

Leader: Strong voter turnout to help Iran progress

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that if the Iranian nation shows the world that they are present in 'decisive scenes,' they will save the country and contribute to Iran's progress.

"Strong and fervent elections constitute one of the pillars of running the country properly," the Leader said. "If we can show the world that the nation is present in the country's critical and decisive scenes, we have saved and moved the country forward," Press TV wrote.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting on Wednesday with a visiting group of the families of Iranian martyrs as well as first-time voters at the country's elections for the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) and the Assembly of Experts on March 1. Pointing to some people's indifference to the vote, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "I am not accusing anyone, but I remind all that we should look at the elections from the perspective of national interests, not from the viewpoints of factions and groups."

The Leader stressed, "Anyone who loves Iran, their nation and security should know that if the elections are poorly held, no one will benefit and everyone will be hurt."

Ayatollah Khamenei stressed

that the presence of Iranian voters at the polls bespeaks "national power," noting that the country's adversaries are closely watching the event.

"National power supports national security. If the enemy feels that you are not capable, [and] the Iranian nation has no power, they will threaten your security in every way," the Leader said. He added, "National security is all that matters. If there is no security, there remains nothing [else]. The enemy is opposed to our national power. Therefore, they oppose everything that is a manifestation of national power, including elections."

Ayatollah Khamenei hailed elections as an "opportunity" that should be seized, saying the vote not only benefits the country, but also disappoints the country's enemies.

"Whoever loves Iran, loves the Islamic Republic, loves the Islamic Revolution, anyone who loves national power, anyone who loves progress should be active in the elections and enthusiastically participate in the vote," the Leader said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader touched on Israel's months-long aggression on Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip and said the issue of Gaza introduced Islam to the world

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks at a meeting with a group of first-time voters and families of martyrs in the capital Tehran on February 28, 2024.

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as an element which encourages people not to give up and promotes resistance in the face of Zionists' crimes. The Leader noted Gaza developments also showed the true

color of Western culture and civilization, saying their leaders in practice failed to halt Israel's aggression by vetoing UNSC resolutions that called for a Gaza cease-fire.

Pointing to the recent self-immolation of Aaron Bushnell, an active-duty member of the US Air Force, in protest at Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "An Air

Force officer sets himself on fire; which means that even a young person who was brought up in that culture finds it burdensome, and even his conscience is offended."

Moscow works effectively with Tehran within OPEC+ framework: Deputy PM



Russia is efficiently cooperating with Iran within the OPEC+ framework, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said on Wednesday during a visit to Tehran.

He added that Russia and Iran need to strengthen work to reduce risks to gas transport infrastructure, reported Reuters. Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji and Novak, the co-chairs of the 17th Joint Economic Commission between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, exchanged their views on the expansion of bilateral cooperation in Tehran on Wednesday.

The two sides discuss the measures taken to promote their cooperation in different areas, including the oil and industry, roads, housing, standards, and free trade zones, wrote Shana.

Putting great emphasis on Tehran-Moscow cooperation in the oil and gas sector, Owji said the two countries will hold more talks in this regard. Iran and Russia can cooperate in all economic fields, he underlined and added Iran's

First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber has also held constructive talks on promotion of cooperation with Russia.

Novak, for his part, referred to his meeting with Mokhber held earlier on Wednesday, saying their talks revolved around trade and economic issues.

He said, "During their meeting in Moscow last December, Iran's President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin pointed to the energy sector's key role in broadening bilateral cooperation."

The deputy prime minister expressed hope that the presence of big Russian oil and gas companies in the meeting will help follow up bilateral cooperation in trade and economic fields.

Shifting to the 7th Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) Summit of Heads of State and Government slated for March 2 in Algiers, the capital of Algeria, Novak said a considerable time has been so far taken to prepare the upcoming sum-



A meeting of the 17th Joint Economic Commission is held between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation in Tehran on February 28, 2024.

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mit's declaration aimed at paying more attention to transmission of natural gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG). He also pointed to Iran-Russia close cooperation in the OPEC+ alliance.

"We are ready to hold constructive talks on formation of an energy hub on Iran's initiative within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)," Novak underlined.

He touched upon the participation of Russian companies in Iran's oil projects, naming ZN Vostok (ZNV), which is cooperating with Iran on development of five oil fields.

Iran and Russia signed six cooperation documents in the presence of the commission co-chairs.

From the psyche to the canvas:

Exhibition explores role of art therapy in mental health recovery



By Sadeq Dehqan

Staff writer

In an inspirational approach to psychotherapy, Roozbeh Hospital, the first psychiatric and mental disorders center in Tehran, is hosting an outdoor exhibition featuring watercolor paintings created by a group of patients with psychiatric disorders.

Fatemeh Arabshah, the exhibition curator and superintendent of one of the sections of the hospital, told Iran Daily, explaining that 70 watercolor paintings from 20 patients with psychiatric disorders are on view.

The exhibition opened on February 27 and will end today. Arabshah highlighted the significance of art therapy in the therapeutic process for psychiatric patients, emphasizing the integration of creative processes with psychological therapeutic techniques.

Art therapy, particularly painting, plays a role in helping individuals suffering from conditions

such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorders to express their emotions and thoughts, ultimately reaching a state of calmness.

The curator elaborated on the positive impact of painting instruction as an art therapy technique used in the hospital to improve the mental well-being of patients.

"Painting not only contributes to a sense of peace and uplifts the spirits of ordinary individuals but also brings joy and tranquility to patients with psychiatric disorders, instilling in them a sense of usefulness." She noted. Arabshah continued, pointing out that through the paintings created by these patients, one could trace elements of their thoughts and emotions, such as joy, hope, peace, and even distress, reflected in the colors, shapes, and subjects of the artwork.

Regarding the social challenges faced by psychiatric patients, Arabshah explained that engagement in artistic activities, including painting, and other

forms of art helps boost their self-confidence, revealing their talents and playing a crucial role in their therapeutic process.

The primary goal of organizing such art exhibitions for psychiatric patients, according to Arabshah, is to change society's perception of these individuals as incapable, showcasing that psychiatric patients can succeed in various artistic and non-artistic fields.

Arabshah concluded by stating that another objective is to support the empowerment of psychiatric patients through the sale of their artworks, providing them with a sense of usefulness and belief in their ability to contribute to society.

Additionally, the proceeds from the sales will be allocated to improving the quality of psychiatric services offered to these patients.

Roozbeh Hospital is the oldest educational neurology and psychiatry hospital in the country and the Middle East, affiliated with Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

