

Raisi: More knowledge-based companies create more jobs

National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday that the establishment of more knowledge-based companies will lead to the creation of more jobs in the country. He made the remarks during a visit to an exhibition of knowledge-based products at the Iran House of Innovation and Technology (IHIT) in the capital, Tehran, which was attended by managers of the Presidential Department for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy. About 689 companies showcased over 2,000 innovative and knowledge-based products at the exhibition. Addressing the managers, the Iranian president emphasized the importance of the department's role in

the creation of jobs for the country's educated people, which is one of the country's main priorities. Raisi praised the "valuable" measures taken by the Department for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy. However, he said that much still needs to be done. He said that the department should first focus on meeting the needs of the country and at the same time have a look at the scientific progress in the region and the world so that the country does not fall behind. Iran House of Innovation and Technology (IHIT), which is also active in Kenya, Syria, China, Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Iraq, is under the supervision of the Presidential Department for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy.



Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi (C) visits an exhibition of knowledge-based products at the Iran House of Innovation and Technology (IHIT) in the capital Tehran on February 19, 2024.
● IRNA

Israel's economy shrinks sharply on impact of war

Israel's GDP shrunk by almost one-fifth in the final quarter of 2023, compared to the three months prior, according to official figures published on Monday.

The 19.4 percent fall in the final quarter was attributed to the scale of the ongoing Gaza war's effect on the high-tech regime's economy.

Overall, Israel's GDP grew by 2.0 percent in 2023, short of the 2.3 percent projection made by the Bank of Israel after the war's outbreak in October, the Central Bureau of Statistics figures showed, according to AFP.

It was the single worst quarter for the Israeli economy in terms of GDP per capita since the opening quarter of the Covid pandemic in early 2020.

Exports fell by 18.3 percent and imports by 42.4 percent, fueled in part by airlines terminating flights and international shipping avoiding the Red Sea after Yemen began attacking ships over Israel's war on Palestinians in Gaza.

The regime has seen massive labor shortages and the collapse of the tourism industry since the outbreak of war on October 7.

Israel's onslaught on Gaza has killed over 29,000 people, mostly women and children.

The chairman of the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces said on Monday that the Israeli regime has undoubtedly suffered an "unprecedented and irreparable" defeat in its war against the oppressed people of Palestine.

"The Zionists seek to make up for their defeat by killing defenseless [Palestinian] people, which is definitely not possible," Major General Mohammad Baqeri said.

The regime is preparing to launch a ground offensive in the Gaza city of Rafah where around 1.5 million Palestinians are sheltering. The European Union on Monday warned Israel against launching an offensive in Rafah that ministers said would create a disaster for the refugees crammed into the city on the southern edge of Gaza.

Palestinian FM urges ICJ to stop Israel's occupation

Maliki accuses Israel of 'apartheid'



Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki (R) and Palestinian UN envoy Riyad Mansour attend a hearing at the International Court of Justice in the Hague, the Netherlands, on February 19, 2024.
● REUTERS

Palestinians are suffering "colonialism and apartheid" under the Israelis, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told the UN's top court Monday, urging judges to order an immediate and unconditional end to Israel's occupation of Palestine. "The Palestinians have endured colonialism and apartheid... There are those who are enraged by these words. They should

be enraged by the reality we are suffering," Al-Maliki told the International Court of Justice (ICJ), according to AFP. The ICJ is holding hearings all week on the legal implications of Israel's occupation since 1967, with an unprecedented 52 countries, including the United States and Russia, expected to give evidence. Israel will not participate in the hearings but sub-

mitted a written contribution, dated July 24, 2023, in which it urged the court to dismiss the request for an opinion. Speaking in the Peace Palace in The Hague, where the ICJ sits, the minister appealed to the judges to declare the occupation illegal and order it to stop "immediately, totally and unconditionally." "Justice delayed is justice denied and the Palestinian people have been denied justice for far too long," he said. "It is time to put an end to the double standards that have kept our people captive for far too long." Summing up, Palestinian

UN envoy Riyad Mansour struggled to hold back his tears as he called for a "future where Palestinian children are treated as children, not as a demographic threat."

In December 2022, the UN General Assembly asked the ICJ for a non-binding "advisory opinion" on the "legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem."

While any ICJ opinion would be non-binding, it comes amid mounting international legal pressure on Israel over its war in Gaza. The hearings are separate from a high-profile case brought by South Africa, which has accused Israel of committing genocide during its current Gaza offensive. Al-Maliki charged, however, that "the genocide un-

derway in Gaza is a result of decades of impunity and inaction."

"Ending Israel's impunity is a moral, political and legal imperative," he said. In January this year, the ICJ ruled in that case that Israel must do everything in its power to prevent genocide and allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, stopping short of ordering a cease-fire.

The UN General Assembly has asked the ICJ to consider two questions. Firstly, the court should examine the legal consequences of "the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination".

This relates to the "prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967" and "measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of

Jerusalem [Al-Quds]".

In June 1967, Israel crushed some of its Arab neighbors in a six-day war, seizing the West Bank including East Al-Quds from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.

Israel then began to settle the 70,000 square kilometers (27,000 square miles) of seized Arab territory. The UN later declared the occupation of Palestinian territory illegal. Cairo regained Sinai under its 1979 peace deal with Israel.

The ICJ has also been asked to look into the consequences of what it described as Israel's "adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures".

Secondly, the ICJ should advise on how Israel's actions "affect the legal status of the occupation," and what the consequences for the UN and other countries are.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



New destroyers join IRGC naval force

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Navy on Monday took delivery of two new patrol and combat destroyers.

In a ceremony at Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas, the "Sayyad Shirazi" and "Hassan Baqeri" military vessels, named after two former senior commanders, joined the fleet of the IRGC's Navy, Tasnim News Agency reported. The two stealth destroyers are the second and third models of Soleimani-class vessels, the first of which, unveiled on January 6, has been named after Abu

Mahdi al-Muhandis, a commander of the Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units, who was killed alongside Iran's Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in a US drone strike in Baghdad in January 2020.

The two new ocean-going catamarans are armed with various strike and air defense missile systems, including the 'Navvab' vertical launching system (VLS) for firing 'Sayyad' cruise missiles with a range of 700 kilometers. Each destroyer, weighing 600 tons, is powered by four propulsive engines and can carry a combat

helicopter and three light corvettes.

Iran's Navy has in recent years achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing surface and sub-surface

vessels. It has also increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers.

