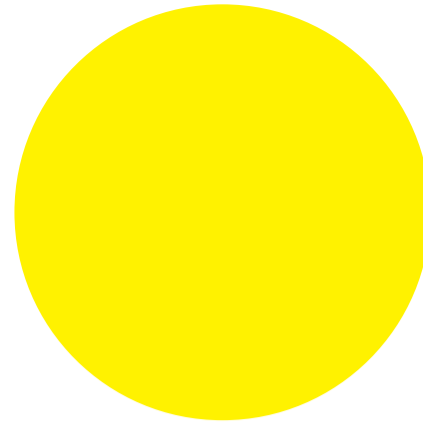


Iran aiming high in Futsal World Cup after Asian glory

6 >



Iran Daily



irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

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Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi gives a red rose to a schoolgirl during a ceremony marking Girls' Day at Azadi Sports Arena in Tehran on May 8, 2024. [president.ir](https://www.president.ir)

Iran's Future in Hands of Girls: *Raisi*

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Pure brutality, shameful disgrace

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

OPINION

Warnings and concerns about the repercussions of the Israeli army's devastating attack on Rafah in southern Gaza have had no impact, and the regime's army has begun heavy attacks on the region. Doctors Without Borders has warned that the attack on Rafah will have catastrophic consequences for over a million Palestinians and will further damage the healthcare system. The European Mediterranean Hu-

man Rights Monitor has also issued a statement warning against the forced displacement of people by the Israeli army. The assaults on Rafah come at a time when the Israeli army has already claimed the lives of over 34,000 Palestinians since the beginning of the conflict. The scale of destruction and genocide in Gaza has led this atrocity to be remembered as the largest war crime of the 21st century. Despite various efforts by governments and international organizations, as well as widespread protests around the world, the Israeli regime continues its slaughter and destruction, disregarding international sensitivities.

Page 7 >



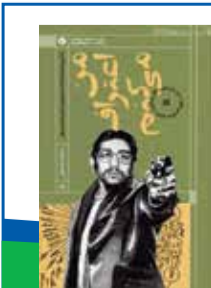
Pro-Palestinian student protests spread across Europe

7 >

35th TIBF opens doors to visitors



8 >



I Confess

By Mohammad Rahmani

Mohammad Rahmani's book, 'I Confess', offers a distinct perspective on the People's Mojahedin Organization, detailing its activities prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. Drawing upon a wealth of documents and sources related to the organization, Rahmani recounts the confessions of Vahid Afarakhteh, a key individual who played a significant role in the organization's military branch. Afarakhteh was arrested by SAVAK in July 1975, and his confessions stand out both in terms of quantity and quality. Following SAVAK's September 1971 blow, Afarakhteh's confessions dealt a severe blow to the People's Mojahedin Khalq forces. By examining these confessions, one can better understand the organization's operations before and after the revolution. 'I Confess' reveals how Vahid Afarakhteh not only breaks down and confesses but also extensively collaborates with the regime, even going so far as to work as an interrogator in SAVAK. The book received a Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Award and became the Book of the Year in Iran last year.



To learn more and buy this book, visit the Iran Publications website at <https://ketahir.com> or reach out to them by calling 021-88941810.

Explore Iran Publications at the Tehran International Book Fair by visiting booth 506, located in corridor 21 of the main hall.

HOSTILITIES IN THE GAZA STRIP AND ISRAEL - REPORTED HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

6 May 2024 at 15:00

DAY 213

KEY FIGURES

34,735
Palestinian fatalities

Source: MoH Gaza

~1.7 million
internally displaced persons
(75% of Gaza)

Source: UNRWA

1.1 million
people projected to face
catastrophic levels of food
insecurity (IPC Phase 5)

Source: IPC projection
for 16 March - 15 July 2024

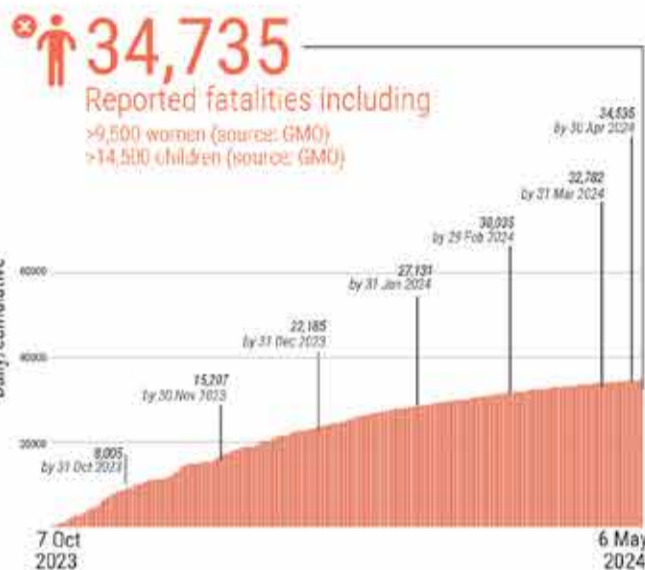
0 hours
Full electricity blackout

Source: GFDCC



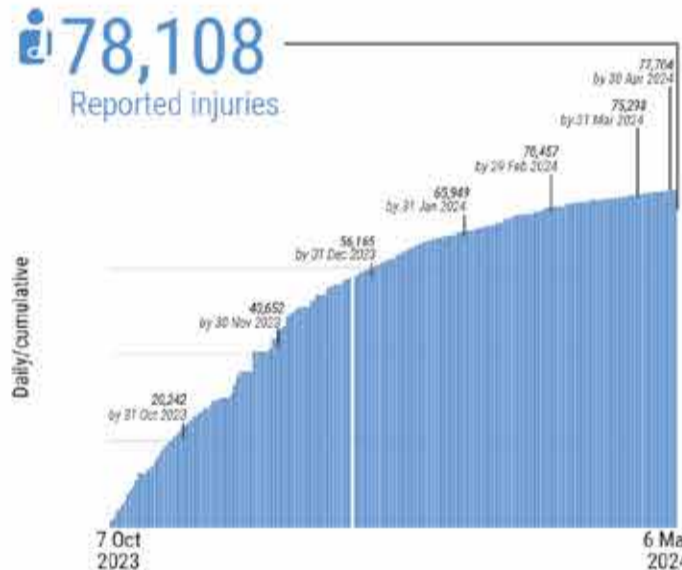
REPORTED CASUALTIES (Cumulative) as of 6 May 2024

Palestinians*



Not including more than 10,000 reported missing or under the rubble (source: GMOD and PCG)

*Source: MoH Gaza



*Source: MoH Gaza

Israelis**

Israel
Over 1,200*** Reported fatalities
 1,162 identified fatalities, including at least 33 children
 ~5,400 Reported injuries

Gaza****
 266 Reported fatalities
 1,610 Reported injuries
 estimated 132 hostages remain in Gaza

** According to Israeli media citing official sources

*** This includes fatalities on 7 October and the immediate aftermath, including foreign nationals.

**** The reported Israeli casualties are soldiers killed or injured since the start of the ground operation.

HEALTH

- 13 hospitals partially functioning (5 in north & 7 south of Wadi Gaza)
- 23 hospitals are out of service.
- 7 field hospitals functional (4 in Rafah & 2 in Khan Younis and 1 in Deir al Balah).
- 80% of primary health care centres not functional (62 out of 77).
- >712,000 cases of acute respiratory infections (source: WHO).
- >380,000 cases of acute watery diarrhea (source: WHO).
- 19 Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) deployed, including 2 in northern Gaza.
- 33% (8 out of 24) of UNRWA health centres are operational.

NUTRITION

- ~31% of children under the age of two in northern Gaza suffer from acute malnutrition.
- ~10% of children under the age of two in Rafah suffer from acute malnutrition.
- >50,000 children are estimated to be acutely malnourished at present.

EDUCATION

- 625,000 students with no access to education.
- >6,425 students and 297 educational staff killed (source: MoE, as of 30 April 2024).
- ~73% (408 out of 563) of school buildings were directly hit or damaged, of which 29% were UNRWA schools.
- ~60% (320 out of 563) of schools buildings have served as IDP shelters, of which 65% were directly hit or damaged.

SHELTER

- 1 square metre of average space per person in IDP shelters.
- 41% of shelters lack sufficient ventilation.
- 57% of shelters affected by rain and water infiltration.
- 150-155 UNRWA installations shelter IDPs.

FOOD SECURITY

- 265K people facing crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3)*
- 854K people facing emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 4)*
- 1.1 million people facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 5)*
- 60-70% of meat and dairy-producing livestock killed or prematurely slaughtered (source: FAO).

* Source: IPC projection for 16 March - 15 July 2024

WATER AND SANITATION

- Two out of three water pipelines coming from Israel are operational, providing 1,200 m³ of water per hour.
- 83% of groundwater wells are not operating.
- Two out of three main water desalination plants are partially functional.
- ~57% of assessed WASH facilities damaged/destroyed.
- ~270,000 tons of accumulated solid waste (source: Union of Gaza Strip Municipalities).

INCOMING TRUCKLOADS*

The pre-crisis average per working day in 2023 was 500 truckloads, including fuel.



*Supplies observed or registered by the UN as entering through Kerem Shalom or Rafah. Other incoming supplies are not currently captured.

Source: gazdashboard.unrwa.org

Splendor of Shirabad waterfalls in Golestan Province



Iranica Desk

Shirabad waterfalls stand out as an exquisite destination to cool off during scorching summer days and bask in the joy of nature with loved ones. Nestled in the scenic landscape of Golestan Province, Iran, these cascades lie 55 kilometers east of Gorgan and approximately seven kilometers south of Khan Bebin.

This collection of enchanting waterfalls, comprising both small and grandiose falls, earned its place on Iran's National Heritage list in 2014. Referred to as Khan Bebin waterfalls, Shirabad waterfalls are a must-visit at-

traction in Ramian, harmoniously set within the verdant and captivating Shirabad forest park. The cascading water features of Shirabad encompass seven distinct falls, all tracing the path of the Shirabad River. Renowned for its septet of waterfalls, it is fondly dubbed the Seven Shirabad waterfalls. The journey begins with the initial fall at the edge of Shirabad Park, a mere two kilometers from Shirabad village, with a height of 308 meters above sea level. The seventh and final cascade reaches a majestic height of 385 meters. Capture the mesmerizing allure of Shirabad Waterfall with your

camera, as its picturesque vista serves as an ideal backdrop for creating timeless memories. Delight in swimming and diving in the refreshing waters and inviting pools, but exercise caution if you are not well-versed in these activities. Embark on forest hikes amidst the lush greenery and towering trees, serenaded by the symphony of nature at Shirabad waterfall.

For the adventurous souls, explore the nearby cave, adding an exhilarating twist to your recreational escapade. Embrace leisurely picnics with family and friends in the charming environs of Shirabad waterfalls.

Regardless of the season, Shirabad Waterfall exudes its unique charm, promising a delightful experience with every visit. However, the peak time to relish this natural wonder is during the sunny days of spring and summer, when the weather is at its most inviting and pleasant.

In Golestan Province, the slopes of the Alborz Mountains are the source of many waterfalls and fountains, which has earned it the name of 'land of waterfalls'; some of which are Kaboudval, Golestan, Baran Kooch, Ziyarat, and Do-Aab. Shirabad is the third natural place to be registered in the province.



gashgozarnews.ir



IRNA

Global recognition of Isfahan's seven-color tile is significant

Iranica Desk

These days, Isfahan's seven-color tile has gained popularity in some national and international arenas. The reason for this is the recent international recognition of this artistic work. It is the third handicraft of this province that, after *mina-kari* (enamel-working) and *qalam-kari* (a type of textile printing), has succeeded in receiving an international geographical indication.

A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.

Mojtaba Taj, the head of Isfahan's Handicrafts Union, said in an interview with ISNA that the geographical registration of various handicrafts is important because it provides a platform for advertising and branding. The economic consequences and benefits of such important and fundamental measures are significant in areas such as marketing.

Referring to the global registration process of this art, he said that seven-color tile and generally such arts require specific legal procedures for global registration. Initially, a request for registration is made by a non-governmental organization. In the case of seven-color tile, the Handicrafts Union of Isfahan Province has re-

quested global registration.

He said that after submitting the request, approval from the Handicrafts Department of Cultural Heritage Ministry is required, which was obtained. In the next stage, a payment equivalent to one thousand Swiss francs had to be made, which was paid by the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce.

"Unfortunately, nowadays, some countries attempt to claim our unique and indigenous arts as their own by registering them under their names. This is a challenge we are currently confronting. The global registration of Isfahan's seven-color tile can protect this art from such misappropriation and, at the very least, reveal the origins of this industry to the world," he emphasized.

Taj highlighted that following the global registration of an industry, efforts should be directed towards enabling artists to leverage its benefits. Geographic indication serves as a crucial marker, allowing artists who possess the legal and global recognition to label their products and reap the associated advantages.

"Out of the 600,000 handicrafts acknowledged by UNESCO, approximately 200 trace their roots back to Isfahan. This momentum must persist, with collective efforts aimed at securing global registration for other artworks originating from this region. Presently, 20 handicrafts from

Isfahan have obtained geographical indication registration, with three of them — specifically, Qalamkari and seven-color tile — being officially recognized on the international stage."

Mohammad Hassan Maqzi, a seasoned tile maker in Isfahan, said "I have serious doubts that the registration of Isfahan's seven-color tile pertains to the tiles commonly manufactured and sold in Isfahan today, as the current tiles in our city's art and culture market lack the merit to be registered."

He pondered over the color, structure, and design of contemporary seven-color tiles in comparison to those from the past, stating, "Presently, all of Isfahan's seven-color tiles are industrial and cannot be artistically equated with traditional ones. Nowadays, all colors are pre-made and chemically treated."

Maqzi emphasized, "In contrast to the natural colors historically used in traditional tiles, the process of tile-making has undergone significant changes. Craftsmen no longer fire tiles in traditional tile workshops. Instead, industrialists procure the seven-color tiles from factories and then apply colors onto their white base. Additionally, all designs are now implemented using stencils, and we no longer have artists like those of the past who were imaginative and meticulous in their designs."

Special assessment of Russian salient in eastern Ukraine



Mobilized Russian servicemen in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region
● IVAN NOYABREV/TASS



By Mick Ryan
Retired Australian army major general

OPINION

In his just-published interview with *The Economist*, the Deputy Head of Ukrainian Military Intelligence (HUR) Major General Vadym Skibitsky tells us that "things are

as difficult as they have ever been since the early days of Russia's full-scale invasion. And they are about to get worse...our problem is very simple: we have no weapons. We always knew April and May would be a difficult time for us."

The aim of this quick assessment is to examine the Russian advances, particularly the Ocheretyne salient and the opportunities and risks it poses for the Russians in the short term.

The current grim situation on the front-line will take some time to turn around. And things may get worse for the Ukrainians in the east before they get better. As Konrad Muzyka of Rochan Consulting wrote this week, "We have reached the point where the situation on the front is the worst since March 2022. The numerical advantage of the Russians is constantly growing, as is the number of attacks. Ukraine did not survive the darkest hour. It's just about to start."

It has been clear for some time that the shortages of manpower and firepower have combined to force the Ukrainian high command to choose between retaining territory and keeping their depleted Army functioning while they reconstitute over the coming months. I explored this military and political challenge in a post back in early April. It is the eastern Ukraine frontline that is causing the most concerns at the moment, at least for ground operations — and recent step-ups in Russian attacks on

Kharkiv are also a big concern. Two key sectors of this eastern front have seen Russian advances in the past month. While these might appear to be separate axes of advance, there is the possibility of the Russians using them as the southern and northern arms of a double envelopment of Ukrainian positions and forces in eastern Ukraine.

The full article first appeared on *Futura Doctrina*.

Ukraine tightens military procurement after corruption shakeup



By Daryna Krasnolutska
Bloomberg Kyiv bureau chief

PERSPECTIVE

Ukraine's Defense Ministry has overhauled its procurement system and boosted cooperation with NATO eight months after corruption allegations led to a shakeup in its leadership, a top security official said. Last September, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy replaced Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov after accusations of graft in military procurement by subordinates on his watch prompted public outrage and criticism from wartime allies. Yuriy Dzhygyr, a deputy defense minister, said a new vetted procurement system has helped "liquidate corruption risks".



A handout photograph published on January 23, 2023, by the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, shows NABU staff members next to the money that was seized tackling corruption.
● AFP

Russia's attack has "highlighted a number of specific corruption risks in the department," Dzhygyr said in a written response to Bloomberg News. Corruption remains a concern for Ukraine's wartime allies as they contribute weapons and funding to help stave off Russia's attack. Donors including the International Monetary Fund and the European Union have demand-

ed a raft of anti-graft measures as a central condition for assistance. Ukraine's agriculture minister last month became the country's first cabinet member to be detained as part of a crackdown tied to corruption allegations. Last year, Zelenskiy also fired all of the army's top draft officers following media reports of graft. The sweep has led to a "two-stage

mechanism" in procurement at the Defense Ministry, Dzhygyr said. The ministry sets procurement policies, controls, and checks quality, while two state companies oversee procurement in an effort to scale back potential risks, he said.

Cleaning up

The Kyiv-based ministry also bol-

stered its involvement in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) program to help countries advance defense reforms and meet anti-corruption commitments, the deputy minister said.

Dzhygyr, who consulted on public finance reform in Ukraine and abroad before joining the ministry in September, said accounting firm KPMG will evaluate in-house auditing to improve risk management and compliance. Ukraine ranked 104 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in 2023, though it climbed up from 116th place the year before, putting it on par with Brazil and Serbia.

On the defense budget, Dzhygyr said the cost for Kyiv's mobilization drive aimed at bolstering its depleted military ranks will depend on monthly conscription levels — a factor of incoming aid — and rotation decisions. He put the cost for maintaining one soldier without weapons at 1.2 million hryvnia (\$30,000).

The ministry is also working with US counterparts as part of an effort to address concerns over how Ukrainian forces are storing and deploying Western ammunition, Dzhygyr said, citing six inspections at military facilities that looked into how certain types of weapons were stored. "The process is on, it has become a routine now," Dzhygyr said. "The mechanism is working."

The article first appeared on *Bloomberg*.

Biden's incoherent energy-policy response to war in Ukraine



By Thomas J. Duesterberg
Former US assistant secretary of commerce

OPINION

In mid-April, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin joined Secretary of State Antony Blinken in urging Ukraine to desist from attacking Russian oil refineries. Such attacks have disabled up to 15 percent of refinery capacity in Vladimir Putin's Russia, denting both its ability to earn

export income and to wage war against Ukraine. In an election year, the Biden administration's policy clearly values domestic fuel-price stability over helping Ukraine in its war for survival. The stated purpose of the US-led price cap and ban on Russian exports to the West

is to maintain Russia's supplies while reducing the income from its exports without causing a price spike by taking Russian oil off the world market. Biden's policy has harmed US interests while aiding major industrial competitors in China and India. These

huge economies are exploiting cheap Russian oil imports to build new refining capacity. Additionally, shifting oil refining to these countries has had negative environmental effects and weakened US industrial competitiveness.

There are better policies to maintain global price stability, starting with reversing the regulatory squeeze on US oil and gas production. Earlier in its tenure, the administration reduced the holdings of the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve by 43 percent, which limited Washington's ability to use these stocks to offset severe price spikes. The Biden team has also closed off the possibility of cooperation with longtime ally Saudi Arabia to keep prices stable by increasing the weight of human rights considerations in the relationship. US policy keeps Iranian oil on the market, leads to additional discounted sales to China, and helps finance the Iranian war machine.

The feeble attempt to slow Russia's oil production by limiting its ability to export crude oil at world prices has been a failure. While Russian exports to Europe have cratered, the breach was quickly filled by huge increases in sales to China and India after the war was unleashed. China's imports of Russian crude have ballooned from .63 million barrels per day (mbd) before the war to an average of 1.3 mbd in recent months. India's imports were negligible prior to the onset of the war, but now average more than 1.75 mbd. The typical price discount available to Chinese and Indian importers relative to Brent crude has ranged from \$37 per barrel to around \$12 or \$13 per barrel in recent months.

These emerging economic giants have



A worker stacks oil barrels at a filling station in Chennai, India, on February 24, 2022, the day Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a "special military operation" against Ukraine.
AFP

benefited from access to a large and steady supply of discounted Russian crude to build new refining capacity and become significant exporters of refined products such as diesel, jet fuel, and gasoline. In effect, Indian and, to a lesser extent, Chinese refiners transform blacklisted Russian crude into higher-value products to supply third markets. And the profits from this arbitrage are significant: The Indian Oil Corporation has more than doubled its profits since starting this trade, and its share price has increased by 178 percent. Indian refined-product exports to the European Union (EU) alone now

average over 360,000 barrels per day (bd). India can compete on price with US exporters due to lower input costs, including transportation. In early 2024, US refined-product exports to Europe fell by almost half, partly due to this competition.

It is also worth noting that America's North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally Turkey has contributed to keeping Russia's war economy from collapsing by increasing its imports of crude oil and refined products that were previously sold to Europe. It has, in turn, become a major exporter of refined products to the EU.

Below-market supplies of crude to China put wind in the sails of Beijing's manufacturing-export goliath, which has become the most important engine of growth in the Middle Kingdom. In sectors such as metals, cement, and chemicals, energy costs are a significant competitive factor. The cutoff of Russian oil and gas to European markets has redistributed exports to China, which has picked up the pace of purchases since the war began. In addition to crude imports, China is the beneficiary of stranded liquefied-natural-gas (LNG) sales, which previously had gone to Europe or other Western allies. Be-

cause the Biden administration has employed a freeze on permits for new US LNG export facilities and increased regulatory burdens on pipelines to get gas to existing facilities, Russian gas may partially displace US LNG supply to China in the medium term. In the short term, Qatar is the main beneficiary of the Biden freeze on new LNG facilities. Europe especially has eagerly signed contracts with Doha, which now plans to nearly double its LNG capacity in the next five to seven years. Some North African suppliers have also reached deals with European nations.

The US and EU price caps and embargoes on imports of Russian oil and gas have reduced the hard-dollar income from this major sector of the Russian economy — which normally accounts for 30 percent to 50 percent of Moscow's federal budget revenues — by \$30 to \$50 million per day. But overall production has not yet materially affected the Putin regime. Russia has accumulated more yuan and rupees to buy manufactured goods and war materials from China. Having access to less Russian crude and fewer Russian refined products would reduce the current advantages for the Chinese and Indian manufacturing and refining sectors, which increasingly compete with US producers on the world market.

The full article first appeared on National Review.

Can Franco-German relations be rekindled over Ukraine war?



By Amandine Hess
Journalist

PERSPECTIVE

Paris and Berlin are at loggerheads over military aid to Ukraine. But can the two European powerhouses unify behind Kyiv?

At a conference on Ukraine in Paris at the end of February 2024, French

President Emmanuel Macron did not rule out putting boots on the ground in Ukraine.

The announcement didn't go down well across the Rhine. A few hours later, Germany's Olaf

Scholz answered "Europe and NATO will not send any soldiers to Ukraine."

Macron's statement was "a red line for Germany", which fears being passed off as "warmonger" in the

eyes of Vladimir Putin, according to Dr. Carolyn Moser, director of a research group at Heidelberg's Max Planck Institute of International Law and holder of the Alfred Grosser Chair at Sciences Po.

During the same conference, the French leader did not miss the opportunity to recall that "many, around this table, were only considering sending sleeping bags and helmets" to Ukraine. It was a jibe at Berlin, which announced at the end of January 2022 it would send 5,000 helmets to Kyiv — but not arms. One month later Russian tanks rolled across the border. The situation has changed a lot since then.

After the United States, Germany is now the second largest contributor of aid to Ukraine.

According to the Kiel Institute, Germany has committed to providing €17 billion in aid for Kyiv when France has only promised €1.8bn.

"France was less hesitant to deliver heavy weapons, but it made it much less public. And until now, it hesitates to say exactly what it delivered and to what extent. It justifies it by the fact that it could then reveal defence secrets," said expert Moser.

Lack of communication is also a source of tension between Berlin and Paris. Faced with Russia's full-scale assault on Ukraine, Scholz announced at the end of February 2022 an envelope of €100bn to modernise the German army.

France regrets not having been informed beforehand.

Another thorn in the side of the Franco-German relationship is the European Sky Shield Initiative.

Initiated by Germany, the project, which includes 21 NATO countries but does not include France, consists of German (IRIS-T), American (PATRIOT), and Israeli (Arrow-3) systems. These dissonances already existed before Moscow's assault on Ukraine. In 2017, Macron made a speech at the Sorbonne, calling for an overhaul of European defence — it fell on deaf ears across the Rhine.

The French and German visions of European defence differ fundamentally on one point: the role of NATO. "While France aspires to a certain autonomy, Germany prefers a transatlantic approach," explains Moser.

Series of disagreements

Defence is just part of a series of long-standing disagreements between Paris and Berlin.

Energy has historically been a major divide between the two. While France depends on nuclear power — providing around 70% of its electricity — Germany shut down its last nuclear power plant in 2023.

The war in Ukraine is now bringing the energy issue back on the table because Germany, a major consumer of Russian gas, must seek supplies elsewhere. Another thorn in the Franco-German relations is the free trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur, the South American trade bloc.

"For Germany, free trade is essential because its economy is very depen-

dent on exports... The opening rate of the German economy is 87%. It is considerable. France is only 60%," says Jacques-Pierre Gougeon, research director at the Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRIS).

While Berlin is pushing for this free trade agreement, Paris believes its "environmental standards are insufficient," he explains.

Contested leadership?

The war in Ukraine has upset the distribution of roles and power relationships between the couple.

"There was a sort of tacit division of roles between a more leading France on defence issues, strategic issues, and then Germany on economic issues. And it is clear that this balance is now weakened with German ambitions on defence issues," says Gaspard Schnitzler, research director at the IRIS.

Franco-German relations have been relegated to the background for Berlin, which increasingly has its eyes on the East.

In his speech in Prague in August 2022, Scholz called for the enlargement of the European Union to include the countries of the Western Balkans, Ukraine, and Moldova.

"Undeniably, Europe's centre of gravity will shift to the East," explains research director Schnitzler.

Experts say the balance of power is far from being redistributed, however.



French President Emmanuel Macron (L) and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz
CLEMENS BILAN/EPA-EFE

"Germany and France alone account for 48% of euro area GDP, 32% of the EU population, and 31% of the EU budget. So, we can't do without," adds Jacques-Pierre Gougeon.

How to relaunch Franco-German engine?

Several ways have been suggested by observers to get the Franco-German tandem back on track.

For expert Moser, the pair must communicate better.

Gougeon pleads for opening the Franco-German relationship to other part-

ners, in particular Poland in the framework of the Weimar Triangle.

Schnitzler recommends carrying out existing projects such as the main ground combat system (MGCS) and the future combat air system (SCAF).

Macron will visit Germany for an official state visit later this month where the two leaders are expected to discuss, among other things, priorities for the next EU mandate ahead of the European elections scheduled for June 6-9.

The article first appeared on Euronews.

Iran aiming high in Futsal World Cup after Asian glory

Sports Desk

The Iranian futsal national team will be looking to build on a title-winning run at the recently-finished AFC Asian Cup when taking part in September's World Cup in Uzbekistan.

Mahdi Karimi, Saeid Ahmad-Abbasi, Ali-Asghar Hassanzadeh, and goalkeeper Baqer Mohammadi were on the scoresheet as Vahid Shamsaei's men defeated host Thailand 4-1 for a record-extending 13th Asian crown in late April.

The latest success saw Iran tally 1469,33 points to stand fourth in the maiden FIFA Futsal Men's World Ranking last Monday – following Brazil (1568,41), Portugal (1527,61), and Spain (1514,42).

Shamsaei, whose debut tournament on Iran bench finished with a disappointing defeat against Japan in the Asian Cup final in 2022, named a proper mixture of youth and experience for

this year's tournament. Iran still had to work hard to clinch the title in arguably most closely-contested edition of the Asian flagship international event, which saw defending champion Japan crash out in the group stage, while Shamsaei's side was given scares by Bahrain – in the group phase – and last-four opponent Uzbekistan.

Shamsaei will hope the integral trio of Hossein Tayyebi, who missed the Asian Cup with injury, reigning Asian Player of the Year Salar Aqapour, and Moslem Oladqobad – all playing for newly-crowned UEFA Champions League champion Mallorca Palma – as well as veteran skipper Hassanzadeh, prolific pivot Ahmad-Abbasi – top scorer in Thailand – and Mohammadi will be in their finest form when the world showpiece gets underway in four months.

Shamsaei's men will learn about its World Cup oppo-

nents when the final draw for the 24-team tournament takes place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on May 26.

The good news for Shamsaei is that the Asian powerhouse will avoid Brazil, Spain, reigning world champion Portugal, 2021 runner-up Argentina, and the host country in the group stage as all six teams are in Pot 1 of the draw.

Iran enjoyed a best World Cup finish in Colombia eight years ago, when former head coach Mohammad Nazemsharieh led his side to a memorable last-16 victory over five-time champion Brazil before a shootout triumph against Portugal in the third-place match.



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (R) gives his ring to Vahid Shamsaei, the manager of the Iranian futsal national team, during a meeting with the squad in Tehran on May 8, 2024.

● khamenei.ir



Iranian 'Clasico' to be staged in all-female venues next season



Sports Desk

Only female fans will be allowed to watch the Persepolis vs. Sepahan double fixtures from the stands when the two Iranian giants go head-to-head in the Persian Gulf Pro League next season, the Disciplinary Committee of the country's football governing body announced on Tuesday.

The unprecedented verdict comes as a response to the incidents in last week's top-flight game featuring the two sides, which finished in a goalless stalemate at Tehran's Azadi Stadium. A viral video after the match showed a Sepahan fan in the stadium making offensive comments about the Reds' female supporters, which sparked a massive backlash from Perse-

polis faithful and players on social media, while Sepahan was quick to denounce the remarks in a statement.

The Sepahan's male fan went on to release an apology for his words a day later but was still handed a 10-year ban from entering the football, futsal, and beach soccer venues in the country.

Tuesday's ruling also saw 13 other men from both sets of supporters receive a 30-day ban from attending all games in the Iranian league.

This is not the first time that the Disciplinary Committee comes up with a drastic decision against the controversial events in a so-called Iranian 'Clasico'. The two fierce rivals were forced to square off in neutral venues in the 2021/22 season



Persepolis (red) and Sepahan players are seen in action during a goalless game in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on May 1, 2024.

● PAYAM.SANI/IRNA

following a quarrel between members from both camps in a league meeting in Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium in the preceding campaign.

Iranian women had been forbidden from entering the football stadiums since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 – except for several international games in recent years – before they were given the green light to attend the club games for the start of the 2022/23 season, though their presence has been limited to segregated sections in the stands.

Flying under the radar, Dortmund stun Europe with final spot

REUTERS – Borussia Dortmund were not on anyone's Champions League radar when the season started but the club's sensational run to the final with a 2-0 aggregate win over Paris St Germain on Tuesday proved their plan was right all along, said coach Edin Terzic.

Dortmund came into the season on the back of a bitter Bundesliga title loss on the final matchday of the previous campaign.

And while their league results quickly confirmed Terzic's team did not have the consistency to be a serious title contender this season, it was a different story in Europe.

Dortmund, who won the tournament in 1997 and were runners-up to Bayern Munich in 2013, cruised through their

group with only one loss in six matches against PSG, AC Milan and Newcastle United.

"There is always a team that no one has on their radar that reaches the quarter-finals or the semi-finals. We wanted to be the team that will not necessarily be on anyone's radar," Terzic said. "That road has been unbelievable."

They did not play the kind of spectacular football that instantly attracts attention but scored key wins at Newcastle and Milan. After losing on the first matchday Dortmund went five group games without defeat to top the section.

"After the second matchday (following a loss at PSG and a home draw against Milan) almost no one believed in us any more," said captain Emre Can.

"We only had one point after two matches but we kept believing in us and that was the most important thing. Keeping two clean sheets in two matches against PSG is no mean feat."

Prior to their two 1-0 wins over PSG in the last four, Dortmund had dispatched PSV Eindhoven in the round of 16 and Atletico Madrid in the quarter-finals.

"We will come up against a very tough opponent, no matter who it is," said Dortmund's Mats Hummels, who scored the winning goal on Tuesday. "Since that second matchday we have kept believing we can hold our own in the Champions League. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever not to believe that we can also win the final."



Dortmund players celebrate after the second-leg victory over PSG in the UEFA Champions League semi-finals in Paris, France, on May 7, 2024.

● KAI.PFAFFENBACH/REUTERS

Raisi: Iran's operation against Israel 'source of national pride'

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi praised as a source of national pride the Islamic Republic's daring strikes last month on the Israeli-occupied territories in retaliation for the regime's earlier aggression on the Iranian diplomatic mission in Syria. Raisi made the statement in a televised interview broadcast live on the state-run television on Tuesday night while elaborating on the aspects of Operation True Promise, Iran's anti-Israel military operation which was carried out on April 13, Press TV reported. Stressing that the large-scale operation should be discussed in various meetings and scientific, research, political and security circles, the Iranian president said, "Operation True Promise is a source of national pride and is considered a turning point in consensus-building measures across the country, and everyone praised this deed." Raisi underlined that the Israeli regime's aggression

against the Iranian Embassy in Syria bespoke the occupying entity's desperation, adding that Iran's reprisal was a punishment for the regime. "The Zionist regime is beset by desperation and defeat. One of the manifestations of this desperation is the attack on the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Damascus; an act that contravened all international laws and regulations," the chief executive said. "Subsequently, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution asserted that the Zionist regime would be punished and this promise was fulfilled by our combatants." Iran's foreign minister said on Wednesday that the West had asked the Islamic Republic to exercise restraint and lower the intensity of its retaliation. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said, "Ahead of the operation, the request of the Westerners was that if you want to respond, do not hit hard and reduce the intensi-



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) speaks in a televised interview on May 7, 2024. president.ir

ty of the operation." In a multi-pronged attack, dubbed Operation True Promise, the Iranian armed forces launched dozens of

drones and missiles at the occupied territories late on April 13 in response to the regime's aggression on the Iranian diplomatic premises

in the Syrian capital, Damascus, on April 1. The Israeli airstrikes on Iran's Embassy compound in Damascus killed two

generals of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as well as five of their accompanying officers.

'Death of European values'

EU staff members protest Israel's war in Gaza

International Desk

A group of EU institution staffers marched in silence in Brussels on Wednesday to protest against Israel's war in Gaza and what they described as the "death" of European values. Protesters laid three rolled-up white sheets with red stains on them on the square outside the European Commission's head office in the Belgian capital. On the three 'bodies' the words International Law, EU Treaties and Genocide Convention were written, in a protest of the way Israel has responded to the attacks by Hamas on Oct. 7. "We're coming together in a peaceful assembly, to stand up for those rights, principles and values that the European institutions are built on," EU Commission staff member Manus Carl-

isle told Reuters. "The reasons why we work here and love to work here. Those values of human rights, human dignity and freedom especially." Sara, one of the EU officials taking part in the protest, told Euronews that EU leaders needed to "go further". "I am here as someone who works every day to make the EU a better place, and the EU cannot be a better place if the world is not a better place," she said. "We as the European Union have a huge responsibility towards Gaza, towards Palestine," she added. "We cannot tolerate the hatred, we cannot tolerate the violence, we cannot tolerate this genocide." Israel's offensive has killed more than 34,800 Palestinians in seven months of war in Gaza, most of them women and children, ac-

cording to the Gaza health ministry. Israel on Wednesday continued its strikes on the overcrowded Gaza city of Rafah, where it has launched a ground incursion, as talks resumed Wednesday in Cairo aimed at agreeing the terms of a truce in the seven-month war. Despite international objections, Israel sent tanks and seized the nearby crossing into Egypt. Rafah has been a vital conduit for humanitarian aid since the start of the war and is the only place where people can enter and exit. Israel now controls all of Gaza's border crossings for the first time since it withdrew troops and settlers from the territory nearly two decades ago. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA,



EU staffers march for peace in Gaza outside the European Commission's head office in Brussels on May 8, 2024. [EURONEWS](http://euronews.com)

said the Kerem Shalom crossing - which Israel shut after a rocket attack killed four soldiers on Sunday - remained closed. Meanwhile, Gaza health workers uncovered Wednesday at least 49 bodies at Al-Shifa hospital - the latest such discovery at the facility previously raided by Israeli forces. The Israeli military has re-

peatedly targeted Al-Shifa, the Palestinian territory's largest hospital, and other medical facilities in its war since October 7. Israel claims that Palestinian fighters use hospitals as command centers. Hamas denies the accusation. Motassem Salah, head of the emergency department at Al-Shifa, told journalists that "a third mass grave

was found inside this hospital." Last month, around 30 bodies were reported found buried in two other graves in the hospital courtyard. So far 520 bodies have been recovered from "seven mass graves" found at three different hospitals across Gaza in recent weeks, the media office said.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Pure brutality, shameful ...

It seems that the international community has reached a stalemate in dealing with this blatant brutality. The actions of the Israeli army in Gaza over the past seven months have been clear violations of human rights, international conventions of war, and constitute war crimes and genocide.

In recent months, efforts and pressures from governments and international organizations to establish a cease-fire and curb the madness of Benjamin Netanyahu, with the support of the United States,

have been unsuccessful. The United States, by ignoring the humanitarian atrocities in Gaza, has not only disregarded the principle of respecting human rights but has also weakened the credibility of the United Nations and the Security Council. Therefore, it is not unjustified to view the United States government as complicit in these crimes.

In a clear contradiction, the US administration has approved a \$26 billion aid package to Israel while simultaneously announcing a halt to bomb shipments to this regime. While shedding

crocodile tears for Palestinian civilians and pretending to negotiate a cease-fire, it has undermined any proposals for peace in the Security Council.

When discussing the assault on Rafah, we are talking about one and a half million individuals densely concentrated in a small area, now either forcibly displaced or exposed to bombing and tank fire. This declaration by Ahmed Abu Zeid, the spokesperson for the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serves as a stark illustration of the current state of silence and inaction in today's world: What is transpiring is a disgraceful blemish for the international community.

Anti-Israel student protests spread across Europe

Campus protests by pro-Palestinian activists, inspired by ongoing demonstrations at US campuses, spread across Europe as some called for a break in academic ties with Israel over the war in Gaza. German police broke up a protest by several hundred pro-Palestinian activists who had occupied a courtyard at Berlin's Free University. Protesters occupied a university building in Amsterdam hours after police detained 169 people at a different campus location.

Elsewhere in Europe, some student camps have been allowed to stay in places like the lawns of Cambridge. In recent days, students have held protests or set up encampments in Finland, Denmark, Italy, Spain, France and Britain, AP reported.

In the eastern German city of Leipzig, about 50 pro-Palestinian protesters set up tents at Leipzig University and occupied a lecture hall.

In the Netherlands, police broke up a pro-Palestinian demonstration camp at the University of Amsterdam, beating some of the protesters and pulling down tents.

In Austria, protesters camped out in about 20 tents in the main courtyard of the University of Vienna for a second day.

Pro-Palestine protest camps have sprung up at about a dozen universities in Britain, including at Oxford and Cambridge, urging the institutions to fully disclose investments, cut academic ties with Israel and divest from businesses linked to the country.

"Oxbridge's profits cannot continue to climb at the expense of Palestinian lives, and their reputations must no longer be built on the whitewashing of Israeli crimes," said a joint statement from protesters at the two universities.

In Finland, dozens of protesters from the Students for Palestine solidarity group set up camp outside the main building at the University of Helsinki, saying they would stay there until the university, Finland's largest academic institution, cuts academic ties with Israeli universities.

In Denmark, students set up a pro-Palestinian encampment at the University of Copenhagen.

In Italy, students at the University of Bologna, one of the world's oldest universities, set up a tent encampment over the weekend to demand an end to the war in Gaza.

In Spain, dozens of students have spent over a week at a pro-Palestinian encampment on the University of Valencia campus. Similar camps were set up Monday at the University of Barcelona and the University of the Basque Country.



Minister: Tehran book fair, hub of unity, cultural tourism

35th TIBF opens doors to visitors

Arts & Culture Desk

Speaking on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting, the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance emphasized the beginning of the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), stating it as a venue for unity and cultural tourism with diverse programs in place. Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili in a meeting on Wednesday invited everyone to participate in the fair, which began on May 8 at Tehran's Mosalla, IRNA wrote. The minister stated, "This year's fair is being held in

a space of 150,000 square meters for the first time, with over 25 countries and thousands of publishers in attendance." He further noted, "Cultural equity is significant. Every Iranian can purchase discounted books through the designated system and receive them free at home. Last year, over two million people availed themselves of this service, and we anticipate a similar response this year." The fair, themed "Read and Create," will run from May 8 to 18 virtually and in-person.

With over 2,619 publishers participating, all publishers this year are housed under one roof with no prefabricated structures. In addition, significant increases in allocated space have been made for university, educational, and children's publishers. Positive changes this year include increased credit for book purchases and subsidies allocated to students, seminarians, and university professors. The city of Semnan, known as the capital of Iranian books, is actively participating in this year's fair, in-

cluding various villages and tribes fond of books. Detailed programs have been arranged for book-loving communities in rural areas. For the first time, dedicated vehicles for the disabled are stationed at the Shahid Beheshti entrance, providing transport to different sections of the fair. The number of entry gates has also significantly increased, facilitating easier access for attendees compared to previous years. Various cultural programs are lined up for this edition of the book fair, including special programs related to

the people of Gaza, as well as programs tailored for women and girls. On May 13, 14, and 15, the fair will host an event aimed at introducing Iranian publishers to foreign publishers. Approximately 20 publishers and literary agents will attend, visiting printing centers and bookstores during their stay. This year, around 60 foreign publishers are present, showcasing about 50,000 foreign titles, compared to 45,000 titles last year. Yemen is the special guest of honor at this year's book fair.

Iran's future in hands of girls: Raisi



president.ir

Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi hailed the invaluable contributions of Iranian girls to the nation's development, stressing their important role in shaping the country's future.

He made the statement during a ceremony commemorating Girls' Day on May 8, president.ir wrote. The president said, "We do not accept isolating women. Our view of women is the same as Islam's, which believes that girls can be valuable wives and mothers and can also play a role in society." Addressing the gathering, Raisi highlighted the significance of recognizing the multifaceted roles girls play in society, highlighting their capacity as both nurturers and pioneers.

Rejecting any notion of marginalizing women, Raisi reiterated the Islamic perspective, which regards girls as capable of assuming diverse roles in society. "We refuse to confine women to a secondary status," he emphasized, advocating for their active participation across all fields.

Pointing to the remarkable achievements of Iranian women in various fields, including education, sports, and cultural endeavors, Raisi commended their notable contributions to the nation's progress. "We take pride in our female professors, teachers, managers, and innovators," he declared, citing their role in advancing the country.

Celebrating the accomplishments of Iranian girls in sports, Raisi highlighted their recent successes in international competitions.

"Yesterday [May 7], I stood among medalists, witnessing girls proudly raising the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he remarked. Reflecting on the significance of Girls' Day, Raisi drew parallels with prominent figures in Islamic history.

"Every day, week, month, and year, we must acknowledge the worth of our daughters," he asserted, urging for continued respect towards girls as precious entities.

"The advancement of our country lies in the hands of our young people, especially our girls, who can make the future of our nation," he concluded.

Raisi said, "I congratulate all of you and all the girls of Iran on Girl's Day, and I came here to say that a girl means affection, feeling, divine mercy, a source of pride and an invaluable and lovable existence, and I say that I love all the girls of dear Iran".

Iranian, Dutch visual artists collaborate in 'Spring Symphony'

Iranian and Dutch artists will hold a joint group exhibition titled 'Spring Symphony' featuring 70 Iranian artists in various visual arts and handicrafts. "The event will be showcased online on Saturday, May 11, ISNA wrote. Iranian painter Aynaz Zarei is the event's curator. Art enthusiasts interested in visual arts can view the 91 artworks featured in 'Spring Symphony' until May 17 on the Instagram page, as well as on the Telegram channel at and the Bloom Art Society's Instagram page.



Hungarian TV networks keen on broadcasting Iranian concerts

Hungary will welcome the broadcast of Iranian music concerts on official Hungarian TV networks, said the economic and cultural attaché of the Hungarian Embassy.

Mohammad Allahyari, CEO of the Rudaki Foundation, along with his colleagues, met with Róbert Németh, the economic and cultural attaché of the Hungarian Embassy in Iran, to discuss expanding bilateral cultural and artistic activities.

Allahyari introduced the Rudaki Foundation and explained its diverse cultural and artistic programs, as well as the technical facilities of its venues, mentioning its capacity to host events such as the Fajr festivals and international artists. He highlighted the collaboration between the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and Iran's National Or-



chestra under the Roudaki Foundation, stating that renowned international conductors have worked with these orchestras, performing internationally. Allahyari added: "With the available facilities, we can introduce the people of Hungary to the culture and civilization of Iran. Your presence and the organization of joint programs will help convey Iran's message of peace and friendship to Hungary and other coun-

tries." Németh expressed delight at visiting the Rudaki Foundation and recalled pleasant memories of artists performing at the Vahdat Hall. He said, "We welcome bilateral cooperation, especially in the arts and music sections, as these areas are easier to collaborate in compared to others." He added, "We welcome the broadcast of Iranian music concerts on official Hungarian TV networks. Television

coverage will have a broad audience reach for us, allowing us to utilize it as a gateway to initiate intercultural dialogues through music and engage with the Hungarian people." Collaboration between the Rudaki orchestras and the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, as well as the proposal to sign a joint Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations, were also discussed during the meeting.