

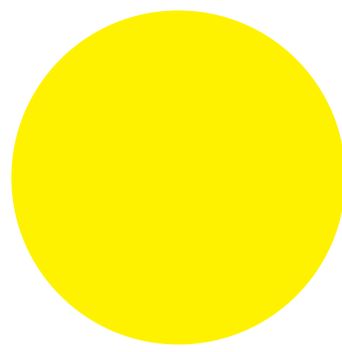
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Oil exports jumped during Raisi's tenure with low discounts: Ministry

The Iranian Oil Ministry announced on Wednesday that country's oil exports surged during the three years of late president Ebrahim Raisi's administration as Iran lowered discounts to its clients. In a statement, the ministry rejected a report by Iranian Entekhab News website on "selling crude with heavy discounts to China was offered by Saeed Jalili," noting that China was not the only destination of Iranian crude oil, Shana reported. At the end of the previous government (August 2021), more than 90 million barrels of oil and gas condensate were stored in floating tanks on water, but with the beginning of the current government and the active marketing of the Oil Ministry, all these reserves were sold in a short period of time. "These kinds of fake news are failed attempt to downplay the positive performance of the Ministry of Oil of the current government in energy diplomacy and its achievements," read the statement.

Capacity of Iran's wind power plants to rise by 5.5 times



The capacity of Iran's wind energy power plants will increase by 5.5 times within the next two years, according to Mahmoud Kamani, the head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA). As stated in a Wednesday report by IRNA, Kamani said that currently, the capacity of renewable power plants built in Iran stands at 1,195 MW, with wind power plants contributing 366.31 MW across the country. He added that the goal is to construct 30,000 MW of renewable power plants by the end of the 7th Development Plan in March 2029. Kamani said that wind energy plays a crucial role in achieving this target, accounting for 3,000 MW of the overall capacity. He also emphasized that the late President Ebrahim Raisi's government has contributed 343 MW to the total capacity of renewable projects, reflecting a remarkable 40% growth in renewable power plant development during this period.

Putin approves EAEU-Iran free trade deal

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law on the ratification of the free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Iran.

The agreement, signed in St. Petersburg on December 25, 2023, was submitted for ratification by the Russian Federation Council with the goal of removing constraints on trade between the EAEU countries and Iran by reducing or eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers, supporting economic and trade cooperation, RIA Novosti reported on Wednesday.

Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia are the five member states of the Eurasian Economic Union.

According to Vladimir Ilyichev, the deputy minister of economic development of the Russian Federation, the agreement will contribute to a further increase in mutual trade, for instance, an increase of \$1.1 billion is expected by 2025.

The deputy minister underlined that such agreements will contribute to the implementation of projects for the development of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

The agreement tends to form the basic rules of trade between its parties, as close as possible to the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Just to name a few, the most-favored-nation treatment and national treatment, the use of protective measures and customs administration, the rejection of quantitative prohibitions and restrictions on the import of goods. The agreement also



contains provisions that establish the basic standards of the WTO in terms of veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical regulation.

In addition to the standard WTO rules, the agreement provides for obligations that go beyond them, but are still applicable in the EAEU. Thus, in terms of technical regulation, obligations are enshrined to ensure a 180-day transition pe-

riod between the publication of technical regulations and their entry into force. This increases the transparency of Iran's trade regime and aligns the regulatory environment with the EAEU, which already operates on this principle.

According to the report, the agreement establishes a preferential trade regime for about 87% of the commodity nomenclature of foreign economic activity. Its implementation will

allow Russian exporters to save about \$300 million annually on the payment of duties.

The agreement provides for the establishment of cooperation in the fields of mining, processing and use of minerals, energy efficiency, research and innovation, education, medicine, transport, including the development of multimodal transport, telecommunications, transport and logistics infrastructure as well as transport

corridors.

The agreement will enter into force 60 days from the date of receipt of the last written notification that the EAEU countries and Iran have completed all the necessary internal legal procedures. It will replace an interim agreement aimed at forming a free trade zone between the EAEU and Iran, which was signed on May 17, 2018 and took effect on October 27, 2019.

Iran posts 5.7% economic growth in year to March 2024



Iran's economy grew by 5.7% in the fiscal year ending in late March 2024, marking the highest growth since 2017, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

In its latest report, the SCI said the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the year ending in March 2024 at the constant prices of 2017 is equivalent to 5.7% of the total GDP and 3.4% of the GDP excluding oil, IRNA reported.

The field of activities of industries and mines group grew by 6.9%, the services group by 5.7%, and the agriculture group by 2.2% compared to the previous Iranian year.

Yadavaran oil output to rise by 42,000 bpd

Iran's plan to increase oil production from Yadavaran joint field aimed at increasing crude extraction of 42,000 barrels per day (bpd) kicked off on Wednesday with a total investment of \$350 million.

The Iranian Oil Ministry will dig a sum of 24 wells in the oil field, according to the development plan in West Karoun, Shana

reported on Wednesday.

West Karoun region is home to nine oil fields, out of which six, including Azadegan and Yadavaran, are shared with Iraq. Iran's priority is to develop jointly-owned oil and gas fields which are being dried out by Iran's neighbors, including Yaran, Azadegan and Yadavaran.



Istanbul hosts D-8 Trade Ministers Council meeting

An unofficial meeting of the D-8 trade ministers was held in the Turkish

city of Istanbul on the sidelines of the meeting of the Trade Committee of

the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

In the meeting, Iran's Deputy Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade and Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) Mehdi Zeyghami clarified the status and approach of Iran on the promotion of foreign relations especially with D-8 member states, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Zeyghami termed Iran's membership in the BRICS group of emerging economies and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as an indicator of Iran's firm

determination to develop economic relations with the member states.

During the meeting, the member states underlined the need for developing cooperation in trade and economic fields, implementing trade agreements and using bartering tools and e-commerce to enhance the level of trade cooperation.

Iran's deputy minister of industry also held talks with Turkey's minister of trade and deputy trade minister to discuss bilateral ties and issues of mutual interests.



Bahabad, a remote paradise in Yazd Province



● top-travel.ir



● mehrnews.com



● top-travel.ir



Iranica Desk

Bahabad is situated in the east of Yazd Province, 200 kilometers away from the city of Yazd and 80 kilometers from the city of Bafq. It is nestled on a hill between two mountain ranges, bordered by Ardakan to the north, Bafq to the west and southwest, Tabas and Lut Desert to the east, and Kerman Province to the south. Bahabad experiences a semi-arid climate with an average annual rainfall of 9.153 millimeters. The western and southern parts offer mountainous and pleasant climates, attracting visitors for relaxation and leisure during the spring and summer seasons, irrespective of their proximity to the region.

It is the main river in Bahabad, flowing through the plain area in the northern part of the county. The surrounding lands of this river are a geological wonder, drawing university students and researchers in the fields of geography and geology for study and exploration. Stretching approximately 11 kilometers,

this river is primarily fed by rain, snow, and springs from the Banestan and Asfij mountains, eventually flowing into the Kavir Desert. Its location near a protected hunting area contributes to its rich biodiversity.

This river is called Shoor because of its salty water (Shoor means salty in Persian). This area is a unique aquatic habitat in the province, with the number of species exceeding 5000. This unique habitat is monitored daily by executive officers to prevent hunting and poaching violations. Furthermore, this area is one of the natural attractions of Bahabad, with a large number of visitors annually. The vegetation cover and the surrounding lands of Shoor River are also geographically significant, to the extent that desert hiking around the salty river is very inspiring and memorable.

The region's abundance of food, water, and shelter supports a diverse array of valuable species, including sheep, goats, gazelles, leopards, lynxes, jackals, as well as various birds and reptiles.

Chellekhaneh village, located along the Shoor River, is a natural and picturesque area. This historic village, found on the western shore of the river, remains uninhabited. Named after the forty houses that once stood within it, Chellekhaneh (Forty Houses) now sees local farmers cultivating wheat and pistachios on parts of its agricultural lands. The village is equipped with an irrigation channel that runs from the eastern mountains to the settlement, along with a tower that was once used for surveillance. In addition to its adobe and clay houses, Chellekhaneh features small caves carved beneath the cliffs, originally used for storing livestock and grains in ancient times. The cultural heritage and tourist attractions of Bahabad are among the least recognized tourist spots in the province, known mostly to the local community because of their remote location from the provincial center. It is crucial to prioritize the promotion of these attractions and utilize them to draw both domestic and international tourists to the area.

Evolution of Islamic and Persian influence in Czech culture

Unlike their northern and southern neighbours, the Czech lands have never had any significant and intensive direct contacts with Islamic countries. As a result, the reflection of Islamic culture has not been as strong in Czech culture as it used to be in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Poland. For historical reasons, Czech society at large formed its picture about Islamic culture out of fear from an Ottoman threat.

Persian culture was too far to be reflected by lower social classes and thus it was perceptible for the upper classes only, though its influence was small even on this group. This situation would change only

in the 19th century when the phenomenon of international travels on the one hand and the establishment of modern museums on the other reached Czech society as well.

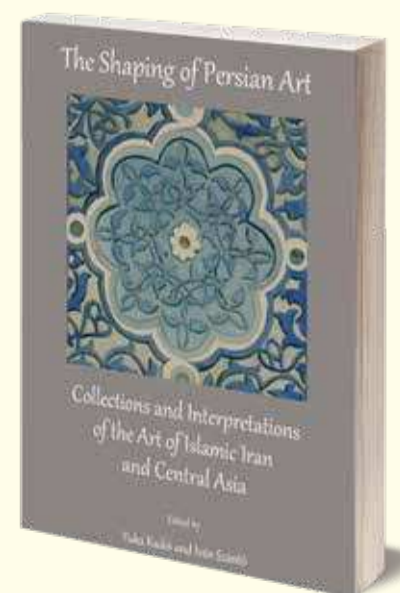
Among the earliest groups of oriental objects in the Czech Republic a few finds from the royal tombs at Prague Castle can be mentioned. The textile fragments which were recovered from the coffins of the wives and sons of Emperor Charles IV (1316-1378) include fabrics of Chinese, Persian or Central Asian origin, datable to the Mongol period. It is noteworthy that in 1314 or 1316 — a few generations before Emperor Charles IV — Pope

John XXII (ruled from 1316-34) sent Odoric of Pordenone (1274-1331), a Franciscan monk of Czech origin, to Beijing, the capital of the Mongol Empire. During his long journey, Odoric crossed Persia and Central Asia and he described the history, traditions, and cultures of these lands in his travelogue.

Although comprehensive collections of Islamic, including Persian, art did not emerge before the second half of the 19th century, there is at least one earlier example which cannot be overlooked. Without doubt, Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612), a passionate lover of art, takes pride of place among the early collectors of world art in

the Czech lands. His art cabinet at Prague Castle, the famous Kunstkamera (Kunstkammer), also included Persian objects.

Rudolf enlarged his collections through purchases and exchanges, as well as through numerous diplomatic gifts or spoils of war. Striving for more than the official diplomatic gifts Rudolf summoned his ambassadors to purchase new objects for him. Friedrich von Kreckwitz (died in 1594), a permanent imperial ambassador to the Ottoman court who had been stationed in Constantinople since 1574, supplied Rudolf with valuable objects, such as a collection of 206 Persian folios of manuscripts.



The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter titled, 'the reception of Persian art in the Czech lands', from a book titled, 'The Shaping of Persian Art: Collections and Interpretations of the Art of Islamic Iran and Central Asia' edited by Yuka Kadot and Iván Szántó, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Days before Paris 2024 Olympics start

Calls to Int'l Olympic Committee, FIFA to ban Israel

grow



By Mehdi
Ebrahim
Staff writer

PERSPECTIVE

Since the start of Israel's genocidal war on the besieged Gaza Strip in October last year, international sports organizations, rights groups, and pro-Palestine movements across the world have called for limiting or suspending Israel's participation at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. In a strongly-worded statement on May 18, the Geneva-based Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (Euro-Med Monitor) said the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) must hold Israel accountable for its crimes against Palestinian athletes. The rights group underlined that international sports organizations must take "decisive action" against Israel as at least 270 Palestinian athletes have been killed since October 7, 2023, and 31 sports facilities, football fields, gyms, and sports training halls have been destroyed, which accounts for over eighty percent of the stadium- and club-level sports facilities in the Gaza Strip.

The Euro-Med added that 300 five-a-side courts, 22 swimming pools, six tennis stadiums, and 12 covered sports halls for basketball, volleyball, and handball have been bulldozed and destroyed. Twenty-eight sports and fitness centers have also been damaged.

The stadiums of Yarmouk, Palestine, Mohammed Al-Durrah, Beit Hanoun, Al-Tuffah, Al-Shuja'iyah, Al-Shati, Beit Lahia, Rafah, Deir al-Balah, and Nuseirat were among the major sports facilities destroyed by the Israeli aggression.

The Euro-Med Monitor said Israel also converted some stadiums into mass graves, abuse centers, and detention spots in blatant disregard of all regional, national, and international laws and conventions.

The statement stressed that Israel's months-long onslaught resulted in the cancellation of all sporting events, competitions, and activities while hundreds of Gaza Strip athletes were denied their right to travel and represent Palestine in different international competitions.

"The ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip must be addressed by FIFA, whose fundamental laws

and disciplinary and ethical rules specifically forbid support for actions that violate international law and human rights," the Euro-Med also noted.

"Failure to consider the Gaza Strip genocide would raise serious questions of double standards in FIFA's operations and policies," the rights groups added, referring to FIFA's move to swiftly impose a complete ban on Russia's participation in international competitions after Moscow's war in Ukraine in February 2022.

Earlier last month, the Palestinian Football Association (PFA) announced that it had sent letters to the International Olympic Committee and FIFA demanding an "urgent international probe into occupation crimes against sports and athletes in Palestine".

"In the latest example of Israeli fascism, the occupation showed us horrific images during its invasion of the Yarmouk Stadium in the Gaza Strip, and turned it into a detention center where it abused and interrogated our people," the PFA said.

"This blatant and scandalous violation of all covenants is added to a long series of violations against Palestinian sports, in-

cluding the killing and arrest of players. This is a crime that the international sports institutions cannot tolerate, silence, and ignore."

Amid rising calls for Tel Aviv to be banished from international sports, the pro-Palestine Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement advocated for Israel's football association to be expelled or suspended for hosting FIFA-sanctioned matches in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

"FIFA has for years actively shielded Israel from accountability for its ongoing war crimes and violations of FIFA's own statutes through its inclusion of teams in illegal Israeli settlements on stolen Palestinian land," the BDS said in a statement five months ago.

"FIFA has gone so far as to sanction not the illegal settlement clubs but fan clubs expressing support for Palestinian human rights. This is how these hypocritical bodies express neutrality."

Moreover, a group of 12 soccer associations in the Middle East region urged FIFA in a letter to ban Israel from global participation in the sport. Signatories of

the letter include soccer associations from Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. The letter has been sent to all 211 soccer federations and six regional confederations including the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA).

On New Year's Eve, Jordan's Football Association (JFA) also released a statement calling on the global sports community to take "decisive action to stop the aggression against Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied territories".

The statement called for stringent sanctions targeting Israeli sports associations in an attempt to isolate them from international sports. This would include barring Israeli teams, clubs, players, and representatives from participating in international competitions "until the occupying entity complies with international cease-fire demands".

"The blatant disregard for moral and humanitarian laws has transfigured football facilities in Gaza into sites of harm, humiliation, and abuse for innocent civilians and children, deviating from their intended purpose

as spaces of joy and hope," read the statement. "Silence in their critical circumstances may be perceived as an implicit endorsement of the occupation's unlawful practices, potentially implicating parties in these grievous atrocities."

The Islamic Republic of Iran, alongside other regional countries supporting the Palestinian cause, has also been pushing for the suspension of Israel and the regime's representatives from all sports activities.

Mehdi Taj, the president of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), walked out of an annual FIFA Congress meeting in Thailand's capital of Bangkok on May 17 in support of Palestinians suffering from Israel's barbaric war on Gaza.

Taj said the protest took place during the statements of the representative of the Israeli regime and that several other representatives, including from Iraq and Lebanon, also left the congress in condemnation of the illegal entity.

During FIFA's annual congress in Thailand, Palestinian Football Association President Jibril Rajoub stressed that Israel had committed multiple "systemat-

ic" violations of FIFA statutes as well as flagrant breaches of human rights in Gaza.

"The Palestinian people, including the Palestinian football family, are enduring an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe," Rajoub said. "We are witnessing a live televised genocide happening in Gaza."

The world's football governing body is scheduled to convene an extraordinary council meeting by July 20 to discuss whether to take action against the Israeli federation upon the Palestinian Federation's request to suspend the regime's membership, a request that has the backing of the Asian Football Confederation.

The Israeli regime's brutal aggression on Gaza came after Palestinian resistance groups carried out Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023, against the occupying entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

With the barbaric war well into its eighth month, the Tel Aviv regime has so far killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured over 84,000 others.

Palestinian children are seen at a sports facility destroyed in an Israeli attack on Gaza, Palestine, on May 24, 2024.

AA

To suspend Israel from Paris Olympic Games How many more Palestinians must be killed?

By Timothy Hopper
Scholar

OPINION

Sports diplomacy is a multifaceted domain that captures the collective ambitions of a nation on the international stage. It manifests in two principal dimensions: Diplomacy in the service of sports, which encompasses diplomatic endeavors that enhance a nation's sporting success, and sports in the service of diplomacy, a concept generally resisted by the Olympic Committee to avert the politicization of sports, aligning with Article 3 of the Olympic Charter. This nuanced perspective on sports diplomacy not only promotes the competitive ethos but also upholds the sanctity of sports from political entanglement.

Article 3, paragraph 5 of the Olympic Charter explicitly prohibits any form of demonstration or political, religious, and racial propaganda within Olympic venues. Despite this, the history of the Games has been marked by political protests. Typically, these have manifested as sanctions or boycotts, serving as a powerful statement within the realm of international sports.

Throughout Olympic history, boycotts have been a significant form of political protest, reflecting the global tensions of their times. The 1908 London Olympics were marked by Ireland's boycott, a significant political statement of the era. In 1956, the Melbourne Olympics were overshadowed by China's absence, protesting Taiwan's participation, which ignited a series of boycotts that lasted for three decades. That same year, the Netherlands and Spain withdrew from the games, objecting to the Soviet military intervention in Hungary. Concurrently, the Suez Canal crisis led Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq to abstain from participating in the 1956 Olympics. Fast forward to 1980, and over 50 countries from the Western bloc boycotted the Moscow Olympics in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This was followed by the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, which saw a retaliatory boycott by the Soviet Union and its allies, echoing the discord of the previous games. These events serve as poignant reminders of the intersection of sports and politics, where the Olympic platform has been repeatedly used to make geopolitical statements.

Olympic boycotts take various forms, not only with countries choosing not to participate but also with governments imposing bans on other nations. This phenomenon has recurred throughout history. For instance, South Africa was barred from the Olympics from 1964 in Tokyo to 1992 in Barcelona due to its apartheid policies. More recently, Russia faced sanctions following its military actions in Ukraine, leading to a ban by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Russian and Belarusian participation in all Olympic and related international events. Initially, this ban was absolute, but it was later revised to allow athletes from these countries to compete, albeit not under their national flags.

Such sanctions are not without precedent, and they serve as a reminder that the Olympic spirit is intertwined with global ethical standards. Today's calls for similar actions against nations violating human rights principles reflect the ongoing debate about the role of sports in upholding human values. Israel can rightly be considered a perfect example of relying on terrorism and war crimes. In the last 75 years, this regime has systematically employed a full spectrum of criminal tactics on the Palestinian people. However, the most egregious escalation of these offenses occurred in the aftermath of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm. Since the start of the war, Israel has perpetrated acts so heinous that even its staunchest Western allies cannot muster the audacity to endorse them publicly anymore.

Astonishingly, the intensity of the regime's bombardment in a mere week has surpassed the cumulative bombardment experienced in Afghanistan throughout the entire duration of the American presence. In the initial 25 days of the conflict, the Gaza Strip witnessed a death toll that surpassed the entire casualty count of the year-and-a-half-long war in Ukraine. The ferocity of the bombings on Gaza was of such magnitude that it equaled double the force of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

The regime's ruthless campaign against the city's inhabitants has culminated in charges of genocide at the International Court of Justice, with South Africa spearheading the case, backed by a coalition of nations, organizations, academics, and cultural figures.

The aforementioned instances represent merely a fraction of the Israeli regime's extensive list of transgressions within the Gaza Strip. Consequently, a pressing and significant debate arises: in light of such extensive criminal

activity, is it not imperative for the international community to call for Israel's exclusion from the Paris Olympic Games? Indeed, there is a compelling case for this to become a universal outcry, ensuring that a regime responsible for the deaths of countless Palestinian children is barred from participating in a global sporting event. Today's egregious human rights abuses by the Israelis bear a chilling resemblance to the conditions of South Africa during the apartheid era, which led to its Olympic exclusion. Numerous African human rights activists and anti-apartheid advocates contend that Israel's pattern of offenses over time reveals a system of apartheid in Gaza that is markedly more brutal, blatant, and inhumane than its historical counterpart in Africa. Consequently, there is a justified expectation that Israel should face at least an equivalent censure concerning their Olympic participation.

Ultimately, it must be emphasized that the Olympic Charter is dedicated to leveraging sports as a conduit for the harmonious development of humanity, fostering a peaceful society, and upholding human dignity. Should the International Olympic Committee permit Israeli athletes to compete in the Paris Games, it would not only signify a disregard for the rights of the Palestinians, their families, and friends — who have all suffered immensely under the Israeli's savage assaults — but also indicate a departure from the Committee's foundational mission to preserve human dignity. Furthermore, the inclusion of Israel in the Olympic Games amidst its ongoing genocide against the Palestinians would convey a tacit endorsement of egregious war crimes by the international sporting community.

The full article first appeared on *Eurasiareview*.

FIFA hypocrisy on display as it defers Palestinian motion to bar Israel

By Karim Zidan
Founder of Sports
Politika

OPINION

During FIFA's annual congress on May 17 in Bangkok, Thailand, Palestinian Football Association (PFA) president Jibril Rajoub gave an impassioned speech in which he revealed that "the Palestinian people, including the Palestinian football family, are enduring an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe."

Rajoub, who also heads Palestine's Olympic Committee, went on to explain that Israel had repeatedly and systematically violated FIFA's mandates, noting the "Israeli Football Association's inclusion in its national league of illegal settlement clubs located in the occupied Palestinian territories".

"The numerous committees to address these issues have either failed to provide effective resolutions or have not reported back to the congress that mandated them," he added during his speech.



Jibril Rajoub waives a symbolic red penalty card at Israel during the 65th FIFA Congress on May 29, 2015.
● FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP

Rajoub's speech came in the wake of a motion filed by the PFA to temporarily suspend Israel over its ongoing destruction of Gaza and the subsequent humanitarian crisis that resulted from Israel's indiscriminate bombardment of the besieged strip.

Yet despite the emotionally charged speech and the thunderous applause that followed, FIFA's president, Gianni Infantino, declined to call a vote.

Instead, Infantino claimed that FIFA planned to assemble experts to analyze whether Israel violated the governing body's sanctions before convening an extraordinary meeting of FIFA's top board in July to make a decision.

"FIFA will mandate, as of now, independent legal expertise to assess the three requests [from the Palestinian FA] and ensure the statutes of FIFA are applied in the right way," Infantino said.

"Due to the urgency of the situation, an extraordinary FIFA Council will be convened and will take place before July 20 to review the results of the legal assessment and to take the decisions that are appropriate."

The decision to defer the motion is unsurprising. Over the past few months, both the Israeli and Palestinian football associations have lobbied other national associations for support. While the Asian football governing body agreed to back the Palestinian motion, Israel managed to prevent the motion from reaching a vote, while also garnering substantial support from most of UEFA, Europe's football governing body.

On May 17, Israel's FA president Shino Moshe Zuares responded to Jibril's speech by reverting to his tried and tested statements calling for the depoliticization of sports.

"I believe football must be a key element of healing the fractures and the wounds, helping us to recover," Zuares said. "Yet once again we are facing a cynical, political, and hostile attempt by the Palestinian association to harm Israeli football." Zuares' statement exemplifies

how those with social and political privilege often advocate for the separation of sports and politics to suit their interests. In this instance, Israel — a country that has occupied Palestinian territories since 1967 — is insisting that sports be used to distract from or normalize its treatment of Palestinians, rather than highlight the injustices resulting from years of occupation and dispossession.

Meanwhile, FIFA, which acted at record speed to bar Russia from competitions after the country launched its assault on Ukraine, is more than happy to embolden Israel's actions by shielding it from consequences or condemnation.

FIFA's failure to take decisive action in response to the PFA's motion highlights a glaring double standard and deepens the credibility crisis already facing the organization. With pressing issues such as the unreleased report on the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and a noticeable decline in transparency under Infantino's leadership, FIFA's commitment to accountability and justice remains in serious doubt. Until FIFA addresses these systemic issues and applies its principles consistently, its integrity will continue to be called into question.

The article first appeared on *Sports Politika*.



FIFA President Gianni Infantino (L) meets with Israel's President Isaac Herzog in 2021.
● SPORTS POLITIKA



An Israeli soldier holds up the flag of the Scottish Celtic football club in the Khan Yunis stadium in the Gaza Strip as Israeli tanks room around the turned field.
● X

'Nothing is impossible': Mohmadi looking to be Iran's dark horse in Paris



● HOSSEIN NAQIZADEH/IRAN DAILY



By Sadeq
Dehqan
Staff writer

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Alireza Mohmadi says he is confident of win-

ning a surprise medal at the Paris Olympics later in the summer. A world under-20 champion, Mohmadi, 22, impressed on his senior debut at the World Championships last year in Belgrade,

going all the way to the final showdown before a 2-1 defeat against high-profile Rafiq Huseynov – an Olympic bronze winner in Tokyo and the 2021 world gold medalist – saw him settle for the silver.

"Thank God I won a precious world medal on my first attempt, though I believe I would have won the gold if it was not for my opponent's higher experience," Mohmadi told Iran Daily.

Looking to build on his decent run in the world event, Mohmadi moved up to the Olympic 87kg class to take a shot at a place in the Paris Games. Having beaten domestic rival Nasser Alizadeh to the

national title in December, Mohmadi bagged a silver in January's season-opening Ranking Series event in Zagreb and then went on to secure the Olympic quota for the country in the Asian qualifiers in April,

convincing head coach Hassan Rangraz to name him in the Iranian six-man squad in Paris.

"I wanted to switch to the 87kg class two years ago but the national team coaching staff told me to stay in the 82kg division for the World Championships. The success in Belgrade, however, gave me the confidence to try my luck for the Olympics," said the Iranian.

While world superheavyweight champion Amin Mirzazadeh and four-time world and Olympic medalist Mohammad-Hadi Saravi are widely regarded as the Iranian favorites for glory at the upcoming Games, Mohmadi also fancies his chances of leaving the French capital with a medal.

"Nothing is impossible at the Paris Games. Looking at 130kg and 97kg events, you can see there are only two or three medal hopefuls, but that's not the case in the 87kg class as there is no clear favorite and the race for the medals will be wide open till the end, which could even make it a tougher contest in my division," Mohmadi said.

Mohmadi was not part of the Iranian squad at the recently-finished Ranking Series tournament in Budapest, as he stayed in the national team training camp in Tehran to continue his Olympic preparation.

"That was a decision made by the coaching staff as even a gold in Budapest would not have changed my position in the world ranking ahead of the Olympics," added Mohmadi.

Iran coach Qalenoey rues fatigue in Uzbekistan stalemate



Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Qalenoey lamented his team's fatigue after the Asian powerhouse played to a goalless home draw against Uzbekistan at the World Cup qualifiers on Tuesday.

There was little to separate the two sides at Tehran's Azadi Stadium, though Iran enjoyed the majority of the possession over the course of the 90 minutes and had the best chance of the game to break the deadlock, when Mahdi Taremi's effort hit the woodwork midway through the second half.

The result was still enough for Iran to beat the Central Asian opponent to the top spot in the qualification group and, according to the FIFA ranking, avoid Japan and South Korea in the third-round group phase.

"I'm glad we progressed as the group winners. I would like to thank the fans for their support until the last seconds. I would also like to give special thanks

to my players," the Iranian head coach said in the post-match press conference.

The game was a second in five days for Qalenoey's side following last Thursday's 4-2 away win against Hong Kong.

"These two games were played right after the final day of the Iranian league. We had to fly to Hong Kong with no training sessions and play in the 90-percent humidity before making a 20-hour trip back home. That's why we played with fatigue in the first half. We'll have to improve our performance for the next round," added Qalenoey.

"Uzbekistan has made proper investments in football in recent years and is achieving significant results. Two of their top players made massive contributions to the Iranian league title run-in," Qalenoey said, referring to Uzbek winger Oston Urunov, who lifted the Iranian top-flight trophy with Persepolis, and midfielder Jaloliddin Masharipov, a league runner-up

with Esteghlal.

Qalenoey's opposite number Srečko Katanec, meanwhile, was pleased with the result and his team's well-organized backline.

"The match went well and I am satisfied with the result," said the Slovenian, adding: "We were confident in defense and did not give Iran clear-cut chances."

"In the second half, the opponents hit the post but in general, we played a good game and I am glad that no player was injured.

"We showed good aggression on the pitch and while we could have done better from an attacking standpoint, it was important for us not to lose the game."

Iranian midfielder Mahdi Torabi (16) is seen in action during a goalless draw against Uzbekistan in the World Cup Asian qualifiers at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on June 11, 2024.

● HASAN PIRMUHAMEDOV/AFK

Ten Hag to remain United manager

BBC – Erik ten Hag will remain as manager of Manchester United following a post-season review by the club's board. It is understood they are now talking to Ten Hag about extending his contract, which is about to enter its final season.

United instigated their review immediately after the FA Cup final.

Ten Hag went into the game against Manchester City at Wembley amid a backdrop of reports claiming he

would be sacked no matter the outcome.

Instead, United's deserved 2-1 victory allowed the club hierarchy to approach the review in a more positive light.

It is understood what are being described as "constructive conversations" with Ten Hag have taken place around the outcome of the review.

All eventualities were considered and the clear preference was for the

54-year-old Dutchman to remain in charge.

Ten Hag is known to be delighted at the outcome, though there were suggestions he was getting irritated at the time taken for United to reach it.

United finished eighth in the league last season – their lowest position in the Premier League era. They suffered the most injuries, with 45 separate cases recorded, a fact Ten Hag often cited for some below-par displays.



● TOM JENKINS/THE OBSERVER

E3 seeking to settle 'political score' with Iran: *Acting FM*



Iran's Interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani (R) is seen in an interview with Russia's RT news channel in the central Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod on June 12, 2024.
● mfa.gov.ir

Speaking in an interview with Russia's RT news channel on the sidelines of a two-day meeting of foreign min-

isters of the BRICS group of countries in the central Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod on Tuesday, Iran's Interim

Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani censured a recent move by Britain, France and Germany to have spearheaded

a resolution against Tehran at the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Accusing the Islamic Republic of withholding sufficient cooperation with the agency, the 35-nation BoG passed the resolution with 20 in favor and two against with 12 abstentions during its meeting on June 5. "Since about two years ago, the Europeans have not taken any positive action in the field of negotiations. Certainly, the move by the three European countries is one of their deceitful actions and while they show no seriousness and will to pursue the negotiations, they unjustly accuse Iran of evading and violating its commitments," Bagheri Kani said. The top Iranian diplomat stressed that the three European countries had turned the IAEA into a venue to settle "their own political score" with Iran, which he said "will definitely

be of no avail." Elsewhere in his interview with RT, Bagheri Kani said bilateral cooperation between Iran and Russia results in the consolidation of stability and security in the region and across the world. "Relations between Iran and Russia ... are historical. The relations between Iran and Russia have developed and expanded in all aspects. Of course, it is natural that the more serious threats Iran and Russia face, the greater their solidarity will be to face common challenges and threats," he said. Bagheri Kani also underlined that the two strategic partners are simultaneously working within the framework of multilateralism by their active participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS group.

Canadian court blames Ukrainian airline for jet downing

Iran calls ruling 'fair'



● IRNA

International Desk

Iran's Vice President for Legal Affairs Mohammad Dehqan described as "fair" a Canadian court ruling on the case of a Ukrainian passenger jet mistakenly shot down by Iran's air defenses in 2020. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice has ruled that Ukraine International Airlines is legally responsible for paying full compensation to the families who lost loved ones in the downing of UIA Flight 752 in Iran in January 2020.

Flight PS752, carrying Canadian citizens and permanent residents, was shot down over Iran's capital, Tehran, by the Iranian Revolution Guards Corps in the early hours of January 8, 2020, at a time when military tensions with the United States were rapidly escalating. The Ontario Court found that UIA was negligent for failing to conduct a proper assessment of the risks of operating the flight out of Tehran.

Justice Jasmine Akbarali ruled that UIA's negligence was grounded in the fact that hours before the departure of Flight 752, Iran had launched ballistic missiles against US forces in Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani and was on high alert for a counterattack. The judgment followed an 18-day trial in Toronto that ended in January 2024.

The plane was shot down by Iran's air defenses, which mistook the aircraft for a military target amid tensions between Tehran and Washington following the US assassination of the late legendary commander in Iraq days earlier. Iran subsequently acknowledged that the mismanagement of an air defense unit's radar system by its operator was the key human error that led to the accident.

Dehqan noted that the incident was a mistake in which the Ukrainian airline played a role. He said that Tehran welcomes the ruling that will be used by Iran in the international Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), where two cases have been brought against the Islamic Republic on the Ukrainian jet.

Iran rebukes US sanctions on disabled community

The head of State Welfare Organization of Iran (SWO) censured illegal sanctions imposed by the US and Western governments on the country's community of persons with disabilities. "The global community and human rights forums must address these critical questions: Which human rights principles are consistent with and justify the sanctions imposed on the Iranian community of persons with disabilities?" Ali Mohammad Qaderi said. He was speaking at the 17th session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP17) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York on Tuesday, Press TV reported. Qaderi said Iran will make every effort to promote services needed for the disabled in accordance with the

convention's framework as the Islamic Republic has prioritized the implementation of community-based rehabilitation programs at the national level. Washington's sanctions against Iran have taken a new turn since May 2018 when the former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew his country from the 2015 nuclear deal and reinstated harsh economic bans on Tehran. Qaderi said the Islamic Republic, with a commitment to further enhancing the empowerment, independence, and social integration of persons with disabilities, has embarked on comprehensive initiatives to ensure accessibility in both physical environments and cyberspace for the disabled. "This is notwithstanding the fact that the cruel sanctions imposed by

the United States and many Western countries on the Islamic Republic of Iran have significantly increased the prime costs of rehabilitation items and specialized services, and affected the economic capabilities of individuals receiving such services," he said. Qaderi asked the forum, "Don't you think that creating barriers to the international communication of the Iranian community of persons with disabilities will ultimately deprive them of their equal rights to educational and rehabilitation facilities?" Iranian authorities have on numerous occasions censured the decades-long unilateral US sanctions on the Islamic Republic as a crime against humanity since they severely undermine the basic rights of the entire nation.

Hezbollah rains rockets on Israel after strike kills commander



Female mourners hold the portrait of Hezbollah's commander Taleb Sami Abdallah, who was killed in an Israeli strike during his funeral in Beirut's southern suburbs on June 12, 2024.
● ANWAR AMRO/AFP

Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah fired barrages of rockets at Israel on Wednesday and vowed to intensify its attacks after an Israeli strike killed a senior commander in south Lebanon the previous day. Hezbollah has traded near-daily cross-border fire with the Israeli army since the beginning of the regime's war on Gaza in October. "We will increase the intensity, strength, quantity and quality of our attacks," said senior Hezbollah official Hashem Safieddine, speaking at the funeral of commander Taleb Sami Abdallah, who was killed in Tuesday's Israeli strike, AFP reported. In Doha, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken renewed calls Wednesday for a diplomatic solution between Israel and Lebanon and said a long-sought Gaza cease-fire deal would "take a tremendous amount of pressure out of the system". Hezbollah in statements said it launched "dozens of Katyusha rockets" at three

bases and a barracks in northern Israel. The group said it also struck a "military factory" with guided missiles "in response to the assassination carried out by the Zionist enemy". Taleb Sami Abdallah was killed along with three Hezbollah comrades in an Israeli strike on Jouaiyya. A Lebanese military source said the commander was "the most important in Hezbollah to be killed... since the start of the war". More than eight months of cross-border violence has killed at least 468 people in Lebanon, most of them fighters but also including 89 civilians, according to an AFP tally. Israeli authorities say at least 15 Israeli soldiers and 11 civilians have been killed. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced on both sides of the border since the violence erupted on October 7. Meanwhile, deadly fighting rocked Gaza on Wednesday as US top diplomat Antony Blinken on a Mid-

dle East tour pushed for an elusive truce and captive release deal to end the war raging since October 7. And in Geneva, a UN investigation concluded on Wednesday that Israel has committed crimes against humanity during the war in Gaza, and that both parties to the bloody conflict were guilty of war crimes. US Secretary of State Blinken arrived in Qatar on his latest regional crisis tour, to promote a cease-fire deal outlined by President Joe Biden on May 31. US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators were studying a reply Hamas issued late Tuesday, but there was no news of a breakthrough as Hamas has insisted on a complete end to the war, a demand rejected by Israel. Hamas and their allies Islamic Jihad said that their response calls for "a complete halt to the ongoing aggression on Gaza". Hamas proposed amendments including a cease-fire timeline and the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, a source familiar with the talks said.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iranian Film Week underway in Bishkek



IRANIAN FILM WEEK

ИРАН КИНОСУНУН ЖУМАЛЫГЫ

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian Film Week is being held as part of the second Bishkek International Film Festival, which runs from June 11 to June 15. The Iranian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan reported that the festival features four Iranian feature films and one animated film.

The films showcased include 'No Prior Appointment' directed by Behrouz Shoyabi, 'Dolphin Boy' directed by Mohammad Kheirandish, 'Captain' directed by Mohammad Hamzei, 'Squad of Girls' directed by Monir Gheidi,

and 'My Second Year in College' directed by Rasoul Sadrameli. Each film has received a state registration certificate for screening in Kyrgyzstan, Tasnim news agency reported. The festival opened with a ceremony attended by Iranian and Kyrgyz cultural officials, including Mohammad Khazaei, head of Cinema Organization of Iran, and Akjolbek Bulutov, Deputy Minister of Culture, Information, Sports, and Youth Policy of Kyrgyzstan. Khazaei expressed gratitude to the Kyrgyz people and officials for their hospitality and

support for Iranian cinema. Khazaei highlighted the importance of cultural exchanges and noted the global recognition of Iranian cinema for its moral values and family-oriented themes. He emphasized the role of cinema in diplomacy and cultural exchange, envisioning a collaborative future between Iran and Kyrgyzstan. The festival, which welcomes over 70 guests from more than 20 countries and around 200 filmmakers, aims to foster cultural understanding and appreciation through diverse cinematic experiences.

Iran art exhibition held in Algeria to honor poet Khayyam

An art exhibition opened in Algeria to commemorate the acclaimed Iranian poet Omar Khayyam. The exhibition, featuring calligraphy, paintings, miniatures, and photos, will run for two weeks at the Palace of Riyas El Bahr, a cultural and historical center in Algeria, IRNA reported. The event, showcasing 40 artworks reflecting Iranian culture, was inaugurated with a ceremony attended by foreign diplomats, political and cultural figures, and media representatives. Iran's Ambassador to

Algeria, Mohammad Reza Babaei, welcomed the guests and spoke about Khayyam's significance in Iranian culture. Khayyam, born in 1048 and known for his Rubaiyat (quatrains), was a Persian astronomer, mathematician, and poet. His poems were famously translated into English by Edward FitzGerald. Special guests signed a commemorative art panel, and attendees received booklets of Khayyam's poetry in English, Arabic, and French. The exhibition will remain open until June 23.



World Day Against Child Labor Skill training to tackle child labor on agenda: *Health official*

Social Desk

A health official Maryam Shirdel highlighted the need for skill training to tackle the social issue of child labor.

The director of the department of Social Harm Prevention at the Organization for Social Services and Participation expressed concern that financial assistance from citizens to working children could inadvertently lead to an increase in their numbers on the streets and intersections, inn.ir reported. Shirdel noted that while the exact number of working children in Iran is not known, approximately 80% of those identified by municipal centers are foreign nationals, with 90% of them being Afghan. She emphasized the importance of organizations working together to help these children break free from the cycle of harm and engage in skill-building activities to prevent them from engaging in risky or harmful occupations.

Regarding the income of working children on the streets and intersections, Shirdel explained that their earnings vary depending on their location and type of work. She pointed out that not all



working children are found on the streets, as many are employed in various sectors such as agriculture, tailoring workshops, mechanic shops, household labor, and gardening around Tehran. Shirdel stressed that due to their role as breadwinners in their families, working children are in need of employment. She cautioned against providing financial support to these children, as it could inadvertently perpetuate their presence on the streets and intersections. She emphasized the importance of raising awareness among citizens to discourage financial help to working children. Shirdel concluded by highlighting the need for proper cultural education to reduce the prevalence of working children on the streets and

intersections. She acknowledged the challenges posed by economic and security issues in neighboring countries, particularly Afghanistan, which contribute to the influx of migrants and exacerbate the situation of working children in Iran.

World progress in fight against child labor stalled

After having made significant progress in reducing the levels of child labor worldwide between the years 2000 and 2016, that progress stalled. Between 2016 and 2020 (the latest available data), the percentage of children working in these conditions remained the same, while the absolute number of children working in childhood labor even in-

creased. Of the 160 million children estimated to be in child labor that year, 79 million are believed to have been working in hazardous conditions, directly endangering their health, safety and moral development. This is according to a report published jointly by the International Labor Organization and UNICEF.

While there has been continued progress in the fight against child labor in Asia and the Pacific as well as Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa has seen an increase in both the absolute number of children and the percentage of children in child labor since 2012.

Another knock on effect of children working in child labor is that they are often out of school, impacting their access to opportunities as they get older. According to the report, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia is the world region with the highest share of children in child labor who were also out of school in 2020, at 37.2 percent. This was followed by Central and Southern Asia (35.3 percent), Northern Africa and Western Asia (28.1 percent), Sub-Saharan Africa (28.1 percent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (15.5 percent).

Iran's 'The Old Bachelor' to compete at Transilvania Int'l Film Festival

The Iranian film 'The Old Bachelor,' directed by Oktay Baraheni, will compete at the 23rd Transilvania International Film Festival, held from June 14-23 in Romania. It is the film's second international appearance following receiving the Grand Prix at the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

Produced by Babak Hamidian and Hanif Sarvari, 'The Old Bachelor' will compete in the main competition, which features debut and



sophomore films from directors. The film stars prominent

actors Leila Hatami, Hamed Behdad, and Mohammad Reza Golzar.

Iran's 'Okht-o-Reda' to be screened in Baghdad

The Iranian film 'Okht-o-Reda' (Reza's Sister) directed by Mojtaba Tabatabai is set to be screened in Baghdad cinemas for 20 days starting on June 16, coinciding with the eve of Eid al-Adha. The film, which tells the story of the journey of Hazrat Fatima Masoumeh

from Medina to Qom and historical events and conspiracies, has previously been screened internationally in Lebanon, Pakistan, and Australia. The film's director is renowned for directing acclaimed documentaries like 'Cloudy Sky' and 'The Footsteps of Water'.

