

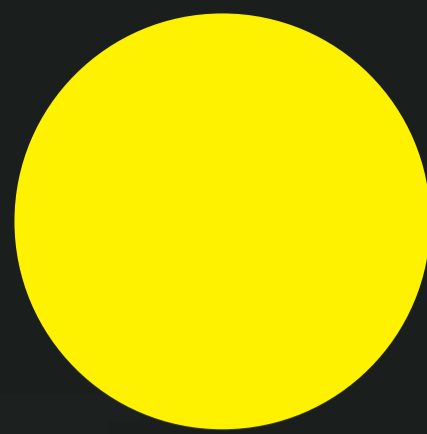


Concerns about Japan's action

Skepticism remains on Fukushima water despite report of no detectable radioactivity



Iran unveils Cesium-137 radionuclide as new nuclear feat



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25 FAR LESS THAN YEARS

Likud warns against bringing Israeli cabinet down



The Israeli existence appears to be at stake for a wide range of reasons, the most significant of which is the potential waning of the US hegemony in the Middle East, in particular, and the world, in general. The United States has been the die-hard supporter of Israel, and its fading domination would deal a severe blow to the Jewish entity, which is grappling with many internal and external issues.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia-Saudi
Arabia rail
transit begins
via Iran

Economy Desk

Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railway Mi'ad Salehi on Sunday announced the transit of a Russian cargo to Saudi Arabia via the Iran transport corridor for the first time. A container transit train, including 36 containers, entered the country at the Inchehborun rail border, Salehi said, according to Tasnim news agency. The official added that the cargo transit train was dispatched to Bandar Abbas after fulfilling customs formalities to be transferred from there to the Saudi Arabian port city of Jeddah.

Qatar's role
in release of
Iran's assets
commended

TASNIM - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said he appreciated Qatar for its role in the release of Iranian assets blocked in foreign countries. In a telephone conversation with his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani on Saturday, he lauded the Qatari government's positive role and its high-ranking officials' constructive efforts in regional and international developments.

Hirmand
water rights

In a telephone conversation with Taliban's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Saturday, the Iranian foreign minister reasserted Iran's right to sharing water from the Hirmand (Helmand) River in Afghanistan. Amir-Abdollahian said that the Iranian technical delegations' visits to the water reserves in the neighboring country will lead to more transparency regarding the issue. He called for the continuation of close consultations between the two countries.

Iran unveils Cesium-137
radionuclide as new nuclear feat

AEOI: Enrichment continues based on strategic framework law

National Desk

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) unveiled a homegrown Cesium-137 radionuclide during a ceremony on Sunday, as the nuclear chief also announced that the nuclear enrichment continues based on the strategic framework law. The material, which is used for multiple medical and industrial purposes, was unveiled during an exhibition in Tehran on Sunday, in the presence of the head of the AEOI, Mohammad Eslami, Press TV reported. Asked about reports regarding Tehran slowing down its enrichment, Eslami said that Iran's enrichment of uranium continues based on a framework established by the country's Parliament.

In 2020, the Iranian Parliament passed a law requiring the government to take measures such as stepping up uranium enrichment beyond the limit set under Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal if other parties did not fully comply with the deal. "Our nuclear enrichment

continues based on the strategic framework law," Eslami said, referring to a related legislation, Reuters reported. Under the nuclear agreement, Iran could only enrich uranium to 3.67%.

Cooperation with AEA

Eslami further announced that Iran keeps cooperating with the IAEA within the framework of the safeguards agreement and that four disputed sites have been reduced to two.

Iran and the IAEA are in a dispute triggered by the agency's Israeli-influenced accusations, which were leveled against Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities. The IAEA insisted on investigating what it claims to be "undeclared nuclear sites" in Iran. Eslami said that the negotiations aimed at resolving the dispute are advancing in the framework of the general policies of the Islamic Republic establishment.

"One of our urgent needs is nuclear diplomacy, especially with regional states,"



he said. "We hope to have sustainable nuclear cooperation with different countries." Addressing the ceremony, Eslami also said that in addition to the nuclear fuel cycle, Iran is capable of designing, constructing, and maintaining nuclear reactors, noting that the country's nuclear industry has a direct role in people's lives. The Iranian nuclear chief

also hailed the production of Cesium-137 radionuclide as an invaluable nuclear achievement that eliminates the country's reliance on other countries for the import of the substance. The material used to be imported. Radionuclides (or radioisotopes) are radioactive atomic variations of elements. They are mostly produced by exposing suitable target materials to the

neutron flux in a nuclear reactor for an appropriate time. With a half-life of 30 years, Cesium-137 radionuclide does not exist naturally and is mainly found in used nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. It is used in radiation devices, brachytherapy, radiotherapy, calibration springs, and various types of industrial gauges. The material is also re-



Iran unveils domestically-produced Cesium-137 radionuclide during an exhibition in Tehran on August 27, 2023.

● TASNIM

quired for radiating blood products, cosmetics, food, and other products. He said that the material can be used in industrial instrumentation systems, oil and gas fields, and other sectors.

Phase 11 of South Pars reaches gas production stage

Economic Desk

South Pars' Phase 11, the sole undeveloped section of the shared South Pars gas field, has reached the gas production phase, benefiting from governmental support and domestic resources. The

national project is to be officially launched today in Asaluyeh, in southern Iran, in the presence of President Ebrahim Raeisi. Gas produced in Phase 11 will be transported from its offshore location in the Persian Gulf to the on-

shore processing facilities of Phase 12. Upon refinement, it will be injected into the national gas network, Tasnim news agency reported. Announcing the inauguration of the project, Governor of Bushehr Province Ahmad Mohammadiza-

deh highlighted other operational projects in the Asaluyeh region, in the presence of the president and Minister of Oil Javad Owji. The governor of Bushehr mentioned that Phase 11 of South Pars will be operational after two decades.

He said that with the start of Phase 11 of South Pars, the initial daily gas production of this phase will be 15 million cubic meters, increasing to 56 million cubic meters in subsequent phases. Mohammadizadeh considered the production

of 50,000 barrels of gas condensate and 750 metric tons of sulfur per day as other features of Phase 11. "With the inauguration of Phase 11 of South Pars, the chapter of the phases of this gas field will be closed," he concluded.

Concerns about Japan's action: Skepticism remains on
Fukushima water despite report of no detectable radioactivity

A view of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant after it started releasing treated radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean, seen from the nearby Ukeda fishing port in Namie town, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, Aug. 25, 2023.

● TOM BATEMAN/REUTERS

International Desk

Japan's move to release treated radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant raises alarm as concerns grow over the potential ramifications of this action. This comes even as the Japanese environment ministry stated no detectable radioactivity in seawater near the plant. Despite objections both domestically and internationally, Japan com-

menced the process on Thursday, prompting protests at home and from neighboring countries, including China, which banned aquatic product imports from Japan. Although the Japanese environment ministry reported no detectable radioactivity in seawater near the plant on Sunday, skepticism remains, as the water contains only tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen, according to Japan and scientific organizations. On Sunday, days after authorities began discharging into the sea treated water used to cool damaged reactors, the ministry said that tests of seawater near the nuclear power plant have not detected any radioactivity, Reuters reported. Japan and scientific organizations say the water is safe after being filtered

to remove most radioactive elements except for tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen. Because tritium is difficult to separate from water, the Fukushima water is diluted until tritium levels fall below regulatory limits. The ministry's tests of samples from 11 points near the plant showed concentrations of tritium below the lower limit of detection - 7 to 8 becquerels of tritium per litre, the ministry said, adding that it "would have no adverse impact on human health and the environment". Monitoring would be carried out "with a high level of objectivity, transparency, and reliability" to prevent adverse impacts on Japan's reputation. Environment Minister Akihiro Nishimura said in a statement. The ministry would pub-

lish test results every week for the next three months at least, an official said. Japan's fisheries agency said tests of fish from near the plant did not show any abnormalities. Its test on Saturday found no detectable levels of tritium. Plant operator Tokyo Electric Power said on Friday seawater near the plant contained less than 10 becquerels of tritium per litre, below its self-imposed limit of 700 becquerels and far below the World Health Organization's limit of 10,000 becquerels for drinking water. Tepco said on Sunday it had not detected any significant change. Fukushima prefecture also published tests from nine locations near the plant that showed tritium below limits. Tepco is storing about

1.3m tonnes of the contaminated water, enough to fill 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools, in tanks on the site. The release of the first 7,800 cubic metres, equivalent to about three Olympic pools, will take about 17 days. It is estimated it will take about 30 years to release it all. Japanese offices have received a barrage of telephone calls, apparently from China, complaining about the water release, the foreign ministry said, adding that it had asked the Chinese embassy in Japan to call on the public in China to remain calm. Also on Saturday, protesters gathered in the capital of South Korea to demand that the government take steps to avoid what they fear is a looming disaster from Japan's release of water from the nuclear power plant.

Globally registered Tabriz Bazaar under restoration

Inscription on UNESCO's List is of great importance



● apochi.com



● irangard.com



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

The historical Bazaar of Tabriz, the capital city of the northwestern province of East Azarbaijan, is one of the largest covered markets of the world and the first of its kind which has been registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List, said head of the city's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department. Speaking in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Ramin Asbaqi said a project to restore the ceiling, walls and domes of the bazaar has been launched.

He noted that the old bazaar, extending in an area of one square kilometer, was globally registered in 2010.

Referring to the strategic geographical location of Tabriz, located on the Silk Road, he said considering that commercial caravans from different parts of the world were constantly passing through Tabriz, this bazaar, which was a very prosperous and important market, has expanded over time. He added that the bazaar is known as one of the important and most visited tourism centers of the city, drawing many Iranian and foreign travelers every day. Asbaqi noted that registration on a cultural, his-



● sahebkhavar.ir

torical or natural site on UNESCO's List not only helps preserve it, but has a direct positive impact on the regions' economic and cultural sectors. This important development would help strengthen the subcultures of the region, increase domestic and international social and

economic partnerships, and ensure preserving the site's historical and cultural identity. "The sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List belong to all people on earth, regardless of race, religion and nationality, thus governments are duty-bound to preserve and

maintain them," he said. The official said that global registration of a work can also help attract scientific and social participation, draw financial and educational aids and increase the number of tourists arriving in the region. "The issue that makes many people, even politicians, interested in global registration of their country's historical and cultural heritage is that this can help prove that their homeland has played a role in the establishment of human history," he noted. "However, in my opinion, development of the tourism industry and generation of income are the most significant results of global registration. This

important occurrence usually motivates local officials to create the required infrastructures, including access roads and accommodation centers, to encourage more tourists to travel to the region." He said, nowadays, it is very important for international tourists to visit a globally registered site. He said a number of training courses would usually be offered to local people to raise their knowledge about the importance of protecting such sites. He said 42 tangible and 45 intangible heritages of Iran have been registered on UNESCO's List, driving the country to stand ninth among all countries of the world in this regard.



▲ Ramin Asbaqi

Ancient settlements on eastern shore of Caspian Sea

In antiquity, to the north of Abaskun in Gorgan, on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, there was only one inhabited place, Dehistan, six days' journey from Abaskun. Here was the border between Muslim domains and those of the nomads, the Ghuzz Turks. For this reason there was a ribat here; in this case the term was used in its original sense of a military post at a frontier.

The foundation of Dehistan was attributed to the Parthians; European scholars usually connect the word Dehistan with the name of the Dahae, a nation that, according to the classical geographers, lived to the east of the Caspian Sea.

According to Tabari (a Muslim historian and scholar from Amol, Tabaristan), there was at a distance of five farsakhs (an old measure of length which is

equal to about 5 to 5.5 kilometers) from Dehistan an island, or, more exactly, a peninsula (as in the work of the anonymous tenth-century Persian geographer) on which a certain Turkish prince lived.

Istakhri (a 10th-century travel author and Islamic geographer) and Ibn Hawqal (a 10th-century Arab Muslim writer) knew Dehistan only as a minor settlement on the seacoast inhabited by fishermen.

The center of this district or ruztaq was the town of Akhur, situated on the right-hand side of a road that went toward the ribat at the frontier; the minaret of Akhur was visible from far away. The ribat used to be surrounded by a wall, but even by Maqdisi's (a medieval Arab geographer) time it had been demolished on the order of the government, and the former frontier outpost became a

peaceful, flourishing settlement. Many bazaars and mosques were to be found there; from among the latter, Maqdisi singles out the old mosque with wooden columns and another with a minaret; this mosque was, in contrast to the rest, not of the Hanafi but of the Shafie' school. Until the question of how much the eastern shoreline of the Caspian Sea has

changed in the course of the last millennium is answered, we shall not be able to pinpoint the whereabouts of this frontier outpost of Muslim territory. Historical sources about this area are exceedingly scant; we do not know when Dehistan ceased to exist and when the last vestiges of Persian culture and urban civilization disappeared from here. There are traces along the Atrak (a fast-moving river which begins in the mountains of northeastern Iran) of an extensive irrigation system, but contemporary explorers such as Poslavskaia admit the possibility of artificial irrigation here only under the condition that sometime in the past there used to be in the Atrak, Sumbar, and Chandyr rivers incomparably more water than today, and that the water did not have the bitter-salty taste it has now.

A change in the course of the Atrak is also assumed on the basis of the site of a city whose ruins are known by the name of Mashhad-e Misriyan, that is, "place of the martyrdom of the Egyptians" (on maps it often appears as Mastorian). These ruins were described at the beginning of the 1830s by the traveler A. Conolly, and in greater detail, together with a plan, by A. M. Konshin. The city occupied an area of 120 desiatinas [that is, 324 acres], and was surrounded by a pentagonal wall built from fired brick, with bastions on its southern side.

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.

▲ Ancient city of Dehistan, now in the Balkan region of western Turkmenistan
● orientmice.com





ISRAEL'S COUP CRIMINALS



Impact of US decline on Israel's position in Mideast

25 FAR LESS THAN YEARS

In recent years, a pressing concern within Israel has revolved around the uncertainty of its future. Israel's reliance on the United States for its security renders any potential erosion of American hegemony a nightmarish scenario for the former's survival. Consequently, anxiety about Israel's fate has gripped the Zionist population residing in the occupied territories, spurring a remarkable trend of reverse migration from Israel — a phenomenon reflective of both internal and external developments.

The concept of security has evolved beyond its conventional and military framework, encompassing an array of diverse dimensions. Players now face complex threats that infiltrate every aspect of life. As a result, they have no choice but to adopt multidimensional policies to counter these intricate challenges. Implementing these strategies mandates a simultaneous focus on both hard and soft power. Israel, a major player in international relations, particularly in matters of security, has not been immune to the reverberations of these dynamics.

With the shifting tides within the international system, the traditional sovereignty of states has been diminished. New actors have emerged in the current labyrinthine state of the international system. Therefore, the examination of any issue needs an all-inclusive approach and one-dimensional analysis

has become obsolete.

Given this backdrop, Israel has constantly hooked its security to the US. Because of its limited geographical expanse, the volatility of both fixed and variable geopolitical factors, and the threats posed by the Resistance Front, Israel's ability to form a protective shield for the inhabitants of occupied territories is constrained. Thus, the potential waning of American hegemony looms as a major cause behind Israel's profound anxieties about its future.

Israel-US dependence

Over the past seventy years, despite the fluctuating nature of their relations, the United States has stood by Israel since its recognition, becoming its foremost ally and supporter. This has led to a relationship characterized by mutual interests, a bond so robust that it has solidified into what can be termed as a special rapport. Such commitment has persisted through the tenures of US presidents, no matter Democrat and Republican, all have pledged unwavering support for Israel's security.

Israel is seen as a strategic asset for the United States, reflecting the power of influential American Jewish factions, mutual interests, common values, and analogous institutions that influence their domestic and foreign policy directions. These features have acted as underpinnings that foster understanding

and cooperation between Tel Aviv and Washington.

Their bilateral interactions span from the United States' empathetic stance when Israel came into existence in 1948 to the forging of a distinctive partnership. These engagements have led to a situation where Israel, although compact in size, possesses outstanding military power and is tied to the United States in terms of both economic and military reliance. The US, meanwhile, tries to strike a balance in the region, through Israel. While some in the United States view the substantial aid and commitments to Israel as a trade-off against cultivating relations with diverse Arab nations, others perceive Israel as a crucial partner.

Israel is one of the two primary non-NATO allies of the United States in the Middle East. In broader terms, such relations are unprecedented. The United States has vetoed almost all anti-Israeli resolutions in the UN Security Council over the years.

Israel functions as a military stronghold for the US in the Middle East, offering a vantage point for Washington to assert its political, military, social, and economic influence over neighboring countries. The United States has channeled its resources to ensure Israel's security, stability and recognition. Israel has enjoyed an array of benefits — economic, military, security, and political — similar

to those enjoyed by the United States. Its security remains a cornerstone of America's foreign policy.

Impact of diminishing US hegemony on Israel

US support for Israel over the past seventy years has emboldened the latter to commit any crime. However, the looming specter of a waning hegemony has emerged as a primary concern in shaping the present and future trajectory of the Jewish entity.

Israel's security has become intertwined with its reliance on the United States. Should the US find itself unable to exert the same role within the emerging international order as it had in the past, the existence of Israel and those living in the occupied territories would be at stake. Moreover, two striking internal issues have taken center stage: a prevailing sense of desperation about Israel's future and a surge in reverse migration. Simultaneously, the threats coming from the Resistance Front further exacerbate the situation.

Reverse migration

The Jewish Agency and affiliated organizations have placed the transfer of Jews to occupied Palestine on their agenda, offering a variety of incentives and launching extensive campaigns about the well-being and security of Israelis. Despite such efforts, roughly one-sixth

of the seven million Jewish population has emigrated in recent years due to unfavorable economic conditions and growing insecurity.

While Israel does incorporate these returning migrants into its population statistics, it has denied them voting in the recent elections. This comes amid Israel's economic woes, exacerbated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, with unemployment rates reaching 30%. Under such circumstances, it is natural to see little enthusiasm on the part of Jews to immigrate to occupied Palestine. In essence, the diminishing Jewish population has plunged Israel into a severe existential quandary, as its very foundation rests upon a Jewish populace.

This is a critical concern highlighted by Israeli media and experts, who perceive it as a prelude to the erosion of Israel. In 2010 alone, as many as 230,000 Israelis returned to their countries of origin. Statistics reveal that by annexing around 85% of Palestinian territories, Israel managed to draw over five million Jews to these areas between 1948 and 2016. Paradoxically, this occurred in tandem with a reverse migration trend, witnessing over 20% of these Jews returning to their native lands during the years 2000 to 2016.

According to experts, the current escalating trend of reverse migration constitutes the most daunting challenge to



Likud warns against bringing Israeli cabinet down

Israel's Likud party is warning the smaller parties in the coalition against bringing down the Israeli cabinet over the actions of the Supreme Court. The warning came after recent polls showed the right-wing camp led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at an all-time low, Maariv reported.

Likud party officials said that they opposed acts to dissolve the cabinet in the event that the Supreme Court intervenes in recent legislation, reducing the court's ability to apply the 'Reasonableness Standard' despite the law's quasi-constitutional status as a Basic Law.

"Holding elections today is the surest way to bring about the collective suicide of the right-wing camp. Today, when the right-wing camp is at its lowest ebb, the polls are the strongest glue holding the ruling coalition together," the sources said.

According to the sources, "the issue of [judicial] reform should be put aside, and if it is to be promoted, then it should be done only by consensus."

"Only after we bring success in the fields of the economy and the personal security of the citizens, and when we succeed in improving the situation in Arab society, only then is it possible to think about elections. Now, we don't have public credit. It's all been wasted on the reform."

Israeli existence. By Israel's classification, reverse migrants are those who have departed occupied Palestine for over a year for any reason and have resided overseas. Official records indicate that the minimal count of Israelis living abroad is 750,000 — equivalent to more than 10% of Israel's overall population. Nevertheless, fresh data suggest that the number of Zionist Jews residing abroad far surpasses these figures. During Israel's initial decade, the exodus of emigrants abroad was about 100,000. However, in 1980, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics disclosed that over 270,000 Zionists had resided abroad for over a year, accounting for 7% of Israel's entire population at that time. This figure has grown significantly over the decades. Departing Jews, when pressed about their reasons for leaving, reply: "Don't ask why we left Israel, ask why we remained there for so long."

Desperation about future

Recent polls suggest that nearly half of Israel's population consists of young individuals who prefer to live abroad. The primary reason cited by Israelis for their yearning to migrate hinges on the unfavorable conditions prevailing within the entity. Among those residing in the occupied territories, who initially migrated to Palestine enticed by an array of promises, optimism about Israel's future has dwindled to a state of desolation. Credible statistics and surveys underscore that hope for the future has hit

a record low over the past decade.

Resistance Front

Following Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution that consolidated the Resistance Front, Israel's erstwhile image of an invincible military power has eroded. Presently, Israel finds itself incapable of countering even the smallest faction within the Resistance Front, an alliance encompassing Palestinian resistance groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The rise of Hezbollah in Lebanon, the emergence of Ansarullah in Yemen and the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq and the failure of plots to overthrow the Syrian government, have made this front exceedingly formidable.

Despite a series of ploys ranging from sanctions to targeted killings and proxy wars, the United States, at the zenith of its power, has failed to overcome this alliance. And now a decline in US dominance has curtailed its capacity even further in countering this coalition of groups and governments. Israel has astutely recognized that the Resistance Front is progressively tightening the noose around its neck.

Media coverage of US fading influence in Israel

Since 2020, the trajectory of the Jewish entity within the era of a multipolar system and the erosion of American hegemony has remained a focal point for Israeli media and think tanks. In an article, Mitvim — the Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Poli-

tics, explored Israel's concerns stemming from the decline of the US influence, coupled with the collapse of the world order engineered by the US, alongside the rise of China and Russia. The key points of the article are as follows:

- The ascent of China and the decline of American power serve to undermine the credibility of the established liberal world order, a development rife with peril for Israel.

- Frictions between the vanguards of liberalism in the West and Israel have escalated. These tensions arise from Israel's ongoing control over the Palestinian people in the West Bank and its military attacks on the Gaza Strip. A recent report from Amnesty International casts doubt on the legitimacy of Israel's political paradigm.

- Certain Israeli acts, such as targeting military figures (both governmental and non-governmental) engaged in activities against Israel, stand in contradiction to the values upheld by the liberal world. In the absence of American support, Israel's actions remain unsupported.

- A weakened United States would invariably debilitate Israel. A substantial portion of Tel Aviv's potency comes from its close ties to Washington. The decline of American influence would undoubtedly cast a shadow over Israel as well. And the prospect of maintaining a parallel level of intimate partnership with China seems implausible.
- A global landscape defined by two com-

peting powerhouses — Beijing and Washington — would prompt a more insular world. Israel's gains from the globalization driven by the United States are at stake.

Although Israeli concerns about Russia and China are less pronounced than those about Iran, the prevailing sentiment among Zionists is that Russia and China are unlikely to evolve into strategic allies for Israel. The Zionist perspective maintains that Israel alone cannot counter the increasing influence of Iran and its proxy groups. Additionally, the United States' ability to rally support against this axis has dwindled compared to the past. Presently, the US finds itself in a position where it seeks negotiation with these very groups and nations.

Within Israeli media, a paradigm shift is evident, heralding the waning of American hegemony. While the United States continues to outpace its competitors in various aspects, the overarching path is leading toward a multipolar global order. Confronted by this shifting landscape, Israel must grapple with crafting a viable strategy to secure its existence. However, according to many Israeli experts, the entity's vitality is perceived to be in its twilight stages, projected to endure far less than 25 years. Extensive Israeli analyses regarding the future of the entity have spawned a range of media narratives, collectively culminating in a prevailing sense of despair among Zionists residing in the occupied territories concerning the times ahead.

Iranian, Saudi clubs to may play in neutral venues



AFC

Sports Desk

Iranian clubs might be forced to play their Saudi opponents in neutral venues when the group stage of the AFC Champions League gets underway in September.

A political standoff has seen the teams from the two countries square off on neutral grounds since 2016 and, despite the thaw in the Tehran-Riyadh relations in recent months, the situation will apparently remain unchanged for the upcoming competition after the Saudi newspaper Arriyadiyah reported on Saturday that Al Nassr has wrote to the Asian football governing body to name Dubai's Al Maktoum Stadium as the venue for the home game against Persian Gulf Pro League champion Persepolis on November 27.

Persepolis is to open its campaign in Group E – also featuring Qatar Stars League champion Al Duhail and Istiklol of Tajikistan – at home against Al Nassr on Sept. 19, though the AFC is yet to confirm the host stadium for the fixture, which will be a repeat of the last-four encounter in 2020, when the Tehran Reds came out victorious in the shootout before falling to a defeat to Ulsan Hyundai in the final. Cristiano Ronaldo's Iranian fans would be dismayed by the Arriyadiyah report as they were hoping to welcome Al Nassr's Portuguese superstar, as well as former Bayern Munich striker Sadio Mane and Croatian midfielder Marcelo Brozovic, to the Iranian capital.

Some of the big names in the European club football – including reigning Ballon D'Or winner Karim Benzema and Brazilian star Neymar – have been lured by lucrative contracts in the summer transfer window to follow in the footsteps of Ronaldo in moving to the Saudi Pro League.

Benzema and his fellow Frenchman N'Golo Kante are part of the Al Ittihad team that is drawn against Iranian club Sepahan, Iraq's Air Force Club and AGMK FC of Uzbekistan in Group C.

Iranian debutant Nassaji Mazandaran, meanwhile, will be facing a mammoth task in Group D, when taking on the 2019 and 2021 champion and last season's runner-up Al Hilal, which will pay Neymar £129.4m a year – six times the amount he earned at PSG. Indian Super League side Mumbai City FC and Uzbekistan's Navbahor are also in the group.

Asian Volleyball Championship: Iran undone by Japan in final showdown



Japan players celebrate after the final victory over Iran in the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship at the Ghadir Arena, Urmia, Iran, on August 26, 2023.

● PAYAM SANI/volleyball.ir



Sports Desk

Japan again proved to be in a league of its own in the continent by cruising to an emphatic victory over host Iran in the highly-anticipated final showpiece of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship in Urmia.

Having captured the bronze medal in July's Volleyball Nations League, the Japanese

came out on top in three sets (25-20, 25-18, 25-18) to avenge the final setback on home soil against Behrouz Ataei's men two years ago.

The formidable trio of opposite spiker Yuji Nishida, skipper Yuki Ishikawa, and outside hitter Ran Takahashi spearheaded the triumph in a jam-packed Ghadir Arena, with the former chipping in

a game-high 15 points. Ishikawa scored 14 points before lifting the tournament's Most Valuable Player (MVP) award, while Takahashi was named the joint Best Outside Hitter – alongside Qatar's Raimi Wadidie – after a 10-point contribution in the final as Japan claimed a 10th title in the Asia's flagship international volleyball event – first

since 2017. There were consolation prizes for the four-time champion Iran – which conceded only a single set against Iraq en route to the final – as Mohammad-Taher Vadi and Amin Esmaeilnejad picked up the Best Setter and Opposite Spiker awards respectively.

Meanwhile, Belal Nabel Abunabot of Qatar and Ja-

pan's Taishi Onodera shared the Best Middle Blocker prize, with China's Yang Yiming taking the award for Best Libero.

Earlier in the day, Qatar – the only team to win a set against Japan – rounded off a decent run in Urmia by beating China 3-0 (25-23, 25-19, 25-18) in the third-place contest.

Japan will be flying high

when hosting the USA, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, and Finland in Pool B of the Olympic qualification tournament from September 30.

Iran, meanwhile, will be facing a daunting task against host Brazil, and reigning world champion Italy, as well as Cuba, Ukraine, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Qatar in Pool A.

Swede Duplantis soars to second straight world pole vault title



Sweden's Armand Duplantis is in action during the men's pole vault final at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, on August 26, 2023.

● DYLAN MARTINEZ/REUTERS

REUTERS – Sweden's world record holder Armand Duplantis claimed his second consecutive world pole vault title on Saturday, but did not have a seventh world record in him on a steamy night in Budapest. The Olympic champion cleared 6.10 metres for gold and then – in what turned into the "Mondo show" – missed at three attempts to clear 6.23, which would have been world record number seven for the remarkable 23-year-old.

"I'm really happy about all these consecutive golds. I don't know where this one ranks but I'm happy to keep winning," Duplantis said.

"This was maybe the craziest atmosphere I've ever competed in so it meant a lot to be able to turn on a pole vault show for them. It almost felt like I was in the Stockholm stadium there were so many Swedish supporters here. It's heart-warming and gets you fired up."

Ernest John Obiena of the Philippines won silver with a jump of 6.00m.

Three days after American Katie Moon and Australia's Nina Kennedy decided to share the women's pole vault gold, there was a tie for bronze between Kurtis Marschall of Australia and Christopher Nilsen of the U.S., who both posted 5.95m.

Duplantis has won 12 of 13 competitions this season, and has cleared 6.00m in a remarkable 50 different events. His most recent world record was 6.22 set in France in February.

His three record attempts enthralled the National Athletics Centre crowd, who clapped in time during his run-ups.

"I try not to set limits and barriers on myself and once I started to realise a world record was possible I tried not to see it as a record just as another height I can achieve," Duplantis said.

"But today never really felt like a world record competition. It was more a pure competition and that's how it can be. It was great fun. I'd spent a lot of energy by the time it got up to 6.23 metres."

The Swede's third attempt was the closest, with his body just grazing the bar, which clung tantalisingly to the standards before wobbling and falling.

Spain coach Vilda criticises Rubiales over 'inappropriate' behavior

BBC – Spain's Women's World Cup-winning head coach Jorge Vilda has criticised suspended football federation president Luis Rubiales, calling the moment he kissed squad member Jennifer Hermoso "inappropriate and unacceptable".

Rubiales was suspended for an initial 90 days by FIFA on Saturday after Hermoso said the kiss prior to the team lifting the trophy was not consensual.

Vilda's entire coaching staff have resigned in protests against Rubiales, but Vilda himself has not stepped down despite his latest comments.

The coach was spotted applauding at the Spanish federation's extraordinary general assembly on Friday, when Rubiales gave an emphatic speech in which he repeatedly insisted he would not resign and claimed to be the victim of "social assassination". The two had been allies after Rubiales stood by Vilda in September 2022 when 15 national-team players pulled



● GETTY IMAGES

out of the squad, saying that the manager's management was affecting their emotional state and health.

Of those 15, only three opted to return to the Spain squad which went on to beat England in the final in Sydney.

Vilda released a statement on Saturday night, saying: "I regret deeply that the victory of Spanish women's football has been harmed by the inappropriate behaviour that our until now top leader, Luis Rubiales, has carried out and that he himself has recognised."

"There is no doubt that it is unacceptable and

does not reflect at all the principles and values that I defend in my life, in sport in general and in football in particular." Vilda is now the only coach from the women's national team who remains in place, with assistant managers Montse Tome, Javier Lerga and Eugenio Gonzalo Martin, physio Blanca Romero Moraleda and goalkeeping coach Carlos Sanchez all having quit their posts earlier on Saturday.

Some 81 Spain players, including all 23 World Cup winners, said they would not play for the team again while Rubiales was in charge.

DoE opposes Miankaleh Petchem on principle: *Official*

Social Desk

The head of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE) stated that the DoE serves the people and is responsible for protecting nature and public property. Due to these duties, the license for establishing Miankaleh Petrochemical was not granted. Ali Salajegheh, the head of DoE, appeared on a national TV broadcast and explained that rules and regulations exist worldwide for land management in order to establish industries or facilities, according to Tasnim news agency. "Any project seeking implementation must

submit an establishment request to a specialized group under the country's DoE, which acts as a trustee for land management. Expert teams review these requests based on existing laws and regulations." Salajegheh further mentioned that after examining these plans, they are either accepted or rejected, with recommendations made in some cases to take precautions.

Miankaleh Petrochemical does not have a license

Regarding Miankaleh Petrochemical, specifically, Salajegheh clarified that their application had been reviewed but no es-

establishment permit had been granted.

"While there may be disagreements about how this industry is perceived by certain organizations, it is important to note that DoE manages land impartially, according to laws and regulations. The same applies to Miankaleh Petrochemical," he said. He added, "A complex called Amirabad Park applied for an environmental license for the production of propylene, and the issue was investigated. From DoE's point of view, this entity does not have any environmental license, and there is nothing personal about it. We are only ser-

vants of the people and take care of nature and people's property." He pointed out the indifference of some industries to the objections of the DoE, while acknowledging challenges in terms of environmental culture awareness. The official expressed a need to better explain the importance of environmental issues as top priorities for both officials and citizens alike.

No project without environmental license

The vice president went on to note that during the current administration's term so far, no projects have commenced with-

out permission from the DoE – an indication of prioritizing environmental concerns within current policies.

Addressing pressures related to approving projects against organizational requirements, Salajegheh stated his commitment to maintaining independence. As a university lecturer in environmental literature at the University of Tehran, he emphasized, "Personally, I'm not someone who could be coerced into doing something," and voiced his readiness to return to teaching and learning if faced with managerial pressures. Salajegheh then clarified

that the process for environmental issues is thorough, involving expert review and participation from representatives across various sectors. The technical assessment follows laws and regulations and is signed off by the relevant deputy. He further emphasized that he lacks knowledge or involvement in this process to be susceptible to pressure when issuing permits. The head of DoE stressed that sometimes large investments are made and individuals consider specific locations suitable for their projects, yet experts and relevant officials must adhere to established rules.



A man whose mission is to save the world's street dogs



Social Desk

Niall Harbison having battled addiction and saved himself, has become a saviour of Thailand's street dogs.

Niall Harbison, 43 is a man who dreams big. He has pledged to be able to sterilise 10,000 dogs a month. In his first year, he managed 1,200 dogs, according to The Guardian.

Niall was in a "dark place" when he went to live in Thailand in December 2018. For a man with undiagnosed ADHD who'd been a prize prankster at school and expelled at 17 with no qualifications, he'd already done exceptionally well. He had several successful online food businesses under his belt, money in the bank and a devoted rescue dog, Snoop.

He raises funds on social media, his 579,000 followers checking in on the dogs he has treated or saved, including his own three rescue dogs, Snoop, Jumbo and Tina. Harbison weaves in updates on his own mental health, which encourages others to share their own mental health struggles.

Most people hide it. There's still a big stigma about mental health, Niall Harbison said.

There are thousands of street dogs on Koh Samui, an island off Thailand.

Harbison had encountered his fill of sick or maimed stray puppies by 2021.

Rescuing puppies "without changing hearts and minds is like sticking a plaster on a heart attack. But it's not my culture, I'm a foreigner, so I have to be cautious", Harbison said.

"I wanted to get to the root of the problem."

Working with local vets who taught him the neutering procedure, he began sterilising the dogs to curtail the stray population, saving them from hardship and suffering, and paying for their vaccinations. The attitude to dogs on the island varies from hatred to love, with the vast majority being indifferent.

There are around 300 dogs in shelters on the island already.

He owns dog sanctuary, comprising two containers on an acre of land gifted to him for a nominal rent by a dog-loving islander which is a sterilisation centre.

For now, the building site puppies are with Harbison, himself a survivor against the odds, and now a rescuer.



Reading camp held for nomadic children of southeastern Iran

Social Desk

A lively one-day reading camp was held in Abadeh County for nomadic children of Fars Province, southeastern Iran. The first round of the project, 'Reading Camp for Nomadic Tribes of Fars,' was held in Kamingah district of Khosro Shirin village in Abadeh County, so that nomadic children could spend a lively day with books, IBNA reported. The one-day event, which provided a cultural service, was aimed at developing cultural justice and facilitating the nomadic community's access to books and information resources. It was held with the presence of Mohammad-Hossein Firouzi, Director General of Fars Public Libraries. Speaking during the camp, Firouzi highlighted that the development of reading and library services

is a key program of the General Directorate of Public Libraries in Fars Province. Through collaboration with cultural institutions and organizations responsible for nomadic affairs, they aim to promote book culture among the nomads in Fars Province. The design of this new plan involved expert input and was facilitated by signed agreements. Emphasizing that this program will extend to other nomadic areas in Fars, Firouzi announced the commencement of a book-reading camp titled 'Reading Camp for Nomadic Tribes of Fars' in Abadeh city. They hope to expand their presence throughout the province by implementing book-oriented services to foster a culture of reading among nomads. Looking ahead,

Firouzi mentioned plans for diverse programs targeting nomadic students in Fars Province starting from the new academic year. With support from partner organizations and devices, they anticipate positive reception despite existing cultural and civilizational challenges within Fars Province. The goal is to conduct book-reading camps periodically wherever there are nomadic communities present. During this one-day book-reading camp held at Abadeh city's summer camp area, with assistance from cultural experts, various activities including book-reading competitions, meetings, performances, storytelling sessions, public readings, painting sessions, and poetry recitals were organized.



Iran inaugurates first-ever insulin production line

Social Desk

On August 27 a momentous event took place in Tehran as the first-ever insulin production line in Iran was officially inaugurated.

Attended by Ruhollah Dehqani, vice president of science and technology and knowledge-based economy, as well as Mostafa Qanei, secretary of the headquarters for the development of the health knowledge-based economy, and some other health officials, the ceremony marked a significant milestone in the country's pursuit of self-sufficiency in medical supplies.

The achievement is not only a technological breakthrough but also a national triumph. Through collaboration with a multinational knowledge-based company and local young specialists, Iran has successfully realized domestic insulin production for the first time. This accomplishment holds immense importance considering past challenges faced due to insulin shortages within the country.

Dehqani highlighted that apart from meeting domestic demands, this large-scale factory also paves the way for potential exports. With such

capabilities in producing this strategic material domestically, Iran now joins an elite group of countries capable of supplying insulin on an international level. This achievement will undoubtedly bring great benefits and elevate Iran's status globally.

Acknowledging Iran's strong presence and technological advancements in pharmaceuticals worldwide, Dehqani emphasized that there are excellent opportunities available for foreign investments in the health care sector.

He also stated that Iran possesses one of the most advanced pharmaceutical technologies globally, while welcoming capital investment and international involvement in this field. The Iranian government stands ready to support investors looking to expand their activities within Iranian territory.

The newly-established production line has been made possible through collaboration with Vitane Pharmed, a knowledge-based company specializing in pharmaceuticals. The infrastructure boasts unparalleled capacity with an annual production capability of 700kg of insulin from cells to a market-ready product. This state-of-the-art facility is poised to bring substantial economic benefits to the country, potentially saving over 100 million euros through cost reductions once clinical approvals are obtained and the product is introduced into the health market.

The inauguration of this groundbreaking insulin production line signifies a moment of pride for Iran as it demonstrates its ability to achieve self-sufficiency in essential medical supplies.



TIFF to lose sponsor after 28 years



VARIETY – Bell Canada is ending its long-standing sponsorship of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), Variety confirmed. The telecommunications company, a lead sponsor since 1995, will not continue its partnership with TIFF after the festival's 48th edition this year.

"Bell has had a terrific partnership with TIFF for the past 28 years," the company said in a statement shared with Variety. "We're proud of our partnership to help make TIFF a leading global destination for film and to support Canadian content and talent on the world stage." The statement continued, "Earlier this year, we decided that the end of 2023 would be the right time to step back from our partnership with TIFF and opted not to renew our sponsorship in order to invest in other opportunities that are core to our business. We are confident TIFF will continue to develop and showcase the world's leading content to inform, educate and entertain the best audience in film. We're grateful to have been a part of it all."

Representatives at TIFF did not respond to Variety's request for comment. Back in July, TIFF unveiled this year's slate of 60 films, representing 70 countries around the world.

The world premiere of Sylvester Stallone's documentary 'Sly' will close the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 16 at Roy Thomson Hall. The festival begins September 7.

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● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453
● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88930684
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irandaily@iranagahiha.com
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Kermanshah handicrafts capable of being introduced to the world: Minister



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Ezzatollah Zarghami said that Meyvan village's handicrafts in Paveh County enjoy a wide variety in terms of design and color and need to be introduced to domestic and international tourists. Zarghami noted the diverse designs and colors of these crafts and their significant contribution to the province's industrial and tourism growth, IRNA wrote. During his visit to Kermanshah Province on Sunday, Zarghami lauded

the skilled *giveh* (traditional Iranian footwear) weavers of Meyvan.

He highlighted their intricate designs, underscoring the importance of showcasing these handicrafts to a broader audience. Zarghami praised the efforts of the Cultural Heritage Department staff and local officials in nurturing this artistic community. He stressed the necessity of education, modernization, innovation, and adaptation to modern preferences to refresh the handicraft sector. He praised Fereshteh Hosseini, the director of Meyvan's Women Weavers'

Cooperative, for transforming the village into a national pride, and setting an exemplary standard for the country. While exploring the Bam Paveh tourism project, Zarghami praised the exceptional tourism potential of UNESCO-designated Uramanat, in Kurdistan Province. He projected tourism-centered projects as the driving force behind the region's development. Zarghami also emphasized the project's strategic location in Paveh, which could significantly enhance the city's tourism appeal.

Iran's Nobakht among Armenian festival's jury members



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker and producer Elaheh Nobakht is among the jury members at the 9th edition of Armenia's Apricot Tree International Documentary Film Festival. Other jury members at the 9th edition of the event include Italian artist Vighen Avetis, and French filmmaker Vincent Sorrel, Mehr news agency reported.

Nobakht, who is also the CEO of ELI Image, an international production and distribution film company, has already been a jury member at several other international film festivals, including the 18th International Oriental Film Festival of Geneva, the Religion Today Film Festival in the Italian town of Trento, the Beirut International Women's Film Festival in Lebanon, and Mena International Film Festival in the Netherlands.

Recently, she was introduced at the Cannes Film Festival Market as one of the top 10 producers, with a promising future in world cinema.

Established in 2015 by Filmadaran Film Culture Development NGO, Apricot Tree (ATIEFF) is a documentary film festival that takes place annually in August in the Armenian village of Ujan. Not only do selected participants get to see their films projected on the big screen in Ujan Park under the open sky but, more importantly, they live among the villagers in their houses, share bread and watch films with them, while getting to experience Armenian culture first-hand.



Iranian diplomat raises concern over safety of artifacts in British Museum

Arts & Culture Desk

Seyed Mehdi Hosseini Martin, the charge d'affaires of the Islamic Republic of Iran in London, expressed concern regarding the security of valuable artifacts, including Iranian items, in the British Museum (BM).

The diplomat's statement comes in the wake of recent reports detailing the theft of about 2,000 ancient artifacts from the renowned British Museum, ISNA reported. In a message posted on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Martin

questioned the museum's ability to provide a safe environment for safeguarding these treasures. He wrote, "With the news about thousands of stolen artifacts from the British Museum, the question remains whether the museum is still a safe place for

holding these priceless artifacts, including the Iranian items. Can British Museum officials regain the trust of original foreign owners?" The British Museum, housing an extensive collection of historical and cultural artifacts, has faced

controversies surrounding the provenance of some of its holdings. The concerns raised by the Iranian diplomat touch on a broader debate about the responsibility of museums to ensure the security and ethical acquisition of artifacts.

Items from Charles Dickens' childhood to be displayed to mark 200-year milestone

Charles Dickens' fans will be able to see relics from his harsh childhood in an exhibition marking 200 years since he was put to work aged 11. The author was forced to leave school in the autumn of 1823 to toil in a blacking factory when his father John was put in a prison for debtors. Charles spent 10 hours a day, six days a week fixing labels to bottles of boot-blackening liquid, first in London's Charing Cross, later in Covent Garden, the

Evening Standard reported. The episode shaped him and his work, and a bottle from his workplace, Warren's Blacking Factory, is among items at the Charles Dickens Museum. The museum is located in Holborn, which is where he wrote 'The Pickwick Papers,' 'Oliver Twist' and 'Nicholas Nickleby'. Visitors can also see two letters written by dad John, described by his son as "a jovial opportunist with no money sense". Curator Frankie Kubicki

said: "The items let us see the damaging effects of poverty on a child's life." Frankie Kubicki, senior curator at the Charles Dickens Museum, said: "Although Dickens never spoke of the blacking factory publicly, his life there was an experience he would never forget. "The 11-year-old boy who walked to work from lodgings in Camden and Southwark every morning experienced the ugliness of factory life and received a permanent mental imprint

of the hardship that was lurking to find impoverished children in the capital city. "In his later works, the blacking factory looms large, not only as a significant backdrop to 'David Copperfield,' but as the driving force behind the creation of hapless child victims in his stories, such as the much-loved character, Oliver Twist. "His position at the factory was to damage his relationship with his parents for the rest of his life, and

his father's continuing money problems only further deepened this void. "The items which we are showing make the experience palpable and enable us to see the damaging effects of poverty on a child's life and a close-knit family." The items are on display at the museum from 25 August until January 21.

● BRITANNICA

