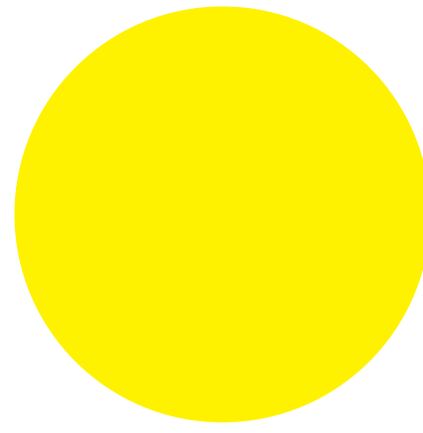


Iran's approach in Caucasus could help resolve crisis **8** >



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Iran discovers four oil, gas fields: *Minister*

With the discovery of three oilfields and one gas field, 2.6 billion barrels have been added to Iran's oil and gas reserves, said Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji on Wednesday. Speaking on the sidelines of a weekly cabinet meeting, the minister added that the fields include Cheshmeshour gas field in the northeast of the country, the Hirkan oilfield in Golestan Province, and the Tengou and Genaveh oilfields in Bushehr Province, according to Shana.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

OPEC+ keeps output reduction to boost oil prices



AFP - An OPEC+ panel recommended Wednesday that the oil group keep its current output reduction strategy unchanged after heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Russia vowed to maintain their cuts to prop up prices.

In a statement following a virtual meeting, OPEC+ said its Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMCC) "reaffirmed the commitment of its member countries" to maintain its production reduction strategy valid until the end of 2024. The panel added that it stands "ready to take additional measures at any time" depending on market conditions.

Euro zone retail sales fall

REUTERS - Euro zone retail sales fell much more than expected in August, data showed on Wednesday, pointing to weaker consumer demand as inflation remains high.

The European Union's statistics office Eurostat said retail sales in the 20 countries sharing the euro fell 1.2% month-on-month for a 21% year-on-year decline in August.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected a 0.3% month fall and a 1.2% year-on-year decline.

Germany seeks 'grand bargain' with France over energy



FT - Germany is seeking a "grand bargain" with France to resolve their current stand-off over nuclear power and help unblock a sweeping reform of the EU's electricity market.

"We are working towards a larger compromise on energy issues," said Sven Giegold, state secretary at the German Economy and Climate Ministry, of the talks between Germany, France and its EU partners. "We need a grand bargain," he said, adding that it could cover several aspects of energy policy, not just the nuclear issue.

Iran discovers four oil, gas fields: Minister

Economy Desk

With the discovery of three oilfields and one gas field, 2.6 billion barrels have been added to Iran's oil and gas reserves, said Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji on Wednesday. Speaking on the sidelines of a weekly cabinet meeting, the minister added that the fields include Cheshmeshour gas field in

the northeast of the country, the Hirkan oilfield in Golestan Province, and the Tengou and Genaveh oilfields in Bushehr Province, according to Shana. Iran's proven oil reserves of at least 160 billion barrels account for almost 10 percent of the world total, and rank it fourth, after Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Canada.

The country also

sits on the world's largest proven gas reserves of almost 34 trillion cubic meters, or 18 percent of the global total. Owji said that the new discoveries have raised the replacement factor to 87% in the liquid hydrocarbon sector, which means that for 100 barrels of crude oil and gas

condensate used for domestic consumption in the country, 87 barrels have been provided by new discoveries. Compared to countries in the region such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar, Iran ranks first place in exploration, which means that every well dug for exploration is successful and has reached hydrocarbon, the minister noted.



Plan finalized for construction of 15 GW solar power plants

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber said a comprehensive plan has been finalized for the construction of solar power plants to generate 15 gigawatts of electricity.

Mokhber said on Wednesday that the plan aims to rebalance the country's energy imbalance and reduce the consumption of liquid fuel in thermal power plants, IRNA reported.

After being approved by the Economic Council of the cabinet, the plan will be implemented by the private sector, with an investment of \$8.3 billion in three phases.

Mokhber also highlighted the issue of preserving the environment, saying the country should move toward the development of renewable energy to meet its needs.



Homegrown catalyst unveiled in central Iran

Economy Desk

Iranian-made reductive catalytic depolymerization (RCD) was unveiled in a ceremony at the Imam Khomeini Oil Refining Company of Shazand, in Markazi Province, on Wednesday. Speaking at the ceremony, the CEO of the company said the catalyst was produced for the first time in Iran in the residual hydrogen purification unit with a capacity of 69,000 barrels per day, IRNA reported.

Majid Rajabi added that the RCD helps to reduce the amount of sulfur, nitrogen and metals in the residual product of the Atmospheric and Vacuum Distillation Unit.

With the production of the indigenized catalyst, the ground was paved for converting heavy mazut into gasoline and lighter products, the official said.



Six-month steel exports up 20%: ISPA

Economy Desk

Iran's export of steel products in the first six months of the current Iranian year (March 21-September 22) registered a 20 percent growth compared to the same period last year, according to figures by the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA). According to statistics, the export of iron beam has increased from 56,000 tons in the first six months of previous Iranian year to 90,000 tons during the six months to September 22, 2023, showing a 60.7 percent growth. In addition, the export of rebar has dropped from 1.137 million tons to 1.123 million tons in the six month period, ISPA added.

Iran exported 874,000 tons of sponge iron during H1 of the current Iranian year, 312,000 tons more than the corresponding figure for last year. According to statistics released by the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) on Saturday, Iranian plants produced 14.6 million tons of direct-reduced iron (DRI) during the first five months of the current Iranian year. The figure is seven percent more than the output for the last Iranian year, which was 13.658 million tons. According to statistics released by the World Steel Association (WSA) on September 25, Irani-

an steelmakers churned out 19.7 million tons of crude steel in the first eight months of 2023, indicating that the country stands at tenth place among steel producing countries. Steel mills of the country kept the rising trend for the eight-month period despite a major drop in production during the summer due to problems in electricity supply. The country's steel ingot production for August 2023 registered a 24.1-percent shrinkage compared to the figure for August 2022. World crude steel production for the 63 countries reporting to the association was 152.6 million tons in August 2023, a 2.2 percent increase com-

pared to August 2022. China produced 86.4 million tons in August 2023, up 3.2 percent over August 2022, while India produced 11.9 million tons of steel ingots last month, up 17.4 percent compared to the figure for last year, as Japan produced 7.1 million tons, down 2.9 percent compared to the same month

last year. The World Steel Association is one of the largest and most dynamic industry associations in the world, with members in every major steel-producing country. The WSA represents steel producers, national and regional steel industry associations, and steel research institutes.



Namin Museum, a gateway to the past

Iranica Desk

Museums are like a mirror of the culture and history of each region. When we travel to a new city or area, there is a possibility that there is a museum that can give us an understanding of its past and present, taking us on a journey beyond the dimensions of time and space.

Museums may appear to only host pieces of objects, tools, and documents that are older compared to today. However, museums are in fact a language of history, and they can narrate the passage of time and everything that has happened to humanity through a silent language, chtn.ir wrote.

The existence of a museum can serve as a medium for a city, becoming an important choice for tourists and even locals to visit and delve into the captivating world of history and culture. Namin Museum, in Ardebil, is situated in the heart of the city, within a magnificent historical structure known as Saarem al-Saltaneh House. After a temporary closure, the museum reopened in July of this year and is all set to

welcome the public.

It is a city with a rich cultural heritage and culture-loving people, which happens to attract tourists due to its natural beauty and climate. The mind-boggling Heyran Pass, the lush Fandoqlu Forest, the mesmerizing Sooha Lake, and countless breathtaking natural landscapes alongside its historical and ancient landmarks, have turned Namin into an ideal choice for travel and exploration. Namin Museum can also be an important addition to all the attractions of this area.

Director General of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization,

Hassan Mohammadi Adib, said that Namin Museum was temporarily closed due to a lack of human resources. However, thanks to the coordinated efforts and support of the municipality and the city's Islamic City Council, the museum's objects have been successfully returned.

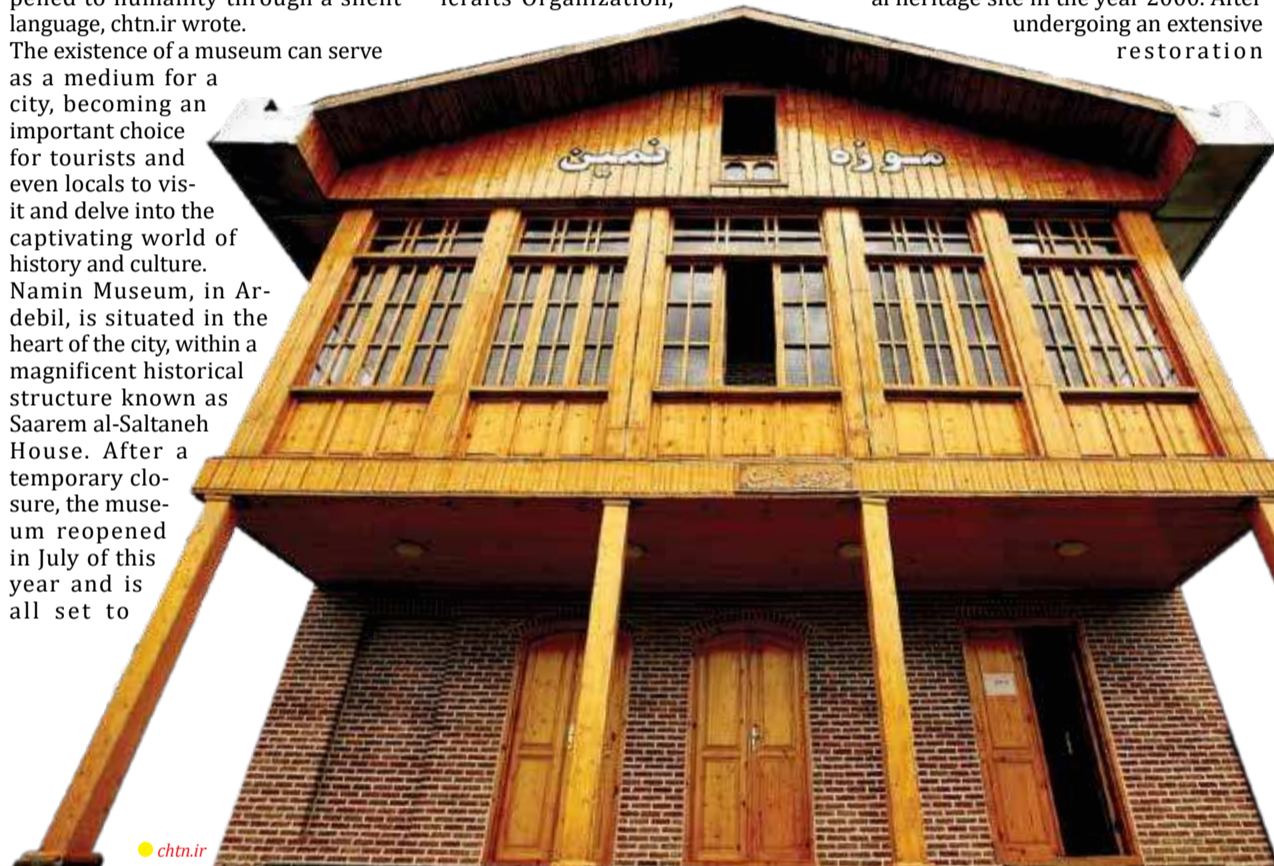
Several historical buildings surround the main square of the city, showcasing themselves very proudly. Alongside the majestic Grand Mosque and the city's bustling ancient bazaar, there stands the most eye-catching monument: Saarem al-Saltaneh House. This iconic structure was officially recognized as a national heritage site in the year 2000. After undergoing an extensive restoration



tishneh.com



chtn.ir



chtn.ir

project, the building was enthusiastically opened as the Namin Museum in 2009, inviting the public to explore its captivating history and treasures.

This historical house, dating back to the Qajar period, belonged to Mir Kazem Khan Saarem al-Saltaneh, who was the ruler of the region. He established his governance in the pleasant and climatically favorable region of Namin and had this building built.

Currently, a portion of this historical house is being used by Namin's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department as an administrative office. The majority of the structure comprises halls and rooms on two floors, especially designated for exhibiting museum artifacts. Malakeh Golmaghanizadeh, an official from

Ardebil Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, who oversees museum management, said that on the first floor, a hall is dedicated to showcasing prehistoric and historical artifacts, while a neighboring room introduces Islamic period objects. This section also displays paintings donated by the local culture enthusiasts. On the museum's second floor, the central hall is devoted to a diverse collection of handicrafts dating from the Qajar period to the modern era. Additionally, there are two adjacent rooms designated for ethnographic objects. In these sections, several donated items from the people of Namin are on display.

Visiting this museum, located in one of the most beautiful historical houses of Ardebil Province, is like a journey to the heart of history.

Competition and collaboration between Roman and Sassanid empires

Extending the length and breadth of the globe, the variety of regions and peoples that played a role in the Roman and Sassanid empires' struggles demonstrates how the field of competition, as well as the empires' knowledge of the world, expanded exponentially. Several peoples who lived in the border areas or strategic military or commercial locations, or who had established themselves as participants in international trade, were instrumental in mediating both economic and cultural goods between the two realms. Armenian and Syriac speakers lived on both sides of the frontier and, when left unmolested by the two great powers, lived as though nothing divided them.

Until they were destroyed by or incorporated into the Roman or Sassanid Empire, the independent merchant cities of Palmyra and Hatra functioned as engines of exchange as well as sites of conflict between the empires in the third century. Cults of Christian martyrs originating in Syria and Mesopotamia gained adherents in both empires whose backgrounds extended well beyond the original Syriac-speaking population, even into the courts.

Indeed, the Syrian Sergius could count no less than the Roman emperor Justinian I and the Sassanid king Kosrow II as donors, with several records of Kosrow II's rich offerings and the church of

Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople standing as testaments to the frontier saint's cross-cultural appeal. Armenia played an especially important and constant role in facilitating exchange between the two realms, and its elites were politically and culturally adept at operating in both the Roman and the Iranian cultural spheres. While not partitioned as starkly as Armenia, the kingdom of Lazika too passed between Roman and Sassanid spheres of influence. Because its kings were integrated into both court hierarchies, at times even concurrently, the Laz transmitted several royal practices and attributes between the two realms through the travels of their kings.

From what is known about the Sassanid court, it is clear that the sons of vassal kings resided at court, participated in royal activities with the king, and were integrated into the court's ritual life as well.

Farther south the Arab Lakhmids and Ghassanids were responsible for starting, as well as fighting in, many Roman-Sassanid conflicts, especially in the sixth century. Not surprisingly, the Lakhmid and Ghassanid rulers were well integrated into the two court hierarchies and appropriated diverse aspects of their court cultures. Although situated on the empires' peripheries, the kingdom of Aksum in east Africa

and the rulers of Hadramawt in the southern Arabian peninsula received the attention of both powers from the mid-third through the seventh century. Given these regions' ability to control the Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade and, in the case of Hadramawt, a possible route of invasion into Iran, the Roman and Sassanid courts expended a great deal of diplomatic and monetary resources in both.

While the Sassanids were ultimately more successful, incorporating the rulers of the south Arabian kingdoms of Himyar, Saba, and Hadramawt into their courtly hierarchy by the reign of Shapur II, the Romans continued to use Christian missionary work and enthronement of bishops as an imperial tool in attempting to gain a foothold in the region through the fifth century.

In the sixth century the Christian Aksumites and Jewish Himyarites fought several proxy wars on behalf of the Romans and Persians for control of the Arabian Peninsula.

Settled Central Asian peoples such as the Sogdians, and nomadic powers such as the Avars, Huns, Chionites, Hephthalites, Khazars, and the first Turk steppe empire, became involved in the affairs of both empires. As they became embroiled in Roman-Sassanid conflicts, these steppe peoples extended the field of contact as well as rivalry between the



two realms into Central Asia in mercantile, diplomatic, and military spheres alike. The Sogdians, an eastern Iranian people, were an especially important catalyst in this process.

This merchant people established trading colonies emanating from their homeland in Transoxiana throughout the length of the Silk Road, from the Crimea to China, and were responsible for mediating goods, motifs, and religions between Rome and Iran, not to mention Europe and Asia.

In addition, Sogdians played an important diplomatic role in the Turk steppe empire in dealings with Sassanid Iran

and China and in serving this third power provided yet another indirect avenue of communication between the Roman and Sassanid worlds.

The collaborative aspect of the Roman-Sassanid relationship was most readily apparent in relation to the invasions of nomadic steppe peoples. Though both attempted to play these tribes off each other, they at times mutually portrayed each other as strongholds of civilization in the face of the pressures of the nomadic peoples, who humiliated and shook both realms several times over.



US systematically racist

The history of the United States is teeming with a disturbing legacy of racism, one that stretches back through the ages. A mere glimpse is enough to reveal to the viewer a vast expanse of time marred by the insidiousness of racial prejudice in the continent. From the unjust killings and dispossession of Native Americans — where their ancestral lands were forcibly taken — to the alarmingly recent instances of police violence against African Americans, no era in the annals of American history remains untainted by the pervasive stain of racism.

In early colonial times, racism played a principal role in shaping the social and economic structures of America. European colonizers arrived on their ships with a deeply ingrained belief that their race was superior to that of others. This groundless, barbaric belief laid the foundation for the oppression of Indigenous peoples and the later enslavement of Africans. The rightful owners of America, Indigenous communities, had rich cultural histories and diverse societies. Yet, they were savagely dispossessed of their lands and subjected to violence, forced displacement, and marginalization. The colonizers justified these actions through the concept of “manifest destiny,” claiming that they were destined to dominate and civilize the land.

Simultaneously, the barbaric Europeans enslaved peoples in Africa, bringing millions of them to the Americas through an inhumane slave market. There, these poor souls were ruthlessly exploited as a

source of labor for plantations and other industries. They endured unimaginable suffering, forced labor, and brutal punishments. They were essentially treated as property. This dehumanizing system stripped enslaved individuals of their freedom, dignity, and basic human rights.

The institution of slavery, deeply rooted in racial prejudices, created a racial hierarchy that continued to shape American society for generations to come.

“Slavery was not merely an unfortunate thing that happened to black people,” writes Isabel Wilkerson in her scholarly book, ‘Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents,’ which describes racism in the United States. She calls slavery “an American innovation, an American institution,” whose objective was to benefit “the elites of the dominant caste.” Understanding the historical context of slavery is indeed crucial for comprehending how deeply entrenched racism became in the fabric of American society and why the fight against it still rages on. The slave trade and the forced removal of the Indigenous peoples from their lands gave way to a social hierarchy based on race. Wilkerson compares this hierarchy to a caste system similar to that of India and Nazi Germany, with white Europeans at the top and marginalized groups at the bottom.

Little by little, however, the abolitionist movement gained ground in the US, which led to the Civil War and, subsequently, the end of slavery in 1865. After the Civil War, the brief period of Reconstruction began, which spanned

from 1865 to 1877. It was a pivotal era, during which the aftermath of slavery, emancipation, and the reintegration of the Confederate states into the Union were addressed. Nevertheless, racism persisted during this time, blockading the progress of African Americans towards true equality.

Even though a few amendments to the Constitution were passed that abolished slavery, granted citizenship rights, and ensured voting rights for African Americans, both systemic racism and violence toward minorities remained intact. Southern states enacted Black Codes — discriminatory laws with the purpose of restricting the rights and freedoms of the newly freed slaves. These codes imposed harsh labor contracts, limited access to education, and denied African Americans the right to vote.

At this stage, the rise of white supremacist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, further fueled racial tensions during Reconstruction. These groups employed intimidation, violence, and terror tactics to suppress African Americans and reestablish white supremacy. Lynching, mob violence, and political assassinations became harsh realities for many African Americans seeking to exercise their newfound rights.

In 1877, with the withdrawal of federal troops from the South, Reconstruction effectively came to an end. The withdrawal allowed Southern states to enact Jim Crow laws, which enforced racial segregation and perpetuated racial inequalities for many more decades.

The unrealized dream

“I have a dream,” declared Martin Luther King Jr. on August 28, 1963, to more than 250,000 people, a fifth of them white. They had gathered near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington to rally for “jobs and freedom.”

Luther King’s dream was to see that one day America “will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed.” He drove his vision home by reaffirming an unshakable belief in the self-evident truth “that all men are created equal.”

His speech came at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, which fought for racial equality. During this time, inspirational leaders such as Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X pushed for desegregation, voting rights, and an end to discrimination. Important events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the March on Washington led to significant advancements in racial equality, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Despite some gains, however, racial

disparities persist in the US and King’s dream remains unrealized. Systemic racism, economic inequality, housing discrimination, and biases in the criminal justice system disproportionately affect African Americans and other minority groups to this day. Testament to this is the Black Lives Matter movement, which aims to put an end to racism. The popular movement came as a means to counter the police killings of unarmed African Americans.

● 2019

Atatiana Jefferson

● 2015

Walter Lamar Scott

● 2015

Sandra Bland

● 2016

Philando Castille

“

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● 2020

Breonna Taylor

● 2015

Freddie Gray

● 2016

Sean Bell





2016

Alton Sterling

1999

Amadou Diallo

2018

Stephon Clark

2020

George Floyd

2014

Ezell Ford



Americans of African descent are three times more likely to be killed by police and 4.5 times more likely to be incarcerated compared to their white counterparts, according to the UN International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality's recent report.

2018

Botham Jean

Racist police

The UN International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in the Context of Law Enforcement has recently released a report highlighting systemic racism against people of African descent in the United States police forces and criminal justice system. The report is based on the Mechanism's country visit that was accomplished earlier this year. Testimonies were gathered from 133 affected individuals, detention centers were visited, and meetings were held with various government and police authorities.

The report emphasizes that systemic racism is a pervasive issue that demands urgent reform. It asserts that racism in the US, stemming from the legacy of slavery and apartheid, persists today in the form of racial profiling, police killings, and other human rights violations. Shockingly, Americans of African descent are three times more likely to be killed by police and 4.5 times more likely to be in-

carcerated compared to their white counterparts.

The report also criticizes the prevailing impunity for police officers, noting that only one percent of the over 1,000 cases of police killings each year result in charges. It rejects the notion that the problem lies solely with "bad apple" officers, highlighting evidence of a broader pattern of abusive behavior. The Mechanism calls for comprehensive reform within law enforcement and criminal justice institutions, emphasizing the need to address values, attitudes, and stereotypes prevalent in US society.

Additionally, the report suggests that armed police officers should not be the default responders to all social issues, advocating for alternative responses to policing, especially in cases involving mental health crises, homelessness, and school discipline. It also raises concerns about the impact of racism and racial discrimination on the mental health of police

officers.

The report calls on police agencies to address systemic racism against Black law enforcement officers as well as the existence of the white supremacy ideology within their ranks. It expresses profound concern over instances such as life imprisonment for children of African descent, the chaining of pregnant women during childbirth, and prolonged solitary confinement. The report also highlights the prevention of voting rights for individuals who have completed their sentences and the use of forced labor in prisons as contemporary forms of slavery.

The Mechanism condemns not only the overuse of incarceration and criminal supervision but also the disproportionate representation of people of African descent jailed by the criminal justice system. It makes 30 recommendations to the US and its jurisdictions, urging comprehensive reform.

A habit of shooting innocents

The early hours of February 4, 1999, descended upon Amadou Diallo like a menacing shroud. The 23-year-old African student was standing near his building, unarmed, having just returned from eating a simple meal.

On those fateful hours, four New York police officers, Edward McMellon, Sean Carroll, Kenneth Boss, and Richard Murphy, were on the lookout for a serial rapist in the Soundview section of the Bronx.

As the officers' unmarked car crept

along Wheeler Avenue, their eyes caught Diallo, who stood before his building entrance, casting prudent glances up and down the street. The officers decided to detain Diallo.

With commanding voices, they demanded that he reveal his hands, but in a moment of sheer panic, Diallo fled towards his building entrance, reaching into his pocket in a futile attempt to retrieve his wallet. Mistaking Diallo's innocent gesture for a draw of a firearm, one officer's finger tightened

around the trigger, discharging a single shot as he ascended the stairs. The recoil of the weapon sent the officer staggering backward, while the remaining three officers, believing their comrade had been struck, unleashed a torrent of bullets from their own firearms.

The echoes of 41 shots rang through the night air. Eyewitness Sherrie Elliott attested that the barrage of gunfire persisted even after Diallo had crumpled to the ground.



A very long list

In examining the extensive roster of African Americans who have tragically succumbed to instances of police brutality in the United States, it becomes copiously clear that the recent report issued by the Expert Mechanism — which asserts the existence of "systemic racism" within

American law enforcement and justice systems — should come as no shock.

From the heartbreaking cases of individuals such as Amadou Diallo and George Floyd — whose lives were unjustly cut short by police violence — to the stories of Daryl Hunt, Albert Wood-

fox, and Troy Davis — who fell victim to an unjust justice system — the list of casualties continues to grow. These individuals all share the unfortunate fate of becoming victims of a deeply ingrained systemic racism that appears to permeate the very essence of the United States of America.

Iran, Saudi agree to reschedule Sepahan-Al Ittihad fixture: **FM**

Sports Desk

Iran and Saudi Arabia have agreed on a second date for the AFC Champions League game between Persian Gulf Pro League side Sepahan and the Jeddah giant Al Ittihad, said the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. The match in Group C of the Asian elite clubs competition was called off at Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium on Monday after the Saudi side refused to take to the pitch.

Al Ittihad is yet to officially announce the reason behind the controversial decision but wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the club was informed by the AFC's organizing official that "the game would not take place on the scheduled date and the team is allowed to leave the venue."

Al Ittihad flew back to Saudi Arabia on Monday night. "The Saudi Foreign Minister [Faisal bin Farhan] and I have been in contact regarding the issue and

we have already agreed to reschedule the fixture," Amir-Abdollahian said on the sidelines of a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday. "The Tehran-Riyadh ties are on the right track and we can't afford to let the sports be manipulated as a political leverage," added the Iranian top official, while calling on the AFC to "act on a technical basis when deciding on the situation." In a statement on Monday night, the Asian football governing body said the game was canceled

"due to unanticipated and unforeseen circumstances," adding: "This matter will now be referred to the relevant committees." Several sources, including the Iranian Fars and Tasnim new agencies, reported that the players of the Saudi side refused to leave the dressing room due to a bust of Iranian Quds Force General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in a US drone strike in Baghdad in January 2020, being placed at the entrance to the pitch.



▶ Sepahan fans are seen in the stands at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, Isfahan, Iran, on October 2, 2023.
● RASOUL SHOJAIE/IRNA

Hangzhou Asian Games:

Alizadeh, Kavianinejad grab GR silvers, Sohrabi bags bronze



▶ Iran's Danial Sohrabi (blue) is in action in the Greco-Roman 67kg contests at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, on October 4, 2023.
● hangzhou2022.cn

Sports Desk

The first day of the Greco-Roman wrestling contests at the Hangzhou Asian Games saw Iranians collect two silver medals and a bronze across four weight classes.

Nasser Alizadeh made it to the final showdown of the 87kg event, only to suffer a 7-4 defeat against Uzbekistan's Jalgasbay Berdimurtov.

Amin Kavianinejad also finished his campaign with a silver after a loss to Kyrgyzstan's Akzhol Makhmudov – two-time world champion and a silver winner in Tokyo Olympics – in the 77kg final. Danial Sohrabi, meanwhile, recovered from a last-four setback

against Meirzhan Shermakhanbet of Kazakhstan to beat China's Li Lei 3-2 and walk away with the joint 67kg bronze.

Elsewhere in the Games on Wednesday, the Iranian kabaddi teams came out victorious against their opponents.

The country's men's side defeated South Korea 64-23 to win Group B and progress into the semifinals.

In the women's competitions, Iran also secured a last-four place, thanks to a 54-16 triumph over Bangladesh.

In water polo, Iran fell to a 15-7 defeat against the host but still managed to qualify for the men's quarterfinals as the runner-up in Group B.

AFC Champions League:

Nassaji outclassed by Al Hilal; Persepolis shows character against Al Duhail

Sports Desk

Iranian minnow club Nassaji Mazandaran was given a reality check by Al Hilal in the AFC Champions League group stage, falling to a 3-0 home defeat against the Saudi giant on matchday two in Group D on Tuesday. The result came a day after Persian Gulf Pro League champion Persepolis bounced back from a first-day loss in Group E to walk away with a massive 1-0 victory at Al Duhail.

Stars make the difference

Saudi clubs stole the global headlines in the summer transfer window by luring some top-notch players in the European leagues to the country's top-flight, and it was the different class offered by Al Hilal's international stars that inspired the Riyadh-based side to a commanding win at the Azadi Stadium.

Ex-Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic headed home from close range 18 minutes into the game and Brazilian magic man Neymar summed up his man-of-the-match performance with a goal in the second half before his corner-kick led to Saleh al-Shehri adding a third in the stoppage time.

"We put in all our efforts into the game but some of our players are playing in the competition for the first time and today you could easily see what kind of contribution a \$200m player can make," Nassaji keeper Rashid Mazaheri said after the game.

With Al Hilal the ultimate favorite to win the group, it already looks like a battle between the other three teams for a runner-up finish and a possible place in the knockout phase. Nassaji is third in the group – thanks to a first-day 2-0 win at Mumbai City

– trailing Al Hilal and Navbahor, who shared the points in Riyadh two weeks ago, by a single point.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Navbahor defeated the Indian side 3-0 at home.

Reds recover

Stepping into Monday's game

in Doha, Persepolis knew a second successive defeat would have left the Reds' chances of progress in the balance.

When the Tehran giant was beaten 2-0 by Al Nassr at home a fortnight ago, Yahya Golmohammadi's side was thoroughly criticized for being overwhelmed by the opponent's big names in Cristiano Ronaldo, Sadio Mane, and Marcelo Brozovic.

The Iranian domestic double champion was a shadow of itself on the day, and a second-half red card for Milad Sarlak, coupled with Mahdi Torabi's early injury, added to the Reds misery.

However, despite missing the key trio in Sarlak, Torabi, and Vahid Amiri, the Tehran Reds rose up to the occasion, producing one of their finest performances in recent months to beat the Qatari champion and revive hopes of progress.

Making only a third start

since March, Omid Alishah seized the opportunity in style as his second-half strike led Persepolis to the victory, though the margin would have been more superior had the Reds been more clinical in the opposition box.

"I enjoyed the win as we showed we are a good team. We expected a very tough match but we were able to hold our own," said the Iran international keeper Alireza Beiranvand after the match.

"We are in one of the most difficult groups but we asserted our quality against a good Al Duhail side. I hope we can continue with this form domestically as well as on the continental front."

Al Nassr, meanwhile, came from behind for a 3-1 home win against Istiklol to maintain its perfect record, with Persepolis in second.

Next for Persepolis is a double header against Istiklol.



▶ Al Hilal's Neymar (blue) is seen in action against Nassaji Mazandaran at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on October 3, 2023.
● AFC

Raisi: Zangezur corridor lays groundwork for NATO in Caucasus

International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi maintained that the Zangezur corridor lays the groundwork for NATO's presence in the Caucasus, making it a threat to the national security of the region. Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president's deputy chief of staff for political affairs, tweeted that Raisi once again stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly opposed the opening of the corridor in separate meetings with representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Raisi received Khalaf Khalafov, the representative of the president of Azerbaijan on special assignments, as well as Armen Valerii Grigoryan, the secretary of the National Security Council of Armenia, on Wednesday. Baku has been pushing to

carve out a chunk of land located within Syunik Province of Armenia to open the crossing called Zangezur that would obliterate Iran's border with Armenia. However, based on the principles of territorial integrity upheld by international law, Armenia holds the rightful authority over this passage. Earlier in the day, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri also met with Grigoryan, declaring Iran's readiness to dispatch observers to the Armenia-Azerbaijan borders. Baqeri emphasized that the ongoing tension in the region is not beneficial for Armenia, Azerbaijan, or other regional countries, IRNA reported. He also advocated for resolving these differences and tensions and offered Iran's assistance in this regard, stating that any

enhancement in defense power and military capabilities should not be driven by aggressive intentions. Baqeri underscored that regional peace is in everyone's interest and should be safeguarded by regional countries, warning against the presence of trans-regional forces, as it contradicts regional peace. He also criticized foreign policies that promote disintegration and unrest, urging regional countries to resolve their issues through dialogue. In response to the recent US military drill in Armenia, Baqeri expressed concern that the involvement of new external actors could make matters more complex and unstable in the region. For his part, Grigoryan provided an update on the developments in the Caucasus.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with Khalaf Khalafov, the representative of the president of Azerbaijan, in a meeting in Tehran, on October 4, 2023. [president.ir](#)



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with the Secretary of the National Security Council of Armenia Armen Valerii Grigoryan in a meeting in Tehran, on October 4, 2023. [president.ir](#)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Others not allowed to damage Iran-Iraq ties: Rashid



National Desk

IRNA – Iraq's President Abdul Latif Rashid said strong relations with Tehran is of great importance for Baghdad.

In an interview with an Iraqi TV network, Rashid underscored that Iraq will not allow other countries to damage relations between Tehran and Baghdad.

He also answered a question about negative impacts of the ongoing tensions between Iran and the US on Iraq, saying that Iraq and Iran share a 1,400-kilometer border, and relations with Iran is important to Baghdad. Rashid added that Baghdad is cooperating with Washington in many fields, especially in science and economy. He said that Iraq is an independent country and its independence is more important than any agreement with countries.

Referring to a recent relocation of anti-Iran groups in Iraq, he said that Iran and Iraq have begun negotiations to further protect the common border.

Over 320k Afghan migrants repatriated



IRNA – Iran said that about 328,000 Afghan immigrants who had illegally entered Iran during the past months were repatriated to their country from Razavi Khorasan Province. The province's border guard commander Brigadier General Majid Shoja added that 44,000 Afghans who tried to illegally enter Iran were arrested and were sent back to Afghanistan during the same period. He said that 488,000 people have legally entered the country during the period. Shoja added that 2,600 kilograms of various narcotics were discovered in the first half of the Iranian year. The latest case was recently discovered with 100 kilograms of industrial narcotics.

Army's drones destroy all targets during drill



The spokesman of the Iranian Army's joint exercise said homegrown kamikaze and combat drones have successfully hit all their targets during the maneuver. Brigadier General Alireza Sheikh said on Wednesday that the anti-radar unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) Omid detected its target in the drill that is being held in seven border provinces by four divisions of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army.

Also, the Arash zamikaze drone successfully annihilated land and sea targets, he added. Sheikh described the use of smart bombs as one of the main features of the exercise. "During the drill, kamikaze and combat drone systems were able to hit all predicted targets in a pinpointed manner using smart ammunition," he said. The drill saw the mass flight of UAVs from various ground, underground and sea bases to carry out operations which were unprecedented in scope. "The ability of mass flights using artificial intelligence is one of the innovative measures in the Islamic Republic of Iran Army's operation of drones," he said. Meanwhile, in an aerial battle, a drone targeted another with a missile and destroyed it, head of Air Defense Force Brig. Gen. Alireza Sabahifard said.

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ISA to launch a bio-space capsule by March 19

National Desk Head of Iran's Space Agency (ISA) Hassan Salarieh revealed plans for the launch of a bio-space capsule by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2024). Salarieh unveiled the initiative during a press conference held at the ISA headquarters on Wednesday, marking World Space Week, according to Tasnim news agency.



"We are making strides in space biology," he emphasized, as he noted a long hiatus in bio-space capsule launches.

Iran previously launched rockets carrying two monkeys into space on separate occasions in 2010 and 2011, in what Iranian officials called "a prelude to sending humans to space". During the press conference, Salarieh highlighted that the ongoing projects of ISA align with Iran's decade-long plan. "In satellite design and production, work on Pars-2 and Pars-3 observation satellites has commenced in collaboration with the Space Research Institute," he stated. Salarieh revealed that the construction of the Pars-2 observation satellite has already started, and the conceptual designs for Pars-3 are complete. "Our nation has achieved higher levels of precision in microsatellite design and production. The Nahid-2 telecommunication satellite serves as a successful example of this qualitative achievement," he added.

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Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



IAEA inspectors expelled over their countries' hostile stances: Nuclear chief

National Desk Iran's nuclear chief said the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who were expelled from Iran in September, were from three European countries that had repeatedly adopted hostile political stances against Tehran. Mohammad Eslami said that the IAEA has 127 verified inspectors in Iran, and those who were expelled had not visited Iran for several years. Eslami noted that the European countries want Iran to

unilaterally implement all the terms of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal while they do not fulfill any of their obligations. Iran's move, known as "de-designation" of inspectors, is allowed; member states can generally veto inspectors assigned to visit their nuclear facilities under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and each country's safeguards agreement with the agency governing inspections. But the IAEA said Tehran's decision went beyond normal practice. It said Iran

had told the agency that it would bar "several" inspectors, without giving an exact number. Iran defended its move and accused the US, Britain, France and Germany of politicizing the IAEA watchdog. "Unfortunately, despite Iran's positive, constructive and continuous interaction with the agency, the three European countries and the United States abused the (IAEA's) Board of Governors for their own political purposes," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani.

Army's drones destroy ...

"Only one or two countries have the ability to carry out this very complex and advanced operation, which of course they have not displayed yet.

The Ababil-5 drone performed a surveillance operation and the Karrar carried out interception and destruction tasks on the first day of the drill, Sheikh added. Additionally, he said, the exercise featured the unveiling of Kaman-19 drone with air-based electronic warfare capability. Last month, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said the scope of foreign demand for sophisticated unmanned aerial vehicles developed and manufactured indigenously by the country's military specialists is much larger than its production capacity.

ISA to launch ...

Furthermore, he said that this project will enable Iran to possess observation radar satellites.

Salariéh noted that satellites such as Pars-1 and Tolo-3 are optical observation satellites, and their performance is affected by cloudy weather and dusty conditions. However, radar satellites can collect data even in cloudy weather, he said. According to the head of the Iranian Space Agency, with the completion of the Sareer launcher's construction and initial tests, the first step toward reaching a 36,000-kilometer orbit has been taken. "A consortium, comprised of private sector entities and the Iran Electronics Industries, has been formed to establish international space launch infrastructure. This facility, capable of launching at various orbital inclinations, initiated its first phase last year," Salariéh stressed. He predicted that the southern port city of Chabahar would be critical in assisting Iran in achieving a Sun-synchronous orbit for its satellite systems.

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Iran's approach in Caucasus could help resolve crisis



By Mohsen Pakayeen
Iran's former ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In the past few days, senior officials from Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan traveled to Iran and held talks with Iranian officials. Armen Grigorian, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council

of Armenia, and Khalaf Khalafov, the special envoy of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, were in Tehran, where they held meetings and discussions with Iranian officials. This indicates the trust of both Baku and Yerevan in Tehran and acceptance of its constructive role in establishing peace in the Caucasus region.

In the 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, the Islamic Republic of Iran adopted rational positions. In a speech on

November 3 of that year, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei stated the fundamental positions of the country, emphasizing five specific points: Firstly, the need to end the bitter war as soon as possible; secondly, the liberation of Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia; thirdly, the insistence on maintaining international borders; fourthly, Iran's emphasis on protecting the rights of Armenians living in Azerbaijani territory; and

fifthly, the demand that terrorists stay away from Iran's borders.

Iran, in the execution of its principled positions, defended the territorial integrity of both sides, and the result was the return of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan. Iran also requested Baku to abandon its historical claims on the Syunik Province of Armenia, as pursuing such claims could lead to changes in international borders and provoke a strong Iranian response.

Iran continues to follow the issue of protecting the rights of Armenians in Azerbaijani territory. During Khalafov's visit to Tehran, Iran reminded Baku of this request. Tehran has also emphasized to Armenian officials that it opposes the entry of extra-regional countries into the Caucasus region and that regional peace should be achieved through regional dialogues.

Therefore, following Iran's policy, Nagorno-Karabakh was returned to Azerbaijan, and Armenia was protected from Azerbaijan's possible aggression. Now, the recent visits by officials from both countries to Tehran indicate their trust in Tehran and its constructive role in establishing peace.

However, there is concern among experts that in the future, after the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh

issue, Azerbaijan may once again raise its claims on the Syunik Province and the creation of the Zangezur Corridor, which Iran strongly opposes. Still, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that Baku is considering such actions. At the Prague meeting in May, Yerevan and Baku explicitly accepted each other's territorial integrity, and this agreement prevented Armenia from entering a war in defense of the Armenians of the Karabakh region.

The most important point is that the Azerbaijani authorities have promised and emphasized in bilateral meetings with Iranian officials that they do not seek to occupy Syunik Province of Armenia and change the borders. In addition, influential extra-regional countries, such as the United States and France, have emphasized the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Armenia, and therefore it seems unlikely that Azerbaijan, which has good relations with the West, would want to invade Armenia against their wishes. All these pieces of evidence suggest that an Azerbaijani attack on Syunik Province in southern Armenia is unlikely, especially since Azerbaijan does not want to be perceived globally as a war-seeking country.

House adrift as Republicans fight over next leader

McCarthy ousted in historic vote

International Desk

The US House of Representatives was leaderless on Wednesday, after hard-line Republicans narrowly won a vote to oust Speaker Kevin McCarthy, an historic move that triggered what will be a lengthy and likely messy battle to find a replacement.

It was the first time that the House has removed a speaker – a position that is second in line to the president after the vice president, Reuters reported. Republican lawmakers signaled they would need a week to regroup, planning to meet on Tuesday to discuss possible candidates to replace McCarthy – who said he would not run again – with votes on Oct. 11 at the earliest. The leadership fight is eating into the time lawmakers have to avert a looming partial government shut-

down, which would begin on Nov. 18 if Congress fails to pass legislation proving more funding.

"We're in uncharted waters," Republican Representative Byron Donalds told reporters after supporting McCarthy in a vote the speaker lost 216-210. "I fought for what I believe in," McCarthy said. "I believe I can continue to fight, but maybe in a different manner." Removing the speaker launches the House Republicans into chaos heading into a busy fall when Congress will need to fund the government again or risk a mid-November shutdown.

Replacement nominees

It was not clear who might seek to succeed McCarthy in a job that has proven challenging for Republicans in recent years. The last two Republican speakers,



Former speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy speaks to reporters after he was ousted from the position of Speaker by a vote of the House of Representatives at the US Capitol in Washington.

● JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS

No democratic support

Democrats said they viewed McCarthy as untrustworthy after he broke a May agreement on spending with President Joe Biden.

"Let them wallow in their pigsty of incompetence," Representative Pramila Jayapal told reporters before the vote. Gaetz was one of more than a dozen Republicans who repeatedly voted against McCarthy's bid for speaker in January. McCarthy ultimately secured the gavel after 15 rounds of voting over four days. To win the job, McCarthy agreed to

Paul Ryan and John Boehner, retired from Congress after clashes with their right wing.

The names being mentioned as replacements for McCarthy include House Majority Leader Steve Scalise and Republican Whip Tom Emmer. Representative Patrick McHenry, who was named speaker pro tempore after McCarthy's removal, could also become

a candidate. None have said if they are interested, and other names could emerge in the week ahead. Tuesday's rebellion was led by Representative Matt Gaetz, a far-right Republican from Florida and McCarthy's antagonist who finally turned on the speaker after he on Saturday relied on Democratic votes to help pass a bill to avoid a partial government shutdown.

rules that made it easier to challenge his leadership.

His supporters have said Gaetz was motivated by a hunger for publicity, a chance to win higher office or resentment over an ongoing ethics probe into possible sexual misconduct and illicit drug use. Gaetz has denied wrongdoing and said he is not motivated by a dislike of McCarthy.

McCarthy supporters

But a long line of McCarthy supporters stood up for him, including Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, a leader of the conservative Freedom Caucus, who said, "He has kept his word." Rep. Garret Graves, R-La., waved his cellphone, saying it was "disgusting" that hard-right colleagues were fundraising off the move in text messages seeking donations. McCarthy, of California, insisted he would not cut a

deal with Democrats to remain in power – not that he could have relied on their help even if he had asked.

Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said in a letter to colleagues that he wants to work with Republicans, but he was unwilling to provide the votes needed to save McCarthy. "It is now the responsibility of the GOP members to end the House Republican Civil War," Jeffries said, announcing the Democratic leadership would vote for the motion to oust the speaker. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden "hopes the House will quickly elect a speaker." "Once that happens, she said, "he looks forward to working together with them."

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell issued a statement thanking McCarthy for "what is often a thankless role.