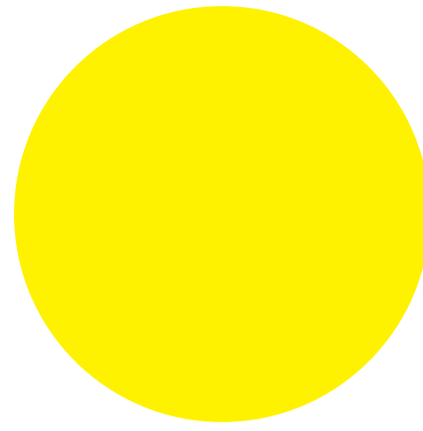


UN warns starvation imminent in Gaza as aid halts again

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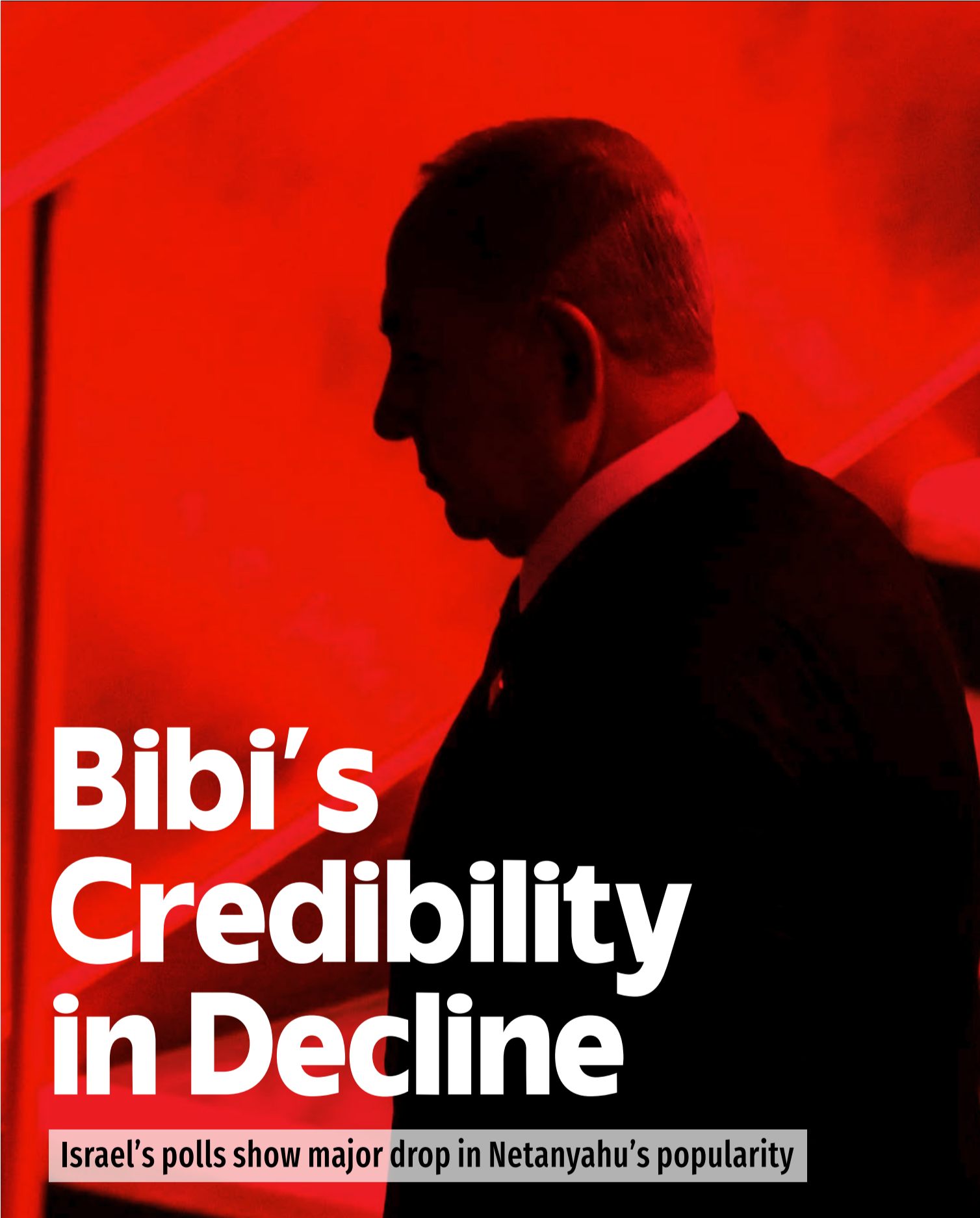


# Iran Daily



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# Bibi's Credibility in Decline

Israel's polls show major drop in Netanyahu's popularity

### International Desk

Since the beginning of Israel's brutal aggression on the Gaza Strip, several opinion polls have been conducted in Israel over the popularity and performance of the regime's prime minister, and almost all of them have shown a major decline in his credibility.

Usually in wars the countries' leaders get a popularity boost, while polls in Israel show the opposite.

The latest survey conducted by researchers at Bar Ilan University in Tel Aviv shows that less than four percent of Jewish Israelis trust Benjamin Netanyahu as the most reliable source of information regarding the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestinian resistance fighters in the Gaza Strip.

The survey examined the consumption of news and information in the first four weeks of the conflict.

Another poll released on November 3, nearly one month after the conflict erupted, showed that only 27% of Israelis believe that longtime prime minister is the right person to run the governing coalition.

The poll conducted by the Lazar Research Institute for Israeli daily Maariv found that 49% of Israelis believe that Benny Gantz, leader of the National Unity Party, is the best figure to lead the coalition.

The poll showed a steep collapse in the popularity of the Likud Party led by Netanyahu.

On Thursday, Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid called for the removal of Netanyahu, saying "the time has come" for a new coalition in Israel.

Lapid laid out his vision for a reconstruction coalition, which he said would be led by another leader from Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party, but would neither include the prime minister nor "the extremists."

"Netanyahu has lost the trust of his citizens, the trust of the international community and, most seriously, the trust of the security system," he added.

A Likud statement said, "It is regrettable and shameful that Lapid is engaging in politics during a time of war."

Lapid's comments come as public anger toward Netanyahu continues to grow in Israel. After Hamas's October 7 operation on the occupied territory, which killed an estimated 1,200 Israelis – the Israeli society has been extremely divided, with a large majority of Israelis saying Netanyahu is somewhat responsible for the attack.

Some of Netanyahu's critics allege his hyper-focus on judicial reforms, which triggered months of anti-Netanyahu protests in Israel, could have caused the failure to anticipate the Hamas Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

The vast majority of Israelis believe he should publicly accept responsibility for the staggering failures that led to Hamas's operation, according to an opinion poll by the Maariv newspaper on October 20.

## West not qualified to preach human rights: *Tehran*

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani rebuked Western countries for drafting and voting for an anti-Iran UN resolution, saying they are not qualified to preach human rights to Iranians. In response to the anti-Iran resolution in the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, Kanaani said countries that have a long history of systemic human rights violations and crimes against nations are in no position to give human rights advice to the Iranian government and people. 2 >

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

## West not qualified to preach human rights: Tehran



THE NEW YORK TIMES

IRNA - Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani rebuked Western countries for drafting and voting for an anti-Iran UN resolution, saying they are not qualified to preach human rights to Iranians. In response to the anti-Iran resolution in the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, Kanaani said countries that have a long history of systemic human rights violations and crimes against nations are in no position to give human rights advice to the Iranian government and people. The passing of the anti-Iran resolution amid indifference to Israeli crimes in Gaza has brought dishonor to Western countries and laid bare their "blatant hypocrisy and sheer lies" about human rights, he said.

## Iran, Kazakhstan resume political talks after years



TASNIM - Iranian and Kazakh diplomats held a new round of political consultations between the two Asian states after a four-year hiatus. In the meeting held in Tehran, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani and his Kazakh counterpart Alibek Bakayev talked about ways to expand relations between Iran and Kazakhstan and discussed a broad range of regional and international issues.

The two diplomats also weighed plans for the conclusion of a road map to bilateral trade, the facilitation of economic relations and trade exchanges, the promotion of cultural and scientific cooperation such as the exchange of academics, and closer ties in the tourism industry. Highlighting the impact of international cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan on strengthened multilateral mechanisms, Bagheri said closer interaction between the two states within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the confidence building measures in Asia will help promote sustainable security in the region.

## UN warns starvation imminent in Gaza as aid halts again

## International Desk

UN aid deliveries to Gaza were suspended again on Friday due to shortages of fuel and a communications shutdown, deepening the misery of thousands of hungry and homeless Palestinians as Israeli troops battled Hamas fighters in the enclave. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said civilians faced the "immediate possibility of starvation" due to the lack of food supplies. Nine Palestinians were killed and others injured in an Israeli strike that hit a group of displaced people near the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt - the transit point for aid.

## WHO's demand

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization called on Friday for a regular flow of patients to be allowed out of Gaza for treatment in Egypt, to relieve the pressure on overwhelmed hospitals. WHO said a system needed to be set up to get priority cases out of the besieged Palestinian territory. Twenty-five out of 36 hospitals in the strip are not functioning and the remainder are struggling to provide services. "This is clearly not enough to support the endless needs arising due to the hostilities," said Richard Peepkorn, the WHO representative in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israel has claimed its troops had found a tunnel shaft used by Hamas at Shifa Hospital in the north of the Gaza Strip.

The hospital, packed with patients and displaced people and struggling to keep operating, has become a major focus of global concern. Israel claims Hamas has stored weapons and ammunition and is holding hostages in a network of tunnels under hospitals like Shifa, using patients and people taking shelter there as human shields. Hamas denies this.

With the war about to enter its seventh week, there is no sign of any let-up despite international calls for a ceasefire or at least for humanitarian pauses.

The conflict was triggered by an attack by Hamas fighters on Oct. 7 killing 1,200 Israelis. More than 11,500 Palestinians, at least 4,700 of them children, have now been killed in Gaza.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), quoting Palestinian data, said Israeli attacks had destroyed or damaged at least 45% of Gaza's housing units.

## Trucks suspended

The UN said there would be no cross-border aid operation on Friday due to fuel shortages and a communication shutdown. For a second consecutive day on Thursday no aid trucks arrived in Gaza due to lack of fuel for distributing relief. An Egyptian security source



said three fuel trucks were ready to cross from Egypt into Gaza on Friday, but an aid official inside the enclave said there was no confirmation that more fuel would be brought in. Nearly the entire Gazan population is in desperate need of food assistance, said WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain.

## Water as 'weapon of war'

The organization also said on Friday it was very worried about the spread of disease in Gaza, citing more than 70,000 reported cases of acute respiratory infections and over 44,000 cases

of diarrhea, far more than expected.

Also, a UN expert said on Friday that Israel "must stop using water as a weapon of war" and allow clean water and fuel into Gaza to activate the water supply network before it is "too late." "Every hour that passes with Israel preventing the provision of safe drinking water in the Gaza Strip, in brazen breach of international law, puts Gazans at risk of dying of thirst and diseases," Pedro Arrojo-Agudo said.

## 'Policy of terror'

In the West Bank, UN figures show that daily Israeli set-

tlement attacks have more than doubled since the Hamas attacks. France on Thursday condemned violence by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, calling it a "policy of terror" aimed at displacing Palestinians and urging Israeli authorities to protect Palestinians from the violence.

"Concerning the West Bank, I'd like to express the strongest condemnation by France of the violence carried out by the settlers against the Palestinians," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Anne-Claire Legendre. UN human rights chief Volk-



Palestinian children eat their meal amid the ruins of their family home destroyed in an Israeli strike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, on November 7, 2023. AFP

er Turk echoed her words. Speaking in Geneva, Turk said he was deeply concerned about the intensification of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has asked Israel to take "urgent" steps to stop violence being carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

## Iranian FM: US responsible for crisis in Gaza

## International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian blamed the United States for the escalation of crisis in the Gaza Strip due to its support for the Israeli regime. "We really didn't want this crisis to expand," Amir-Abdollahian told CBS News, referencing Israel's ongoing slaughter in Gaza. "But the US has

been intensifying the war in Gaza by throwing its support behind Israel." Referring to Hamas's October 7 operation in the occupied territories, the Iranian top diplomat said Hamas's attacks were a response to 75 years of Israeli occupation. "What Hamas did was based on its legitimate right to defend itself," Amir-Abdollahian said. He also denied that Iran

was responsible for a recent drone attack in the Red Sea that appeared to be targeting a US missile destroyer. The drone, which originated from Yemen, was shot down early Wednesday morning by the USS Thomas Hudner as it was "heading in the direction of the ship," according to a statement from the Pentagon. In a separate interview with the Financial Times,

he revealed that Tehran told the US through back channels that it did not want the Israel-Hamas conflict to spread further, but also warned Washington that regional conflict could be unavoidable if Israeli attacks on Gaza continue. "In response to the US," he said, "we said that Iran does not want the war to spread, but due to the approach adopted by the

US and Israel in the region, if the crimes against the people of Gaza and the West Bank are not stopped, any possibility could be considered, and a wider conflict could prove inevitable." "The war has already expanded in the region," he added. "The fact that the Yemeni Army... attacks the occupied lands with missiles and drones means the war has begun

to expand. The fact that [Lebanon's resistance movement] Hezbollah is fighting with a third of the Israeli Army shows the war has expanded," he said. Amir-Abdollahian warned that the resistance groups in Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon "are not indifferent towards the killing of their Muslim and Arab peers in Palestine".

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## Gen. Qaani: Axis of Resistance stays united with Gaza fighters

The head of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has assured the military wing of Hamas in the Gaza Strip of the solidarity of the "Axis of Resistance" with Palestinian fighters. "Your brothers in the axis of Al-Quds and the resistance are united with you, and they will not allow the enemy to reach its dirty goals in Gaza and Palestine," Brig. Gen. Ismail Qaani said in a message on Thursday, Press TV reported. The Axis of Resistance refers to an alliance among Iran,

Syria and anti-Israeli groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere. Gen. Qaani hailed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm by Palestinian resistance fighters on Oct. 7, which caught Israel off guard and shattered the regime's myth of superiority in everything from military to intelligence power. The message came after the Western media claimed that Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh had gotten a dressing-down from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran. On Thursday, senior

Hamas official Osama Hamdan dismissed claims to this effect as "pure lies and slander," saying the British news agency Reuters "has published worthless lies instead of news." "Everyone knows the nature of the relationship between the Hamas movement and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the position of the country in supporting the Palestinian cause and its resistance, and especially the Hamas movement, and they know the view of Ayatollah Khamenei in supporting the Palestinian resistance.

# Archaeological discoveries in Kohgiluyeh



An ancient cave in Kohgiluyeh  
● IRNA



An old mill in Choram, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province  
● IRNA



Qal'eh Dokhtar Bridge  
● IRNA

## Iranica Desk

The region of Kohgiluyeh, located in southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, is of great historical and cultural importance. This region has witnessed the presence of various ethnic groups and cultures throughout different historical periods. However, its ancient and recent history remains largely unknown. According to IRNA, this is due to various factors such as the mountainous terrain, natural erosion, and a lack of attention to archaeology in the region. The Kohgiluyeh region, centered around the city of Dehdasht, covers an area of approximately 4,850 square kilometers, and is situated in the south of Zagros and the west and northwest of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province.

Based on conducted research, this area has a long history of human settlement. The identified archaeological sites in this region indicate human presence from prehistoric periods to the Islamic period. According to the conducted surveys, it can be said that the Kohgiluyeh region possesses a considerable diversity of archaeological sites. These sites include various ancient structures such as mounds, caves, rock shelters, and public utilities like mills, bridges, and water reservoirs. These archaeological sites reflect the establishment and activities of human societies in this region from prehistoric times to the contemporary period.

The identification of the ancient and recent history of Kohgiluyeh can provide valuable insights into the history and culture of Iran. It can contribute to a better understanding of the historical and cultural developments of this region and Iran as a whole. Furthermore, the identification of Kohgiluyeh can aid in the preservation and revival of its histor-

ical and cultural heritage. This can also contribute to the development of tourism and the local economy.

### Ancient mounds

A number of ancient mounds have been identified in the surveys conducted in this region. These mounds are scattered throughout different parts of the area and are natural. Ancient mounds are a type of archaeological site that formed due to the accumulation of cultural materials over time. These cultural materials can include architectural remains, tools, pottery, metal objects, and more.



Chehel Sotoun Mosque in Dehdasht  
● IRNA

In the Kohgiluyeh region, three ancient mounds have been identified, namely, Gerdou, Tang-e Kushk and Barfdoon. Due to unfavorable environmental conditions and the mountainous structure of the region, which affected the livelihoods of the communities, the formation of mounds resulting from settlement sediments is limited. Additionally, the mountainous structure of the Kohgiluyeh region restricts the formation of large and extensive mounds in this area. However, the presence of three ancient mounds in Kohgiluyeh indicates that this region

also had human settlements in the past.

### Caves

The caves are among the important ancient sites of this region that can provide valuable information about the history and culture of Kohgiluyeh. The natural caves of Kohgiluyeh are located at different altitudes in the mountains of this region. These caves have different shapes and sizes and are also different in terms of their age. Studies conducted on the caves of Kohgiluyeh indicate that they have been used by humans in different historical periods. Cul-

tural artifacts found in the caves of Kohgiluyeh include stone tools, pottery, and metal tools. Based on surface findings, the history of habitation in the caves of Kohgiluyeh most likely dates back to the prehistoric and early Neolithic periods, and the Ilam and later Islamic periods.

### Rock shelters

In total, eight rock shelters have been identified in the Kohgiluyeh region. These shelters are scattered across various parts of the region and include both fragmented rock shelters and natural rock shelters.

### Public structures

In surveys conducted in the Kohgiluyeh region, 55 mills, four bridges, and two water reservoirs have been identified.

### Mills

Mills were built next to permanent and seasonal rivers, streams, and waterways. According to available evidence, the distribution of mills is in areas where there were more favorable conditions for agricultural activities. The materials used to build these mills were mainly stone, adobe, and gypsum. According to local residents, most of these mills were

few remains of the foundations are left from the Marun River bridges. The most important of these bridges is the Qal'eh Dokhtar Bridge, which has architectural similarities to the Seljuk and Safavid period structures.

### Water reservoirs

Two water reservoirs (*ab-anbar*) have been discovered in the Kohgiluyeh region, both of them were independently constructed using stone and adobe.

### Houses of lords

In these surveys, 14 houses of lords with fortifications were

tectural structures.

### Religious buildings

In the Kohgiluyeh region, 15 religious buildings were identified. Based on their architectural structures and the collected pottery from the surrounding areas of some of the shrines, their history can be attributed to the middle and late Islamic centuries. Not all of these buildings are mausoleums, and some of them have different structures and appear to be older; they are exactly attributed to the Sassanid and Islamic eras.

### Cemeteries

Seven cemeteries were identified in the region. These cemeteries are located in the mountainous slopes of the region and have simple architectural structures. They are usually made of stone and gypsum and have tombs with various coverings.

### Cobblestone roads

Remnants of five cobblestone roads were identified. These roads are located on the communication routes of the region and are of great importance.

### Rock carvings

In the surveys conducted in the Kohgiluyeh region, remnants of two rock carvings were identified. These rock carvings contain information about the history and culture of the region.

### Belad-e Shapur

Belad-e Shapur is a significant ancient monument in Iran, located in the historical fabric of Dehdasht in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad. Its roots can be traced back to pre-Islamic times, but most of its remaining artifacts are from the Safavid period. This valuable site holds immense historical, cultural, and touristic value, which can be harnessed as a vital resource for the economic and social development of the region.



Belad-e Shapur  
● IRNA

used until the previous decades as well.

### Bridges

Four bridges have been identified in the Kohgiluyeh region. The Marun River has always been a natural barrier to accessing the northern parts of the Kohgiluyeh region. For this reason, bridges have been built to facilitate access to these areas. The identified bridges in the Kohgiluyeh region are built over Marun River. These bridges are made using stone, gypsum, and adobe and rely on the rock bed from one or both sides. Only a

identified. These houses belonged to the nobles of that region and the locals know them as "castles". These houses are actually residential places. They are located in the rural areas of the region and are mostly scattered in the northern parts. These houses are usually made of stone and gypsum. Some of these houses have two floors.

### Mountain fortresses

During excavations, 11 mountain fortresses were identified. These fortresses are located in the mountainous heights of the region and have complex archi-

Historical houses of Dehdasht  
● IRNA



Israel possesses a formidable military capability, but it has never been able to turn this capability into a lasting victory against Hezbollah or Hamas. In every engagement, Israel eventually withdraws, leaving behind death, destruction and greater instability. Israel must realize that it cannot fight its way to peace in Gaza.

# Israel cannot defeat Hamas



An Israeli soldier is seen among the destruction caused by Hamas fighters in Kibbutz Nir Oz during their October 7 raid in southern Israel on October 30, 2023.  
● CHAIM GOLDBERG/FLASH90



By Emir  
Hadžikadunić  
Author at Fair  
Observer

## OPINION

In 1979, there were two significant developments in the Middle East. First, Israel and Egypt signed a historic peace treaty, the Camp David Accords. The accords did not specifically address the issue of occupied Palestinian territories, including Gaza. Second, the Iranian Revolution overthrew the Shah. This marked a change in the relationship between Israel and Iran. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini established "Quds Day" as an annual event to express opposition to the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and other Palestinian territories, including Gaza. (Quds is the Islamic name for Jerusalem.) These events had a profound regional impact, shaping politics and conflicts from the 1980s onward. Israel had defeated its Arab neighbors in several wars (1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973), but now resistance groups like Hezbollah and Hamas took their place. Backed by the US, Israel has in its favor a greater disparity in military power than history has ever seen. In conflicts with these fight-

ers (1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s), the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) won every battle. Despite this, Israel has never been able to secure a strategic victory. Each time, Hezbollah and Hamas emerged stronger and more determined in their resistance. With Israel engaged in another war against Hamas in Gaza, we are seeing the same conflict play out once again.

### Israel's failed occupation of Lebanon

Over the past 40 years, Israel has demonstrated time and again that it cannot win wars against Hezbollah or end them by military means. On June 6, 1982, the IDF crossed into southern Lebanon and quickly advanced to the outskirts of Beirut. However, the war that Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon believed would last for just few days turned into Israel's version of Vietnam. By the end of the war, Israeli casualties totaled 455 dead and 2,460 wounded.

Hezbollah, a Shia Muslim resistance group, formed during this war. It forced the IDF to retreat 30 kilometers south of Beirut, a major setback for Israel. Faced with growing public pressure, Begin resigned on September 28, 1983. The new Israeli cabinet, led by Shimon Peres, faced the same challenges as before and eventually withdrew to a self-declared security buffer zone in southern Lebanon on January 14, 1985. This move set a precedent for future Israeli withdrawals from occupied territories without negotiated agreements with opposing sides. Israel left the battlefield to Hezbollah, which became a prominent actor in Lebanon and it solidified its presence and influence in the following years. Israeli dissatisfaction with the occupation of a buffer zone grew during the 1990s. It escalated following a 1997 helicopter crash in which 73 Israeli soldiers were killed. Ultimately, on May 23, 2000, the Israeli army executed the third

and final withdrawal of Israeli forces. The IDF pulled out of southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, effectively ending the 22-year occupation. It was the second Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in Lebanon without a negotiated agreement, marking another strategic setback for Israel. After the withdrawal, the border with Lebanon remained unstable. Hezbollah expanded its missile and military capabilities in the area, and a new conflict erupted in the region only six years later. Although the Israeli army destroyed Lebanon's infrastructure in the 2006 Lebanon War, Hezbollah was not defeated. Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah called the war a "divine victory." For Israel, the conflict was a military failure. The conduct of the war discredited Israel's leadership, and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's approval ratings soon fell to 3%.

**From Hezbollah to Hamas**  
Israel has demonstrated time

and again that it cannot win wars against Hamas or end them by military means. Israeli security forces have killed many leaders from the military and political wings of Hamas. In 2004, they killed Hamas's founder and spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Ismail Yasin. In the same year, they killed one of the co-founders of Hamas, Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi. Despite these targeted killings, Hamas has demonstrated the ability to rebuild its leadership, increase its popularity and act effectively as a political organization. It won the plurality of the vote in the 2006 Palestinian legislative election. Hamas maintained its presence in Gaza. Despite facing conflicts with Israel in 2008-09 (Operation Cast Lead), 2012 (Operation Pillar of Defense), 2014 (Operation Protective Edge), 2018 (Gaza Border Protests) and 2021 (Israel-Gaza Conflict), Hamas survived with support coming from regional actors like Iran, Qatar and Turkey. While Israel won each battle, Hamas, after suffer-



A fire rages where a rocket fired from Gaza into southern Israel landed in the city of Ashkelon on October 7, 2023.  
● YOSSEI ZAMIR/FLASH90

ing casualties and infrastructure damage, consistently demonstrated resilience. Following each conflict, Hamas rebuilt infrastructure, adapted new tactics, and refined strategies.

On October 7, Hamas executed a swift and coordinated action by land, sea and air, resulting in the deaths of around 1,200 people, including at least 846 civilians, 278 soldiers and 44 police. Hamas also took an estimated 239 hostages. This unexpected move disrupted the status quo, altering dynamics in the Middle East. Journalist Alon Pinkas described Hamas's incursion as an "epic Israeli debacle."

#### Israel's mission impossible

Given the historical patterns of conflict between the Israel Defense Forces and non-state actors like Hezbollah and Hamas over the past 40 years, we can predict how this present conflict will evolve. Israel's chances of winning the war against Hamas are slim. Netanyahu painted himself into a corner with "destroy Hamas" as an objective, just as Begin and Olmert painted themselves into corners with "destroy PLO" or "destroy Hezbollah." Both of them won their battles but eventually lost their wars, withdrawing from the fight without achieving

their declared objectives.

If Netanyahu aims to "destroy Hamas," he would have to wage a protracted and bloody urban war, similar to what Begin faced. The question arises: Is Israel prepared for a prolonged war on multiple fronts against highly motivated resistance groups entrenched for over a decade? Will the Israeli public tolerate significant IDF casualties? Even if the IDF incapacitates Hamas in Gaza, as it did with the PLO in Lebanon in 1982-83, merely destroying infrastructure will not eradicate its ideology. As Ami Ayalon, Gilead Sher and Orni Petruschka point out, Hamas is an idea, and it will persist among Palestinians as long as there is no real peace option to which they can attach their hopes. Moreover, Tel Aviv is unlikely to bring the 2 million Palestinians in an occupied Gaza to submission. More likely, considering history, we will witness the IDF leaving Gaza, leaving destruction in its wake, similar to its compelled withdrawal from Lebanon. Hamas would claim a victory because it, or at least its ideology, wasn't completely destroyed.

#### New trends in the Middle East

Netanyahu has said he will "change

the Middle East," establishing a regional order aligning with Israel's interests. However, his actions following October 7 have had the opposite effect. The region has undergone drastic changes: Protests have erupted in major Arab capitals, leading to the suspension of normalization talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia and forcing Cairo, Amman and Riyadh to change their official narrative. Israel's relations with Turkey are strained, and groups affiliated with Iran have targeted Israel, as well as US assets in Iraq and Syria, with missiles and drones.

A sustained ground operation by Israel could result in tens of thousands of casualties, heighten the risk of a broader regional conflict and destabilize governments in multiple Arab countries. Iran has also hinted that it would not allow Hamas to lose without escalating the conflict.

Internationally, Israel's maneuvering space is narrowing, as public opinion increasingly rejects the dehumanization of the Palestinian people. The voices supporting Palestinians resonate from London to Madrid to Washington. The United States, once the primary force in the Middle East, is no longer the sole or main authority. We live in

a multipolar world. Muslim-majority states in the Middle East are demonstrating greater independence and a willingness to establish strategic partnerships with different global powers, including BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The withdrawal of US troops from Iraq in 2011 and Afghanistan in 2021 serve as poignant reminders of evolving regional realities. Prime Minister Netanyahu presented himself as a master statesman who could do the impossible for Israel. In addition to killing the two-state solution, his plan involved normalizing relations with all Arab states, and treating Palestinians as a security concern to be managed indefinitely. But everything Netanyahu has built for decades crashed in a matter of hours. The political grave he dug for the two-state solution may now become his own, and like Menachem Begin four decades earlier, he and his unpopular ministers may retire from politics. The recent conflict and devastation in Gaza might sow the seeds for a new order, challenging the existing structure of the occupation of Palestine, which, in turn, contains the seeds for more wars that Israel cannot win and cannot end.

## Biden's support for Israel, Arab public opinion pose threat to US



By Syed Ali Hassan

Iran Daily's  
correspondent  
in Pakistan

### OPINION

According to a report by a Western media outlet, the US administration, through a diplomatic cable from the American embassy in the Arab capital, Oman, has informed President Biden that anti-American sentiments among the youth in the Arab world have reached a dangerous level. The diplomatic cable also highlights that American embassies in the Arab world have received serious warnings, indicating that traditional American support in the Arab world has suffered due to unwavering support for Israel's destructive and aggressive military campaign.

As per the published excerpts of the cable, there is deep concern in the Arab and Islamic world about the appointments of American diplomats in Arab countries, with growing resentment against the United States. This resentment has intensified since the beginning of military actions by Israel against Hamas immediately after the start of hostilities.

The cable warns that in the Arab world, attacks on Israeli cities are perceived as acts of war crimes, holding the United States morally and ethically responsible. The cable, dispatched from the embassy in Muscat, includes communications from several American ambassadors in Arab capitals, addressed not only to the American President but also to the White House National Security Council, the CIA, and the FBI.

Appointments made by senior officials in embassies, as conveyed in the cable sent by top officials of the embassies to the Middle East, indicate a rising anti-American wave in Arab societies. These threats are being acknowledged by American policymakers, leading the United States to adopt a flexible stance from its previous hardline position. Consequently, a few hours of ceasefire have been initiated to provide basic humanitarian aid, including food, water, and medicines, to people deprived due to the conflict.

It is emphasized that the demand for the unilateral release of Israeli prisoners of war, which the United States is advocating during these few hours of ceasefire, is not based on justice. Hamas has already rejected such demands, and even after a week of ground attacks by Israel, the Israeli military has not been able to recover the prisoners of war from October 7.

There is a possibility that even if Israel declares the release of all Palestinians arrested or abducted in the past eight to ten years, Hamas may still be ready to negotiate the release of prisoners of war. Despite Israel's occupation of Gaza, Hamas cannot be eliminated. Israel will have to face prolonged resistance indefinitely, and it is possible that supporters and humanitarians from various parts of the world may arrive to aid Hamas and the people of Gaza.

The Biden administration and the forced support for Israel have been duly noted, recognizing that global public opinion does not align with them. Western governments are under tremendous pressure to rethink their support for Israeli aggression. The ongoing presidential election campaign in the United States has begun, and President Biden will have to confront the public. At that time, Biden will have to face not resistance but opposition.

I believe that the Democratic Party will keep Biden away from future presidential elections as per the demand of democracy. The requirement of democracy is that an unpopular person should not be brought into the field. If the support for Israel continues, it will become a reason to end an ancient tradition of American politics.



Hamas' armed wing, the Qassam Brigades, enters the Israeli side of the fence in Gaza on October 7, 2023.  
● HANI ALSHAER/AFP

## Fury, Usyk separated during face-off in London



● REUTERS

BBC – Tyson Fury launched a tirade of abuse towards Oleksandr Usyk and pushed his head into the Ukrainian at their face-off before the two were separated by security in London.

Briton Fury, 35, takes on Ukraine's Usyk in Riyadh on 17 February – the winner will be crowned the first undisputed heavyweight champion in the four-belt era.

Usyk, 36, is the WBA, WBO and IBF champion with Fury holding the WBC belt. "You are all dossers. He's going to get knocked out. And you two are going to work for me slinging my bags," Fury told Usyk and his promoter, Alexander Krassyuk and manager, Egis Klimas.

A composed Usyk remained undeterred and reluctant to engage in a war of words. "Enough? My friend. Have you stopped? Enough? Have you stopped talking?" he asked.

Fury boasts an undefeated record of 34 wins and one draw but is coming off October's unexpectedly close fight against Francis Ngannou.

French-Cameroonian Ngannou, a former UFC champion, was making his boxing debut. Fury edged a split-decision points victory in the non-title bout, although many ringside observers felt Ngannou should have been awarded a shock victory.

But any suggestion the below-par Ngannou performance would humble the champion were quashed when a dancing Fury strutted to the stage on Thursday evening with a swagger.

It took Fury mere minutes to lay into Usyk, interrupting Krassyuk's opening statement.

"You're getting smashed to pieces. Sausage. You're fighting the best British heavyweight there's ever been," he shouted, adding a number of expletives.

Ever unpredictable, Fury then began to compliment the undefeated Usyk's boxing skills and achievements, but the praise was short lived.

Usyk – who has won all 21 pro bouts – defended his titles against Londoner Daniel Dubois in August. He was dropped in the fight by a punch which the referee declared a low blow.

"I think he got hit in the body and he didn't want to get up for five minutes," Fury said. "Crying to the referee. That's what he did."

Usyk replied: "I absolutely don't care what Tyson thinks of that."

Fury looked to provoke his opponent by forcefully driving his head into Usyk, who held his ground before security intervened.

# Iran routs Hong Kong for comfortable start in World Cup qualifiers

Sports Desk

Sardar Azmoun bagged a brace as Iran began its quest for a spot in the 2026 World Cup with an easy 4-0 win against Hong Kong, China at Tehran's Azadi Stadium in the second-round Group E of the Asian qualifiers.

Roma striker scored twice in similar fashion, side-footing from close range, in the space of three minutes to give Amir Qalenoeei's men a two-goal cushion inside 15 minutes.

Porto forward Mahdi Taremi added the third with three minutes left on the clock before Ramin Rezaeian's curling free-kick rounded off the victory in the stoppage time.

"We had a flying start and netted two early goals, but we took our foot off the gas after that. It's hard to play against the teams with multi layers of defense, although I believe we created enough chances for more goals. Our players were so unselfish today, which was the positive aspect of our game," Qalenoeei said after the game.

Iran's starting XI on Thursday will more or less be the one to begin the game against Palestine in the AFC Asian Cup opener in January. Qalenoeei has been criticized in recent days for making minimum changes to the squad that was the oldest under his predecessor Carlos Queiroz in last year's World Cup.

While Sepahan prodigy Mohammad-Javad Hosseinnejad has been the only significant young talent to make his international debut since Qalenoeei was appointed to job earlier in the year, Karim Ansarifard and Omid Ebrahimi, who are both well past the peak of their careers, received a call-up for the double header in the qualifiers.

"It is a gradual process," Qalenoeei said of bringing in new players,



Iranian players celebrate a goal during a 4-0 victory over Hong Kong, China in the World Cup Asian qualifiers at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on November 16, 2023. ● SOHEIL SAADATMANDI/FPFIRI

while praising the likes of AEK Athens fullback Ehsan Hajsafi, 33, for his contribution to the national team.

"We have a full assessment of all of our assets. Ehsan, for instance, was one of the best players on the pitch today. He can surely help the team as he is still capable of keeping up with the pace at the European club football," the Iranian head coach said.

"We have at least two good players in every position. There are three to four decent midfielders in the squad, some of whom were not even on the bench today but still

deserve to be in the starting eleven."

Ahmad Nourollahi was not in the 23-man squad and was ousted from the Iranian camp later on Thursday for what was described as "unprofessional behavior" by the Al Wahda midfielder. Meanwhile, Alireza Jahanbakhsh was among the senior Iranian players in action against Hong Kong but was replaced by Reza Asadi in the second half after suffering an injury.

"I am a bit worried. It seems to be a minor injury but I'll have to wait for the MRI result. I hope it's not

serious as we have another game [against Uzbekistan] and then there is the Champions League on my return to the club duty," said the Feyenoord winger. Iran will play away to Uzbekistan in the group on Tuesday, in what will be the Asian powerhouse's final outing before the Asian Cup in Qatar.

When asked about the high average of the Iranian players' age, Jahanbakhsh said: "This team will have to get results in the Asian Cup and I believe the experience of the senior players playing alongside each other for years will surely be

a great help in the tournament." "Winning the ultimate prize in the Asian Cup is the prime target for every one of us. We were unlucky in the last-four defeat against Japan in the previous edition, but we will give it our best shot this time around as the path to the final showdown seems to be an easy one for us," added Jahanbakhsh.

Chasing a first trophy in the Asian flagship international tournament since 1976, three-time champion Iran is drawn against Palestine, the United Arab Emirates, and Hong Kong.

## Colombia fight back to shock Brazil, Uruguay beat Messi's Argentina

Colombia's Luis Diaz (R) is in action against Brazilian Raphinha in World Cup South American qualifier in Barranquilla, Colombia, on November 16, 2023. ● LUISA GONZALEZ/REUTERS



REUTERS – Brazil lost their second consecutive World Cup qualifier match as Colombia fought back to win 2-1 against the five-times champions, who dropped to fifth place in the South American standings on Thursday.

It was a cathartic evening for Liverpool forward Luis Diaz, who scored twice within four minutes late in the second-half to give his country the shock win just days after Colombian guerrillas freed his kidnapped father. Brazil started well and dominated early proceedings, taking the lead in the fourth minute through a strike by Gabriel Martinelli, assisted by Vinicius Jr.'s fine first touch pass.

The jet-heeled Real Madrid winger was forced out due to a thigh injury halfway through the first-half after which the home side slowly took control, roared on by the crowd at the sold-out Metropolitan stadium in Barranquilla.

Luis Diaz alone created 10 attempts on target for Colombia, but was denied the equaliser by a string of fine saves from his Liverpool team mate Alisson, before defensive mistakes helped him net two headers in the 75th and 79th minutes.

Diaz burst into tears as he dedicated the win to his father who was celebrating emotionally in the stands.

Winless in the last three games, Brazil will be under heavy pressure as they are set to host long-time rivals Argentina at the iconic Maracana in Rio de Janeiro on Tuesday.

**Argentina outclassed**  
Argentina will also be looking to

bounce back after dropping their first points in five games in the South America World Cup Qualifiers, losing 2-0 at home to Uruguay on Thursday but keeping their place at the top of the standings.

Goals in each half from Ronald Araujo and Darwin Nunez gave Uruguay victory over Lionel Messi's Argentina in a nervy affair at the World Cup champions' Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires.

The visitors were the better side from start to finish and the win put them second in the standings on 10 points, two behind Argentina.

Araujo scored in the 41st minute with a first time strike from inside the box that was just beyond goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, and Nunez secured the points with a tidy finish in a counter-attack in the 87th.

"They are a strong and physical team and played with more intensity. We struggled mightily to find ourselves and our game," Messi told TyC Sports. "We never felt comfortable, didn't find a way to end up with the ball or the control of the actions, were not able to have long possessions, didn't create chances and played the game that they wanted, in their rhythm. They are a physical team that bring a lot of danger in the counter-attacks and they showed that with the goals they scored."

Colombia are third on nine points, one ahead of Venezuela who were held to a goalless draw at home by sixth-placed Ecuador, who are one point behind Brazil, who are fifth on seven points.

# Flying with Paper Wings

## On the importance of reading for children

**By Ali Amiri**  
Staff writer

These days, in our digital age, it's almost impossible not to come across people on social media – or even in real life – who insist on their irrational, unsympathetic beliefs, totally ignoring the need for a common ground in order to achieve mutual understanding. These individuals generate false dichotomies or are rather stuck in them, failing to see the nuances in every debate. When encountering such individuals with whom you can't have a fruitful conversation, there is a tendency to blame the educational institutions they attended. How-

ever, that is only partially the case. Higher education institutions may not only indoctrinate their students and fail to provide them with the critical skills needed to properly examine ideas and situations. What instills such skills in people is the book: our "quietest and most constant of friends," as Charles William Eliot puts it. For anyone invested in their country's growth and development, the presence of a thriving book market can reflect certain aspects of its development. A market like this indicates high literacy rates, a flourishing publishing industry, intellectual and cultural development, access to information, and freedom of expression. However, for us Iranians who

are concerned about the future of our country, looking past its crisis-stricken book market is no easy task. High book prices and low circulation numbers are indicators of deep stagnation in this sector, with many regular book readers turning away. Many publishers do not reprint their valuable books and survive solely on their best-sellers, which, more often than not, are poor translations of best-sellers in English speaking countries. Against this backdrop, which we must look past – because even in the darkest of times, there is hope – people like Esmail Azarnejad and Shermin Naderi are just two examples of torchbearers in our country, bringing books to children in underprivileged areas of two provinces: Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad and Sistan and Baluchestan. Not only should we not overlook their endeavors to build libraries and get children hooked on books,

but we should also laud their doings as the correct path towards sustainable growth. Without books, children are left with nothing to help their cognitive evolution. They cannot develop their mental faculties, and they are devoid of the chance to become social creatures with the powers of empathy and deduction. It goes without saying that reading books plays a crucial role in fulfilling the higher social needs of children, as highlighted by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Since storybooks often depict relatable characters, emotions, and relationships, they allow children to develop empathy and connect with others and, therefore, reading them promotes a sense of belonging and love among children. Through literature, children can explore diverse cultures, experiences, and perspectives, implanting them a sense of inclusion and understanding – something that would later on prevent them from being mindless trolls on social media. Moreover, when children read stories featuring characters that overcome challenges or achieve personal growth, they can identify with these characters and feel inspired to overcome their own obstacles. This, in turn, contributes to children's self-esteem. Exposure to a wide range of literature also enables children to develop their knowledge, vocabulary, and communication skills, which can boost their confidence and self-worth. Books can be faithful companions of children in their journey towards self-actualization. They nurture their intellectual curiosi-

ty, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Books provide a gateway to new ideas, imagination, and self-expression. Through literature, children can explore their interests, discover their passions, and develop a love for lifelong learning. As the beloved Dr. Seuss once put it, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Reading books also facilitates the development of vital social skills in children. When children engage with stories, they encounter various social situations, conflicts, and resolutions. These revelations help them understand different perspectives, enhance their emotional intelligence, and develop problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, reading can encourage children to engage in discussions, share their thoughts, and learn how to communicate effectively with others. If we take Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs to be true, books belong at the top of the pyramid and are great tools at our disposal for self-actualization. Without books, our lives would be empty, and we would have missed countless opportunities to imagine ourselves as other people and experience life through their eyes. So, all in all, what we must remember is that although things may seem upsetting at the moment, thanks to the efforts of those good people who bring books to children, in time new generations of readers and writers will emerge. An intellectual vigor will once again prevail, shaping the social climate of our beloved country.



### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Historical object unearthed at Sa'dabad



**ISNA** – A stone object resembling an ornamental water fountain with an unknown historical period was discovered at Tehran's Sa'dabad Cultural-Historical Complex.

The organizers of the complex announced that "on November 14, a number of employees, during their routine duties in one of the areas of the complex, noticed part of a stone artifact".

In the presence of all responsible personnel, the discovered historical artifact was carefully excavated and transferred to a secure area within the complex.

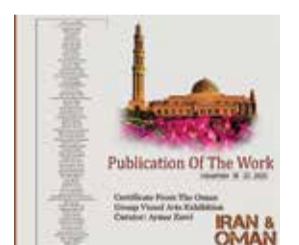
Experts at the Sa'dabad complex speculate that this newly discovered object, nearly one meter in height, may be specifically designed as a decorative water fountain.

However, further research is needed to recognize its historical use, as it has never been used and has been relocated to one of the side areas of the complex.

In the first phase, experts are carrying out laboratory studies on the stone material and examining the engraved patterns on the artifact.

A representative of Sa'dabad complex stated that the research will continue and additional updates will be announced.

#### Iran, Oman to hold visual art exhibition



**MEHR** – Iran and Oman will hold a joint online visual art exhibition titled 'Publication of the Work'. The exhibition, featuring artworks in seven different fields including painting, photography, calligraphy, digital art, sculpture, calligram, and tazhib (illumination), is scheduled to take place from November 18 to 25.

Organized by Aytist Art Group and Alrehyhan Institute of Oman, the exhibition will be curated by Aynaz Zarei.

Iranian artists such as Shirin Madani, Hossein Hakim, Sharzad Fazel, and Ali Fallah will be showcasing their works in this collaborative event.

## Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's London show 'effectively cancelled' over supporting Palestinians

Chinese dissident and artist Ai Weiwei said his new exhibition at the Lisson Gallery in London has been cancelled after he posted comments on social media referencing the Israel Hamas war.

The show had been expected to open on Wednesday, November 15, Euronews reported.

The Chinese contemporary artist is well known for his political commentary and activism on human rights issues. He has been vocal in his support for the Palestinians.

In a since-deleted tweet, Ai reportedly wrote: "The sense of guilt around the persecution of the Jewish people has been, at times, transferred to offset the Arab world. Financially, culturally, and in terms of media influence, the Jewish community has had a significant presence in the United States."

The tweet continued: "The an-

nual \$3bn aid package to Israel has, for decades, been touted as one of the most valuable investments the United States has ever made. This partnership is often described as one of shared destiny."

In the wake of the tweet, a Lisson representative said the exhibition would not go on as planned.

"After extensive conversations with Ai Weiwei, following a comment he posted online, we together agreed that now is not the right time to present his new body of work," a gallery statement reads.

"There is no place for debate that can be characterized as anti-Semitic or Islamophobic at a time when all efforts should be on ending the tragic suffering in Israeli and Palestinian territories, as well as in communities internationally. Ai Weiwei is well-known for his support of

freedom of expression and for championing the oppressed, and we deeply respect and value our longstanding relationship with him."

In a statement of his own, Ai said that the show had been "effectively cancelled" by the gallery.

"In my opinion, all kinds of opinions can be expressed, even when they are not correct," he wrote. "Incorrect opinions should be especially encouraged. If free expression is limited to the same kind of opinions, it becomes an imprisonment of expression. Freedom of speech is about different voices, voices different from ours. Simply put, we have never lived in a society with freedom of expression but rather in a society where speech is not cherished; an individual's speech is not deemed important or acceptable by controllers of speech."



He continued: "The cancellation of an exhibition is not important at all because thousands and tens of thousands of exhibitions are still going on. Whether I exist or not is also not important because there would always be someone who wants to look for light and the joy that light brings to life, as people do not

like darkness." Ai has previously addressed the conflict in his 2017 documentary 'Human Flow, about the global refugee crisis, which featured footage shot in Gaza.' A representative for the artist said a further three exhibitions, in New York, Paris and Berlin, had also been called off.

## "Iran Project" exhibition opens in Ashgabat

A specialized exhibition of the achievements of Iranian companies, called "Iran Project," opened in Turkmenistan's capital on Friday.

The opening ceremony of the event was attended by Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rasit Meredow, IRNA reported.

A total of 300 Iranian companies and businesses have attended the event where they have put their latest achievements on display. The exhibition is aimed to give a boost to Iran's exports, especially the exports of techno-engineering services, to Turkmenistan.

Meanwhile, Arash Kordi, the managing director of Iran Power Generation, Distribution and Transmission Company (Tavanir), told IRNA on Friday that Iran and Turkmenistan are scheduled to sign an agreement, which will allow Iran to receive more electricity from the northern neighbor, an official said.

"The agreement will be signed on Saturday during an Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Cooperation Commission."

He said that the agreement would require Turkmenistan to complete the electricity transfer project on its soil. Kordi added that Iran has already completed its own share of the project.

Noting that Iran's biggest share of electricity imports comes from Turkmenistan, the Iranian official said that some 350-400 MW of electricity is imported from the Central Asian country.

## NPC says \$4.2b will be invested in self-sufficiency projects

Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) managing director on Thursday said \$4.2 billion will be invested in domestic projects to attain self-sufficiency and complete the industry's value chain.

Morteza Shahmirzaei added, "In addition to identifying opportunities and offering projects for investment, NPC has conducted a thorough study on the petrochemical industry's value chain, launching 20 project packages for producing propylene, methanol, ethylene, aromatics, and butylene, Shana reported.

He put the projects' annual nominal capacity and production value at 3.8 million tons and \$4.4 billion.

Based on their access to necessary feedstock, domestic holdings have been informed of the projects, said Shahmirzaei, concluding some holdings have received permits for making investment in the projects.

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Address: 208, Khorramshahr Avenue, Tehran, Iran

● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 84711171  
● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 84711445  
● ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5  
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# Ground is paved for safe foreign investment in Iran: MP

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadi  
Staff writers

The ground is paved for safe investment with the guarantee of capital and profit in Iran for foreign investors, announced a member of Civil Committee of the Iranian Parliament.

Pointing to the offered facilitation for Iranians living abroad to invest in Iran, Eqbal Shakeri told Iran Daily that President Ebrahim Raisi has ordered making preparations for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country.

The role of foreign investment in improving the economy of countries cannot be denied, as the benefits of this issue are visible in categories such as economic growth, job creation, technology transfer, increasing competitiveness, improving financial and human resources.

Attraction of the capital of Iranians living abroad and using their scientific and technical potentials could be considered as one of the examples of attracting FDI, which can accelerate economic growth and improve the GDP of the country.

As experience has shown, there is a desire and tendency to serve and provide technology and investment



in Iran among Iranians who live abroad, and they are strongly interested in the progress of Iran.

As the only thing that the officials should do is to set the scene for the quick entry of foreign investment into the country so that foreign investors are encouraged to continue their activities in Iran.

The first step to encouraging foreign investments of Iranians who live abroad for participation in various fields in Iran is to clear the way for their communication with the Iranian

bodies, along with having access to their databases, in order to have complete statistics, the MP said.

Referring to the duties of the High Council of Iranian Affairs Abroad, Shakeri noted that 10 specialized working groups have been formed by the council, each group being responsible for laying the foundations for the needs of Iranians abroad by providing operational plans.

He pointed to the necessity of a comprehensive database which should be established for Iranians

abroad so that, through it, they can get the required information about how to invest in Iran.

One of the problems for Iranians who live abroad is that, for example, a person who had a legal problem to enter the country does not know if that problem has been completely resolved or not, the lawmaker said.

"Recently, Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, the chief of Iran's judiciary announced that a system will be established in the judiciary, where Iranians living abroad can inquire about

their situation." Referring to Iran's capacity to attract FDI, he said, "We have a large number of skilled workforce and huge resources in the country, which are attractive for any investor."

Finally, there is no need for us to try to bring the power and capital of Iranians abroad into the country, because we can use their potentials remotely as they can cooperate with us from their country of residence, while using their capacities, the MP concluded.

## Tehran, Baghdad stress bolstering bilateral ties in energy sector



Iran's oil minister and Iraq's electricity minister emphasized the need for enhancing bilateral ties in the field of energy.

Iraq's visiting Minister of Energy Ziad Ali Fazel held talks with Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji in Tehran, stressing the need to strengthen mutual cooperation in the field of energy, especially the export of gas

from Iran to Iraq, Tasnim news agency reported.

The two sides discussed a host of issues including the development of bilateral ties in the fields of gas and oil byproducts, joint investment and export of technical and engineering services from Iran to Iraq, as well as the implementation of common projects.

Iraq's Deputy Minister of Electricity Adil Karim accompanied the Iraqi minister of electricity on his visit to Tehran to participate in the inaugural ceremony of the 23rd edition of the Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE).

The exhibition was inaugurated on November 14 and wrapped up on Friday. Owji met with Iraqi Prime

Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani in Baghdad in April to discuss the development of bilateral cooperation in the field of energy.

During that visit to Baghdad, Iranian and Iraqi oil ministers inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the development of oil, gas and petrochemical projects.

## Iran keen to increase its trade with Turkey: Official

The chairman of the Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce announced proposals for boosting the level of trade and economic relations between the two countries.

The level of trade and economic ties with Europe can be promoted using the transit routes and taking advantage of the trade capacities of neighboring Turkey, Mehrdad Sa'adat noted.

Talking to IRNA, he pointed to the upcoming visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Turkey and emphasized that the joint

commission has prepared suggestions for promoting the volume of trade and increasing the level of mutual ties with this country that will be raised during this visit.

It is hoped that the two countries will further expand their bilateral trade, Sa'adat said.

He also pointed to the pursuit of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries, and added that the growth of technology and modern trade methods in the world will not provide facilities for

Iran within the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), but free trade can enhance trade relations between the two countries to a great extent.

The private sector is seriously following up the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), he said, adding that the two countries enjoy high potentials and capabilities that can boost their trade and economic activities.

Sa'adat expressed hope that the level of trade and economic activities between Iran and Turkey will be fur-

ther expanded with the support of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (IC-

CIMA) and the government. Raisi will visit Turkey next month to discuss bilateral ties.

