

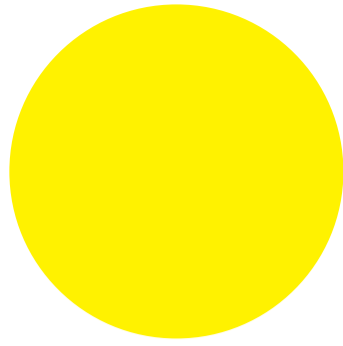
Women, families first

A look at achievements of Raisi gov't

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SPECIAL ISSUE



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US role in Gaza war: Not a mediator, but a side

By Mehdi Shakibaei
Mideast affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The Israeli regime has released four captive Israelis after committing yet another brutal act in the Gaza Strip's Nusirat camp, resulting in the tragic deaths of 200 innocent people. However, the question remains: Can the release of four captives, following an arduous eight months of warfare, genuinely be celebrated as a victory for Israel?

Israel, notorious for its self-proclaimed invincibility and well-equipped military forces, has waged a relentless war across land, air, sea, and through propaganda for eight months in a tiny 360 square kilometer territory. Now, Israel has freed four of its people, at an extraordinary cost: the lives of 200 Palestinians. Analysts and international media argue that the immense sacrifices and innumerable crimes committed by Israel during this prolonged war cannot be reasonably equated with success, as simply measured by the release of four captives. Importantly, this so-called success was facilitated by the involvement of American intelligence. While this might be viewed as an achievement for the Israeli regime, it has simultaneously incited global criticism and condemnation for its inhumane crime.

It is critical to scrutinize the United States' contradictory positions regarding the Gaza war. Despite President Biden's initial refusal to engage with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for three years, the US president swiftly pivoted upon the outbreak of the war, rapidly making his way to the occupied territories and publicly meeting with Netanyahu.

Over the past eight months, American support for Israel has been manifest in various forms, with the recent US intelligence-backed release of four Israeli captives being a striking example. This support, coupled with the egregious crime committed in Nusirat, appears to embolden Israel in its relentless pursuit of supposed success—a success that might precipitate a ground assault on Rafah.

Consequently, it is imperative not to overlook the United States' role in the Gaza war developments. The US has asserted itself as a mediator while simultaneously backing Israel, claiming dedication to establishing a cease-fire and fostering lasting peace. Yet, these diplomatic overtures have ultimately served Israel's interests, buying time to fortify the Israeli army while weakening Hamas and other Palestinian resistance groups. In this context, the US must be recognized as a participant in the war rather than an impartial mediator, as its strategic goals align with Israel's: the eradication or containment of Hamas and Palestinian groups.

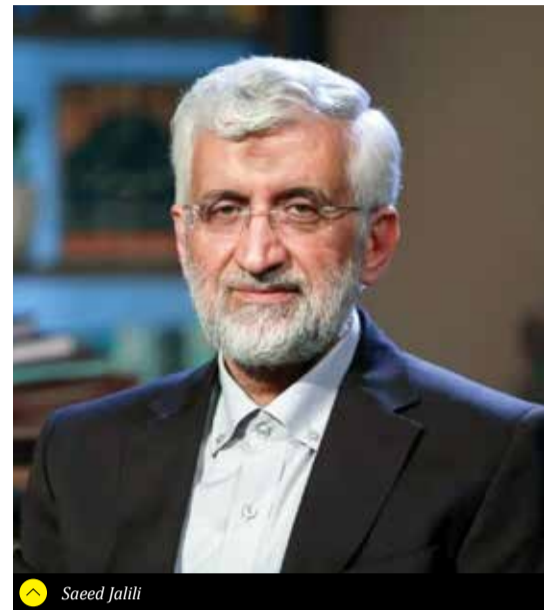
On the other hand, Palestinian resistance groups have demonstrated remarkable resilience, as evidenced by the fact that despite Israel's continuous perpetration of crimes, only four prisoners have been released—leaving 160 others still under Hamas' custody. While these crimes might impede cease-fire negotiations, the Palestinian people have, after eight grueling months of war, acknowledged that their sole viable recourse is resistance, as reliance on the West and Arab nations has proven futile.



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf



Massoud Pezeshkian



Saeed Jalili

Who Will Be Next President?

Six candidates to vie for high office

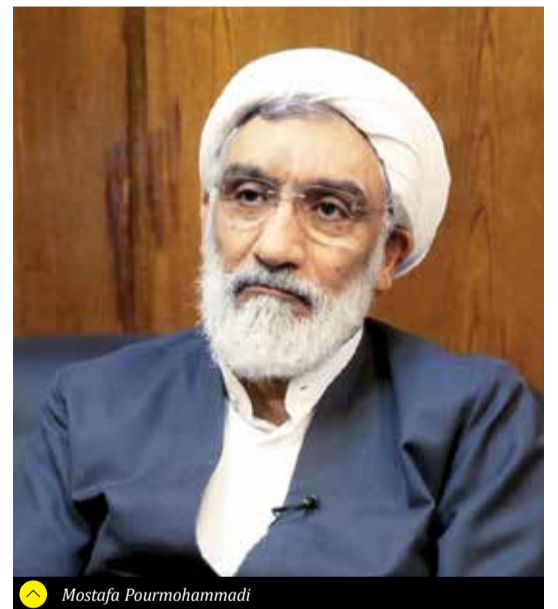
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran to export renewable electricity to Pakistan

Pakistan is to be the first destination for exports of Iranian renewable electricity, announced Alireza Parandeh-Motlaq, the deputy head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization of Iran (SATBA) for technical and engineering affairs. Putting the total capacity of the country for export of renewable electricity at 300 megawatts, the SATBA official also noted that Turkey and Iraq have the infrastructure to import renewable electricity from Iranian plants, ILNA reported. To receive electricity from Iran, Afghanistan needs to build two stations as well as 50 km of transmission line, Parandeh-Motlaq said. The largest wind power plant, with the capacity of generating 50-MW, was inaugurated in the southern province of Sistan and Baluchistan by Iran's Minister of Energy Ali Akbar Mehrabian on Friday. "Mil Nader" power plant is equipped with twenty 2.5-MW turbines. More than 250 million liters of water and 30 million liters of diesel will be saved annually with the generation of every 100 megawatts of the renewable energy. According to the SATBA, it is planned that up to 700 MW of the electricity will be generated in Mil Nader region in the coming years.

China's imports of Iranian oil soared in May



Export of Iranian crude oil to China this May surged to the highest level in seven months after a recovery in refining margins. According to Bloomberg, China imported 1.54 million bpd of Iranian oil in May 2024, the most since October 2023, according to data from Kpler. Over half went to buyers in the port city of Qingdao in eastern China's Shandong province, where many independent refiners are clustered. China's independent refiners — known as teapots — have struggled with weak margins for making fuels this year, which has led to companies cutting operational rates. The processors account for a quarter of the vast Asian country's total refining capacity and are typically big producers of diesel. The profit from converting crude into diesel and gasoline — or the crack spread — has recovered since early April and are near the highest seasonal level in 10 years.

Iran-Turkmenistan trade expected to rise by 50%: *Chamber head*

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

The annual trade between Iran and Turkmenistan is expected to increase 30 to 50 percent by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2025), said Ramezan Bahrami, the head of the Iran-Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce. Talking to Iran Daily, Bahrami stressed that with a focus on boosting trade, the Embassy of Iran in Turkmenistan and the Embassy of Turkmenistan in

Iran will work to improve bilateral relations. According to initiatives taken by the Iran-Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce to develop trade exchanges, the result of these measures will be seen by the year-end, he noted. Bahrami went on to say that holding an exhibition of Iran's export capabilities (Iran Expo 2024) in Tehran as well as holding an agrofood exhibition in Ashgabat, in upcoming September and exchanging trade delegations in the coming months are among the efforts by the Iran-Turkmenistan

Chamber of Commerce to raise the level of bilateral trade. The current volume of commercial exchanges between Iran and Turkmenistan does not reflect the capacities of the two countries in the field of trade, criticized Bahrami, noting that the annual bilateral trade stood at \$450 million during the year to March 19. Iran's major export products to Turkmenistan include food, construction materials, chemicals and petrochemicals, minerals and techno-engineering services, and on the other hand, minerals and raw materials

needed in the textile industry are among the major exports of Turkmenistan to Iran. Bahrami called Turkmenistan a gateway for the transit of Iranian goods to Central Asian countries and added that Turkmen traders believe that Iranian goods and products are welcome by the people of Central Asian states. The government should support the increase in the share of the private sector in the business sector and limit its performance to supervisory tasks in the business sector, he suggested. Bahrami went on to say that the

government should facilitate the trade procedure in terms of regulations as the existing rules in the field of trade and free economy are very strict and sometimes unenforceable. "Currently, there are good relations between the two countries as the heads of the two countries are determined to resolve all problems." To keep the current rising trend of trade between the two countries, Tehran and Ashgabat should pay further attention to infrastructures to set the ground for more developed economic ties, Bahrami concluded.

Iran's GDP doubled in three years: *IMF*

The figures of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicate that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) more than doubled during late President Ebrahim Raisi's administration. The statistics released by the international monetary body show that Iran's GDP based on the current prices more than doubled between 2020 and 2023, Tasnim News Agency reported. Iran's GDP based on the

last year of activity of the previous administration in 2020 had reached \$195 billion, the rate of which exceeded \$403 billion in 2023, registering a 106 percent growth. In this respect, Iran's rank has significantly improved among the world's economies. Iran stood in the 51st rank in the world in 2020 in terms of the gross domestic product based on the current prices but it climbed 13 places to

rank 38th in the world in 2023. In other words, the GDP of 37 countries was higher than Iran in 2023 while in 2020, over 50 countries had a higher GDP than the Islamic country, according to the IMF. Iran's rank, as stressed by the IMF, considerably improved during Raisi's administration in terms of the gross domestic product based on the purchasing power index (PMI).

Iran, Russia discuss implementation of Rasht-Astara railway

Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali discussed the implementation of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) with Oleg Belozorov, the president of Russian Railways. Referring to the signing of the agreement for the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway, Jalali also considered the implementation of this project important and in line with the interests of Iran, Russia, and the countries of the region, according to Tasnim News Agency. In the meeting, Belozorov emphasized the promotion of bilateral relations and called for the development of railway cooperation between

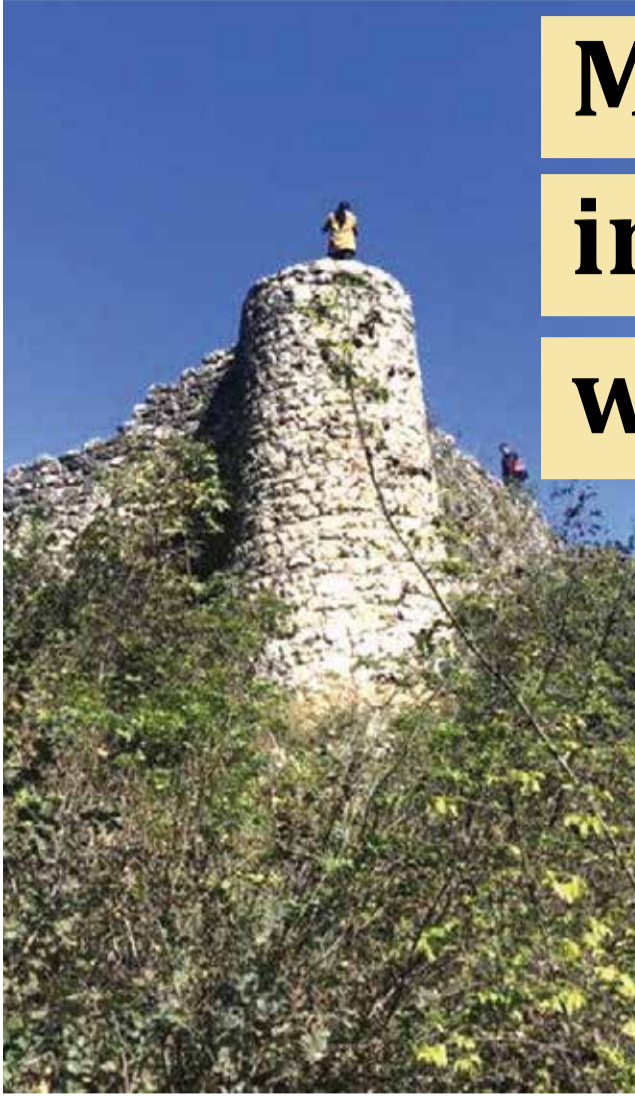
Iran and Russia to increase freight transport between the two countries, Tasnim said. Russia has announced plans to export coal to India through Iran's railway network system. The announcement was made at a meeting of BRICS transport ministers on Saturday on the sidelines of the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF). Russia's Presidential Aide Igor Levitin said the first coal-carrying wagons will be sent to India after passing through Iran and the port city of Bandar Abbas. Levitin said the first wagons carrying coal will be transited to India after

passing through the territory of Iran and Bandar Abbas. In February 2024, Iran Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash hosted Levitin in Tehran to discuss the promotion of transit along the INSTC and acceleration of the Rasht-Astara Railway Project which was reached in July 2023. In 2023, Russia transited 600,000 tons of freights through Iran's territory and the cargo transportation is expected to increase along the INSTC via Iran to four million tons per year in 2024, according to the Russian deputy minister of transport.



Markuh Castle

in Ramsar, a military fortress with historical significance



fararu.com



lastsecond.ir

Iranica Desk

Castles are significant historical and architectural landmarks in Iran, serving various purposes. Some castles were built for military defense, while others functioned as the residences of city or state governors or as administrative centers. The location and design of a castle can give insight into its intended use. Castles situated outside cities or villages, strategically positioned in mountainous areas, were typically constructed for military defense, to protect against enemies and safeguard the local pop-

ulation. The location and layout of Markuh Castle in Ramsar, Mazandaran Province, suggest that this historic site was primarily a military fortress. One notable aspect of Markuh Castle is its architectural similarity to Babak Castle in East Azarbaijan Province. The castle offers a captivating view, with its strategic position providing a stunning panorama from the north to the sea. The sight of the Alborz Mountains adds to the scenic beauty visible from the castle's vantage point. Additionally, the presence of nearby hot springs, recog-

nized as a national heritage of Iran, attracts visitors to the area surrounding Markuh Castle. In recent years, significant efforts have been undertaken to restore Markuh Castle with precision and care, ensuring the preservation of its original structure. These restoration projects have not only enhanced the castle's historical significance but have also contributed to the growth of tourism in Ramsar. For those drawn to exploring historical landmarks amidst the breathtaking natural beauty of northern Iran, a visit to this site is highly recommended.

History

While historical records suggest that the castle was constructed after the advent of Islam to Iran, the significance of Iranian castles in ancient times and certain architectural clues indicate that Markuh likely originated as a Sassanid fortress. It is believed that the castle was reconstructed during the Islamic period, repurposed for military functions in the third century.

Naming

The name Markuh Castle derives from the mountain on which the castle is situated, known as Markuh. Various interpretations and stories surround this mountain. Some view it as a sacred site, linking its history to the worship of Mithra, an ancient Iranian deity.

Area

Markuh Castle spans an area of approximately 600 square meters. Today, only four side walls and supporting towers of this once magnificent castle remain standing. The entrance to the castle is located in the northeast, leading to a refurbished room constructed from rubble stone, mortar, and cement, serving as the residence of the current castle guard. Remnants of various rooms are scattered throughout the castle. The castle staircase, connecting to the southeast and southwest towers, is the last visible part of the structure. The construction materials primarily consist of stone, mortar, and gypsum. The internal layout of Markuh Castle is spacious enough to house a hundred soldiers comfortably. At the center of the castle lies a dungeon, initially thought to be a hidden tunnel near the coast, but later identified as a water reservoir.



khabaronline.ir

Qasabeh Qanat, one of the oldest and deepest in Iran



Iranica Desk

Qanat is a significant aspect of Iran's historical civilization which recognized as a unique and innovative method of water engineering, particularly suited to Iran's climatic conditions. Across Iran, there are numerous qanats still in operation. Qasabeh Qanat, located on the southern outskirts of Gonabad along the Gonabad-Kakhak route, is approximately 295 kilometers south of Mashhad in Khorasan Razavi Province. It stands as a remarkable attraction, representing a harmonious blend of human ingenuity with nature. Dating back 2,500 to 2,700 years, Qasabeh Qanat is acknowledged as one of the oldest and deepest under-

ground aqueducts globally. In 2,000, it was designated as national heritage site by the Cultural Heritage Organization and is now proudly listed in UNESCO's World Heritage List. The qanats in Gonabad are categorized into mountainous and plain types. Mountainous qanats, often excavated in steep valleys and fed by rain and snow, have flow rates ranging from one to 25 liters per second and lengths between 50 to 500 meters. In contrast, plain qanats, dug in flat lands, travel long distances to reach underground water sources, showcasing a grandeur that seemingly surpasses human capabilities. Qasabeh Qanat, spanning 33 kilometers, comprises two main branches and is renowned as one of Iran's

most water-rich qanats. Its history is rich with stories, with pottery artifacts near one of the qanat wells suggesting its significance as the primary channel. Believed to have been constructed during the Achaemenid period, the qanat has stood the test of time as a marvel of water engineering. The qanat's main branch, stretching 13,135 meters along the Khanik Valley, is estimated to have a mother well depth exceeding 200 meters. Additional branches were dug during periods of drought to mitigate collapses. Dividing the qanat into two branches 683 meters from the mother well was an ancient solution to ensure continuous water flow, even if one channel collapsed or was obstructed.

Canals and tunnels

The interior space of Qasabeh Qanat features impressive canals and tunnels that have been identified through conducted investigations. Apparently, these sections were used to place torches and lighting fixtures.

Best time to visit

Gonabad is a dry and semi-desert region on the outskirts of the central desert of Iran. In this area, in addition to hot summers and cold winters, the temperature difference between night and day can be challenging. The best season for traveling to Gonabad and visiting Qasabeh Qanat is spring.



alibaba.ir

Women, families first

A look at achievements of Raisi gov't



Iranian late president Ebrahim Raisi waves to a crowd of Iranian girls and young women in a gathering in Tehran, Iran, on May 8, 2024, two days before the National Girls' Day. "The advancement of our country lies in the hands of our young people, especially our girls," he said.

● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

PERSPECTIVE

Women, as half of the country's 80 million population, were put at the top of the planning and policy-making agenda from day one by the previous Iranian government, so that related matters would improve at a faster pace. It's now been three years since that government took the reins, and a lookback at the achievements of this period showcases the efforts made in a host of fields.

Dedicating facilities

Some of the important steps of the previous Iranian government in the field of women include modifying and tailoring laws and regulations for women and families and dedicating better facilities to them. To this end, the cabinet made it a priority to approve special facilities for these two groups during provincial trips and followed up on the implementation of these approvals during subsequent visits.

Another valuable measure of the government was to clear the obstacles and address the economic challenges faced by Iranian families, particular-

ly in the field of housing, which ties in with the acceleration of general policies on the issue of encouraging larger families. As such, the approval of a note in the budget of the Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended March 19, 2024) to grant land to families with quadruplets or higher-order multiples was one such measure swiftly implemented from the outset of this year.

Also, allocating facilities to women and families, as well as assuming responsibility for addressing social harms in this domain, were among the government's other measures in its 500-day plan.

Setting targets for women's health

Women's health, as the most central element of family well-being, has been the foremost concern of the late president's government from his earliest days in office. It is an area that, unfortunately, had been neglected in prior decades due to a lack of appropriate groundwork.

However, in the first two years, by relying on the identification of statistical variables and indicators, the government has given new impetus to the issue of women's health and well-being, employing Land-use planning. Tangible measures were subsequently taken in this field, the most obvious being

the extension of pregnant women's insurance coverage to the end of breastfeeding.

Also, preparing an atlas on the status of women, setting priorities in the field of health for women and families, pinpointing problem areas and pathologies of women's health, and identifying health needs across 31 provinces are all part of the government's action plan to address the deprivations in women's health. Additionally, determining the most important priorities and health issues for women and girls in sports, as well as ensuring equitable access

to sports facilities between men and women, are all integral components of this initiative.

National Women's Health Week and the subsequent prioritization of identifying and treating cancer in women, providing the necessary infrastructure by utilizing sports facilities and increasing the budget for the construction and repair of special gyms for women, and investigating infertility treatment issues, including the lack of infertility treatment centers in various provinces, all formed part of the previous government's performance in promoting women's health.

Women's rights on parliament's agenda

Perhaps the greatest achievement in the field of women and families is the fulfillment of their legal needs and rights. To this end, president Raisi's government, in addition to taking measures within the scope of its executive power, pursued the reform and adjustment of laws pertaining to women's rights in the legislative arena to ensure these rights are permanently upheld.

Offering female relief recipients of the country's Diya Institution a one-year breathing space to repay facilities, drafting the bill granting housing to quadruplet families, drafting a bill that tackles the issue of persons without identity documents, and the proposal to exempt female-headed households and mothers with custody of children from serving outside their place of residence were all part of the government's legislative reforms and

tailoring efforts regarding Iranian women.

In addition to the aforementioned, the drafting of a bill on the scope of the guardian's powers, the amendment of a bill on permitting the opening of savings accounts for children, the preparation of the bill to join the Women Development Organization of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the revision of school instructions for handing over students' report cards and educational information to parents, the issuance of a directive by the first vice president on the obligation of government agencies to coordinate with the vice presidency in the appointment of advisers, and the resolution to allocate one percent of facilities from executive bodies to the field of women and families are all actions undertaken by the previous government to advance the legal rights of these two groups.

Empowering female heads of households

Empowering and enhancing the health and quality of life of female heads of households were a central demand and agenda item for Raisi's government. Providing education, economic empowerment, and employment opportunities for women heads of households and affected women was the general policy pursued by the late president and his cabinet during their 500 days in office. In realizing this policy, the previous government created a guarantee fund to facilitate employment for female heads of households who are relatively poor and lack protective coverage.

The training of 2,046 women and the economic empowerment of an additional 2,055 women across 11 provinces, the development of a comprehensive empowerment plan for women in line with the 6th National Development Plan, the creation of employment opportunities for women recovered from addiction, and the empowerment of 315 women from the target group were all actions undertaken by the late president's vice president for women and family affairs during their two-year tenure.



Mourners attend the funeral of Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi at Azadi square in Tehran, Iran, on May 22, 2024.

● AFP

Iranian women in int'l arena

Among the previous government's notable achievements is the active participation of Iranian women on regional and international platforms. The signing of international cooperation agreements with a focus on women and the hosting of international empowerment courses serve as a part of the government's main strategy to foster a robust presence for Iranian women on the

global stage. Harnessing the potential of women's diplomacy in international interactions, the late president's government developed international relations by signing six joint memorandums of cooperation, in particular, with six countries. They also followed up on the approval and implementation of joint coopera-

tion plans through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the government hosted and participated in a training course on the international empowerment of women, as well as conducted empowerment courses for female managers, contributing to the enhancement of Iranian women's status in the country's overseas arenas.

Consolidating families

Lastly, it's worth mentioning that the government's most critical task in implementing the general policies of the establishment was addressing Iran's aging population. In this regard, Raisi's government utilized the potential of its Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs and took significant steps. Supporting the nutrition of mothers in

deprived areas, fostering a connection between creative ideas and manufacturers and managers within the baby equipment industry, commending eight selected innovative women, and calling for the production of products and provision of services to support babies, children, and mothers were all steps taken by the Vice Presidency for Women and

Family Affairs in this domain. Supporting the provision of layette sets in underprivileged areas, pursuing the establishment of kindergartens within executive bodies, and extending free aid to underprivileged families with babies were all part of the previous government's record in addressing the needs of the young population.

Remembering a game-changer

Late president's work in empowering women

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

Before the government of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi, the women's field hadn't been paid as much attention as it should have. We can even dare say that many of this government's achievements were made for the first time in the field of women. Tackling some long-standing issues was something that had not been started before. One hundred percent infertility treatment coverage and social insurance

for rural housewives with three children are cases in point. These initiatives can go a long way toward addressing the country's pressing issues of population decline and aging.

Women taking managerial positions

The appointment of expert and elite women of Iran to decision-making councils is another significant development in the women's field. Iranian girls and women have been outperforming boys in obtaining top scientific degrees and pursuing higher education for several years, but they lacked representation in management positions. Now, thanks to the popular government of president Raisi, we see women appointed to senior management roles.

In line with this, the office of female advisors, equivalent to deputy ministers or directors-general, has been established.

Marriage rate, divorce rate

President Raisi's government coordinated the three branches of government to facilitate marriage, employment, and paying for dowry for couples in rural areas and towns with populations of fewer than 20,000. A support package for couples in their 40s was also on the agenda of the government. Planning and coordination to provide incentive facilities for rural couples in their 40s, in particular, who wish to marry have taken place.

The rise in divorce rates under previous Iranian governments was a key concern for Raisi. Precise targeting and planning in this field by his government led to a reduction in divorce rates, as the latest statistics show. One successful program involved planning and coordinating a long-term preventive and active family counseling program, titled "Newlyweds," targeting couples in the first five years of their married life, with a pilot test in Iranian provinces at high risk for divorce.

Supporting vulnerable and affected women from the lowest-income classes of society has been a priority since the beginning of the previous government's term. Clearing the backlog of pension claims from female heads of households was a notable move towards achieving this goal and alleviating poverty. This can be counted as one of the achievements of the late



Iran's Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Ensiyeh Khazali (2nd row-C) delivers a speech at the ministerial conference held in the 68th meeting of the Women Status Commission (WSC) of the United Nations, elaborating on the measures taken to fight poverty for Iranian women.

● SCRENGRAB

president's government in promoting social welfare for the most vulnerable, and it was accomplished within a short period.

Int'l achievements of Iranian women

In addition to domestic achievements, a number of international and trans-regional accomplishments also took place under president Raisi's popular government. These include taking on the two-year incumbency of the Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (WGWE) of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), with an extension into a second biennial term; compiling and contributing to the compilation of 30 national reports presented to international and regional forums; setting up a national committee on women and fighting corruption, an initiative suggested by the vice presidency at the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and lauded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); drafting legislation to establish a national working

group on women and fighting corruption, and getting it approved at the national headquarters of women and family affairs; and meeting with 170 official delegates and senior officials from various countries.

Legal challenges of women, families

In order to advance affairs in any field, executive bodies need to carry out approved policies and programs properly to reach the desired goal. Under president Raisi's government, these bodies were key to achieving the best results from the approvals. Monitoring and pinpointing legal and judicial challenges faced by women, children, and families, as well as presenting legal bills and proposals to the relevant authorities, took center stage in the agenda of these bodies. In the meantime, a revision of all laws and regulations pertaining to women and families has been underway since the inception of legislation in this domain under the Islamic Republic, and the Raisi government diligently followed up on these matters.

Iran gov't promotes female entrepreneurship

PERSPECTIVE *During the global economic crisis, while many developed countries were struggling with the tremendous problem of unemployment, the government of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi was zeroing in on employment to further its goal of serving the people.*



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (R) listens as Fatemeh Nassaji (L), a female entrepreneur, explains her educational handicrafts during the president's provincial visit to Kurdistan Province, Iran, on November 3, 2023.

● ISNA

The salience of the government's approach on this matter stems its two targets of facilitating stable businesses and family-oriented businesses. This is due to the fact that in the design of a sustainable family-oriented business network, the job seeker, while undertaking the necessary training and support, takes on a job whose sustainability is guaranteed and monitored by the entrepreneur for at least four years.

On the other hand, the woman working in such a network carries out her work in a flexible way, fitting in her home responsibilities and playing a part in a family-oriented role, while also making use of the capabilities of other family members. In this network, home businesses and value-creating small businesses were expanded through the use of the capacity of the Omid Entrepreneurship Fund under the previous government. What is more, female heads of households, abused women, self-supporting girls, and job-seeking graduates were employed in 239 categories as the target community. Additionally, more than 7,000 female entrepreneurs and job seekers were trained in home-based jobs through the use of facilities approved during the late president's provincial visits.

In another aspect of this network, the plan for economic empowerment of female heads of households and backing for women entrepreneurs was carried out for women leading households and unmarried girls over 45 years of age, resulting in the training of upwards of 4,500 individuals in 209 categories.

Tapping into the capacity of non-governmental organizations to generate employment for the target group of women who are heads of households, self-supporting, recovering addicts, or disabled across 15 categories opened up over 400 job fields as a result of the previous government's efforts.

The government's backing for the establishment and growth of women's cooperative companies in tandem with Iran's Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives, and Social Welfare unlocked job prospects for female heads of households as well.

Furthermore, collaborations with the aforementioned ministry in setting up and growing cooperative businesses led by disabled women across 34 categories unlocked job opportunities for this target demographic.

Harnessing the potential of the country's Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology by way of holding job training and skill-building events for female students stands as another achievement of this network.

Additionally, collaborations with the Ministry of Agriculture towards providing training in healthy crop production and establishing health gardens, with a focus on empowering local communities, culminated in over 18,000 person-hours of training for women under president Raisi's government.



Naeimeh Panaq (R), a female Iranian entrepreneur, sits in her sewing workshop where she employs some 20 other women in a village near Bandar Torkaman, northeastern Iran, in November 2022.

● BASIJNEWS

Polyák Imre & Varga János Memorial:

Hedayati stuns Kayaalp as Iran captures four GR medals



Sports Desk

Superheavyweight wrestler Fardin Hedayati stole the show on the first day of the Greco-Roman contests at the Polyák Imre & Varga János Memorial in Budapest as Iran grabbed four medals across three weight classes. The 20-year-old prodigy enjoyed an emphatic run toward the 130kg glory, defeating two of the prominent stars of the class in the process. The reigning world junior champion began the day with a 4-0 victory over Turkish great Riza Kayaalp – a winner of 13 world and Olympic medals – and then outmuscled former world bronze winner Alin Alexuc-Ciurariu of Romania by technical superiority in the semifinals. Awaiting Hedayati in the final showpiece was high-profile Georgian Iakobi Kajaia, who won the silver at the Tokyo Olympics, but the Iranian rounded off his campaign in dominant fashion, cruising to a 5-0 triumph – a second gold medal for the young Iranian in this year's UWW Ranking Series. Elsewhere on Saturday, Mahdi Mohsennejad eased into the 60kg final with victories over refuge team's Jamal Valizadeh (11-0) and South Korean Kim Dahyun (8-0), though he had to settle for the silver after a 6-5 loss to Pridon Abuladze of Georgia. The result was still enough for Mohsennejad, who had won the Olympic quota for the country in last year's World

Championships, to secure his place in the Iranian six-man squad for the Games in July as his domestic rival Amir-Reza Dehbozorgi finished behind him on the third podium. Dehbozorgi was beaten 4-0 by Abuladze in his first bout but came out on top against Algerian Abdelkarim Fergat (7-0) for the bronze medal. Meysam Dalkhani was the other Iranian bronze winner in Budapest, sharing the third podium with Venezuelan with Raiber Jose Orozco in the 63kg event. A world champion in 2021, Dalkhani bounced back from a 10-1 defeat against Azerbaijan's Murad Mammadov – last year's world silver winner – in the quarterfinals to outclass the host's Levente Toth 11-0 in the third-place bout. Saturday's results came a day after the Iranian freestyle team had collected a gold through Hassan Yazdani in the 86kg contests, as well as a couple of silvers and bronzes apiece to finish as the runner-up in the team table with 117 points. Abbas Ebrahimzadeh (65kg) and Adel Panahian (79kg) left the Hungarian capital with a final defeat, while Shahdad Khosravi (61kg) and Ali Rezaei (74kg) bagged two consolation bronzes.



Fardin Hedayati, pictured in last year's World U20 Championships in Amman, won his second 130kg gold in this season's UWW Ranking Series in Budapest.

● UWW

Iranian girls finish Asian kurash runner-up

Sports Desk

The Iranian women's team captured eight medals, including a couple of golds, to finish as the runner-up at the 13th Asian Senior Kurash Championship in Tehran. Uzbekistan won the team title with three golds and four silvers, with the Chinese Taipei in third, thanks to double golds and three bronze medals. Tahereh Azarpeivand and Fatemeh Barmaki finished their campaigns on a high note, grabbing the golds in the -57kg and +87kg contests respectively. Arezou Salimi (-52kg), Riehaneh Gilani (-72kg), and Hanieh Vahdani (-87kg) settled for silver medals in their respective weight classes, with Faezeh Ebrahimi (-48kg), Pardis Edivandi (-63kg), and Saba Karam-Ali (-78kg) adding three bronzes to Iran's medal haul.



Jacobs sees room for improvement after retaining European title

REUTERS – Olympic sprint champion Lamont Marcell Jacobs said he is aiming to improve his time and technique ahead of the Paris Games after electrifying the home crowd in Rome by retaining the men's 100m title at the European Athletics Championships on Saturday. The Italian, who claimed two gold medals at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (100m and 4x100m relay), had a slow start but showcased his signature strength in the final third of the race to clock a season-best 10.02 and clinch gold. The 29-year-old has failed to dip under the 10-second mark in nearly two years and endured a series of injury issues since his Tokyo Games triumph in 2021. "I thought I could run 9.95. I didn't

manage it but the important thing was to win," Jacobs said after the race on Saturday. "I made a big bet on myself because I came to Rome not in the best shape, but it was one of my goals of the season to win. I am the European Champion again. It is really incredible the people here scream my name every second. "I'm really happy about that (but) not really happy about the time. But here in this competition what counts is the medals. Now we can work, work, work more to improve the time and the technique for the Olympics of course." The athletics competition at the Paris Olympics will take place from Aug. 1-11 at the Stade de France.

Iranian Danaei heads toward 'Savage Mountain'

Sports Desk

Iranian mountaineer Amir Danaei left for Pakistan this week to embark on a three-month journey toward the K2 Summit in the Karakoram range. Danaei, 23, wrote his name into history books when he became the youngest-ever Iranian to conquer Mount Everest – the highest altitude on the face of the earth – in May last year. "The sweetest moment through my entire life was when I took the one last step toward the Everest peak," said the Iranian, who will be looking to repeat the feat as the country's youngest mountaineer to have ever peaked K2. At 8,611 meters, K2 is the second highest peak in the world, known to be one of the most dangerous and difficult treks due to avalanches, steepness and unpredictable weather. Nicknamed the 'Savage Mountain', K2 boasts the second highest fatality rate – following Annapurna in Nepal – with 23 deaths per 100 successful summits. "I will be joined by a group of the world's best mountaineers in the journey, including high-profile Briton Nirmal Purja," Danaei said of his newest ascent. "Given its unique conditions, K2 is a dream, yet challenging, destination for all mountaineers, which makes the trek an equivalent of a world gold medal in the sport," added the Iranian.





Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf



Massoud Pezeshkian



Saeed Jalili

Six candidates to vie for presidency

National Desk

Iran's Guardian Council on Sunday approved six candidates for the June 28 election to succeed the late President Ebrahim Raisi who lost his life in a tragic helicopter crash last month. The candidates announced by the Interior Ministry were selected from 80 registered hopefuls by the 12-member election supervisory council. Among those approved are the Conservative Speaker of Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and the former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili from the Steadfast Front. Qalibaf ran unsuccessfully for president in 2005 and 2013. He

withdrew from the 2017 presidential campaign to support Raisi in his first failed presidential bid. Just one Reformist candidate, Massoud Pezeshkian, 69, who is a lawmaker representing northwestern city of Tabriz in Iran's Parliament, has been given the green light. The Conservative former interior minister Mostafa Pourmohammadi has also been authorized to run. Others on the list include Conservative Tehran mayor Alireza Zakani and incumbent Vice President Amirhossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi, the head of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs. In a Sunday post on the X social

media platform, Zakani said he would "compete until the end to continue the path of" Raisi. **Ahmadinejad, Larijani disqualified** The Guardian Council once again barred former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from running. He was previously disqualified from entering the presidential races in 2017 and 2021. The politician had said he was only heeding "a call from people from across the country" to run again, and he was confident he could resolve Iran's domestic and international issues. Others including former three-time parliament speaker Ali Larijani and Vahid Haqanian,

a former commander in the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, were also barred from standing. Larijani was disqualified in 2021 presidential election. Four women had also registered their candidacy but were disqualified. According to Iran's electoral law, campaigning should officially start from Sunday until 24 hours before the elections. The campaign likely will include live, televised debates by the candidates on Iran's state-run broadcaster. They also advertise on billboards and offer stump speeches to back their bids. Iran's presidential elections were originally slated for 2025 but were brought forward

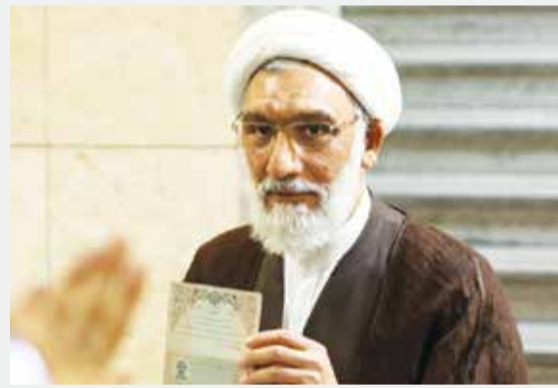
following Raisi's unexpected death on May 19. Raisi and seven members of his entourage, including foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, were killed when their aircraft came down on a fog-shrouded mountainside in northern Iran. Raisi is the second Iranian president to die in office. In 1981, a bomb blast killed former President Mohammad-Ali Rajai in the chaotic days after the country's Islamic Revolution. Following Raisi's death, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei appointed Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, 68, as caretaker president in accordance with the Constitution.



Alireza Zakani



Amirhossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi



Mostafa Pourmohammadi

Ansarallah targets 3 ships off Yemen's coast



AFP

Yemen's Ansarallah resistance movement said on Sunday they targeted ships off the country's coast with missiles and drones after maritime security firms said two vessels had caught fire after being hit by projectiles. The strikes are the latest in a flurry of attacks by the resistance group which says is in solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. In a statement on social media platform X, Yemen's military spokesperson Yahya Saree said the group attacked "two ships belonging to companies that violated" directives by the group not to enter Israeli ports. He identified the vessels as the Liberia-flagged MSC Tavvishi and the Norderney, which sails under the flag of Antigua and Barbuda. Saree said Temeni forces also targeted the HMS Diamond, a British naval warship. The announcement came after maritime security firm Ambrey said an Antigua and Barbuda-flagged cargo ship caught fire after being hit by a missile off Yemen on Saturday night. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UK-MTO), run by Britain's Royal Navy, said an "unknown projectile" hit a vessel off Yemen around 2000 GMT on Saturday, starting a small fire in the mooring station that was extinguished.

Global outrage after Israel's 'massacre' in Nuseirat camp

Several countries and international organizations condemned the Israeli killing of at least 274 Palestinians, many of them civilians, during an operation to free four Israeli captives in central Gaza's Nuseirat refugee camp. Authorities in the Gaza

Strip on Sunday said at least 698 others were injured in "an unprecedented brutal attack", some in critical condition, as hospitals struggle to cope with the flow of wounded or dead bodies. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa said

the Palestinian Authority is seeking an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council over the Nuseirat attack. Hamas resistance group said Israel's release of four captives "will not change the Israeli army's strategic failure in the Gaza Strip",

especially after taking eight months to enact the operation. It also said reports that the United States facilitated the Israeli operation prove again that Washington is "complicit and completely involved in the war crimes being perpetrated" in the besieged territory.

ic Cooperation (OIC), representing 57 member states, most of whom are Muslim-majority, condemned "the horrific massacre" and called for an investigation. In a statement, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said the country "deplores" the Israeli attack, which it called "barbaric" and another in a long list of "crimes" committed by Israel which has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians since October 7.

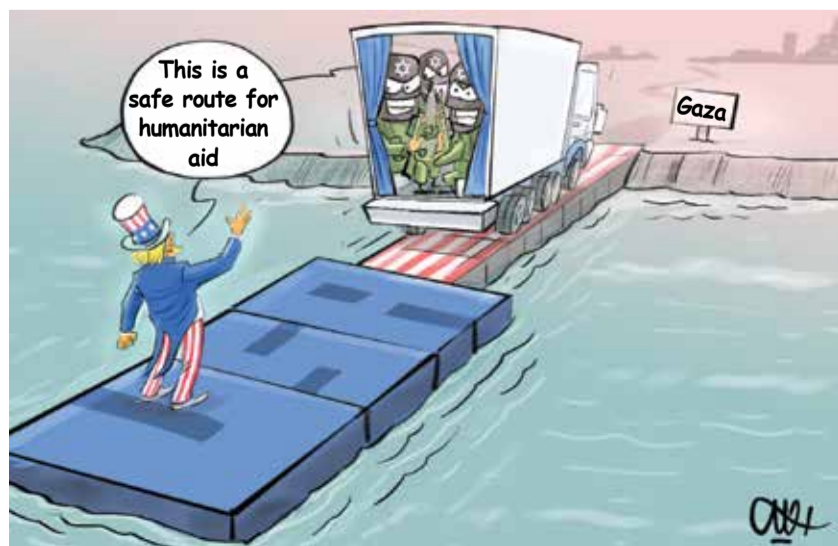
World's inaction Iran's Foreign Ministry blamed the latest killing of hundreds of Palestinians on "inaction" by world governments and the UN Security Council. "These horrific and shocking crimes... are the result of the inaction of governments and responsible international bodies, including the United Nations Security Council, in the face of eight months of war crimes and violations by the Zionist regime [Israel]," spokesman Nasser Kanaani said in a statement.

'Bloodbath must end' Josep Borrell, the foreign policy chief of the European Union, had a stronger reaction, writing in a post on X that "the bloodbath must end immediately". "Reports from Gaza of another massacre of civilians are appalling. We condemn this in the strongest terms," he said. Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, deputy foreign minister of Norway, wrote on X that he was "appalled by reports of another massacre of civilians in Gaza" and said the country condemns attacks on civilians while calling for the release of captives and an immediate ceasefire. The Organization of Islam-



A Palestinian girl walks amidst the debris a day after Israel's attacks on the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip on June 9, 2024. EYAD BABA/AFP

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



killed in Gaza. Martin Griffiths, the UN relief chief, called the Nuseirat refugee camp "the epicenter of the seismic trauma that civilians in Gaza continue to suffer" and said all remaining captives must be released and the war ended.

Lebanese minister hopes for a cultural week in Isfahan



Lebanon's Minister of Culture Mohammad Wissam al-Mortada
 ● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Lebanon's Minister of Culture Mohammad Wissam al-Mortada lauded his country's relations with Iran as broad and inclusive, expressing hope for a Lebanese Cultural Week to be organized in Iran to enhance cultural and artistic connections. In an interview with IRNA, the Lebanese minister referred to the Iranian Cultural Week held in Beirut, Lebanon's capital in 2020, expressing optimism for a Lebanese Cultural Week to be organized in Iran, specifically in Isfahan, to introduce the Iranian people to Lebanon's diverse cultural heritage. Dubbed "Fajr (dawn) Cultural Days," the cultural program in 2022 covered several roundtables and symposia, a large exhibition of Iranian

handicrafts and artworks, screening of Iranian films and an Iranian music night. Mortada described the Lebanon-Iran relationship as broad and inclusive, highlighting their shared commitment to values of faith, morality, and opposition to injustice in the region. The Lebanese official also expressed optimism for cultural cooperation to enhance collaboration in various fields, recognizing Iran's substantial capabilities in industry, agriculture, and energy, while acknowledging his country's challenges in these areas. In response to a question of whether Lebanon is less referred to as the "Bride of the Middle East" these days than in the past, the minister replied, "Despite the current conditions and challenges,

Lebanon remains the gem of the Middle East, and nothing will diminish the exceptional beauty of its nature. It continues to shine as a beacon for the world in terms of intellect, culture, and tourism." Despite current challenges, as Mortada said, Lebanon remains a jewel for the Middle East, preserving its exceptional natural beauty and serving as a beacon of intellect, culture, and tourism globally. Lebanon has demonstrated resilience and stability over the years, showcasing its capacity to overcome obstacles, the minister added as he expressed hope for the region's liberation from the Zionist dominance, envisioning Lebanon reclaiming its position and becoming a model for the world on how people, ir-

respective of religion, belief, or culture, can coexist with a national spirit of unity. The Mediterranean country is still suffering a debilitating economic crisis that has gripped the country since 2019. About 80 percent of the population is below the poverty line and 36 percent is below the "extreme poverty line", living on less than \$2.15 a day. The Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah fought off two Israeli wars against Lebanon in 2000 and 2006, forcing a humiliating retreat upon the Tel Aviv regime's military on both occasions. The illegal entity began waging sporadic attacks against the country following the onset of the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, prompting a firefight with Hezbollah.

Iranians register 12% rise in blood donations in two months

The Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) reported a 12% rise in blood donations in the first two months of the current Iranian year (starting March 20) compared to the same period last year, as stated by the organization's spokesperson. Bashir Haji-Beigi was cited by IRNA as saying that around 435,000 units of blood were donated during this period. Iranians contributed 435,000 units of blood in the stated interval, with Tehran Province leading the way with 74,600 units, accounting for approximately 17% of the

total donations. Haji-Beigi noted that Khorasan Razavi and Fars Provinces trailed Tehran with nearly 7% each. Over the past two months, Iran's blood donation rate exceeded

55%, with Semnan Province having the highest rate at over 66%, as stated by the IBTO spokesperson. He also mentioned that the central provinces of Yazd and Qom ranked

next with around 65%. Haji-Beigi highlighted that Iranian women donated about 19,280 units of blood during this period, marking a more than 16% increase from the previous year.



Public access to historical photos 'useful' to researchers: Official

Arts & Culture Desk

An official with Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism has extolled the publication of historical photos and works as a source of useful information for researchers. In reaction to an unauthorized publishing of photos from the Golestan Palace Photo-Archive as well as publicly released photos from the excavations at Shush for the first time, Mostafa Dehpahlavan said researchers are "thirsty for this information." Dehpahlavan expressed hope that the ministry should move towards a direction in the museums of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts that the doors of repositories and store-rooms can be opened to researchers "as they are thirsty for this information." "When we put this infor-

mation at the service of the academic community, rest assured that new research topics will emerge with these intellectual downpours, and as long as we lock the doors, there will be no healthy nourishment for noble research," he said. According to ISNA, recently a digital file containing more than three thousand pieces of photos from the album collection of Golestan Palace has been published in the cyberspace from an unknown source. The release of these photos, which have been difficult for many researchers to access until now, has been met with various reactions. Following the unprecedented release of these photos, Golestan Palace explained in a statement that "no object or album from Golestan Palace is missing," clarifying that "a small part of the historical

photo album of this palace has been published, and soon more albums of photos from Golestan Palace's photo gallery will be published." The palace emphasized that "in line with better serving the academic and research community and in line with this year's International Council of Museums theme, "Museums for Education and Research," the Golestan Palace World Heritage Collection has decided to publicly release the 'Shadow Albums.'" Further in response to these reactions, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ezatollah Zarghami has recommended that, "People should be informed of valuable reserves." There are 1040 photo albums containing nearly 42500 photographs housed at the Golestan Palace Photo-Archive today.



Iran unveils flight models of Kowsar, Hodhod satellites

Iran has unveiled flight models of the homegrown Kowsar and Hodhod satellites. The models were put on display on Sunday at a ceremony, where the active figures of the private sector had gathered to honor the endeavors of late President Ebrahim Raisi in the aerospace field, Press TV reported. The Kowsar satellite is expected to be placed at a distance of 500 kilometers from the Earth's surface this autumn aboard the Russian rocket Soyuz. It can be used for agricultural, mapping and demarcation purposes. The satellite is equipped with two cameras and can take images with a resolution of 3.45 meters. Back in February, Iran successfully launched the indigenously-manufactured Pars 1 research-sensing satellite by a Soyuz rocket from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome spaceport. It came one month after the country simultaneously put into orbit the Mahda research satellite, as well as the Keyhan-2 and Hatef-1 nanosatellites, using the Simorgh (Phoenix) carrier. Iran is among the world's top 10 countries capable of developing and launching satellites.

