



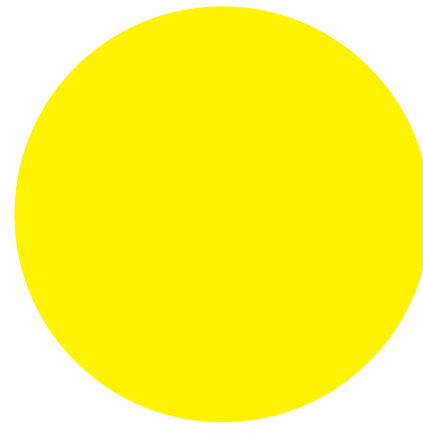
Iran's parliament re-elects Qalibaf as speaker

7 >



Tourist arrivals surged 43% in 2023

8 >



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Bahraini cabinet backs king's bid to restore Iran ties

2 >

Tehran's arms open for all neighbors



By Majid Qannadbashi
Mideast affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa said in a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin that there is no reason to postpone the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Also, a delegation led by the kingdom's Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani visited Tehran last week to offer his condolences on the tragic death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed alongside seven others in a helicopter crash in northwest Iran on May 19.

Following the agreement reached between Iran and Saudi Arabia in March 2023, which led to the revival of diplomatic relations between the two countries, it was foreseeable that other Arab countries would also lean towards Iran. However, Bahrain's stance differs from that of other Arab countries, notably due to its normalization of relations with Israel.

Nonetheless, Bahrain is not an exception in Iran's regional policies. The Islamic Republic of Iran bases its regional policy on reducing tensions and enhancing cooperation. As a result, considering the positive response of the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson to Bahrain's expression of willingness to normalize bilateral relations, it seems that in the near future, we may witness serious discussions between the two states to resolve some misunderstandings and differences and revitalize diplomatic relations.

The new approach of the Bahraini government must be attributed to various factors. Among these, attention must be paid to the policy of Saudi Arabia, which after several years decided in favor of its own interests and the region by reviving political relations with Iran. When the bigger brother moves towards Iran, it is natural for the smaller brothers to follow suit.

Another factor contributing to Iran's diplomatic and regional policies traces back to figures such as President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Page 2 >

Israel Reaches Central Rafah as European States Recognize Palestine

7 >



Iraq's Sadr calls for closure of US Embassy

7 >



Iran coach Shamsaei wary of minnow teams' threat at Futsal World Cup

6 >



SPECIAL ISSUE

Economy, foreign policy hand in hand under Raisi

4-5 >

Iran's acting FM urge Muslim elites to pressure Israel

Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Baqeri Kani called upon scholars in the Muslim world to explore all available avenues and exert more pressure on the Israeli regime in order to stop its onslaught against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

7 >

Iran-EU trade rises 8% in Q1: Eurostat



European Union (EU)'s statistics office, Eurostat, said in a report published earlier in May that the trade between Iran and the bloc's member states reached €1.276 billion in the first three months of 2024, registering an 8 percent growth year on year.

Based on the Eurostat figures, the trade between the two sides stood at €1.18 billion in the previous year's first three months.

As reported, the EU's exports to Iran from January to March 2024 stood at €1.06 billion, registering an increase of 10 percent compared to the same period of the previous year when the EU exports to Iran were reported to be €958 million.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €216 million in the first quarter of 2024 with a three percent decrease compared to the same period last year. In the same quarter of the previous year, €220 million of goods were imported from Iran.

According to Eurostat, the value of trade between Iran and the EU's member states reached €4.732 billion in 2023. The trade between the two sides fell by nine percent in 2023 in comparison to the preceding year when the figure stood at €5.244 billion.

As reported, the EU's exports to Iran from January to December 2023 stood at €3.993 billion, registering a decrease of six percent compared to the same period of 2022 when the EU's exports to Iran were reported to be €4.187 billion.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €799 million in 2023 with a 24 percent decrease compared to 2022. EU imported €1.057 billion of goods from Iran in January-December 2022.

According to Eurostat, Germany was Iran's top trade partner in Europe in 2023. The country accounted for 36 percent of the Iran-EU total trade in 2023. The total trade between Iran and Germany reached €1.432 billion last year.

Germany exported €1.199 billion of goods to Iran and imported €233 million from Iran. German exports to Iran decreased by 24 percent and imports by 16 percent year on year.

Italy and the Netherlands were the second and third biggest European trade partners of the Islamic Republic in the previous year.

Bahraini cabinet backs king's bid to restore Iran ties

Bahrain's cabinet threw its weight behind King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's remarks in the Russian capital of Moscow about normalizing ties with neighboring countries, including Iran. Iran's official IRNA news agency referred to a report by the Arabic-language Bahrain Mirror news website stating that the cabinet welcomed and was pleased with discussions regarding the resumption of ties with the regional states during talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday. King Hamad said in his meeting with Putin that there was no reason to postpone the restoration of diplomatic relations between Manama and Tehran.

During the conversation, the Bahraini king emphasized that he favored good neighborliness and was after maintaining normal diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with neighboring countries.

"We previously had issues with Iran, but now they



• BNA

no longer exist. Therefore, there is no reason to delay the normalization of relations with Iran," the king said in Moscow. Moreover, the deputy speaker of the Bahrain's Parliament announced that the Persian Gulf Arab country will soon take

measures to resume its relations with the Islamic Republic.

"Resumption of political and trade relations between the two countries is of great importance because Iran is a neighboring country and Bahrain supports stable ties with all

regional states," Abdulnabi Salman said on Saturday. Bahrain followed Saudi Arabia's decision by severing diplomatic relations with Iran on January 4, 2016, after Iranian protesters, enraged by the execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir

al-Nimr by the Saudi government, stormed its diplomatic mission in Iran. Back in March 2023, Iran and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement in the Chinese capital of Beijing to restore their diplomatic relations and re-open embassies and missions.

Last Wednesday, Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani visited Tehran to offer his condolences on the tragic death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed alongside seven others in a helicopter crash in northwest Iran on May 19.

Tehran's arms open ...

Iran has demonstrated resilience against external

pressures and contrary to Western expectations, has shown its unwillingness to retreat from its fundamental positions in order to preserve and reinforce regional security and stability.

Some regional countries used to believe that Iran's regional power and influence were temporary and that the main factors for security lay with the United States and Israel.

However, the developments of the past three years, particularly the recent seven months and the Gaza war, have dispelled such beliefs. Iran's power and influence in the region have solidified, and some countries have come to realize that neither Israel nor even the United States are reliable powers for ensuring security. It is not without reason that after Iran's missile and drone attacks on Israel, officials from Iraq's Kurdistan region traveled to Iran, demonstrating their willingness for closer relations and further cooperation.

Similarly, the Republic of Azerbaijan has also pursued a policy of enhancing or revitalizing relations with Tehran.

Now, Bahrain, considering the regional realities, has expressed readiness to approach Iran. This willingness was also discussed in a meeting with the Russian president, who has good relations with Iran.

Bahrain may seek to utilize the approach utilized by Saudi Arabia, with China as the mediator for reviving relations with Iran.

Nevertheless, Iran's welcoming attitude has consistently extended towards neighboring nations. This outlook stems from Iran's belief in the vital importance of fostering cooperation and engagement with its neighboring countries to safeguard the security and interests of both adjacent and regional nations.

Therefore, Bahrain's new policy should not solely be limited to bilateral relations but should undoubtedly consider broader considerations related to the future of the region and the firmly established position of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It is not far off that Tehran's position of the region's independence from the presence of countries and non-regional powers will be accepted among all regional countries.

Iran's poverty rate drops by 7.4%: Minister

Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ehsan Khandouzi cited a World Bank report released in April as saying that the rate of poverty in Iran has decreased by 7.4% from 29.3% to 21.9%.

Addressing a press conference in Tehran on Tuesday, Khandouzi said the economic growth for the current Iranian year and the next year is forecasted to be positive according to the World Bank's predictions, surpassing the rise in the previous year.

Khandouzi stated at the presser that the Iranian administration's efforts have resulted in 6.5 million Iranians moving out of poverty in recent years.

According to the World Bank, poverty in Iran has gone down as the economy has recovered between 2020/21 and 2022/23.

"Over two years, poverty as measured at the US \$6.85

poverty line, declined by a cumulative 7.4 percentage points to 21.9 percent in 2022/23, meaning an estimated 6.5 million (Iranian) people were lifted out of poverty," the World Bank has said.

"A combination of increased wages, an increase in self-employed earnings, and a top-up to the national cash-transfer program contributed to the growth in consumption and the corresponding reduction in poverty," the report said about Iran.

The World Bank underlined that Iran's economic growth has proven to be "resilient" over the past four years despite the ongoing economic sanctions.

Meanwhile, the head of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said a day earlier that it is currently not possible to unify the foreign exchange rate due to sanctions and restrictions.



Addressing the 31st annual conference on monetary and exchange rate policies, Mohammad Reza Farzin said that negative inflation expectations along with political tensions have driven up exchange rates through unofficial channels and the black market. The rial is valued at 565,000 rials per dollar.

The CBI governor stressed

that the unification of exchange rates simultaneous with the implementation of economic stabilization policies is not possible.

Economic stabilization policies are described as a set of measures aimed at restoring stability to a country's economy, including controlling inflation, liquidity, reducing budget deficits and stabilizing prices in the market.

Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1403/06

Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70.000 metric tons of Pellet (%Fe:65) on basis of F.O.B at Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 09:00 A.M. on 11. June.2024 to Golgohar complex in sirjan (50 km in shiraz road). Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 09:00 A.M. on 11.June.2024 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis%		
Fe	65.00	Min
FeO	1.0	Ave
P	0.05	Max
S	0.01	Max
SiO2	3.5	Max
Al2O3	0.7	Max
CaO	0.9	Max
MgO	2.5	Max
CCS(kg/p)		Ave 250
8-16 mm%		Min 90
-6 mm%		Ave5
A.1%		Max 4
T.1%		Min 95
Prosity%		19-24
Reducibility%		Min 90

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

Amir Chakhmaq Complex, a tapestry of time in Yazd



In the heart of Yazd lies the captivating Amir Chakhmaq Complex, a unique blend of ancient architecture and vibrant activity that vividly narrates the city's rich history. Stepping into this complex feels like embarking on a journey through time, surrounded by its historic edifices and bustling energy. This extraordinary complex holds significance as a custodian of national heritage, housing integral structures such as a mosque, water storage facilities, and a mausoleum. Beyond being a major tourist attraction in Yazd, the Amir Chakhmaq Complex serves as a focal point for communal gatherings, events, and festivities, solidifying its role as the beating heart of Yazd's social fabric.

The history of Amir Chakhmaq Complex unveils a narrative of collaboration and foresight. Constructed during the Timurid era under the patronage of Amir Jalal Addin Chakhmaq and his wife Seti Fatemeh Khatoon, the complex initially named Amir Chakhmaq Square and Mosque swiftly garnered admiration as a cherished landmark. Throughout the ages, the complex underwent transformations and enhancements, each chapter leaving an indelible mark on its storied past. From serving as a burial ground to its restoration during the Pahlavi Dynasty, the complex's evolution reflects a tapestry of resilience and revival, attracting visitors with its enduring legacy.

The architecture of Amir Chakhmaq Complex is a testament to the skill and artistry of Persian craftsmen. The grand three-story facade at the entrance to the bazaar sets a majestic tone, while the intricate arched alcoves showcase a fusion of elegance and craftsmanship. Whether bathed in daylight's warmth or illuminated under evening lights, the timeless allure of these architectural marvels never fails to mesmerize. The addition of fountains enhances the enchanting ambiance, adding a touch of magic to the surroundings. The Amir Chakhmaq Mosque, also known as the Duhok Mosque, stands as a venerable beauty within the complex. Dating back to ancient times, this

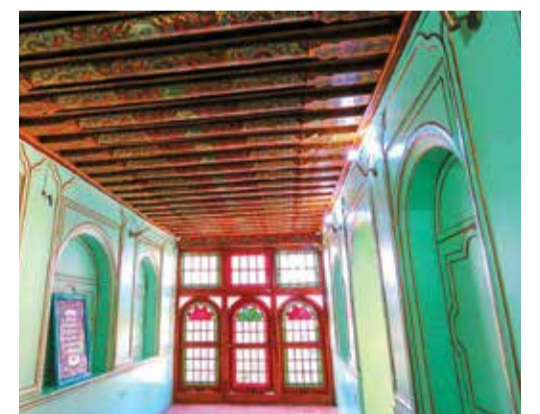


halitour.com

mosque boasts exquisite mosaics, intricate moqarnas structures, and innovative architectural features such as dual prayer halls for varied climates, exuding both practicality and charm. The vibrant windows and colorful tiles further infuse the mosque with a welcoming aura, inviting visitors to admire its splendor. Within the Amir Chakhmaq Complex, the historic Haji Ghanbar Bazaar beckons with its timeless allure and cultural significance. Named after Haji Ghanbar Jahanshahi, this bustling market offers a sensory journey through Yazd's traditions, featuring a rich array of goods and artifacts that encapsulate the region's heritage. Beyond a marketplace,

it stands as a living museum, preserving and showcasing the essence of Yazd's cultural tapestry. Completing the ensemble of treasures in Amir Chakhmaq Square are hidden gems like the Amir Chakhmaq Tekyeh, a striking structure steeped in mystery and architectural elegance. The Tekyeh's intricate mudbrick construction, adorned with elaborate plasterwork and ornate alcoves, stands as a testament to an era of opulence and grandeur. Paired with the historical palm and the Seti Fatemeh Khatoon Mausoleum, these elements enrich the tapestry of Amir Chakhmaq's narrative, offering glimpses into a bygone era of artistry and legacy.

Visit the enchanting Narenjestan Garden in Shiraz



jamaran.news

Iranica Desk

Persian garden is one of the defining features of the architecture in Iran, visible throughout various regions of the country. The Narenjestan Garden in Shiraz, Fars Province, also known as the Qavam Garden among locals, stands out as one of the must-visit attractions in Shiraz. Dating back to the Qajar period, this building is named after the abundance of orange trees.

Constructed between 1878 and 1888 by the directive of Ali Mohammad Khan Qavam during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, the Qavam complex comprises two distinct parts: the outer (Narenjestan Museum) and the inner (the Zinat al-Molk House), connected by a tunnel. Over the years, this building has served as a government office, a venue for political and

military affairs, and a space for engaging with foreign government delegates. The Narenjestan building was generously donated to the University of Shiraz in 1966 and subsequently supervised by an Asian institute, led by the renowned Iranologist Professor Arthur Upham Pope, between 1967 and 1978.

The complex spans a total area of 3,500 square meters, with the main buildings on the north and south sides covering a combined area of 940 square meters. Shirazi architects and artists have adorned these structures using a variety of artistic techniques such as mirror work, wood carving, painting, brickwork, marquetry, stone carving, plasterwork, and mosaic work. Stepping through the southern building and past the traditional and decorative supplies shop, visitors are welcomed by a beau-

tifully symmetrical courtyard featuring orange and palm trees, facing the vibrant and mirror-adorned main building. Passing through this courtyard leads to the main building and its magnificent ivan, located on the left side of the coffee house. To enter the building and its ivan, several stairs are embedded on both sides of the ivan, designed beautifully and artistically.

Around and behind the ivan, there are small rooms where entering them will immerse you in a sea of marquetry and mirror work art. These rooms display historical artifacts and furniture from that era, captivating your gaze. The ceilings of the adjacent rooms are mostly made of wood with beautiful patterns and carvings, but upon entering the main room next to the ivan, the reflected colors from the mirror work on the ceiling will

mesmerize you. The entire main room and veranda are covered in exquisite mirror works, requiring days and even weeks to fully appreciate all the details of this masterpiece. The main hall, known as the Mirror Hall or the Shahneshin, is connected to the central ivan through a crescent-shaped wooden window with lattice windows. The walls of this hall are entirely covered in mirror work. On the upper section of the marble stone fireplace, you can see two finely carved mirror images of Qavam al-Molk. The central ivan showcases two large stone columns that are used for various ceremonies, with a high, seamless ceiling adorned with beautiful mirrorwork and paintings. The presence of large mirrors on the walls of the hall and ivan reflects captivating views of the garden courtyard, pool, and fountain.

In front of the ivan, there is a beautiful pool with a single fountain that transports us back to the splendor of the peak period of this artwork. Below the building lies the Narenjestan Museum of Antiques, which houses a beautiful and valuable collection of utensils, coins, paintings, tiles, and more from different historical periods in Iran. The ideal time to visit the Narenjestan Garden is during the spring season when the beauty of the garden is at its peak, and the scent of the orange blossoms provides an indescribable pleasure to enthusiasts. While the Narenjestan Garden remains enchanting in the summer, the high temperatures may be a bit challenging. In autumn, the garden offers a distinctive backdrop for photography enthusiasts who have an appreciation for traditional spaces and Iranian architecture.

Raisi cements regional ties, economic gains follow

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iranian foreign policy took a decisive turn under the late president Ebrahim Raisi, who zeroed in on fostering relations with neighboring countries. In recent years, there has been a flurry of diplomatic activity between Iranian officials and their counterparts in the region, who have been rubbing elbows frequently. The frequency and intensity of these diplomatic interactions drive home the importance of regional cooperation for Iran's foreign policy agenda.

Iran Daily conducted an interview with Seyyed Reza Sadrolhosseini, a regional affairs expert, to discuss the effectiveness of this foreign policy and shed light on the driving forces behind the government's commitment to building strong regional alliances.

IRAN DAILY: What national and regional factors influenced the decision by the government of president Raisi to prioritize relations with neighboring countries?

SADROLHOSSEINI: For any nation, fostering good relationships with its neighbors is a cornerstone of political wisdom and essential to safeguarding national security. In Iran's case, Islamic ethics also play a role as it emphasizes the importance of forming strong bonds between Tehran and its predominantly Muslim neighbors. Additionally, Iran's constitution and the recommendations of the late founder and the current leader of the Islamic Republic strongly encourage regional cooperation.

With this in mind, president Raisi shifted the focus of his government's foreign policy to tackling shared challenges and bolstering economic relations with neighboring countries. Over the past three years, both the late president and the late foreign minister diligently pursued this approach, reaping significant



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (front-R) talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at an Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 11, 2023.
● IRNA

rewards and solidifying the foundation for continued collaboration.

Could you provide striking examples of accomplishments stemming from the policy of strengthening relations with neighboring countries?

First off, significant strides were made in resolving misunderstandings and differences with certain neighboring countries, which were previously fueled by external influences.

Secondly, a major diplomatic breakthrough was achieved with the normalization of ties between Tehran

and Riyadh, a crucial player in the region, the Islamic world, and the Arab sphere. This rapprochement has paved the way for further diplomatic successes.

Thirdly, economic relations with neighboring nations have seen marked improvements during the past three years. As per official statistics, Iran's exports to its neighbors jumped by 30%, and overall trade relations witnessed a 36% uptick in the first two years of president Raisi's time in office.

Another feather in the cap of this policy is the masterful handling of the

Iran-Azerbaijan crisis. Even though an individual attacked the Baku embassy in Tehran for personal reasons, we witnessed a reduction in diplomatic ties between the two countries. Meanwhile, some countries tried to over-emphasize the border challenges, even expecting the two Muslim countries to go to war with each other.

However, the government of the late president and his diplomatic apparatus skillfully de-escalated tensions between Tehran and Baku. The case in point is the fact that the very last trip of the late president and foreign minister before their tragic air accident was taken to inaugurate a large joint dam on the Aras River. As another testament to the strengthened relations, the reopening of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Tehran is on the horizon.

Adding to this list of accomplishments, we can highlight the resolution of challenges with Iran's eastern neighbors, particularly Afghanistan. Relations between Iran and Afghanistan had hit rock bottom due to US interference during Ashraf Ghani's government. However, ties have since bounced back, with Iran's exports to Afghanistan experiencing a substantial boost.

Iran's readiness to engage in dialogue and address disputes over maritime borders and joint energy fields with countries such as Kuwait should also be recognized as another triumph of the government's neighborhood policy. Moreover, within this relatively brief period, Raisi's government tried to regain the trust of nations like Armenia, Turkey, and Pakistan across various sectors, including security, energy, and economics.

The high-profile attendance of foreign delegations, particularly from neigh-



boring countries, at the ceremony paying tribute to the late president and his accompanying delegation serves as a testament to the Islamic Republic's enhanced standing and the positive role that it plays in the region.

How did the government seek to implement the neighborhood policy to successfully overcome misunderstandings?

The government followed a strategic approach rooted in interaction and dialogue, aiming for mutual benefits while ensuring mutual respect and security. The late foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian adeptly enacted this policy, prioritizing the expansion of economic relations. Of course, Iran's government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained steadfast in upholding Islamic and revolutionary values throughout the de-escalation and interaction processes with neighboring countries.

While president Raisi underscored not seeking to tie economic issues to specific foreign policy matters, it appeared that economic collaboration became an essential aspect of our approach to foreign policy. Were the government and foreign ministry effective in leveraging foreign policy for economic cooperation?

From the outset, foreign minister Amir-Abdollahian stressed the im-



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (L) waves to workers aboard a platform at Phase 11 of the South Pars Gas Field in the Persian Gulf on August 28, 2023.
● SHANA

portance of solidifying and broadening economic relations with other nations, particularly neighbors.

President Raisi's statement about not tying the economy to foreign policy was intended to communicate that the government would not restrict meeting the country's economic needs to a singular case or bow to Western demands and pressures.

Addressing economic needs was a top priority for the government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Raisi, as evidenced by increased Iranian exports and meeting

domestic demands amidst Western sanctions over the past three years. Therefore, president Raisi's viewpoint does not imply a disconnect between the economy and foreign policy. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of not allowing the economy to be held hostage by Western expectations and indulgences.

The presence of Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and Bahrain's foreign minister at the ceremony honoring the late president and his companions was noteworthy. How might

these attendances impact the restoration and promotion of diplomatic relations with these two countries?

During the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, a significant meeting occurred between Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukri. The meeting resulted in a mutual agreement to expedite the process of improving political relations between the two nations. Furthermore, the ministers engaged in discussions regarding Egypt's stance on Israel's actions

in Gaza and their involvement in providing aid to Palestinians.

While the interim government's remaining term may witness ongoing efforts to bolster Iran-Egypt relations, it is possible that any substantial advancements may fall under the purview of the succeeding Iranian government. Ali Bagheri Kani, the acting minister of Foreign Affairs, has indicated that the previous government's emphasis on regional relations will continue to be a top priority.

The presence of the Bahraini delega-

tion, led by their foreign minister, was also of considerable importance, especially since no specific and preliminary measures have officially been taken to address the differences between Iran and Bahrain in a serious manner. Their participation in the tribute ceremony demonstrates respect for Iran's leadership and acknowledges the nation's regional and international standing. This gesture of goodwill from Bahrain sets the stage for constructive dialogue and potentially paves the way for resolving the differences between the two countries.

Precious legacies of Raisi's economic diplomacy

ANALYSIS

Iran is mourning its revolutionary president Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi who on Sunday was martyred in a helicopter crash northwest of the country. He dedicated his life to the people's welfare and economic prosperity. During three years of his tireless presidency, president Raisi was a source of many services to the progress of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the world stage. One of the brilliant areas of his activities was the foreign policy.

In addition to the tangible outcomes of the policies of president Raisi's government in boosting foreign relations in the path of realizing national interests, increasing national power, enhancing foreign trade, and neutralizing Western sanctions have certainly been the cornerstones of many actions that can be built upon by future governments.

Here we focus on a small but important part of president Raisi's foreign policy achievements.

Membership in regional, international blocs

Strengthening international alliances in foreign relations, especially membership in regional common market organizations and free trade agreements, has always been one of the important objectives in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic. Remarkable gains have been made to this end under president Raisi who, compared to his predecessors, further used Iran's unique geopolitical position and economic capabilities to secure Iran's share of regional and international trade.

One of these achievements was the finalization of Iran's membership in the two key economic blocs of BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) along with several emerging non-Western powers. Though Iran for years was an observer member of these blocs, if it was not for the major change in Iran's foreign policy under president Raisi who adopted the "Look to the East" policy, Iran's membership could not have been realized this quickly.

Russia and China, two great strategic allies in the transitioning global order, consider the Islamic Republic as the third member of their Eastern alliance due to the country's completely independent policy, strategic geopolitical position, military power, and extensive regional influence. The government of Raisi played a key role in this achievement.

Indeed, membership in SCO will provide unmatched opportunities for Iran's economic development and foreign trade. The bloc covers about 30 percent of the global GDP and about 40 percent of the world's population, which translates into the total defeat of the West's sanctions that aimed to isolate Iran from global trade.



Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi delivers a speech at the 15th summit of the BRICS group of countries held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 24, 2023. The BRICS leaders announced during the summit that they would welcome six new members in January 2024: Iran, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

TASNIM

Joining the club of the emerging powers of BRICS, which many experts say will prospectively replace the G7, facilitates foreign trade, cuts trade costs and customs, transfers technology and knowledge, provides raw material, expands Iran's interactions with global markets, and eliminates various international payment problems by doing business with national currencies.

During president Raisi's tenure and thanks to the efforts of the late foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Iran managed to take a huge step toward membership in the Eurasian Economic Union. The organization, which accounts for about 2.4 percent of the global trade, also signed a free trade deal with Tehran.

Marketing, opening new trade gates

The economy was a priority to the foreign policy of the government of president Raisi, to the extent that during his 33-month presidency, he visited 28 foreign countries. In the meantime, although the government focused on expanding all-round economic relations with neighbors and countries in the region, president Raisi did not ignore other markets receptive to Iranian companies and goods, especially in developing countries.

To this end, after years of stagnation, Raisi's government revived Iran's trade and political standing with Latin America. In addition to meetings with Latin American leaders on the sidelines of the UN annual sessions, in June 2023, he started a five-day tour that saw him visiting Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. By signing 35

cooperation documents in various areas, he took a long leap to restore Iran's considerable trade share in this region.

During his presidency, relations with Africa also saw a surge. His efforts manifested, for example, in the Iran-Africa Summit initiative held earlier in April in Tehran at the level of senior officials, including finance ministers of over 30 African countries. Furthermore, president Raisi toured the three countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe in July 2023, marking the first visit of an Iranian president to Africa in 11 years. The tour secured significant achievements for Tehran.

The jump in the country's oil and gas revenues in the middle of tough sanctions and energy agreements with neighbors were among the other accomplishments of the economic diplomacy of president Raisi's government. According to officials, Iran managed to increase oil and gas production and export revenues to levels higher than before the US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Revamping the country's energy diplomacy and boosting cooperation with neighboring countries have been on the agenda of the oil ministry since the beginning of the late president's government. Ending the five-year hiatus in gas trade with Turkmenistan, the signing of a three-party gas swap deal between Iran, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan paved the way for Tehran to access the European gas market in the future.

Another key step in increasing en-

ergy exports was taken by Raisi in his recent trip to Pakistan. The two neighbors agreed to conclude the construction of the Iran gas pipeline to Pakistan. By taking the final steps of this agreement, Iran's share of the region's energy market will surely witness a fundamental transformation. Since the 11th phase of the South Pars Gas Field in a shared field with Qatar was rolled out during his term, Iran's production surpassed that of the Qataris even in the midst of sanctions.

Unlocking Iran's corridor capacities

Iran is a country with a unique geopolitical position on a highway connecting the east, west, north, and

south of the world. This has created an opportunity for Iran to play a key role in major transit projects and the international trade network. Both of these can contribute to its economic development and secure income sources for it.

During Raisi's tenure, a change in Iran's approach to the "resistance economy" caused the government to prioritize putting more into the development of the International North-South Corridor, consequently allowing the rail and road projects to experience a remarkable expansion in a short period. In this regard, cooperation with India to further develop Chabahar port took place. Moreover, Iran's rail connection to Afghanistan was concluded with the inauguration of the Khaf-Herat railway in July last year.

The East-West Corridor is also a mid-term strategic priority that invites intense competition given its huge transportation potential. Some rival routes are already active and entrenched within the framework of this corridor. Three years ago, when the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was inaugurated and the first Turkish freight train made its way to China without passing through Iran, there emerged a feeling that Iran was abandoned in this megaproject. Actions of the past governments made Iran the big absentee in this significant project despite being aware of the geopolitical importance of the BRI.

This approach was changed under president Raisi's government as the latter focused on taking advantage of the country's regional capacities. Under his government, a new approach was put high on agenda that exploited the country's transit capacity in bilateral or multilateral trade exchanges with the allies. Inaugurating the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey corridor in May 2022 to boost the East-West Corridor was among the fruits of this policy that managed to restore Iran to the BRI.

The article first appeared on ABNA24.



The first transit train carrying a container of sulfur from Kazakhstan to Turkey, after passing through Turkmenistan, moves through Iran on June 19, 2022.

TASNIM

Iran coach Shamsaei wary of minnow teams' threat at Futsal World Cup

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Vahid Shamsaei believes his side cannot afford to underestimate its Group F opponents when the FIFA Futsal World Cup gets underway in Uzbekistan in mid-September.

The draw for the 10th edition of the sport's flagship international event took place in the ancient Uzbek city of Samarkand on Sunday, where top-seed Iran was pitted against Venezuela, Guatemala, and France.

Venezuela will be making only a second World Cup appearance after reaching the last 16 in Lithuania three years ago, while Guatemala, beaten by Iran in all six previous meetings between the two sides, has failed to go beyond the group stage in five attempts. France, meanwhile, will be a debutant in Uzbekistan courtesy of an elite-round group win in the European qualifiers.

Some might fancy a comfortable progress to the knockout stage for Iran, which was ranked fourth in the inaugural FIFA men's ranking in early May, but Shamsaei has other ideas.

Having steered his team to a record-extending 13th Asian Cup trophy in April, Shamsaei in no stranger to recent surprises after witnessing some shock results in the continental event in Thailand. While Tajikistan and Afghanistan –

a debutant at the competition – finished in the top five to celebrate a maiden World Cup berth, Iran had scary moments against Bahrain and Uzbekistan, with defending champion Japan crashing out in the group stage, failing to qualify for the world showpiece.

"A number of up-and-coming teams have burst onto the international scene since I took over the Iranian job two years ago," Shamsaei said after the draw.

"Venezuela finished third to Brazil and Argentina in Copa América [in February] while France made it into top 10 in the world ranking and has seven or eight players in the high-profile Spanish league," added the Iranian.

"Guatemala may be the weakest of the four teams in the group, but the World Cup is still a place for formidable sides," said Shamsaei, who believes the host country – drawn against the Netherlands, Paraguay, and Costa Rica – enjoys the easiest group lineup among the five Asian sides at the tournament.

Making a ninth World Cup appearance in the upcoming edition, Iran, whose best finish came in 2016 thanks to a shootout victory over Portugal in the third-place playoff, will begin its campaign against Venezuela on September 16.

Shamsaei's men will face Guatemala on September 19 before squaring off against the European opponent three days later.



AVC Volleyball Challenge Cup: Iranian girls beat Hong Kong, to face India for fifth place

Sports Desk

Iranian women will be hoping to repeat last year's fifth-place finish at the AVC Volleyball Challenge Cup when taking on India in Manila, Philippines, today.

Padideh Bolourizadeh's girls defeated Hong Kong 3-1 (26-24, 26-24, 19-25, 25-19) in Tuesday's 5th-8th semifinals, though the

victory proved costly for the Iranian coach as first-choice setter Dorsa Fallah and Elaheh Poursaleh were forced out injured midway through the contest and will be doubts for the final-day game.

Today's encounter will be a second between the two sides at this year's event after the Indians came out on top in straight sets in Pool A opener

last week.

Taking part at the event for only a second time, Iran also suffered defeats against the Philippines (3-0) and Australia (3-1) and managed a single victory over the Chinese Taipei in four sets to finish second from bottom in the five-team group, with the host and Australia progressing to the last four thanks to a top two spot.



● ROUELLE UMALI/XINHUA

Nadal says Olympics main goal after early Roland Garros defeat

Rafa Nadal likened his struggles with injury in the last 18 months to being in a jungle as the 14-times French Open champion hoped to return to Roland Garros for the Olympic Games after making a premature exit from the Grand Slam on Monday.

Never far from physical issues in his glittering career, the 37-year-old missed almost all of 2023 with a hip problem and his comeback earlier this year was stalled by a muscle tear, before small niggles affected his preparation for the clay-court major.

Nadal crashed to a 6-3 7-6(5) 6-3 defeat by fourth seed Alexander Zverev in Paris and although there were positives, he said he could not predict how his battered body would respond to the demands of the Games in July and August.

"My body has been a jungle for two years. You don't know what to expect. I wake up one day and I find a snake biting me. Another day a tiger," Nadal told a packed press conference following his earliest exit from Roland Garros.

"I've been fighting with all the things that I went through. But the dynamic is positive the last few weeks. I felt ready. I think tomorrow I'll be ready to play again if I have to. But I will not have to.

"So that's the thing. Now, I need to prepare myself, I need to clear my ideas and see what's the new calendar to try to be

ready for Olympics. I can't say anything today, but my main goal now is to play the Olympics."

Nadal will be eyeing his third gold medal after triumphing in singles in the 2008 Beijing Games and doubles eight years later in Rio.

He had expressed doubts about his fitness ahead of what is likely his final French Open.

"Today in the match, I felt I was able to move myself much better than in the previous tournaments. But I had a very tough opponent in front of me. He played well," Nadal added.

"Of course disappointed to lose, but in terms of body feelings, I'm happy that I finished

healthy and I had a tough battle out there. And I was ready for a little bit more."

Nadal said it would be unwise to prepare for the grass-court season that follows with a potentially difficult transition back to clay for the Olympics.

"It looks difficult, honestly. For me now I can't confirm what's going on, but it looks difficult to make a transition to grass, having the Olympics again on clay," Nadal said.



● REUTERS

Israel reaches central Rafah as European states recognize Palestine

In a major setback for Israel, Spain, Ireland and Norway formally recognized a Palestinian state on Tuesday in a coordinated decision as the regime continues its genocidal war in the Gaza Strip. The three European countries believe their initiative has strong symbolic impact that is likely to encourage others to follow suit, AFP reported.

After Ireland's government formally approved the measure, Prime Minister Simon Harris said the aim was to keep Middle East peace hopes alive.

As Oslo's recognition went into effect, Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide hailed the move as "a special day for Norway-Palestine relations". And after Spain's cabinet backed the move, Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said it was a day that would be "etched in Spain's history".

Earlier, Spanish Prime Min-

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares (c), Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide (r) and Irish Foreign minister Micheal Martin join hands after holding a joint press conference in Brussels on May 27, 2024. **● KENZO TRIBOUILLARD/AFP**

ister Pedro Sanchez said recognition was "essential" for peace, insisting the move was "not against anyone, least of all Israel" and the only way to secure a future of two states living side-by-side "in peace and security". The plans were unveiled last week by the prime ministers of the three countries, sparking a furious response from Israel and further exacerbating its diplomatic tensions, notably with Spain.

'Clear call for elimination of Israel'

Last week, Sanchez's far-left deputy Yolanda Diaz hailed the move saying: "We cannot



stop. Palestine will be free from the river to the sea", which the Israeli Ambassador in Spain slammed as a "clear call for the elimination of Israel". The slogan refers to the British mandate borders of Pal-

estine, which stretched from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea before Israel was created in 1948. On Tuesday, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz went even further.

"Sanchez, as long as you

don't fire your deputy and you recognize a Palestinian state, you are participating in the incitement to commit genocide and war crimes against the Jewish people," he wrote on X.

Tuesday's move will mean

145 of the United Nations' 193 member states now recognize Palestinian statehood.

Rafah invasion

On Tuesday, Israeli tanks advanced to the center of Rafah for the first time, witnesses said, three weeks into a ground offensive in the southern Gaza city that has stirred global condemnation for its continued civilian toll, according to Reuters.

Overnight, its forces battered the city with airstrikes and tank fire, residents said, pressing the offensive despite an international outcry over an attack on Sunday that sparked a massive blaze in a tent camp, killing at least 45 Palestinians, more than half of them children, women and the elderly.

Global leaders voiced horror at the fire in a designated "humanitarian zone" where families uprooted by fighting elsewhere in Gaza had

sought shelter, and urged the implementation of a World Court order for a halt to Israel's assault.

Israel's war on Gaza has claimed the lives of more than 36,000 people since October 7 when the Hamas resistance group launched an operation in the occupied territories which killed more than 1,200 people.

In an opinion published in Haaretz newspaper, an Israeli major general has warned of the consequences of the war on Gaza.

Yitzhak Brik has said that only the Israeli cabinet can end the war, because there is no chance that the Palestinian resistance groups will decide to end it.

He said that if this does not happen, this campaign will turn into a war of attrition, which will last for years, under the leadership of Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in the north, and will lead to the collapse of the regime.

Iran's acting FM urge Muslim elites to pressure Israel



Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Baqeri Kani called upon scholars in the Muslim world to explore all available avenues and exert more pressure on the Israeli regime in order to stop its onslaught against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Baqeri Kani made the appeal during a meeting with former Iraqi prime minister Adel Abdul-Mah-

di in Tehran on Monday, Press TV reported. During the meeting, the Iranian diplomat pointed to the strategic changes and developments that have taken shape at regional and international levels following Operation al-Aqsa Storm launched by Gaza-based Palestinian resistance groups on October 7 last year, and Operation True Promise,

through which Iran made Israel pay the cost of the criminal attack against its embassy in the Syrian capital on April 1.

Baqeri Kani underlined that prominent thinkers and elites of the Muslim world must play much greater role, and heap pressure on Israel and its sponsors, above all the United States, so that the occupying regime would stop its crimes and genocide in Palestinian territories.

Abdul-Mahdi visited Tehran to offer condolences on the passing of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who lost his life alongside seven others in a helicopter crash in northwest Iran on May 19.

Parliament re-elects Qalibaf as speaker

National Desk

Iranian lawmakers re-elected Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf as the speaker of the country's 12th Parliament. During the Tuesday parliament's session, Qalibaf gained the votes of 197 out of 287 lawmakers. He will serve as the speaker for one-year period. The new parliament was inaugurated on Monday with a message from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.



Iran's parliamentary elections were held in March. 245 candidates won the race in the first round of balloting. The final make-up of the legislative body was determined after a run-off held on May the 10th. A trained pilot, Qalibaf was

a commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) during the Iraqi imposed war in the 1980s. He also served as the head of the IRGC's construction arm, Khatam al-Anbia, the commander of the IRGC's air force, the police chief and the mayor of Tehran. Qalibaf's reinstatement comes ahead of early presidential vote as a snap election has been set for June 28 following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash on May 19.

ton's "shameless" support for the "genocide" he charged was under way in Gaza. "I reiterate my demand to expel" the US ambassador and "close the embassy through diplomatic means without bloodshed," he said in a statement on X.

Iraq's Sadr calls for closure of US Embassy

Influential Iraqi cleric Moqtada Sadr renewed his calls to close the US embassy in Baghdad Tuesday after an Israeli strike killed at least 45 civilians in a camp in Gaza on Sunday night. Sadr condemned the Israeli strike and Washing-

The Iranian Copper chain and Development Company (ICDCo) under affiliation The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)

has issued a public call (No:140301/6) for the identification of contractors, investors, and financial providers. This call is related to the implementation of development projects under the EPCF (Engineering, Procurement, Construction, and Financing) framework. Eligible legal entities (single or consortium / cooperation group) with the capability for investment, financial provision, and project execution within the EPCF contractual framework are invited to submit the following documents by June 20, 2024:

- A profile and professional resume (including a list of similar ongoing or completed contracts).
- An expression of interest.
- Other relevant information related to the call.

Submissions can be made either by mail to the following address:
Address: 63 IMINO Building, 5th Floor, Between Jahan Kodak Square and Vanak Square, Vanak, Tehran, Iran, Postal Code: 1969935788
 Or electronically to the email address: info-icdco@imidro.gov.ir

The project scope includes various aspects related to copper production:
Design, construction, and installation of semi product and downstream copper chain production lines.

In this regard, Mr. Mostafa Eini Sohail can be contacted at phone number +98 2141868000-742 for collaboration and document retrieval.

The Iranian Copper chain and Development Company (ICDCo) under affiliation The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)

has issued a public call (No:140301/4) for the identification of contractors, investors, and financial providers. This call is related to the implementation of development projects under the EPCF (Engineering, Procurement, Construction, and Financing) framework. Eligible legal entities (single or consortium / cooperation group) with the capability for investment, financial provision, and project execution within the EPCF contractual framework are invited to submit the following documents by June 20, 2024:

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 Or electronically to the email address: info-icdco@imidro.gov.ir

The project scope includes various aspects related to copper production:
Copper production processes (including concentration, smelting, and refining).

In this regard, Mr. Mostafa Eini Sohail can be contacted at phone number +98 2141868000-742 for collaboration and document retrieval.

The Iranian Copper chain and Development Company (ICDCo) under affiliation The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)

has issued a public call (No: 140301/2) for the identification of contractors, investors, and financial providers. This call is related to the implementation of development projects under the EPCF (Engineering, Procurement, Construction, and Financing) framework. Eligible legal entities (single or consortium / cooperation group) with the capability for investment, financial provision, and project execution within the EPCF contractual framework are invited to submit the following documents by June 20, 2024:

- A profile and professional resume (including a list of similar ongoing or completed contracts).
- An expression of interest.
- Other relevant information related to the call.

Submissions can be made either by mail to the following address:
Address: 63 IMINO Building, 5th Floor, Between Jahan Kodak Square and Vanak Square, Vanak, Tehran, Iran, Postal Code: 1969935788
 Or electronically to the email address: info-icdco@imidro.gov.ir

The project scope includes various aspects related to copper production:
Exploration and extraction of copper (including heavy mining machinery, crushers, and in-pit crushing and conveying systems).

In this regard, Mr. Mostafa Eini Sohail can be contacted at phone number +98 2141868000-742 for collaboration and document retrieval.



Tourist arrivals surged 43% in 2023

Arts & Culture Desk
 Iran saw a significant increase in international tourists in 2023, with a 43% rise in arrivals compared to the previous year, according to a report by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). This growth has elevated Iran six places in the glob-

al tourism ranking, now positioned at 34th among top destinations. The data, released by the UNWTO and cited by IRNA on Tuesday, indicates that approximately 5.9 million tourists visited Iran in 2023, up from 4.1 million in 2022. This surge follows a previous quadrupling of tourist numbers in 2022, which

rebounded from a pandemic-induced slump in 2021 when only 880,000 tourists visited Iran. The remarkable increase in tourism has placed Iran ahead of many countries, with only 33 nations attracting more international tourists. France led the global rankings with 100 million visitors, followed by Spain with 85 million,

and the United States with 66 million. Other top destinations included Italy, Turkey, Mexico, the UK, Germany, Greece, and Austria. Iran's tourism sector has shown resilience and significant recovery post-pandemic, as evidenced by the substantial rise in international arrivals over the past two years.

'In the Shadow of the Cypress' wins top prize in Spain

Iranian film 'In the Shadow of the Cypress,' won the Best International Short Film prize at the 19th Spain's Animayo Gran Canaria Fest. The Iranian animation centers on a war veteran struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who takes out his pent-up rage on his daughter until something unexpected washes up on the beach before their house, Variety wrote. Last year, the Animayo Grand Jury prizewinner, Yeganeh Moqaddam's Iranian stop-mo-

tion/2D hybrid short 'The Uniform,' was among the five nominees shortlisted for the animated short film Oscar. Disney animation legend John Musker ('The Little Mermaid,' 'Aladdin'), who served as jury president, praised 'In the Shadow of the Cypress' by Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani for its scenography, use of light, script and story. Aside from winning the Grand Jury Prize, it also took home the best 2D Award. With Animayo being the first and only ani-

mation festival in Spain designated a qualifying festival by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 'In the Shadow of the Cypress' gets a direct pass to vie for the Oscars in its short film categories. For this 19th edition held May 8 to 11, 59 works competed in four Official Competition sections: International, Animation with N, Cinematics, videogames and commissioned films, and the children's and young people's section, 'My First Festival.'



Aggression, irresponsibility common problems in children: *Iran's SPRC*

Social Desk
 A psychologist and official from Iran's Society for Protecting the Rights of the Child (SPRC) reported that 360 calls were made to the Yara Hotline from December 22 to March 19. The most common issues reported by mothers included behavioral problems such as aggression, defiance, depression, stubbornness, irresponsibility, inattention, and concerns about internet addiction. In an interview with ISNA, Somayyeh Omidhi provided details about the callers. In the three-month winter period, 76% of the calls were from mothers, 17% from children, and 7% from fathers, sisters, grandmothers, teachers, or other relatives. Omidhi stated that 53% of the mothers who called were between 35 and 45 years old, with the rest being between 30 and 35, 45 and 50, and 50 and 60 years old. Regarding their education, 4% had a doctorate, 50.6% had a bachelor's or master's degree, 32% had a high school diploma, 3.2% had complet-

ed secondary school, 5.5% had completed primary school, and 1.4% were illiterate. Omidhi noted that 76% of the mothers were homemakers, while the rest were employed in various professions including as office workers, university professors, nurses, salespeople, hairdressers, accountants, freelancers, child caregivers, factory workers, sales managers, drivers, insurance agents, teachers, and plastic goods manufacturers. Among the fathers who called, 47% were between 35 and 40 years old, and 40% were between 40 and 45 years old. On average, 68% were employed as freelancers, office workers, drivers, salespeople, accountants, company managers, doctors, university professors, manufacturers, farmers, and teachers. Omidhi highlighted that the most common issues reported by mothers included aggression, defiance, depression, stubbornness, irresponsibility, inattention, internet addiction, cyberbullying, school problems, lack of motiva-

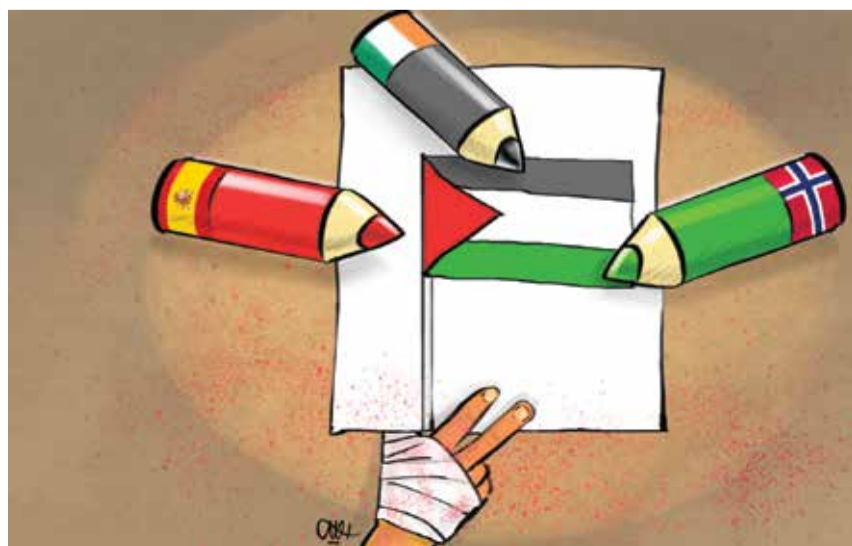
tion for studying, relationship issues with friends and peers, disorganization, and lack of self-confidence. These issues were most frequently reported for children aged 12 to 18 (46% of calls), followed by children aged 5 to 7 (33%), children aged 7 to 12 (24%), and children aged 0 to 2 (8%). For children aged 12 to 18,

the main problems included lack of parenting knowledge, behavioral issues like aggression and depression, school problems like lack of motivation, feelings of loneliness, irresponsibility, relationship issues with peers and parents. For children aged 5 to 7, the main problems were anxiety about starting school, issues related to

the home environment such as migration or parents' separation, emotional stress, separation anxiety, difficulty in social interactions, lack of parenting knowledge, aggression, stubbornness, issues related to the arrival of a second child, hyperactivity, medication use, speech problems, bedwetting, and habitual issues like teeth

grinding, nail-biting, and tics. For children aged 7 to 12, the main problems were relationship issues with peers and parents, lack of self-confidence, hyperactivity, aggression, lack of focus, incorrect information about puberty from peers or social media, problem-solving skills, stubbornness, irresponsibility, neglect by parents with the arrival of a second child, disorganization, and the need for interpersonal skills training. Omidhi added that 53% of callers were from Tehran, while 47% were from other provinces including Shahr-e Kord, Karaj, Pardis, Parand, Isfahan, Shiraz, Zanjan, Abhar, Bushehr, and Varamin.

 **Mohammad Ali Rajabi**
 Cartoonist




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