

NIOC signs contracts on gas well development

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Hamas fighters use earth-moving equipment to breach the fence between Gaza and the occupied territories on October 7, 2023. **REUTERS**



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Nouri case exposed Swedish gov't's lack of transparency

On Thursday, November 8, Hamid Nouri's final appellate court session was held in Stockholm, Sweden, and the court's verdict will be announced in approximately 40 days.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

COP28
warned
on energy
transition deal

AFP – Around 100 climate campaign groups warned COP28 organisers that success of critical upcoming talks in Dubai rests on whether countries can negotiate a formal agreement to replace polluting fossil fuels with clean power. Published two weeks before the conference in the UAE, the open letter from groups led by Oil Change International and 350.org expressed alarm that the hosts of the UN talks could be positioning to accept a watered-down outcome.

Number
of bitcoin
millionaire
wallets triples
in 2023

REUTERS – The number of crypto wallet addresses holding more than \$1 million in bitcoin has more than tripled this year. BitInfoCharts data shows the number of addresses with more than \$1 million in BTC increased from 23,795 on Jan. 1 to 81,925 currently, a 237% increase in the last 11 months. The millionaire wallets are not one-to-one with individual users, as many addresses with more than \$1 million BTC belong to crypto exchanges and financial institutions.

Deutsche
Bank says
Lira bonds
will be top
investment in
2024

BLOOMBERG – Turkish lira bonds will flip from being the worst-performing local debt market in developing nations this year to the best in 2024, according to analysts at Deutsche Bank. “It is still a few months too early to turn structurally bullish,” strategists led by Christian Wietoska wrote in a note. “We believe local bonds need to reprice another 200-400 basis points, but then offer value from a structural perspective.”

NIOC signs contracts on
gas well development

Economy Desk

The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed a contract worth \$1.17 billion with four Iranian companies in drilling of 35 wells in South Pars Gas Field.

Announcing the above, NIOC Managing Director Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr added that the contract also includes boosting the productivity of gas wells as well as maintaining gas production, Shana reported.

The Pars Oil and Gas Company will supervise the implementation of the contract which will be complete in three years, he said.

“Handing over this enormous project to domestic contrac-

tors will help develop the gas industry, maintain production and economic growth of the country, while, on the other hand, it will create job opportunities as well as improve domestic capabilities.”

The NIOC intends to hand over similar projects to other qualified contractors to drill more in-field wells.

Iran’s total hydrocarbon reserves amount to the equivalent of 340 billion barrels of crude oil, making the country the largest holder of combined oil and gas reserves in the world.

Iran has a total of 400 oil and gas reserves with some 230 drilling rigs, or platforms, operating in the country’s offshore oil and gas fields.



Iran starts extraterritorial refinery project

Venezuelan El Palito refinery’s progress at 85%

Economy Desk

The El Palito refinery project in Venezuela has progressed by about 85 percent, as 85-90 percent of its equipment has been provided by Iranian companies, announced director of coordination for capacity increase and overhauling of the Homs Refinery in Syria.

Talking to IRNA, Ali Shahverdi said it was the 44-year wish of the Iranian people and the Leader’s demand to work on extraterritorial refineries in construction and overhauling operations, to put them into operational service.

He mentioned Venezuela as the first country, and El Palito as the

pilot refinery for Iran’s extraterritorial project, adding that an Iranian team was sent to the Latin American state to evaluate the project as well as listing the parts and equipment needed for the refinery.

“We prepared a list of spare parts with a two-year guarantee, which included about 2.5 million items. A total of 1,900 domestic companies were invited to cooperate on production, as finally 254 companies were qualified,” the official explained, noting that these companies manufactured the goods domestically and supplied some spare parts from Japan, Korea and the European Union.

Regarding the time to start over-

hauling, he said: “We are waiting for an announcement by the Venezuelan state-run oil company, PDVSA, to close the refinery to begin overhaul operations in order to increase the capacity.

The purpose of the project is to boost cooperation between Iran and Venezuela in the field of energy and finding ways to overcome the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies, the official noted, adding that the refinery will process Iran crude oil after overhauled.

“Building international trust in Iran’s oil industry, exporting techno-engineering services to modernize refineries, using domestically-manufactured equipment and goods in overseas refineries, refining Iran’s crude oil, and countering the oil sanctions by the United States are among the goals of the project of operating extraterritorial refineries.”

The National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) was the first Iranian company to start extraterritorial refineries, he said.

The next project is the Syrian Homs refinery, for which we are negotiating the details of contract as finalizing the spare parts list, Shahverdi concluded.

Tehran, Yerevan can triple
gas-for-electricity
volume: Ambassador

Armenia and Iran can increase the volume of the gas-for-electricity project, said Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Mehdi Sobhani.

“There’s a gas pipeline between the two countries and we extended the gas-for-electricity agreement two months ago,” Sobhani told CivilNet in an interview.

“That was a big and strategic step in the relations of the two countries. This agreement would allow us to triple and even quadruple the imports of electricity from Armenia in exchange for gas. We have very good projects with Armenia. We have the third power transmission line, which I hope will be completed in the coming months.”

He expressed hope that trade turnover between Armenia and Iran, which stood at \$711 million last year, will reach approximately \$1 billion this year.

“There’s also the Agarak-Kajaran 32km road project, which is also a strategically

important project, and by far the biggest project signed between the Armenian government and Iranian companies.”

We’ve always encouraged other Iranian companies to come to Armenia and make use of the good working opportunities here, to produce here and export to other countries. Overall, I can say that our trade and economic ties have good dynamics of development, and we will decisively continue this path, said the Iranian ambassador.

Syrian-Iranian Business Forum discusses
boosting joint trade, investment

Syrian-Iranian Business Forum discussed ways to develop joint trade and investment work along with activating the business sector in the two countries, with the aim of upgrading economic relations.

During the forum organized by Joint Syrian-Iranian Chamber of Commerce in Damascus, Deputy Minister of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection of Syria Rasha Karkouki affirmed the ministry’s readiness to provide all possible facilities to boost Syrian-Iranian relations, SANA reported.

For his part, Deputy Chairman of Syrian Chambers of Commerce Federation Mazen Ham-

mad, highlighted the fruitful cooperation between the two countries over the recent period in the field of building power plants and benefiting from expertise in the field of renewable energies.

Chairman of Joint Syrian-Iranian Chamber of Commerce Fahd Darwish underlined the importance of exerting all possible efforts to activate relations and the signed agreements between the two sides through cooperating with the private sector.

In turn, Iranian Ambassador to Syria Hossein Akbari stressed that in the upcoming stage, the Iranian Embassy will focus on enhancing economic coopera-

tion between the two countries, as a free trade agreement has been signed and it will come into force next week, which will enable merchants to exchange goods without customs tariffs and without obstacles.

The ambassador noted that a joint insurance company was established and it is ready to be launched.

He noted that work is underway with banks in Iran to activate the mechanism of trade exchange in the local currency, and to prepare the infrastructure to increase the volume of Syrian-Iranian investments and overcome the sanctions imposed on both countries.



Kerman Grand Mosque, a historic masterpiece



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Iranica Desk

Many cities in Iran boast historical monuments, which intriguingly stand as some of the most captivating tourist attractions in their respective cities. Kerman, a beautiful city located in southeastern Iran and renowned for its wealth of historical monuments, is no exception. The Mozaffari Mosque, popularly known as the Kerman Grand Mosque, is a historic masterpiece displaying unique and magnificent architecture that never fails to capture the attention of tourists. Construction of the Kerman Grand Mosque took place around 1349 CE, during the reign of "Amir Mozaffari al-Din Muhammad Mozaffari Meybodi," one of the kings of the Muzaffarids. Consequently, the mosque bears the original name of Mozaffari Grand Mosque. Historical documents and accounts reveal that the Grand Mosque was initially constructed outside the city of Kerman. However, as the city expanded over the years, it eventually encompassed

the mosque within its boundaries. Legend has it that Muhammad Mozaffari Meybodi engaged in a fierce battle against the "Jerman and Oghan," a Turk tribe. In the face of uncertainty, he sought to create a lasting legacy for himself if he emerged victorious. After surviving the war, he came to Kerman and resolved to build this very mosque. It is said that he utilized the proceeds from farming and selling his agricultural products in Meybod to finance the mosque's construction. Thus began the story of this magnificent structure. The mosque features three entrance doors on its west, east, and north sides. The courtyard spans 66.5 meters in length and 49 meters in width, covering an area of 3,258 square meters. The east entrance, adorned with exquisite tilework, captivates visitors' eyes, further enhanced by the presence of a clock atop the entrance, adding to its splendor. This mosque is part of a group of four-ivan mosques. The tilework within the mosque is renowned for

its remarkable beauty. Notably, the eastern entrance boasts breathtaking muqarnas works that make it a must-visit attraction. The mosaic tiles in the mihrab, found on the mosque's western side, deserve special mention. Some experts regard this mosaic tiling, along with the eastern entrance, as the most prized aspect of the building. The mihrab's edges are made of marble, while delicate calligraphy lines on the tiles, combined with a harmonious yellow color palette, contribute to its magnificence. However, venture beyond the west side of the mihrab, and you'll encounter the shrine of a poet. This shrine belongs to "Raji Kermani," a Persian poet. Like many historical landmarks in the country, Mozaffari Mosque has suffered damage throughout its history and has undergone numerous reconstructions. During the reign of Shah Abbas II, a restoration project breathed new life into this historic mosque. Additionally, Mohammad Taghi

Khan Durrani, the ruler of Kerman during the Zand Dynasty, rebuilt sections of the mosque in 1763, as evidenced by inscriptions atop the minaret. Another instance of restoration followed the gunfire by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, which damaged the eastern entrance. The Kerman Grand Mosque has endured cycles of damage and reconstruction throughout its history. Today, this historical complex stands proudly as a notable attraction within Kerman Province. Notably, its reconstruction owes much to the grand architect of Isfahan, "Inayatullah ibn Nizamuddin." His name adorns the mosque's grand ivan, symbolizing his significant contributions to the carvings, tilework, and overall reconstruction of the mosque. Acknowledging its historical and cultural significance, the Kerman Mozaffari Grand Mosque, commonly referred to as Kerman Grand Mosque, was officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List on March 3, 1961.



destinationiran.com

Ancient underground city unveiled in Dolatabad village of Isfahan Province

Iranica Desk

The first underground city of Tiran and Karvan was discovered in the village of Kurd-e Oliya, Isfahan Province, in 2016. It was a hand-carved site with an area of over 20,000 square meters and 80 entrances. Studies have shown that its history dates back to the pre-Islamic era. One interesting fact is that a part of this underground city is now open to tourists. But the discovery of another underground city in Dolatabad village, located in Tiran and

Karvan, in the current year has grabbed everyone's attention. This city, which has likewise been hand-carved, is situated beneath several houses of the village and is believed to date back to the pre-Islamic era. Head of Tiran and Karvan's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department Mohsen Mazaheri said that this hand-carved site has been expanded to an area of 10,000 square meters, ISNA wrote. Throughout time, the villagers of the rural area engaged in diverse activities within this vi-

city. They utilized it as a storage facility, or a shelter for their livestock. Occasionally, the entrance doors remained closed and went unused. "Dolatabad village is situated five kilometers from Kurd-e Oliya village. Upon receiving information about the discovery of intriguing hand-crafted structures in this village, we promptly delved into the matter. A thorough examination of the site revealed its historical and ancient significance, leading to its recognition as an underground city," he said.

He added that this site has entrances in the houses or beneath, with a well located next to the entrance. Chambers and rooms are also seen in its discovered tunnels. Overall, the complex's structure has given it a resemblance to a city, leading experts to introduce it as an underground city. Mazaheri noted that there are different theories regarding the purpose of these structures. Some theories suggest that they were used for residential purposes, while others emphasize their role as sacred places.

In some theories, the use of these structures for defensive purposes has also been mentioned. However, a precise understanding of their intended use requires further research and investigation. He said that the site encompasses about 25 houses. All parts of this underground site are interconnected, and the people living above them are aware of its significance and try to protect it. Moreover, he gleefully added that the village's council has received guidance on preserving

the site. Additionally, the supervision of the city's Cultural Heritage Department ensures that the area is given proper attention. "Considering that the people of Dolatabad village are the owners of these ancient structures, we hope to establish a union or cooperative as soon as possible, with the participation of the rural people. Once archaeological measures are completed in this area, we aspire for this underground city to become a tourist attraction," he concluded.



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Israel will not return to pre-October 7

PERSPECTIVE

"It is quite possible that the war in Gaza will be the first war in Israel's history that the army has fought and lost. That loss would be catastrophic for Israel and deeply damaging to the United States," wrote Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Over the course of more than 70 years, the Israeli army tried to portray an invincible image of itself, disregarding the rights of

the Palestinian people and ignoring UN resolutions. Some ground realities have contributed to this image, including its victories in the three wars with Arab countries and its harsh, inhumane treatment of Palestinians. According to Mohammad Javad Zarif, former Iranian foreign minister, alongside the notion of invincibility, Israelis have also presented themselves as victims over the past seven decades. This image of victimhood is based on the claim that Jews were massacred in World War II as part of the

Holocaust. Until October 7, everything seemed to be in favor of the regime. The Palestinian issue had gradually been sidelined, and Israel had moved from normalizing relations with a few Arab countries to the main stage of normalization, that is establishing political relations with Saudi Arabia. The well-equipped Israeli army with its cutting-edge intelligence and communication equipment had seemingly provided a sense of security to the leaders of this regime. They be-

lieved there was no threat to the regime and no obstacle to pursuing its aggressive goals. However, on the morning of October 7, the myth of Israel's invincibility shattered. The Operation Al-Aqsa Storm by Hamas dealt a severe blow to Israel's credibility and position. On October 15, the Hebrew-language newspaper Haaretz wrote that the strategic blow inflicted on Israel by the Qassam Brigades on October 7 was a thousand times more dangerous than the defeat in the 1973 war. The Al-Aqsa Storm had a signif-

icant and important difference from previous confrontations between Palestinian resistance groups and Israelis. Unlike previous cases, this operation took place inside the occupied territories. This means that Hamas, as a lone resistance group, overcame the deterrent power of Israel and penetrated into the occupied territories. Tzachi Hanegbi, the head of Israel's National Security Council, admitted a week after the operation that Israel received a painful blow. "I made a mistake when

I said Hamas was deterred after Operation Guardian of the Walls," he added. Some consider the high volume of destructive attacks by Israel on Gaza as an attempt to compensate for the heavy defeat on October 7. Seyyed Reza Sadrolhosseini, an expert on West Asian affairs, emphasized in an interview with Iran Daily that Israel, in order to compensate for its historical defeat on October 7 and restore its shattered dominance and lost credibility among the Israelis, resorted to massacring the

At Gaza hospital, patients trapped in 'circle of death'

UN warns fuel shortage to halt aid work in '48 hours'



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



International Desk

Israeli forces reached the gates of Gaza City's main hospital on Monday, the primary target in their battle to seize control of the northern half of the Gaza Strip, as the UN warned its operations in the war-torn strip would shut down within two days due to fuel shortages. The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Monday the death toll at Shifa hospital rose to 34 since the weekend, as the facility suffered fuel shortages.

The latest toll included 27 adult intensive care patients and seven babies, deputy health minister in the besieged strip, Youssef Abu Rish, told AFP.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees warned Monday its operations in war-torn Gaza would shut down within two days due to fuel shortages. "The humanitarian operation in Gaza will grind to a halt in the next 48 hours as no fuel is allowed to enter Gaza," UNRWA's Gaza chief Thomas White wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

Battles around hospitals have forced thousands of Palestinians to flee from some of the last shelters in northern Gaza while stranding critically wounded patients, including newborns, and their caregivers with dwindling supplies and no electricity, health officials said Monday.

At least 650 patients were still inside, desperate to be evacuated to another medical facility by the Red Cross or some other neutral agency. Israel claims the hospital sits atop tunnels housing a headquarters for Hamas fighters, who are to blame for its plight for using patients as shields, which both Hamas and the hospital staff at Shifa deny.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Shifa "is not functioning as a hospital anymore."

Another hospital in Gaza City, Quds hospital, was forced to shut down Sunday because it ran out of fuel. The

Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which operates the facility, said Israeli forces are stationed nearby and that preparations are being made to evacuate some 6,000 patients, medics and displaced people.

It said that an attempt to reach the hospital from Khan Younis in order to evacuate patients has been abandoned due to "continuing shelling and shooting". A convoy accompanied by the International Committee of the Red Cross was forced to return due to the dangerous conditions.

Both sides have seized on the plight of hospitals, particularly Shifa's, as a symbol of the larger war, now in its sixth week.

The fighting was triggered by Hamas's unprecedented Oct. 7 surprise attack into Israel, and Israel's response has brought unseen levels of death and destruction to Gaza.

"The tanks are in front of the hospital. We are under full blockade. It's a totally civilian area. Only hospital facility, hospital patients, doctors and other civilians staying in the hospital. Someone should stop this," a surgeon at the hospital, Dr. Ahmed El Mokhalalati, said by telephone.

"They bombed the (water) tanks, they bombed the water wells, they bombed the oxygen pump as well. They bombed everything in the hospital. So, we are hardly surviving. We tell everyone, the hospital is no more a safe place for treating patients. We are harming patients by keeping them here."

War at risk of spreading

There was also fresh concern that the war could spread beyond Gaza, with an upsurge of clashes on the border with Lebanon, and the United States launching air strikes on military targets in neighboring Syria. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Saturday warned the Hezbollah resistance movement that launching a war would result in widespread destruction in Lebanon similar to that in Gaza.

"If it (Hezbollah) makes this kind of mistake here, the ones who will pay the price will be first and foremost Lebanese citizens," Gallant told soldiers on the northern border in remarks relayed by his office. "What we're doing in Gaza, we can also do in Beirut."

UNRWA building targeted

The IDF issued an update on its military operation in Gaza, saying its forces have conducted 4,300 strikes to date. It claims to have struck "approximately 300 tunnel shafts".

The UN's refugee mission in Palestine has reported that one of its buildings in Rafah has been struck by Israel's Navy. Rafah is in the south of the Gaza Strip, within the area that Israel has insisted that Palestinians move to. In a statement, UNRWA said there were no casualties. It added that UN buildings and facilities within Gaza currently host nearly 780,000 displaced people, saying "they should be protected at all times".



people of Gaza. In addition to enduring this heavy defeat, the Israeli regime has also suffered another defeat in the media while trying to highlight its victimhood. The Israeli narrative and propaganda quickly lost its credibility. As the attacks intensified, Gaza was left devastated, hospitals were bombed, women and children and journalists were massacred, and water and electricity were cut off, the true face of Israel was shown to the world more

than ever before. The situation unfolded in a way contrary to Israel's desires. While the European and American heads of state continued to support Netanyahu and his hardline actions, the streets of Washington, Paris, London, Berlin, and others were filled with people who had come together in unprecedented numbers to support the people of Gaza and the freedom of Palestine, demanding an end to the war and a ceasefire. Stephen Walt, a renowned

political theorist, wrote in Foreign Policy that "sympathy will only increase the longer the war goes on and the more Palestinian civilians are killed, especially when the US government and some prominent European politicians are leaning so heavily to one side." Benjamin Netanyahu had said at the beginning stages of the Israeli assault on Gaza that this war would change the future course of events in the region. But will these changes be in Israel's favor? The evidence

and indications point to the contrary. Israel is losing its credibility more than ever before, and the more it continues its aggressions and crimes, its internal and international vulnerabilities become more apparent. Bloomberg magazine, maintaining that the war costing Israel's economy about \$260 million per day, wrote that the war against Hamas became "more expensive for Israel than first predicted and is putting a strain on public finances".

Thierry Meyssan, a French writer and researcher and author of the book "9/11: The Big Lies" said that this will be a very deadly and endless war. He added that Israel can restore the order in its favor, but it can never win. Therefore, what is evident is that the process of normalizing relations between Islamic countries and Israel has been suspended indefinitely. Contrary to the myth of invincibility, 1,400 Israelis have been killed in just one day, and over 200 have been taken captive. The global public opinion is more opposed to Israel's brutal actions than ever before. The narrative of what is happening in Palestine has moved out of the hands of the monopoly of media outlets that are aligned with Israel, and the issue of Palestine has become central. For the foreseeable future, Israel will not be a safe and attractive destination for global tourists. The shadow of new security threats and the prospect of new conflicts weigh heavily on the Israelis. All of this indicates that the conditions for Israel will not return to what they were before October 7.



Largest toll of UN staff

United Nations workers observed a minute's silence on Monday to honor the more than 100 employees killed in Gaza since the war began last month, the largest toll of humanitarian workers in the organization's 78-year history. Staff at UN offices in Geneva bowed their heads as a candle was lit in memory of the 101 employees of UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA killed in the Israeli assault on Gaza. UN flags across the world flew at half-mast. "This is the highest number of aid workers killed in the history of our organisation in such a short time," said Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the UN office in Geneva. "We are gathered here today, united in this

very symbolic location, to pay respect to our brave colleagues who sacrificed their lives while serving under the United Nations flag."

EU calls for 'humanitarian pauses' Meanwhile, the 27 EU member states have called for "immediate humanitarian pauses" to allow humanitarian aid to get into Gaza, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs Josep Borrell said. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh on Monday called on the union and the United Nations to "parachute aid" into the Gaza Strip. "I call on the United Nations and the European Union to parachute aid into the Gaza Strip, especially the north," he said, referring to the area where fighting is most intense. Also, Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena

Baerbock has said it was vital to keep "hope alive" in the "unbelievable situation where so many people are currently losing hope" in Gaza. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said the world must "distinguish between Hamas and Palestinian citizens" and mourn all civilian deaths, as he defended his government's response to the escalating crisis in Gaza. Joko Widodo, the president of Indonesia, home to the world's biggest Muslim population, called for a cease-fire ahead of meeting US President Joe Biden in Washington on Monday.

AP, AFP, Reuters, and the Guardian contributed to this report.

US victim of its commitment to Israel

Region will not develop in Tel Aviv's favor

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The Gaza war and the brutal attacks and killings by Israel will eventually come to an end. Two questions in everyone's mind are: What the United States, the most important supporter of Israel, will achieve or lose after the war is over? Will Washington's international and regional position and credibility improve or deteriorate? These questions were raised with Diako Hosseini, a senior international relations expert.

IRAN DAILY: Stephen Walt, a well-known American theorist, has found analyzing the post-Gaza war conditions in the US to be challenging. He has pointed out that Washington's involvement in the Middle East affects its role in the Ukraine war and its competition with China. In your opinion, what position will the United States hold in regional and global relations after the Gaza war?

DIAKO HOSSEINI: The Gaza war was kind of a surprise for the Americans as well. The US became a victim of its fundamental weakness, which is its unjustifiable commitment to support the Israeli regime. As a result, Washington's positions in the Gaza war have called into question the country's credibility in the Arab and Islamic world, as well as among many countries that have a more realistic view of this war. Furthermore, the resources of the US have been strained in its competition with China, the Ukraine war, and its other priorities. The commitment to Israel forced Washington to be involved and preoccupied with the Middle East (West Asia) for years. The US is now confused. Although it tries to manage the crisis somehow and ultimately establish peace, its ability to broker peace has diminished. The US is unable to emerge from this crisis unscathed. The Gaza war and the US's support for Israel will not have any specific achievements for the US in line with the priorities it has set for foreign policy, and they will diminish its international credibility as well.



Until recently, it used to be said that the United States was trying to withdraw from the West Asia region or reduce its presence in the area to focus more on the Far East and compete with China. Do you think the new circumstances will change this plan for the US?

The Americans believed that by normalizing the relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia and reducing tensions with Iran, they could pave the way for their withdrawal from West Asia or reduce their presence in the region. However, the conflict in Gaza showed that the plan would not be easily operationalized. They indeed thought that by establishing security and stability in the region as a result of reducing tensions with Iran and normalizing the relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, they would focus their resources on competing with China, managing the war in Ukraine, and further weakening Russia. They also thought that these plans would curb the enthusiasm of West Asian countries to develop relations with China. Now, however, these plans have undergone changes that are not in the US's favor. That's why I say that the Americans, too, were caught off guard in the Gaza war.

Benjamin Netanyahu said in the early days of the war that this war would lead to fundamental changes in the region. Do you think the security arrangements in the region will be in favor of Israel after the Gaza war?

A rational look at the developments on the ground shows that no one actor in this crisis will be able to manage the conditions and changes in their favor, not even the US. Israel's credibility has been damaged in every aspect. Given the continuation of the war and its uncertain prospects, as well as the ongoing genocide in Gaza by Israel, the situation will worsen for the Zionist regime. The massive demonstrations that were held in various parts of the world, especially in Western countries, and the criticisms that were leveled by some Western politicians and statesmen also indicate that the situation will not be in favor of Israel. Netanyahu's statement that the region will undergo fundamental changes is more of a self-assurance coming from Israel and the US. It seems that Israel will not return to the situation before October 7 under any circumstances.

US President Joe Biden (R) is welcomed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as he visits Israel amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Tel Aviv, Israel, on October 18, 2023.
REUTERS



Iranian Salimi on double major medals and Olympic ambitions



Mahdiah Qazvinian
Staff writer

The failure in making one last push toward the ultimate prize at the Hangzhou Asian Games turned out to

become the familiar story for the Iranian taekwondo squad, giving a the country's governing body of the sport a reality check ahead of next summer's Paris Olympics. While Matin Rezaei and Mehran Barkhordari left China with a couple of bronze medals, Mahdi Hajimousaei, Alireza Hosseinpour, and Arian Salimi had to settle for a finish on the second podium in their respective weight classes – eventually leading to the men's head coach Bijan Moghanlou stepping down from his role after the event.

However, Salimi, 19, believes the final outcome in Hangzhou could go down as a success for the Iranian men's taekwondo, which had won double golds – coupled with a silver and bronze medals apiece – in the previous edition of the Asian Games in Jakarta-Palembang 2018.

"All countries brought their full-strength squads to the Asian Games, but every member of our team still managed to win a medal. We had three finalists across five weight divisions, and I'm sure we would have won at least two golds, had it not been for some controversial decisions by the referees," Salimi told Iran Daily.

The young Iranian had a decent run en route to the final in Hangzhou – beating opponents from the Philippines, Jordan, and the Chinese Taipei – only to suffer a 2-1 defeat against the host's Song Zhaoxiang in a thrilling +80kg showdown, in which the two contestants scored a remarkable 96 points between them.

"The opponent had the support of the home crowd, but I was in full control of the final, except for the final 10 seconds of the first and the deciding rounds. That's where the result was settled," Salimi said of his bout against the two-time world bronze winner.

"He was very smart and made the most of his opportunities, not to mention I had six points chalked off by the refs in the closing seconds. I could still have won the final but I made some mistakes, which I can't afford to repeat in the future events," added the Iranian teenager.

The Asian Games silver rounded off an impressive four months for Salimi, who, at such a young age, already has two major international medals under his belt – following the joint bronze he grabbed at May's World Championships in Baku.

Salimi overcame some high-profile contestants – including Spaniard Raúl Martínez – before falling to a defeat in a last-four thriller against South Korea's Kang Sang-hyun, who went on to snatch the 87kg gold, thanks to a victory over Croatian Ivan Šapina.

"For some reasons, I was not in my best mental conditions and I also had to deal with a minor injury through the competition, which kept me from delivering my best performance against the South Korean opponent, whom I had beaten in the Grand Slam series last year," Salimi said of his campaign in Baku.

Salimi said he has now set his sights on securing a quota for next year's Paris Olympics.

"I will give it my best shot to seal the berth for the Olympics and then win a medal in Paris. I'm currently the number one in the Grand Slam ranking and will have to retain my position when this year's event gets underway in December [in Wuxi, China] to boost my chances of qualification for the Olympics."



taekwondo.ir

Asadi's screamer leads Sepahan past Persepolis in 'Iranian Classico'



Sepahan's Reza Asadi (bottom) celebrates with teammates after scoring the winner in a 1-0 victory over Persepolis in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, Isfahan, Iran, on November 12, 2023.
● HAMIDREZA NIKOOMARAM/FARS

Sports Desk

A Reza Asadi's outrageous free-kick from 40 yards out was the difference between Persian Gulf Pro League giants Sepahan and Persepolis in Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium on Sunday.

The much-needed 1-0 victory in the so-called 'Iranian Classico' saw Jose Morais's men get their title charge back on track after a stalemate at Nasaji Mazandaran and a shock home defeat against Malavan had ended their perfect start to the season.

Meanwhile, Persepolis manager Yahya Golmohammadi was left with much to think about during the upcoming international break – ahead of massive continental showdowns against Al Nasr and Al Duhail as well as mid-December's Tehran Derby – after his side – hit with injuries and a flu virus in recent weeks – left the pitch without a win for a fourth successive game across all competitions.

There was little to separate the two sides in a cagy first half, but few would argue that Sepahan

did not ultimately deserve the maximum points, given the chances the home side created before breaking the deadlock 20 minutes from normal time.

Reds keeper Alireza Beiranvand produced heroic saves to deny Milad Zakipour and substitute Shahryar Moghanlou but the Iranian international could only watch Asadi's sizzling strike go in off the bar.

Persepolis desperately pushed for an equalizer in the closing stages but it proved too little too late for the defending cham-

pion, which suffered only a first defeat in the Iranian top-flight since mid-March, when the Reds were beaten at home by the same opposition before lifting the league and cup trophies by the end of the previous campaign.

The result leaves Persepolis five points adrift of archrival Esteghlal, which walked away with a 2-0 home victory against Tractor on the preceding night – courtesy of goals by Iman Salimi and new Argentine signing Gustavo Blanco – to stay atop the table with 22 points.

Zob Ahan also made the most of the Tehran Reds' wobble, as a Fardin Yousefi's stoppage-time winner led Mohammad Rabiei's men to a 2-1 win at Nasaji, lifting them to second with 18 points.

Asadi, meanwhile, will be looking to build on his flying form – which has seen the league's leading marksman bag nine goals and double assists in 11 outings – when representing the national team in the World Cup qualification double-header against Hong Kong and Uzbekistan in the coming days.

Djokovic beats Rune in ATP Finals to secure year-end No 1 spot

PA MEDIA – Novak Djokovic ensured he will finish the year ranked world No 1 for an eighth time after battling to a late-night victory over Holger Rune in his opening match at the ATP Finals.

Djokovic is chasing a record seventh title but again found the 20-year-old Rune, who is making his debut at the eight-player event, a troublesome opponent before pulling off a third win in five meetings.

It was past midnight in Turin when Djokovic completed a 7-6 (4), 6-7 (1), 6-3 victory after three hours and four minutes on court.

Rune has fared much better against Djokovic than most of his rivals over the last couple of years, beating him in Paris last autumn and Rome in the spring before a narrow defeat in the French capital a



Novak Djokovic hits a serve during a victory over Holger Rune in the ATP Finals in Turin, Italy, on November 12, 2023.
● GUGLIELMO MANGIAPANE/REUTERS

week-and-a-half ago. The Serb went on to win the Masters series title, maintaining his record of not having lost a match since the Wimbledon final.

Djokovic told Prime Video: "It took everything. I saw in the first game when he fired shots from

the baseline, I knew it was going to be a tough night for me. I thought he played great. I played great in some moments. Overall a win is a win. It was a very emotional win and a tough win knowing the significance of tonight's match. After a really terrible sec-

ond-set tie-break I think I played a really solid third set."

Earlier, Jannik Sinner delighted the crowd in Turin by defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas in the opening singles match.

The 22-year-old Italian played as an alternate two years ago but quali-

fied for the first time this season after claiming four ATP Tour titles and rising to world No 4. He is one of the favourites to lift the trophy this week, which would be the dream scenario for the home fans, and a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Tsitsipas is a big step towards the semi-finals. There had been doubts over Tsitsipas's fitness heading into the event and he failed to force a break point on the Sinner serve during the 85-minute contest.

"I was excited to step on court and opening the finals is really, really special," said Sinner. "I knew it was going to be very tough but I think I handled the situation well. I tried to stay aggressive and I am very happy with the performance. I am happy to start off with a win and hopefully I can continue with this intensity."

A quarter of Iranian adults suffer from pre-diabetes

Social Desk

Twenty-five percent of Iran's adult population has pre-diabetes, putting them at risk of developing the disease and its complications, according to the head of the Endocrine and Metabolism Research Institute of Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

"However, this risk can be mitigated through proper education and adopting a healthy lifestyle," said Afshin Ostovar, according to IRNA.

Ostovar revealed these concerning statistics regarding diabetes in the country during a press conference held on the eve of World Diabetes Day (November 14).

He further pointed out that diabetes is among the most prevalent metabolic diseases worldwide, affecting approximately 450 million individuals.

"This number is projected to exceed 700 million by 2040," he said.

Additionally, he noted that more than 20 percent of the Iranian population over the age of 18 is overweight, with women being twice as likely to be overweight as men, which is a "significant risk factor for diabetes."

Furthermore, Ostovar said that two-thirds of individuals over the age of 60 in Iran are

overweight. He also revealed that over 50 percent of people in the country do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity, particularly women, who exhibit a 60 percent lack of physical activity.

According to Ostovar, the prevalence of diabetes in Iran is currently at 14 percent, indicating a 30 percent increase over the past five years.

"This rise poses a significant burden on the healthcare system, leading to increased treatment costs. To address these challenges, a new diabetes symposium is scheduled to take place on November 14, which aims to raise awareness of high-risk factors and promote effective actions to combat diabetes," he said.

Another expert, Mohammadreza Mohajer, a professor from Tehran University of Medical Sciences, also warned about the escalating incidence of diabetes in the country. He highlighted that "four out of ten people in Iran have abnormal blood sugar levels," indicating a high prevalence of the condition. Moreover, many individuals remain unaware of their diabetes, seeking medical assistance for other health concerns such as heart disease.

"If left untreated, diabetes can lead to coma and death," Mohajer said.

There are other severe

complications as well, including blindness, kidney failure, and even the need for leg amputation. "Fifteen percent of diabetic patients suffer from foot ulcers, with 25 percent requiring amputations," he said.

Mohajer stressed the importance of early diagnosis and proper management of diabetes. However, he expressed concern that despite available information, a significant portion of the population remains unaware of their condition or fails to adequately control their blood sugar levels. To combat diabetes effectively, he proposed collaborative efforts between the Ministries of Sports and Youth and Education.

"These efforts would involve creating suitable sports facilities and training students as health ambassadors to prevent the further spread of the disease."

The rise in diabetes can be attributed to various factors, including the consumption of high-calorie foods and a sedentary lifestyle. Being overweight alone accounts for 50 percent of diabetes cases, and the aging population also contributes to its increasing prevalence. In fact, diabetic patients currently rank as the third most populous group globally. By 2040, the number of diabetes cases is projected



IRNA

to reach a whopping 700 million people, according to statistics from the World Health Organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the situation, as it has increased insulin resistance and secretion. The fear of seeking medical attention during the pandemic has led to an increase in amputations due to diabetes. To address these challenges, steps must be taken to ensure that individuals receive appropriate medical care and treatment.

On a more positive note, it was announced that Iran will begin producing a new insulin drug from December 2023 onwards.

"This insulin will be readily available in pharmacies and will provide patients with a longer-lasting and more effective treatment option," Mohajer said, adding, "Unlike previous insulin drugs, this new formulation will only require two daily injections." He then noted that there are already insulin drugs available internationally that allow patients to control their blood

sugar levels with just a single injection. Furthermore, ongoing studies are exploring the potential of insulin drugs that require only one injection per week to maintain blood sugar control.

The fight against diabetes in Iran requires increased awareness, education, and access to proper healthcare. By addressing risk factors, promoting healthy lifestyles, and improving treatment options, it is possible to curb the escalating prevalence of this chronic disease.

Loneliness blurs brain's line between real friends and fictional characters

A recent neuroimaging study published in Cerebral Cortex has shed light on how loneliness can affect the way our brains process real-life friends and fictional characters from television shows.

The study indicates that lonely individuals may blur the boundary between real friends and beloved fictional characters, experiencing a more similar neural response when thinking about both, compared to their less lonely counterparts, according to PsyPost.

The backdrop to this research stems from the

challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited opportunities for socializing with friends and acquaintances. People around the world turned to television series, books, and other forms of fiction to fill the void left by physical isolation. In the United States alone, individuals reported spending an extra 30 minutes a day on personal interest activities like watching TV or reading during the pandemic.

A similar trend was observed in the United Kingdom, where adults increased their daily

streaming service usage by 71 percent. With subscriptions to streaming services surpassing one billion during the pandemic, it's clear that engagement with fictional narratives reached new heights. Simultaneously, there was a growing concern about loneliness, especially among young adults.

Prior research has shown that individuals tend to seek a sense of social connection from mediated experiences, such as engaging with fictional characters, when they are feeling socially rejected or

lonely. This study aimed to explore the relationship between loneliness and the way the brain represents real friends and fictional characters.

"My students and I have long been interested in how the brain makes sense of other people," said study author Dylan D. Wagner, an associate professor of psychology at The Ohio State University.

"How we learn about them, how that knowledge is stored and retrieved, how it may be different for different people. Along the way, we became

interested in how people feel and think about fictional characters and form so-called parasocial relationships with them."

The study involved 19 right-handed participants (10 females, median age = 24) who were fans of the popular television series "Game of Thrones." The researchers selected this show because it featured a large and diverse cast of characters, allowing for a variety of attachments. Data was collected during the seventh season of the show, which aired in 2017.

Second Announcement


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PIC OF THE DAY



The medical staff of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences hospitals gathered together to condemn the crimes of Israel and express support for the oppressed Palestinians in Gaza, on November 13, 2023.

The photo depicts a protester holding a poster of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, featuring a dialogue printed on it:

"What's your job?"
"Killing children."

MOHAMMADREZA DEHDARI/ISNA

Clear breaches of Swedish laws in Nouri's trial



● MIZAN

Why, according to Thomas Bodström, Hamid Nouri's Swedish lawyer and the former minister of justice, has his case tarnished the reputation of Sweden and the Swedish judicial system?

- Violation of fair trial rights
- Breach of the principle of equal arms
- Arbitrary detention of the defendant
- Disregard for the presumption of innocence
- Ignoring the principle of in dubio pro reo (interpreting doubt in favor of the accused)
- Violation of the basic rights of the accused
- Breach of privacy
- Blocking access to exculpatory evidence for the defendant's lawyers
- Not removing detention restrictions after the completion of interrogation and court sessions
- Blocking the defendant's access to medical care
- Violation of the right of the prisoner to be safe from assault
- Prosecutor's disregard for exculpatory evidence
- Lack of field investigations by the prosecutor
- Police torture and violence towards the accused
- Violation of the principle of equality of rights between complainant and accused, supporting human rights violators and terrorists
- Abduction and assistance in setting a trap
- Neglect of fundamental rights and freedoms of the accused
- Violation of the rules governing evidence gathering for self-defense (violation of the right of access)
- Failure to preserve and disclose the defendant's secrets and making attempts to prevent the dissemination of the defendant's image and other details and information
- Denial of the right to choose a proficient and impartial translator for the accurate conveyance of legal concepts
- Not documenting accusatory evidence
- Violation of Article 9.1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Disregard for human rights and dignity
- Violation of the right to inform the family of the accused of the state of his detention
- Failure of the prosecutors to examine the crime scene and discover the truth
- Failure of the judge to hear the accused's rights violation in prison
- Disregard for the right of the prisoner to meet with his family
- Failure to observe the principle of judicial security
- Detaining the accused on baseless, speculative charges for a record-breaking period

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Senior lawyer for Nouri speaks out Nouri case exposed Swedish gov't's lack of transparency

● VOA



What troubles Bodström is not the conviction of his client but the disregard for fundamental principles of due process and the violation of the rights of the accused by prosecutors and the police.

On Thursday, November 8, Hamid Nouri's final appellate court session was held in Stockholm, Sweden, and the court's verdict will be announced in approximately 40 days.

To assess the trial process and its events, we need only to look at the statements of one of Nouri's two attorneys, Thomas Bodström. He is an experienced Swedish lawyer who previously held the position of Minister of Justice in Sweden, making him familiar with the Swedish judicial system. Hanna Larsson, another attorney for Nouri, also supports Bodström's opinions, expressing serious criticisms of the judicial process in Hamid Nouri's case. The defense lawyers, through a detailed examination of the charges and the handling process, have repeatedly stated, "You have compromised the honor of Sweden and the Swedish judicial system with this case." They provided numerous pieces of evidence to the court, asserting that the case was formed under the influence of terrorist groups and that the Swedish judicial system was neither independent nor impartial in the proceedings.

According to Bodström, Nouri's case is "unique" and "a part of our legal history." He believes the case has no similarities to previous ones in terms of the court's independence and thoroughness. Given that the prosecutor did not face any difficulties in conducting investigations and relied on the complainants' statements and witnesses' testimonies as evidence, the defense's task of defending their client, conducting investigations, and presenting robust evidence became challeng-

ing. On the other hand, "prosecutors found it easy to say whatever they wanted, and it couldn't be disproven." The ruling of the first instance court clearly supports Bodström's statements, indicating that the initial evidence was hastily accepted. Hence, the first instance court "had an easy job". What troubles Bodström is not the conviction of his client but the disregard for fundamental principles of due process and the violation of the rights of the accused by prosecutors and the police. He states that contrary to the basic principles of due process, "the burden of proof has been shifted from the shoulders of the prosecutors to the defense attorneys." He points out the fundamental principle that in criminal cases, the presumption of innocence lies with the suspect or accused, and it is the prosecutor's responsibility to prove the occurrence of the crime and attribute it to the accused beyond reasonable doubt. However, in Nouri's case, this fundamental principle was overlooked in the initial stage. In the appellate stage, the prosecutor shifted their duty towards the defense attorneys, making it very difficult and worrisome for Bodström. Consequently, he stood against the prosecutors in various appeal hearings. Bodström is also critical of the behavior of the first instance court in Nouri's case, claiming that they took proof lightly. He questions how the first instance court accepted the evidence when the 200-page ruling provided no explanation of how Nouri committed the crime and the accusations were never proven. This raises a serious and un-

equivocal question in our minds: How did the first instance court accept this? When we see a court in Sweden behaving in this way, "our hair stands on end." It is regrettable that the prosecutor changed the description of the crime just a few days before their final statements, despite having written it for over two years, influencing the choice of imprisonment. In response to this action, defense lawyers naturally need more time. Bodström says, "If we request more time, they say we are obstructing the judicial process." While defense attorneys need sufficient opportunity to defend their clients against the changed description of the crime, the prosecutor warns, "Do not say these things; it will tarnish Sweden's image." The mission of defense attorneys is clear: to defend the rights of the accused. Additionally, defense attorneys say the prosecutor must be impartial, not just in words but in action. Another firm point raised by defense attorneys is, "A police officer with personal interests has entered the case and conducted preliminary investigations, and extraordinary misconduct has occurred with Nouri, especially in the detention center, in the Swedish judicial system." These positions and criticisms of defense attorneys towards the prosecutor and the police have caused them to be the subjects of "anger and wrath" from the prosecutor and the police. Bodström says, "The prosecutor and the police have lost the judicial compass." Although the prosecutor accuses defense attorneys of "being unprofessional, damaging the Swedish judicial system,

lying, and lacking integrity," Bodström states, "A gentleman is never undisciplined and responds politely to impoliteness." "Global attention has been drawn to this case. We are now like an elephant in a dark room not knowing what we are doing. The flaws made by the prosecutors and the police should not be overlooked. We are supposed to be an example to the world. Is it helpful for a police officer with personal interests to come and worsen the situation in this case? Should defense attorneys remain silent? What does the world say? For how long do we want to sweep the shortcomings under the rug?" Careful consideration of Bodström's professional and principled statements leads to the conclusion that in Nouri's case, not only has a political maneuver been executed, but also the conduct of the prosecutors and the police has been unethical, unprofessional, and inhumane. Bodström is right to be concerned about the credibility and dignity of his country's judicial system, which presents itself as a model of justice and human rights. Nouri's case is a good yardstick for evaluating the Swedish judicial system. Can the appellate court restore the honor of the Swedish judicial system that was lost as a result of the actions of the first instance court? Can the appellate court alleviate the former minister of justice's concerns about the dignity of his country's judicial system? It remains uncertain how long the Swedish government intends to "sweep the ugliness under the rug".



Thomas Bodström, Hamid Nouri's Swedish lawyer and the former minister of justice
● TT



Hamid Nouri, an Iranian citizen detained in Sweden
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