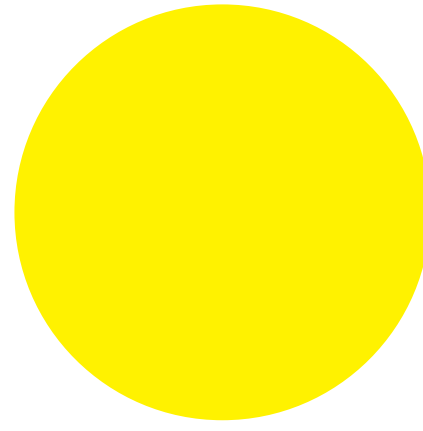




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NEWS IN BRIEF

US dollar to be removed from regional tourism exchanges



MEHR – The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced that the dollar will be removed from tourism exchanges between the countries of the region.

Currently, Iran's trade transactions with other countries are generally carried out in the euro, dirham, yuan, ruble, rupee, and dinar currencies, CBI Governor Mohammadreza Farzin said on Saturday.

Tourism and non-commercial transactions are made with the dominant currencies of the euro and the US dollar. He further added that removing the US dollar from non-commercial and tourist transactions occurred for the first time in the country during the Arbæen March this year.

Iran attends first SCO official meet

MEHR – Following the approval of Iran's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a delegation from the country participated in the 40th session of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Council of the organization in Astana on Friday.

The participants appreciated the efforts of regional countries in combating terrorism and extremism, and paid tribute to the victims, forces, and military commanders including the martyred General Qassem Soleimani.

UN, Iran rally forces against sandstorms

International Desk

Countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia must work together to combat sand and dust storms made increasingly severe by climate change, the United Nations and Iran said Saturday. "Cooperation is key. I urge you to use your time in Tehran to build partnerships, increase cooperation, and commit to practical action," UN chief Antonio Guterres said in a video broadcast to representatives of around 50 states and 15 organizations, according to AFP.

Opening the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi called on countries in the region to create "a fund" to pursue common solutions.

Raeisi expressed dissatisfaction that developed countries favor industrial development and the development of their military tools, which is "cruelty to humanity and the environment".

He further said that the implementation of UN resolutions on environmental issues must be guaranteed in some way, IRNA wrote. Environmental preservation must not be influenced by

political issues, he noted because, otherwise, it would not bear any fruit.

Not stopping at agreements

Also speaking at the first International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms in Tehran on Saturday, the head of Iran's Department of the Environment said the incumbent Iranian government will not stop at signing agreements on combating sand and dust storms, and will take action in this regard.

Ali Salajegheh noted that July 12 was named last year as the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms upon Iran's proposal, IRNA reported.

"Considering that we saw 55 countries directly exposed [to sand and dust storms (SDS)], we invited all of them [to participate in this meeting], and today, their representatives are present," said Salajegheh during his opening remarks at the conference. He pointed out that 15 international institutions were also present at the summit.

"Based on the latest data, it has been determined that Turkmenistan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Iran are more



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi (c), flanked by his Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (2nd-R) and Head of Iran's Department of Environment Ali Salajegheh, attends the first International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms in Tehran, Iran, on September 9, 2023.

exposed [to SDS] than other countries," he said, expressing hope that the final statement of the meeting would lead the way forward.

He also criticized the United Nations for allowing the "cruel sanctions" imposed unilaterally by the United States against Iran to damage cooperation with Iran on SDS and called on the UN to fulfill its responsibilities in protecting the environment and combatting SDS.

More cooperation needed

According to meteorologists, sand and dust storms are expected to increase in countries most vulnerable to climate change.

"About two billion tons of dust enters the atmosphere each year, affecting more than 350 million people," Food and Agriculture Organization Assistant Director-General AbdulHakim Elwaer told the meeting.

The people most affected are

"farmers and those whose income depends directly on natural resources," he said.

Iran, co-organizer of the two-day gathering, is one country where such storms are increasingly numerous, particularly in the southeast desert region of Sistan and Baluchestan, where rare wetlands are drying up at an alarming rate. This has caused diplomatic tensions with neighboring Afghanistan, which Tehran accuses of considerably reducing the

volume of water in the Helmand (Hirmand) River, which flows through both countries. To its west, Iran is also cooperating with neighboring Iraq to combat the effects of sand and dust storms.

"Fortunately, we have reached some very good operational stages with Iraq," Ali Salajegheh said at the conference.

He added that "ground and field operations" were due to start in six provinces in both countries.

Raeisi to Pashinyan: Any geographic change in region a red line



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi (R) shakes the hand of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

International Desk

Assuring Armenia of Iran's opposition to any alteration to regional boundaries, President Ebrahim Raeisi said Iran is prepared to play "an effective role" as a "powerful neighbor" to prevent regional clashes or geopolitical changes.

After being briefed by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan about the latest developments in the Caucasus, Raeisi reaffirmed Iran's support for the territorial integrity of all regional states, according to Tasnim news agency.

In particular, reference was made to the deepening humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of the blocking of the Lachin Corridor; the accumulation of Azerbaijani troops around Nagorno-Karabakh, the tendencies of increasing tension on the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border, the Prime Minister's Office said in a readout. The Iranian president stated, "We believe that regional issues need to be resolved through dialogue among regional countries. We are seriously opposed to foreign countries gaining

a foothold in the Caucasus region."

The president also expressed Iran's readiness to contribute to the settlement of disputes via diplomatic negotiations.

He further hailed the growing economic cooperation between Tehran and Yerevan, saying Iran is prepared to broaden economic and trade ties with Armenia and expedite the implementation of bilateral agreements.

For his part, Pashinyan praised Iran for its effective and constructive role in establishing, maintaining,

and strengthening regional peace, stability, and security.

He expressed his willingness to hold urgent discussions with the president of Azerbaijan, aimed at reducing tensions, the readout said.

Pashinyan also expressed appreciation for Iran's stances on the Caucasus and briefed the Iranian president on the economic cooperation between the two neighbors and efforts to speed up the implementation of bilateral deals concluded during his visit to Tehran in November 2022.

Military to improve long-range missiles

New models of Fattah missiles underway

National Desk

Iran is pursuing the enhancement of its 2,000-km-range missiles, according to a senior official from the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

"Today, we are pursuing to improve the quality and capabilities of our missiles within the range of 2,000 kilometers, like the recently-unveiled "Fattah" hypersonic missile," IRGC's Deputy Commander for Operations Abbas Nilforoushan said in an interview with Tasnim news agency.

The IRGC's Aerospace Force in June unveiled the Fattah

hypersonic missile, which boasts an impressive range of 1,400 kilometers, attains speeds of Mach 13-15, and possesses the ability to penetrate and neutralize anti-missile defenses.

"The Fattah missile is notable for its high speed, reaching Mach 13-15, and its maneuverable warhead, which allows it to adjust its trajectory towards the target," Nilforoushan said.

Iran has long defined a 2,000-kilometer range as a benchmark for its missiles. The official emphasized that Iran has the technological capability to increase missile range, but such advancements are deter-

mined based on operational doctrines and threats. As of now, the directive is set at a 2,000-kilometer range.

The commander explained that the country categorizes its missile systems into three speed classes: subsonic (below the speed of sound), supersonic (with speeds ranging from 1.2 to 5 Mach), and hypersonic (exceeding 5 Mach).

It is clear that the Fattah missile and potential future models are designed to counter the Israeli anti-missile systems, which Iran possesses detailed knowledge of their capabilities, Nilforoushan said.

"Certainly, the Fattah mis-

sile and the forthcoming models under development are poised to impose substantial financial burdens on the Israeli regime," he added.

The official emphasized that the existing missile defense systems of the Israeli regime are ill-equipped to counter this new threat, despite their claims of having hypersonic defense capabilities.

Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the Armed Forces self-sufficient. Iranian offi-

cial have made clear that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense.

Iran's deadline to Iraq

Elsewhere in his interview with Tasnim, Nilforoushan talked about Iran's potential response if Iraq fails to fulfill its commitments to address the presence of separatist groups in the Kurdistan Region, saying his country expects cooperation from its brotherly country.

"We expect brotherhood from our brothers in the Kurdistan Region. Shelter-



TASNIM

ing terrorists in the region, who have become a source of operations against our country, is neither in line with the logic of brotherhood, nor the principles of good neighborliness," the commander said.

"After several rounds of negotiations, Iran finally signed an agreement with both the central Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Region, which has a set timeframe ending on September 19. Iran re-

mains committed to every aspect of the agreement, adhering strictly to its terms without deviation. The expectation is that the other party would similarly abide by the terms of the agreement, just as the Islamic Republic of Iran has upheld its commitments. Failure to do so would result in a return to the previous state of affairs, and Iran is compelled to safeguard the interests of its nation," he concluded.

Varsho - sazi, a fascinating handicraft of Borujerd



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IRNA

Varsho or nickel silver is an alloy that consists of copper, nickel and zinc. Some of its unique characteristics are high luster, hardness, good ductility and easy malleability. This alloy, which entered Iran from Germany and Poland many years ago, turned into a fascinating material in the hands of craftsmen and artists of Borujerd, western province of Lorestan, visitiran.ir reported. The craft of varsho-sazi was formed and Borujerd eventually became registered as the National City of Varsho as its prac-

tioners created artistic, beautiful and delicate products. Very little is known about the history of varsho-sazi; the findings of this matter are greatly ambiguous and do not provide a clear answer regarding the beginning of this craft in Iran. However, there are some indications about the art of varsho in Seljuk Dynasty and later. But what can be certainly said is that the art of varsho flourished in Borujerd during the Qajar Dynasty. Artists of this city gave special shapes

to the alloy plates by hammering and bending them and created both applicable and decorative products. Some of the products that can be listed were tea serving sets, coal samovar, teapots, sugar cube holders, teacups, and small utensils such as forks and spoons, kohl holders, plates, trays, bowls, braziers, water jars, rose water splinters, etc. Samovars are the most special among them; so much so that there is another craft known as samovar-sazi, or mak-

ing samovars. In fact, it can be said that Borujerd's artists have successfully mixed chasing and hammer working and added an aesthetic aspect to these products. The craft of varsho also has a close connection with other handicrafts such as copper repoussage and metal working. Ali Minagar, late master Rauf, late master Gharib, Reza Golduz, Mohammad Badavar, Alireza Shaddel, Masha'llah Farokhi are some of the great masters of Varsho craft.

Today, in addition to decorative crafts, new products have begun to be made. Usually some varsho products can be found in the homes of each Borujerdi family, and they are considered a valuable part of the dowries of young girls of this city. Lorestan is one of the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran and mainly acts as a gateway to neighboring Khuzestan Province, which hosts the UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System.



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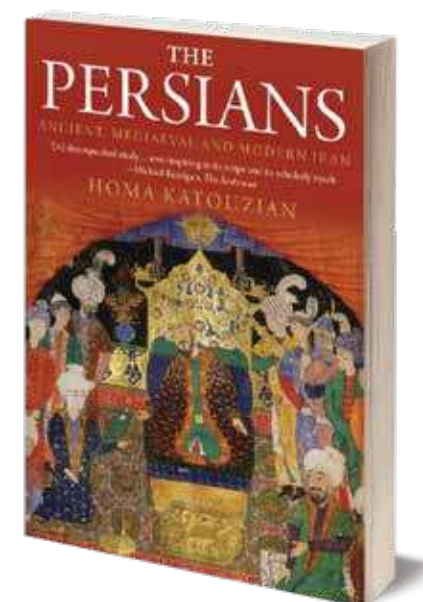
Holagu and the Mongol Empire

In 1227 Changiz Khan, the founder and first khagan of the Mongol Empire, had died. In 1251 his grandson, Mangu, became the Great Khan and two major expeditions were planned. The first was to China, led by the renowned Qubilai (Kublai) Khan, who later became the Great Khan. The second was to Persia, led by Holagu, who later became the Ilkhan. Both were brothers of Mangu and grandsons of Changiz. Holagu led his forces into Iran with the aim of overthrowing the two centres of Islamic faith, the Ismailis in Iran and the Abbasids in Iraq, although his motive was military rather than religious. Ismaili castles fell in 1256 and the head of the community was killed despite his surrender and cooperation. Nasir al-Din Tusi, the great Persian scientist and scholar resident at Alamut castle, accompanied Holagu to Baghdad, which was sacked in 1258, the caliph being beaten to death. Holagu's later invasion of Syria did not succeed. His troops were defeated by the Egyptian ruler: This was the first check to the advance

of the Mongols since the beginning of their campaigns. Yet, as the Ilkhan, he was in possession of a vast empire consisting of Persia, Iraq and parts of Anatolia, centred in Azerbaijan, with Maragheh as the capital, though this was later moved to Tabriz by his son Abaqa. The Ilkhans ruled Iran for about eighty years, from 1260 to about 1340. Both Sa'di and Rumi were contemporaries of Holagu, in their fifties, though this is not evident from Rumi's works. Rumi in fact lived in Anatolia, in the safety of Seljuk Rum. Sa'di left his native Shiraz in the wake of the first Mongol invasion. When he returned thirty years later, in about 1255, he celebrated the peace - 'the leopards had given up leopard-like behaviour' - little knowing that Holagu's troops were on their way. He wrote two poignant elegies, one in Persian and one in Arabic, on receiving the news of the sack of Baghdad: 'The sky would rightly weep blood on the earth full / For the kingdom of Musta'sim, Commander of the Faithful.' He was a friend and admirer of the brothers Shams al-Din and Ata

Malek Joveini, both of them Ilkhan viziers and great men of letters. The mystic poet Fakhr al-Din Araqi also flourished in the thirteenth century, while Hafez in the fourteenth century was a contemporary of the late Ilkhans. There were many other notable poets and writers during the Mongol era, for example Obeid Zakani, Khaju-ye Kermani and Salman Savaji. The later Ilkhans undertook building projects, even a town, of which by far the greatest surviving example is the Oljaitu Mausoleum in Soltaniyeh near the city of Zanjan. In addition, calligraphy, miniature painting and the arts of the book continued to develop, though reaching a pinnacle of perfection only in the fifteenth century. The administration of the realm was, as usual, in the hands of Persian viziers and ministers, who, also as usual, were constantly in danger of losing their lives and possessions. Of the nine grand viziers of the Ilkhans only one died a natural death; others, including great figures such as the Jovieinis and

Rashid al-Din Fazlollah, were killed and expropriated, often together with their families, friends and relations. Military affairs, by contrast, were in the hands of Mongols. The viziers' most important function was to raise finance through taxation. The early Ilkhans, being foreign as well as nomadic, hardly cared about the welfare of the sedentary population, and least of all the peasantry. Their attitude towards their Iranian subjects resembled that of an occupying force rather than an imperial power - they tried to milk their subjects as much as possible. The Iranian peasant was used to a heavy tax burden, but the early Ilkhans' taxation policies were so exploitative that they left little or no motivation for the people. With government policy being to kill the goose that lays the golden egg, frequent financial crises arose. The peasants fled and hid on seeing taxmen, envoys and other officers whom they were obliged to look after and who would often confiscate what little they had left.





Why do Turkey's DAP and GAP Dam projects violate international laws?

National Project, Regional Threat

The GAP and DAP projects in Turkey, involving the construction of numerous dams on international rivers such as the Tigris, Euphrates, and Aras, pose a multitude of environmental crises and economic, social, and humanitarian challenges to the countries of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Armenia, and the Republic of Azerbaijan. These projects have led to the generation of delicate particulate matter (PM2.5), reduced water rights for downstream nations, the extinction of native fish species, wetland drying, desertification, sanitary agricultural crises, exacerbated unemployment, and increased migration as consequences.

By claiming that the water resources of the Tigris, Euphrates, and Aras are part of Turkey's internal waters without considering the environmental repercussions, these projects are proceeding unchecked.

In this context, Dr. Ahmad Kazemi, who holds a Ph.D. in Public International Law from the Islamic Azad University, has published an article titled "Projects of GAP and DAP in terms of International Law and the Role of Media" with a theoretical approach to "Environmental International Law" and "Environmental Human Rights," especially focusing on the concept of "preventing harmful use of the environment." He has conducted an investigation using a descriptive-analytical method.

The researcher seeks to answer the question: "What are the dimensions of international law violations in GAP and DAP?" The following report highlights some of the most important findings of this research.

What are the Major Plans for 'DAP' and 'GAP'?

In 1936, the idea of the GAP or Southeast Anatolia project was formed with the establishment of two commissions for the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This idea became more serious from 1980 with the merger of these two commissions, and the comprehensive GAP project took shape on a land larger than the Netherlands, Denmark, and

Belgium. Turkey has allocated 30 years and 32 billion dollars for the implementation of the GAP. The GAP includes nine less-developed provinces in Southeastern Turkey, including 'Gaziantep,' 'Adiyaman,' 'Sanliurfa,' 'Diyarbakir,' 'Mardin,' 'Batman,' 'Siirt,' 'Kilis,' and 'Sirnak.' The goal of this project is to build 22 dams and 19 power plants on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, along with the development of irrigation networks on 1.8 million hectares of land.

The implementation of the "DAP" or Eastern Anatolia Project, a late and extensive dam construction project in Turkey, began in 1998. Unlike the GAP project, Turkey is strict about preventing the international community from obtaining information about it. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also closely monitors the release of documents and records related to it. For this reason, there are varying statistics on constructing 10 to 90 dams and irrigation projects under the DAP project.

The DAP project, which is primarily constructed in the Aras and Kura river basins, directly affects Iran, Armenia, and the Republic of Azerbaijan. Some dams being built as part of the DAP project include the "Karakurt," and "Narin Castle" dams. Considering the extensive dam construction in Turkey within the framework of the GAP and DAP projects on the Tigris, Euphrates, Aras, and Kura rivers, and considering that Turkey is considered the upper riparian country for the shared rivers, the effects of these projects are a subject of international legal consideration.

International Law and the Principle of Non-Harmful Environmental Use

International environmental law, as a branch of general international law, has evolved in recent decades to protect the environment and address environmental challenges through the establishment and enforcement of mandatory and non-mandatory legal rules by the global community. Recent developments indicate that the general principles of international environmental

law have been accepted by the majority of states and have evolved into customary and binding rules. Two principles, the "non-harmful use of the environment" and "state responsibility for environmental damage in the territories of other states," are particularly significant within this body of law.

From the perspective of "good neighborliness," the principle of "non-harmful use of the environment" is closely related. Based on this principle, a ruling in the case of Lake "Elon" between France and Spain emphasized that the application of the principle of "non-harmful use of land" is not limited to territorial boundaries. The fundamental rule of international law regarding "good neighborliness" can extend beyond common borders. The United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Committee, referring to its General Comment No. 15 on the "right to water" and citing Turkey's dam construction projects, explicitly states that member states must respect the enjoyment of the "right to water" by other countries. The absence of international treaty regulations regarding the international commitments of states in the dam construction process has led some countries to build numerous dams within their own territories based on the doctrine of absolute territorial sovereignty. As a result, adherence to customary rules of international environmental law centered on the "prevention of harmful use of the environment" has increased in the international community in recent decades.

Considering the absence of a multilateral and comprehensive treaty among the riparian countries of the Tigris and Euphrates River basins, the identification of customary international rules governing this river basin is inevitable to define the rights and obligations of these countries in disputes. This applies similarly to the Aras River basin. In this process, the theoretical concept of the "prohibition of harmful use of the environment" holds significance, as it is the most important and inspiring principle for the provision

of many international conventions in the field of international environmental law.

The Consequences for the Region

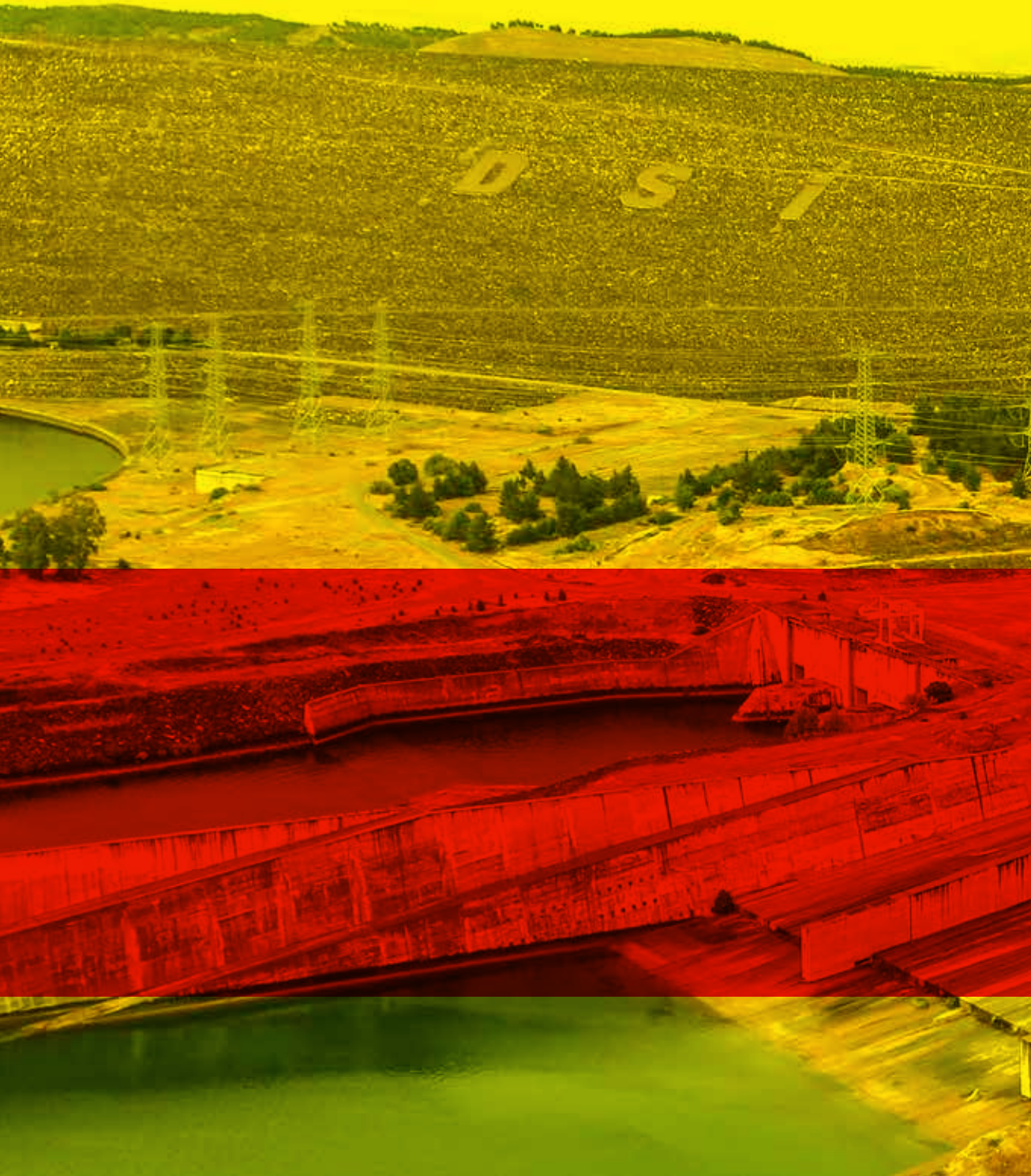
Despite the positive portrayal of the GAP project in local media, it has significant environmental implications for the countries of Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Consequences such as the generation of fine dust particles in Iraq, Syria, and Iran, a decrease in the water rights of Iraq and Syria, the endangerment of native species and some Persian Gulf fish, agricultural crises, unemployment, and the threat to food security are just some of the negative outcomes of this sprawling project.

Similarly, Turkey, through the DAP project and its most important dams planned or under construction in the Eastern Anatolia project along the cross-border Aras River, has caused detrimental and even irreparable consequences for our country.

Issues such as the reduction of Iran's water rights from the Aras River, the jeopardy to the drinking water security of East Azerbaijan, the negative impact on Lake Urmia, agricultural crises, the threat to food security in the northwest, increased unemployment, decreased investment, and exacerbated migration in the northwest, the emergence of dust storms and fine dust particles in the northwest, and the challenge to the efficiency of the Khoda-Afarin Dam and other dams on the Aras are among the most significant repercussions of this major project for Iran.

Turkey regards international rivers flowing through its territory as its internal waters, granting itself the right to exploit them without regard to the sensitivities of downstream countries. This approach is rooted in the theory of "absolute territorial sovereignty," which has become obsolete for over a century and is not referenced by any international legal authorities.

Currently, the theory of "limited territorial sovereignty" is the prevailing and widely accepted theory



among states, as well as in international courts and arbitration tribunals. Current international rules, such as the 1992 European Water Convention, the 1997 United Nations Water Convention, and the 2004 Berlin Rules, are based on this theory. In summary, large-scale dam projects like GAP and DAP have far-reaching environmental and geopolitical consequences for the region, affecting water rights, food security, environmental stability, and migration patterns. The shift from the outdated concept of "absolute territorial sovereignty" to the more balanced and cooperative notion of "limited territorial sovereignty" is essential in addressing these complex and interconnected challenges.

Findings and Effective Recommendations

The findings of this report indicate that the implementation of the GAP and DAP projects contradicts customary rules of international environmental law and the "Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses," as well as conventions such as Ramsar, combating desertification, Espoo, and the Stockholm Declaration. Furthermore, due to violations of the "right to access clean water" and the destruction of cultural heritage, it severely infringes upon international human rights rules and the cultural rights of minorities. The international media can counteract the media policy of censorship and distortion of the consequences of these projects by explaining the dimensions of human rights and environmental rights violations in the GAP and DAP projects. Simultaneously, by raising awareness and advocacy among the public and environmental groups, they can hinder foreign investments in these projects' development, implementation, and cessation.

Kazemi's report not only highlights the problems, obstacles, and legal violations associated with the GAP and DAP projects but also provides important

recommendations for media programs. According to him, media outlets should consider the following points in their media programs:

- 1 Clarify the dimensions of human rights violations, including the violation of the right to access clean air and water, resulting from the implementation of the GAP and DAP projects.
- 2 Explain the reasons for Turkey's non-membership in the 1997 United Nations Convention (the New York Convention) from a legal perspective.
- 3 Produce documentaries on TV regarding the environmental and human rights implications of GAP and DAP projects, with the participation of prominent domestic and international experts.
- 4 Elaborate on the dimensions of cultural rights violations of the Kurdish minority within the framework of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage.
- 5 Analyze negative media coverage regarding the drying of Lake Urmia and their silence regarding the consequences of the DAP project on drought in northwest Iran.
- 6 Collaborate with Iranian, Iraqi, and Syrian television networks to produce joint documentaries about the GAP project and with Armenia regarding the DAP project.
- 7 Explain the role of the GAP and DAP projects in Turkey's hydro hegemony and its prospects.
- 8 Describe how uncontrolled dam construction on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers leads to drought in Iraq and Syria and violates the human right to "access to clean air and water," emphasized in the International Bill of Human Rights, which is a customary rule, and is mandatory for all countries. This issue is crucial because among the 23 million people residing in the Euphrates River Basin, only 31% live in Turkey, while the remaining 44% are in Iraq, and 25% are in Syria.

Environmental Consequences For Regional Countries

Based on the findings of a study, the implementation of the ambitious GAP project (constructing dams on southern rivers) by Turkey has resulted in significant unfavorable environmental consequences in some regional countries such as Iraq and Syria.

Three countries, namely Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, which share the drainage basins and catchment areas of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, have been compelled to construct dams and control water flows within their territories due to their increasing dependence on the water from these rivers. Among these, Turkey, positioned upstream compared to its southern neighbors, requires a significant amount of water from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for the development of agriculture and industry in its southeastern Anatolian region through the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP). This has led to a considerable reduction in the water outflow to Syria and Iraq by constructing numerous dams on these two rivers within Turkey's borders.

The reduction of water in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers since the implementation of this plan has caused substantial harm to the environmental security of Iraq and Syria. These damages have resulted in unfavorable political, economic, and social consequences for both countries. Furthermore, this issue has given rise to doubts about Turkey's political objectives in recent decades, leading to tensions and conflicts among the three nations. The consequences, whether intended or unintended, have also affected Iran's environmental issues, including the influx of dust particles.

Based on this context, "Yashar Zaki" and "Seyed Soroush Asadollahi" have conducted research using a descriptive-analytical approach and library resources. They seek to answer the question: "What impact did the hydropolitics of the GAP project have on the environmental security of Iraq and Syria, and what are Turkey's objectives in implementing this plan?"

The phased implementation of the GAP project in recent decades has resulted in various environmental consequences, including water pollution, the extinction of rare flora and fauna species, increased desertification, soil salinity, the drying of wetlands and ponds, and the production of dust particles in Iraq and Syria. It appears that Turkey, relying on this project, aims to establish hydro hegemony in the region.

Water Instead of Oil in the Modern Era

One of the primary concerns of any political entity about large-scale land management is environmental management, especially of non-renewable environmental resources. Nowadays, water resources have transformed into one of the most fundamental sources of conflicts in the 21st century, capable of being the source of many global transformations. In this context, the obstacles to water supply and the intensity of demand have become crisis-prone issues.

This vital resource, referred to as a tool of competition between nations, can potentially lead to tensions and conflicts, particularly among countries facing water scarcity. The importance of this matter is such that some theorists and experts in the field of political geography refer to the current era as the era of hydropolitics (policies based on water). They believe that water resources are among the foundational factors of geopolitical crises, as competition between countries for shared water resources and access to freshwater sources can lead to efforts by nations to achieve

national security and reduce regional conflicts. Adequate water resources for a country imply development in agriculture, sufficient food, economic growth, and public welfare.

Water security is particularly relevant in arid and semi-arid regions, and it's closely related to national security. Water is one of the most significant indicators of security in Western Asian countries. Nowadays, it is being positioned as an essential resource, gradually replacing oil, and it is both a factor of tension and division as well as cooperation and collaboration in the Western Asian region.

For this reason, one of the most important issues concerning international relations and defining the borders of a country relates to rivers that flow between one or two countries as the primary sources of freshwater. There are more than 200 international rivers in the world. The range of interactions between nations regarding the exploitation of these shared water resources encompasses a wide spectrum from harmony and complete cooperation to discord and conflict.

Objectives of the GAP Project

The utilization of the phases of the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) in the past decades has had significant impacts on Turkey's economic, political, social, and environmental domains, as well as on downstream countries. In this study, using the theoretical framework of the regional security complex "Barry Buzan," the authors have examined Turkey's objectives. In this study, using the theoretical framework of the regional security complex "Barry Buzan," the authors have examined Turkey's objectives in implementing the Southeastern Anatolia Project on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, along with its political, economic, and social implications.

The results of this research indicate that Turkey, Iraq, and Syria, as major actors in the Tigris and Euphrates river basins, which are situated within the same geographical region, have formed a hydro-political security complex. Changes in the hydro-political pattern of the upstream country have led to alterations and consequences in downstream countries. The evaluation of environmental effects reveals that the GAP project's implementation is not confined to the internal governance of individual countries; it holds transboundary repercussions.

Therefore, linking water security to water resources outside a country is, in essence, tying a part of national security to the region. The absence of collaborative management structures and governance of surface and groundwater resources can transform the utilization of these resources into a source of crisis between nations.

In the execution of this project, national water needs are met, but it appears that the project's political goals are more pronounced, or at the very least, it can be inferred that this project has the potential to be used as a coercive tool against downstream countries (Iraq and Syria). It can be employed to leverage water against their oil resources, establishing a winning card. It seems Turkey aims to solidify its power over neighboring countries as a "hydro-power" by gaining control over water arteries. Given that the Western Asian region lies within the belt of aridity, experiencing recurrent droughts and reduced rainfall in recent years, the final utilization of the GAP project's dams has led to Iraq and Syria, as downstream countries of the Tigris and Euphrates river basin, being devoid of the environmental consequences' protection.

Beiranvand to miss Al Nassr clash



FFIRI

Sports Desk

Persepolis goalkeeper Ali-reza Beiranvand is ruled out of the upcoming AFC Champions League encounter against Saudi giant Al Nassr after suffering a groin injury while on international duty. The Persian Gulf Pro League champion will open its campaign in Group E – also featuring Qatar's Al Duhail and Istiklol of Tajikistan – of the Asian elite clubs competition against Cristiano Ronaldo and co. at Tehran's Azadi Stadium on September 19. The Iranian keeper felt the pain after a long throw during a 1-0 friendly victory over Bulgaria on Thursday and was replaced by Payam Niazmand midway through the first half.

"He has suffered a grade 2 strain in the groin area and will need two to three weeks to recover," club doctor, Ali-reza Haqiqat, said on Saturday, meaning Beiranvand will also be a doubt for the away game against Al Duhail on October 2 as well as the Paykan game and the Tehran derby against Esteghlal in the Iranian top flight. His absence will be a huge blow for Reds manager Yahya Golmohammadi, who will be left with academy keepers Amir-Reza Rafiei and Mehrshad Asadi – yet to make a senior appearance for the club – in the squad ahead of the massive games coming their way.

The injury is also a bitter disappointment for the high-profile keeper himself as he was eager for a second duel against Ronaldo after famously saving the Portuguese great's spot-kick in a 1-1 draw at the 2018 World Cup.

The Al Nassr game will be the first on home soil for an Iranian club against a Saudi side since 2016.

A political rift had seen the teams from the two countries square off in neutral venues for the past seven years, but a thaw in the Tehran-Riyadh relations in recent months convinced the Asian football governing body to give the go-ahead for all matches contested by the Iranian and Saudi national teams and clubs taking place on a home-and-away basis.

Sepahan will welcome Al Ittihad to Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium in Group C on Oct. 2, with Nassaji Mazandaran taking on Al Hilal at the Azadi Stadium in Group D a day later.



Asian Cadet Taekwondo Championships:

Gold rush on final day as Iran lifts girls trophy, finishes boys runner-up

Sports Desk

The Iranian girls and boys teams, their coaching staff, and the federation officials pose for a photo after a glorious campaign at the Asian Cadet Taekwondo Championships in Beirut, Lebanon, on September 8, 2023.

taekwondo.ir

A medal-laden campaign at the Asian Cadet Taekwondo Championships saw Iran claim the girls' title while settling for the runner-up spot in the boys' event in Beirut, Lebanon.

On Friday, five Iranians brought the curtain down on a glorious run for the country in the Lebanese capital by capturing the ultimate prize of their respective classes. It was a head-to-head battle between Iran and South Korea in the girls' competitions on the final day as all three showdowns were contested by the athletes from the two continental powerhouses.

Rojan Heydari outclassed Park Soyoun for the -172cm gold, with Niayesh Ali-Asgari coming out on top against Lee Cheaeun in the -176cm final.

Hasti Khalaji completed a clean sweep of final triumphs for Iran with a straight-round victory in the +176cm contest.

Friday's medals took Iran's tally to a remarkable five golds, two silvers, and a single bronze as Mahboubeh Mohammadnejad's team beat Kazakhstan to the girls' crown, with South Korea in the third place.

Narina Khayat (-164cm) and Fatemeh Zahra Baqeri (-148cm) had bagged a couple of golds, with the former enjoying further

glory in the awarding ceremony as she was named the female MVP of the competitions after cruising to the top podium of her category without conceding a single round.

Mohammadnejad, meanwhile, took the best female coach award. The team trophy rounded off a glittering run for the Iranian girls at the international age-group competitions over the past 10 days as the world cadet title in Sarajevo had been followed by the Asian juniors' crown earlier in Beirut.

Elsewhere on Friday, Iliya Allahverani defeated Mongolian Belgutei Bat-Erdene 2-0 for the +180cm gold, with his fellow

Iranian Abolfazl Najafi beating South Korean Kim Geunwoo in the final showpiece of the -180cm category – taking the country's gold count to three in the boys' event, after Seyyed Mohammad Abdollahi had triumphed in the -152cm class on Day 1. The Iranian boys also grabbed double silvers and bronzes apiece to finish second to South Korea, while Jordan stood third.

Fatemeh Hassanzadeh, Pinar Lotfizadeh, Pouya Kiaheyrafi, and Amir-Abbas Nasiri were the Iranian silver medalists in the tournament, with Asma Khorrami, Mohammad-Hossein Montazeri, and Armin Masoumi leaving Lebanon with three bronze medals.

Need to raise game against Djokovic, says Medvedev ahead of US Open final

REUTERS – Daniil Medvedev expects Novak Djokovic to be in top form in tonight's US Open final, but the third-seeded Russian adds that he will try to produce his "best-ever version" to beat the record-23-time Grand Slam champion.

Medvedev prevailed 7-6(3) 6-1 3-6 6-3 in a fascinating encounter that ended top seed Carlos Alcaraz's reign as Flushing Meadows champion, with the 27-year-old setting up a rematch of his triumphant 2021 finale against Djokovic.

Djokovic, 36, is hunting a fourth US Open title that would see him equal Margaret Court's record haul of 24 Grand Slams and a good measure of revenge on Medvedev. "He (Djokovic) is always better than the previous time he plays. For example, I beat him in the US Open final, he beat me in Bercy (Paris Masters) in a great match. Carlos beat him in Wimbledon, he beat him in Cincinnati," Medvedev told reporters.

"Novak is going to be his best version on Sunday, and I have to be the best-ever version of myself if I want to try to beat him. "Novak, when he loses, he's



Daniil Medvedev hits a return during his U.S. Open last-four victory over Carlos Alcaraz in Flushing Meadows, NY, US, on September 8, 2023.

MANU FERNANDEZ/AP

never the same after... It's just a different mentality... So, I have to use it knowing that he's going to be 10 times better than he was that day. And I have to be, if I want to still beat him, 10 times

better than I was that day." Medvedev, however, said he would stick to his pre-match routine before facing Djokovic. "I'm going to do all the same. It's just the mental preparation

where... you want to fight till the end, you want to win, and that's how you should be in the final of a Grand Slam," he said. Medvedev said the win against Alcaraz was a confidence boost

but acknowledged that he would be "hell-disappointed" if he were to lose the final despite a successful run at New York.

"To know I'm capable of doing it on the big stage every time you do it one more time brings more confidence," Medvedev added. "You know you can do it again. You want to do it again. You want to feel this. And at the same time, what is most important is to kind of use it but forget about it and go for the next one." Meanwhile, said he would put the landmark out of his mind against Medvedev.

The Serb battled past American Ben Shelton in straight sets on Friday to set up a rematch with the Russian, who denied him a rare calendar Grand Slam two years ago. "(I don't) think about the history too much in this sense, you know, because when I did that in the past, like, '21 finals here I was maybe overwhelmed with the occasion and the opportunity and I underperformed," said Djokovic. "So I don't want this to happen again, and I'll try to, you know, just focus on what needs to be done and tactically prepare myself for that match."

Morocco earthquake kills over 1,000, rescuers dig for survivors

Rescuers dug through rubble for survivors in collapsed houses in remote mountain villages of Morocco on Saturday, in the wake of the country's deadliest earthquake for more than six decades, which killed more than 1,000 people.

The quake which struck in Morocco's High Atlas mountains late on Friday night damaged historic buildings in Marrakech – the nearest city to the epicentre – while the most of the fatalities were reported in mountainous areas to the south, Reuters reported.

The Interior Ministry said 1,037 people had been killed and another 672 injured by the quake, gauged by the US Geological Survey at a magnitude of 6.8 with an epicentre some 72 km (45 miles) southwest of Marrakech.

In the village of Amizmiz near the epicentre rescue workers picked through rubble with their bare hands. Fallen masonry filled narrow streets. Outside a hospital, around 10 bodies lay covered in blankets as grieving relatives stood nearby.

The quake, which hit at

around 11 p.m. (2200 GMT), affected a sweep of the High Atlas mountain range. Tremors were felt as far away as Huelva and Jaen in Andalusia in southern Spain.

Street camera footage in Marrakech showed the moment the earth began to shake, as men suddenly looked around and jumped up, and others ran for shelter into an alleyway and then fled as dust and debris tumbled around them. In Marrakech, where 13 people were confirmed dead, residents spent the night in the open, afraid to go home.

In the heart of its old city, a UNESCO World Heritage site, a mosque minaret had fallen in Jemaa al-Fna Square.

Injured people filtered into Marrakech from the surrounding areas seeking treatment.

State television footage from the Moulay Ibrahim area some 40 km (25 miles) south of Marrakech showed dozens of houses collapsed at the foothills of a mountain, and residents digging graves as groups of women stood in the street.

In Marrakech, where rub-



ble had tumbled into the streets, residents described desperate scenes as people fled for safety.

Moroccan state television broadcast images of troops being deployed.

The quake was recorded at a depth of 18.5 km, typically more destructive than deeper quakes of the same magnitude. It was Morocco's deadliest earthquake since 1960 when a quake was estimated to have killed at least 12,000 peo-

ple, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Governments around the world expressed solidarity and offered assistance.

Expressing empathy with the families of the victims, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani extended his condolences to the people and the government of Morocco for the death of hundreds of citizens of the country, IRNA reported. Turkey, where powerful

earthquakes in February killed more than 50,000 people, said it was ready to provide support.

Algeria, which broke off ties with Morocco in 2021 over the political status of Western Sahara, said it would open airspace for humanitarian and medical flights.

Marrakech is due to host the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in early October.



Rescuers carry a search operation following a powerful earthquake, in Amizmiz, Morocco, on September 9, 2023.

● ABDELHAK BALHAKI
REUTERS

Border tensions a major challenge to Pakistani-Afghan ties



By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

The Pakistani Taliban launched a coordinated attack on a non-Muslim populated area in northern Pakistan's Chitral, resulting in casualties on both sides. Security agencies in Pakistan have since gained control of the area, forcing the Pakistani Taliban to retreat toward the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Following a military operation against the Taliban in

the mountainous Kailash region along the border, officials claim that the situation is now under control and no longer poses a threat.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani described the terrorist attacks in the Chitral district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as an isolated event, stating that they do not believe the Afghan government approved of it. However, in the aftermath of the Chitral incident, an exchange of fire between the border forces of Pakistan and Afghanistan at

Torkham in the Khyber district resulted in injuries and the closure of the busiest trade route between the two countries. Pakistani authorities assert that Afghanistan initiated the firing.

The Torkham border, a vital passage for Afghan trade, has remained closed for the past three days as officials from both nations engage in negotiations to ease border tensions.

This is not the first time that the Pakistani Taliban have targeted the non-Muslim Kalashis population, as a similar attack

occurred in 2018, raising concerns for the Muslim Ismaili sect within Chitral. Deputy Commissioner for Lower Chitral, Muhammad Ali, has deployed additional personnel in the area to ensure the security of the people and the protection of tourists.

The presence of the Pakistani Taliban along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border is seen as a security threat to Pakistan, with allegations that they receive support from the Afghan Taliban, who currently control Kabul. It is claimed that the Afghan Taliban are supply-

ing weapons left behind by the US in Afghanistan to the Pakistani Taliban.

In light of strained relations between the two countries, Pakistani Foreign Minister Jilani's statement that the Afghan Taliban were not involved in planning the attack on Chitral indicates that Pakistan continues its diplomatic efforts to curb Afghan Taliban support for the Pakistani Taliban. This comes despite Pakistan's previous accusations of the Kabul government supporting the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

Shia leader condemns opening of Israeli Embassy in Bahrain



Sheikh Isa Qassem, the leader of the Islamic Movement of Bahrain
● IRAN PRESS

Sheikh Isa Qassem, the Shia leader of the Islamic Movement of Bahrain, said that the opening of the Israeli Embassy in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, is in line with the destructive role of the Zionists. Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen opened the embassy during his first visit to Bahrain last Monday, Iran Press reported.

According to the Bahrain Mirror, Sheikh Qassem emphasized in a statement on Saturday that the opening of the Israeli Embassy in

Bahrain is an obvious battle against God, the Prophet of Islam, and all the Muslims of the world.

Cohen's trip to Bahrain was met with a wave of condemnations from Bahraini people, civil institutions, and religious and political communities.

Previously, the people of Bahrain had expressed their opposition to the compromise between the Al Khalifa (the ruling family of Bahrain) and Tel Aviv by holding demonstrations and burning the flag of Israel.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



G20 unveils Int'l rail, shipping project



AP – US President Joe Biden and his allies on Saturday announced plans to build a rail and shipping corridor linking India with the Middle East and Europe, an ambitious project aimed at fostering economic growth and political cooperation.

The corridor, outlined at the annual Group of 20 summit of the world's top economies, would help boost trade, deliver energy resources, and improve digital connectivity. It would include India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Israel, and the European Union, said Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser.

Armenia denies Azerbaijan's charge

REUTERS – Azerbaijan said on Saturday that Armenian forces had fired on its troops overnight, and that Azerbaijan Army units took "retaliatory measures", in an incident denied by Armenia. The claim and counter-claim came against the background of rising tensions between the two countries, which have fought two wars over the Armenian-populated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in the past three decades, and a flurry of calls to foreign leaders by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The Armenian government and state media said Pashinyan held phone conversations on Saturday with the leaders of France, Germany, neighboring Iran and Georgia, and with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Azerbaijan said its foreign minister discussed the situation with a senior US State Department official, Yuri Kim.

Japan FM discusses reconstruction, security with Zelenskiy

REUTERS – Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in a Saturday meeting agreed to begin discussions on security guarantees and cooperate on reconstructing Ukraine's economy, the Japanese foreign ministry said. The security guarantee discussions come after the G7 group of countries, of which Japan is a member, said in July that its members would begin bilateral security guarantee talks with Ukraine.

Iran to stage first play produced in collaboration with AI

MEHR – In an innovative development for the Iranian theater scene, 'Antigone,' the first-ever play in Iran produced in collaboration with artificial intelligence (AI), is set to go on stage in Tehran as of September 21. The play's poster, designed by Pedram Shahrabadi, was unveiled on Saturday. The creators behind 'Antigone' used various aspects of AI in different elements of the production, effectively blending human intelligence with artificial intelligence throughout the work. Directed by Mohammadreza Agaah, the cast of 'Antigone' includes Mahsa Jamshidi, Pedram Zamani, Parsa Sahraei, and Sajjad Mir. 'Antigone' follows 'Woyzeck,' making it the second joint work between Sajjad Afsharian and Mohammadreza Agaah in the field of theater.

A poignant excerpt from 'Antigone' reads, "When a law is broken... the gates of Greece are also broken... If your father were here today... he wouldn't give you this permission."

This innovative fusion of theater and AI technology promises to offer audiences a unique and thought-provoking theatrical experience, setting a guide for future creative collaborations in the Iranian arts.

Amazon to require authors to disclose use of AI material

AP – After months of complaints from the Authors Guild and other groups, Amazon.com started requiring writers who want to sell books through its e-book program to tell the company in advance that their work includes artificial intelligence material.

The Authors Guild praised the new regulations, which were posted Wednesday, as a "welcome first step" toward deterring the proliferation of computer-generated books on the online retailer's site. Many writers feared computer-generated books could crowd out traditional works and would be unfair to consumers who didn't know they were buying AI content.

In a statement posted on its website, the Guild expressed gratitude toward "the Amazon team for taking our concerns into account and enacting this important step toward ensuring transparency and accountability for AI-generated content."

A passage posted this week on Amazon's content guideline page said, "We define AI-generated content as text, images, or translations created by an AI-based tool." Amazon is differentiating between AI-assisted content, which authors do not need to disclose, and AI-generated work.

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Parthian era monument discovered in Iran



Arts & Culture Desk

Archaeological excavations by researchers from the University of Tehran revealed the remains of a significant monumental structure dating back to the Parthian era in the historical site of Viranshahr in North Khorasan Province.

The Viranshahr archaeological site, located in Faruj County, North Khorasan Province, has been one of the most important historical sites in the province

since 2019, when it came under the scrutiny of archaeological researchers, as reported by IRNA. The fifth season of excavations, which began in late June 2023, uncovered a quadrangular wall measuring 350 meters in length and width, with an acropolis or governing seat situated in its northern corner.

Previous excavations and studies indicated that this wall in the Viranshahr site was equipped with corner towers and featured

a main gate in its northwestern edge. The ongoing archaeological explorations in the southern part of the site led to the discovery of architectural remains characterized by thick adobe walls, measuring three meters in thickness. Further excavations in the southern mound revealed a grand structure consisting of a wide eastern hall, a square-shaped hall in the west, and adjoining rooms in the north and south. Additionally, a central hallway with a width of three meters was identified within the space of the eastern hall and the main hall.

The layout and structure of the newly-found building in Viranshahr closely resemble architectural complexes of the Greek-Hellenistic cultural sphere in northern Afghanistan during the Parthian era. These architectural designs spread to various regions of Central Asia, the Iranian Plateau, and Mesopotamia during the Parthian period.

Based on the identified architectural elements and dated pottery fragments, the discovered edifice in Viranshahr is believed to have been constructed around the 2nd century BC and was in use until the mid-Sassanid era.

What distinguishes the Viran-

shahr monumental structure from similar examples is its relative preservation. The structural integrity of the walls in Viranshahr has allowed for the conservation of more than four meters of the building's height in most areas. Evidence suggests that many of the spaces were covered with vaulted roofs, and the walls were coated with layers of plaster.

The discovery of this monumental structure in Viranshahr, located on Iran's current borders, is a rare find and holds the potential to become a significant archaeological site-museum. It presents an excellent opportunity for further exploration and research into the historical background of the region and the development of tourism in the area.

Meysam Labbaf, an associate professor in the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Tehran, explained the term "monumental structure" in archaeology: This term is commonly used in archaeology to refer to magnificent buildings constructed by the ruling authorities of their time, symbolizing power and often carrying symbolic and ceremonial significance.



● IRNA

Iran's 'Alaa' to be staged in South Korea



Arts & Culture Desk

'Alaa,' a monodrama written and directed by Mohammad Kazemtabar, is set to make its international debut at the 14th Daejeon International Play Festival in South Korea.

This theatrical production introduces a unique blend of romance and aerial yoga movements, making it a standout performance in the festival, Mehr news agency reported.

With a presence of 16 plays from eight different countries, the 14th edition of the South Korean festival opened on September 8, and will run through September 26 in the city of Daejeon, South Korea.

The talented cast includes Marjan Aqanouri, Ali Borji, and Mohammadreza Azadfar, who bring the production to life with their outstanding performances.

Record number of submissions for Iran's Cinéma Vérité

Arts & Culture Desk

The 17th edition of the Iran International Documentary Film Festival, known as Cinéma Vérité, has so far received over 2,000 documentary film submissions, with a significant section focusing on social issues.

Under the direction of Mohammad Hamidimoqaddam, the festival has attracted filmmakers from Iran and around the world, showcasing a diverse range of topics, Mehr news agency reported.

To date, the festival's secretariat has received over 2,000 films, with 300 of them coming from Iranian documentarians, and over 1,800 entries hailing from various countries, competing in the international section.

A substantial number of these submissions are on social subjects, with documentaries addressing environmental issues, demographics, women's rights,



and family dynamics, garnering particular attention among filmmakers.

The primary deadline for submitting the works was announced as September 11, while documenta-

ry filmmakers still have the opportunity to submit their entries for consideration.

The 17th edition of the festival will be held in December 2023 in Tehran.