchers and small arms, with ammunition
 - 100,000 sets of body armor and helmets
 - Thousands of night-vision devices, surveillance systems, thermal imagery systems, optics, and laser rangefinders
 - C-4 and other explosives
 - Explosive-ordnance-disposal equipment
 - M18A1 Claymore mines
 - Anti-tank mines
 - Mine-clearing equipment
 - Obstacle-emplacment equipment
 - Medical supplies
 - Field equipment, cold-weather gear, generators, and spare parts
 - Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear protective equipment
 - 18 armored bridging systems
- Air defense**
 - 1 Patriot air defense battery and munitions
 - 8 NASAM systems
 - 20 Avenger air defense systems
 - HAWK air defense systems and munitions
 - Laser-guided rocket systems
 - RIM-7 missiles
 - Antiaircraft guns and ammunition
 - Equipment to integrate with and sustain Ukraine's systems
 - 9 anti-drone gun trucks and ammunition
 - 10 anti-drone laser-guided rocket systems
- Air-to-ground missiles**
 - High-speed anti-radiation missiles (HARMs)
 - Precision aerial munitions
 - 6,000 Zuni aircraft rockets (could function as air defense)
 - 7,000 Hydra-70 aircraft rockets
- Manned aircraft**
 - 20 Mi-17 helicopters
- Explosive and combat drones**
 - Switchblade drones
 - Phoenix Ghost drones
 - ALTIUS-600 drones (can also be used for surveillance)
 - Munitions
- Surveillance drones**
 - ScanEagle drones
 - Puma drones
 - JUMP drones
 - CyberLux K8 drones
- Coastal defense**
 - 2 Harpoon coastal defense systems
 - 62 coastal and riverine patrol boats
 - Unmanned coastal defense vessels
 - Port and harbor security equipment
- Radar and communications**
 - 4 satellite communications antennas
 - 2 radars for unmanned aerial systems
 - 21 air surveillance radars
 - 70 counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars
 - 20 multi-mission radars
 - Tactical secure communications systems
 - Counter air defense capability
 - Counter-unmanned aerial systems
 - Electronic jamming equipment
 - SATCOM terminals and services
- Satellite services**
 - Commercial satellite imagery services
- Tanks and armored carriers**
 - 154 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles
 - 4 Bradley Fire Support Team vehicles
 - 31 Abrams tanks
 - 45 T-72B tanks (via the Czech Republic)
 - 125 Stryker armored personnel carriers
 - 300 M113 armored personnel carriers
 - 250 M117 armored security vehicles
 - 200 armored medical-treatment vehicles
 - 500 MRAP vehicles
 - 125mm, 120mm, and 105mm tank ammunition
- Ground support vehicles**
 - 2,000 Humvees
 - 354 tactical vehicles
 - 100 light tactical vehicles
 - 68 trucks
 - 124 trailers
 - 10 command post vehicles
 - 30 ammunition support vehicles
 - 6 armored utility trucks
 - 8 logistics support vehicles
 - 89 heavy fuel tankers and 105 fuel trailers

Just How Much Aid Has the U.S. Sent to Ukraine?



Kiel Institute for the World Economy

A member of Ukrainian National Guard carries a mortar shell in Kharkiv region on October 25, 2022. **SERGEY BOBOK/AFP**

The aid is provided mainly through bills of credit. This chart only covers the aid to Ukraine; therefore, it does not include all of the United States' war-related expenditures. The majority of this aid has gone towards providing weaponry, instruction, and data. According to many Western experts, the United States and its allies' military support was crucial to Ukraine's defence and counteroffensive against Russia. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has listed the top arms manufacturing and shipping firms in the world, 51% of which are based in the United States and 19% of which are based in Europe, and which together account for 70% of the global arms sales market. The top 15 arms manufacturers in the world sold about 360 billion dollars' worth of weapons and military services in 2022. The top ten arms corporations are all either American or Chinese, with only one exception and the top five arms manufacturing companies in the world are based in America. The fact that the Pentagon budget increase has a good impact on the economy and em-

ployment is one of the reasons why both the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States support it. The armaments manufacturing industry offers the best working circumstances for engineers, scientists, and even employees, and the discoveries made by scientists there, are applied to other areas of the economy. However, there is fierce competition among manufacturers as a result of the abundance of weapons producers, and governments subsidize the industry with substantial sums of money. The high profit of the arms manufacturing industry has made all the government officials in America interested in it, and many members of the Congress are big shareholders of the arms manufacturing companies, and it is common that the prosperity of this industry will be very profitable for them. In Europe, the military industry is one of the most important sectors of the economy, and in 1,300 companies active in this field, 500,000 people are working directly and 200,000 people are working indirectly. Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution addressed the issue of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine on July 12, 2023 while speaking to missionaries and seminary students from all over the nation. He did so after outlining the conflict between the Islamic system and the Western front and outlining the colonialism of the West in earlier centuries. "The issue with Ukraine is to put a country like the poor, destitute nation of Ukraine in front, let the country fight, let it be killed, so that weapons will be sold and Europeans will be forced to buy weapons, make weapons, share weapons, and the pockets of weapons companies will be filled.", Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Tractor to face Sharjah in ACL qualifier



● MORTEZA SALEHI/TASNIM

Sport Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor will host the UAE's Sharjah next Tuesday in the AFC Champions League playoffs.

Brazilian Luanzinho was on target twice as the Emirati side defeated Bashundhara Kings of Bangladesh 2-0 in Tuesday's preliminary-round clash at the Sharjah Stadium to progress to the next round.

A place in the group stage of the Asian elite clubs' competition will be up for grabs when Tractor and Sharjah square off in the Yadegar-e Imam Stadium. Should Tractor go through, the Tabriz-based club will join fellow Iranian top-flight sides Persepolis, Sepahan, and Nassaji Mazandaran in the group phase of the competition. Under Spanish head coach Paco Jemez, Tractor enjoyed an impressive run in the second half of the domestic league to finish fourth last season.

City's De Bruyne could miss rest of year with injury



● GETTY IMAGES

THE GUARDIAN - Pep Guardiola fears Kevin De Bruyne could be out into the new year with the hamstring injury sustained in Friday's Premier League win at Burnley, and has described it as a "big blow". The 32-year-old was forced off after 28 minutes of the season opener in a recurrence of the problem that caused his first-half substitution in June's Champions League final victory against Internazionale.

"It's serious - a big blow, really tough for us," Guardiola said. "We have to decide whether he has surgery or no surgery but it will be a few months out. In the next days we will decide on surgery. The injury is a big loss, Kevin has specific qualities. You can lose him for one or two games but for a long time it's really tough for us. But you have to look forward. "We have alternatives with different skills, different talents. It's another opportunity [for others] - life gives you that. I'm pretty sure they will take it."



Wrestling U20 Worlds: Shakeri, Babalou win double golds for Iran on Day 2

● Mohammadreza Shakeri (R) celebrates with the Iranian flag after a victory over American Jesse Mendez in the freestyle 65kg final at the Wrestling U20 World Championships in Amman, Jordan, on August 15, 2023.

● UWW

Sport Desk

The second day of the Wrestling U20 World Championships in Amman, Jordan, saw Iranians grab a couple of gold medals, as well as a silver, across five weight classes in the freestyle contests. Having finished ninth at the event in Sofia last year, Mohammadreza Shakeri went all the way in the Jordanian capital this time around, walking away with the ultimate prize of the 65kg competitions. Shakeri powered past opponents from Spain and Japan before a thrilling 11-8 win against Russian Dalgat Abdulkadyrov - participating as a neutral athlete - sent the Iranian into the final shown against Jesse Mendez of the United States. The Iranian young gun opened the scoring against Mendez with a stepout before being handed a second point for the American's inactivity. Shakeri was put on the shot clock in the second period but went on to lead 4-1 through successive stepouts with one minute left. Mendez reduced the deficit to two but the Iranian managed to hold out a desperate push by the American to seal a 5-2 triumph.

Abolfazl Babalou won a second gold of the afternoon for Iran, thanks to a 5-0 beating of Ukrainian Ivan Prymachenko in the 97kg final.

Last time the Iranian was in action in Amman, he had to leave the Asian U20 Championships empty-handed in July, but in a remarkable turnaround, Babalou avenged his losses to Kazakhstan's Kamil Kurguliyev and Indian Deepak Chahal - followed by a 5-1 triumph over American Camden Mc Danel in the semifinals. Prymachenko's inactivity and a couple of stepouts saw Babalou take a 3-0 advantage into the break and he then rounded off the victory with a takedown in the second period. A second Iran-USA final showpiece on Tuesday pitted Ali Rezaei against American Meyer Shapiro - a cadet world champion in 2021 - in the 70kg contests.

Returning to Amman as an Asian gold winner, Rezaei outclassed wrestlers from Turkey, Poland, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan en route to the final but had to settle for a silver after giving away a 4-0

lead to lose 11-6 to Shapiro.

It was still an improvement for the Iranian in the age group following his bronze-winning campaign in the tournament two years ago. Shapiro's gold proved to be the sole final victory for the American team on Tuesday as Luke Lilledahl - last year's U17 world champion - fell to a 5-0 defeat against Japan's Yuto Nishiuchi in the 57kg decider.

Iranian Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan's run in the category came to a last-eight finish, courtesy of a 3-1 setback against Ruslan Asif Abdullayev of Azerbaijan. Farzad Safi Jahanshahi, meanwhile, failed to finish on the podium in the 79kg event after an 11-1 defeat against Ali Tcokaev - also from Azerbaijan - in the third-place bout. American Matthew Singleton won the other bronze of the class, while Russian Ibragim Kadiev secured a gold for the Individual Neutral Athletes team with a 17-6 dismantling of Indian Sagar Jaglan.

● Iran's Abolfazl Babalou celebrates his win against Ivan Prymachenko of Ukraine in the freestyle 97kg final at the Wrestling U20 World Championships in Amman, Jordan, on August 15, 2023.

● UWW

'I want to write new sporting history': Neymar says after Al Hilal move



BBC - Brazil forward Neymar has joined Saudi Pro League side Al Hilal from French champions Paris St-Germain. The deal for the former Barcelona player, 31, is understood to be worth about 90m euros (£77.6m) plus add-ons. "I've achieved a

lot in Europe and enjoyed special times, but I have always wanted to be a global player and test myself with new challenges and opportunities in new places," he said.

Neymar was not part of PSG coach Luis Enrique's plans for the new season. The striker, who joined PSG for a world-record fee of £200m in 2017, was left out of their squad for Saturday's Ligue 1 draw against Lorient. His exit also fits PSG's strategy of moving away from the 'Galacticos' era of signing high-profile players for big fees and significant wages, with Lionel Messi also leaving the club this summer.

"I want to write new sporting history, and the Saudi Pro League has tremendous energy and quality players at the moment," Neymar added. "I have heard a lot and learned that I am following a long list of Brazilian players who have played in Saudi Arabia over the years, so I believe it is the desired place."

The forward was understood to be earning an annual income in the region of 25m euros (£21.6m) at the French club.

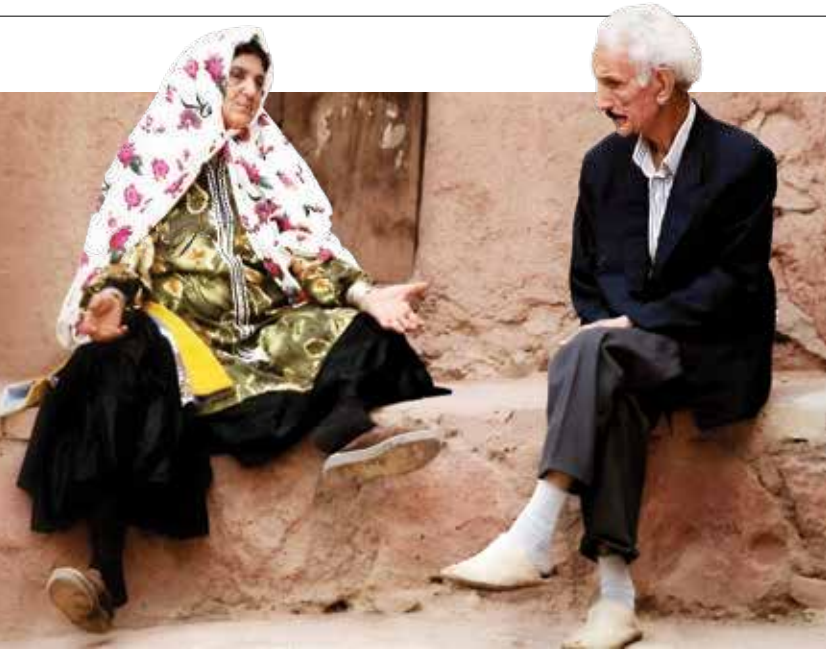
He will reportedly be paid 150m euros (£129.2m) a year in Saudi Arabia - six times the amount he earned at PSG - having signed a two-year contract. Al Hilal's chairman, Fahad bin Saad, called Neymar "a global icon" and "an unstoppable attacking force" in welcoming him to the club.

The Brazilian made 173 appearances for PSG, helping the club win 13 trophies, including five Ligue 1 titles, as well as reaching the 2020 Champions League final. Neymar's departure comes two days after PSG's Kylian Mbappe was reintegrated into first-team training after positive talks with the club. The France forward, 24, had been in a contract stand-off amid a desire to join Real Madrid but could now extend his contract at PSG, with his current deal due to expire next summer.

Neymar's move continues a remarkable summer spending spree by Saudi clubs, underlining the league's ambition to be one of the top competitions in the world in the next few years.

Karim Benzema, N'Golo Kante, Jordan Henderson, Ruben Neves, Sadio Mane and Roberto Firmino have all moved to Saudi Arabia. Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo joined Al Nassr from Manchester United in January. Neymar's new team-mates include ex-Wolves captain Neves, former Chelsea centre-back Kalidou Koulibaly and Sergej Milinkovic-Savic, formerly of Lazio, who were all signed for big fees. After Riyad Mahez left Manchester City to join Al Ahli in July, Pep Guardiola said the Saudi league's financial muscle has "changed the market". "A few months ago when Cristiano [Ronaldo] was the only one to go, no-one thought this many top players would play in the Saudi league," the City manager said. "In the future there will be more and that's why clubs need to be aware of what is happening."

Iranian SWO to unveil nationwide program promoting mental health among the elderly



● DIDAR NEWS

Social Desk

The deputy of counseling and psychological affairs at the Center for Development and Prevention of Iranian State Welfare Organization (SWO) has announced the implementation of a plan called 'Psychological Well-Being of Pre-Old Age and Old Age'. Masoumeh Tavakoli highlighted that ageing is a global phenomenon affecting all countries, with projections indicating that there will be approximately 1.5 billion elderly individuals worldwide by

2050. She further stated that this significant number brings its own set of challenges, ISNA reported. "In Iran, it is expected that the elderly population will reach 18 million by 2050 based on current population growth trends," she said. Tavakoli emphasized the importance of valuing old age as a precious period in people's lives. "One way to care for the elderly is by prioritizing their physical health along with other aspects of their well-being. Health should not be limited to physical

health alone; mental health plays a crucial role as well," she said. The World Health Organization defines health as having diverse capabilities to fulfill various roles rather than solely focusing on physical well-being. According to Tavakoli, common psychological symptoms observed among older adults, especially in Iran, include depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, and feelings of futility. In old age, these issues become more prominent as individuals also face increased

physical weaknesses and challenges which may lead them to withdraw from society. She emphasized that any actions taken regarding old age should prioritize preventive measures aimed at reducing constant care needs while avoiding expensive and continuous medical services. Taking this approach into consideration, a plan focused on psychological well-being during pre-old age and old age has been developed. This experimental plan aims to implement preventive measures

through components such as awareness campaigns, training programs, screening procedures, and capacity building efforts. The project was initially piloted in two provinces: Khorasan Razavi and Fars. Results from these pilots have been analyzed successfully leading towards plans for a wider implementation across the country. Additionally, six educational packages have been designed for different groups within this plan. Tavakoli highlighted the importance of considering the elderly as part of

a family or welfare center complex. The educational plan encompasses all individuals involved in the care and support of the elderly. In total, 6,000 elderly individuals were examined and screened as part of this project. Families received training, and supplementary courses were conducted for specialists due to the relatively new focus on psychological services for older adults in Iran. A total of 236 professionals received the necessary training to contribute effectively to this process.

Sudanese children 'wasting away' due to hunger



● AFP

The past four months of fighting in Sudan has pushed millions into food insecurity – with an additional 1.5 million children expected to fall into crisis levels of hunger by September – as aid agencies say they are struggling to reach people. Up to 17,000 children a day have been falling into crisis levels of hunger, Save the Children warned on Tuesday, according to The Guardian. With 4 million people displaced so far, the charity said more people were facing hunger in Sudan than at any point since records there began in 2012. "It's impossible to overemphasize the seriousness of the situation in Sudan. This is a desperate, dire crisis for children," said Arif Noor, Save the Children's director in Sudan. "In conflict areas, if you go to a market, you risk being robbed, shelled, murdered or caught in the crossfire," he said. "If you get to that market, the shelves are empty." According to the most recent report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, areas with the worst fighting are predictably seeing the highest rates of hunger. Across the country, 20.3 million people – or 42 percent of Sudan's population – were gripped by high levels of acute food insecurity, the IPC said. More than half of the population needs urgent help in Darfur, where the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have been accused of large-scale massacres of minority ethnic groups. The Sudanese independent broadcaster Radio Dabanga reported that 132 children had died of malnutrition-related conditions in the eastern state of El Gedaref. Prices of staple foods such as sorghum, millet and wheat are already high but shortages are likely to worsen as farmers are forced from their land by fighting. An open letter from humanitarian leaders released this week called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and warned the international community that there was "no excuse for waiting" to act in stopping the conflict "as Sudan's children are wasting away". Frustrated aid workers have bemoaned the lack of funding and support for humanitarian operations in Sudan, compared with the response to the war in Ukraine, condemning the disinterest as "unapologetically racist".

What is celebrity culture and why it matters?

Social Desk

The word 'celebrity' literally means someone who is a professional in their own field of activity. A celebrity is highly known in public and has an influence over people of a society. In the modern world, celebrities have attracted both people and social media's interest. The main feature of celebrities is that they come to the center of attention of the people

via social media, in a way that other non-celebrity people can't. In this context, Instagram, where celebrities can be directly in connection with their fans, in addition to sharing their photos and more, plays an important role. The importance of celebrities lies not only in their popularity among people, but also, for the most part, in the emotional effect their acts have on people.

Reasons for the rise of celebrity culture: Digitalization of the youths' lifestyle: The youth population's lifestyle is getting more digital and internet-based, in which mobile phones appear as the main source of everything. Although these current entertainment items help unlimited access to an abundance of information, Smartphones cause people to spend too much of their time on social media apps rather

than in real life. Consumerism of the society: Some consider the consumerism of society, which is both the reason and result of celebrity social activities, the original reason for fans' interest. Overrating of celebrities: Nowadays, celebrities are not only attractive concepts but also they have prestige in their own right. Getting validation through becoming the symbols of modern culture gives them the

capability of forming the cultural values of people. This process results in young people trying to prove themselves more than before and leads them to believe in fame as a valuable human quality. Decrease in institutional trust: It stem from the population's lack of trust in institutions and authorities' actions and decisions, and the poor job media entities are doing. Censorship and hiding reality, as well as the lack of

responsibility of officials, lead to people trying to find alternatives means of communicating their values and opinions. Inequality in society: The more unequal and unjust a society is – economically and politically – the harder, more limited it becomes for younger people to achieve their goals. All the while, the celebrity culture instills in the young generation the illusion of fast realization of their dreams.

Tehran's Pooya Shahr centers offer free skill courses to labor children

Social Desk

The CEO of the Services and Social Partnerships Organization of Tehran Municipality has announced that free training in 14 skill courses is being provided to working children at Pooya Shahr centers. Highlighting the range of services available across the capital's 34 Pooya Shahr centers, Ahmad Ahmadi Sadr emphasized the commitment of the organization to empowering

working and street children, according to IRNA. As part of this initiative, free training classes are being conducted in 14 different fields, with the aim of equipping these children with valuable skills. The CEO stressed that all services offered at Pooya Shahr are completely free. "The primary goal is to empower both the working children, who may be vulnerable to social harm, and their families. The focus is on providing skill-based and professional

training," he said. Ahmadi Sadr added that these workshops and classes cover handicrafts, painting, embroidery, hairdressing, sewing, leatherworking, knitting, carpet weaving, computer skills, advanced mechanics, theater, writing, and acting. He further noted that since implementing this project, a significant number of working children or their family members have acquired new skills and experienced empowerment. Lastly, the CEO highlighted additional activities taking place at these centers that go beyond educational programs. These include providing health items and livelihood packages along with financial support for medical treatment costs. Furthermore, they offer assistance with school registration and literacy initiatives.



● IRNA

PIC OF THE DAY



The Iranian fallow deer, a subspecies of deer, holds the distinction of being one of the world's rarest species. Over the past few decades, concerted efforts have been undertaken to address its declining population and prevent the risk of extinction for this globally significant creature. Among these initiatives is the establishment of a breeding and rearing center for Iranian fallow deer in Urmia Lake National Park within Urmia's Rashakan Complex. Constructed in 2022, this center spans six hectares within the Rashakan complex. Its purpose is to facilitate successful reproduction and nurturing of Iranian fallow deer. The recent birth of three new individuals in spring 2023 serves as an encouraging sign regarding the favorable biological condition experienced by this rare species within Urmia Lake National Park. Currently, there are 11 Iranian fallow deer residing at this breeding and reproduction center. Additionally, Ashk Island is home to 24 individuals while Spir Island houses five more members of this unique species. ● SOHEIL FARAJI/ISNA

Saudi Arabia oil exports hit 21-month low



REUTERS - Saudi Arabia's crude oil exports fell for a third straight month in June to their lowest since September 2021, data from the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI) showed on Wednesday. The kingdom's crude exports totalled 6.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in June, down about 1.8% from May's 6.93 million bpd. Monthly export figures are provided by Riyadh and other members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to the JODI, which publishes them on its website.

Kenya's debt rises to historic high



CNBC - Kenya's debt level has reached record highs despite President William Ruto's vow to tame the country's appetite for loans, treasury figures show. Total public debt rose by a record 1.56 trillion shillings (\$10.8 billion) in the financial year ended June 30 to 10.1 trillion shillings (\$70.75 billion), breaching a debt ceiling of 10 trillion shillings. "The increase in the public debt is attributed to external loan disbursements, exchange rate fluctuations and the uptake of domestic and external debt," the treasury said.

Total says gas exploration rig arrives off Lebanon



AFP - French firm TotalEnergies said Wednesday that a drilling rig had reached Lebanese waters ahead of exploration for offshore gas reserves. "TotalEnergies, the operator of Block 9, announces the arrival of the drilling rig, Transocean Barents, on the block, at around 120 kilometres (75 miles) off the coast of Beirut," a statement said, adding that a transport helicopter had also reached Beirut airport.

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- Email: newspaper.irandaily.ir
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- Printing House: Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Raeisi visits homegrown EVs



● president.ir

Economy Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi visited a number of hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) and full electric vehicles (FEVs) produced by domestic automobile companies on Wednesday. On the sidelines of a cabinet meeting, the president visited a number of FEVs and HEVs produced and assembled by domestic automakers as he was briefed about the production and commercialization process of the EVs, IRNA reported. Considering the environmental problems and



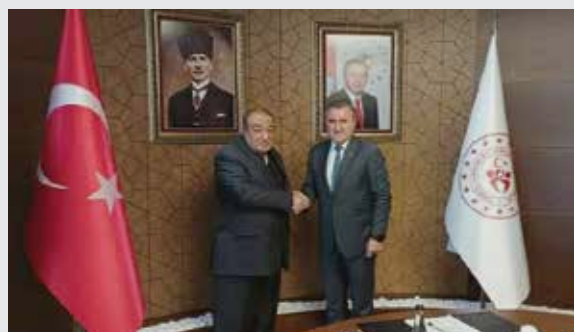
● MEHR

pollution of combustion vehicles, as well as the country's capacity in the field of electrical infrastructure, a change in the automobile production and increasing the EV production is on the govern-

ment's agenda. Based on the agreements made between the Ministry of Industry and the relevant bodies, including the Tehran Municipality, the installation of charging stations for EVs has start-

ed in Tehran, where at least 70 stations will be inaugurated by next month. By the end of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2024), in addition to expanding the infrastructure for the use of EVs in Tehran,

charging stations will be installed on highways between Tehran and neighboring provinces as well as some other high-traffic provinces such as the northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi.



● IRNA

Iran, Turkey to hold fresh round of joint economic commission

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari said that the 29th intergovernmental committee of Iran and Turkey will be held soon. According to a report by

IRNA, Safari made the remarks in a meeting with Turkish Minister of Youth and Sports Osman Aşkın Bak. He reviewed the economic issues on the agenda of the

two countries, including energy, border markets, and cooperation between border provinces, transit, and intergovernmental committees. Meanwhile, Aşkın Bak re-

ferred to the commonalities of the two neighboring countries. The Turkish side hoped for expanding economic relations between Iran and Turkey.

Over 60 energy projects to come on stream by March: Iran's VP

Iran's first vice president announced that 67 oil and gas projects will be put into operation by the end of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2024). Out of 83 oil and gas projects worth \$36

billion, 67 valued at more than \$15 billion will come on stream by March, Mohammad Mokhber noted, according to SHANA. On Monday, Oil Minister Javad Owji said, "Last

year, we completed unfinished projects worth over \$12 billion, and more partly-finished projects worth \$15 billion will become operational by mid-March 2024."



● SHANA

Sustainable development plan needed for female-led businesses

Economy Desk

Cooperatives have helped attain synergy, unity, and cohesion of businesses within women's societies, announced the head of the women's commission of the Iran Cooperative Chamber, adding that this would boost women's share in the economy. Khatereh Ostad-Rezaei

told IRNA on Wednesday that expert panels will be held by the end of the current [Iranian] year under the National Congress of Iranian Women to draft a sustainable development document of women's cooperatives. Women should gain their appropriate position in sustainable development and economic participa-

tion. Meanwhile, the formation of cooperatives helps families provide economic livelihood along with a reduction in social damages, she added. Ostad-Rezaei noted that a lot of women are working in different fields across the country as we are looking for establishing a network for more communication between businesses.

Export of medicinal plants requires proper processing for development: Official

Economy Desk

The development and improvement of medicinal plant exports in the central Iranian province of Isfahan requires proper processing as well as increasing active units in the area since the province is one of the most promising areas in the cultivation and production of herbal medicine plants, said Ahmadreza Raieszadeh, the

horticultural affairs deputy of Isfahan Agriculture Organization. The official stated that 60 out of 80 species of medicinal plants cultivated across the country can be produced in the province, noting that Isfahan stands at fifth place in developing these types of plants, IRNA reported. He added that about 2,000 traditional units along with about 30 industrial units are

active in processing, packaging and exporting medicinal plants, with a total production of 65,000 tons. Raieszadeh concluded that the export of medicinal plants of the province during the year to March 20 included flowers and buds of the rose, licorice, rose water, herbal extracts, shallots, and saffron, with a total weight of 1,196 tons, worth \$2 million.