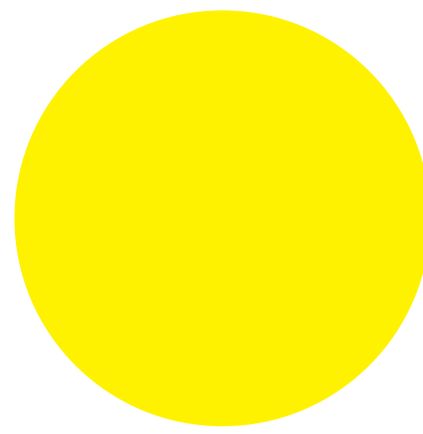




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Iran Daily

A reminder to Beijing about a shared feeling



By **Shuaib Bahman**,
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The recent move by the Chinese government in signing a joint statement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), all the while pushing for refer-

ring the issue of sovereignty over the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf to international bodies or courts, sparked a reaction from Tehran. Despite the robust ties and cooperation between the two nations, Iran's ambassador to Beijing was called in by the Foreign Ministry to convey the Islamic Republic's protest. However, the issue of the three islands and the UAE's assertions necessitate further action from Iran. The UAE has elevated this matter to a foreign policy priority, firmly embedding it within the country's bilateral and multilateral political negotiations agenda. Consequently, Tehran ought to step up its efforts in asserting its sovereignty over the three islands and convey its stance with heightened clarity during bilateral or multilateral exchanges. When China and Russia issued a statement regarding the three islands, which ran counter to Iran's stance, it starkly highlighted the imperative for Tehran to transcend mere assertions of its historical sovereignty rights when engaging in dialogue with influential powers and entities. Tehran must unambiguously elucidate its sovereignty prerogatives.

While the Iranian Foreign Ministry has summoned the Chinese ambassador, it appears that high-level discussions are warranted. Iranian officials should issue sterner warnings to the Chinese side, unequivocally impressing upon them that the issue of the three islands is intimately linked to Iran's territorial integrity. This matter ought to be accorded the same significance that China attaches to its border disputes with other nations.

Given its interests, the Islamic Republic of Iran has zeroed in on bolstering cooperation with eastern countries, notably China and Russia. This strategic focus has inadvertently fostered the perception that Tehran is bound to acquiesce to any terms set by these partners. This perception, however, is fundamentally flawed. Relations with China and Russia hold paramount importance for Iran, and Tehran remains committed to forging deeper cooperation with these nations across various domains. Nonetheless, this strategic alignment doesn't imply a lack of alternatives for the Islamic Republic.

In meetings between high-ranking officials, it is entirely appropriate to remind our Chinese counterparts of the Iranian people's acute sensitivity regarding their territorial integrity. Alongside official diplomatic channels, Iranian experts, media professionals, and analysts can also informally engage with these issues and openly emphasize the significance Iranians attach to the three islands. Iranian experts and media outlets can convey clear reminders or even warnings to the Chinese side, suggesting that Iran could mirror China's stance on the contentious issues of Taiwan and Hong Kong – a prospect that Beijing would likely find unpalatable.

Should China persist with its controversial stance on the three islands, deviating from mutually agreed frameworks, the Iranian government's retaliatory actions will inevitably become a widespread demand among the Iranian public. Such a scenario would undoubtedly undermine the long-term interests of both Iran and China and jeopardize their cooperative endeavors. Just as the Chinese demonstrate sensitivity concerning Taiwan and Hong Kong, they ought to recognize and respect the Iranian people's strong sensitivities about their territorial integrity and the three islands.

Leader: Palestine First Issue of Muslim World



As many as 80 pick up gauntlet in Iran's presidential race



• Zohreh Elahian



• Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili



• Eshaq Jahangiri



• Saeed Jalili



• Ali Larijani

Political Desk

With the deadline for a 5-day registration of presidential candidates having come to an end, it was revealed that 80 individuals have signed up for the election.

After the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in the northwest of Iran on May 19, as per the Constitution, elections must be held within 50 days to select a new chief executive. Now, the Guardian Council,

the body overseeing the electoral process, will vet the qualifications of hopefuls within a seven-day period to announce the approved candidates to the Interior Ministry. According to the election's timetable, presidential

candidates will start their campaigns from June 12 to June 26. The election will be held on June 28. Many of the registered candidates for the polls are former MPs who may not have a high chance of passing the

Guardian Council's vetting system. However, it appears that the main political factions in the country have directed their representatives to stand for the presidency. [Page 2 >](#)



• Solat Mortazavi



• Ali Nikzad



• Masoud Pezeshkian



• Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf



• Hamideh Zarabadi

OPEC+ deal sole way for global energy security: *Oil Minister*

Alliance extends deep production cuts into 2025



SHANA

Economic Desk

The Iranian oil minister emphasized that the production-cuts agreement by OPEC+ members and cooperation among major oil producers is crucial for ensuring global energy security in the short and long term. OPEC+ on Sunday decided to extend most of its significant oil output cuts until 2025 to sta-

bilize the market amidst weak demand growth, high interest rates, and increasing US production competition, Reuters reported. Brent crude oil prices have hovered around \$80 per barrel recently, which is below the required budget balance for many OPEC+ nations. Concerns about sluggish demand growth in China, the top

oil importer, and the surge in oil inventories in developed countries have also contributed to the price pressure. Following the 188th OPEC Conference, conducted via video-conference, Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji stated that what can be stated for sure is that OPEC+ carefully and regularly monitors developments in the global oil market and the factors affecting

it, noting that the necessary and appropriate decisions are made to create and maintain stability in the world market. That OPEC+ agreements and its decisions are important factors in eliminating fluctuations in the oil market, help improve the world's economic conditions, encourage new investment in the oil industry, and ensure energy security, the Iranian

minister said. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, together known as OPEC+, have made a series of deep output cuts since late 2022. OPEC+ members are currently cutting output by a total of 5.86 million barrels per day (bpd), or about 5.7% of global demand. Those include 3.66 million bpd of cuts, which were due to expire at the end of 2024, and voluntary cuts by eight members of 2.2 million bpd, expiring at the end of June 2024. On Sunday, OPEC+ agreed to extend the cuts of 3.66 million bpd by a year until the end of 2025 and prolong the cuts of 2.2 million bpd by three months until the end of September 2024. OPEC+ will gradually phase out the cuts of 2.2 million bpd over the course of a year from October 2024 to September 2025. "We are waiting for interest rates to come down and a better trajectory when it comes to economic growth ... not pockets of growth here and there," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman told reporters. OPEC expects demand for OPEC+ crude to average 43.65 million bpd in the second half of 2024, implying a stocks drawdown of 2.63 million bpd if the group maintains output at April's rate of 41.02 million bpd. The drawdown will be less when

OPEC+ starts phasing out the 2.2 million bpd voluntary cuts in October. The International Energy Agency, which represents top global consumers, estimates that demand for OPEC+ oil plus stocks will average much lower levels of 41.9 million bpd in 2024. "The deal should allay market fears of OPEC+ adding back barrels at a time when demand concerns are still rife," said Amrita Sen, co-founder of Energy Aspects think tank. Prince Abdulaziz said OPEC+ could pause the unwinding of cuts or reverse them if demand wasn't strong enough. What can be stated for sure is that OPEC+ carefully and regularly monitors developments in the global oil market and the factors affecting it, he added, noting that the necessary and appropriate decisions are made to create and maintain stability in the world market. That OPEC+ agreements and its decisions are important factors in eliminating fluctuations in the oil market, help improve the world's economic conditions, encourage new investment in the oil industry, and ensure energy security, the Iranian minister said. OPEC+ agreed on Sunday to extend most of its deep oil output cuts well into 2025 as the group seeks to shore up the market amid tepid demand growth, high interest rates and rising rival US production.

As many as 80 ...

As such, the conservative camp, to which the sitting government and the majority of the new Parliament belong, has several representatives running in the election. Saeed Jalili, who had also registered for the presidency in the previous elections but ultimately withdrew, is one of the main candidates of this political current. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Tehran's representative in Parliament, who was recently re-elected as the parliament speaker, is another main candidate of the Conservatives. Deputy Speaker of Parliament Ali Nikzad from the conservative current has also registered for the upcoming vote. Tehran's Mayor Alireza Zakani is among the Conservatives who has run for the election, too. He had nominated himself in the previous elections but eventually stepped aside in favor of Raisi. Several members of the sitting government have also been nominated for the election. While many were expecting Mohammad Reza Mokhber, the first vice president, to run for the presidency, he chose not to enter the race. However, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili, Minister of Roads

and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash, Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare Seyyed Solat Mortazavi, Head of Plan and Budget Organization Davoud Manzour, and Head of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Amir-Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi are from Raisi's administration, who now seek to replace him. Qazizadeh Hashemi had signed up in the previous elections, where he received fewer than one million votes. The political faction, known as the Moderates, also has several representatives among the candidates. Ali Larijani, who has a track record of several terms as the parliament speaker, is considered the most prominent nominee of this faction. Larijani was disqualified by the Guardian Council in the previous presidential election. Abdolnaser Hemmati, the former head of the central bank, and Mohammad Shariatmadari, the former minister of Labor in the administration of the Moderate Hassan Rouhani, are also from the Moderate political current. Hemmati was the most serious rival to Raisi in the previous elections, garnering 2.5 million votes. Mostafa Pourmohammadi, the secretary-general of a political-religious party (Associ-

ation of Combatant Clerics) has run for the election. He served as the Minister of Justice in the first term of Rouhani's Moderate government. Reformist political groups in the country also have multiple candidates representing them. One notable figure is Eshaq Jahangiri, who held the position of first vice president during Rouhani's Moderate administration. Jahangiri was previously weeded out by the Guardian Council in the past elections. He also has served as a minister in the Reformist government of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami. Masoud Pezeshkian, a representative in several parliamentary terms and a Minister of Health in Khatami's administration, along with Ali Soufi, Mostafa Kavakebian, and Abbas Akhoundi are among the other reformist figures who have been nominated for the elections. Raf'at Bayat, Hajar Chenarani, Hamideh Zarabadi, and Zohreh Elahian are four women candidates who have succeeded in standing for the presidential election. Each of them has a history of representing in various terms in Parliament. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, former president who was disqualified in the previous presidential election, has also joined the fray.

Iran promoting trade with neighbors, figures show



Statistics for Iran's trade exchanges show that the export of non-oil products to the neighboring countries has risen by 15% in the first two months of the current Iranian year (began on March 20, 2023). The statistics for Iran's trade exchanges with 15 neighboring countries indicate that Iran's foreign trade value from March 20 to May 20 has surpassed \$9.2 billion, showing a 15% increase compared to the last year's corresponding period, Tasnim reported. Iran has exported \$4.9 billion in products to 15 neighbors, registering a 25% growth compared to the

last year's corresponding period. Iran has also imported \$4.3 billion worth of products from the neighboring states in these two months. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman account for the biggest rise in Iran's exports. Meanwhile, the value of Iran's non-oil exports to Pakistan in the first four months of 2024 has reached \$360 million, showing an 18% growth compared to the last year's corresponding period. The Pakistani Ministry of Commerce's statistics show that Pakistan has imported \$360 million in products from Iran in the first four months of 2024, 18 percent higher

than in January-April 2023. Iran's southeastern neighbor's import from Iran in April 2024 has hit \$73.2 million, registering a 30 percent growth compared to the same month last year. The value of Iran's exports to Pakistan totaled \$944 million in 2023, indicating a 13% rise compared to a year earlier. Iran ranked as the eleventh source of imports for Pakistan in April 2024. China, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia respectively hold the top three positions in this regard. In that month, Pakistan imported \$1.443 billion worth of goods from China.

Threats to fauna at Mouteh Wildlife Refuge in Isfahan Province

Iranica Desk

Mouteh Wildlife Refuge in Isfahan Province is known to everyone as the habitat of the Iranian gazelle; a valuable habitat in the north of Isfahan Province with mountains, hills, and vast plains that is considered an important refuge for various wildlife species.

What has multiplied the importance of this region in the country and even in the Middle East is that Mouteh is one of the best habitats for Iranian gazelles, which harbors the largest number of this valuable species.

In addition, the mountains of this region are also important habitats for wild goats and sheep, which have been trembling for years with the terrifying sounds of explosions, power generators, and treasure hunters drilling machines.

What is important in wildlife sanctuaries is that these natural habitats with specific climatic conditions for wild animals should be safeguarded as much as possible in order to protect the ecosystem and animal species.

Mouteh Wildlife Refuge, with an area of 205,000 hectares, has various terrains that are monitored day and night by only nine rangers; a tough and exhausting task that is complicated enough with the hunting problems and incidents threatening the rangers' lives, but becomes even more complicated when treasure hunters also threaten the lives of the animals.

The first threat of treasure hunters in this area is disrupting the wildlife's tranquility, especially if these operations, usually accompanied by explosions, coincide with the mating and breeding season of the animals.

However, the most serious threat is when



gazelles, goats, and sheep are forced to travel kilometers further to find water, or even leave the Mouteh and enter the free habitats.

The danger in free habitats is lurking wildlife due to the unrestricted movement of ordinary people, from poachers to accidents with passing vehicles and other various damages, which is extremely challenging considering the limited number of rangers to monitor the habitats.

With only one ranger per 10 hectares of land monitored by the Department of Environment in Iran, it is clear that protecting animals would become even more challenging if wildlife were to flee the region. Rasoul Jalali, the head of Mouteh Wildlife Refuge, told IRNA that the rangers recently arrested three individuals who were illegally drilling in the wildlife refuge to unearth artifacts.

He also mentioned that this is not a new occurrence, and similar incidents have taken place in the area in previous years. According to him, a significant number of illegal drilling activities were conducted in the Takht Abbas Khan and Takht Sorkh regions, where the deep holes caught the attention of onlookers.

The explosions that occur in the search for treasures disrupt the peace and tranquility of the animals, leading them to flee the area," Jalali stated. He added that the wildlife leaving the region might venture into an area called Goud-e Khosroabad, where they are at risk of being hunted.

Jalali emphasized that there are no artifacts hidden in the area, and profit-seekers deceive treasure hunters into buying metal detectors.

Head of Meymeh's Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization Javad Chehrizi said that local reports about excavations are submitted to Police and if there is a report of excavation for the discovery of historical objects, the matter is reported to the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit.

Alireza Jafarizand, an archeologist, said some rocks and highlands are considered as the treasure signs, and cause some individuals to engage in digging at these locations. Highlighting the importance of raising public awareness about illegal digging, he noted that some archaeologists are tasked with identifying signs of hidden treasures in the area, and steps should be taken to prevent these actions.

Sanandaj Bazaar, a gateway to Kurdistan Province's rich cultural heritage

Iranica Desk

In many of Iran's historical and prominent cities, remnants of old bazaars stand as testament to their rich commercial past. Sanandaj, the capital city of Kurdistan Province, is no exception to this, boasting a historical roofed bazaar that serves as one of the key tourism attractions in the city.

Considered the primary traditional bazaar in all of Kurdistan Province, the origins of the Sanandaj Bazaar can be traced back approximately 400 years. Constructed during the Safavid era, when Sanandaj served as the capital under the Ardalan rulers, the bazaar drew influence from the architectural styles of its time. Soleiman Khan Ardalan, then the governor of Sanandaj, oversaw its development, firmly establishing the city as the capital of the expansive Kurdistan Province.

Over time, urban developments led to the division of the bazaar into two distinct sections. Presently, the southern part is known as Asef while the northern counterpart is referred to as Sanandaji. The bazaar's unique triangular layout, resembling the Naqsh-e Jahan square

in Isfahan, houses several courtyards, adding to its architectural allure.

Capable of accommodating bustling trade activities, the bazaar originally boasted four entrances, with three of them still in use today. Strategically located at the heart of the city along Enqelab (formerly known as Sirus) street, the bazaar continues to serve as a vital hub for commerce and a focal point for locals, despite the emergence of modern shopping centers in Sanandaj. Preserving traditional artisanal practices such as forging, goldsmithing, and other traditional trades, the bazaar offers a glimpse into the cultural heritage and craftsmanship of the Kurdish tribe. Recognized for its significance, the old Sanandaj bazaar was officially designated as a national heritage site in Iran.

Visitors to Kurdistan Province should not miss the opportunity to explore the vibrant Sanandaj bazaar, a place where shopping transcends mere retail transactions, offering a deeper connection to the region's history, culture, and the enduring traditions of the Kurdish people.



Unleashing Iran's tourism capacities: The Raisi effect

Massive income from tourism

Statistics reveal a compelling story: foreign tourists injected \$6.2 billion into Iran's economy in 2022, marking a substantial 73.5% jump from 2021, when international visitors spent \$2.5 billion. Combined over two years, that's a hefty sum of \$8.7 billion. On top of that, we need to factor in the spending of Iran's domestic tourists, who shelled out 225 thousand billion tomans (over \$7.5 billion) in 2021 and then upped their game in 2022, splashing

out over 316 thousand billion tomans (over \$8.1 billion), reflecting a 40.1% year-on-year increase. Ebrahim Raisi, the late president, consistently underscored the importance of harnessing all of Iran's diverse capacities to the fullest and set an ambitious target of attracting 15 million foreign tourists annually. Within the tourism sector, this goal stood as one of the most pivotal axes emphasized by the president and his government.

Share of incoming tourists to Middle East

A 2022 World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report shed light on Iran's burgeoning appeal to foreign tourists. In 2022, international visitor arrivals surged, with 4.1 million trips recorded — a remarkable 315% uptick compared to the previous year, effectively quadrupling the number. However, Iran's share of the global tourism pie remains modest, capturing only 0.4% of all foreign tourist trips in 2022.

The 315% surge in foreign tourist arrivals in 2022 marked a dramatic rebound from the previous years' declines: an 83% drop in 2020 due to the widespread impact of the coronavirus pandemic, followed by a 30% dip in 2021. Meanwhile, the Middle East as a whole welcomed 66 million foreign tourists in 2022, reflecting a robust 163% growth year-on-year. Iran's share of this regional tourism pie stood at an estimated 6%.

Ecotourism permits, national works

In September 2023, Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts issued a comprehensive statistical and comparative report at an exhibition, detailing its accomplishments over the previous two years. Among its notable achievements, the ministry highlighted the expansion of the country's hospitality infrastructure with the addition of 313 hotels (excluding those in free zones) and the issuance of permits for 849 ecotourism accommodations. Furthermore, an im-

pressive array of cultural treasures has been recognized: 427 movable cultural properties, 595 immovable cultural properties, 302 tangible works, and 476 intangible works — amounting to a total of 1,800 entries — have been inscribed on the list of national treasures. In the Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended March 20, 2022), Iran's national programme to safeguard the traditional art of calligraphy gained international recognition with its inscription on UNE-



The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (front-L) visits the Ashuradeh Island and Khazini Canal in the Caspian Sea on December 21, 2023, while reviewing plans to dredge and revive the Gorgan Bay on a boat.
● IRNA

SCO's list of Good Safeguarding Practices. Then, in a remarkable leap forward, four joint international cases — celebrating Yalda (Shab-e Chelleh), the art of crafting and playing the oud instrument, sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving, and Turkmen-style needlework art — were approved at the UNESCO meeting in Rabat, Morocco, in 2022. This propelled Iran to sixth place globally on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

Additionally, in line with the 10-year plan, two global files showcasing Iran's tangible cultural heritage — the cultural landscape of Masouleh and Hegmataneh, and the historical center of Hamedan — have been meticulously compiled and submitted. Field evaluations for one of the world's most extensive serial registration files, titled "54 Iranian Caravanserais," have been completed. Seven cases of intangible cultural heritage, including Iftar and its associ-

ated social and cultural beliefs, the art of gilding, the tradition of pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), and the Sadeh Celebration, the Mehregan festival, the art of crafting and playing the Robab, and the traditional production of Rosewater along with its related social and cultural beliefs, have been forwarded to UNESCO for the years 2023 and 2024. These submissions are currently under review as part of UNESCO's cultural inscription process.

Foreign investment in tourism

On April 27, 2024, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, Iran's deputy tourism minister, highlighted the surge in foreign investment in the tourism sector. He noted that since president Raisi took office, foreign investment in tourism had multiplied eighteenfold, reaching a substantial \$256 million by the close of the calendar year 1402 (ended

March 19, 2024). This was accompanied by the presentation of 600 investment packages by over 2,000 businessmen from 80 countries at the Iran Expo 2024 event. He deemed the exhibition's timing crucial in light of previous events, underscoring its significance as the standout feature of the next expo. He elaborated, "The very

fact that this exhibition is taking place sends a clear message about the prevailing security in our country. This visual testament can be leveraged by businessmen and merchants to convey this reality to the world, effectively dispelling any doubts that may have arisen due to recent developments."

Revival of Gorgan Bay after 25 years

Gorgan Bay, also known as the Gulf of Gorgan, and its environs earned international recognition in 1975 as a wetland of significance by the Ramsar Convention. In 1976, UNESCO further acknowledged its ecological importance by classifying it as a natural biosphere reserve. However, between 2017 and 2021, a confluence of factors, including a drop in the Caspian Sea water level, sediment buildup, rampant

marine plant growth, canal closures, decreased rainfall, and heightened evaporation rates, resulted in the desiccation of 35% of this once-lush bay. Following the previous government's swift and effective interventions to resuscitate Gorgan Bay, the esteemed American scientific publication Science took note. A paper reported that just four weeks after the Ashuradeh Canal opening in 2023, a

massive 1.5 billion cubic meters of water surged from the Caspian Sea into Gorgan Bay, elevating the water level by a full 40 cm. This timely influx of water resuscitated some 400 meters of coastal areas along the Caspian Sea that had previously dried up, restoring 3,000 hectares of the bay. Additionally, water salinity levels dropped from 48 units per thousand to 27 units per thousand.



Heavy machinery work to open the Ashuradeh Canal in 2023, allowing water to flow from the Caspian Sea into the drying Gorgan Bay.
● BORNA

Restoration of historical monuments

In October 2023, Shahab Talai, CEO of Iran's Fund for the Development and Restoration of Historical Textures, unveiled an enticing incentive. He announced that any individual, company, or institution incurring expenses related to the repair, restoration, or refurbishment of tourist sites could have those costs recognized as tax equivalents. This recognition would be granted with the endorsement of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the development

and restoration fund, facilitating a beneficial arrangement for those contributing to the preservation of tourist attractions.

Highlighting the fund's resources and capabilities, he emphasized the ability to offer diverse and tailored support to owners and custodians of historical buildings. He elaborated, "The government extends a range of benefits to those active in this field, one of which comes in the form of tax exemptions."

Insurance for tourist guides

At the 15th gathering of Iranian tourist guides, Mohsen Hajisaeid, vice president of the Iran Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, shed light on several beneficial measures undertaken by the government of president Raisi. He noted that providing insurance to thousands of tourist guides, deploying guides during Nowruz celebrations, facilitating the participation of tourist guides in international events, and

placing tourism guidance signs in tourist hotspots were among the key initiatives of Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. He also commended the ministry's efforts in resuscitating tourism post-pandemic, waiving visas for 33 countries, and pushing for the implementation of two-day weekend holidays.

Mehdi Ghasemian, secretary of the Iran Tourist Guide Association, announced the resumption of tour

guide insurance in July 2023. He went on to say that "by linking the tourist guide card to the banking system and setting up direct deposits into this account, it has become possible to put in place a requirement for foreign tourists to purchase tickets through tourist guide cards at major sites like Persepolis, thus making use of the capacity of local guides."

Construction of coastal towns

Mehrdad Bazrpash, Iran's minister of Roads and Urban Development, also recently said, on the sidelines of the signing of the contract to equip and operate the container terminals of Chabahar Port with the Republic of In-

dia: "Turning Iran into a tourism hub is one of the government's goals. By designating several coastal towns — seven of which have been prioritized while work on three towns is already underway — we are moving in that di-

rection." Saeid Ghafouri, the head of the New Towns Development Company, recently announced preparations are underway for the construction of seven towns. He stated, "The new towns of

Tis; Makran Central; a new town in Jask city; the towns of Persian Gulf, Beris, Kooshk, and Shahrak-e Aftab form a collection of settlements that, while offering diverse economic and social roles and functions, aim to introduce

new patterns of urban planning and architecture. These patterns are designed to be appropriate to local and climatic conditions while also taking into account regional and international capabilities."

Big steps of tourism industry under late president

PERSPECTIVE

The previous government wrapped up its nearly three-year-long term with the tragic loss of its president on May 20, but the reverberations of his actions will carry over into multiple areas. President Ebrahim Raisi's government knocked it out of the park in the tourism sector, which this note will focus on.

Big steps of tourism industry

Despite the relentless smear campaign waged by certain foreign media outlets aligned with imperialist powers, and amidst the onslaught of sanctions imposed by the United States and several European countries — all fueling Iranophobia — Raisi's government steadfastly prioritized tourism and attracting foreign visitors. Determined to reveal the true essence of Iran to the world, the late president, along with his cabinet members, worked tirelessly. As a result, the tourism industry not only kept its upward momentum but accelerated, as evidenced by this report.

In line with the Leader's policies on tourism, the government pulled out all the stops. Consequently, figures revealed that Iran's tourism industry raked in \$7.8 billion over the last two years.

The tourism numbers for last year were also crunched and showed a 58% jump in visitors, with 6,382,755 tourists touching down, compared to the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended March 20, 2023), when a mere 4,230,000 people visited.

According to figures from Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the Deputy Tourism Minister, foreign investment in the tourism sector has skyrocketed since the previous government took office,

leaping a massive 18 times and hitting \$256 million by the end of the calendar year 1402 (ended March 19, 2024).

The late president's provincial trips were a real boon for local tourism industries. A total of 1,610 tourism projects kicked off across the country since his government took office.

As stated by the deputy minister, a staggering 2,400 tourism projects valued at 400,000 billion Rials (over \$68 million) are currently underway. Of these, 81 projects, accounting for 97,000 billion Rials (over \$167 million) in investment, are over 80% complete.

The government gave the green light to cancel tourist visa requirements for citizens of 33 countries, a strategic move that saw tourist numbers soar to 6,382,000 by the end of last year.

Ezzatollah Zarghami, the minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, maintained that the Islamic Republic has thrown open its doors to the world, rolling out the red carpet for international visitors and offering them

the chance to discover the country's unique attractions firsthand. He further emphasizes the need to counter the barrage of negative advertising, rumors, and Iranophobia propagated by the arrogant powers.

According to Zarghami, the cabinet firmly believed that tourism is the birthright of everyone on the globe, and Iran stands out as one of the most breathtaking countries owing to its unique history, natural wonders, ecotourism, hospitable locals, and health tourism.

Moreover, the Iranian tourism industry experienced a boom in job creation under president Raisi, witnessing a 10.3% spike in employment in 2023 compared to the previous two years. Last year's surge propelled the industry's contribution to the country's total employment to a substantial 6.6%.

What we've covered here only scratches the surface of the previous government's efforts in the realm of tourism. Despite facing significant challenges, including the global coronavirus pandemic, which brought worldwide tourism to a grinding halt, and amid strong smear campaigns and Iranophobia, Raisi's government strived to showcase Iran and its myriad attractions to the world.

The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi visits the historical neighborhood of Yazd, Iran, on December 17, 2021, to oversee efforts at restoring historical monuments.
● president.ir



Job openings for female graduates rising in Iran

ANALYSIS

The surge in female employment over the last three years has led to a notable increase in the involvement of university-educated women in the job market of the country. Out of 100 employed women, more than 50 possess university degrees. It is important to highlight that the number of female graduates in the year to December 22, 2023, which was the start of the winter of the previous Iranian calendar year of 1402, experienced a 7.5 percent growth. Women's employment in Iran has experienced acceleration during the past three years, particularly following the containment of COVID-19. Remarkably, the most significant aspect of this development is the increase in women's employability. During this period, women's employment in entrepreneurship and self-employment sectors has witnessed growth, bolstered by government support.

The share of university-educated women's employment reached 50.9% of the total workforce in the winter of 1402. In other words, one out of every two working women in the labor market had higher education qualifications. Interestingly, the participation rate of female graduates also increased as their hope of securing employment aligned with their education levels motivated them to actively engage in the country's economy, thereby raising their job-seeking aspirations. This trend is reflected in the high share of the unemployment rate among female graduates compared to the total number of unemployed women. In the winter of 1402, the unemployment rate share of female graduates decreased by 0.8%, falling from 70.3% to 69.5%, indicating a rise in the employment share of female graduates.

Reasons for increased participation

Under the current administration, policies focused on developing information technology



The decrease in women's unemployment rate and the increase in their participation and employment rates in the winter of 1402 indicate that the women's labor market has prospered. As previously mentioned, the rise in women's engagement in domestic employment and participation in cooperatives and entrepreneurship reflects successful endeavors in this regard. Women's economic participation climbed to 13.8%, marking a 0.5% increase compared to the winter of 1401, while their employment rose to 11.6%, a 0.4% boost. During this period, total female unemployment also experienced a decline.

Growing employment of educated women

However, the expansion of service employment — a vital support system for the country's industrial and productive sectors, and an area that primarily necessitates education and skills — highlights that educated women have managed to bolster their employability in this sector, thanks to the provision of essential platforms and opportunities.

In the winter of 1402, the women's sector employed over 2,407,000 women, while the industrial sector engaged more than 950,000 women.

Although the women's share in the industrial sector experienced a slight decline in the winter of 1402, the service sector — the backbone of the country's economy — successfully attracted this demographic.

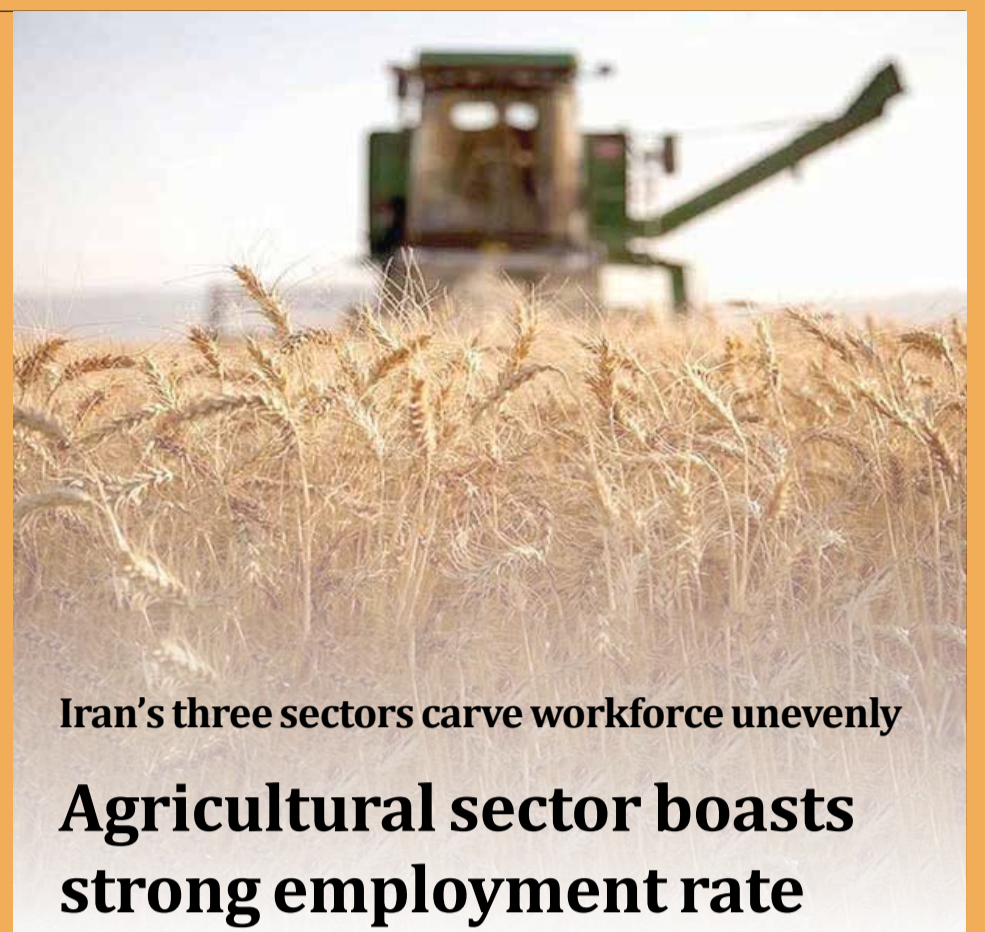
Educated women played a significant role in this sector. University-educated women held a larger portion of the labor market during the winter of 1402 compared to the same period in 2022. Analysis of statistical data from the winter of 1402 indicates that out of every 100 employed women, more than 50 had a university education — an upward trend from the winter of 1401.

infrastructure have generated multiple job opportunities for university-educated individuals.

The emergence of modern services, such as consulting and marketing, has attracted a skilled workforce in various sectors. Moreover, the growth of modern private sector industries requiring educated, skilled professionals familiar with cutting-edge technologies has contributed to reducing university graduate unemployment rates. On the one hand, many barriers to production growth have been removed by the government because without addressing these obstacles, the possibility of developing sustainable employment does not exist.

The rapid increase in educated women's share of the labor market has transformed job structures, facilitating women's entry into the workforce.

Critics often criticize the current government for the significant disparity in the employment market between women and men. It should be noted in response that there is a gradual need for social attitudes to change and for public opinion to accept that women should have access to various professions. This was highlighted by Mahmoud Karimi Biranvand, the Deputy for Entrepreneurship and Employment Development at the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, in an interview with "Iran Cultural and Press Institute." The societal perspective has not evolved much compared to previous decades, resulting in limited acceptance of women's participation in many job roles. Over the past two and a half years, the proportion of women, particularly graduates, in employment has increased, indicating that the government has facilitated women's employment and established the necessary infrastructure for their inclusion. These efforts represent the government's dedication to advancing opportunities for women in the workforce.



Iran's three sectors carve workforce unevenly

Agricultural sector boasts strong employment rate

ANALYSIS

An analysis of labor market statistical data from the closing months of the last Iranian year (ended on March 19, 2023) reveals that the agricultural sector's contribution in 21 provinces exceeded the national average of 12.9 percent. Attention to rural employment, the growth of ancillary and transformational industries in the agricultural sector over the past three years, has been one of the key factors contributing to the rise in the agricultural sector's share in the provinces, despite the persistent drought. Upon reviewing the report from the Statistical Centre of Iran, it is clear that the unemployment, employment, and economic participation rates in the provinces have shown improvement, resulting in favorable conditions across different economic sectors.

Comparing the final quarter of the last Iranian year to the same period two years ago, the participation rate was 40.8%, with an employment rate of 37.3%. This shows a decrease in unemployment and growth in both participation and employment rates. Studies indicate that the unemployment rate saw a balanced 8.6% decrease at the end of the last Iranian year compared to the same period two years ago. The unemployment rate decreased in 20 provinces, with 16 provinces witnessing a more significant drop than the national average. Moreover, the increase in participation rates across 19 provinces indicates that the labor market was dynamic, spurred by the growth in the active population over the past year.

Employment figures across three sectors

According to data from the Statistical Centre, the country's economy is classified into three sectors: Services, industry, and agriculture. Each sector's growth has the potential to drive the overall economy and contribute to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the previous year's winter, the services sector maintained its position as the highest employment generator in the country, accounting for 53.6% of total employment. The industry sector ranked second, with 33.5% of the workforce employed in this sector last winter. Interestingly, this sector's share saw a 0.3% increase compared to March 19, 2022 (two years ago), while the services sector saw a slight 0.1% decrease.

During the last winter, more than 311,000 job seekers found employment in the industrial sector, and an additional 390,000 individuals secured jobs within the services sector. In contrast, the agriculture sector's share of overall employment reached 12.9% during this period, representing a 0.1% decline when compared to

the winter of 2022. Despite this marginal decrease, the agricultural sector still saw an increase in workers, with approximately 52,000 individuals joining its ranks. Out of the total 24,193,000 workers in the winter of last year, 3,110,000 workers were engaged in the agriculture sector. This highlights the significance of all three sectors in contributing to the country's workforce and overall economic growth.

Some provinces pick up the slack

During the winter of 2023, the majority of the country's provinces saw a higher concentration of employment within the agricultural sector than the national average. An analysis of labor market data from the Statistical Center's report reveals that 21 provinces boasted an employment share in agriculture surpassing the 12.9% national average.

With the exception of five provinces, the remaining 26 provinces exhibited an agricultural sector employment share of over 10%. Notably, Yazd had a 7.6% share, Isfahan 6.9%, Qom 2.8%, Alborz 1.9%, and Tehran 1.5%, representing the lowest agricultural sector employment shares among all provinces.

Kerman leads in employment

Provinces with the highest job creation within the agricultural sector include Kerman, North Khorasan, Ardebil, Lorestan, and West Azarbaijan.

In these five provinces, the agricultural sector's employment share exceeded 22%. Notably, Kerman Province boasted the highest share at 40.4%, significantly outperforming the other economic sectors in job creation. Furthermore, Kerman's agricultural sector average employment was 27.5% higher than the national average.

North Khorasan secured the second spot with a 29.1% share, followed by Ardebil at 26.4%, Lorestan at 23.2%, and West Azarbaijan at 22.8%. Provinces such as Kermanshah and Kurdistan also saw notable shares, reaching 19%.

In Hamedan, Zanjan, Hormuzgan, and Golestan, the agricultural sector's average employment reached 18%, marking a 6% higher contribution than the national average.

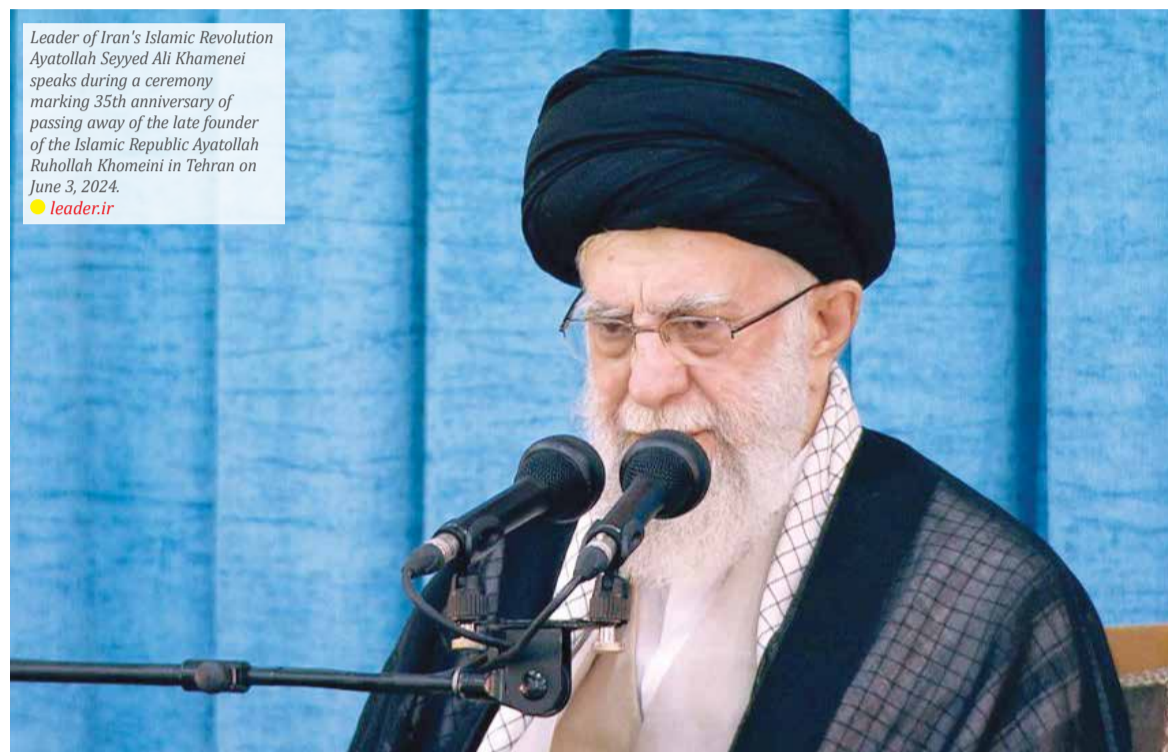
Next in line were Ilam, South Khorasan, and Gilan, boasting a 16% share and 4% increase above the national average. East Azarbaijan, Khuzestan, and Mazandaran provinces fell within the 14% range, while Fars and Qazvin provinces reached the 13% mark. South Khorasan and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces held steady at 12%. The current administration's proactive labor market policies have fostered an environment conducive to labor market equilibrium. This strategic approach, encompassing mechanisms such as job search platforms, vocational training, and direct or self-employment opportunities, has effectively influenced labor supply and demand.

Leader: Palestine first issue of Muslim world

Ayatollah Khamenei urges high turnout in presidential election

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Palestine is the first and foremost issue of the Muslim world. The Leader made the remarks in an address to a crowd of people gathering at the mausoleum of the founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in southern Tehran on Monday to mark the 35th anniversary of his passing, Press TV reported. Ayatollah Khamenei said Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against Israel was carried out at the right time and put the Israeli regime on a path that will lead to its destruction and elimination. During Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, the Palestinians pushed the enemy to a corner where it had no way to escape, he noted. The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas launched Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023, penetrating deep into the territories occupied by the Israeli regime, by carrying out large-scale air, land, and sea strikes. The group said the operation was a reaction to the recurring desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occu-

pled Al-Quds as well as intensified Israeli atrocities against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. Ayatollah Khamenei further stated that Imam Khomeini emphasized that the people of Palestine themselves would have to restore their own rights and force the Israeli regime to retreat. He noted that everything that the late leader predicted regarding the issue of Palestine has come true. He said Imam Khomeini believed that the people of Palestine should not trust the so-called peace talks, play an active role and restore their rights to achieve a final victory in the face of the Israeli enemy. Ayatollah Khamenei also urged all nations, particularly Muslims, to support the Palestinian people to help them defeat the Zionist regime. "These big developments are being realized now," he emphasized. "Although the US and many Western countries continue to support this regime, they also know that there is no way out for the occupying regime."



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a ceremony marking 35th anniversary of passing away of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Tehran on June 3, 2024. [leader.ir](https://www.leader.ir)

The Leader warned that the US, elements of the global Zionism and some regional states have hatched a comprehensive plan to change relations and equations in the region. Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to the death of former Iranian president

Ebrahim Raisi, foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and six others in a helicopter crash last month and said they are "martyrs of service" as they lost their lives while serving the people. He described "dear" president Raisi as a hard-working and honest man who

made his utmost efforts to serve the Iranian nation. Despite the president's death, Iranian authorities managed to maintain the country's full tranquility and security, the Leader added. Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to the June 28 presidential election in

Iran, organized after President Raisi's death, and said an "epic of election" will complete the huge funeral held for the martyrs. The Leader called for high turnout in the upcoming "important" presidential election, saying that it would be great achievement for the nation.

Tehran vows response if IAEA approves anti-Iran resolution



International Desk

Iran threatened to respond Tuesday if the UN nuclear watchdog approves a new censure resolution proposed by three European governments. "In case of issuing a resolution against Iran in the board of governors and political pressure from the parties, Iran will respond according to the announcement it made to them," Iran's atomic energy chief Mohammad Eslami said. Britain, France and Germany submitted a draft resolution to the International Atomic Energy Agency's board on Monday, accusing Iran of lack of cooperation with the watchdog. He said Tehran's civilian nuclear activities are within the framework of the strategic action law adopted by the Iranian Parliament in late 2020 to counter sanctions and promote the country's nuclear program. "Under the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, we are obliged not to honor our commitments in case the other party fails to do so. If they fulfill their obligations, the Islamic Republic will meet the JCPOA (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) obligations which require certain curbs," Mohammad Eslami said. Eslami said based on the 2015 nuclear deal with major powers "if the other parties do not return to their commitments, Iran has the right to reciprocally reduce its obligations, and now the country is in the phase of reducing them."

Iran dismisses US-proposed Gaza cease-fire deal



International Desk

Iran's acting foreign minister dismissed a Gaza cease-fire deal proposed by US President Joe Biden and warned Israel against launching an all-out war on Lebanon during a visit to Beirut Monday, his first official diplomatic visit since his predecessor died last month. Ali Baqeri Kani replaced Hossein Amir-Abdollahi-

an who died in a helicopter crash on May 19 in a mountainous area near Iran's border with Azerbaijan, along with Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and a delegation of other officials. "If the Americans are honest, then instead of proposing plans under the name of cease-fire, they must take one step, which is end all aid to the Israeli entity," Baqeri Kani said in a news

conference at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut. "Only once the aid is cut from the Israeli entity, the entity won't have the tools and ability to commit crimes against the Palestinians and the war will end." Baqeri Kani met with Lebanese counterpart Abdallah Bouhabib as well as Lebanese Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri and caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati. Bouhabib said Lebanon wants to avoid a wider war and is looking for "sustainable solutions that restore calm and stability to southern Lebanon." The Iranian foreign minister said Israel would find itself in a quagmire

should it launch an all-out war in Lebanon against Hezbollah, a country he described as the "cradle of resistance." "The entity which is trapped in the swamp in Gaza, if it had the basic rationality, shouldn't put itself in a similar situation with the strong Lebanese resistance," Baqeri Kani said. He Iranian diplomat also met the secretary general of Lebanon's Hezbollah re-

sistance movement. During the meeting, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah expressed his gratitude to Iran for its "steadfast" support for peoples and resistance movements in the region. On Tuesday, Baqeri Kani visited neighboring Syria where he held talks with President Bashar al-Assad and Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad. Baqeri Kani and Bashar

al-Assad discussed a wide range of issues including the crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip as well as the need to end the crimes of Israel against the Palestinian people. Earlier in the day, the top Iranian diplomat said Israel is the root cause of instability in the region. He made the remarks at a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mekdad.

UN criticizes Israel over deaths of 500 Palestinians in West Bank

The UN rights chief demanded Tuesday an end to surging violence in the occupied West Bank, saying it was "unfathomable" that more than 500 Palestinians had been killed there since October 7. Volker Turk said at least 505 Palestinians had been killed in the West Bank by the Israeli military and by West Bank settlers since the war in nearby Gaza erupted nearly eight months ago. Palestinian officials have giv-

en a toll of at least 523. Two dozen Israelis, including eight soldiers, have also been killed in West Bank clashes or alleged attacks by Palestinians from the West Bank during the same period, he said. "As if the tragic events in Israel and then Gaza over the past eight months were not enough, the people of the occupied West Bank are also being subjected to day-after-day of unprecedented bloodshed," he said in a statement.

"It is unfathomable that so many lives have been taken in such a wanton fashion." Turk insisted "the killing, destruction and widespread human rights violations are unacceptable, and must cease immediately." "Israel must not only adopt but enforce rules of engagement that are fully in line with applicable human rights norms and standards," he said, demanding accountability for all alleged unlawful killings.

Second Announcement

Appendix Number 1

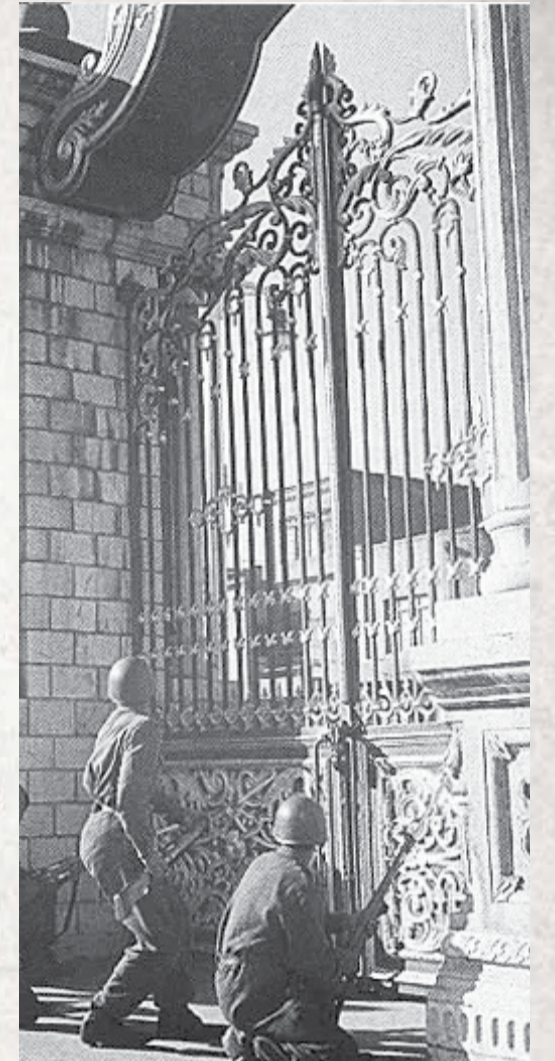
Announcement of the public invitation proposal
number 1102115 for
investors Pre-qualification assessment.

National Iranian Copper Industry Co. (NICICO) intends to "purchase the electrical energy required by the Sarcheshmeh copper complex in the amount of approximately 600 GWH/year in Kerman province through the construction of a large-scale solar power plant with a capacity of 320 MW by investor in the form of a 21-year long-term guaranteed purchase contract (three periods of 7 years) based on the B.O.O. method" through public invitation as pre-qualification of investors.

In order to get more information, it is necessary to refer to the official website of this company as described below:

<https://en.nicico.com/>

June 5 Uprising, significant historic event with few photos



Arts & Culture Desk

The June 5 Uprising in 1963 is a significant event in Iran's contemporary history, yet it remains relatively unknown in the world of photography. Despite the importance of this day, only a few photographers were present to capture the events.

What makes this uprising memorable are the limited photographs taken by photographers and documentarians of that era, using minimal equipment. These images now serve as historical documents, preserving details that might have otherwise been lost to history. During that period, photography lacked the advanced

tools available today, with cameras being a luxury few could afford. Additionally, the process of printing and publishing photos was lengthy compared to modern standards, leading to a scarcity of documented images from that day. On the 48th anniversary of the June 5 Uprising, the Islamic Revolution Docu-

ment Center released rare photographs from the historic event, shedding light on a lesser-known aspect of Iran's past. Unfortunately, many of these images lack proper attribution to the photographers who captured them. One such photographer is Seyyed Javad Tahami, whose personal interest led him to

the streets on that fateful day. His works, compiled in the book 'A Century Pictures of the Olden Tehran,' include images from the June 5 Uprising. While some photographs are attributed to him, many remain anonymous, highlighting the challenges of preserving historical moments through photography.

Iran marks 35th anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's passing with multilingual publications

Marking the 35th anniversary of the passing of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's revolutionary leader, Tehran-based Alhoda International Cultural, Artistic, and Publishing Institute has released a series of multilingual publications. Nine special editions in English, Arabic, Azeri, Russian, Spanish, Thai, and Urdu, under the supervision of Mehdi Fayyazi, offer insights into the life and legacy of Imam Khomeini. Titles include "Al-Wahda," "Eco of Islam," "Mahjubah," "A Word from Iran," "Al-Taherah," and "Iran-e-Novin," catering to international audiences with a long-standing interest in Iranian affairs. These publications are also available on the Damavand platform, a multimedia content hub introducing Iran to an international audience,

IRNA wrote. Head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), Mohammad Mehdi Imanipour, emphasizes the importance of cultural exports and elevating book and publication productions as a key strategy for Alhoda institute. "Public diplomacy is incomplete without cultural exports," Imanipour asserted, noting how American cultural exports have influenced lifestyles worldwide. "Cultural exports can effectively change lifestyles, values, and norms globally." Imanipour further highlighted the potential of cultural exports in opening new avenues for diplomatic engagement, citing it as the most cost-effective approach for advancing international activities, as evidenced by the experiences of various nations.



Two Iranian films awarded at Bulgarin event

Arts & Culture Desk

Two Iranian films 'Echo' and 'Kal Fatemeh' received honorable mentions at the Golden Femi Film Festival in Bulgaria. The animated film 'Echo' by Zahra Khorshidi Paji and the documentary 'Kal Fatemeh' by Mehdi Zamanpoor Kiasari were awarded by the jury panel at the 3rd Golden Femi Film Festival, ISNA reported. 'Echo,' a 6-minute short animation with an environmental theme, has been shown at over 20 international festivals and was previously nominated for Best Animation at the 22nd Vaasa Wildlife International nature Film Festival in Finland. 'Kal Fatemeh,' a 56-minute documentary, tells the story of a woman named Karbalaeei Fatemeh who lives with her two children in a farm on the outskirts of Zarom village in Neka. The film has also been screened and well-received at several prestigious international festivals, including the Montreal International Documentary Festival, and the Iranian Film Festival in Paris.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
 Cartoonist



Thyroid disorders more common in women: Iranian health official

Social Desk

A Health Ministry official has drawn attention to the significantly higher prevalence of thyroid disorders in women compared to men. Head of Endocrinology and Metabolic Department at Ministry of Health and Education of Iran Shahin Yarahmadi stated that these disorders are more common and carry more severe complications in pregnant women, newborns, children, and the elderly, IRNA wrote. Yarahmadi highlighted that thyroid disorders af-

fect people of all ages, and approximately 1.6 billion individuals worldwide are affected or at risk of developing thyroid diseases. The official explained that thyroid disorders can manifest as hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism, inflammation, nodules, or cancer. She listed several risk factors for thyroid disorders, including family history, iodine intake, air and water pollution, excessive use of iodine-containing medications, age over 60, radiation therapy to the head and neck, autoimmune diseases

such as type 1 diabetes and celiac disease, smoking, an unhealthy diet, physical trauma to the thyroid, certain mental health conditions, genetic factors, and pregnancy. Yarahmadi emphasized the crucial role of the thyroid gland in the body, as it regulates the function of other endocrine glands and metabolism. Looking ahead, the Health Ministry is focused on reducing the burden of thyroid disorders in Iran through prevention, early diagnosis, effective treat-

ment, and complication management. Ongoing and future initiatives include sustaining the successful newborn screening program, developing evidence-based guidelines for thyroid disease management, educating healthcare providers, raising public awareness about thyroid health, fostering inter-sectoral collaboration to address modifiable risk factors, and engaging insurance organizations for optimal thyroid disorder management.