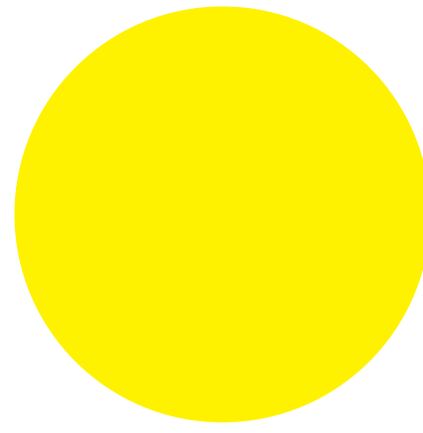


Public opinion ultimately calls shots, not UNSC



Iran Daily

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Talaeih missile system is displayed in an unveiling ceremony at a naval base in the southern Iranian port of Konarak, on December 24, 2023. nja.ir

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Iranian students eyeing world robotics title



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NEWS IN BRIEF

**INTA says
eight-month
tax collection
exceeds
\$12.6b**

Economy Desk

The total amount of taxes and duties collected by the Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) during the first eight months of the current Iranian year topped \$12.6 billion (631 trillion rials). Announcing the above on Sunday, INTA head Mohammad-Hadi Sobhanian said that the Supreme Audit Court of Iran is very effective in helping to explain the destinations of the collected taxes, IRNA reported. Tax exemptions have been doubled for salary earners with the aim of reducing the economic pressure, the INTA head added. He pointed to basing the tax credit rating for granting facilities as well as eliminating injustice in provincial taxes as the main steps taken by his organization, and said a reform has been prioritized by INTA on tax collection system of the country.

**Iran
exporting
aquatics to
55 countries:
Official**

The secretary general of Iran's fisheries Production and Trading Union said the country is exporting aquatic animals to more than 50 countries. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the 7th International Congress of Fisheries and Aquatic Research held in Karaj, Alborz Province on Sunday, Ali Akbar Khodaei said \$500-\$600 million worth of aquatics are exported from the country overseas annually, reported Tasnim news agency. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution has placed special emphasis on the subject of sea-based development, as steps have been taken in the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi in the fisheries industry, he stated. Khodaei called on the private sector to make its utmost effort to realize the objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture, especially in the field of fisheries. Increasing the efficiency of technical know-how in this industry has been cited as one of the main goals of organizing the congress, he said, adding that under an agreement inked by the Vice Presidency for the Science and Technology and the Ministry of Agriculture, projects in the field of fisheries will be supported. Moving towards the optimization of the production infrastructures based on technology is the sole way to overcome the existing challenges, Khodaei concluded.

Relations with Europe reviving: *MP*

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writers

A member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said Iran and the European countries are reviving their relations, which had been damaged following last year's unrest in Iran. In an interview with Iran Daily, Jalil Rahimi Jahanabadi said that the Europeans' miscalculation of Iran's social conditions and last year's unrest in the country led to taking hardline and aggressive stances against Iran, followed by poor relations between Tehran and some European countries. Jahanabadi said that the biased approach adopted by the Western media which spread lies about Iran had greatly affected Europeans' analysis of the situation in Iran. The death of 22-year-old Iranian girl Mahsa Amini in police custody on September 16, 2022, led to protests across the country

which turned violent in some regions. Jahanabadi, who is also the head of the Iran-Portugal Parliamentary Friendship Group, said that the Western media had also affected relations between Iran and Portugal. However, he said that ties between the two sides are improving after the return of calm to the streets of Iranian cities.

He said that we will arrange a trip to Iran by a group of representatives of Portugal's different sectors to witness the real situation in Iran.

Jahanabadi described the NATO-member state as an important country in the European Union, saying that Portugal is of great importance for Iran due to its strategic geographical position in the continents' southwest.

The Iranian lawmaker said that Portugal has turned to a hub for computer programming and technology in Europe and Iran is interested in expanding cooperation with the European country in the fields of information technology and computer programming. Currently, many powerful com-

panies active in the field of European computer programming are operating in Portugal, and Iranian companies can cooperate in these fields with the Portuguese companies in the form of joint projects, the Iranian lawmaker said. Jahanabadi said Iran sent a group of the members of the Parliamentary Friendship Group of Iran and Portugal and representatives of different departments and sectors of Iran to Portugal almost two years ago. During the trip, both sides discussed cooperation in various economic, cultural and scientific fields.

Referring to capacities of Portugal in the field of meat production, Jahanabadi said importing meat from

Portugal is economically more efficient than other countries, including those of Latin America.

On the other hand, Iran is a four-season country with a suitable platform for producing all kinds of agricultural products that can be sold in Portugal, which has seen a 13 percent growth in exports in 2023. In addition, the two countries can cooperate in cultural and sports fields and holding joint cultural festivals.

The Iranian official said that according to statistics, food and agricultural products, metals, minerals, ores, machinery and other equipment were the main exports from Portugal to Iran in 2020.

In the same year, minerals and ores, agricultural and chemical products were Iran's main exports to Portugal.

**Tehran, Dushanbe seek €500m in trade**

The head of the international affairs department of Iran's Ministry of Energy said that Iran and Tajikistan have targeted to boost annual trade to €500 million. The two countries have witnessed considerable growth in bilateral trade during the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi, while more than \$91 million worth of non-oil products were exported from Iran to Tajikistan over the past two years, Mojtaba Akbari told IRNA. The two countries have managed to strengthen political and economic relations in various fields due to their cultural, historical and lingual commonalities, he

emphasized.

Pointing to the development of trade-economic relations between the two countries, Akbari noted that Iran and Tajikistan inked seven cooperation agreements in September 2021 during Raisi's first visit to Dushanbe.

Nineteen cooperation documents were signed between the two countries in November 2023 during Raisi's second visit to Tajikistan, he said, adding, "In addition, 17 cooperation documents had been inked between the two countries after the visit of the Tajik president to Iran in 2021." He pointed to the export of con-

struction materials, food products, detergents, petrochemical products and agricultural equipment and machinery from Iran to Tajikistan and added that an exhibition will be held in the Tajik capital of Dushanbe on December 26 with the participation of 36 large Iranian companies.

In this exhibition, Iranian companies will showcase their latest achievements and products, he continued.

Boosting the annual bilateral trade to €500 million has been cited as one of the main objectives of an upcoming visit by Iranian Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian to Tajikistan, he said.

**Some 1,100 Iranian firms producing medical equipment: *Deputy minister***

Iran's deputy minister of industry, mine and trade for industrial affairs put the number of companies manufacturing medical equipment and machinery at 1,100.

Most of the medical equipment and machinery produced by these companies meet European standards, noted Mohammad Mousavi.

Speaking to IRNA, he pointed out that the competent domestic companies have attained a high capability of manufacturing medical-related equipment, while observing international standards.

Following a visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to

Indonesia, Iranian companies exported a surgery robot to the Southeast Asian country, he said, adding that Iranian companies can export advanced medical equipment and machinery to other countries as well.

The time of delivery and quality of the product are the main two principles that should be taken into consideration in this field, the deputy industry minister emphasized.

Mousavi pointed to the production of face masks and other medical supplies during the global coronavirus pandemic and noted that domestic companies managed to meet the

demands during this critical condition.

While Western countries had imposed tough sanctions against the country, especially in the field of medicine and medical equipment, domestic companies managed to manufacture hi-tech medical equipment and machinery, he said. Presently, two Iranian companies are producing advanced ventilators (breathing machines), the deputy industry minister stated.

Efforts are underway to get a considerable share of the global market in the field of manufacturing advanced medical equipment, he added.

Maragheh's architectural legacy are five domes

Iranica Desk

The city of Maragheh in East Azarbaijan Province, with its five-tomb tower dating back to both pre-Islamic and post-Islamic civilizations, boast a rich history, playing a pivotal role in

the architectural history of its time. Comprising the five towers named Sorkh Dome, Modavvar Dome, Kabud Dome, Ghaffariyeh Dome, and Gooy Burj Dome, along with other historical monuments, Maragheh was once renowned as the city of towers.



Sorkh Dome

● [1sajar.com](#)

Sorkh Dome (Red Dome) stands in south-western Maragheh. It was constructed in 1147 CE, in the Razi architectural style, by Bani Bakr Mohammad ibn Bandan ibn Mohsen during the Seljuk period. The dome features two inscriptions — one on the north side and another on the west side. The north side inscription bears the name of its constructor, while the west side inscription narrates the story of its construction.

Following the conclusion of the Razi architectural period in Iran, the Azari style emerged, marking the beginning of Sorkh Dome's construction. Consequently, the influence of Razi architecture is evident in its design. The structure, a square cube-

shaped complex, consists of a basement, a main chamber, and several steps, constructed using a combination of brick and tile, reflecting the fusion of Razi and Azari architectural styles.

The inscriptions on the north and west sides each hold specific meanings, while the east and south sides feature verses from the Holy Qur'an. Cultural heritage experts have suggested that the cavities on the dome's edges indicate its previous use as an observatory. This distinguished building has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List. Adjacent to Sorkh Dome, an ancient and valuable sundial, though now only serving a display function, has lost its original technical purpose.

Kabud Dome

Kabud Dome (Blue Dome) is a structure dating back to the Seljuk and Ilkhanid periods. There are varying opinions regarding its construction period, with some attributing it to the Mongols. It is estimated that the construction of the Kabud Dome took place around the year 1196 CE. In contrast to the Red Dome, which features four sides, the Blue Dome is a ten-sided conical structure

comprising a basement and a main chamber. An inscription in the basement has led some to believe it was the tomb of Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan's mother, although this theory has been dismissed by cultural heritage experts. The basement walls are adorned with engravings of words such as "Allah" and "Al-hamd," with turquoise-colored bricks.



● [hotelbashee.com](#)

Modavvar Dome

Modavvar Dome (Round Tower), dating back to the Seljuk period, stands about 10 meters from the Red Dome, allowing for easy visitation of both structures. This tower, serving as a personal mausoleum, with an unknown identity, has not had any theory about its purpose confirmed. Historically, the tower had a defensive function and, therefore, its exterior decoration was not a focal point. Similarities between this tower and the Red Dome are evident in the inscriptions adorning the door frames of both buildings.



● [kojaro.com](#)

Ghaffariyeh Dome

Ghaffariyeh Dome is situated adjacent to the Sufi Chay River, northwest of Maragheh. During the Ilkhanid period, Sultan Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan commissioned the construction of this two-story building. The dome, a square-shaped structure, is embellished with bricks and features a large dome adorned with black, white, and turquoise tiles. Inside, brick columns in the shape of diamonds are significantly visible.



● [irancultura.it](#)

Gooy Burj Dome

Gooy Burj Dome, located in the Atabak neighborhood within the alley of Sabzichiha, stands in the fifth cemetery of Maragheh. Regrettably, over time, this edifice has fell to ruin, and no inscriptions or signs have been found to help determine its historical significance.

Like other edifices, this tower is built with a shabestan (an underground space found in traditional Iranian buildings), a domed structure erected on a high stone foundation.

The exterior facade showcases large lozenge-shaped patterns crafted from bricks. The raised patterns at the entrance, made with plaster and inlaid tiles, stand in stark contrast to the expansive ornamentation of the Ghaffariyeh Dome, indicating that the tower is notably more contemporary.

Resumption of archaeological excavation in Konar Sandal Hills



Iranica Desk

Archaeological survey has commenced in the Konar Sandal Hills in Jiroft after a 17-year hiatus under the supervision of the prominent archaeologist, Seyyed Mansour Seyyed Sajjadi, known as the savior of the Shahr-e Sookhteh (Burnt City) of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, announced by Saeed Shahrokhi, the director general of Kerman Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization. Shahrokhi emphasized the significance of the Konar Sandal Hills, noting that the pause in studies had resulted in the deterioration of certain parts of the hills and the artifacts discovered there, following excavations conducted in 2001 and 2007. The primary objective of the new phase of excavation is to rescue, assess, and preserve the artifacts found at the site, IRNA wrote. Furthermore, Shahrokhi highlighted the need to document and create a database for

the artifacts unearthed in previous phases, as many of them have not yet been studied. He stressed that this is a top priority for those involved in the project.

Shahrokhi also lauded Seyyed Sajjadi as a distinguished Iranian archaeologist, whose extensive years of excavation and dedication have contributed to the global recognition of Shahr-e Sookhteh.

The historical sites of Jiroft, housing valuable artifacts dating back to the third millennium BCE, are among the most significant historical sites in the world.

Located 30 kilometers from Jiroft, the Konar Sandal Hill comprises southern and northern hills, with heights of 13 and 21 meters, respectively, situated a few kilometers apart. The hills have yielded numerous historical artifacts, including clay sculptures, engraved pottery, and jewelry, all of which are preserved in the Jiroft Archaeological Museum.



Members of the United Nations Security Council vote on a proposal to demand that Israel allow aid access to the Gaza Strip - via land, sea and air routes - and set up UN monitoring of the humanitarian assistance delivered, during a meeting at the UN headquarters in New York, US, on December 22, 2023.

REUTERS

Public opinion ultimately calls shots, not UNSC

Right to self-defense belongs to Palestinians, not Israel



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

After a series of unsuccessful attempts, the United Nations Security Council achieved a breakthrough on Friday by passing a resolution aimed at bolstering and streamlining humanitarian aid to the people of the Gaza Strip. The United States which previously vetoed resolutions calling for a cease-fire, chose to abstain this time, alongside Russia. Prior to the voting session, the US engaged in consultations and made a major revision to the proposed resolution by removing the call for an immediate halt to the Israeli aggression. To gain further insights into the matter, Iran Daily has spoken with Mehdi Zakerian, an international relations experts and university lecturer.

IRAN DAILY: After several attempts, a resolution was eventually passed in the UN Security Council over the Gaza war and Israeli crimes. What is the significance of the latest resolution?

ZAKERIAN: This time, the US chose to abstain from vetoing the proposed resolution, which marks a notable shift. The US and Israel had vehemently opposed any resolution pertaining to the Gaza war. However, it seems that Washington has finally yielded to global demands. The international community highlights the dire situation in Gaza, characterized by genocide, grave human rights violations, lack of safety for civilians, and limited access for relief efforts.

By endorsing the resolution, the Security Council slammed Israeli crimes and demand an end to such acts. Therefore, with the US abstaining and not vetoing the resolution, Washington's green light for Israel to continue its crimes has faded. In fact, the containment of Israel and

America's cooperation with the international community may be the key aspects of this resolution.

Why do you think America chose not to veto the proposed resolution and instead abstained?

A: The global public conscience has expressed vehement opposition to the Israeli massacre in Gaza, resonating loudly in various countries worldwide. While the US previously condoned Israel's acts, it now finds itself compelled to align with this global demand.

The resolution of global public opinion carries more weight than the Security Council resolution and had been expressed much earlier than the resolution against Israel and the US. Without these global condemnations, or in other words, without the resolution of global public opinion, we might not have witnessed the same outcome in the Security Council.

The recent resolution explicitly calls for the establishment of conditions for a “sustainable cessation of hostilities” serving as a potential foundation for the future, and shattered the alliance between Israel and the US in committing war crimes.



Humanitarian aid trucks wait in line to be inspected at the Kerem Shalom crossing, amid Israel's ongoing war against Gaza on December 12, 2023.

Can we hope that this resolution will pave the way for additional resolutions or significant measures to end the war in Gaza?

The recent resolution explicitly calls for the establishment of conditions for a "sustainable cessation of hostilities" serving as a potential foundation for the future. It shattered the alliance between Israel and the US in committing war crimes and gross human rights violations, underscoring the fact that human rights resolutions cannot be vetoed within the international system.

Conventionally, when a major power exercises veto power, other countries tend to avoid engaging with the issue, perceiving it as futile. However, this time it was demonstrated that human rights issues are not subject to veto power. In terms of international law, this marks a revolutionary or momentous event. Gross human rights violations, including mass killings and war crimes resulting in civilian casualties, bear consequences for the perpetrators, even when committed by a major power or an ally who has its full support.

While a major power may seek to disregard such inhumane acts, public opinion is becoming increasingly sensitive to them. Thirteen member states of the Security Council, apart from the United States and Russia which abstained, voted in favor of the resolution, emphasizing the imperative to halt these inhumane acts and commence aid to the affected population.

Although the US refrained from vetoing the resolution, it managed to take off the issue of an immediate cease-fire during the preliminary consultations.

Indeed, this resolution does not signify the end of the war. While the Security Council has called for aid to the people of Gaza, they still acknowledge Israel's claim of self-defense. However, differing opinions have emerged regarding Israel's right to legitimate defense. Personally, I do not hold such a perspective for Israel. The fundamental issue lies in Israel's occupation of land, with its inhabitants fighting to free themselves from this occupation.

What occurred on October 7 at the hands of Hamas can be perceived as a natural reaction to Israel's occupation. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of human rights and conventions pertaining to war, certain objections can be raised regarding the actions of Hamas fighters on that day. Nonetheless, this does not alter the fact that Israel remains the occupying force, and the right to legitimate defense belongs to the Palestinians, not Israel.

Alongside the tragic events of the Gaza war, a notable phenomenon has emerged in a more pronounced form—the influence of public opinion worldwide. Public sentiment has gradually been able to sway the positions of politicians and statesmen from countries that support Israel, or even modify them. Can this power potentially lead to positive outcomes for the Palestinians in the future?

Absolutely. The power of public opinion has indeed become a valuable asset in international relations. The portrayal of events or phenomena in the world significantly impacts the shaping of public sentiment. In the early stages of the war, particularly after October 7, the Israelis made considerable efforts to craft the narrative they desired. By emphasizing the events that transpired on that day and subsequent to the Hamas attack, they painted themselves as the oppressed party, managing to influence public opinion to some extent. Additionally, certain behaviors, such as celebrations in countries that support Palestine, inadvertently contributed to this portrayal of Israel.

Israel believed that with this carefully constructed image, it had the greenlight to take any action. However, it failed to realize that public opinion is vigilant and observant of unfolding events. As the truth gradually emerged and indefensible crimes against the people of Gaza came to light, public opinion began to recognize the discrepancy between the image Israel presented and the realities on the ground in Gaza.

Consequently, widespread condemnation of the massacre in Gaza ensued. Currently, Israel has almost no support from global public opinion, and this influential force can continue to exert pressure on states that support Israel, ultimately pushing for a cease-fire.

Yemen, a thorny issue for US



By Jaafar
Qannadbashi
Middle East affairs
expert

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

According to reports, several countries, including Britain, Spain, Canada, France, Bahrain, led by the United States, are planning to establish a maritime alliance to ensure trade security in the Red Sea. The measure is a response to Yemeni attacks on ships bound for Israel in the body of water. The formation and implementation of attainable goals by such a coalition will inevitably escalate tensions in the region, particularly affecting transportation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait. The United States has already made efforts to prevent the war from spiraling out of Gaza and the emergence of new fronts against Israel and has stuck to it. Thus, it appears that the US is not contemplating an offensive against Yemen. Yemen has become a complex issue for both the United States and Israel, presenting a thorny problem to resolve. The Americans understand that waging a war with Yemen would be akin to stepping into a quagmire with no guarantee of a safe exit. Yemen could potentially become another Afghanistan for the United States, incurring significant costs without achieving objectives. Moreover, the situation in Yemen differs from that of Afghanistan, as the Houthis have eight years of experience battling the Saudi-led coalition. Furthermore, their advantageous geographical position and military capabilities contribute to Yemen's strength. Therefore, an American attack on Yemen or targeting the

Houthis would not resolve the issue but instead initiate a new regional situation fraught with its own challenges for the United States. Insecurity of the vital Bab al-Mandeb waterway would likely be a primary concern, adversely affecting America and its allies.

Engaging in a war with Yemen could be a protracted war that would consume American resources for years to come. The Americans are well aware of this reality, which might explain their lack of desire to lock horns with the Yemenis.

The US seeks to establish coalitions, as it did against ISIS previously, aiming to exert influence and shape the opinions of regional countries by creating such alliances.

On the other hand, the Yemenis have taken a prudent stance, emphasizing that only ships destined for Israel in the Red Sea would be targeted, while vessels sailing to destinations other than Israel are not a source of concern for them. In fact, the Yemenis took away the excuse from the US that they had endangered maritime trade in the Red Sea. It is evident that America's primary motive is not sea trade security but rather Yemeni measures against Israel, which are unrelated to maritime trade.

However, it seems unlikely that the establishment of such a coalition will stop Yemen's actions against Israel. The Yemenis have successfully resisted the Saudi-led coalition for eight years and will not easily capitulate to American pressure. It is noteworthy that Saudi Arabia is not among the countries announced to be part of the maritime alliance. For now, Riyadh has chosen a policy of neither war nor peace toward Yemen.



People dance on the deck of the Galaxy Leader commercial ship, seized by Yemen's Houthis last month, off the coast of al-Salif, Yemen, on December 5, 2023.

Iranian students eyeing world robotics title



● RSI

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

The elite children of Iran are among the favorites to claim the world robotics title in 2024, according to the head of the country's student robotics team, which was recently crowned the champion at the UniKL International Robattle Competition in Malaysia.

The Iranian team beat China and the host country to the top spot in the three-day continental event, held by the Universiti Kuala Lumpur in mid-December.

"The 34-member team, comprising 24 boys and 10 girls, took part in four categories of sumo, line follower, innovation, and technical report leagues," Nader Nobakht told Iran Daily.

"Twelve teams, mostly from East and Southeast Asian countries, participated at the event. South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and India are the top robotics teams in the conti-

nent," Nobakht added.

"The Iranian team took part at the world championships, contested by 34 teams, four months ago, finishing as the runner-up in China," said the head of the team, adding: "Given the Iranian children's skills and determination, I'm sure our team is more than capable of winning the world title, and we have already set sights on achieving that goal next year."

"Iranian students are best known for being so smart and highly talented in the world, and those attributes make a massive contribution when it comes to robotics contests.

"Iranian children are quick learners and good at communicating with participants from other countries. Personally speaking, I believe their talent and smartness are even more valuable than the national resources such as oil and gas for Iran, if the country is to reach the highest scientific and technological level worldwide."

Nobakht added: "Our children excel at different scientific competitions around the world, but they will need to be provided with more modern-day equipment and facilities to flourish as professionals when they grow older." Asked about the process to pick the robotics team, Nobakht said: "The children's talent is first recognized by their parents, before they are introduced to the Robotics Society of Iran. The students then take training courses at the College of Engineering, the University of Tehran, and participate in an annual competition held by the university, where the top students are picked for the national team."

"Our top priority is to have students from every corner of the country in the team, as there were children from numerous provinces, namely Isfahan, Fars, Kerman, Khuzestan, and Khorasan Razavi, in the squad that headed to the Malaysian capital."

Iranian female footballer Mohammadi dies in car crash



● JAVAD NADERIPOUR/footballi.net

Sports Desk

Iranian footballer Melika Mohammadi, a member of

the women's national team, died in a car accident near the southeast city of Bam. She was 23.

Two of Mohammadi's Bam Khatoon FC teammates, Behnaz Taherkhani and Zahra Khajavi, and the

male driver suffered severe injuries during the incident when the taxi car overturned near the Bagh Chamak crossroad, five kilometers outside Bam, in the early hours of Sunday.

Khatoon Bam, the top team in the Iranian Women's Pro League, was to host Malavan FC – second in the table on goal difference – on Friday, but the game has been called off after the tragic incident, Gelareh Nazemi, the head of the Iranian league organization, said.

Mohammadi was a center-back in the national team's starting XI during October's Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Perth, Australia, where double defeats against the host (2-0) and the Philippines (1-0) either side of a goalless draw against the Chinese Taipei saw Maryam Azmoun's side finish third in Group A and fail to reach the third round of the qualifiers.

Joshua wins in style but Wilder suffers shock loss in Riyadh

BBC – Anthony Joshua put in a terrific performance to beat Otto Wallin inside the distance but Deontay Wilder's shock points loss to Joseph Parker on the same bill scuppered plans for the long-awaited heavyweight showdown.

Briton Joshua boxed magnificently in Saudi Arabia, dominating Wallin before the Swede's corner pulled him out of the fight at the end of the fifth.

Wilder admitted all the talk of a fight at least five years in the making had been "a distraction", although Joshua more than did his part.

After the fight, promoter Eddie Hearn said Joshua is most likely going to face Croatia's Filip Hrgovic for a vacant IBF world title, bidding to become a three-time world champion.

But as the dust settles in Riyadh, many

of Joshua know Wilder lost to Parker." UFC star Conor McGregor and footballer Cristiano Ronaldo watched on as Joshua made his ring walk.

On a dramatic night for heavyweight boxing, there was a noticeably low-key atmosphere in the Kingdom Arena, with plenty of empty seats in the 6,000 capacity venue.

Joshua, unlike Wilder, began strongly.



Anthony Joshua (L) and Otto Wallin exchange punches during a heavyweight fight in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on December 23, 2023. ● RICHARD PELHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Earlier in the night, American Wilder appeared a shadow of himself in Riyadh, and was hurt badly in the eighth as New Zealander Parker was awarded a unanimous decision.

"I heard that Deontay lost. So what? He'll be back. Deontay, everything that he said about me, I could rip him apart right now, but I'm going to take the higher ground," Joshua said.

"You can come back. If he wanted to, he can come back. I'm sure everyone still wants to see that fight."

Parker, also a former world champion, was awarded a unanimous decision with the judges' scoring it 118-111, 118-110 and 120-108.

Saudi organisers had already pencilled in the Joshua-Wilder bout for next year. While no contract had been signed, the pair were expected to enter the ring post-fight and announce a deal to fight at some point in early 2024.

boxing fans will be cursing their luck, as Joshua v Wilder slips away once again. Wilder entered the ring wearing a crown, but it has been almost four years since he reigned over the heavyweight division.

The inactive Wilder had boxed just three minutes in the past two years, signs of ring rust were expected. But losing rounds is nothing new to Wilder. Numerous times before he has looked out of his depth, only to unleash that ferocious right hand.

Parker, 31, grew in confidence and traded with Wilder in the fourth, whipping a left hook into the body and hurting Wilder with an exchange on the inside. Wilder refused to rule out retirement, but with just one win in four years his next move is uncertain.

With Joshua moments from making his ring entrance, his promoter Eddie Hearn told TNT: "It was the most one-sided heavyweight fight I've ever seen. It's ruined our plans. We've got to go let Antho-

The 34-year-old delivered a gut-wrenching body shot in the first and made southpaw Wallin's legs buckle in the second with straight rights down the barrel. The 2012 Olympic gold medallist has transitioned from an explosive power-punching finisher to a smarter, less reckless, boxer.

The Watford fighter called the win "just another fight" and although he did not rule out a bout with Wilder in the future, he now seems ready to set his sights on challenging for a world title.

With Oleksandr Usyk v Tyson Fury on 17 February in Saudi Arabia, a potential rematch between that pair could see the IBF title become vacant. A belt Joshua and Hrgovic could contest.

"We've got bigger ambitions," Joshua said of his three wins this year. "As I said to Louis Theroux, we don't celebrate when we win these fights, we celebrate when we win titles."



Nader Nobakht
● IRAN DAILY

Pistons equal 26-match NBA losing-streak record

BBC – The Detroit Pistons lost 126-115 to the Brooklyn Nets as they equalled the NBA record of 26 defeats in a row during a season.

They join the Cleveland Cavaliers from 2010-11 and the Philadelphia 76ers in 2013-14 in sharing the record for the longest single-season losing streak.

"Our guys don't want to be a part of any kind of losing streak, whatever. But every day they come back with focus and drive and grit trying to win a game," Pistons coach Monty Williams said.

The Pistons got to within two points of their opponents when they trailed 77-75 in the third quarter before the Nets pulled away and finished the quarter 98-82 in front on the way to victory.

Mikal Bridges scored 29 points with six rebounds and seven assists for the Nets, while Jaden Ivey top scored for the Pistons with 23 points as he also

contributed six rebounds and seven assists.

The all-time longest losing streak in NBA history is a 28-game run by the Sixers spread between the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons.



● USA TODAY SPORTS

Navy takes delivery of homegrown cruise missiles, choppers

The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy has taken delivery of a range of domestically-designed and manufactured military equipment, including strategic cruise missile systems and helicopters furnished with electronic warfare systems. The new weapons were supplied to the naval forces during a ceremony attended by Chief Commander of the Iranian Army Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani and other senior military figures in Iran's southeastern port city of Konarak on Sunday, Press TV reported. The arrivals included the Talayieh strategic cruise

missile system, Nasir cruise missile system, helicopters with first-ever homegrown electronic warfare systems, and light military helicopters for reconnaissance purposes. Surface-to-surface missile systems with eight launchers, Sanjar smart loitering and suicide drone mounted on Jamaran destroyer, a multipurpose drone system used for electronic warfare and surveillance operations, a diver detection system, and Sirvan tugboat to be used in ports and anchorages were also among them. Speaking at the event, Irani described Talayieh as a smart cruise missile with a range of over 1,000 kilometers (621 miles) that can change course during

flight and choose a new target before striking and destroying it. Nasir cruise missile, with a range of more than 100 kilometers, offers a high destructive force against enemy targets, and can be mounted on rocket launching vessels of different classes, the commander stated. The Iranian Navy's new helicopters have been furnished with a range of electronic warfare systems, which can deceive various missiles. Moreover, the naval force's reconnaissance copters have Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) systems fitted in. The systems allow the aircraft to undertake both naval combat and civilian maritime missions.



Nasir cruise missile system is put on display during a ceremony in Iran's southeastern port city of Konarak on December 24, 2023. aja.ir

Russian envoy summoned over isles statement

Iran has summoned the charge d'affaires of Russia in Tehran in protest at a recent joint statement issued by Russia and several Arab countries on Iran's three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb, and the Lesser Tunb. The assistant director general of the Persian Gulf Department of Iran's Foreign Ministry on Saturday summoned the Russian diplomat in the absence of the Russian ambassador, IRNA reported. The development came after the final statement of the 6th Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum, which was held in Morocco on December 20, reiterated the UAE's baseless claims about the three Iranian islands.

The Iranian diplomat conveyed the Islamic Republic's "strong protest" in writing to the Russian envoy over Moscow's repeated support for the "groundless claims" that were included in the statement.

The Iranian official reminded the Russian diplomat of "the necessity of showing respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries as one of the most recognized and fundamental principles in international relations."

For his part, the Russian diplomat said he would convey Iran's strong protest to his country's authorities as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov has reiterated his country's full respect for Iran's territorial integrity.

In a Saturday meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, Bogdanov said that respect for Iran's territorial integrity is a fundamental part of Russia's foreign policy, Press TV reported. During the meeting, Bogdanov briefed Jalali about the 6th Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum.

Iran to take Sweden to ICJ over Nouri verdict: MP

The chairwoman of the Human Rights Committee at the Iranian Parliament said the country will file a complaint with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Sweden's judiciary for illegally prosecuting and handing life imprisonment to former official Hamid Nouri. Zohreh Elahian made the remarks on Sunday, a few days after the Stockholm Court of Appeals upheld a life sentence for Nouri, who was arrested in 2019 under unfounded allegations of human rights violations, Press TV reported. "By this ruling, the Swedish judicial system showed that it is strongly influenced by the propaganda of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group and that it issued a life sentence based on the cult's baseless complaint," she said.

"Nouri's family reserves the right not to recognize the verdict issued by the Swedish National Court due to its non-compliance with legal standards, to lodge a complaint with international conventions, and to pursue the case at the International Court of Justice."

The former Iranian judiciary official was put on trial on unfounded allegations staged against him by elements representing the MKO terrorist group that has openly boasted about carrying out terrorist operations against Iranian officials and civilians perceived to be supporters of the government.

The terrorist group had falsely claimed that Nouri was involved in the execution and torture of MKO members in 1988, baseless charges he has vehemently rejected.

Muttaqi: Kabul paving ground for return of Afghan migrants

International Desk

Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said that Kabul is trying to pave the ground for the return of Afghan migrants to their homeland as soon as possible.

In an interview with IRNA, Muttaqi referred to measures taken by the Afghan government for the safe return of migrants. He said that Kabul is trying to improve the economic and living conditions in the country.

He said that Afghanistan has been in war with the Soviet Union, the United States and NATO for 45 years, which caused the migration of Afghan people

from the country. Now, the country is trying to pave the ground for their return to the country.

The Afghan official also thanked the countries that have hosted Afghan immigrants and called on Afghans to return to their homeland gradually.

After Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 2021, millions of Afghans left their country for a better life in other countries.

Pakistan and Iran have been the main destinations of Afghan migrants.

In recent months, both countries have repatriated hundreds of thousands of illegal Afghan refugees to their country.

Over 160 killed in 24 hours amid Israeli attacks on Gaza

International Desk

Israel bombed areas of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip overnight, with fighting throughout Sunday morning, residents and Palestinian media said, as Gaza health authorities and the Israeli military both announced mounting death tolls.

Israel claims it has achieved almost complete operational control over northern Gaza and is preparing to expand a ground offensive against

Hamas fighters to other areas. But Jabalia residents reported persistent aerial bombardment and shelling from Israeli tanks, which they said had moved further into the town on Saturday. Israel pushed on Sunday with its military campaign, as the focus of the deadly combat shifted to southern Gaza where most displaced Palestinians are trapped.

A Gaza health ministry spokesman said on Sunday 166 Palestinians had

been killed in the past 24 hours, taking the total Palestinian death toll to 20,424. Tens of thousands have been wounded, with many bodies believed trapped under rubble. Almost all of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced.

The Israeli military said eight soldiers had been killed, bringing to 154 its published combat losses since it began its ground incursion in response to Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which 1,140 people were killed in Israel, and about 250 abducted, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

The White House said that US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had discussed the Israeli campaign. Biden "emphasized the critical need to protect the civilian population including those supporting the humanitarian aid operation, and the importance of allowing civilians to move safely away from areas of ongoing fighting", the White House said.

US claims dismissed

Meanwhile, the US claimed on Friday that Iran was "deeply involved" in planning operations against commercial vessels in the Red Sea and its intelligence was critical to enable Yemen's Houthi movement to target ships.

Houthis, who say their attacks are in support of Palestinians under siege by Israel in Gaza, have targeted commercial shipping in the Red Sea with drones and missiles, forcing shippers to change course and take longer routes around the southern tip of Africa.

Iran denies involvement in attacks by the Houthis in the Red Sea with its deputy foreign minister saying the group was acting on its own.

"The resistance (Houthis) has its own tools... and acts in accordance with its own decisions and capabilities," said Ali Baqeri. "The fact that certain powers, such as the Americans and the Israelis, suffer

strikes from the resistance movement... should in no way call into question the reality of the strength of the resistance in the region," he told Mehr News Agency.

Earlier on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister

Hossein Amir-Abdollahi said Washington had previously asked Iran to advise Yemenis not to act against US and Israeli interests in the region.

REUTERS and AFP contributed to this report.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



A child stands amid the rubble in a room overlooking a building destroyed by a strike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on December 24, 2023. [SAID KHATIB/AFP](http://saik.khatib/afp)

Tehran's parks set to embrace inclusion for disabled



Social Desk

A total of 114 parks will be adapted for the use of disabled people by mid-March 2024, as announced by Tehran's deputy mayor.

"The Organization of Parks and Green Spaces in Tehran has been tasked with increasing its efforts to accommodate disabled individuals and enable them to utilize the city's green and recreational areas," said Hossein Nazari, according to ILNA.

The comprehensive plan involves the adaptation of 114 parks from March 21, 2023, to March 20, 2024. Nazari further elaborated on the progress made in previous years, stating that in 2015-16, 22 parks were adapted, followed by 22 more in 2016-17, 22 in 2017-18, 39 in 2018-19, and a total of 22 in both 2019-20 and 2020-21. In 2021-22, an additional 58 parks were adapted, bringing the total to 185 parks in Tehran that have been made accessible for disabled people.

The deputy mayor emphasized the importance of completing the remaining parks by the end of the year, aiming to improve a total of 114 parks. Nazari highlighted the features of the project, which include equipping the parks with facilities like sports sets for the disabled, creating ramps, landscaping, adapting drinking fountains, toilets, and benches to meet the needs of disabled individuals.

The city official concluded by stating that this optimization of parks aligns with Tehran Municipality's commitment to providing a suitable platform and environment for disabled individuals to enjoy the city's green and recreational spaces.

It goes without saying that a truly inclusive society would remain an unrealized dream without incorporating the needs of disabled individuals into city facilities. By ensuring that these spaces are accessible to all, regardless of physical or cognitive abilities, we create an environment that promotes equal opportunities and participation.

When disabled individuals can seamlessly access public spaces, parks, buildings, and transportation systems, it not only enhances their quality of life but also empowers them to engage fully in social, cultural, and economic activities. Inclusion in city facilities not only benefits the disabled community but also enriches the entire community by nurturing diversity, breaking down barriers, and promoting a sense of belonging for all residents.

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Recovery of more than 16k children with cancer: *Charity CEO*

Social Desk

More than 16,000 children under the support of Mahak have successfully recovered from cancer over the years, announced the CEO of Mahak Charity, which supports children with cancer.

"This achievement would not have been possible without the support of philanthropists, dedicated volunteers, and the efforts of Mahak employees, who embody the values of this organization," said Arash Ahmadian, according to IRNA.

He added that Mahak, a charitable organization supporting children with cancer, has been providing assistance to the children of Iran for over three decades. Their motivation stems from a deep commitment to serving fellow human beings and relying on the humanitarian assistance of benefactors. Mahak has been steadfast in its support for cancer treatment.

Ahmadian emphasized that the organization's primary concern is to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its activities. He stated that the benchmark of their success lies in the trust of the helpers in our country, and the true measure of their effectiveness is reflected in the number of children who have recovered with the help of this charity.



● IRNA

Ahmadian further announced that Mahak's mission is to support children under the age of 18 with cancer and their families across the country, regardless of the circumstances. "Although children's cancer is a chronic disease, it should not mark the end of their childhood. It takes at least 2.5 years to guide each child with cancer towards a healthy destination," he said, adding,

"Mahak strives to ensure that no family is left alone in their child's treatment, providing comprehensive and integrated support throughout the treatment process, reaching every corner of Iran with the participation and companionship of the family." Ahmadian went on to mention that on December 7, the birthdate of the first child to recover under Mahak's care is celebrated as 'Day of the Recovered' within the organization. Currently, more

than 13,000 children are undergoing treatment in 13 hospitals in Tehran and 28 hospitals in other provinces of the country. "Mahak hopes that all these children will regain good health with the positive intentions of its supporters," Ahmadian said. The annual campaign celebrating those who have recovered brings hope to children with cancer and their families, encouraging them to continue their treatment journey with renewed determination.

The CEO of Mahak concluded by expressing gratitude to the organization's supporters. "Mahak Charity strives to utilize the knowledge of researchers and specialists to improve its services for children with cancer throughout Iran," he said, and stated that with early cancer diagnosis and the support of philanthropists across the nation, Mahak aims to bring happiness and brighter days to the lives of these children.

Online access system for Iranians abroad unveiled



Social Desk

The unveiling ceremony for the online access system, allowing Iranians abroad to access judicial electronic services, took place in the presence of the Vice-President of the Judiciary for International Affairs and Secretary General of the I.R of Iran's High Council for Human Rights. During the ceremony,

Kazem Gharibabadi expressed his gratitude to the head of the Statistics and Technology Center of the Judiciary and his colleagues. He emphasized that the focus of providing services to Iranians abroad is on the judicial services, acknowledging the diverse challenges faced by Iranians living outside their home country, some of which fall

within the jurisdiction of the judiciary system. Gharibabadi expressed his hope that the comprehensive bill for the protection of Iranians abroad would be passed in parliament, leading to the resolution of issues faced by Iranian nationals residing abroad. Access to the Sana system, a crucial foundation for benefiting from judicial services, has been a con-

cern, and efforts are being made to provide the same services electronically for Iranians abroad. The launch of the online system and the use of home-grown social messengers like have helped overcome the obstacle of mobile numbers for Iranians residing abroad. Gharibabadi highlighted that the system offers a range of services for Iranians abroad. The next step involves the development of electronic service proceedings based on the Sana system, which would expedite these services. "Collaboration with the Center for Statistics and Technologies of the Judiciary is underway to create a system and encourage judicial units to utilize this capacity," he said. Furthermore, a list is being compiled in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice to form

judicial working groups aimed at resolving issues faced by Iranians abroad. These issues include the provision of online judicial electronic services in the Sana system and the pursuit of violated rights of Iranians residing abroad. Gharibabadi emphasized the responsibility of supporting Iranians abroad, regardless of their location, religion, or rituals. He also emphasized the importance of access to the Same system, which facilitates communication with governance and governing institutions. Iranians residing abroad should have access to these facilities through the Sana system, enabling them to register requests and request meetings with high-ranking judicial officials. Additionally, efforts are being made to provide advice and necessary training to Iranians traveling abroad, particularly in

countries such as Turkey and Iraq, where some Iranians face challenges and legal issues. Facilitating investments by Iranians abroad is another area of consideration. Another significant issue within the jurisdiction is the situation of Iranians imprisoned abroad. To address this, a four-way memorandum is intended to be signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prisons Organization, the Prisoners' Cooperative Foundation, and the International Vice-President of the Judiciary. "The objective is to solve problems and provide support to Iranians in prisons abroad, especially those who are the heads of families or lack support. The well-being of Iranians abroad and the support of their families are among the priorities to be addressed," Gharibabadi said.