



Iran: UN report on 2022 riots built on 'baseless claims'

Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned a UN report on the 2022 riots in the country, saying that the report was built on "baseless claims" and "false and biased information, without a legal basis".

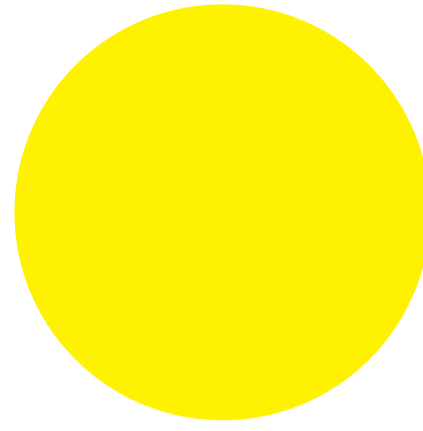
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Palestinian children stand amid the rubble of a mosque and makeshift shelters destroyed in Israeli strikes in Deir el-Balah, central Gaza, Palestine, on March 2, 2024. AFP



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Iran among top five countries in aerospace field



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

Iran is among the top five countries in the world in the field of aerospace, said the head of the Iran Aviation and Space Industries Association (IASIA), Davoud Najafipour. The first Aerospace Industry Exhibition was held with the participation of 120 Iranian companies in the special economic zone of Payam International Airport, in northern Alborz Province. The industrial manufacturers and knowledge-based companies showcased their products and capabilities during the three-day event which wrapped up on Saturday.

On the sidelines of the event, the IASIA head told Iran Daily that due to its self-sufficiency and reliance on entirely indigenous technologies and production,

Iran's aerospace industry is considered one of the best in the world. He added that this achievement comes in a context where our enemies have consistently tried to prevent the aerospace technologies and components from reaching Iran through various sanctions, and withholding any part of their knowledge and production from us. Najafipour said the exhibition was the most significant event in the country's aerospace industry. While previous aerospace exhibitions have been held on Kish Island, this was the first time an exhibition of this scale was taking place around the capital. According to the IASIA head, 380 knowledge-based companies in the aerospace industry are members of the association, and some of them participated in the exhibition. "Our companies in this exhibition have demonstrated their

capabilities in the production of aircraft engine parts, special alloys required in the aviation industry, as well as components related to aircraft hydraulic and mechanical systems.

He said that despite the significant sanctions imposed on the country's aviation industry, Iranian companies have stood on their own feet, producing many parts in the aviation industry domestically.

He explained that whenever the United States and Western countries decide to impose sanctions on a country, they first target its aviation industry. This has been done in the case of many countries including Libya, Sudan, and others, causing the aviation industries of these countries to suffer.

He added that Iran has never been paralyzed, and our airplanes have never ceased to take flight.



Economy more impactful on US elections than Gaza

America's red line is non-involvement in Middle East wars



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

important to consider whether the Gaza conflict and America's support for Israel will have an impact on the US elections. We have discussed this matter with Jahanbakhsh Izadi, a university professor and expert on American affairs.

The presidential elections in the United States are scheduled to take place in about eight months. Donald Trump, the most prominent Republican candidate, is still preoccupied with the cases raised against him, while the physical condition of Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee, has also become a challenge for the Democrats. On the other hand, it is



IRAN DAILY: Donald Trump has been quite newsworthy in the past couple of years. However, can he be considered a contender for the upcoming presidential elections in the United States?

JAHANBAKSH IZADI: In the US Constitution or the executive procedure of the Constitution, there is no impediment or provision that would prevent Donald Trump from running in the elections

so far. The complaints against Trump and the allegations and crimes currently under investigation are not obstacles to his electoral participation. If Trump's opponents pursue other cases, such as mishandling classified documents, or events like the January 6 attack on the Capitol, which have security implications, it may pose a problem for him, provided that a court decides to convict and disqualify him from running in the elections. However, such an event has not occurred yet, and he is running his election campaign.

Polls show Trump's position as being relatively strong, with even a three to four percent lead over Biden. Do you think his election campaign is advancing and will maintain this status until the end?

Trump enjoys a good standing among Republicans. Although Nikki Haley managed to defeat Trump in the Washington D.C. primary elections, the overall margin between Trump and Haley is significant, and it doesn't seem she could pose a challenge to Trump. Trump's position, according to polls, is currently favorable. However, whether he can maintain this status as the official nominee throughout the election campaign remains uncertain. Nonetheless, he

has the experience of two election contests, one of which he won and the other he lost. We'll have to wait and see.

How do you think the situation with Joe Biden is progressing for the Democrats? Can Biden compete against Trump in this cycle? Is the Democrats' track record appealing to Americans?

According to polls, Trump and Biden's popularity are currently very close. However, what may become troublesome for Democrats is Biden's physical condition and age. Republicans, especially Trump, portray Biden as a forgetful and ailing individual. Trump even mocked Biden, saying he can't even remember his own name. Nonetheless, physical health is a formal norm in the world of politics, and if some of Biden's controversial behaviors persist, there's a possibility of replacing him with another candidate for the election, as names like Michelle Obama, former president Barack Obama's wife, and Vice President Kamala Harris have been mentioned. However, it should not be forgotten that the outcome of the US elections is usually determined by the so-called swing states. Some states are traditionally blue or red, meaning they are Democratic or Republican supporters. The situation of

these swing states is still unclear.

The war in Gaza and Israel's actions there, backed by the United States, have sparked considerable criticism within America. Do you think the Gaza conflict could have a noticeable impact on the US elections?

I don't believe it will have a significant impact. The US government has no issue with confronting and even physically eliminating Palestinian militant groups and Hezbollah in Lebanon, which it labels as terrorist organizations. However, it does not necessarily endorse Israel's methods of dealing with these groups and its tactics in the Gaza conflict. For instance, it emphasizes the need for distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants, or providing aid to civilians affected by the conflict, etc. Hence, in essence, the approach to dealing with Palestinian militant groups is not different between Israel and the US.

America has set a red line for itself, which is not getting involved in another direct war in the Middle East, a line it has managed to uphold so far. Therefore, the Gaza war will not have an impact on US policy.

While the Gaza conflict may not affect US policy, is it insignificant to the American public? Large protests criticizing Isra-

el and supporting Palestine have taken place in American cities, and it seems that parts of the American populace oppose unconditional support for Israel.

In the American electoral scene, the primary influencing factor is the economy. Years ago, when a supporter told Bill Clinton he won because he dressed well, Clinton replied, "Idiot! What won it for me was the economy." So, the primary issue is the economy, and other issues, such as the Gaza conflict, serve as catalysts for electoral debates and discussions. Additionally, disgruntled segments of the public are well aware that the Republican Party's relationship with Israel is much stronger than that of the Democrats. Therefore, the Gaza conflict does not have the potential to become the main issue in the US elections. Moreover, the fact that the US has not engaged in direct warfare in the Middle East thus far is considered an achievement for the Democrats. As you can see, Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea continue, and nuclear and regional tensions with Iran persist. Despite reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency against Iran's nuclear program, the US has remained silent for now, trying to control and manage crises and tensions. This is because it does not want to engage in a military conflict with Iran.



Attendees listen to speeches during an "Uncommitted for Joe Biden" primary election night watch party at Adonis restaurant, Michigan, US, on February 27, 2024.

● AFP

Jannat Garden in Shiraz adorned with majestic trees and vibrant flowers



● neshan.org



● yjc.ir



● kite.ir



● kite.ir



● neshan.org

Shiraz, the capital of Fars Province, is home to a stunning array of gardens, among which the Garden of Paradise or "Jannat" stands out. With a rich historical legacy, Jannat Garden is one of the oldest and most traditional gardens in the city, often cited as one of the earliest urban parks in Shiraz. Over the decades, Jannat Garden has undergone numerous restoration efforts, preserving its allure for visitors.

Historical roots

The origins of Jannat Garden can be traced back to the Qajar Period, during which the grand mansion of Mushir al-Mulk graced

its grounds. Though historical records describe a splendid mansion, no remnants of it exist today. In the "Safarnameh Naseri," a historical and geographical account of Fars Province, it is noted that Jannat Garden was one of the constructions of Haj Mirza Abolhassan Khan Mushir al-Mulk. He cleared a plot in the western desert of Shiraz, planting a variety of trees and erecting an impressive mansion adjacent to it.

A botanical haven

Jannat Garden comprises a series of interconnected smaller gardens, collectively forming

a visually captivating and unified space. The garden boasts a diverse array of plant and tree species, drawing the admiration of tourists. Adorned with majestic cypress and pine trees, lush lawns, vibrant flowers, and a designated camp area for Nowruz visitors add to its charm.

Facilities and amenities

Jannat Garden offers a host of amenities, including parking, a supermarket, a coffee shop, numerous kiosks, and a bicycle rental counter. Additionally, visitors can find everything from bakeries and take-away food to

car repair services and stores selling travel tents in close proximity to the garden. The garden remains open throughout the year, providing consistent services, particularly during holidays and Nowruz, with free entry and paid private parking. It serves as a delightful stop for travelers, especially those en route to or from Shiraz during the festive season.

Recreational activities and leisure

The garden caters to a wide range of recreational pursuits, featuring a well-maintained bike trail, playground for chil-

dren, and sports facilities such as tennis and volleyball courts, as well as a football field. Furthermore, visitors can enjoy leisurely strolls in designated areas, indulge in swimming at the well-equipped indoor pool, or partake in outdoor barbecues within the serene surroundings of the garden.

Capturing the essence of Jannat Garden

A visit to Jannat Garden offers a unique experience, with its picturesque fountains, ponds, and iconic cypress trees symbolizing the essence of Shiraz. The vibrant atmosphere, filled with

the laughter of children and the presence of families, infuses the garden with a sense of vitality and tranquility, making it an ideal place for relaxation and rejuvenation.

Ideal time to visit

The most enchanting time to explore Jannat Garden is during the final week of winter and throughout spring, when the garden is at its most resplendent. However, its warm hues also make it a delightful destination during the summer and autumn, offering visitors a year-round haven of natural beauty.

Rich history and trade of Kerman in 10th century

In the 10th century, the towns of Kerman differed little from those of the rest of Persia and Central Asia. Most were surrounded by a wall with four gates; only the capital, Sirjan, is said to have possessed eight gates.

Also noteworthy is that because of the lack of timber, the dwellings had the form of domelike structures. A similar type of structure exists in Kerman even today; the historian Fedor Tumanskii, who was there in 1894, says about the village of Nigar: "A great number of homesteads have domelike roofs, which suggests a lack of construction timber."

After Sirjan, the most important city was Bam, the industrial center of the province; the cotton fabrics manufactured here were exported all over the Islamic world, including Egypt. These fabrics were remarkable for their durability; one set of clothes made from this cloth could be worn for from five to twenty years. The manufacture of Kerman

shawls, famous to this day, became concentrated in Bam. At that time, according to Ibn Hawqal, the price of one shawl could be as much as 30 dinars, that is, 150 rubles.

At present, besides the Kerman shawls, the Kerman carpets are especially famous. The 10th-century geographers do not mention them, but this art of weaving already existed in the fourteenth century under Timur; the master craftsmen of Fars and Kerman supplied silk rugs for the Friday mosque built by Timur in Samarqand, now known by the name of Bibi Khanim.

In the northern part of Kerman, in Kubanan, according to Yaqut and Marco Polo, was concentrated the production of zinc oxide or tutty; this was exported from Kerman to other countries as a medicine for eye ailments.

Of course, the Iranians penetrated into the southern part of Kerman, the so-called "warm lands" later than they did into the northern part; here the autochthonous pop-



↑ Konar Sandal Hill, Jiroft, Kerman

ulation has to this day partly retained its distinctiveness from the Iranian conquerors. In the geographical sense, these parts have not yet been fully explored; even the question of where the interior basins end and where that of the Indian Ocean begins has not been adequately answered. The district of Jiroft is watered by the rivulet Khalil Rud (some travelers call it the Khaliri). Wilhelm Tomaschek

(1841-1901), a Czech-Austrian geographer and orientalist, refutes the assertion of E. A. Floyer, an early nineteenth-century traveler, that this rivulet flows into the sea, and he suggests that it disappears in the sands; yet in 1894, Tumanskii again heard that it flows into the sea. Jiroft was separated from the northeastern districts of Kerman by the mountains of Barez, now Jebal Barez. The

population of these mountains adopted Islam only in 'Abbasid times; and only under the Saffarids, at the close of the ninth century, did it actually submit to Muslim rulers.

The city of Jiroft, whose ruins lie not far from the village of Karimabad, was in pre-Mongol times one of the richest towns of the Islamic world. Here the road coming from the Persian Gulf port of Hormuz (near modern Bandar Abbas) converged with the road coming from India through Jalk, and the goods brought to Jiroft from India were then distributed to other Persian provinces.

In the 10th century, the city ceded primacy in terms of size to Sirjan and Bam, but its prosperity seems to have risen under the Seljuk rulers of Kerman to the point where it was one of the two capitals of the realm, alongside Bardasir. Foreign merchants lived mostly in the suburb of Qamadin, which, according to Muhammad b. Ibrahim, was "the

treasury of the wealthy and the warehouse of the owners of products of the East and West".

Jiroft is mentioned under the name of Camadi by Marco Polo, in whose time the city was already completely ruined.

The road from Jiroft to the sea went through the district of Rudbar, also mentioned by Marco Polo. Between Rudbar and the seacoast, in the mountains, primarily to the east of the road, lived the Kufichs or Qufs, in Persian Kuch or Kufij, a people who spoke a special language of their own; according to Istakhri, they claimed Arab origin.

There were seven mountain chains in the region, each of which had its own chieftain; altogether, up to 10,000 men were counted among the inhabitants of the mountains. These mountaineers had no horses and undertook their incursions on foot; nevertheless, their raids spread fear all over Kerman and the adjacent districts of Fars and Sistan.

The above is a lightly edited version of chapter titled 'Quhistan, Kerman, and Makran,' from a book entitled, 'An Historical Geography of Iran,' written by V. Barthold and published by Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Unimaginable suffering of Gaza's children



By Catherine Russell
Executive director of
UNICEF

PERSPECTIVE

The conflict in Gaza has now passed the 20-week mark. Since October, unrelenting war has squeezed people farther and farther south, pushing them to Rafah, the final stretch of Gazan territory before the Egyptian border.

In just the past six weeks, the population of Rafah has increased from less than 300,000 people to 1.4 million as desperate families, including many young children, seek refuge from horrific violence in other parts of the territory. Gazans sheltering in Rafah now face the terrifying reality that large-scale military operations could be imminent in the very area where they have fled for refuge. They cannot be pushed farther, however, and there is no safe place to go in the north.

Occupying an area of just 25 square miles on the border with Egypt, Rafah now has twice the population density of New York City and more than four times that of Washington, DC. But unlike either of those American cities, people in Rafah are not living in high-rises or townhomes. They are sheltering together in crammed hospitals and schools. More than 610,000 children are trapped there, making up about half of the displaced population. Gazans struggling to survive in Rafah are enduring unimaginable conditions, including prolonged exposure to cold and wet winter weather, sheltering side-by-side in the streets, under tents and tarpaulins — anywhere they can find space.

Now, this small section of Gaza, which already has experienced an abundance of suffering, faces the prospect of additional hardship and heartache. In recent weeks, headlines have been filled with news of a possibly imminent offensive.

Given the sheer population density and lack of safe spaces in Rafah, any significant military escalation — especially the use of explosive weapons that can have indiscriminate consequences — would be catastrophic for the civilian population trapped there, including its most vulnerable inhabitants.

We have already seen this play out in other parts of Gaza, with children and women estimated to make up a shocking 70% of the more than 29,000 people reported to have been killed over the last four months.

A major attack on Rafah would add considerably to Gaza's already grim toll of deaths and injuries. Thousands more would likely die in the violence or from

the lack of essential services and further disruption of humanitarian assistance to a civilian population that is extremely vulnerable. An attack would also accelerate the ongoing breakdown in law and order.

The staff of UNICEF on the ground has borne witness to some of the cruel horrors of this war. Parties to the conflict have blatantly committed grave violations against children — including killing, maiming, kidnappings, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access.

Injured children are reporting to the few remaining functional hospitals with severe burns, injuries that require amputation, open wounds, and other serious traumas.

Rafah is home to some of Gaza's last remaining hospitals, shelters, markets, and water systems — all of which are essential for children's health and well-being. Without these resources, the incidence of hunger and disease will increase dramatically, costing more children their lives.

Even now, we estimate that at least 90% of Gaza's children under the age of five are affected by one or more infectious diseases, and that 70% have had diarrhea in the past two weeks — a 23-fold increase compared with the 2022 baseline.

There are reportedly plans to evacuate civilians in Rafah ahead of a major military offensive. But where can they go? Much of Gaza has been reduced to rubble. Civilians cannot be forcibly displaced farther south. And they cannot, as some have suggested, reasonably move to Al-Mawasi, a Palestinian town on the southern coast of Gaza, because it is just a narrow strip of beach that lacks basic infrastructure including sufficient

toilets and running water needed to sustain the population.

Most of the children in Rafah have already been displaced multiple times by the fighting in Gaza, in direct contravention of international law. We know that as the war enters its 20th week many are injured, sick, and malnourished and will struggle to find the wherewithal to move yet again. We estimate that at least 17,000 children in Gaza are now unaccompanied or have become separated from their families, a number that will surely increase in the event of further population displacement.

It is imperative to refrain from further military escalation in and around Rafah and to ensure that all captives still inside Gaza are urgently and safely released. If the parties do not heed this call, they will be responsible for the deaths of many more children, in addition to the thousands who have already perished.

Parties to the conflict should urgently implement a permanent humanitarian cease-fire so that our group and other humanitarian agencies can help to roll out the massive, multi-agency operation that is so desperately needed. I strongly urge the authorities to allow more aid trucks through border checks, to lift restrictions on the movement of humanitarian workers, and to guarantee safety for people accessing and distributing aid.

The destruction of Gaza and the killing of civilians will not bring peace or safety to the region. That can only be achieved with a negotiated political solution, one that prioritizes the rights and well-being of this and future generations of Israeli and Palestinian children.

The article first appeared on CNN.

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UNICEF Executive Director
Catherine Russell (R) visits Nasser
Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza, on
November 14, 2023.
● UNICEF

Yazan al-Kafarneh's death a stain on humanity



Yazan al-Kafarneh (L) suffering from malnutrition in the last few hours of his life at a children's hospital in Rafah, Gaza, on March 2, 2024.
● MOHAMMED TALATENE/DPA



By Seraj Assi
Palestinian
Author

PERSPECTIVE

The world just watched a 10-year-old Palestinian boy, Yazan al-Kafarneh, starve to death in Gaza. Others like him have already died of hunger, and many more will if Israel does not stop its brutal starvation of Gaza's civilian population.

The body of this article contains a graphic image of Yazan al-Kafarneh to illustrate the effects of the ongoing starvation of Palestinians.

Yazan al-Kafarneh, a 10-year-old Palestinian boy from Gaza, had been dying of hunger for weeks as a result of Israel's crippling blockade and deliberate starvation of Gaza. Images and videos of Yazan, who had cerebral palsy, showed the motionless boy lying on a hospital bed with a skeletal body, sunken cheeks, bare bones, and hollowed eyes. For days his parents sat helpless by his bed and watched him fade away. His father shared an older photo of Yazan, healthy and happy, just before Israel displaced the family from Beit Hanoun in North Gaza to Rafah in the South.

Yazan succumbed to starvation on March 4, dying in his mother's arms at a local hospital in Rafah. He weighed eleven pounds when he died. "Today, I lost my son due to lack of food,"

his grieving father told reporters. His weeping mother added, "I lost my child today after ten days at the hospital due to malnutrition. My son's health rapidly deteriorated, and he lost weight until he became a skeleton. My son is now in heaven, but I never imagined that we would reach this stage. My message to the world is to look at Gaza's children and see how their lives have changed."

The world has watched Yazan die in real-time. So far, nearly twenty Palestinian children and newborns have perished of starvation because of Israel's inhumane blockade of Gaza — and more such deaths are imminent. Last month, the United Nations warned of an "explosion" in child deaths due to Israel's starvation of civilians. For weeks, aid groups such as Human Rights Watch have been warning that Israel is "using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in the occupied Gaza Strip". The starvation of Gaza is a crime against humanity. In the trembling words of the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, "Look at our children. Look at Yazan. Look what agony they are enduring. Dozens more children who have died of malnutrition have been identified, and many more have died and are dying in darkness and destitution. This has to stop. For God's sake, this has to stop."

Over the past five months, Israel has imposed a total blockade on the already besieged strip, depriving over two million people of food, water, energy, and medicine. Israel continues

to willfully impede relief supplies that are indispensable to the survival of Palestinians in Gaza, where over 700 thousand people in the North are facing starvation. Thus far, Israel has killed at least 30 thousand Palestinians in Gaza, while wounding nearly 72 thousand others. About 85 percent of Gaza's population has been displaced.

Israel's deliberate starvation of Palestinians like Yazan al-Kafarneh makes a brutal mockery of international appeals to allow aid to the besieged enclave. Last month, Mahmoud Fattouh, a two-month-old Palestinian boy, died from starvation in northern Gaza, having gone days without milk. Footage shows the emaciated infant gasping for breath in a hospital bed. A paramedic who rushed the boy to the hospital said, "We saw a woman carrying her baby, screaming for help. Her pale baby seemed to be taking his last breath. We rushed him to hospital, and he was found to be suffering acute malnutrition. Medical staff rushed him into the ICU. The baby has not been fed any milk for days, as baby milk is totally absent in Gaza." Israel's inhumane starvation of Gaza has spared no one: neither children, newborns, women, nor elderly people. Today Abdul Rahman al-Dahdouh, an elderly Palestinian man, died due to severe dehydration and malnutrition, as Israel continues to prevent food convoys from reaching northern parts of Gaza, forcing children to walk miles in search of food and water for their families.

People in Gaza are looking down into the abyss. On February 29, Israel massacred Palestinians scrambling to collect flour from aid trucks on al-Rasheed Street in Gaza City. On March 3, Al Jazeera reported that Israeli soldiers again opened fire on a crowd of hungry people in Gaza City, this time at the al-Kuwait roundabout.

Western governments, led by the Biden administration, are complicit in Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe. Embarking on political theatrics, the United States airdropped food in Gaza over the weekend — barely the equivalent of two trucks. Instead of demanding an end to the siege and a permanent cease-fire, the United States has chosen to act helpless before its genocidal partner, while refusing to halt its massive military aid and arms shipments to Israel.

A recent video featuring Joe Biden indifferently licking ice cream while addressing the plight of Palestinian children has removed the last shred of dignity from the US administration.

The article first appeared on Jacobin.



The photo shows the body of the 10-year-old Palestinian child Yazan al-Kafarneh who died from severe hunger due to Israel's ongoing crippling siege on Gaza.
● RABIE ABU NOQAIRA/ANADOLU

In midst of genocide

Gaza's cats warm children's hearts, beds

By Sally Ibrahim
Reporter

PERSPECTIVE

As Israel's indiscriminate onslaught on the besieged coastal enclave continues, cats have snuggled up alongside displaced

Palestinian children under flimsy tents as a means of refuge from the harsh, cold weather and brutal war.

Separately speaking to *The New Arab* (TNA), several children said they are doing their best "to protect stray cats from death from the cold weather or starvation".

"These poor cats cannot save themselves from Israel's attacks. They cannot find food in the streets. They also are victims of the Israeli war against us in Gaza," said Subhi Elian, a 12-year-old boy displaced to Rafah, located in southern Gaza.

'At least, we can live longer together'

A month ago, Elian, who was forced to run from his home in Gaza City with his family to shelter in Rafah, noticed two stray cats sleeping beside him. He says at that moment, he felt extreme sadness.

"I cried as I felt the cats also suffered from the war. They cannot speak to ask us to help them; they only came here and slept," Elian remarked to TNA.

Elian says he shares his food with his new feline friends, whom he named Semsem and Lolo. "We are starving, but, at least, we can live longer together until we get more food the next day," he added.

At first, Elian's father, Mohammed, asked his son to let go of the cats because there was barely food for the family, arguing that the cats would only increase their burden. But Elian did not concede and pleaded, so the father relented.

"Since then, I suddenly started receiving more assistance from UNRWA," the father told TNA, "It seems the cats brought us luck."

Abdul Qader al-Assar, an 8-year-old child from the al-Nuseirat refugee camp, adopted three cats after seeing them desperately search among piles of rotting garbage for food.

"The cats were so skinny and unable to move," he said. "I decided to adopt and care for them until the war ended."

'All of us are under attack by Israel'

Israel launched a massive war on Gaza after Hamas led an attack on Israeli military bases and civilian settlements within and around the Gaza envelope on October 7, with some 1,200 Israelis dying in the fighting.

Since then, Israeli war jets, ground artillery, and naval boats have battered all of the besieged coastal enclave, killing at least 29,000 and wounding more than 67,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

Because of the war, numerous stray animals were also killed or had to be abandoned. This is why Salman al-Hams, a 15-year-old boy in Rafah, gathered as many starving cats as he could and routinely fed them in front of his house.

"They are animals, and they have rights like humans (...) Israel does not distinguish between us and the animals in Gaza. All of us are under attack by Israel," he said to TNA.

"Even though we are struggling to obtain food, we are still happy to share it with these poor cats and stray dogs in our areas," he added.

According to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation, Gaza's entire 2.3 million population is currently classified as facing either crisis, emergency, or catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

The UN, Human Rights Watch, and other humanitarian organisations have warned that starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is being used in Gaza — a move deemed illegal under International Humanitarian Law and in direct breach of UNSC Resolution 2417.

The article first appeared on *The New Arab*.



A Palestinian boy holds up an adopted stray cat in a tent in Deir al-Balah, Gaza, on January 27, 2024, in the midst of Israel's brutal onslaught in Gaza.
● GETTY IMAGES

Persian Gulf Pro League roundup: Esteghlal, Persepolis flex muscles ahead of Tehran Derby



Esteghlal striker Gustavo Blanco (1) celebrates with teammates after scoring the winner in a 1-0 victory over Esteghlal Khuzestan in Ahvaz, Iran, on March 8, 2024.
● AMIN BAHRAMI/IRNA



Persepolis players celebrate a goal during a 4-2 victory over Foolad Khuzestan in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on March 8, 2024.
● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

Sports Desk

It now appears to be a two-horse race for the Persian Gulf Pro League crown for the rest of the way after Esteghlal and Persepolis ran away winners over southern Iranian clubs on Friday, while a fifth successive top-flight defeat saw Sepahan drop to fifth in the table.

In Ahvaz, Argentine striker Gustavo Blanco bagged only his second goal since joining Esteghlal in the summer, heading home a Jaloliddin Masharipov's cross late in the first half, before the Tehran Blues were forced to hold on in the closing stages to beat Esteghlal Khuzestan 1-0 and restore a three-point lead over archrival Persepolis, which came out on top against Foolad Khuzestan at the capital's Azadi Stadium earlier in the day.

Chasing a fourth league victory on the bounce under Brazilian head coach Osmar Vieira, Persepolis came from behind twice to beat the 10-man Foolad 4-2.

Moussa Coulibaly gave the visiting side a 11th-minute lead after Iranian international keeper Ali-reza Beiranvand made a mess of saving Malian defender's tame effort from an acute angle.

Winter signing Oston Urunov netted his first goal for Persepolis with a composed finish in the 35th minute, but Qatari fullback Abdelkarim Hassan – also a January addition – had his maiden league start marred by an awkward own goal four minutes before the break.

Issa Alekasir drew Persepolis level again with 10 minutes into the second period, before Mojtaba Najjarian received his marching orders for keeping out

a Dania Esmailifar's effort with his arm.

Hossein Kan'anizadegan scored from the spot to put the host in front for the first time in the match in the 68th minute.

Mahdi Torabi rounded off the Reds' brilliant performance in the second half with a superb strike, curling in a left-footed effort from the corner of the box 15 minutes from normal time.

Viera hopes his men will keep up the momentum heading into Wednesday's crunch derby, though he will have to do with instrumental center-back Kan'anizadegan, who received a fourth booking of the season.

Sepahan, meanwhile, suffered further blow to its title hunt following yet another league loss – at home to Paykan, which stepped onto the pitch in Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium

without a win in 12 top-flight outings.

Having beaten Shams Azar by three goals in the Hazfi Cup four days earlier, Sepahan looked to be back on track when Paykan goalkeeper Mohammad Nasser's effort ricocheted off Farshad Ahmadzadeh's leg and found the back of the net with four minutes into the contest.

Mohammad-Hossein Fallah netted twice to give Paykan a 2-1 lead at the break and things went from bad to worse for the home side five minutes after the restart when Bryan Dabo was dismissed by the referee for a foul on goal-bound Hamed Pakdel – a 12th red card for Sepahan in 25 games across all competitions this season.

Reza Asadi still managed to equalize for Sepahan four minutes later – joining teammate

Shahriar Moghanlou on top of the league's leading marksmen chart with nine strikes – but former Sepahan forward Ali Qorbani secured the maximum points for the visitors with 14 minutes left on the clock.

Sepahan is now 11 points adrift of the top with two games in hand – away to Tractor and at home against Zob Ahan – but Portuguese manager Jose Morais will need a quick fix to his side's struggles if they are to keep title aspirations alive.

Elsewhere, Ricardo Alves's superb strike from 20 yards out gave Tractor the lead at Mes Rafsanjan, before Mohammad Akbari came off the bench to draw Moharram Navidkia's rejuvenated side level right at the death as it finished 1-1.

The point was still enough for Tractor to leapfrog Malavan into

third spot on goal difference – seven points behind Persepolis with a game in hand.

Malavan continued its fairytale campaign on the preceding night, defeating Golgozar Sirjan 1-0 at home, courtesy of a Mohammadreza Soleimani's spot-kick in the second half.

A Babak Moradi's stoppage-time penalty saw Zob Ahan surrender a two-goal lead at Havadar after going down to 10 men late in the game as the two sides shared the spoils in a thrilling 2-2 draw.

Relegation strugglers San'at Naft and Nassaji Mazandaran played to 1-1 stalemate in Abadan, while Shamas Azar bounced back from the cup setback with a 2-1 home win against Iralco, thanks to Pouria Sarabadani's penalty and Faraz Emam-Ali's strike against Mahdi Limouchi's late consolation for the visiting side.

Iran wins Vehbi Emre tournament; Geraei stunned in Sofia



● UWW

Sports Desk

A remarkable 12 medals, including four golds, saw Iran win the Greco-Roman title at the Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre wrestling tournament in Antalya, Turkey.

Hassan Rangraz's men topped the team table with 166 points, followed by the host and Kirgizstan, which collected 107 and 97 points respectively. Saeid Esmaili (67kg) and Amin Kavianejad (77kg) walked away with

the ultimate prize of their respective weight classes on Friday, a day after Pouria Dadmarz (55kg) and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) had won a couple of golds for the country. Amir-Reza Dehbozorgi (60kg), Ali Oskou (77kg), Rasoul Garmsiri (82kg), Mahdi Bali (97kg), and world champion Amin Mirzazadeh (130kg) settled for five silvers, while Amir Abdi (77kg), Abbas Mahdizadeh (82kg), and Fardin Hedayati (130kg) left Antalya with three consolation bronzes.

Wakeup call for Geraei

Meanwhile, reigning Olympic champion Mohammadreza Geraei was given a reality check ahead of his Greco-Roman 67kg title defense at the Paris Games after being pinned by Kazakhstan's Adilkhan Satayev in the Dan Kolov – Nikola Petrov tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The Iranian went on to add the world gold to his Olympic success in 2021, but a slump in form over the past two years saw Geraei lose the world final to Serbian Mate Nemes in 2022 before laboring to the bronze in last September's World Championships.

Taking part in the 72kg contests, Geraei looked to be back to his best when claiming four superiority victories – including an 8-0 triumph over Satayev – in a round-robin format in the Bulgarian capital, but while leading 5-1 in the final, suffered a shock fall defeat in a rematch with the Kazakhstani wrestler to take the silver.

Mohammad Naqousi won the 82kg gold in the Greco-Roman contests, with Mohammad-Mobin Azimi finishing on the top podium of the 92kg class in the freestyle event.

Yassin Rezaei won a second freestyle bronze for the country, taking the bronze in the 61kg event.

Destructive Joshua knocks out Ngannou in second round



Anthony Joshua (left) lands a punch on Francis Ngannou in a heavyweight bout in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on March 8, 2024.
● RICHARD PELHAM/GETTY IMAGES

BBC – Briton Anthony Joshua delivered the most powerful statement to the heavyweight division with a destructive second-round knockout win over Francis Ngannou in Saudi Arabia.

Joshua, 34, floored the former UFC champion in the first round and early in the second. A dazed Ngannou rose to

his feet in Riyadh but was stunned by an explosive and formidable right moments later as the referee halted the contest. The 37-year-old appeared to be out before he even hit the canvas and required medical treatment.

Victory is two-time world champion Joshua's fourth in 11 months, and keeps

alive his ambition of recapturing a world title.

Eddie Hearn called for Joshua, who he has promoted throughout the heavyweight's pro career, to face the winner of Tyson Fury and Oleksandr Usyk. The pair will fight to become the undisputed heavyweight champion in May, with a rematch later in the year.

Iran: UN report on 2022 riots built on 'baseless claims'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned a UN report on the 2022 riots in the country, saying that the report was built on "baseless claims" and "false and biased information, without a legal basis".

The report by a fact-finding mission mandated by the United Nations on Friday alleged that Iran's response to the riots that broke out following the death of the 22-year-old Iranian girl, Mahsa Amini, in September 2022 amounts to serious human rights violations.

The ministry's spokesman Nasser Kanaani in a statement on Saturday said that human rights mechanisms of the world body have turned into "a plaything" in the hands of some regimes to advance their sinister and unlawful goals.

Kanaani said the report repeats groundless allegations rooted in inaccurate and biased information and, therefore, lacks legal credibility and is fundamentally rejected.

He denounced attempts to foment Iranophobia and defame Iran, stating that the so-called fact-finding mission

was established and funded in November 2022 as a result of the "ridiculous show of human rights" by a number of Western governments, especially Germany.

The Iranian diplomat said the mission's latest report entails an organized set of falsifications and lies that have purposefully altered realities.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the report, which has been compiled and engineered by the Zionist regime, the United States, and some Western countries, as a clear example of abuse of the sublime human rights concepts and values for the purpose of pursuing short-sighted political goals. It believes that the report has no legal acceptability and effect whatsoever," he said.

Kanaani underscored that the report revealed that the so-called fact-finding mission functions in compliance with the schemes of its German, British, American and Israeli founders, and abuses the UN human rights mechanisms to serve the sinister and illegal objectives of those regimes.

Kanaani also advised the initiators of the mission to deal with human rights violations



● mfa.gov.ir

in their own countries rather than improperly meddle in Iran's affairs, arguing they should attend to the violation of rights of thousands of Palestinian women and children in Gaza, where more than 30,000 civilians have been killed in Israeli strikes over the past five months.

"The countries that violate the rights of other nations and are complicit in all of the Zionist regime's crimes and massacre of civilians, particularly women and children, cannot present themselves as advocates, or judge the human rights status in other countries. They must be held accountable for their

crimes concerning gross violations of human rights," Kanaani said.

Kanaani further pointed to the formation of a special committee on Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's order to probe the 2022 unrest, adding that its final report was recently submitted to the president.

Complexity of situation on Israel's northern front



By Mohammad Bayat
West Asia expert

EXCLUSIVE OPINION

Israel's defense minister has reportedly announced the possibility of a ground invasion of Lebanon and the escalation of the war with the Hezbollah resistance group during a meeting with the US special envoy in the region.

It seems that a duality has emerged within the Israeli regime, i.e., the interests of the regime, on the one hand, and the interests of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on the other.

Engaging in a war with Hezbollah is not in favor of the regime, and the opposition side in Israel is against such military action. But, on the other hand, Netanyahu's personal interests require the continuation of the war because he is worried about his political situation after the war.

There are signs that Netanyahu is preparing to attack Hezbollah. Firstly, the exchange of fire on the northern borders of the occupied territories has intensified in recent weeks, and Israel has targeted civilian areas in southern Lebanon. Also, Hezbollah's attacks have targeted the regime's positions deep inside the occupied territories. Secondly, Israel has attempted to assassinate and eliminate Hezbollah's top military commanders for a long time; and the third sign is the Israeli army's buildup, which shows that it is preparing to attack southern Lebanon.

It is said that Hezbollah has about 20 trained brigades. Although the Lebanese army is deprived of an air defense system, Hezbollah has managed to create a defense system for itself, which the Israeli army has tried to disable in recent weeks.

The US special envoy in the region, Amos Hochstein, visited Lebanon on Monday and held talks with the country's Parliament Speaker Nabi Berri, and then traveled to the occupied territories to meet the Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant amid ongoing cease-fire talks on Gaza in Cairo.

It seems that the US envoy is trying to prevent the escalation of another war in the region while seeking to help establish a cease-fire in Gaza. Another war is not in favor of the US and, especially, the Democrats who are at the height of an election race.

On the other hand, even though Hezbollah is ready to defend itself, considering the political and economic situation in Lebanon, the resistance group prefers to not enter a broader war with Israel. Meanwhile, Israel's political factions, including the opposition ones, do not agree with a ground attack on Lebanon.

While talks on Gaza and the cease-fire are going on, the situation in the northern front is getting more complicated, and these complications have led the US special envoy to visit the region. It seems that a war of wills is happening in the region.

On the one hand, Netanyahu is trying to escalate the war with Hezbollah; on the other hand, the international community and Israel's factions are attempting to prevent the escalation of the war. Netanyahu probably wants to use the opportunity of a possible cease-fire in Gaza to attack Lebanon. Now we should wait and see which side will win the war of wills.

Gaza war has 'ruptured any sense of shared humanity': ICRC

The war in Gaza has "ruptured any sense of a shared humanity," the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Saturday.

ICRC head Mirjana Spoljaric called for an urgent cease-fire in Gaza, saying Israel and Hamas must respect international law and protect civilians caught up in their conflict.

She said getting a steady, substantial flow of desperately needed aid into the besieged Palestinian territory – where the United Nations says more than 90 percent of the population is on the brink of famine – was "only part of the solution", AFP reported.

"Alleviating the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza starts with a clear will and measures that safeguard civilian life and human dignity, meaning both sides must conduct their military operations in a way that

spares the civilians who are caught in the middle," Spoljaric said.

"The only way to achieve this is that the parties strictly adhere to international humanitarian law, which means preserving the life, dignity and humanity of all people affected by armed conflict, regardless of which side they are on.

"It is the line between humanity and barbarity," she insisted. "Preserving civilian life and health is the rule, not the exception."

Nearly 30,000 Palestinians – mostly women and children – have been killed in Gaza since Israel began its onslaught on the Palestinian territory on October 7 in response to the Hamas' attack on the occupied territory which killed about 1,160 people.

Five months into the war, an international effort is gather-

ing pace to get humanitarian relief into the densely populated region by sea, in a bid to counter restrictions on access by land that have been blamed on Israel.

The UN says 2.2 million of Gaza's 2.4 million people are on the verge of famine and desperately short of drinking water.

"As an occupying power, Israel must provide for the basic needs of the population or facilitate the safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian relief," Spoljaric said.

The war had "ruptured any sense of a shared humanity", she said.

"The situation in the Gaza Strip degenerates by the hour. There is nowhere safe for people to go. The civilian death toll and the ongoing captivity of hostages are shocking and unacceptable," Spoljaric said.

"In the face of such deep suf-

fering", the ICRC called urgently for a cease-fire to allow "a steady, robust flow of humanitarian aid" to reach people in Gaza.

It urged Hamas to release the captives it was still holding, care for their safety and medical needs, and allow the ICRC to visit them.

It said the ICRC must be "notified" of any Palestinians detained by Israel and allowed to visit them, stressing Israel had a duty to treat them "humanely" and allow them to "communicate with family".

Spoljaric urged world leaders to make respect for international law a "political priority".



Wounded Palestinian children receive treatment at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital after Israeli bombardment in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on March 9, 2024.
● AFP

Yemen strikes US ship, warships with missiles, drones

International Desk

Yemen's Army said on Saturday it fired missiles at an "American" commercial ship and launched drones at US warships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Yemen's Armed Forces spokesman Yahya Saree said the Yemeni forces carried out two separate attacks. The first targeted the commercial vessel Propel Fortune in the Gulf of Aden, he said, calling it an "American" ship.

The second saw "37 drones" fired at "a number of American" warships, Saree said.

"The two operations successfully achieved their goals," he added.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces will continue to carry out their military operations in

the Red and Arab Sea until the aggression stops and the siege on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip is lifted," Saree underlined.

However, the US and its allies claimed they shot down 15 drones fired by Yemen into the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden on Saturday, in one of the largest attacks by the Arabian country.

The US Central Command, or CENTCOM, said the "large-scale" attack occurred before dawn in the Red Sea and adjacent Gulf of Aden.

Yemen has openly supported Palestine's struggle against Israel since the occupying regime launched a devastating war on Gaza on October 7 after the territory's Palestinian resistance movements carried out the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Curtains down on 13th Tehran International Animation Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The 13th Tehran International Animation Festival (TIAF) concluded on March 7 at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).

The closing ceremony, attended by various dignitaries, including Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and Reza Morad-Sahraei, the Education Minister, awarded the festival's winners, ILNA wrote.

Hamed Alamati, the CEO of IIDCYA, highlighted the significance of the TIAF as the most important event in the animation field.

He emphasized that despite the various sanctions imposed on Iran, the progress in animation showcased at the festival reflects the achievements of Iranian youths and the people. Alamati underscored the impact of animation, stating



that when the imaginative factor is integrated into artistic structures, it becomes more influential, conveying messages effectively. He stressed the need for serious consideration of the

narrative content, as the content should extend beyond the form, addressing the challenge of a lack of coherent scenarios. Alamati urged a balance between content and tech-

nique, emphasizing the importance of avoiding deficiencies in both areas. Regarding the diverse sections of the 13th TIAF, Alamati mentioned the production of 800 minutes

of scientific content, the introduction of five research books, and the hosting of multiple workshops. He also acknowledged the inclusion of a session discussing the war in Gaza,

where cinema professionals explored the role of filmmakers in reflecting such crimes.

Alamati announced plans for increased support in this field in the coming year, with a total of 74 countries participating in this year's festival.

Esmaeili praised the rich cultural heritage of Iran, describing it as a society with thousands of years of cultural history, fostering talents across the land.

Esmaeili elaborated on the government's commitment to cultural justice, aiming to provide opportunities for growth and development for the youth throughout the country.

He expressed the government's focus on cultural and artistic activities within the ministry, ensuring cultural

and educational initiatives reach all students.

The minister also praised IIDCYA for its foundational role in promoting various festivals, including animation, theater, and storytelling.

Esmaeili announced plans to revitalize the animation sector, expressing satisfaction with the simultaneous collaboration of the TIAF with the Animation Foundation. Esmaeili predicted a new horizon in Iranian animation, emphasizing its increasing prominence in educational and artistic spheres. He cited the success of the animation 'Smart Kid' which had over two million viewers and generated sales. Esmaeili debunked the notion that box office success is exclusive to comedy.

He stressed the importance of creating diverse characters for children, exemplified by 'Smart Kid' and 'Dolphin Boy' applauding the institute for its demonstrated capability in this regard.



Moin-Amirjahed house museum: fusion of literature, music, calligraphy in eastern Tehran



By Sadeq Dehqan
 Staff writer

The house museum of famous lexicographer Mohammad Moin and Mohammad Ali Amirjahed stands as a tribute to two departed Iranian luminaries in the fields of music and Persian literature. Today, this location is recognized as a specialized center for music, literature, and calligraphy.

If you share a keen interest in both poetry and music, and desire an intimate encounter with the living spaces of these two giants in their respective fields, amidst the architectural beauty of an Iranian home with a large pond, courtyard, and brick walls, then a visit to this house museum in eastern Tehran is highly recommended.

Mohammad Moin

Born in 1918 in the Zarjoob neighborhood of Rasht, Mohammad Moin (circa 1918-1971) remains a prominent figure known for producing one of the most significant Persian dictionaries 'Moin Encyclopaedic Dictionary'. He was the first Iranian doctorate graduate from the University of Tehran and received accolades in literature and arts from France. His contributions were acknowledged with the Literary and Decorative Arts Academy Award in France.

Mohammad Ali Amirjahed

Moin's son-in-law, Mohammad Ali Amirjahed (1896-1977), was a distinguished Iranian poet and composer. His compositions covered themes of homeland, society, love, politics, and philosophy. The Amirjahed Divan, a collection of his political memoirs, songs, compositions, and poetry, sheds light on Iranian music. In 1957, he established the National Music Conservatory, nurturing prominent figures in Iranian music. These two great scholars, due to their close familial ties, were once neighbors sharing adjoining walls.

In 2004, when the municipality acquired both

homes from the heirs of Moin and Amirjahed, the residences were merged to create the current house museum.

Home reflecting Pahlavi era architecture

Maryam Massah Bidgoli, the chairwoman of the house museum, explained its history to Iran Daily reporter, stating that the house is situated in the 400 Dastgah neighborhood, which was once predominantly barren when Professor Mohammad Ali Amirjahed built his home over 90 years ago. With an architectural background, Amirjahed himself drew the house plan, embodying the distinct features of Pahlavi era architecture. Almost two decades later, Moin, as his son-in-law, constructed another house adjacent to it, sharing a connecting courtyard. However, when the municipality took ownership approximately 20 years ago, the dividing wall between the two courtyards was removed, giving the place its current form.

Originally serving as a residence for eulogists, the house later transformed into the cultural and artistic center called "Ghadir" before finally assuming its present identity as the House Museum of Moin

and Mohammad Ali Amirjahed. The families contributed some of their personal belongings, including chairs, desks, furniture, and documents, to the museum during the handover.

Amirjahed Music Festival

Regarding the museum's musical activities, Bidgoli highlighted the initiation of the national Amirjahed Music Festival six years ago in collaboration with the Iran Music Association. The festival features solo, duet, and group performances in various musical genres, aiming to preserve and elevate serious music based on national Iranian thought, culture, and art. The fifth edition, held recently, attracted over two thousand participants from across the country. She added, "The Amirjahed Music Festival is designed to discover and support brilliant talents and promote serious music. The event includes competitions in solo, duet, and group performances, held annually at the Azadi Tower hall."

Moin National Literary Festival

In the literary field, the museum, in collaboration with the Dehkhoda Dictio-

nary Institute, annually organizes the Dr. Mohammad Moin National Literary Festival. Participants are invited to submit their works in the categories of poetry, short stories, and writing. The submitted works undergo a judging process, and selected pieces receive awards.

Bidgoli also emphasized the literary courses and workshops held at the museum, covering topics such as writing classes, storytelling, and more. These courses include sessions on works such as Rumi's 'Mathnawi,' Attar's 'Conference of the Birds,' and Sa'adi's

'Bustan' and 'Golestan.'

Furthermore, the museum hosts the nationwide Imam Ali Calligraphy Festival, organized in collaboration with the Iranian Calligraphers Association. Participants are encouraged to create calligraphy pieces in tribute to Imam Ali (PBUH), and selected works are displayed in an exhibition within the museum.

Honoring veteran artists' birthdays

The museum also serves as the headquarter-

ters for commemorating pioneer artists. Seasonal ceremonies celebrate the birthdays of artists in the fields of music, literature, and calligraphy. The festivities terminate in the installation of commemorative tiles bearing the names of these honored individuals on the museum's walls.

