



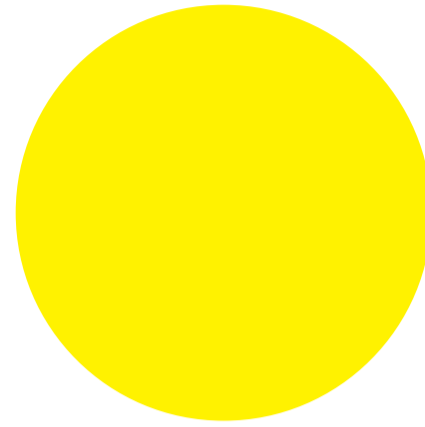
# Leader hails Gen. Soleimani's role in revival of resistance front

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei paid tribute to late Iranian commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani for reviving the resistance front in the region. [2](#) >

Power of innovation with private sector, NTBFs for smart postal system in Iran

[4-5](#) >

**SPECIAL ISSUE**



# Iran Daily



[irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir) | [newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir) | [IranDailyWeb](http://IranDailyWeb)

Vol. 7473 • Monday, January 1, 2024 • Dey 11, 1402 • Jumada al-Thani 18, 1445 • 100,000 rials • 8 Pages



Displaced Palestinian artist Amal Abo sits next to her mural painting on the wall of a house destroyed during Israeli bombing in Rafah in the southern of Gaza Strip, on December 31, 2023. [AFP](#)

# Israel's Massacre of Gazans Continues in New Year [8](#) >



Iranians access to health services has increased: **Minister** [7](#) >

Iran names 27-man squad in hunt of Asian Cup glory [6](#) >

Netanyahu resists int'l truce calls amid increasing civilian deaths [2](#) >

Splendor of Hasht Behesht Palace in Isfahan [3](#) >



## Iran, UK FMs discuss Red Sea developments

### National Desk

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron announced that he had discussed the developments in Red Sea in a phone talk with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Sunday. "I spoke to @Amirabdollahian today about Houthi attacks in the Red Sea," which Cameron said, "threaten innocent lives and the global economy".

Iran's Foreign Ministry did not issue any statement regarding this conversation. Reiterating his country's claim, Cameron wrote on his X account, "I made clear that Iran shares responsibility for preventing these attacks given their long-standing support to the Houthis."

A British government spokesperson in early December had claimed that Iran bears responsibility for the actions of the resistance groups in the region.

"As we've previously stated, Iran has long provided military and political support to Houthi militants and it bears responsibility for the actions of its proxies and partners," the British spokesperson had said in a statement.

Iran at the time rejected "unfounded" allegations made by the UK government over Tehran's role in resistance groups' attacks against Israel and US targets in the region. Foreign Ministry's spokesman Nasser Kanaani said that the British government tries to achieve its special political goals by making such allegations. He said that London is trying to distort the realities of the region.

Following the escalation of tensions in the Gaza Strip, the Yemeni armed forces announced that they would carry out attacks against the Zionist regime until the aggression against Gaza is stopped, and they will not allow any Israeli ships to travel in the waters of the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. Claims against Iran's role regarding the actions of the Yemeni armed forces come as the resistance groups in the region act completely independently based on their own decision about the security of their countries or to support the oppressed Palestinian nation.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



# Leader hails Gen. Soleimani's role in revival of resistance front



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (r.) speaks in a meeting in Tehran on December 31, 2023, with the family of the assassinated Iranian commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.  
● leader.ir

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei paid tribute to late Iranian commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani for reviving the resistance front in the region.

The family of General Soleimani, who was assassinated by a US drone strike near Baghdad on January 3, 2020, met with Ayatollah Khamenei on Sunday ahead of the

fourth anniversary of the martyrdom of the commander, Tasnim news agency reported.

At the meeting, the Leader attributed the lasting memory of General Soleimani to the martyr's character, his steadfastness and sincerity.

"The most important role and service of the great martyr has been the revival of the resistance front in the region," Ayatollah

Khamenei added.

Associating the resistance shown by the people of Gaza against the Israeli onslaught for around three months to the existence of the resistance front, the Leader said General Soleimani had made a great deal of effort to revive the resistance front in a sincere, prudent, wise and moral manner.

The Leader praised the Commander of the Islamic

Revolution Guards Corps Quds Force Brigadier General Esmail Qaani for his services after succeeding General Soleimani, adding, "The course of strengthening of the resistance front must continue."

In the meeting, also attended by the commanders of the IRGC and the IRGC Quds Force, a daughter of the late commander, Zeinab Soleimani, gave a report on the

cultural and artistic programs that have been carried out or are underway to familiarize the younger generation with the spirit, manners and characteristics of General Soleimani. Also on Sunday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi had an unannounced visit to the family of martyr Brigadier General Seyyed Razi Mousavi, as he extended his condolences to his family.

Raisi has condemned Israel's assassination of the senior Iranian military adviser of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in Syria, stressing that the occupying regime will pay the price for the crime, Press TV reported.

The Iranian president called the murder a "cowardly act" and went on to say that the sacrifices and dedication of the martyrs form the cornerstone of the country's security and power.

"The services and sacrifices of this great commander in supporting and strengthening the Islamic resistance front will forever remain honored," he added.

"Certainly, this crime will not go unanswered, and the Zionist criminals will pay for this crime," he said.

Mousavi was killed in a terrorist Israeli airstrike on December 27, while on an advisory mission in Syria.

Iran maintains an advisory mission in Syria at the request of Damascus, with the aim of helping the war-torn Arab country get rid of the foreign-backed militants who have been fighting the democratically-elected Syrian government since 2011.

## Netanyahu resists int'l truce calls amid increasing civilian deaths

### International Desk

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that Israel's war on Gaza will continue for "many more months," pushing back against persistent international cease-fire calls after mounting civilian deaths, hunger and mass displacement in the besieged enclave.

The Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip said Sunday at least 21,822 people have been killed in

the Palestinian territory since the war with Israel erupted on October 7. The figure includes 150 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said. It added that 56,451 people have been wounded in Gaza since the start of the war.

The number of Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza combat rose to 170, after the military announced two more deaths Saturday.

The war has displaced some 85% of Gaza's 2.3

million residents, sending swells of people seeking shelter in Israeli-designated safe areas that the military has nevertheless bombed. Palestinians are left with a sense that nowhere is safe in the tiny enclave.

In new fighting, Israeli jets intensified attacks on central Gaza on Sunday, residents and medics said, as battles raged through the rubble of towns and refugee camps.

The United States, Israel's main ally, has urged it to scale down the war and European states have signaled alarm at the extent of Palestinian civilian suffering. Netanyahu's comments signal no let-up in a campaign that has killed many thousands and levelled much of Gaza, while his vow to restore Israeli control over the enclave's border with Egypt raises new questions over an eventual two-state solution.

### US honored for new weapons sales

Netanyahu also thanked the Biden administration for its continued backing, including approval for a new emergency weapons sale, the second this month, and prevention of a UN Security Council reso-

lution seeking an immediate cease-fire. Israel argues that ending the war now would mean victory for Hamas, a stance shared by the Biden administration, which at the same time urged Israel to do more to avoid harm to Palestinian civilians.

A Red Crescent video published on Sunday showed the chaotic aftermath of strikes in central Gaza, as rescuers worked in the dark to carry an injured child from smoking rubble. As the year drew to a close, Palestinians in Gaza were praying for a cease-fire but had little optimism that 2024 would be better. The US State Department said Friday that Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Congress he approved a \$147.5 million sale for equipment, including fuses, charges and primers, that is needed for 155 m shells Israel bought previously.

It marked the second time this month that the Biden administration is bypassing Congress to approve an emergency weapons sale to Israel. Blinken made a similar decision on Dec. 9 to approve the sale to Israel of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition worth more than \$106 million.



### Risk of famine

The war and lack of supplies have left 40% of Gazans at risk of famine, the Gaza director of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said on social media on Saturday.

Israel blockaded most food, fuel and medicine after the Oct. 7 attack. It said on Sunday it was ready to let ships from some Western countries deliver aid directly to Gaza's shores after security checks in Cyprus. Gemma Connell, an official with the UN humanitarian agency OCHA who has been working in Gaza, said tens of thousands of people fleeing to Rafah had been through attacks and bombardment and had arrived often with no possessions or anywhere to sleep. "I just am so fearful that

the amount of deaths that we've been seeing is going to increase exponentially both because of this renewed offensive but also because of these conditions which are literally unbelievable," she said.

With Israeli forces expanding their ground offensive this week, tens of thousands more Palestinians streamed into the already crowded city of Rafah at the southernmost end of Gaza. Thousands of tents and makeshift shacks have sprung up on Rafah's outskirts next to UN warehouses. Displaced people arrived in Rafah on foot or on trucks and carts piled high with mattresses. Those who did not find space in overwhelmed shelters pitched tents on roadsides.

# Splendor of Hasht Behesht Palace in Isfahan



● jamaran.news



● jamaran.news



● jamaran.news



● safarzon.com



● pinorest.com

## Iranica Desk

Isfahan, the capital city of the central province of Isfahan, is renowned for its wide array of historical buildings, making it an exceptional destination for both domestic and international tourists. Throughout the city, served as the capital of the Safavid dynasty, one can witness the enduring legacy of Safavid craftsmanship in its palaces, gardens, and mansions. Among these architectural marvels stands the Hasht Behesht Palace.

## Introduction

Hasht Behesht Palace is known as one of the most significant attractions in Isfahan, boasting magnificent and artistic decorations from the Safavid era that continue to captivate visitors. Situated on Bagh-e Goldasteh Street, it is recognized as one of the most

beautiful palaces in Iran. In 1934, the Hasht Behesht Palace was designated as a national heritage site. Today the palace is surrounded by Shahid Rajaei Park, a popular recreational area in Isfahan.

## History

Construction of Hasht Behesht Palace in Isfahan was completed in 1669 CE, during the third year of Shah Suleiman Safavid's reign, and stands as a prime example of Safavid architecture. Under the rule of Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar and Zell al-Sultan's governance of Isfahan, the palace was repurposed as the Homayouni School. In her travelogue, Jane Dieulafoy, a French archaeologist and explorer, mentioned the name of Homayouni School in her description of the garden and mansion of Hasht Behesht. The garden and palace were later entrusted to Nasser al-Din Shah Qa-

jar's daughter, Ozma Eftekhari, with the condition that its state and appearance remain unaltered. Following her passing, the garden and palace underwent significant alterations by subsequent occupants. Similar to Ali Qapu and Chehel Sotoun, the original decorations of painting, gilding, and mirror works were concealed under a layer of plaster.

Since 1964, the remaining portion of the garden and the palace have been officially entrusted to the Ministry of Culture. Hasht Behesht continues to be preserved under the supervision of the Cultural Heritage Organization, alongside other historical buildings and monuments in the country.

## Architecture

This mansion measures 35.26 meters by 30 meters, standing

two meters higher than the neighboring garden, and accessed through two staircases. Beyond the entrance, there is a porch adorned with two tall wooden columns, leading to the central hall. The hall features a dome-shaped vault culminating in an octagonal skylight with eight wooden windows. At the center of the hall, there is an octagonal pool with a 30.3-meter diameter and a fountain. Doors surrounding the hall lead to octagonal rooms specifically designated for the reception of women.

The primary entrance of the mansion faces north and takes on an octagonal shape, featuring two imposing cedar wood columns. At the heart of this entrance there lies a pool measuring 80.2 meters by 30.2 meters, with a fountain at its center. The ceiling of this area is intricately adorned, while the interior walls

of the palace showcase a display of paintings, gilding, bird motifs, vibrant flowers, glasswork, and mirror embellishments.

Within the central hall, two grand paintings depict Fat'hali Shah Qajar seated on the throne, surrounded by some of his descendants. The entire structure is erected upon a foundation crafted from exquisite marble sourced from Tabriz, serving as the bedrock of this magnificent edifice.

The rooms on the first floor of the mansion, located in each of the four corners, are adorned with ornate plasterwork and paintings. The second floor of the mansion further enhances its beauty with a series of corridors, rooms, domes, and windows. This level is divided into multiple hallways and rooms, each featuring its own unique decorations. Some rooms include water basins, while others are equipped with

wall-mounted heaters. Additionally, the walls are adorned with numerous mirrors.

The mansion's significant feature is the relationship that has developed among its various spaces and parts. This connection results in the mansion having a remarkable sense of unity and coherence despite the diversity and variety of its spaces and decorations.

The exterior of the mansion is adorned with hard stones and, at its center, there is a small courtyard paved with stone, through which the overflow from the fountains inside and outside the mansion flows. This water flows into two large pools, each 8 meters wide and 50 meters long, situated in front of the western and eastern porticos of the mansion. The palace grounds are surrounded by tall plane trees, and its flower gardens enhance its beauty with roses and jasmine.

## Cross-cultural interaction between Rome and Sassanid

It is useful to look at the problem of the cross-cultural interaction between Rome and Sassanid Iran from one final perspective and consider which types of objects and spaces enticed the kings to appropriate them and which proved to be the most popular venues for the two realms' debate.

Overall, those architectural features, urban spaces, or sites of performance that defined royal identity within one of the two empires consistently show evidence of visual or ritual expressions that have to do with the two

rulers' and realms' relational identity.

Sites where the sovereigns showed themselves to their own people and to envoys, such as hippodromes, banqueting and audience halls, urban spaces that hosted processions, regal iconographies (such as nimbus-es), ornamental motifs, games, luxury items (like silk shoes and robes), and audience-hall technologies, were the privileged venues for the two courts' debates. The objects and activities that defined each emperor's identity, and ensured his dominance of the social hierarchy, tended to carry polemical

messages about the place and identity of the other king.

On the other hand, these same visual, urban, and spatial environments were also the prime targets of appropriation by their rival.

In a similar sense, the emperors' physical bodies could be simultaneously objects of appropriation and places of debate. The imperial body, and thus identity, were constantly manipulated and adjusted in pictorial spaces, ranging from sculpture to icons to numismatic representations. One can find statements on the two sovereigns' relational identity on their clothing and regalia,

and even the ornamental designs that embellished them. This was the case occasionally in real life, too — most glaringly in the case of the captured Roman emperor Valerian, whose identity was manipulated by the ritual humiliation he was forced to endure, but also, vicariously in the treatment of the other emperor's envoy.

Although the two empires' courts and urban centers, under the auspices of diplomacy, were the commonest locations of symbolic display and identity manipulation, similar events took place far afield and by proxy. The consolidation of symbolic capital took place on an international level, too, and it was a tool that the emperors utilized to gain control over client states, as well as to negotiate their relationship with each other.

Within cultural systems as globally minded as the Roman and

Sassanid empires these symbolic trappings became very important, because they were unifying elements that facilitated the functioning of socially and culturally diverse societies.

Both empires subsumed many sociopolitical systems and thus systems of conferring honors. The Romans and Sassanids, with their compulsory rites of investiture and robing ceremonies, conflated these various systems of symbolic capital into a single system.

The two powers codified, delegated, and guaranteed, even bureaucratized, this system of symbolic capital.

When a client king traveled to the court of the Roman or Sassanid king, he received insignia of office that marked at once his relationship to the Roman court and his membership in the Roman or Sassanid cultural sphere.

*The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, 'The Art and Ritual of Kingship Within and Between Rome and Sassanid Iran', from a book entitled, 'The Two Eyes of the Earth', written by Matthew P. Vanepa, published by University of California Press.*

✓ Taq-e Kasra, a remnant of the former Sassanid palace in Ctesiphon





## Greater role of postal industry in driving Iran's economic growth

By Zohreh Molavi  
Guest contributor

As Iran's economy needs diversification and expansion, the importance of a robust postal industry cannot be overstated. The postal sector has a crucial role to play in facilitating commerce, enhancing connectivity, and fostering entrepreneurship across all corners of the nation.

By leveraging its extensive network, the postal industry can emerge as a key driver of economic growth and development in Iran.

The postal system can be considered as one of the basic infrastructures of the e-commerce boom in Iran, especially in the issue of handicraft exports and the online retail business market.

The postal industry is much more than just a means of sending letters and parcels. It is an essential infrastructure that connects businesses, entrepreneurs, and consumers throughout the nation. The postal industry plays a crucial role in facilitating commerce, supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and enabling logistics and supply chain operations.

By offering a range of value-added services, such as financial transactions and e-commerce fulfillment, the postal industry can serve as a catalyst for economic growth.

SMEs are the backbone of Iran's economy, representing a great part of businesses in the country. However, these enterprises often face substantial challenges in accessing financing and expanding their reach beyond local markets. The postal industry can help bridge this gap by offering a range of financial services to SMEs, including micro-lending, payment processing, and insurance. Through these offerings, the postal industry can support the growth of SMEs, enabling them to expand their operations across the nation and beyond.

With the rise of e-commerce, the demand for reliable and efficient fulfillment services is rapidly increasing. The postal industry can leverage its vast network of post offices and delivery routes to offer robust e-commerce fulfillment services to businesses and consumers. By streamlining the fulfillment process and offering real-time tracking and automated notifications, the postal industry can enhance the overall customer experience, driving repeat business and fostering online commerce.

Efficient logistics and supply chain operations are critical for the success of any enterprise. The postal industry can play a vital role in this area, leveraging its network of post offices and delivery routes to offer last-mile delivery services and optimize supply chain operations for businesses. This results in reduced transit times, enhanced operational efficiency, and cost savings for enterprises across various sectors.

Access to financial services remains a significant challenge for many Iranians, particularly in rural areas. The postal industry can help bridge this gap by offering a range of financial services such as savings accounts, money transfers, and bill payments which enables individuals and businesses in underserved areas to access financial services, fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth in these regions.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are key drivers of economic growth, and the postal industry can play a pivotal role in fostering these attributes. By providing access to funding, offering mentorship and training programs, and collaborating with start-ups and SMEs, the postal industry can create an enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship to thrive. This results in the emergence of new businesses, products, and services, enhancing the overall competitiveness of Iran's economy.

# Power of innovation NTBFs for smart pos



By Reza  
Abesh Ahmadiou  
Staff writer

*In today's digital age, the rapid growth of technology is reshaping the way we approach traditional services, including postal systems.*

*In Iran, the private sector and new technology-based firms (NTBFs) are playing a pivotal role in driving the transition towards smart, efficient, and innovative postal solutions.*

*By harnessing the capacity of these dynamic entities, Iran's postal industry is poised to undergo a transformative shift, embracing cutting-edge technologies and elevating the overall quality of postal services.*

*Speaking at a ceremony to mark World Post Day in Tehran on October 10, Issa Zarepour,*

*the minister of information and communications technology of Iran, emphasizing accelerating smartening the postal system in the country, called on reducing package delivery time.*

*Noting that the postal service is the driving force for the development of the digital economy, he said: "With the renovation and smartening of the postal system, we can witness the advancement of the digital economy."*

*Steps have been taken in the field of smartening the postal system, but it should gain momentum with all kinds of technologies, the minister added, noting that his ministry should pay more attention to the potentials of the private sector and NTBFs.*

### Private sector's greater participation

Iran's postal sector has traditionally been dominated by state-operated entities. However, with the increasing demand for modern, tech-driven postal service, the private sector could emerge as a formidable force in driving innovation and competition. Private companies are leveraging their agility, expertise, and capital to introduce advanced postal solutions that cater to the evolving needs of the market. Their participation will not only inject fresh ideas and investments into the industry but will also foster a culture of customer-centricity and efficiency.

### Innovation through NTBFs

NTBFs are at the forefront of technological innovation, as their impact on Iran's postal sector is significant. These agile and entrepreneurial ventures are leveraging the latest advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, block chain, and Internet of Things (IoT) to revolutionize postal operations. By collaborating with established postal players or operating independently, NTBFs are introducing disruptive solutions that enhance last-mile delivery, optimize logistics, and elevate the overall customer experience.



# with private sector, postal system in Iran

## Key areas of impact

The involvement of the private sector and NTBFs is driving momentum for smartening the postal system across various key areas, transforming the traditional postal landscape into a dynamic and tech-infused domain:

### Last-mile delivery optimization

**1** Private companies and NTBFs are deploying predictive analytics, route optimization algorithms, and real-time tracking solutions to streamline last-mile delivery operations. This results in faster, more precise deliveries, reducing transit times and enhancing customer satisfaction.

### E-commerce integration

**2** With the booming e-commerce market in Iran, private sector players and NTBFs are collaborating with online retailers and marketplaces to develop seamless integration of postal services into the e-commerce ecosystem. From automated order fulfillment to real-time inventory management, these partnerships are creating a robust infrastructure for efficient e-commerce deliveries.

### Customer-centric solutions

**3** Through the utilization of advanced customer relationship management (CRM) systems and personalized communication platforms, private sector entities and NTBFs are redefining the way customers interact with postal services. From proactive delivery notifications to tailored service offerings, the focus should be on delivering a superior and personalized customer experience.

### Advanced logistics and warehousing

**4** In the near future, private companies should invest in state-of-the-art logistics and warehousing facilities, incorporating technologies such as radio-frequency identification (RFID) tagging, autonomous vehicles, and warehouse automation to optimize inventory management and order fulfillment processes. This results in enhanced operational efficiency and cost savings.

## Regulatory facilitation and support

Recognizing the transformative potential of the private sector and NTBFs in driving smart post momentum, the Iranian government should take proactive steps to facilitate their participation. By fostering an enabling regulatory environment, providing access to funding, and offering support for research and development, authorities will promote an ecosystem where innovation and entrepreneurship can flourish within the postal industry.

## Challenges

While the involvement of the private sector and NTBFs presents a wealth of opportunities for a smart postal system in Iran, it also brings forth certain challenges. Issues such as data security, regulatory compliance, and interoperability with existing postal systems need to be addressed. However, these challenges present avenues for collaboration and innovation, providing an opportunity for stakeholders to work together in shaping the future of a smart postal system in Iran.



## Iran's postal system: Modernization imperative for a connected future

Economy Desk

Iran's postal system stands at a critical juncture in the 21st century. As the global landscape of communication and logistics undergoes rapid transformation, the need for modernizing Iran's postal infrastructure has become increasingly urgent. Embracing technological advancements, streamlining operational processes, and enhancing service offerings are essential to position the country's postal system as a cornerstone of connectivity and economic growth. The traditional methods and infrastructure of Iran's postal system are no longer equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving digital era. Outdated equipment, inefficient workflows, and limited technological integration have resulted in operational bottlenecks, suboptimal service quality, and diminished competitiveness in the global marketplace. It is imperative to address these challenges through comprehensive modernization efforts that align with contemporary industry standards and consumer expectations.

Modernizing Iran's postal infrastructure offers a profound opportunity to enhance nationwide connectivity and accessibility. By investing in advanced logistics and distribution networks, as well as leveraging digital technologies, the postal system can ensure timely and reliable communication and package delivery services across urban and rural areas. This not only fosters a more connected society but also supports the socioeconomic development of regions previously underserved by outdated infrastructure. The adoption of new technologies, such as automated sorting systems, digital tracking capabilities, and e-commerce fulfillment solutions, is paramount to realizing the full potential of Iran's postal system.

Integrating technology into operational processes streamlines workflows, minimizes errors, and elevates the overall efficiency of the postal infrastructure. Furthermore, embracing digital platforms for customer interaction and service provision enhances user experience.

The rapid growth of e-commerce and cross-border trade presents both an opportunity and a challenge for Iran's postal infrastructure. A well-modernized postal system is crucial for facilitating seamless international trade, ensuring swift customs clearance, and expediting package delivery to and from global destinations.

By establishing strong partnerships with international postal networks and optimizing cross-border logistics, Iran's postal system can position itself as a key enabler of cross-border commerce, contributing to the expansion of the national economy and trade ecosystem.

Modernizing Iran's postal infrastructure also presents an avenue to embrace sustainable practices and reduce environmental impact. By optimizing delivery routes, deploying eco-friendly vehicles, and implementing energy-efficient facilities, the postal system can contribute to environmental conservation, while simultaneously lowering operational costs. Embracing sustainability not only aligns with global environmental initiatives but also resonates with the growing preference for eco-conscious services among consumers and businesses.



## Ten Hag bullish he can lead new United era despite poor run



● REUTERS

**THE GUARDIAN** – Erik ten Hag said it is clear Manchester United are underperforming after falling to a ninth Premier League defeat of the season but he is confident he will convince Sir Jim Ratcliffe he is the best manager to lead the club in the long term. Defeat at Nottingham Forest means United have lost five of their past eight games in all competitions and 14 before the turn of the year for the first time since the 1930-31 season.

Ten Hag previously said he was looking forward to working with Ratcliffe, who has taken control of football operations after acquiring a 25% stake in the club. The United manager said he and Ratcliffe will set “high targets” when they meet. Sir Dave Brailsford, the Ineos director of sport who is poised to take a prominent role on United’s football board and report to Ratcliffe, was in the directors’ box at the City Ground alongside legendary former manager, Sir Alex Ferguson.

“They know me and they know when I have the squad what is available then the results will be there,” Ten Hag said. “We have already proved against the top teams that we can go head to head. I am convinced and I have strong belief that we can get progress in this team and get more consistency than this moment. It is part of a project. We were overperforming last year, this year – so far – we are underperforming and we have to do better. We have to step up. I have to lead the process.”

Asked if he believes United’s fortunes will improve, Ten Hag replied: “Of course I believe that. I know when [injured] players return, I’m sure this side will be stronger.”

Ten Hag bemoaned the absence of the striker Rasmus Højlund, who missed the match through illness, and said needing to change the team that overcame Aston Villa on Boxing Day disrupted their rhythm. “One thing is for sure, if every time you have to swap [the team] the routines are not there,” the Dutchman said. “Top footballers go quick so you need communication in split-moments. There was one counterattack [for Forest’s winning goal] where we probably were not too good defending as a team. He [Brailsford] will see we have our problems. You want to build on Tuesday but you have to replace your striker.”

# Iran names 27-man squad in hunt of Asian Cup glory

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee on Sunday announced the 27-man squad for the upcoming AFC Asian Cup – starting January 12 in Qatar. AS Roma striker Sardar Azmoun has been named in the squad but could still be Iran’s major absentee in Qatar due to his commitments in the one-year loan contract with the Serie A club.

However, the Iranian Football Federation said it is in talks with the Giallorossi to convince Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho to release the national team’s talisman for the four-week tournament.

All 24 Asian teams will have until Tuesday to announce 26 players for the tournament.

Al Wahda midfielder Ahmad Nourollahi has been ignored for the event after he was axed from the squad for disciplinary reasons during a visit to Tashkent for a World Cup qualifier against Uzbekistan in November.

Ali Karimi, playing for Turkish top-flight club Kayserispor, is also absent in the list despite having a regular place in the squad in recent months.

Mahdi Qayedi, whose last international appearance came in the CAFA Nations Cup final against Uzbekistan in June, was rewarded with a surprise spot in the list follow-

ing an impressive run of late with Farhad Majidi’s Ittihad Kalba in the UAE Pro League. Iran will play Burkina Faso during a training camp in the Kish Island on Friday before facing Indonesia in a final friendly before the tournament in Qatar.

Chasing a first trophy in the continent’s flagship international event since 1976, the three-time champion Iran

will begin its campaign with a game against Palestine in Al Rayyan’s Education City Stadium on Jan. 14.

Iran will take on Hong Kong at the Khalifa International Stadium five days later before playing the United Arab Emirates in the final round of Group B fixtures on Jan. 23.

For Qalenoee – the most decorated coach in the Persian Gulf Pro League history with

five titles, who replaced Portuguese Carlos Queiroz on Iran bench last March – the upcoming event will provide the opportunity to accomplish an unfinished mission.

The 60-year-old Iranian has always felt hard done by to see his previous 11-month spell in charge of the national team come to an end following a shootout defeat against South Korea in the

2007 Asian Cup quarter-finals and will be eager to steer his team to the final showpiece, which will be staged at the Lusail Stadium on February 10, this time around.

The following is the full Iranian squad for the AFC Asian Cup:

**Goalkeepers:** Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis), Payam Niazmand (Sepahan), Seyyed Hossein Hosseini (Esteghlal)

**Defenders:** Seyyed Majid Hosseini (Kayserispor), Saman Fallah (Golgozar Sirjan), Hossein Kan’anizadegan (Persepolis), Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Sadeq Moharami (Dinamo Zagreb), Ramin Rezaeian (Sepahan), Arya Yousefi (Sepahan), Ehsan Hajsafi (AEK Athens), Milad Mohammadi (AEK Athens)

**Midfielders:** Saeed Ezzatollahi (Vejele BK), Rouzbeh Cheshmi (Esteghlal), Omid Ebrahimi (Al Shamal SC), Mohammad-Javad Hosseinejad (Sepahan), Saman Qoddous (Brentford), Alireza Jahanbakhsh (Feyenoord), Mohammad Mohebbi (FC Rostov), Mahdi Qayedi (Ittihad Kalba), Mahdi Torabi (Persepolis), Ali Qolizadeh (Lech Poznan)

**Strikers:** Mahdi Taremi (FC Porto), Sardar Azmoun (AS Roma), Reza Asadi (Sepahan), Shahriar Moghanlou (Sepahan), Karim Ansarifard (Omonia FC).



● FFIRI

## Pistons end 28-match NBA losing streak with win over Raptors

**BBC** – The Detroit Pistons narrowly avoided unwanted history as they ended their 28-match losing streak with victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Cade Cunningham scored 30 points and made 12 assists as the Pistons edged a 129-127 win – their first in the NBA since 28 October.

Their 28th defeat had equalled the longest losing run in NBA history.

A loss to the Raptors would have matched the longest losing streak in major US professional sports history.

That record is held by NFL team the Chicago Cardinals – now the Arizona Cardinals – who fell to 29 successive losses between 1942 and 1945.

In Saturday’s match, Bojan Bogdanovic added 19 points for hosts the Pistons, while Jalen Duran contributed 18 points and 17 rebounds and Kevin Knox II made 17 points.

“We just kept battling,” said 2021 NBA draft number one pick Cunningham. “It’s been a long, long stretch – all these losses – but I’m just happy to be a part of a group of guys that don’t quit and bring it every day



Pistons forward Bojan Bogdanovic and guard Cade Cunningham celebrates during an NBA victory over the Raptors at Little Caesars Arena, Detroit, MI, US, on December 30, 2023.

● RICK OSENTOSKI/USA TODAY SPORTS

and still stay positive and uplift each other.”

He added: “It’s been weighing on us heavy everywhere we go

for two months, which is unreal, for it to have been that long.

“It was a long time coming, something that we’ve been

pushing for for so long and to finally get over that hump, we’re not trying to go back. Now it really begins where we see who

we’re going to be and if we’re going to continue to play with that same fire that we’ve been playing with.”

### No birthday win for LeBron

Elsewhere, it was not a happy birthday for LeBron James, whose Los Angeles Lakers lost 108-106 to the Minnesota Timberwolves.

James, who turned 39, scored 26 points, with the Timberwolves’ Anthony Edwards scoring 31 points in 38 minutes for the hosts.

In Indianapolis, Tyrese Haliburton became the first player in 33 years to score at least 20 points and 20 assists in consecutive games as he led the Indiana Pacers to a 140-126 win over the New York Knicks.

With his 22 points and 23 assists, he joined Hall of Famers Magic Johnson and John Stockton as only the third player in NBA history to achieve the feat.

Luka Doncic led the Dallas Mavericks to a 132-122 victory over Stephen Curry’s Golden State Warriors, while there were wins too for the Chicago Bulls and Utah Jazz.

# Iranians access to health services has increased: *Minister*

## Social Desk

In the last two years, 5,000 health-oriented products have been produced in Iran, with more than 3,000 products entering the market, announced the Minister of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education.

Bahram Einollahi stated on Sunday at the gathering of the country's top researchers, held at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, that 126 outstanding projects were selected and received financial support, IRNA reported.

"The goal of supporting research, especially in the field of medicine, is to streamline processes, and the Food and Drug Administration should delegate authority to parent universities of medical sciences, such as Shiraz, Tabriz, and Mazandaran, to expedite administrative procedures," Einollahi said.

Referring to the preparation of a comprehensive scientific research map in the country, the Minister of Health highlighted the need to transform innovative ideas into products and

increase the number of accelerator centers with the help of public support.

Einollahi pointed out that people's access to health services has increased, and the ministry's goal is to establish an advanced and modern health system.

"Justice and excellence were prioritized in the health sector during the current administration," he said.

Highlighting the growth of medical research in the past two years, Einollahi mentioned that during this period, 16,000 hospital beds were added to health centers, 2,000 health centers were established, 280 advanced devices were installed in underserved areas, and electronic health records have been implemented in over 90 percent of cases.

He announced the implementation of the advanced family health plan in 10 provinces and a 75 percent growth in health benefactors. Einollahi stated, "We encourage people to invest in [health sector's] product production."

Einollahi further empha-

sized the need to dynamically progress towards third and fourth-generation universities. He highlighted that there are currently 22,000 academic staff members, with 48 percent of them being women, indicating positive indicators of the country's scientific growth and development.

Recognizing the existing infrastructure in the country's health sector, Einollahi called for scholarly research and the availability of scientific information across various fields in laboratory and library environments.

The Minister of Health further emphasized the responsibility of medical sciences university presidents to keep scientific resources and information up-to-date. He stressed the importance of having comprehensive information available in all fields and suggested the use of search engines to facilitate access.

Einollahi stated, "Idea generation and critical thinking are the two main components of a researcher. It is necessary to establish think tanks in research



Hazrat-e Mahdi (PBUH) Smart Hospital was inaugurated in Tehran on October 12, 2023, with the presence of President Raisi (L) and Health Minister Einollahi (C).

● TABNAK

centers and create an idea bank."

Regarding research methods, Einollahi highlighted the importance of ensuring validity. He stated that researchers should scientifically document proposed methods, and it is the duty of the Food and Drug Administration to approve these

ideas.

Einollahi further emphasized the significance of creativity and innovation, stating that the country's 850 research centers should prioritize ideation and conduct research based on societal needs.

"In the field of research, agile and proactive organizations are

needed, and the involvement of interested students in research centers is crucial," he said.

The meeting concluded with the recognition of top medical sciences researchers, and the unveiling of two key pharmaceutical ingredients, including an anti-rheumatic and platelet-reducing agent.

## Medical residents: students or staffers?

## Social Desk

A top official with the Iran Medical Council has announced that a clear separation must be made between education and employment within the medical assistant course. The current distinction between the two is uncertain and ambiguous.

Mahmoud Fazel raised concerns about the residency period, questioning why individuals in residency are considered students when they are required to work full-time, ISNA reported.

He argued that the blurred line between residency as a job or a student course deprives medical assistants of job and educational benefits.

"Despite the legislator's obligation to prioritize knowledge



and skill acquisition, the current medical residency period is exceptionally challenging and incomparable to similar cases," he said.

Fazel identified four main con-

cerns troubling residents: livelihood, job security, work difficulties, and an uncertain future. He emphasized that the distorted occupational and educational boundary negatively impacts

residents' well-being.

"While the residency program aims to equip general practitioners with necessary skills, it fails to adequately address the violation of residents' basic rights," he said and called upon those involved in the health system and the parliament to pay attention to the demands of residents.

Fazel further stressed that during the residency education period, the responsibility should not solely rest on the residents but should be implemented through appropriate degrees and methods. The Medical Council should also play a role in this regard.

According to Fazel, although the Ministry of Health has drafted regulations, they have not been

approved by the residents after trial and error, and they lack the necessary efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, he urged the urgent formation of a cross-departmental working group to investigate the problems faced by residents.

Regarding the explicit position on the residency period, the health official stated that their stance is to clarify the distorted boundary between education and employment for residents. However, achieving this requires joint meetings among responsible entities.

"Striking a balance between job considerations and professional residency is crucial, as disregarding education entirely would be detrimental. Ultimately, the goal is to nurture knowl-

edgeable, skilled, and committed doctors within the educational and treatment team."

Fazel emphasized that residents should receive the highest possible level of livelihood benefits, and welfare, and have no mental worries about their future. He called upon the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, and the Health Commission of the parliament to consider the limits of residents' duties.

"The aim is to create an environment where residents can solely focus on education. He emphasized that these doctors are the future of healthcare, and if their concerns are not addressed and the quality of their education compromised, society as a whole will suffer."

### Saipa Wheel Manufacturing Company Tender for Wheel Weight Chopping and Marking Machine & Wheel Weight Taping Machine

Saipa Wheel Manufacturing Company intends to purchase a wheel weight chopping and marking machine and a wheel weight taping machine. Interested companies are requested to offer their quotes based on the specifications mentioned in the attached file on our website. Please receive the tender form and send your PI to commercial2@kswo.com by January 06 2024. Please inform us about your participation in this tender by this email. commercial1@kswo.com

For further information please contact Mr. Eftekharian: +989378257970

## Scientific seminar to discuss role of interventions in country's rainfall

## Social Desk

Following the mission of Ali Salajegheh, vice president and head of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE), to the deputy of Marine Environment and Wetlands of the DoE regarding the study of the causes of low rainfall in recent years in the country, the first scientific seminar on the topic of "The Role of Possible Regional Interventions in the Country's Rainfall Changes" will be organized by the Environmental Research Institute with the presence of experts in this field.

The head of the DoE, recognizing the sensitivity of public opinion regarding climate change and low annual rainfall, and the serious need for research activities and specialized investigations in this field, requested Mojtaba Zoljoodi, deputy of Marine Environment and Wetlands of the DoE, who has extensive records in the field

of meteorology, to investigate the causes of low rainfall in the recent year in cooperation with the National Climate Change Center and the Environmental Research Institute in a comprehensive and specialized study.

In late December, the image of a road leading to the heart of a mountain that was partly dry and partly covered with snow raised questions among the public about the difference in rainfall between Iran and Turkey. Many Iranian users online asked: "Why does it snow in Turkey but not in Iran?" On December 27, the head of the DoE stated in a gathering of journalists regarding the claim of the disappearance of rain clouds over Lake Urmia: "We have tasked the scientific authority on climate change in the country and the Environmental Research Institute with examining the issues related to climate change and its consequences within a two-week peri-

od. What has been raised in the Urmia Lake debate should also be investigated."

Salajegheh emphasized that every country uses special scientific methods based on climate change, and the average rainfall in neighboring countries has also decreased compared to the long-term average, indicating

their great impact from climate change.

"However, the disappearance of the rainy air front over Lake Urmia requires a scientific investigation to determine whether the methane gas produced there or the increase in temperature has an effect or not. Work is being done on these issues," he said.



MS can be controlled  
timely diagnosis  
and  
new drug



Iran MS Society

www.iranmsa.ir

Assistance practices

\*780\*2223#

Tel: 02166953907-9

## Oliver Stone condemns Israeli acts, urges US to reassess its support



Acclaimed US filmmaker Oliver Stone spoke out on the historical context of Israel's nuclear program and the current violence in the region, criticizing the US for its unwavering support for Israel.

Stone's comments were made during a recent interview, which went viral on Twitter, where he highlighted the secrecy surrounding Israel's nuclear capabilities and expressed concern over the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians.

Stone began by emphasizing that president John F. Kennedy had reservations about Israel obtaining nuclear weapons, citing Kennedy's claimed plans for severe inspections of the Dimona nuclear facility.

According to Stone, US's stance shifted after his assassination, with president Lyndon B. Johnson allowing Israel a free hand in its nuclear programs.

The filmmaker claimed that the Dimona facility was opened in 1968 without the knowledge of most Americans, attributing this to a directive issued by President Johnson to keep the matter unnoticeable.

Stone argued that the secrecy has contributed to a lack of awareness among Americans regarding Israel's possession of nuclear weapons.

He accused Israeli leaders, particularly Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, of having aggressive intentions, stating that they "want the bomb because they want to blow up Iran."

Expressing his opinion on Netanyahu, Stone called him a "madman," claiming that his actions were justifying a slaughter as revenge.

Stone lamented the high number of casualties in the region, alleging that the Israeli government had killed thousands, including Palestinians.

The filmmaker criticized US President Joe Biden for supporting Netanyahu during a recent visit, expressing disappointment in the administration's approach.

Stone urged a reconsideration of US support for Israel, proposing a complete cutoff of aid and emphasized that such a stance should not be dismissed as antisemitic.

Stone concluded by reflecting on the broader issue of justice, peace, and human decency, expressing confusion over the ongoing violence and the high number of casualties. He questioned the international community's response and underscored the need for having a second thought about US foreign policy in the region.

- License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)
- Managing Director: Ali Kakadezfuli
- Editor-in-chief: Mostafa Shirmohammadi
- Int'l & National Desk: Javad Mohammad Ali, Zohreh Qanadi, Ebrahim Beheshti, Amir Mollaei Mozaffari, Reza Abesh Ahmadlou, Sadeq Dehqan
- Economy Desk: Amirhadi Arsalanpour
- Sports Desk: Leila Imeni
- Iranica Desk: Hamideh Hosseini
- Arts & Culture Desk: Ali Amiri
- Social Desk: Ali Mehran
- Language Editor:

Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)  
 Ali Kakadezfuli  
 Mostafa Shirmohammadi  
 Javad Mohammad Ali, Zohreh Qanadi,  
 Ebrahim Beheshti, Amir Mollaei Mozaffari,  
 Reza Abesh Ahmadlou, Sadeq Dehqan  
 Amirhadi Arsalanpour  
 Leila Imeni  
 Hamideh Hosseini  
 Ali Amiri  
 Ali Mehran

Address: 208, Khorramshahr Ave., Tehran, Iran

- Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 84711171
- ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892-5
- Advertising Dept. Tel: +98 21 88500601
- & Email: irandaily@iranagahiha.com
- Website: www.irandaily.ir
- Email: newspaper.irandaily.ir
- Email: irandaily@icpi.ir
- Printing House: Iran Cultural & Press Institute



Palestinian girls are writing "2024" in the sand during the last sunset of the year in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, on December 31, 2023, amid the ongoing Israeli aggression on the coastal enclave. ● GETTY IMAGES

# Israel's massacre of Gazans continues in new year

### International Desk

In 2023, the world witnessed many significant events that became front-page news. India passed China as the world's most populous country, Azerbaijan seized Nagorno-Karabakh region, global temperatures shattered records, a strong earthquake in Turkey and Syria killed more than 67,000 people, and Iran and Saudi Arabia restored their relations after seven years. But the most important event that has shocked people around the world is Israel's ongoing massacre of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip which has inflamed anti-Israel sentiments across the globe. Many countries which have for decades supported the Israeli regime are now shocked by the extent of the regime's barbaric acts in the Palestinian territory.

Since the early days of October, when the Israeli regime began its onslaught on Gaza, cities across the world have also been the scene of angry protests against Israel's massacre of civilians in Gaza. There have been many international efforts to put an end to the crisis but the Israeli regime has so far snubbed international calls for a cease-fire, a position backed by its ally the United States. Steadfast support from Washington has helped Israeli leaders shrug off international concern about the humanitarian crisis which is worsening in the Gaza Strip. Heavy bombardment, and a ground invasion launched three weeks into the war, have reduced vast areas of Gaza to a ruined wasteland and killed at least 21,800 people, mostly

women and children, and thousands more buried under the rubble, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza. The world has watched in horror as the long-running conflict exploded into the bloodiest ever Gaza war after Hamas launched its unprecedented attack on October 7 that left about 1,200 people dead. The surprise attack blindsided and infuriated Israel and sparked a devastating military response. The scale of death and suffering inside Gaza has isolated Israel internationally, with even allies such as the UK now calling for a "sustainable cease-fire". As heavy combat raged on, 85 percent of besieged Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced, according to the UN, which warns of the growing risk of hunger and disease as desper-

ate families shelter in makeshift tents against the winter cold. Over 56,000 people have been injured at a time when most Gaza hospitals are either out of service or damaged and overwhelmed. The Israeli army says 172 of its soldiers have been killed in Gaza. UN chief Antonio Guterres has condemned the "epic human suffering" and "collective punishment" of Palestinian civilians. Inside Gaza, Palestinian families - many pushed into the territory's far south as the battlefield draws ever closer - are praying for a respite from the war. "We were hoping that 2024 would arrive under better auspices and that we would be able to celebrate the new year at home with our families," said Mahmoud Abou Shahma, 33, in a camp in Rafah near Egypt.

"We hope that the war will end and that we will be able to return to our homes and live in peace." Meanwhile, at least 129 Israeli captives are still believed held in Gaza after more than 100 were released in a prisoner swap and week-long truce in late November. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned the war will last for "many months". Netanyahu stressed that the war will continue until Hamas is eliminated and the captives are returned. International mediators have continued efforts toward a new pause in fighting. Israel's crimes in Gaza have also provoked reactions by the resistance movements in countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, which have launched attacks against Israel.

## Traces of a mosque uncovered in Persepolis

### Arts & Culture Desk

In the latest archaeological research at Persepolis, evidence of a mosque dating back to the early Islamic period was unearthed. The findings were recently published in Issue 4 of the Society for Iranian Archaeology journal, authored by Hamed Molaei Kordshuli and Younes Zare. During investigations around the stone steps of the northwest gate of the Apadana Hall at Persepolis, researchers observed inscriptions and carvings indicating the existence of a religious site within this large structure, dating back to the Achaemenid era, ISNA reported. The content of these inscriptions, prayers and divine forgiveness requests, along with blessed names and a likely indication of a qiblah (prayer direction), were identified in Arabic and Kufic script. These scholars believe that the evidence found at this site, combined with writings from historians, travelogues, and Islamic-era explorers, as well as archaeological findings mentioned by Western archaeologists in their reports, strongly supports the notion that "a part of Persepolis was transformed into a mosque during the early Islamic period".

