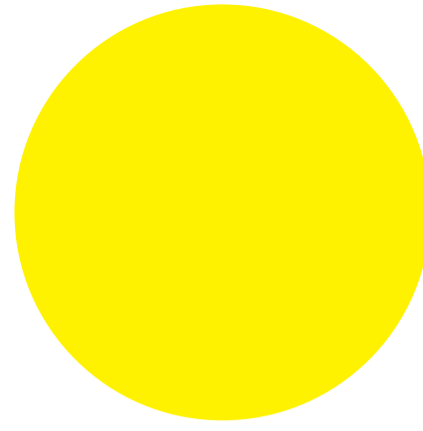


China's BRI to shape future of global trade

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Time to call Israel terror entity: *Iran*

Gaza Gets Aid

Palestinians vow not to leave homeland

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A convoy of lorries carrying humanitarian aid enters the Gaza Strip from Egypt via the Rafah border crossing on October 21, 2023.
● MOHAMMED ABED/AFP

Water project glimmer of hope for thirsty SE Iran

An Iranian lawmaker expressed confidence that the desalination project and the transfer of water from the Oman Sea to Zahedan and other water-scarce areas of Sistan and Baluchestan Province will be completed by mid-March 2025. This development is expected to provide the people with sufficient healthy drinking water.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran's nano market worth \$600m

The secretary of the Iranian Nano Technology headquarters revealed recent statistics regarding the country's exports of nano products. The total sales market for these products in 2022-23 amounted to over \$600 million, marking a 50 percent increase compared to the previous year. "More than six percent of the market, equivalent to \$69 million, came from the export of these nano products," according to Emad Ahmadvand, Mehr news agency reported.

In terms of market share, the construction, automobile, oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors emerged as the top three industries for nano products in 2022-23. The construction sector alone accounted for nearly half of the country's nanotechnology market. Meanwhile, automobile and oil and gas industries heavily relied on nano catalysts.

Iran's nano products have found a global market, with exports amounting to over \$69 million. Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan were the main destinations for these exports, representing more than 80 percent of the total export volume.

Iran's gas and petrochemical industries witnessed a boost in domestic production, with around 70 percent of the total nano catalysts being produced within the country.

Iranian non-oil exports hit \$24b

The head of Iran's Trade Development Organization said Saturday that the total exports of the country has reached \$24 billion since mid-March 2023, showing a growth rate of 29 percent in terms of weight.

Mehdi Zeighami stated that there was an increase in the number of business consultants in target countries, as well as the establishment of 50 Iranian business centers in 35 countries, IRNA reported. "Iran's strategy has been to focus on developing trade with various countries, and its performance over the past two years indicates that this objective has been successful," said Zeighami.

He emphasized that the government tried to enhance trade with neighboring countries and previously overlooked destinations. Furthermore, it has prioritized the expansion of trade with South America, Asian countries, and the African Continent. He further highlighted that the government's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS holds great promise for trade development and access to markets in numerous countries.

Water project glimmer of hope for thirsty SE Iran

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

An Iranian lawmaker expressed confidence that the desalination project and the transfer of water from the Oman Sea to Zahedan and other water-scarce areas of Sistan and Baluchestan Province will be completed by mid-March 2025. This development is expected to provide the people with sufficient healthy drinking water.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Iranian MP Esmaeil Hossein Zehi highlighted that besides the Oman Sea water transfer project, the government is also taking additional measures to address the water problem in various cities and villages across the province.

"However, there is a need for special attention and swift implementation of these measures by the government," he said. The plan to transfer water

from the Sea of Oman to the southeastern region of the country has been under discussion for several years, with the objective of addressing water scarcity in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, which is the largest province in the southeast. As part of this project, pipeline operations commenced in May 2023 to transport water from the Oman Sea to Sistan and Baluchestan, South Khorasan, and Khorasan Razavi provinces. Approximately 1,700 kilometers of pipelines were laid for this purpose. The water transferred to Sistan and Baluchestan will not only be used for industrial consumption but also for drinking purposes.

The main goal of this project is to provide sustainable water resources in the eastern region of the country and develop water infrastructure as a prerequisite for overall development. It aims to meet the water needs of industries and mines in the eastern provinces, support the growth of mining industries, and the development of petrochemicals, refineries, and other sectors in the area, create employment opportunities, eliminate deprivation, stabilize the population in the eastern region, prevent migration, and provide drinking water to the cities and vil-



IRNA

lages of the region. The legislator expressed concern over the current water shortage in different regions of the province, especially the city of Khash, which he represents in Parliament.

"Despite the approaching rainy season, only 30 percent of Khash City's water requirements are being met, resulting in a lack of drinking water and health-related challenges," Hossein Zehi said, and called for "more urgent action to ensure that water reaches the city faster to avoid a potential disaster." Hossein Zehi pointed out

that the lack of drinking water and adequate agricultural resources in various regions of Sistan and Baluchestan Province have contributed to the abandonment of villages in these areas. He stressed that the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture are responsible for implementing water supply and irrigation projects in these regions. He emphasized the need for close monitoring and follow-up by relevant institutions to expedite these measures.

The lawmaker identified poor water resource man-

agement as a key factor contributing to the water shortage in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

"Despite Khash receiving considerable rainfall in recent years, no measures have been taken to collect surface water and manage watersheds effectively," the MP said.

Regarding Iran's rights to the Helmand River, the lawmaker stated that both the Parliament and the government are actively pursuing the fulfillment of Iran's rights from Afghanistan.

"Although the matter is still ongoing, consulta-

tions and negotiations are progressing in a manner that raises hope for a resolution in the near future," said Hossein Zehi in that regard.

Hossein Zehi further emphasized the urgency of resolving the issue of water flow from the Helmand River to Hamun Lake.

"It's been six years that the lake has not received any water from Helmand River. If left unresolved, the lake might dry up, posing significant risks. Currently, the water from the lake is used for drinking purposes in Zahedan and other locations," he said.



IRAN DAILY

China's BRI to shape future of global trade

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

China hosted leaders and delegates from 130 countries in Beijing from Monday to Wednesday for the third Belt and Road Forum 10 years after it launched its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The project, a key component of Chinese President Xi Jinping's strategic agenda, aims to establish connections between Beijing and various spots across five continents. The event welcomed a distinguished guest, Russian President Vladimir Putin. Iran Daily has sat down with Shuaib Bahman, the director of Tehran-based Contemporary World Research Institute and an expert on Eurasian affairs to get his take on the forum's significance and the messages it conveys for the West.

IRAN DAILY: The Chinese hosted representatives from 130 countries. What objectives does



REUTERS

China seek with such an international gathering, and what message does it convey to the world?

BAHMAN: The Belt and Road Initiative Summit is important from several angles. On one hand, it pertains to economic and international trade matters. The BRI is the world's most extensive economic project launched by a single nation. Given its immense importance and massive investments, various countries are keen to participate, integrating themselves into this initiative to reap its economic benefits.

From another perspective, there is rivalry and disagreement between China and the United States. The US and Europe have tried

to establish alternative or opposing plans in response to China's large-scale project. The latest example is the India-Saudi-Israel Corridor, a project designed to link with Europe and unveiled during the recent G20 summit.

Zooming out further, the BRI can be seen as a key arena for competition between Beijing and Washington. If we consider the presence of envoys from 130 countries in China as a form of alignment, it signifies that more nations are motivated to engage with the Chinese plan. This has the potential to challenge America's international standing while simultaneously bolstering China's global influence.

Should we interpret Putin's visit to China and his meeting with Xi as merely an aspect of mutual cooperation, or does it carry broader implications?

Putin's visit to China serves the dual purpose of fostering cooperation and cementing the strategic relationship between the two nations, while also delivering a unified political message from Moscow and Beijing to the West. Russia and China are actively working to maintain harmonious relations in military, economic, and political domains. Such collaborations have remarkably gathered pace, particularly in the economic sector, following the war in Ukraine.

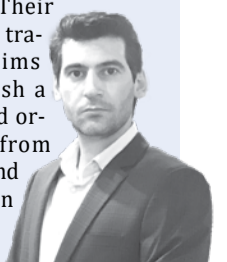
Furthermore, China and Russia, both global powers, are locked in opposition or rivalry with the United States. Thus, Putin's presence in China and his meeting with Xi can be seen as a challenge to the US and its sanctions imposed against Putin. It also sends a clear political message to both America and Europe. Above all, Russia is a part of the BRI. The northern route of the project, originally intended to connect China to Europe via Central Asia through Russia, faced

obstacles after the Ukraine war. However, by attending the Chinese forum, Putin aims to show his commitment to active engagement in the BRI and underscores that blocking the Russian route is detrimental to Europe. The Russian route offers both proximity to Europe and cost-efficiency, due to its extensive railway network established since the former Soviet Union.

The BRI, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS, all seem to revolve around China and Russia. Are these projects and groupings linked to an emerging international order based on a multi-polar world?

Indeed, the BRI, the SCO, and BRICS are integral components of the strategic relationship between China and Russia. Their objective goes beyond mere bilateral ties, as they seek to advance their interests by establishing international and regional mechanisms and organizations. Through such initiatives, China and Russia not only bolster their own partnership but also bring on board other nations into their own alliances, enlarging and reinforcing the front against the West. Each of these

organizations holds its unique significance, acknowledged even by Western nations. For instance, the SCO is seen as an Eastern counterpart to NATO, with the potential to challenge the Western military alliance in the realm of security. Thanks to its diverse capabilities, BRICS, comprising emerging economies, can put up a fight against the Western monetary and financial system set up in the wake of World War II. The BRI, on the other hand, represents a promising future for international trade, prompting countries to participate in it to avoid being sidelined in the global commercial competition. Therefore, these institutions, predominantly driven by China and Russia, are part of efforts to reshape the international system or compete against the Western hegemony in terms of military and financial dominance. These groupings operate in concert, with China, Russia, and other participating countries keenly aware of the direction they are heading. Their collective trajectory aims to establish a new world order free from Western and American hegemony.



Discovering hidden gems: Kaleybar's cultural, tourist attractions



By Reza
Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writer

The undiscovered gem of Kaleybar is located in East Azarbaijan Province in northwest Iran. The lovely town offers a special fusion of cultural richness and natural beauty, as it is bordered by picturesque mountains, lush meadows, and historical sites.

Kaleybar is a place which travelers looking for an authentic experience should visit. Here, we set out on an adventure to discover Kaleybar's cultural and tourist attractions, illuminating the fascinating history, outstanding landmarks, and natural beauties that make this town a must-visit.



Beautiful environment

Set the scene with a description of Kaleybar's stunning surroundings before digging into the city's cultural and tourist attractions.

Kaleybar is located in the north of East Azarbaijan Province, which is renowned for its varied scenery, including rolling hills, lush woods, rough mountains, and tranquil lakes.

For nature lovers, the town is the perfect getaway because of the mountains' magnificent



backdrop of snow-capped peaks. Kaleybar's magnificent surroundings provide several chances for hiking, trekking, and outdoor exploration. The area's abundant biodiversity, which includes native plant and animal species, enhances its allure.

The town's quiet ambiance, characterized by the melodic bird sounds and the lulling wind, provides a getaway from the bustle of city life for those seeking tranquility.

Kaleybar's rich history

Kaleybar's history is a tapestry woven with threads of ancient civilization, Iranian culture, and the indomitable spirit of its people. The town's historical significance is apparent in its many landmarks and cultural attractions, each of which tells a unique story.

1. Babak Castle (Qaleh-e Babak)

Perhaps the most iconic symbol of Kaleybar is Babak Castle, a fortified structure perched on a precipitous rock formation overlooking the town. Named after Babak Khorramdin, a local hero who led a rebellion against the Abbasid Caliphate in the 9th century, the castle is a testament to the region's history and resilience.

The castle's strategic location on a

rocky outcrop has made it a symbol of resistance. Visitors can explore its ancient walls, towers, and chambers while taking in panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

2. Historical villages

Kaleybar is surrounded by several historical villages, each with its own character and charm. These villages are not only rich in history but also showcase the traditional architecture of the region, with mud-brick houses and winding alleyways. A visit to these villages allows travelers to step back in time and immerse themselves in the culture and lifestyle of the local population.



Cultural delights

In addition to its historical landmarks, Kaleybar offers a taste of authentic Iranian culture through its traditions, crafts, and culinary delights.

1. Handicrafts

Kaleybar is known for its skilled artisans who produce a variety of handicrafts, including exquisite carpets, rugs, and textiles. These handmade creations are not only items of beauty but also a reflection of the region's rich cultural heritage. Visitors can explore workshops and markets where they can witness the intricate process of crafting these traditional items and even purchase them as souvenirs.

2. Traditional cuisine

Iranian cuisine is a delight for the senses, and Kaleybar is no exception. The town's culinary offerings feature a fusion of traditional Iranian dishes, highlighting



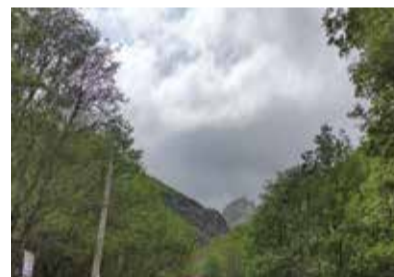
the use of fresh herbs, aromatic spices, and locally sourced ingredients. Must-try dishes include kebabs, stews, and a variety of rice dishes, with flavors that vary by season and region.

It is possible to relish these delicious meals while taking advantage of the warm welcome of the locals at neighborhood cafés and restaurants. In Kaleybar, eating in a family-style setting is typical, and doing so is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the residents and learn about their way of life.

3. Festivals and celebrations

Kaleybar's festivals and celebrations provide a window into the region's cultural traditions and a chance to engage with the local community.

During Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, Kaleybar comes alive with vibrant festivities, including the Chaharshanbe Suri (fire-jumping) tradition. This celebration marks the arrival of spring and the triumph of light over darkness, and visitors are welcome to join in the festivities.



Cultural heritage

One of the most popular traditional events in Kaleybar is the annual Ashura ritual. Ashura marks the day of mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, and is observed by Shia Muslims worldwide.

The Ashura ritual in Kaleybar is known for its unique blend of religious fervor and cultural expressions. The locals come together to commemorate this day by participating in proces-

sions, reciting elegies, and reenacting historical events. Witnessing this deeply rooted tradition is a truly immersive experience that offers a glimpse into the local culture.

Natural wonders

Kaleybar's natural beauty is an attraction in itself, offering travelers the chance to explore pristine landscapes, embark on outdoor adventures, and revel in the splendor of the great outdoors.



1. Arasbaran Forest

The Arasbaran Protected Area, a UNESCO-recognized biosphere reserve, surrounds Kaleybar. These forests are a sanctuary for diverse flora and fauna, making them a paradise for nature enthusiasts and wildlife lovers. Hiking trails wind through the lush forests, leading to serene glades and hidden waterfalls.

2. Hot springs

A short drive from Kaleybar, hot springs provide a rejuvenating experience. These natural hot springs offer a warm respite from the cool mountain air. Visitors can soak in the therapeutic waters while enjoying the scenic beauty of the region.

Preservation and sustainability

As travelers discover the cultural and tourism attractions of Kaleybar, it's essential to emphasize the importance of responsible tourism and sustainable practices. The region's natural beauty and historical landmarks deserve to be protected for future generations. Travelers are encouraged to follow 'Leave No Trace' principles, respect local customs, and support eco-friendly initiatives in the area.



Time to call Israel Terrorist

UN chief: Gaza faces 'humanitarian catastrophe'

Palestinians vow not to leave homeland

International Desk

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman has censured the ongoing Israeli onslaught in the besieged Gaza Strip, stating that the international community must designate the occupying Tel Aviv regime as a "terrorist entity" and put its leaders on trial over war crimes against Pales-

tinians.

In a post published on his X account on Saturday, Nasser Kanaani denounced the appalling Israeli atrocities against Palestinians and threats of bombardment of hospitals in the Gaza Strip, according to Press TV.

"Following the catastrophic attacks on the al-Ahli Arab hospital, mosques, schools, and the

Greek Orthodox church in Gaza, the Zionist regime has threatened to pound other hospitals in Gaza!" he wrote.

Kanaani said that such horrendous crimes amount to a morally shameful scandal for the governments that have long provided unconditional support to the Zionist regime while preaching to others about human rights.

'Godawful nightmare' in Gaza: UN

UN Chief Antonio Guterres pleaded Saturday for a "humanitarian cease-fire" in the war between Israel and Hamas that has devastated much of Gaza, demanding "action to end this godawful nightmare". Addressing a Cairo summit as the conflict raged into its third week, Guterres said the Palestinian enclave of 2.4 million people was living through "a humanitarian catastrophe," with thousands dead and more than a million displaced, AFP reported. "We meet in the heart of a region that is reeling in pain and one step from the precipice," he told the meeting that included the leaders of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates as well as of Italy and Spain and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas. However, the absence of Israel and senior US

officials at the meeting undermined any prospect of halting an escalating war.

The bloodshed began on October 7 when Hamas resistance fighters killed at least 1,400 people and took more than 200 captives, according to Israeli officials.

Israel has hit back with a relentless bombing campaign, killing more than 4,300 Palestinians, mainly civilians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, and cut off supplies of water, electricity, fuel, and food.

US President Joe Biden and his top aides have been urging Israeli leaders against carrying out any major strike against Hezbollah, the powerful resistance movement in Lebanon that could draw it into the Israel-Hamas war, according to New York Times.

PA: 'We will not leave'

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas stressed his demand for a two-state solution and an "end to Israel's occupation" and rejected what he has warned could be a "second Nakba" — a reference to the more than 760,000 Palestinians who fled or were driven from their lands during the creation of the state of Israel.

"We will not leave," he repeated three times at the end of his speech at the Cairo Peace Summit.

During the event, Jordan's King Abdullah II called for "an immediate end to the war on Gaza" and condemned what he labeled "global silence" on Palestinian death and suffering.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi argued that the "only solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian con-

flict is "justice" and said that "Palestinians must realize their legitimate rights to self-determination" and have "an independent state on their land". Cairo and Amman have repeatedly rejected calls for large numbers of refugees to enter Egypt from Gaza, warning that a "forced displacement" of Palestinians would lead to the "eradication of the Palestinian cause".

Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan condemned "unconditional military aid to Israel which only serves to maintain the occupation," while Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan condemned the failure of the UN Security Council to pass a resolution calling for a cease-fire after a US veto.

Protesters around world demand end to war on Gaza



Demonstrators hold up flags and placards during a pro-Palestinian demonstration in London, on October 21, 2023.

AP



Iran will not enter Israel-Hamas war

PERSPECTIVE

The ongoing war between Israel and Hamas resistance group, which has been considered as one of the heaviest conflicts between the two sides in decades, has raised questions about the consequences of the war for the Palestinian group and the role of Iran, as one of the main supporters of the resistance movement, in the conflict.

Mehdi Zakerian, an Iranian expert on Israeli affairs, in an interview with Asr Iran news website, has ruled out the possibility of Iran's entering into the conflict, given that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei recently rejected accusations about Iran's involvement in Hamas's October 7 military operation against Israel.

Zakerian, however, praised Iran's diplomatic efforts to help put an end to the bloody war in the Gaza Strip. He said a recent warning issued by Iran's foreign minister about the possibility of the spread of war to the region can be useful for ending the conflict, which has claimed the lives of nearly 5,800 people so far.

Zakerian said that Iran had also played such a constructive role in resolving conflicts in the region in the past. He referred to Iran's cooperation with the European Union, France, Lebanon's Hezbollah movement and the country's government to help end the 33-day war between the Israeli regime and the Lebanese resistance group, Hezbollah, in 2006. He also referred to Iran's role in resolving differences between Afghanistan's groups, which the United States had not been able to settle.

The Iranian expert believes that Tehran should play the same constructive role in the new conflict and submit proposals and plans to save the people of Gaza from the crisis and gain credibility for itself in the world.

Zakerian said that the Israeli regime withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and then Hamas took control of the territory two years later. However, conflicts which erupted between the resistance movement and Palestinian Authority after the regime's retreat from the coastal region were of great benefit for Tel Aviv. Because the differences between the Palestinian groups had led to the weakness of the Palestinian negotiating side. But Hamas, which gradually focused more on Israel than the Palestinian Authority, became a serious threat for the occupying regime.

Therefore, the Israeli regime has finally come to the conclusion that it should end Hamas's rule in Gaza and displace a large population of the Palestinian territory and take control of the region, or hand it over to the Palestinian Authority. Between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Gazans have been forced to leave northern Gaza after Israel threatened them with a ground assault. Whenever Israel has displaced Palestinians, it has not allowed them to return to their original location.

Zakerian said that the people of Gaza have been under an Israeli siege for years. There is a sense of resistance carved in Palestinian hearts. Therefore, the public feels proud and victorious when such operations are carried out against the Israeli regime. However, he said that the recent military operation might not yield desirable results.

Aid trickles to Gaza

The summit came on the day a first convoy of aid trucks rumbled into southern Gaza through Egypt's Rafah crossing, which Guterres said needed to be rapidly scaled up, with "much more" help sent through.

The UN has said that about 100 trucks per day are needed to meet worsening needs in Gaza.

The UN Humanitarian Chief Martin Griffiths said the first convoy carrying aid into the besieged Gaza Strip Saturday "must not be the last", adding, "I am confident that this delivery will be the start of a sustainable effort to provide essential supplies... to the people of Gaza."

Meanwhile, the first humanitarian aid consignment of Iran, which consists of around 60 tons of commodities including medicines and health care equipment, has been dispatched to the Gaza Strip, according to IRNA.

Hamas freed first captives

Despite the humanitarian crisis caused by Israel in Gaza, Hamas has freed two American captives who had been held in Gaza since its fighters rampaged through southern Israel on October 7.

A pair consisting of a mother and daughter were freed for "humanitarian reasons," Hamas said, according to BBC.

Joe Biden said he was overjoyed at their release and confirmed he had spoken with the pair on the phone.



Iran's first humanitarian aid consignment gets dispatched to the Gaza Strip from an airport in the capital Tehran on October 20, 2023.

● TASNIM



The photo shows the opening session of the Cairo Summit for Peace, at the St Regis Almasra Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, on October 21, 2023.

● RYAN CARTER/REUTERS



Protesters from Jakarta to Mexico City demanded an end to Israel's bombardment of Gaza after two weeks of intense air and artillery strikes that authorities there say have killed 4,100 people.

Israel is gearing up for a ground war in the tiny, crowded Palestinian enclave after a brazen attack by Palestinian group Hamas on Oct. 7 that killed 1,400 people.

While some Western governments have voiced support for Israel's military campaign, many Muslim states have called for an immediate ceasefire, with many of their people angry at conditions in Gaza and expressing solidarity with Palestinians.

Tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched in London and other cities on Saturday in support of Gaza and condemning Israel's bombardment of the besieged enclave, AP reported.

Police estimated the crowd winding its way through central London at "up to 100,000." Waving Palestinian flags, participants called for an end to Israel's blockade and airstrikes.

Police in Berlin banned a pro-Palestinian demonstration that was scheduled for Sunday in the center of the city but allowed a pro-Israel demonstration elsewhere, hundreds marched through Rome on Saturday, some holding signs saying "Palestine, Rome is with you," and "No

peace until we get freedom."

"Israel carries out war crimes there, crimes against humanity there, and the international community has never acted," said Maya Issa, president of the Movement of Palestinian Students in Italy, which organized the demonstration.

In Australia, thousands marched through central Sydney on Saturday, shouting "Shame, shame Israel" and "Palestine will never die." Authorities in Gaza say nearly 4,400 people have been killed in the territory since the latest war began.

Crowds gathered in Lebanon; in Iraq at the country's border crossing with Jordan; in Jordan itself; in cities and towns across Egypt; in Turkey's capital Ankara and its most populous city of Istanbul; and in Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco and South Africa.

In New York, hundreds of protesters from Muslim, Jewish and other groups marched to US Sen. Kristen Gillibrand's Manhattan office, many shouting "cease fire now." Police later arrested dozens of protesters who blocked Third Avenue outside Gillibrand's office by sitting in the road. In Mexico City, dozens gathered outside the Israeli embassy on Friday evening, lighting candles and chanting "Free Palestine." In Jordan, which made peace with Israel in 1994, but where much of the population has

Palestinian heritage, more than 6,000 protesters marched in the center of the capital while thousands more rallied near the Israeli embassy, Reuters wrote.

Protesters in Jordan voiced support for Hamas, urging it to attack Israel with rocket strikes and suicide bombings, and addressing the Palestinian group with the chant: "We are your army."

In Egypt, thousands of protesters stood at the al-Azhar mosque, one of the oldest in the world, chanting "Where is the Arab army?", while others gathered at the central Tahrir Square.

Some demanded military action against Israel, others said Arab states should consider using other methods to stop the bombardment of Gaza.

"Palestine is the only country that unites our voices. If the Persian Gulf countries do not send aid, at least they should stop sending oil and gas. That's the least they should do," said protester Mohammed Gomaa in Cairo.

In Southeast Asia, hundreds of people gathered to protest near the U.S. embassies in each of the Indonesian and Malaysian capitals, burning Israeli flags and stamping on pictures of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Joe Biden.

"Today we gather here with the same intention to condemn the criminal act by Israel," said Qilila Marisa, a protester in Kuala Lumpur.



Moqanlou steps down as Iran taekwondo coach



MNA

Sports Desk

Bijan Moqanlou announced his resignation as the head coach of the Iranian men's national taekwondo team on Saturday.

Appointed to the job in April 2022, Moqanlou said he made the decision due to "lack of common approach" with the Iranian Taekwondo Federation.

The 54-year-old coach had been under pressure after recent blow-par runs at the World Championships and the Asian Games.

The country's male squad managed only a couple of bronze medals – courtesy of Matin Rezaei (-68kg) and Arian Salimi (-87kg) – across eight weight classes in June's world event in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Iran also failed to bag a single gold at the recently-finished Hangzhou Asian Games, as Salimi, Mahdi Hajimousaei (-58kg), Alireza Hosseinpour (-63kg) settled for the silver medals of their respective classes, while Rezaei and Mehran Barkhordari (-80kg) grabbed two bronze medals.

The Iranian seven-man team then left the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Taiyuan, China, empty-handed.

Majid Aflaki, an assistant coach to Moqanlou during his second spell in charge, will be the interim coach of the Iranian team for December's final series of the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Manchester.

Iran's Ahmadi bags wushu silver at World Combat Games



MNA

Sports Desk

The first day of the World Combat Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, saw Iran's Saman Ahmadi grab a silver medal at the wushu contests.

Representing the country in the men's taolu, the Iranian tallied 9.583 points for a runner-up place in the changquan event.

Bijay Sinjali of Nepal scored 9.723 points to walk away with the ultimate prize, with the Brazilian Filipe da Silva finishing third.

Wrestling U23 World Championships: Iranians ruled out after Albania visa refusal

Sports Desk

Iranian Greco-Roman and freestyle squads missed out on the Wrestling U23 World Championships – starting Monday in Tirana – after host Albania refused to issue entry visas for them.

This was a second visa setback in as many days for the Iranian athletes as several members of country's karate team were also ruled out of the upcoming World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, for the same reason.

"The Iranian Wrestling Federation had provided the Albanian Wrestling Federation and the United World Wrestling with all required documents regarding participation at the event a month ago," the Iranian governing body of the sport wrote in a statement late on Friday, adding: "However, despite repeated follow-ups, Albania refused to grant visas to the Iranian youths, who were the favorites to win the titles at the competitions, for political reasons."

The two Iranian teams were hoping to complete a clean sweep of six world age-group titles for the country in 2023 – following under-17 and under-20 crowns earlier in the summer.

The Iranians' absence



iwf.ir

means the tournament will take place without the reigning Greco-Roman champion and last year's freestyle runner-up.

Denouncing the decision as "unconventional", the Iranian

federation said it would lodge a complaint to the related governing bodies.

"It is clear to everyone that Albania, which has proved its animosity towards the Iranian people in the past,

made the decision against the international norms and out of support for a certain group," the statement added.

For nearly a decade, the European country has

accommodated several thousand members of the anti-Iran terrorist cult Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), who reside in Camp Ashraf 3 near the Albanian capital.

The MKO has carried out numerous terrorist attacks against Iranian civilians and government officials since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in the country, killing nearly 17,000.

Vlahovic ready but Chiesa a doubt as Juventus take on Milan



Juventus' Dusan Vlahovic celebrates scoring against Lazio in Turin, Italy, on September 16, 2023.

● MASSIMO PINCA/REUTERS

REUTERS – Juventus's Dusan Vlahovic is back from injury and ready to play against Serie A leaders AC Milan today, while Federico Chiesa is still a doubt, manager Massimiliano Allegri said.

Vlahovic was unavailable for the Serbia squad during the international break having missed

Juve's last two games with a back injury.

"Vlahovic has been working with the team all week and is fine," Allegri told a press conference on Saturday.

"From the start? We'll see, he certainly doesn't have the full 90 minutes in his legs having been out of action."

Chiesa, meanwhile, did join up with the Italy squad even though he missed Juve's 2-0 win over Torino with a muscle

injury, but returned to his club before Italy's games with Malta and England.

"Chiesa completed half the training session on Friday, today we will evaluate whether he will be available and whether to call him up or not," said Allegri.

"I hope to have him available, tomorrow (Sunday) will be a game where substitutions can be decisive and therefore the more players we have, the better it will be."

One player who won't be a part of the manager's plans is Nicolo Fagioli, who began a seven-month ban on Thursday for breaching rules on betting on games.

"I spoke with Fagioli, because it was right to do so, given that it won't be an easy period for him," Allegri said.

Morocco to build new stadium, upgrade six others before 2030 World Cup



REUTERS

REUTERS – Morocco plans to build a large stadium in Benslimane, near Casablanca, and upgrade six others in preparation for co-hosting the 2030 World Cup, the prime minister's office said on Friday.

A deal was signed the same day between the government and state-owned fund CDG to finance the new stadium to be ready by 2028 for a total cost of 5 billion dirhams (\$500 million), the office said in a statement.

The six stadiums – to be renovated to host the African Cup of Nations in 2025 and the 2030 World Cup – are in the cities of Agadir, Casablanca Fez, Marrakech, Rabat and Tangier, it said.

Earlier this month, FIFA allocated the 2030 World Cup to Morocco, Spain and Portugal but also said Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay would host three matches to mark the tournament's centenary.

Morocco will be the second African country to host the World Cup after South Africa in 2010.

Climate change world's 'most pressing issue': Vice President



Social Desk

The head of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE) emphasized the global significance of environmental issues in his talk at the 9th Conference of Environment Ministers in the Islamic World in Jeddah. Ali Salajegheh emphasized that the Article 50 of Iran's Constitution encompasses a vital and progressive principle that forms the foundation of environmental policies and strategies. This principle advocates for knowledge-based development and emphasizes the importance of how knowledge is generated and disseminated within the country. Head of DoE also expressed gratitude to the Saudi Arabian government and educational organization for hosting the event. He acknowledged the role of education in shifting the dominant development-focused mindset of industrial

societies towards sustainable thinking. Salajegheh stressed that environmental awareness is crucial for changing attitudes and fostering sustainable values such as justice, equality, contentment, respect for nature, and the rights of all living beings. These values are deeply rooted in the religious and cultural teachings of the Islamic world and align with the principles of sustainable development, making them an effective model to propose. The Iranian environmental official pointed to the importance of combining traditional value-oriented knowledge and culture with scientific rationalism, considering the changing world and the emergence of green development thinking. "Both aspects are necessary to achieve balanced development," he said. Furthermore, he brought to the fore the need for regional and international cooperation

and collective participation due to the universal nature of environmental issues. "The opportunity to exchange opinions and share experiences at this meeting should be seen as valuable for addressing common concerns," he said. The VP also discussed the effective measures taken in Iran to promote balanced development through education. Notably, the literacy rate in Iran has surpassed 90 percent, with faster growth among women compared to men. Additionally, rural areas have experienced higher literacy growth rates than urban areas. In terms of university education, the number of female students has exceeded that of male students, indicating progress in gender equality. "The focus now is on improving the quality of education and enhancing practical skills," Salajegheh said. He further outlined various actions undertaken to

integrate environmental topics into the official education system, implement extracurricular training programs, establish urban environmental assistants, and enhance the development of social capital and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the environmental sector. "Currently, there are over 1,470 active environmental NGOs in Iran. These policies aim to expand community-oriented organizations and improve the quality of environmental activities," the official said. To further these efforts, DoE has initiated the establishment of "Environmental Houses," which serve as local community-oriented organizations. "These houses aim to raise environmental awareness, promote qualitative environmental growth, provide a platform for sustainable livelihoods, and encourage broad participation from all social and local groups

to strengthen the higher environmental education sector. These include establishing specialized environmental faculties, increasing scientific disciplines related to the environment, and conducting fundamental research through knowledge-based companies focused on environmental education. The goal is to implement the green development plan and promote environmental culture, with the aim of engaging people in protecting the environment and supporting environmental activists.

Iranian scientist awarded

During the 9th Conference of Environment Ministers in the Islamic World, Lo'bat Taqavi, an Iranian environmental scientist won the Islamic World Environmental Management Award from the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO). Taqavi, an associate professor of environment and energy department at the Islamic Azad University Science and Research Branch, was honored for being among the authors of the world's most cited research in the field.



Lo'bat Taqavi (L) won the Islamic World Environmental Management Award from the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
● IRNA



Ali Salajegheh, Head of Iran's Department of the Environment at 9th Conference of Environment Ministers in the Islamic World in Jeddah, October 2023
● IRNA



An overview of violence against women



By Reza Gerami
Legal advisor

OPINION

Violence against women is a pervasive issue with no boundaries. It's not limited to social stratum, climate, region, or class of society. This problem exists all over the world and cannot be ignored. However, the alarming rise in violence against women is a cause for concern.

In Iran, acute family discord, child abuse, and spousal abuse are among the most common reasons for seeking social emergency services. Violence against women is prevalent in all these cases. It encompasses not only physical and sexual abuse but also verbal insults, intimidation, isolation, controlling behavior, repetitive acts of jealousy, denying access to friends and family, attempting to hinder education or work opportunities, preventing women from seeking medical help, and making decisions on their behalf.

If the image of a bruised eye and a sorrowful woman is the only thing that comes to your mind when thinking about violence against women, you are not alone. Many people mistakenly believe that violence against women is solely physical. However, street harassment and other forms of daily mistreatment also constitute violence against women, even if they have become so commonplace that they are often overlooked.

To address this issue, it is crucial to raise awareness among families, particularly in rural communities and small towns. They need to be educated on how to treat and protect women and girls. Providing families with vital information about the dangers women and girls face and teaching life skills from an early age, even before childbirth, can make a significant difference. Additionally, laws should be amended to reflect the current societal conditions, and comprehensive research should be conducted in order to effectively tackle this problem. Educational videos created by psychologists and utilizing the expertise of efficient researchers can also play a vital role in combating violence against women. Furthermore, it is essential not to overlook the importance of educating and informing men. By educating men and encouraging them to change their behavior towards women and girls, we can work towards a society free from violence against women.

Iran's SWO pushes for expansion of free counseling services

Social Desk

The director general of the counseling and psychological affairs office at the Social Health Deputy of the Iranian State Welfare Organization (SWO) revealed that over 56,000 Yaribarg (health coupon) were provided to individuals in need, allowing them

to access psychological and counseling services throughout the past year. Masoumeh Tavakoli highlighted the SWO's three-decade-long commitment to mental health support, explaining that these efforts were carried out in compliance with legal obligations and assigned duties, ISNA reported.

"Due to limited capacities and challenges related to the availability of human resources and funding, non-governmental counseling centers were established in the 1990s to enhance mental health at a community level and provide high-quality services," Tavakoli said. She further stated that SWO currently holds the legal responsibility for licensing non-governmental counseling centers. Over the years, more than 30,300 counseling centers have been established in the country under SWO's supervision. "The organization diligently monitors, evaluates, and reviews the performance of even the most remote counseling centers in the smallest cities," she said. In addition to the efforts of governmental and non-governmental counseling centers,

Tavakoli acknowledged that some individuals in society face financial barriers preventing them from accessing these services. "To address this issue, counseling and psychological services subsidies, known as 'Yaribarg' have been designed for those in need," the official said. Explaining how the coupons are utilized, Tavakoli elaborated that individuals receive counseling services through non-governmental counseling centers, and the welfare organization covers the cost on their behalf. Tavakoli proudly announced that over 56,000 people benefited from counseling and psychological services in the past year, with an additional 25,000 people benefiting within the first six months of the current year. Pointing to the high demand for the coupons, Tavakoli acknowledged that the available funding does not fully meet the needs of the population. "Efforts are underway to increase funding in this area,"

she noted. Tavakoli also mentioned the provision of non-attendance counseling services through the 1480 hotline. "This hotline offers free counseling services to individuals nationwide who may not have the desire or financial means to visit counseling centers in person," Tavakoli added. According to the official, last year, the hotline provided psychological and counseling services to over 1.7 million callers. She further emphasized the organization's commitment to expanding the availability

of free counseling and psychological services and increasing its capacity to meet the growing demand. Finally, Tavakoli highlighted the economic benefits of investing in mental health. "According to conducted research, every dollar spent in the field of mental health results in the saving of four dollars for society," she said. The SWO deputy posited that by prioritizing mental health, societies can benefit from a stronger and more productive workforce, improved work quality, and reduced social conflicts and damages.





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40th Tehran Int'l Short Film Festival gets kudos on its first days



Arts & Culture Desk

ILNA - The 40th Tehran International Short Film Festival, which opened on October 19, has attracted an audience of thousands on its first days.

Mehrab Mohammadzadeh, the head of the festival's Information Committee, announced that over 6,000 cinephiles flocked to the festival on its opening day.

Speaking about this unprecedented reception, Mohammadzadeh expressed his hope to be a perfect host to all artists, guests, and festival-goers, given the available resources.

Attracting more than 6,000 attendees on the event's first day signifies a revival of cinematic festivals, he highlighted.

He further said, "In response to the audience's demand, we have also introduced special screenings to ensure that no one misses the opportunity to experience these short films."

Mohammadzadeh highlighted the success of the specialized panel discussions, adding that Hall 12 of the Mellat Cineplex hosted eager students who had registered in advance. However, due to the students' high interest, daily single-meeting ticket sales have been sold out at the venue, and the hall was filled to its capacity. According to information posted on the festival's website, out of the 7,216 submissions from 131 countries, 58 short films have been selected to be screened in the International Competition Cinema Competition.

The selected films will compete in the sections of short fiction, animation, documentaries and experimental films.

The 40th Tehran International Short Film Festival kicked off on October 19 at Mellat Cineplex, and will run until October 24 in the two main categories of the Iranian Cinema Competition and the International Cinema Competition.

The festival's secretary, Mehdi Azarpendar, said 1,787 films were submitted for the national section, comprising 1,185 fiction films, 267 documentaries, 222 experimental films, and 113 animations.

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Philippine official praises Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art's collection

Arts & Culture Desk

The Philippines' National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Chairman Victorino Mapa Manalo, along with the deputy ambassador of the country in Tehran, visited the 'The Pioneers of Calligraphy' exhibition at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, held from October 14 to 20. This exhibition provides an overview of a hundred years of the development of Iranian calligraphy from the early 1970s, according to IRNA.

Victorino Mapa Manalo praised Iranian calligraphy as a delicate and beautiful art form and admired its transformation from the Qajar era to the contemporary period in terms of aesthetics.

After visiting the exhibition, the Philippine official also explored the museum's collection, explaining that the museum possesses many masterpieces created by modern and contemporary artists from around the world, some of which are considered among the most significant and influential artworks from a his-

torical art perspective.

He compared the architecture of the museum to iconic buildings such as the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona, Spain, recognizing the incorporation of traditional Iranian architectural elements.

He expressed readiness, interest, and hope for future close collaboration between the museums of both countries, with due regard for necessary standards.

The exhibition features over a hundred works by



70 calligraphy artists, including prominent figures like Asadollah Shirazi, Malek-Mohammad Qazvini, Ali-Mohammad Isfahani, Abdolhossein Qazvini,

Mohammadreza Kalhor, Mirza Gholamreza Isfahani, Mirza Kazem Tehrani, Mir Hossein Khoshnevis Bashi, Mehdi Sharif Shirazi, and many more.

Selected works of 5Photo Award to go on display in Tehran

The secretary of the fourth Biennial Exhibition of the International 5Photo Award Festival has announced that the artistic works from this event will be on display at the Morteza Momayez Gallery of the Iranian Artists Forum from November 17.

Mehdi Shadizadeh stated that the international biennial will be held for one week, according to IRNA.

He added, "During the third edition of this festival, we were unable to showcase the artworks due to certain circumstances and conditions at that time."

Following discussions with Lili Golestani, the chair of the Policymaking Council for this festival, it was decided to display the works of both the third and fourth editions at the same time. Shadizadeh elaborated, "This biennial is much more comprehensive than previous ones because it will feature artworks from many artists worldwide, including those from Iran, South America, Japan, Turkey, Italy, and India among others."

The biennial is organized in collaboration with the cultural and artistic institution of Didnegar.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

'Mr. Babak's Family' to feature in Japanese festival

Iran's short film 'Mr. Babak's Family,' directed by Aminreza Alimohammadi

and produced by Amin Rafiei, is scheduled to take part in the 7th edition of

the Shibuya TANPEN Film Festival in Japan, ILNA reported.

This is the eighth international experience of the film at global festivals.

This festival, scheduled to take place from December 22 to 24 in two Japanese cities of Nagasaki Tokyo, showcases a diverse array of content, including short and feature films, music videos, and television series.

The international distribution of this film is handled by Soulmaz E'temad.

