

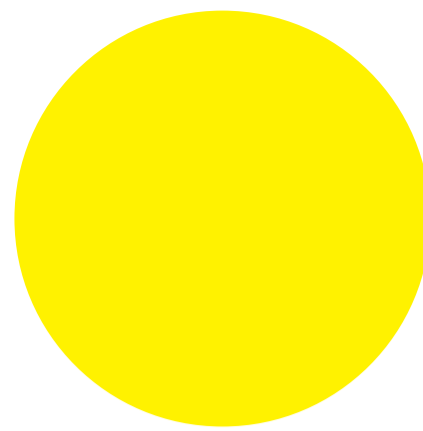
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Pakistani ambassador in Iran: Islamabad, Tehran enhancing intelligence, security cooperation to counter terrorism

Bilateral annual trade to hit \$5b



By Sadeq Dehqan

Staff writer

The Pakistani ambassador in Tehran, referring to strengthening intelligence and security cooperation between Iran and Pakistan to counter terrorist activities and enhance security at the common borders, announced the continuation of the fencing program along more than 900 kilometers of the shared border with Iran.

Ambassador Muhammad Mudassir Tipu stated in a conversation with Iranian Daily, "The development and reinforcement of fencing along the borders are carried out with the aim of controlling the entry and exit of terrorist groups and illegal movements. We hope that by implementing these measures, the threats posed by terrorist groups at the borders will decrease."

The fencing program, covering over 900 kilometers of the shared border between the two countries, follows past terrorist attacks in various areas of Sistan and Baluchestan Province. Tehran has requested Islamabad to strengthen security and enhance monitoring at the borders.

Recently, in the aftermath of a terrorist attack last Friday night, a terrorist group attacked the police headquarters in Rask, leading to the martyrdom of 11 members of the Law Enforcement Force (NAJA). Rask is located in the southeast of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, approximately 500 kilometers south of Zahedan, near the Pakistan border.

Pakistan-Iran relations at highest level

The Pakistani ambassador praised the current relations between Iran and Pakistan as being at the highest level, and stated, "The Pakistani government is eager to expand relations further with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Mudassir continued, "Iran and Pakistan are

neighboring countries with significant cultural and historical ties, and these shared connections and proximities facilitate bilateral cooperation between the two nations." He noted the increasing political and diplomatic communications between Iran and Pakistan, saying, "Good meetings at the level of high-ranking officials of both countries have taken place in the past months, such as the meeting between Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the Prime Minister of Pakistan in New York in late September. This meeting occurred on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly."

He added, "In addition, in the month of August this year, Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian visited Pakistan and held meetings with our country's officials. We aim for these meetings and political and diplomatic exchanges between the two countries to continue and increase."

Trade to hit \$5b

The Pakistani ambassador in Tehran mentioned the current volume of trade between Iran and Pakistan, which is approximately \$2 billion, and stated, "Both countries aim to increase the level of trade, intending to reach a figure of \$5 billion in the coming years."

Mudassir elaborated, "In terms of enhancing commercial relations, the Chambers of Commerce of both countries play a crucial role and should increase their interactions with each other. The Chambers of Commerce of both countries must first identify the potentials and economic strengths of the two nations."

Referring to the abundant potentials for collaboration in the commercial and economic sectors, Mudassir stated, "These potentials assist both countries in achieving a substantial increase in trade transactions. Iran and Pakistan each possess capacities and significant products in the commercial and economic fields, which the counterpart country needs. Therefore, the method of exchanging

these products and capacities must be well identified."

He continued, "Additionally, both countries are planning for bilateral relations to develop, including in the economic and trade sectors, by increasing direct flights between Tehran and Karachi, and other cities."

The Pakistani ambassador also commented on the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, saying, "Pakistan is keen for the swift completion of this pipeline. We are working on the continuation of the project, and we hope it becomes operational sooner."

According to him, the inauguration of this gas pipeline will not only be impactful on increasing gas exchanges but can also lead to the improvement of collaborations in other sectors, including trade matters, fostering even greater friendship and closeness between the two countries.

The Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, also known as the Peace Pipeline, is the name of the project for the export of Iranian gas to India and Pakistan. Based on agreements made, Iran committed to selling its gas to India and Pakistan at an agreed-upon price for a period of 25 years. This route is the most economical method of energy supply for the Indian subcontinent.

The construction of this pipeline, which began in 2002, was initially planned to be operational in 2014. However, with India withdrawing from the project and Pakistan delaying the construction of the pipeline within its borders, the project remains incomplete.

So far, over 1,100 kilometers of the pipeline have been implemented in Iran, from the South Pars Gas Field to the border region with Pakistan in Baluchistan. However, the execution of the pipeline in Pakistan has been delayed due to the country's urgent need for gas. Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian, during his visit to Pakistan in August, urged the country to complete the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project in the Pakistani section. The lack of funding and international sanctions

against Iran are among the reasons cited for the non-execution of this project in Pakistan.

Academic exchanges rising

The Pakistani ambassador also spoke about cultural and linguistic interactions and collaborations between Iran and Pakistan, stating, "Pakistan is very eager to enhance the interactions between the two countries in this field and increase the exchange of professors and students."

He continued, "In line with the development of cultural and linguistic interactions, the University of Tehran has recently invited a Pakistani professor to participate in an event in Tehran, and we are looking forward to continuing these exchanges. Moreover, the two countries can collaborate in the exchange of films and TV series, as such collaborations help bring the cultures and people of both nations closer. In this regard, arrangements should be made so that Pakistani films and TV series can be dubbed and broadcast in Iran."

The Pakistani ambassador announced his country's readiness to cooperate in the translation and publication of books by poets and eminent figures from both countries, stating, "In this regard, the works of Hafez and Ferdowsi have been translated into Urdu by prominent Pakistani scholars, and extensive research has been conducted on them."



Eight-month transit of goods via Iran up 20%: IRICA

The volume of goods transited through Iranian territory registered a 20 percent rise in the first eight months of the current Iranian year (March 21- November 21), announced the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Speaking at a meeting with Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) Umberto de Pretto, Mohammad Rezvanifar emphasized the need for cooperating in the devel-

opment of multimodal transportation from the southern ports of the Persian Gulf, especially Chabahar port and Bandar Abbas, reported Tasnim news agency.

"IRICA is ready to cooperate with the union for providing the necessary training services to the neighboring states, including Iraq and Afghanistan, in the field of International Road Transport (TIR), aimed at the development of transit activities," he added. Rezvanifar also point-

ed to measures taken in line with facilitating and developing transit via Iran and reiterated that 11 million tons of goods were transited through Iranian land from March 21 to November 22, 2023, registering a 20 percent hike compared to the same period last year.

During the meeting, the secretary general of the IRU expressed hope that transit of goods through Iran's territory will increase to 40 million tons within the next five years.

The International East-West Transport Corridor will be improved through Iranian territory, Umberto de Pretto underscored. Iran is ranked first in the world among member states of the TIR Carnet Convention, he added. TIR Carnet is a customs document issued in the country of origin for the international transit of goods within the framework of the TIR Carnet Convention.



A Revision of the Specific Procurement Notice
DA-SL1 & DA-SL2

Following the first Announcement of the Specific Procurement Notice (Call for Tender) on the subject of "Remaining Works of Procurement, Construction, Test and Commissioning of Trunk Main, Laterals & Interceptors of Lot 1 & 2 of Darab Wastewater Network" which was previously published in this newspaper on **December 12, 2023**, this is to inform you that the amounts of the bid security are hereby revised as follows:

Lot 1: 58,000,000,000 IR Rials (Fifty-eight Billion Rials)
Lot 2: 79,000,000,000 IR Rials (Seventy-Nine billion Rials)

اصلاحیه آگهی مناقصه عمومی
شماره: DA-SL1 & DA-SL2

پیرو آگهی مناقصه نوبت اول شرکت آب و فاضلاب فارس با موضوع باقیمانده کارهای تدارکات، ساخت، آزمایش و راه اندازی «خط انتقال و خطوط اصلی و فرعی لات ۱ و ۲ شبکه جمع آوری فاضلاب داراب» که در تاریخ ۱۴۰۲/۰۹/۲۱ در این روزنامه به چاپ رسیده است، بدین وسیله به اطلاع می‌رساند که مبلغ ضمانت‌نامه شرکت در مناقصه (فرآیند ارجاع کار) به شرح ذیل اصلاح می‌گردد.

لات ۱: ۵۸,۰۰۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰ ریال (پنجاه و هشت میلیارد ریال)
لات ۲: ۷۹,۰۰۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰ ریال (هفتاد و نه میلیارد ریال)

A Revision of the Specific Procurement Notice

Following the first Announcement of the Specific Procurement Notice (Call for Tender) on the subject of "Procurement, Construction, Test and Commissioning of Trunk Main, Laterals & Interceptors of Lot 1 & 2 of Fasa Wastewater Network" which was previously published in this newspaper on December 12, 2023, this is to inform you that the amounts of the bid security are hereby revised as follows:

Lot 1: 72,500,000,000 (Seventy-two billion five hundred million Iranian Rials)
Lot 2: 75,000,000,000 (seventy-five billion Iranian Rials)

اصلاحیه آگهی مناقصه عمومی

پیرو آگهی مناقصه نوبت اول شرکت آب و فاضلاب فارس با موضوع دعوت برای تهیه، ساخت، آزمایش و راه اندازی خط انتقال و خطوط اصلی و فرعی لاتهای ۱ و ۲ شبکه فاضلاب فسا که در تاریخ ۱۴۰۲/۰۹/۲۲ در این روزنامه به چاپ رسیده است، بدین وسیله به اطلاع می‌رساند که مبلغ ضمانت‌نامه شرکت در مناقصه (فرآیند ارجاع کار) به شرح ذیل اصلاح می‌گردد.

لات ۱: ۷۲,۵۰۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰ ریال (هفتاد و دو میلیارد و پانصد میلیون ریال)
لات ۲: ۷۵,۰۰۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰ ریال (هفتاد و پنج میلیارد ریال)

Qalat village, a hidden gem in cultural landscape of Fars Province



karnaval.ir



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Iranica Desk

Qalat village, nestled in the picturesque landscape of Fars Province, stands as a captivating tourism destination, drawing in both local and international visitors. This historical gem is a part of the vibrant tapestry of attractions in the region, offering a unique blend of rich history, lush natural beauty, and a serene, cool climate.

Perched at an elevation of 2,065 meters above sea level, Qalat village boasts a distinctive charm, characterized by its stepped houses and the imposing presence of Qalat Mountain, which encircles the village like a protective barrier. The village, with its historical monuments,

verdant surroundings, and refreshing springs, was once a favored retreat for ancient Iranian royalty, and to this day, it remains a haven for leisure and relaxation in the heart of Shiraz. With a population of approximately 7,000, the locals of Qalat village lead a semi-traditional life, engaging in agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, and weaving. Their unique customs and traditions, including the use of the local Qalati dialect and traditional Qashqai attire during ceremonies and celebrations, add to the village's cultural allure.

Visitors to Qalat village are treated to a wealth of experiences, from the breathtaking views atop Qalat Mountain to the enchant-



karnaval.ir

ing old-world charm of the village's architecture, adorned with ancient trees and meandering streams.

The region is also home to a rich variety of medicinal plants, including yarrow, thyme, and hollyhocks,

adding to its natural splendor. A visit to Qalat village offers a glimpse into its rich histo-

ry, with attractions such as the Qalat Museum House, which showcases ancient instruments, artifacts, and cultural treasures. Additionally, the ruins of an old castle, believed to date back to the Atabakan Fars era, stand as a testament to the village's enduring heritage. The village's natural wonders include three captivating waterfalls, nestled at the foot of the mountain, and the old bathhouse, which is steeped in local lore, with tales of Sa'di once bathing within its walls. Unfortunately, some historical sites, such as the church and the bathhouse, have suffered from neglect and are in need of preservation.

Qalat village also offers a delightful array of locally produced souvenirs,

including walnuts, almonds, grapes, handmade baskets, and traditional wooden utensils, providing visitors with a tangible connection to the village's rich cultural heritage.

The traditional clothing and customs of the Qashqai nomads add a colorful touch to these cultural events, enriching the experience for visitors.

In every season, Qalat village exudes its own unique allure, from the vibrant colors and scents of autumn to the tranquil beauty of its winter landscape. Whether exploring the winding alleys, enjoying the local cuisine, or simply taking in the natural splendor, a visit to Qalat village promises an unforgettable journey through history and culture.

Khosrow Abad Mansion, a jewel of Kurdish heritage in Sanandaj

Iranica Desk

Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan Province, is a city steeped in Kurdish heritage and history, featuring a wealth of captivating historical buildings and mosques that serve as significant tourist attractions. Among these landmarks, the Khosrow Abad Mansion stands as a prom-

inent and cherished site. Mansions, symbolizing expansive residential houses, have long been emblematic of the aristocratic lifestyle which was prevalent in ancient Iran. Influenced by what is now recognized as Iranian architectural style, these mansions underwent significant changes in their design and structure following the in-

roduction of Islam to the region. Nevertheless, they still exude the essence of Iranian craftsmanship. Notably, a striking feature of these mansions is their placement within expansive gardens, adding to their allure and grandeur. The Khosrow Abad Mansion, listed on Iran's National Heritage List, is celebrated as one of the most

exquisite mansions, drawing visitors as a key tourist attraction in Sanandaj. Under the ownership of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization, many sections of the mansion have been meticulously restored, allowing the public to explore its various parts and experience its historical grandeur. The history of the mansion

traces back to the Qajar period, with Amanollah Khan Ardalan, the governor of Kurdistan at the time, commissioning its construction.

Spanning an area of 6,000 square meters, the mansion comprises distinct sections, including the regal palace with its columned entrance, a bathhouse, a guard room, and servants'

quarters. Some believe that the eastern part of the building, known as the palace, was erected during the Zand era. While the mansion occasionally served as a political and military headquarters, it predominantly functioned as a venue for ceremonial events and royal receptions, such as the wedding ceremony of the Qajar king Fat'h-

Ali Shah's daughter and Amanollah Khan's son.

The mansion's adornment showcases intricate plasterwork and brickwork, embodying the essence of Iranian architecture. Noteworthy is the amalgamation of materials used in different areas of the mansion, such as the castle, kitchen, bath, stable, and the eastern, western, and southern walls, each adding to the rich tapestry of its historical significance.

The Khosrow Abad Garden, an integral part of the complex, holds significant historical value. The presence of a plaque bearing the names of Fat'h-Ali Shah and Amanollah Khan, alongside the date of 1223 AH (after hejira), further underscores its historical significance.

Restoration efforts for this invaluable building commenced in 1994, ensuring its preservation for generations to come. The mansion and its surrounding garden stand as a testament to the rich history and cultural heritage of the region, inviting visitors to step back in time and experience the grandeur of a bygone era.



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By Ebrahim
Beheshti
Staff writer

Benjamin Netanyahu's opposition to international pressure for a cease-fire in Gaza reflects the failure of the Israeli army to achieve its declared objectives. The destruction of Hamas and the liberation of Israeli captives were the two main declared goals of Netanyahu's cabinet and the army in the Gaza war.

However, according to media reports, the war in Gaza is intensifying, indicating that Hamas remains resilient. On Friday, the Israeli army issued a shocking statement 70 days into the war, revealing that not only had they failed to free a single captive in an operation, but three prisoners were mistakenly targeted and killed.

An exhausted army in Gaza

Protracted urban war not in favor of Israel

Madness of war

The madness of war seems to have engulfed the Israeli regime, bringing it to a state of desperation. Global public opinion is increasingly against the continuation of the war and Israel's crimes. The tone of Western governments supporting Israel has also gradually changed, and ending the war has become a public demand contrary to Israel's wishes. Two cease-fire resolutions have been passed with a majority of votes in the United Nations General Assembly. The proposed cease-fire resolution in the UN Security Council received 13 affirmative votes, with only one negative vote from the United States (Veto) and one abstention from the UK.

Internal pressure on Netanyahu's cabinet has intensified. Former prime minister and current leader of the opposition, Yair Lapid, told Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper: Netanyahu can no longer remain in the prime minister's position, and elections may be held under war conditions.

The families of captives are also exerting pressure on Netanyahu. Lior Peri, whose 79-year-old father is a Hamas captive, said at a protest gathering of captive families on Saturday: Israel must propose something to Hamas that it cannot reject, whether it's a cease-fire, an exchange, or whatever is necessary. The cabinet has done nothing.

However, Netanyahu's hardline cabinet seems to have no practical initiative other than continuing and intensifying the war in the face of this difficult domestic and international situation. Nevertheless, the question on many minds, both in the occupied territories and around the world, is whether the prolonged war has yielded tangible results for Israel. Will Netanyahu and the Israeli army achieve their goals by continuing the war?

Hamas, an unbeatable army

Earlier analyses had suggested that the prolongation of the war would be detrimental to Israel. Former Lebanese foreign minister, Adnan Mansour, in an interview with Mehr news agency in Iran, had stated that the ongoing military operations in Gaza were imposing a heavy cost on Tel Aviv. Forty days into the war, he said, "The Zionist regime spends \$260 million a day in the war against Gaza, and, based on this, over \$7.5 billion has been spent in this war, and it cannot afford to continue this war for a long time." Some analysts also pointed to a reduction in foreign investment in Israel, insecurity consequences in the occupied land, and an increase in reverse migration from Israel to other parts of the world.

However, what is happening on the battlefield appears to be more painful and perhaps unexpectedly challenging for Israelis than the anticipated economic and social consequences of the prolonged war. Israeli army casualties exceed expectations. According to the Israeli newspaper Maariv, the Hamas movement seems to be an endless (unbeatable) army, and there is still a long way to resolve the battle in the Gaza Strip.

On Friday, when three Israeli captives who had apparently escaped from Hamas were targeted by soldiers in the Shejaiya neighborhood in northern Gaza, more realities about the Israeli army became apparent:

Realities that vividly show the consequences of the prolonged war and the effects of facing a classic army against a guerrilla organization in urban warfare.

This situation is evident in the statements of the Israeli army spokesperson, who, on the one hand, acknowledges the preparedness of Hamas forces and their military tactics, and, on the other hand, highlights the disregard of Israeli soldiers for violating the principles of war.





↑ Israeli soldiers operate, amid the ongoing ground invasion in a location given as the Gaza Strip in this screengrab obtained from a video released on November 17, 2023.

● REUTERS

Violation of war rules

The spokesperson of the Israeli army told CNN that Israeli soldiers violated war laws; they should not have opened fire near captives... Hamas uses all sorts of tricks to confuse our soldiers and kill them, which played a role in the deaths of the kidnapped. Hamas tries to use loudspeakers broadcasting in Hebrew to lure our soldiers into ambushes.

The more significant admission of this military official is the acknowledgment of the exhaustion of the army: Our soldiers suffer from fatigue and the burdens of war, and some of them have been in battle for a month and a half.

Avi Dichter, a former head of the Israeli Security Agency (Shin Bet or Shabak) and the current Agriculture Minister in Netanyahu's cabinet, said to Channel 12 that Israel has paid very high costs in the Gaza war and military operations there are very challenging. Israel's use of this amount of force in a war and the unprecedented volume of bombs is remarkable.

On November 20, The New York Times reported, citing US officials, that Israel's quick decision to start ground operations in Gaza prevented sufficient planning to minimize the risk of civilian casualties, but what it ensured was a high number of deaths among non-combatants.

However, the prolonged war and the high number of civilian casualties in Gaza, reaching around 19,000 people, do not guarantee the realization of Netanyahu's and the Israeli army's objectives. General Kenneth McKenzie Jr., the retired head of US Central Command, claimed that Israel is achieving its goals, but he emphasized that, strategically, it may not necessarily be in Israel's favor.

Unprecedented losses for Israeli army

Now, since the ground invasion into Gaza, the remarkable and unprecedented statistics of Israeli army casualties testify to the claim that time has not been in favor of Israel. According to BBC Persian, the number of Israeli military personnel killed after the start of the ground operation and entry into Gaza until December 16 has reached 121. The Israeli army has confirmed the death of 426 military personnel from the beginning of the war on October 7 to December 18.

Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper, on December 18, reported, citing Israeli military sources, that more than 5,000 Israeli soldiers have been injured since the beginning of the war. However, Ariel Shimon, an Israeli journalist, believes that Israel does not disclose the true casualty figures. According to this Israeli journalist, the actual number of casualties is more than three times what has been announced.

According to military experts, Israel's main strategy in its various conflicts over the past seven decades has been "surprise" and striking in a short time. However, on October 7, Israel itself fell victim to Hamas's surprise attack. After that, due to Hamas's resistance, it could not quickly achieve its goals as in the past. Therefore, the prolongation of the war, especially in a confined region and in the style of guerrilla and urban warfare, has made the Israeli army vulnerable. On December 16, one of the Israeli commanders who participated in the 2014 war told Reuters, that the broader range of ongoing ground operations in Gaza means the presence of more forces on the ground, allowing for defensive tactics and inflicting more casualties on the invading forces for Hamas.

Friendly fire

It seems natural that fatigue resulting from the prolongation of the war, in addition to increasing casualties for the Israeli army, might also result in more violence due to failures and violations of customary rules of war, lack of necessary focus for planning, and mistakenly attacking its own forces. On December 12, the Israeli army announced in a statement that 20 Israeli military personnel had been killed by their own fire in the Gaza Strip. According to the army's statement, the reasons for the deaths of these soldiers include the large number of forces in the field, the duration of the war, fatigue, lack of operational discipline, and lack of coordination among the forces, among other reasons. The Times of Israel also wrote 13 of these 20 soldiers targeted by their own forces were killed due to the mistakes of fighter jets or tanks. One soldier was killed when a comrade accidentally shot him, two were killed in Israeli explosions, two in collisions with armored vehicles, and two were mistakenly targeted. According to Israeli military analysts, severe fatigue of the soldiers after about two months and a few weeks of war and not adhering to military rules are additional reasons.

However, the incident of the killing of three Israeli captives in the north of Gaza reveals the psychological state and vulnerability of the Israeli army further.

The prolongation of the war and the failure to achieve declared objectives have also caused psychological problems for Israeli soldiers. Maariv newspaper wrote that grief, sorrow, pain, and problems related to sleep and breathing are seen in soldiers. Soldiers returning from the war suffer from mental and physical problems. With the advancement of the war, which is likely to continue for a long time, the level of damage and pain of the military will increase.

↑ An Israeli soldier takes position during the ongoing ground invasion at a location given as Gaza, in this picture released on November 17, 2023.

● REUTERS



Qassempour heading to Zagreb Open in one last shot at Paris slot

Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Kamran Qassempour will make a final attempt to secure a berth at next year's Paris Olympics when taking part at the Zagreb Open Ranking Series, starting January 10. Qassempour will participate in the 97kg contests – one of six freestyle weight classes in Paris – in the Croatian capital as he will be looking to add the Olympic glory to his double 92kg world golds in 2021 and 2022. The Iranian missed out on last week's National Championships – serving as the trials for the international events – due to a hamstring injury but Iran head coach Mohsen Kaveh and his technical staff were convinced to give him a second chance for the Olympic slot. The injury setback kept Qassempour from defending his title in September's World Championships in Belgrade, as well as the

Hangzhou Asian Games in October. Qassempour's previous international appearance came in last December's Freestyle World Cup in Coralville, Iowa, where he represented the country in the 92kg contests before falling to a 5-0 defeat against American great Kyle Snyder – a winner of four world and Olympic golds – in the final showdown's 97kg bout. Two-time world under-23 champion Amir-Ali Azarpira emerged as a contender for a place in the Iranian squad in Paris after winning the 97kg title at the National Championships in Sari. Mohammad-Hossein Mohammadian, who was the Iranian 97kg wrestler at the Tokyo Olympics, looked to be the favorite for the top spot after a first-round victory over injured Mojtaba Goleij but came short against Azarpira in the final showpiece. Iran has already been guaranteed three freestyle slots at the Olympics, thanks to world

medal-winning campaigns for Hassan Yazdani (86kg) and Amirhossein Zare' (125kg), plus Rahman Amouzad's fifth-place finish in the 65kg contests – with the 57kg, 74kg, and 97kg spots at stake. A former world U20 and U23 bronze medalist, Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan dominated the 57kg contests in Sari, defeating 2021 world silver winner Alireza Sarlak in the final, and will likely be Iran's top choice to chase the Olympic quota in the coming months. Hossein Abouzari, meanwhile, made the most of Amirmohammad Yazdani's below-par performance in Sari to grab the 74kg gold and will be joined by Mohammad Nokhodi – 79kg bronze medalist in Belgrade – in an international tournament to decide who will represent the country in April's Asian Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, as well as the Olympic qualifiers.



UWW



DYLAN MARTINEZ/REUTERS

Russia still banned, but 'world changes', says Coe

REUTERS – The Olympic door for Russian track and field athletes remains firmly shut, Sebastian Coe said on Monday, but he also offered them a glimmer of hope by acknowledging “the world changes” and highlighting a working group that is monitoring the situation. Earlier this month the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said that Russians and Belarusians who qualify in their

sport for the Paris 2024 Games can take part as neutrals without flags, emblems or anthems, changing the position of their original blanket ban following the invasion of Ukraine. That followed a recommendation in March that put the onus on international sports federations to decide, with most of them moving to allow the two countries' athletes to return. Athletics, the Games' biggest

and most popular sport, immediately responded by saying they would keep their ban in place, but Coe seemed less certain when speaking to journalists on Monday. “There is no change,” he said. “The most important thing is that the autonomy and independence of international federations to make these judgements is really important. We made a judgement which we believe

was in the best interest of our sport. “Do I see anything changing in the foreseeable future? I don't know. The world changes every five minutes, the situation could change. We do have a working group that is monitoring the situation within the sport and it will advise and guide (the policy-making) Council on what circumstances might need to exist for any exclusion to be lifted.”

Joshua doesn't have the heart to fight me: Wilder

BBC – Deontay Wilder believes Anthony Joshua does not “have the heart” to fight him, but says a bout between the former heavyweight world champions is closer than it ever has been. The pair are on the same bill in Saudi Arabia on Saturday and could fight each other in 2024 if they both win. “I don't want to say he's 100% afraid, but I think he's 75%,” said Wilder. Joshua told BBC Sport he would “love to fight” Wilder, but is eyeing the IBF title first if he beats Otto Wallin. Wilder is one of the greatest knockout punchers in heavyweight history and, while not convinced about Joshua's intentions, remains hopeful of getting him in the ring. “I've learned over the years especially dealing in boxing that nothing is for sure, until it's for sure. And I know that's

a little bit confusing, but what's understood doesn't have to be explained,” the American told BBC Sport in the build-up to Saturday's event in Riyadh. “We'll see what happens. The future is bright and we are farther [in talks] than we've ever been in history. I can say that with certainty.” On a stacked card in Saudi Arabia, Britain's Joshua tops the bill against Sweden's Wallin after Wilder takes on former champion Joseph Parker. Both Joshua and Wilder are on the comeback trail after losing world titles in the past three years to Oleksandr Usyk and Tyson Fury respectively. On why the pair have not yet met, Wilder said: “Money hasn't been the issue. It comes with not having the heart, the will, the courage to step in the ring.”



BBC

Second Announcement

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for Dextrose (DEX)//28000Kg

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of Dextrose (DEX) for Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) production plant from reputable & reliable producer and supplier of said product. Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until Dec 28, 2023. Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: January 09, 2024. Email: n.ahmadian@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-41-34217426

Tender	No	Quantity
Dextrose (DEX)	PVS-0241048	28000 kg

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company (Public Stock)

First turn published: December 14, 2023 Second turn published: December 20, 2023

Second Announcement

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for Diatomite// 22000 kg

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of Diatomite for ABS production plant. Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until January 04, 2024. Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: January 20, 2024. Email: me.rahimi@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-21-88737355#109

Tender	No	Quantity
Diatomite	PVS-0241020	22000 kg

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company (Public Stock)

First turn published: December 14, 2023 Second turn published: December 20, 2023

Houthis vow to keep up Red Sea strikes despite US warnings

Europe losing 'moral ground' over Gaza: *Borrell*

UN agencies voice anger at Israeli attacks on hospitals

International Desk

Europe is losing moral ground with the rest of the world as a result of its stance on Gaza, the EU's foreign policy chief said on Monday.

Speaking at a conference in Aosta, Josep Borrell also said the EU had been unable to adopt a united view because some countries in Europe were feeling guilty as a result of the Holocaust and the Second World War, the Guardian reported.

"There are a certain number of countries that are prepared to support Israel to the limit because they have a bad guilt complex about the Holocaust, and that is not a sentiment that everyone shares," he said. He noted that "relations with the global south had not been very good before October 7, now it has become worse".

He added, "We are losing moral ground with the rest of the world, including in the Middle East." The accusations of double standards seemed massive compared with the EU's standard in Ukraine, he said.

Injured Gazans sitting ducks in hospitals

UN officials voiced anger and disbelief on Tuesday about the situation in Gaza hospitals, where injured people do not have basic supplies and children recovering from amputations are being killed in the ongoing conflict.

Most of Gaza's hospitals are no longer operating due to damage from attacks, Israeli raids, and a lack of fuel and staff. Those still

open are under growing pressure due to both strikes and the growing numbers of sick and injured patients arriving, Reuters wrote.

"I'm furious that children who are recovering from amputations in hospitals are then killed in those hospitals," said James Elder, spokesperson for the UN children's agency.

He added that the Nasser Hospital, the largest operational hospital left in the enclave where he spent time earlier this month, had been shelled twice in the past 48 hours.

"So where do children and families go? They're not safe in hospitals, they're not safe in shelters, and they're certainly not safe in so-called safe zones," he said.

Margaret Harris, a World Health Organization spokesperson, described the situation in Gaza hospitals as "unconscionable".

"The very basics, they do not have them. One of my colleagues described people lying on the floor in severe pain, in agony, but they weren't asking for pain relief. They were asking for water," she said. "It's beyond belief that the world is allowing this to continue."

Meanwhile, Israeli forces raided one of the last functioning hospitals in Gaza's north and bombarded the south with airstrikes that killed at least 28 Palestinians, pressing ahead with their offensive Tuesday with renewed backing from the United States despite rising international alarm.

The air and ground war, launched in response to Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel, has killed nearly 20,000 Palestinians, displaced



People inspect the damage in a room following Israeli bombardment at Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, on December 17, 2023. AFP

some 1.9 million, demolished much of northern Gaza, and sparked attacks on US and Israeli targets across the region.

Yemenis won't forsake Palestinians

The United States condemned "unprecedented" attacks by Houthi (Ansarullah) fighters on Red Sea shipping as they pledged Tuesday to continue military operations despite the announcement of a new maritime protection force.

The flurry of drone and missile attacks by the Ansarullah, the latest of which targeted two vessels on Monday, threaten to up-

end global trade flows, with major shipping firms halting traffic through the Bab al-Mandeb strait, according to AFP.

Pentagon Chief Lloyd Austin warned Tuesday that the attacks "threaten" the free flow of commerce, a day after he announced a multinational task force to quell Ansarullah missile and drone attacks. The task force includes Britain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain, as well as the United States.

It drew Ansarullah's ire, with fighters pledging to continue attacks.

"Even if America succeeds in mo-

bilizing the entire world, our military operations will not stop... no matter the sacrifices it costs us," senior Ansarullah official Mohammed al-Bukhaiti said on X, formerly Twitter.

The group's spokesman Mohammed Abdul Salam said the "US-formed coalition aims to protect Israel and militarize the sea," adding: "Whoever seeks to expand the conflict must bear the consequences of those actions." Yemen's Ansarullah group have launched more than 100 drone and missile attacks, targeting 10 merchant vessels involving more than 35 different countries, according to the Pentagon.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UN chief: JCPOA best available option

XINHUA - The UN political chief said that the organization's secretary-general still considers the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) "the best available option to ensure that the Iranian nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful".

The international community must exhaust "all available diplomatic avenues" to restore the JCPOA, Rosemary DiCarlo told the Security Council on Monday.

Gas stations in Iran back online after cyberattack



SHANA

IFP - Almost all gas stations in Iran are operational a day after about 70 percent of the pumps were hit in a cyberattack, the Iranian deputy oil minister said Tuesday.

Jafar Salari Nassab announced over 40 percent of the total 33,000 gas stations across the country are connected to the smart system for fueling at subsidized prices.

Salari Nassab added that the rationing allocated to the motor vehicles is unaffected and dismissed reports that plans are underway to increase fuel prices in the country.

Second Announcement

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for: **FILTROL GRADED(CLAY-24) TONSIL CO 616 G // 23430KG**

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of FILTROL GRADED(CLAY-24) TONSIL CO 616 G for ABS production plant from reputable & reliable producer and supplier of said product.

Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until 7 days after the first print.

Email: M.iranmakani@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-41-34282973

Tender	No	Quantity
FILTROL GRADED(CLAY-24) TONSIL CO 616 G	PVS-0241044	23430KG

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company (Public Stock)

First turn published: December 14, 2023 Second turn published: December 20, 2023

Second Announcement

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for **BUTYL CHLORIDE // 25,400kg**

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of BUTYL CHLORIDE for polyethylene production plant from reputable & reliable producer and supplier of said product.

Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until December 28, 2023.

Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: January 09, 2024.

Email: l.allafkari@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-41-34282921

Tender	No	Quantity
BUTYL CHLORIDE	PVS-0241050	25,400 kg

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company (Public Stock)

First turn published: December 14, 2023 Second turn published: December 20, 2023

Swedish court upholds life sentence for Iranian citizen

A Swedish appeals court on Tuesday upheld a life sentence conviction for a former Iranian judicial official.

Hamid Nouri is an Iranian citizen who has been illegally imprisoned by the Swedish government for 50 months over unfounded allegations, Mehr news agency wrote.

The 62-year-old Iranian citizen and the Iranian Foreign Ministry have vehemently rejected the accusations of breaching

international humanitarian law leveled by the Swedish court against him, saying that the verdict was issued under the influence of anti-Iran terrorist groups, most notably the Mujahedeen Khalq Organization.

Noury was arrested at a Stockholm airport in November 2019 after Iranian dissidents in Sweden filed police complaints against him. He has been placed in solitary confinement since his illegal arrest.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Autism awareness walk held in Tehran



IRNA – An Autism Awareness Walk was recently held around Chitgar Lake in Tehran with the aim of raising awareness about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) within society. This event was sponsored by members of the autism community in Iran who took on the expenses of the walk as part of their social responsibility. The next Autism Awareness Walk is scheduled to take place in March 2024, coinciding with World Autism Awareness Month, which officially begins on April 2. Families of individuals with autism face the lifelong responsibility of providing constant support and care for their loved ones. Unfortunately, these parents often find themselves in situations where they have to apologize for their children's unintentional behaviors due to a lack of understanding and awareness about autism among those around them. Towards the end of the autism walking event, family members of autistic adults took the opportunity to address the general public, emphasizing the importance of improving public awareness and understanding of the unique behaviors displayed by individuals with autism.

Iran ready to produce med products with Libya

IRNA – Iran's Food and Drug Administration (IFDA) head, Heidar Mohammadi, announced Iran's readiness to produce joint health products with Libya during a meeting with Libya's deputy minister of health, Azzam al-Hadi Omar, in Tehran. According to the senior official at IFDA, Iran is self-sufficient in the production of medicines, medical equipment, food products, cosmetics, and formula. Additionally, Tehran is prepared to collaborate in the production of vaccines, medicines, and other health products, while also offering technology transfer in the healthcare industry to Libya. During the meeting, Deputy Minister of Health in International Affairs, Mohammad Hossein Niknam, emphasized the global significance of healthcare and expressed Tehran's willingness to enhance cooperation in the field of health with Libya. Niknam further highlighted the potential for Iran and Libya to expand their collaboration in joint medicine production, medical equipment, medical research, and medical education.

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Low tariffs are Iranian healthcare's Achilles' heel

Social Desk

Medicine is a highly esteemed academic field in Iran, with numerous aspiring teenagers dreaming of becoming doctors. However, the path to becoming a doctor is rigorous and selective. Only a fraction of candidates who take the national university entrance exam are ultimately accepted into medical schools. After completing the seven-year general medicine course and passing the necessary exams, doctors enter specialized fields, requiring an additional four to five years of training before practicing medicine in their chosen specialty. Despite the challenges doctors face in entering and excelling in specialized fields, medical tariffs have failed to keep pace with inflation or reflect their hard work. As a result, many positions in specialized fields remain vacant each year, compelling some doctors to

turn to cosmetic work for higher earnings, while others opt to migrate abroad. The income disparity between doctors in the public and private sectors further exacerbates the issue, creating an imbalance within the healthcare system.

Dr. Reza Jabbari, a distinguished neurologist, offers insights into this pressing issue. When asked about his motivation to pursue a career in medicine, he shares his personal experience, stressing his deep interest in neurosurgery from a young age. He attended medical school at Isfahan University of Medical Sciences and pursued neurosurgery at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences.

Jabbari is also known for his charitable work, providing free-of-charge treatment to deprived areas. He has taken numerous trips to regions such as Lali, Andika, and Haftkel in Masjed Soleyman, where he has conducted charitable treatment programs. Over the years, Jabbari has formed a community called Imam Reza (PBUH) with young specialist doctors who share the spirit of charity.



● IRNA

Regarding the declining desire of doctors to remain in the public sector and university hospitals, the neurologist identifies income disparity, unfair payment mechanisms, and delayed payments as major factors. He emphasizes the urgent need for cooperation between the Ministry of Health, the Health Commission of the Parliament, and other responsible entities to resolve these issues and restore balance to the healthcare system. Disturbingly, recent statistics reveal that over 6,000 doctors emigrated from Iran last year. This

exodus raises concerns, as neighboring countries entice Iranian doctors and specialists with attractive salaries. The Persian Gulf countries, in particular, are trying to position themselves as regional treatment hubs, competing with developed nations. The Ministry of Health, as the leading entity in the healthcare system, must urgently devise a fundamental solution to this problem to prevent further damage.

Jabbari further underlines the severe consequences of inadequate medical service tariffs, including long queues at public hospitals

and clinics, which deprive people of high-quality and timely medical services. If left unaddressed, these problems will continue to weaken the overall health and treatment system. However, with coordinated efforts among various components of the health system and the implementation of decisive actions, these issues can be mitigated.

The disparity in medical tariffs in Iran poses a significant threat to the healthcare system, leading to a decline in doctors' desire to remain in the public sector and university hospitals. The income

imbalance and delayed payments have resulted in dissatisfaction and demotivation among doctors. As a consequence, many doctors choose to migrate abroad, leaving crucial positions vacant. Urgent collaboration between the Ministry of Health, the Health Commission of the Parliament, and other responsible entities is essential to address these issues and restore balance to the healthcare system.

**This is a modified version of an interview with Dr. Reza Jabbari published on Tasnim News Agency.*

Daydreaming might serve a vital purpose

Daydreaming is looking less like a vice and more like a virtue the more that neuroscientists and psychologists dig into the phenomenon. Scientists at Harvard University have now found preliminary evidence that when mice "daydream" or quietly reflect on something they saw earlier that day, their brains are rewired in a useful way for memory and learning, Science Alert reported.

That hypothesis still needs to be tested in further experiments, but it seems that when mice are shown a black-and-white checkered pattern, they can still visualize the image in their mind's eye after it is removed from sight. This "daydream" effect, where the visual cortex is busy visualizing an image that is no longer there, only occurred when the mouse was un-

stimulated, in a calm and relaxed state with small pupils. It is this non-stimulated, dreamy state that scientists at Harvard think could have a similar effect to sleep, consolidating memories and improving learning.

"We wanted to know how this daydreaming process occurred on a neurobiological level, and whether these moments of quiet reflection could be important for learning and memory," explains neurobiologist Nghia Nguyen from Harvard University. The study included 13 mice, which

were shown two different black-and-white images 64 times throughout the day for two seconds a piece in an otherwise non-stimulating environment. Over the course of several days, these experiments were repeated while the team at Harvard monitored the electrical activity of 7,000 neurons in the brains of eight of the mice, including nerve cells in its visual cortex and hippocampus – a region strongly associated with memory consolidation. Each of the two images ultimately triggered a different pattern of neural activity in the lateral visual cortex of the mice. This part of the brain is associated with object recognition and discerning the features

of shapes. The findings suggest that the mouse brain is encoding each image with a different pattern of neural activity. But what's really interesting is that after these images were replaced by a blank computer screen, the mouse visual cortex sometimes "reactivated", exciting a similar pattern of neurons to the removed image. This brief reactivation in the visual cortex was often coupled with sharp-wave ripples in the hippocampus – a sign that the brain was effectively encoding visual information despite the absence of a stimulus. Over time, brain activity upon seeing an image started to resemble brain activity when daydreaming about that image. This is a sign that daydreaming was strength-

ening some neuronal connections while weakening others, creating a more efficient stimulus response overall. "When you see two different images many times, it becomes important to discriminate between them," explains Nguyen. "Our findings suggest that daydreaming may guide this process by steering the neural patterns associated with the two images away from each other." The findings suggest that when the brain is not stimulated, it can slip off into an imagined world, where mental images can actively reorganize the brain's future responses to stimuli. Whether this also applies to human brains is unknown, but previous studies have shown that asking people to recall an image does increase brain activity in their visual cortex and hippocampus.

● TASNIM



What's really interesting is that after these images were replaced by a blank computer screen, the mouse visual cortex sometimes reactivated.

