



Hamas Wins Major Victory

Europeans distancing themselves from Israel

Palestinian prisoners cheer after being released from the Israeli Ofer military facility in Baytunia near the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank in exchange for captives freed by Hamas in Gaza, on November 24, 2023. ● AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP

Kashan: A world craft city driving economic growth and artistry



Persepolis looking to resurge at Al Nassr; Sepahan facing Air Force test



In praise of Generation Z



Start-ups showcasing achievements in Iran Metafo 2023

The 20th edition of Iran's international metallurgy exhibition entitled "Iran Metafo 2023" was inaugurated in Tehran on Friday. The four-day expo covers a wide range of products and services related to the metallurgy industry, with a focus on iron and steel products, mining industries, non-ferrous metals, copper, aluminum, zinc, casting, molding, machining, forging, refractories, and heat treatment.



Iranian director keen on making films on drug addiction

Iranian film director-cum-screenwriter, Manouchehr Hadi, declared drug addiction as an interesting subject in cinematic production. Hadi expressed his interest in making films with drug addiction themes, which are not only compelling but also educational and influential.



EXCLUSIVE

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IKIA to become air transportation hub in Mideast



Economy Desk

Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA) will turn into a new air transportation hub in the Middle East, the chief executive of Chinese Hakan Company said.

Emphasizing that China's cooperation with Iran is "unshakable and unwavering," Hui Ka Yan stated that the development project of IKIA, in cooperation with the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, will become a role model for the development of the Silk Road, reported Tasnim news agency.

Speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony of the construction operation of the second phase of IKIA, he pointed to the amicable ties between Iran and China, and added that Chinese President Xi Jinping, during the visit of the Iranian president to China, emphasized that relations between the two countries are strategic, and he will make his utmost effort to expand the friendly relations in all areas.

The development of the airport is a turning point in cooperation between Iran and China, within the framework of a 25-Year Strategic Partnership Agreement, he said.

Speaking at the ceremony, Iranian Roads and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash invited all airlines to join the second phase of the IKIA development project, which needs an investment of over €2.5 billion.

He emphasized that with the completion of the second phase of the project, its capacity will reach 50 million passengers per year.

The minister pointed to the development of the international airport as the biggest development project since the Islamic Revolution of Iran (1979), and said the first phase of the development project of IKIA will be completed by March 20, 2025.

"This project is also included in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), and we will see that the corridor will contribute to the increase of the national income of Iran as much as oil sales," Bazrpash concluded.

Start-ups showcasing achievements in Iran Metafo 2023



By Mahdieh Qazvinian & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

The 20th edition of Iran's international metallurgy exhibition entitled "Iran Metafo 2023" was inaugurated in Tehran on Friday.

The four-day expo covers a wide range of products and services related to the metallurgy industry, with a focus on iron and steel products, mining industries, non-ferrous metals, copper, aluminum, zinc, casting, molding, machining, forging, refractories, and heat treatment.

The exhibition is the biggest event of its kind in the Middle East and its aim is to connect Iranian businesses with their foreign counterparts, introduce them to providers of raw materials, and present opportunities for attracting investors and signing cooperation agreements.

A total of 639 domestic and foreign companies from 22 countries, namely, Germany, China, Italy, Japan, Turkey, Spain, UK, France, Hong Kong, Switzerland, India, Russia, Taiwan, South Korea, Czech Republic, UAE, Slovenia, South Africa, Malaysia, Austria, US, and Sweden have participated in Iran Metafo 2023.

More participants

The number of participants in this year's exhibition has increased by 30 percent compared to last year, said the event's organizer Abdolkarim Jalali.

He added that the main groups participating at the exhibition are related to iron and steel, whose presence is impressive as in previous years.

The event provides an opportunity for companies to showcase their products

and services, network with potential customers and partners, and learn about the latest trends in the metallurgy industry.

As one of the largest private producers of steel sections of Iran, Tabriz Nab Steel Company is capable of meeting other companies' needs with its products including steel profile and iron beam.

Generating forex

Talking to Iran Daily, Mehrdad Vahabzadeh, quality control manager of the company added that his company and other Iranian steel companies play a significant role in generating forex for Iran.

Most of our exports are destined to Iraq, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia, he noted.

Saying that the main challenges for steel industry is energy supply, Vahabzadeh said, "During the first six months of the [Iranian] year, we have a problem with providing electricity, as

in the second six months of the year, a problem with gas supply is the greatest challenge for us."

The company updates its infrastructure every four years to improve the quality of its products, which is also welcomed by domestic and foreign clients, he added.

"Two weeks ago, we attended a steel exhibition in Erbil, Iraq, which is not comparable to Tehran's 'Iran Metafo 2023', mainly in terms of foreign visitors who are mostly from Turkey and Syria," said Vahabzadeh.

Modern technologies

The participation of start-ups and new technology-based firms in the exhibition is eye-catching, said Gholamreza Sarvi, the managing director of Azar Nabsh Tabriz Company.

Launched in 2008, the company enjoys an annual production capacity of preheat furnaces, hot-rolling stands, cooling beds, annealing and packaging products, he noted, adding that Georgia, Iraq and Turkey are the main importers of L-shaped steel profiles of the company.

"We must renovate our kilns by using modern technology so the labor force will be more comfortable, as we will have products with higher qualities."

"The company has used filters that have the highest efficiency in order to move towards a green industry and environmental considerations on reducing emissions," Sarvi said.

He also pointed to the presence of visitors from the Chinese company whose aim is to sell their machines to Iranian steel factories, as they see the technical knowledge of Iranian engineers as much higher than other

countries.

Also, Navid Javid, project manager of Azar Foulad Amin Company, told Iran Daily that the presence of more NTBFs in Iran Metafo 2023 is very favorable as they introduce new ideas to Iran's steel industry.

Pointing to modern technology developed by his company, he said, "We have the largest and most up-to-date induction furnaces in Iran which, compared to other steel furnaces in Iran, have a higher capacity, higher production power, and less electricity consumption, as well as having high-level security systems."

In order to have a greater forex income, it's inevitable to work more on processing raw materials to have products with more added value as our final products in this industry in Iran, Javid noted.

Our company's forex generation at a recent exhibition held in Iraq was very impressive, he said, explaining that the low cost of transportation and access to the transit road has become an advantage for us in the neighboring country.



Towards green industry

In order to progress on the way to a green industry, the company has reduced water consumption by changing the technology of cooling in furnaces to air coolers, a system that does not consume water at all, as it uses air to cool the foundry machin-

eries and furnaces.

The project had a cost of \$1 million, Javid said, adding that our company decreased water consumption from 25 liters per second to 5 liters per second by developing the technology.



Kashan: A world craft city driving economic growth and artistry

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Iranica Desk

The city of Kashan, located in the central plateau of Iran, has been honored with the prestigious title of the second world craft city of Isfahan Province, following the renowned city of Isfahan. This recognition not only brings immense pride to the locals but also presents a remarkable opportunity for the sustainable development of handicrafts and traditional arts in this historic land. Hamidreza Mohaqeqian, the director general of the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and

Handicrafts Organization, highlighted the cultural and artistic prominence of Isfahan Province. Presently, more than one-third of the world's recognized handicrafts are produced in this province, with over 68,000 artists working alongside 130,000 others who are indirectly active in the sector.

In 2016, Isfahan achieved two international titles. Firstly, it was chosen as the Second World Craft City by the World Crafts Council, surpassing numerous contenders due to its diverse range of handicrafts and the presence of nearly 100,000 tal-

ented artists. Subsequently, Isfahan was designated as the Creative City of Crafts by UNESCO, further cementing its reputation as an artistic hub.

Building upon this momentum, various cities within Isfahan Province have also attained recognition for their craftsmanship. Shahreza, located on the historical and tourist axis of the province's southern region, emerged as the National Craft City for Ceramics; Mehrgerd, a village in the suburbs of Semirum, which boasts over 400 native craftspeople, was designated as the National Handi-

craft Village. Additionally, Golpayegan was acknowledged as the National City of Wood Carving; and, finally, Kashan, with its rich historical background and pivotal role in the cultural and civilizational development of Iran, has been chosen as the World City of Traditional Textile. The invaluable contribution of artists of this city in shaping the country's art and culture cannot be underestimated. With a history spanning nearly 7,000 years, and its significant contributions in pre- and post-Islamic eras, Kashan has long been destined to receive this prestigious

recognition.

The city's claim to fame lies in its pioneering efforts in traditional textile art, boasting workshops with nearly 200 years of history. Furthermore, the dedication of modern-day artists and handicraft suppliers to carry on the legacy of their predecessors has solidified Kashan's nomination as a world craft city for traditional textile art.

After almost two years of meticulous planning and preparation, a 10-member delegation from the World Council of Handicrafts visited Kashan in February. They explored the city's various

handicraft workshops and markets before ultimately choosing Kashan as the World City of Traditional Textile.

As a result, a magnificent official ceremony was recently held to celebrate the world registration of Kashan as a distinguished city preserving and promoting the art of traditional textiles. This acknowledgment will undoubtedly play a crucial role in elevating Kashan's global standing, attracting artisans, enthusiasts, and tourists from all corners of the world, and fostering the continued growth and appreciation of traditional textile art.

Honarmandan Park of Tehran serving as a magnet for art and culture enthusiasts

Iranica Desk

In the heart of Tehran, Honarmandan Park not only serves as a beautiful green space but also stands as a vibrant center for art and culture. With its rich history and diverse offerings, this park has become a magnet for art enthusiasts seeking a blend of modern artistic expressions and peaceful surroundings. Originally dating back to the Qajar Dynasty, Honarmandan Park

was transformed into an artistic and cultural complex under the architectural guidance of a German architect. Serving as a weapons warehouse during World War II, several non-Persian style buildings were constructed to strategically protect the essentials. However, prior to this period, it was home to a garden and a mansion belonging to one of the Qajar princes.

One of the key highlights within Honarmandan Park is the

Iranian Artists' Forum. This significant cultural and artistic location encompasses visual arts galleries, theaters, cinemas, handicraft shops, art and design shows, as well as national and international events. With numerous galleries surrounding this part of Tehran, visitors are spoiled for choice with creative displays and exhibitions.

The Iranian Artists' Forum serves as a hub for various artistic endeavors, focusing on theater

performances, film screenings, paintings, sculptures, photography exhibits, music concerts, and educational lectures.

Additionally, Tamashakhaneh of Iranshahr, one of Tehran's most famous performance halls, is nestled within this park, offering captivating theatrical experiences.

Beyond embracing the world of art, Honarmandan Park caters to visitors of all interests. The park boasts facilities such as

libraries, coffee shops, restaurants, football fields, and basketball courts. Sports enthusiasts can engage in friendly matches or simply enjoy outdoor activities available in the resort-like setting.

With its regular lineup of music concerts, exhibitions, and movie screenings, Honarmandan Park has become a beloved destination among art lovers. Visitors can immerse themselves in the vibrant atmosphere, interact

with Iranian artists, and savor the delights of Persian tea while exploring the park's unique offerings.

Whether you are an art aficionado seeking creative inspiration, or simply looking for a serene place to unwind, Honarmandan Park presents an ideal haven in Tehran. Its fusion of artistic expression, cultural heritage, and recreational facilities makes it a must-visit destination for locals and tourists alike.



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Hamas delays release of captives over Gaza aid

International Desk

Hamas delayed release of the Israeli captives on Saturday, the second day of the four-day cease-fire until Israel lets aid into northern Gaza.

Earlier the day, Egyptian officials had said that Hamas was to release 14 Israelis for 42 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel as part of an exchange on the second day of a cease-fire that has allowed critical humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip.

The armed wing of Hamas said it had decided to delay Saturday's scheduled second round of captive releases until Israel committed to allowing aid trucks to enter northern Gaza. Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades said the captive releases would be delayed if Israel did not adhere to the agreed terms for the release of Palestinian prisoners.

There was no immediate Israeli response to the statement. On the first day of the four-day cease-fire, which has given Gaza civilians their first respite after seven weeks of war, Hamas released 24 of the approximately 240 prisoners taken during its October 7 attack on Israel, and Israel freed 39 Palestinians from prison. Those Hamas freed from captivity in Gaza were 13 Israelis, 10 Thais, and a Filipino.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed on Saturday his country's mediation for the release of the 10 Thai prisoners following the request of Thai authorities from Tehran.

On Saturday, Hamas provided mediators Egypt and Qatar with a list of 14 captives to be released, and the list was passed along to Israel, according to an Egyptian official. A second Egyptian official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the details.

Under the truce agreement, Hamas will release one Israeli for every three prisoners freed. It was not immediately clear how many non-Israeli captives may also be released.

Overall, Hamas is to release at least 50 Israelis, and Israel will reciprocate by freeing 150 Palestinian prisoners during the four-day truce, all women and minors.

Israel has said the truce can be extended an extra day for every additional 10 prisoners freed — something United States President Joe Biden said he hoped would come to pass.



AFP

'Huge victory'

John Bolton, the former US national security advisor, called the truce "a huge victory" for Hamas fighters over Israel, arguing that Hamas wants to turn the four-day pause into a permanent cease-fire by attempting to "break the morale" or the resolve of the Israeli military — thus giving its fighters an advantage over Israel.

He said the prisoner exchange deal has costs as well as benefits, and it's the Hamas fighters who stand to gain most. Separately, a Qatari delegation arrived in Israel on Saturday to coordinate with parties on the ground and "ensure the deal continues to move smoothly," according to a diplomat briefed on the visit.

The start of the truce Friday morning brought the first quiet for 2.3 million Palestinians reeling and desperate from relentless Israeli bombardment that has killed more than 14,800, driven three-quarters of the population from their homes, and leveled residential areas. Rocket fire from Gaza fighters into Israel went silent as well.

Focus on criminals' trial

Iran's top human rights official said criminal Israeli authorities must be brought to trial for their atrocities against the Palestinian nation, stressing that the Islamic Republic is seriously following up on the matter.

In an interview with the Alalam television news network, Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, said, "Criminal officials of the Israeli regime must be tried. The Islamic Republic of Iran has placed particular focus on the issue, and Iranian lawyers and jurists have, for this reason, had interactions with their counterparts in other countries to follow up on the case. The matter is also being pursued by judicial authorities of other Muslim states."

The top Iranian rights official went on to sharply criticize certain Muslim countries for their

refusal to cut off diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv and expel Israeli ambassadors, boycott products linked to Israel, and impose an embargo on all oil and energy exports to the Israeli-occupied Palestinian lands.

Pro-Palestinian protesters

Meanwhile, on Saturday, thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in London in the latest of a series of protests calling for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza.

The Met Police had warned those who gathered at Park Lane for the march to Whitehall that they would not tolerate any behavior supporting what they called "terrorism".

Within minutes of the marchers gathering, one man was arrested on suspicion of inciting racial hatred after officers spotted him carrying a placard with Nazi symbols on it.

Around 1,500 officers were being deployed for the protest. Officers along the route handed out leaflets to provide "absolute clarity" on what was deemed an offense.

Ade Adelekan, the deputy assistant commissioner of operations at the Metropolitan Police Service, said: "This sets out that anyone who is racist or incites hatred against any group should expect to be arrested, as should anyone who supports Hamas or any other banned organization."

The force had come under severe pressure from politicians over the decision to allow that march to go ahead, with Suelia Braverman, the former UK home secretary, accusing it of showing bias in favor of left-wing protesters.

The Stop the War Coalition, which organized the protest, rejected the label of "hate march" deployed by Braverman before she was sacked by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Israeli-owned ship targeted

A suspected drone attack hit a container ship owned by an Israeli businessman in the Indian

Ocean, according to a United States defense official.

The container ship owned by an Israeli billionaire came under attack in the Indian Ocean, an American defense official said Saturday.

The Friday attack on the CMA CGM SYMI came as global shipping increasingly finds itself targeted in the weeklong war that threatens to become a wider regional conflict.

The defense official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said the Malta-flagged vessel was suspected to have been targeted by a triangle-shaped, bomb-carrying drone while in international waters. The drone exploded, causing damage to the ship but not injuring any of its crew.

"We continue to monitor the situation closely," the official said. Al-Mayadeen, a pan-Arab satellite channel that is politically allied with the Lebanese resistance group Hezbollah, also reported that an Israeli ship had been targeted in the Indian Ocean. The channel cited anonymous sources for the report.

CMA CGM, a major shipper based in Marseille, France, referred questions to SYMI's owner, Singapore-based Eastern Pacific Shipping. That company is ultimately controlled by Israeli billionaire Idan Ofer.

A statement issued on behalf of Eastern Pacific acknowledged the company is "aware of claims that a container ship under the company's management was targeted in a possible security incident overnight on Friday."

"The vessel in question is currently sailing as planned," the statement said. "All crew members are safe and well."

The company, through representatives, declined to answer any questions. The Israeli military referred questions to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which did not respond, either.

AP, Reuters, The Telegraph, Al Jazeera, Press TV, and IRNA contributed to this report.



Palestinians leaving the north walk through the Salaheddine road in the Zeitoun district on the southern outskirts of Gaza City on November 25, 2023, on the second day of a truce between Israel and Hamas.

MAHMUD HAMS/AFP

'Criminal Israeli authorities must be brought to trial for their atrocities against the Palestinian nation.'

John Bolton calls the truce "a huge victory" for Hamas fighters over Israel.

European countries gradually distancing themselves from Israel

International Desk

Israel has become locked in a diplomatic dispute with Spain and Belgium after the two European countries denounced the regime's crimes in the Gaza Strip and called for the recognition of the Palestinian state.

The Israeli and Spanish foreign ministers exchanged harsh words and summoned each other's ambassadors for reprimands as the dispute spiraled on Friday while Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and his Belgian counterpart Alexander De Croo continued a visit to the Middle East. Speaking in Al-Quds alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, Sánchez had said the number of civilians killed by Israeli attacks on Gaza was "unbearable".

And on Friday, on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing into Gaza, Spain's leader said Israel was not acting within the limits of humanitarian law. "The indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians, including thousands of boys and girls, [is] completely unacceptable," he said.

His words, and similar sentiments expressed by De Croo,

drew a sharp response from Eli Cohen, Israel's foreign minister. "We condemn the false claims of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Belgium which support terrorism," he wrote on X.

Unacceptable accusations

Spain was taken aback by the Israeli foreign minister's response, said one Spanish official. Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares in a statement on Friday night condemned Israel's "false, misplaced and unacceptable accusations". Albares said Israel's response was "especially serious" because it was aimed at the Spanish prime minister, whose country holds the six-month presidency of the Council of the EU, and the leader of Belgium, which takes over the same role on January 1. At the Rafah crossing, De Croo said Israel's military operation had to respect international humanitarian law. "The killing of civilians needs to stop now. Way too many people have died," he said. "The destruction of Gaza is unacceptable. We cannot accept that a society is destroyed in the way it is being destroyed."

EU countries and G7 members have been divided over how

much pressure to put on Israel to rein in its bombardment and allow humanitarian aid into Gaza. Other allies of Israel have started to adopt a tougher line on the stark human cost of its war in Gaza.

While acknowledging Israel's right to self-defense, David Cameron, the UK's foreign minister, said in an interview with the BBC on Friday that he had told Israeli officials that "they must abide by international humanitarian law, that the number of casualties are too high".

'Settler violence'

Cameron added that the "settler violence" against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank is "completely unacceptable", and that those responsible should "be arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned".

Spain has consistently spoken up for Palestinians and Sánchez on Friday called for the EU to formally recognize the state of Palestine.

Switzerland had also expressed strong support for Israel in the beginning.

However, on November 20, the country's foreign minister an-

nounced that Switzerland will continue to support the International Criminal Court's (ICC) investigations, including into the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

France, which has generally tried to maintain a balance in its relations with Israel and the Arab world for decades, was swift to draw attention to the indiscriminate nature of Israeli attacks on Gaza, after its initial strong expressions of support.

No reason for killing babies

President Emmanuel Macron openly called for a cease-fire in a BBC interview on Nov. 10, saying there is "no reason" for babies, women and the elderly to be killed, urging Israel to stop its assault.

France has reiterated the importance of a political solution, improving living conditions in Gaza, as well as opposing any plan that would include the re-occupation of Gaza by Israel.

Ireland is also among the other countries who has been strong in their criticism of Israeli attacks on Gaza.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar has described the attacks on

Gaza as "something approaching revenge," while Foreign Minister Micheal Martin repeated that the offensive has been disproportionate.

Recognition of Palestinian state

In Norway, a bill passed with overwhelming majority in Parliament "asks the government to be ready to recognize Palestine as an independent state when recognition could have a positive impact on the peace process, without making a final peace accord a condition."

Since the start of the conflict on October 7, many countries have cut diplomatic ties with Israel or recalled their ambassadors to show their anger at Israel's atrocities in Gaza, which have claimed the lives of more than 14,500 people in the Palestinian territory.

South American countries of Belize and Bolivia have broken off diplomatic relations with Israel. Back on October 27, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva slammed Israel's war on Gaza as a "genocide", saying that what is happening is not a war.

On the early days of the conflict,



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (C) shakes hands with Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo (R) and Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez during a meeting in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah on November 23, 2023.

● ALAA BADARNEH/AFP

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro also accused Israel of committing "genocide" against the Palestinians.

"We have witnessed in the past massacres and brutal atrocities against the Palestinian people." The current situation, he pointed out, is a "new apartheid system" against Palestinians.

Turkey, Colombia, Chile and Honduras have recalled their ambassadors for consultations.

South Africa has also been highly critical of Israel's military operation in Gaza.

On Tuesday, its MPs passed a motion recommending the Israeli Embassy's closure until there is a cease-fire and a commitment to negotiations. Earlier this month, South Africa also recalled its diplomats from Israel.

Israel's crimes in Gaza have also sparked pro-Palestinian protests on a daily basis across the world.

Opportunity to pressure Israel



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

OPINION

The 47 days of uninterrupted bombing of the Gaza Strip caused enormous damage to the people of the Gaza Strip and to the resistance groups. More than 14,800 people have died and much of the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has been destroyed. These losses have not been without achievement. It is not wrong to say that the most important achievement for the Palestinian people and the Gaza Strip came from the margins of the Palestinian issue.

Over the past few weeks, there have been unprecedented rallies and rallies around the world, especially in Europe and the United States, in support of the people of Gaza and against

Israeli atrocities. Some Western politicians whose governments are staunch supporters of Israel have had critical reactions to Israel's criminal acts, insisting that the Palestinian issue must be decided and the decades-old oppression against the Palestinians must end.

Spain's prime minister has insisted that the European Union should recognize an independent Palestinian state. Even the US government, which was Israel's main backer in the Gaza invasion, has been forced to moderate its positions in recent days, and President Joe Biden has argued in a Washington Post article that the US goal should not just stop today's war, but to end it forever. British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said Israel would never be safe without security and stability for the Palestinians.

Whether out of pity for the Palestinians and the awakening of

their conscience, whether out of reality and acknowledgment of the power of Palestinian fighting groups and the steadfast Palestinian determination to exercise their historic right, these Western comments represent a global consensus and demand for an end to the ongoing violence against Palestinians. Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel, with significant casualties including the deaths of more than 1,200 people and the capture of more than 200 Israelis, sent a clear message to both Israeli leaders and supporters in the West that Israel's superiority of military power does not mean that only Palestinians are victims of insecurity and violence.

In addition, this top military power has never been able to provide lasting security to its citizens over the past few decades, and in the all-out battle with Hamas in Gaza after 47

days of airstrikes and ground attacks, it did not succeed in destroying Hamas or releasing one of its prisoners. Then he opened fire and exchanged the fire. John Bolton, a hardline US figure and former national security adviser, has called the deal and prisoner exchange a victory for Hamas.

Thus, supporters of Israel are perhaps more prepared than ever to exert pressure on Israel not out of sympathy for the Palestinians but out of concern that Israel is more vulnerable and the apparent contradiction between assertive Western values such as human rights and what is happening in Palestine. It seems that the Resistance Front and Arab and Islamic countries should put more active diplomacy on the agenda to critique or stabilize Palestinian gains. They must not allow the infliction of enormous damage on the Gazan people to be forgot-



ten without any established gains in the interests of Palestine. The first step is to try to make the cease-fire permanent, and to continue to seize the opportunity to reclaim the Palestinians' rights.



People raise flags and signs during a demonstration in support of Palestinians at Washington Square Park in New York City on November 24, 2023.

● YUKI IWAMURA/AFP

Australia outclass Finland in Davis Cup semis



● JORGE GUERRERO/AFP

THE GUARDIAN – Australia eased into the Davis Cup final for the second successive year with a ruthless, efficient 2-0 win over Finland on Friday evening in Málaga.

In the opening rubber, Alexei Popyrin produced his first live Davis Cup win, steadying his nerves through an extremely tense opening set before beating Otto Virtanen 7-6 (5), 6-2. Alex de Minaur then closed out the tie with an excellent performance, defeating Emil Ruusuvuori 6-4, 6-3 to take Australia back to the final.

“You don’t take anything for granted in Davis Cup,” said Lleyton Hewitt, Australia’s Davis Cup captain. “It doesn’t matter the format. So we knew coming here every match was going to be extremely tough. You only have a day to prepare for your next opponents, as well, which isn’t easy.”

As was the case in Finland’s opening tie, the large Finnish expat community in the surrounding area ensured that their presence was felt in the José María Martín Carpena Arena as they filled out the stands in their thousands, belting their chants right until the end. Their energy was particularly effective against Popyrin as he struggled to control his nerves in the opening set. When it mattered, though, the Australian found his powerful first serve and subdued Virtanen with his greater weaponry, earning the landmark win under immense pressure.

“It’s nerves that I have never experienced before in my life, the nerves playing the first tie, the first rubber of a Davis Cup, winning my first live rubber of a Davis Cup,” said Popyrin. “I just had to keep my head steady and just really focus on my serve and try to capitalise on opportunities when they came.”

Finland’s presence in the semi-finals has been a shock in itself, but an even greater surprise was the team upsetting defending champions Canada without their No 1 player, Ruusuvuori, who sat out the tie with a shoulder injury. It was clear that against Australia, though, a win would be nearly impossible without their only top-150 singles player. Ruusuvuori’s shoulder had recovered enough for him to compete but he could not serve at full power.

Over their 95 minutes, De Minaur worked Ruusuvuori around the court with his depth, defence and willingness to take on short balls and control the point from inside the baseline.

AFC Champions League preview:

Persepolis looking to resurge at Al Nassr; Sepahan facing Air Force test

Sports Desk

Three Persian Gulf Pro League clubs will be in action on Matchday 5 when the AFC Champions League returns after the international break.

Having already missed out on a top-two finish in Group D with a couple of games to spare, Nassaji Mazandaran will only fight for its reputation against Mumbai City – bottom of the group without a point – at Tehran’s Azadi Stadium on Tuesday.

However, there will be all to play for on the preceding night for the other two Iranian top-flight giants, with Persepolis visiting Riyadh to take on Al Nassr and Sepahan hosting Iraqi side Air Force Club in Tehran.

Plagued by injuries and a flu virus in recent weeks, Yahya Golmohammadi’s Persepolis will be chasing a first victory across all competitions since the 2-0 home win against Tajikistan’s on October 24, though the game against the star-studded Saudi club and in-form Cristiano Ronaldo will arguably provide the most demanding test for the Tehran Reds in months.

The Portuguese superstar was on target twice as Al Nassr eased to a 3-0 victory over Al Akhdoud in the Saudi Pro League on Friday – an eighth successive win in all competitions for Ronaldo and co.

The Reds’ last outing came before the international break in Isfahan, where Persepolis suffered a first domestic defeat since March – a 1-0 loss at Sepahan in the so-called ‘Iranian Clasico’ – which was the latest episode in a frustrating four-game winless streak, following league draws against Malavan (0-0) and San’at Naft Abadan (2-2) as well as the 1-1 stalemate away



● MOHAMMADREZA ALIMADADI/IRNA

to Istiklol.

Al Nassr is top of the table in Group E and is favorite to progress as the group winner – having a five-point lead over Persepolis with two games remaining – but the Reds, despite being all but guaranteed a runner-up finish, are far from securing a place in the knockouts as only three of the second-placed teams across five West Zone groups will head into the last-16.

Persepolis is currently fourth among the five runners-up due to an inferior goal difference against Sepahan and Uzbekistan’s FC Nasaf, while Navbahor – sec-

ond in Group D – is the most likely to go through thanks to a three-point advantage over the chasing three.

The Iranian champion will be without international center-back Morteza Pouraliganji and Yasin Salmani, both out for the rest of the season with ligament injuries, and integral midfielder Vahid Amiri is not expected to be back on the pitch before mid-December.

With the home game against Al Duhail on the final day of the group stage, Golmohammadi and his men might believe even a draw at Al Awwal Park will be enough

to keep the Reds’ hopes for a knockout berth alive.

Tricky test

Sepahan will be looking to build on a decent run of late when squaring off against Air Force Club earlier on Monday.

When Sepahan was handed a 3-0 loss against Al Ittihad after their October fixture at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium was called off minutes before the kickoff – for what the Asian football governing body labeled as the Iranian side’s failure to act “in a politically neutral manner” – few fancied the Isfahan-based club recovering

from the setback.

Jose Morais’s men, however, bounced back in style, running riot against AGMK with an emphatic 9-0 win in Tehran before the 1-0 victory over Persepolis was followed by Thursday’s 3-1 away triumph over Esteghlal Khuzestan.

Group C remains incredibly tight with just two points separating leader Al Ittihad and third-placed Air Force Club, who sits level with Sepahan ahead of Monday’s game.

A win for either side would see them go into the final day with a chance of topping the table, while defeat could signal the end of their quali-

fication hopes.

Portuguese head coach Morais will be desperate to see international trio of Morteza Asadi – who has bagged nine goals and three assists in 12 matches this season – Ramin Rezaeian and Mohammad-Javad Hosseinnejad contribute with yet another impressive performance.

Iraqi teenage sensation Ali Jasim will be the one watch in the Air Force outfit after scoring four in the competition – including one in the stunning 2-0 victory over Al Ittihad three weeks ago and a double in the 2-2 draw with Sepahan.

NBA roundup:

Balanced scoring lifts Bucks past Wizards

REUTERS – Brook Lopez, Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard each eclipsed 30 points as the Milwaukee Bucks improved to 3-0 in in-season tournament play with a 131-128 win over the visiting Washington Wizards.

It’s the first game in Bucks franchise history in which three players had 30 points or more. Lopez tied his career high with 39, while Antetokounmpo (nine rebounds) and Lillard (10 assists) each had 31.

Washington had four 20-point scorers, led by Milwaukee native Jordan Poole with 26 and seven assists. Kyle Kuzma and Tyus Jones each added 22 while Corey Kispert scored 20.

In the final seconds, Antetokounmpo made two free throws before Wash-



● Bucks center Brook Lopez (11) shoots during the second half against the Boston Celtics at TD Garden, Boston, MA, US, on November 24, 2023.

● PAUL RUTHERFORD/USA TODAY SPORTS

ington’s Landry Shamet air-balled a wide-open, po-

tential game-tying 3-point attempt.

Elsewhere, Jalen Green scored a team-high 25

points while Alperen Sengun and two more teammates added double-doubles as Houston Rockets extended their homecourt winning streak to eight by beating Denver Nuggets 105-86 in an NBA in-season tournament game.

Orlando Magic turned in a dominant second half and extended its winning streak to six games by beating visiting Boston Celtics 113-96.

Devin Booker scored a season-high 40 points to fuel visiting Phoenix Suns to a 110-89 victory over Memphis Grizzlies.

Booker made 15 of 21 shots from the floor and added four steals. RJ Barrett converted a go-ahead, three-point play with 1:59 left for hosts New York Knicks, who stormed back from a 21-point, third-quarter deficit to beat Miami Heat 100-98.

OG Anunoby scored 26 points and Toronto Raptors

defeated visiting Chicago Bulls 121-108.

Tyrese Haliburton had 26 points and 10 assists and Indiana Pacers finished the game on a 19-1 run in Indianapolis to hand Detroit Pistons a 13th consecutive loss – 136-113.

De’Aaron Fox scored 36 points and dished 12 assists as Sacramento Kings pulled away for a 124-111 win over Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Stephen Curry hit seven 3-pointers while scoring 35 points and Golden State Warriors improved its chances of advancement in the NBA in-season tournament by edging San Antonio Spurs 118-112 in San Francisco.

Zion Williamson scored 32 points and Brandon Ingram added 30 as visiting New Orleans Pelicans defeated Los Angeles Clippers 116-106 to finish group play of the in-season tournament with a 3-1 record.

In praise of Generation Z

Zoomers have turned out to be the new champions of the Palestinian cause, and it's irritating conservative boomers.

By Ali
Amiri

Staff writer

Championing the Palestinian Cause

Every day, new videos on TikTok emerge that challenge the Zionists' narrative surrounding the longstanding conflict in the Middle East. As a result, conservative senators and congressmen in the US have expressed concern about the proliferation of pro-Palestine content on TikTok, accusing the company of manipulating algorithms to amplify such content. However, TikTok recently issued a press statement clarifying that the prevalence of pro-Palestinian content is not due to algorithmic manipulation, but rather reflects the sentiments of the platform's teenage users.

"Israel can't sway us as easily with a propaganda video," said a young TikToker recently in a 72-second video that went viral on the platform. "So, every time you

see a video spreading the truth about Palestine and you like it, comment, favorite it, post it, or share it, you are costing Israel more money."

In a video titled 'Propaganda Is Expensive,' the user @yourfavoriteguy drew an intriguing parallel between the South African apartheid and the ongoing apartheid in occupied Palestine, which resonated strongly with younger TikTok users (known in generational terms as Gen Zers, or zoomers). However, it was not just his peers who appreciated his insightful analysis, but also members of older generations who were impressed by his depth of understanding and clarity. His video shed light on the fact that amidst widespread misconceptions about the conflict, he was able to articulate a perspective that resonated with many. He concludes the video by saying, "Free Palestine," a sentiment that has gained traction among a majority of Generation Z individuals.

Following is a full transcript of this viral video for the sake of my argument:

"Look at South Africa for a second. The government during apartheid was spending an average of \$100 million a year on a worldwide propaganda campaign to convince the world that what they were doing was not a human rights violation and not oppression. And when we look at Israel, they spent \$7 million on YouTube ads alone to convince people to support their oppression of Palestinian people since October 7. We have AIPAC, the Zionist lobby to the US government, spending tens of millions of dollars giving to politicians to convince them of their Zionist ideas. And then we have Israel in 2018, putting together a \$37 million budget on propaganda videos. I'll say it again: propaganda is expensive. A part of the reason apartheid ended was because it became too expensive to maintain. It was costing them too much money. It wasn't worth it anymore. And the same must happen to Israel. Israel can't sway us as easily with a propaganda video. So, every time you see a video spreading truth about Palestine and you like it, comment, favorite it, post it, or share it, you are costing Israel more money. So make sure to do all those things whenever you see those types of videos. Anyway, thank you for watching. Free Palestine."

No Climate Justice on Occupied Land

Zoomers have inherited a messed-up world: from global warming to decades-long wars, unresolved territorial conflicts, some of which escalated into humanitarian crises. In the case of Israel, there is a new apartheid regime for which they are shouldering the responsibility of setting things right.

Greta Thunberg, the Swedish activist and a Gen Z icon, is only 20 years old, yet she understands the world and its happenings better than most political figures with decades of experience. During a recent pro-Palestinian rally, she emphasized the importance of listening to the voices of the oppressed and those fighting for freedom and justice as part of the climate justice movement. Thunberg stated, "Otherwise, there can be no climate justice without international solidarity," according to Euronews.

To further amplify these voices, Thun-

berg invited a Palestinian and an Afghan woman to speak at the rally. However, while resuming her speech, a man approached the stage and took the mic angrily to express his disagreement, stating, "I have come here for a climate demonstration, not a political view."

Undeterred, Thunberg firmly reclaimed the microphone from the man and told him to "calm down." She then joined the crowd in chanting, "No climate justice on occupied land," emphasizing the interconnectedness of climate justice and the need for addressing political issues.

The mere fact that a zoomer icon recognizes the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is hopeful. What is admirable about this new generation is that they are doing all the thinking for themselves, disregarding the influence of legacy media. They educate themselves on various matters without succumbing to the distorting views of their elders.

Not only are they confronting climate

anxiety, but they also face limited means to halt the profitable oil and war machines. Nevertheless, they are persistent in their efforts. Moreover, they are indeed passionate about making sense of the world on their own terms, often challenging traditional modes of thinking or questioning what their parents and teachers have taught them to believe.

Criticisms of Gen Z

Born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, Generation Z is the first generation to grow up as digital natives. Often criticized by older generations for being unproductive and having short attention spans, Gen Zers are much more than that. The common criticism is expressed in lines such as, "Look at them; they are careless. They spend countless hours on their phones, accomplishing nothing productive in their lives." Sometimes referred to as "millennials on steroids," zoomers pose a challenge for their elders on how to handle them. Subject to many jokes, they are often seen as individuals who will create chaos.

"We are a diverse cohort," writes Leshan Kroma, a junior in the School of International Service, on The American Agora website. "All we want to do is use social media to interact and connect with the rest of the world. We learn about different cultures."

Kroma further elaborates that they curate their public image, using social media as a means of communication and self-expression. Despite facing condemnation, they are simply innovative and pragmatic. They grasp the direction in which the world is heading and possess open-mindedness towards the evolving future, be it in technology or diversity.

"Gen Z are incredible individuals who are already changing the world," Kroma verdicts.

Another Gen Z member, Grace Potter, writes in 'In Defense of Gen Z' on Junkee: "As a Gen Z, I feel an increasing amount of scrutiny from the public eye as we enter high school, universities, and the workforce. Gen Z is on the verge of embarking on adult lives in an environment that seems far from nurturing and encouraging."

Pointing out the "complete lack of understanding" behind the familiar sigh of "young people," accompanied by a shake of the head, she emphasizes that zoomers are not "hopeless and unmotivated."

"We, like every generation before us, are simply trying to figure out how to navigate the world we have been placed in, which comes with its own set of challenges."

Ability to Change

I seriously doubt that it's true that zoomers don't read as many books as previous generations and spend more time on their screens, jeopardizing their cognitive and social development.

According to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, our habitus encompasses the ways in which we internalize and embody social structures and systems of meaning. Since we don't share the same habitus with Gen Z, it's hard for us to clearly see how they constantly evolve their value systems to navigate ethical conundrums. Their stance on the Palestine issue is a clear example of how successful they are in this regard.

Growing up with access to the internet, these young individuals had the time and resources to build a global community for themselves. Furthermore, through

the creation of their own jargon and art forms – namely, memes and reels – they successfully ward off intruders who could pollute their thinking with corrupting agendas.

Due to our differences in habitus, it's only natural that we don't fully understand them, and from what I've gathered so far, zoomers are not like their parents, and their value system comes from their peers on social media. The only Gen Zers who aren't like their global peers are the ones who were cut off from the internet. When someone wants to be critical of the new generation, it would be wise to remember all the generational conflicts that came before them. Zoomers want different things in life and face unique challenges, so it's natural for them to feel resentful towards previous generations and rebel against them.

When we come into contact with a member of this cohort and struggle to communicate with them, failing to understand their motives or even language, we should remind ourselves that the problem does not lie with them, but with us. Instead of trying to lecture or guide them onto our own paths, we should make an effort to learn their language and be passionate about their interests.

American zoomers not only suffered the effects of a long, futile war on terror instigated by George W. Bush, but also witnessed the shocking election of Donald Trump.

Therefore, given the world we are offering them, we are in no position to lecture zoomers on anything. They are a potent community of free-thinkers with the ability to change the world for the better. Let's just support and help them along the way.



Gen Z icon Greta Thunberg (c) and youth activists protest outside the White House, September 13, 2019.
● GETTY IMAGES



Iranian video artists at 'The Wrong Biennale'



IRNA — In a cultural showcase, an independent and non-profit institution, Platform 101, is participating in the 6th edition of 'The Wrong Biennale,' unveiling an exclusive exhibit titled 'Glitch In The Sacred Geometry.' The exhibit is curated by Mohammad Ali Famori. This year, Platform 101 presents the works of 11 diverse Iranian video artists, including Arash Masoom, Arezou Ramezani, Elnaz Mohammadi, Melissa Valipour, Mohammad Abdollahzade, Mohammad Ali Famori, Nilufar Baniasadi, Parisa Pakzami, Reza Famori, Sadegh Majlesi, and Yasamin Asgharizadeh. Known for promoting international coexistence and artistic diversity, 'The Wrong Biennale' will feature over 2,000 artists globally. The platform goes beyond geographical boundaries, weaving an array of artistic expressions that celebrates global diversity. Special thanks are extended to David Quiles Guilló, whose efforts played a crucial role in making this participation possible. The event kicked off on November 1 and is scheduled to run until March 1, 2024.

Iranian actress Bita Farrahi dies at 65



IRNA — Bita Farrahi, a veteran Iranian actress, who was suffering from lung and heart complications, died on Saturday at the age of 65. Born on April 1, 1958, in Tehran, Farrahi was introduced to late director Dariush Mehrjui by Nasser Cheshmazar, leading to her portrayal of Mahshid in the film 'Hamooun'. Farrahi marked her cinematic debut in 1989 with 'Hamooun,' a performance that earned her the diploma of honor for Best Actress in a Leading Role at the 8th Fajr International Film Festival. Although she became famous with Mehrjui's 'Hamooun,' Farrahi continued to collaborate with great directors such as Ahmad Reza Darvish, Bahman Ghobadi, and Masoud Kimiaei in the following years. Her cinematic contributions include 'Time of Love,' 'Waiting for a Miracle,' and 'La Minor' among others. Furthermore, Farrahi showcased her ability by starring in television series such as 'Trandokht,' 'Green Land,' and 'Forgotten.' Her latest project, 'Motherland,' in which Farrahi played a significant role, is currently airing on the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

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Iranian director keen on making films on drug addiction

By Sadeq Dehqan
 Staff writer

Iranian film director-cum-screenwriter, Manouchehr Hadi, declared drug addiction as an interesting subject in cinematic production. Hadi expressed his interest in making films with drug addiction themes, which are not only compelling but also educational and influential. In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Hadi said, "Drug addiction is of great significance in the creation of cinematic works, spanning genres from drama to even comedy. It provides a rich narrative that can yield engaging cinematic pieces." Hadi further stated, "If the Iran Drug Control Headquarters commissions a film or series on this subject, I would gladly take on the project. Providing the necessary financial resources is the key to such projects. As a director, I wish for an opportunity to create a work unburdened by financial constraints, allowing me to write a high-profile story that could attract a large number of audiences." Addressing his appointment as an

ambassador for preventing addiction, Hadi remarked, "I am honored to be selected as an ambassador for addiction prevention. However, I believe this mission and opportunity should be handed over to those with expertise in the field who can dedicate more time to this issue." "I lack expertise in addiction prevention, but in my professional field, I strive to be useful and influential in this area," he added. Highlighting effective measures for addiction prevention, Hadi emphasized the significance of choosing good friends. He stated, "Families and, subsequently, the education system and schools must provide the necessary guidance to all students and children regarding the selection of friends." Discussing the influence of friends on individuals' lives and character development, Hadi said, "In certain situations, the influence a misguided friend can have on a person's life, shaping the course of their future and casting a shadow over their destiny, may surpass that of an enemy. Conversely, in life's scenarios, a good and devoted friend might contribute more positively than even one's own family."



Hadi urged parents to be cautious, emphasizing, "Parents should be mindful of their children's friendships and intelligently manage them to guide their children away

from addiction." As part of the Iran Drug Control Headquarters' initiatives, utilizing the potential of artists, athletes, and influential figures in cultural

promotion and drug prevention, appointing them as ambassadors for addiction prevention stands as a crucial program in the fight against drug addiction.

Portrait of Iranian composer Mashayekhi to be screened at Indian festival

Arts & Culture Desk

A semi-feature documentary, 'Bricolage: The Life of Nader Mashayekhi,' directed by Mahmoud Tavassolian, is slated to participate in the Competition



Section of the seventh edition of the International Folklore Film Festival in India. The documentary offers a narrative on the personality, thoughts, and artistic life of Mashayekhi, a renowned Iranian composer and orchestra conductor, IRNA wrote. The international version of the film runs for 47 minutes, with its technical production concluding this summer. The international distribution of this work is managed by Ariana Film, under the supervision of Fahimeh Rahapoor-Qasem. The seventh edition of the International Folklore Festival in

India, to be held in collaboration with the St. Thomas College Media Studies Block, Trissur, focuses on people-oriented cinema, peace initiatives, traditions, and biodiversity. The festival will take place from January 5 to 9, 2024, in the city of Kerala, India. The term "bricolage" is a conceptual framework introduced by the French ethnologist and anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss in Europe. In this film, Mashayekhi's perspective explores the reinterpretation of Iranian culture, combining tradition and modernity through the lens of this intellectual concept.

Iran, Indonesia ink agreement for academic collaboration

Arts & Culture Desk

The State Islamic Institute of Kerinci in Indonesia and the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote scientific and academic cooperation. The MoU was signed by the rector of the Indonesian institute H. Asa'ari, and Mohammadreza Ebrahimi, the cultural attaché of Iran in Indonesia, IRNA wrote. In an online ceremony, Asa'ari highlighted Iran's advancements in the scientific and cultural fields since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. He expressed a keen interest in expanding scientific and university collaborations, particularly in cultural exchanges, between Iran and

Indonesia. Ebrahimi, the cultural attaché, addressed global developments in the Islamic world, emphasizing the need for a unified voice condemning the inhumane actions of the Zionists, especially in Gaza. He called on the Islamic world to denounce the atrocities committed by Israel. Ebrahimi explained that cultural collaboration between Iran and Indonesia involves establishing an Iran room in Indonesian universities. He added that these rooms, managed by university deans, will host various programs including conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and presentations about contemporary Iran.

PICS OF THE DAY



In a five-day event from November 29 to December 3, the city of Birjand, located in the South Khorasan Province, hosts the sixth edition of a handicrafts exhibition, featuring 214 booths and a gathering of 300 skilled artists.

MOHSEN NOFERESTI/IRNA