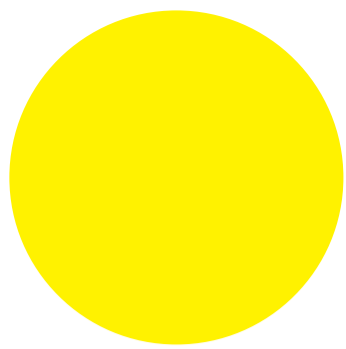


Tehran, Canberra can double bilateral trade: *Chamber deputy*

EXCLUSIVE

2 >



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Leader's Hajj message:

Renunciation Must Go Beyond Hajj

Muslim states must tighten noose around Israel

7 >



A 'competitive election' in the making

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The presidential campaigns in the run-up to the June 28 vote have begun in Iran. The election race is gradually heating up.

With no political factions boycotting the election as seen in the past two terms (presidential election in 2021 and parliamentary election in 2024), a question emerges that will we witness a notable surge in voter turnout this time around? Iran Daily has discussed this issue with Abbas Salimi Namin, a political expert.

IRAN DAILY: Do you reckon that we will face a tough competition among the six presidential candidates in the upcoming election? And if so, do you think it will result in a high voter turnout?

SALIMI NAMIN: Yes, I believe that we are facing a serious competition and as a result, we should expect a high level of participation in the election. High voter turnout will be the outcome of competitive elections and people's thorough understanding of the candidates. Nevertheless, nominees from various political parties have succeeded in standing for the presidential election, with no political faction boycotting the election. However, what matters is that ultimately, people will cast their votes based on a precise understanding of the societal conditions and capabilities of the candidates, or they will be influenced by election emotions and the potential polarized atmosphere, thus not paying much attention to the candidates' programs and capabilities.

Page 7 >



Ex-Iranian official Hamid Nouri released from Swedish prison

7 >

Girls cruise to golds as Iran grabs six Asian canoe medals

6 >



Iran, Russia discuss implementation of Rasht-Astara railway

2 >



Ayatollah Khamenei meets Olympiad medalists

Leader praises elites as "major asset" to achieve scientific development

8 >



SPECIAL ISSUE

Hajj of renunciation to disturb pro-Israeli balance

4-5 >

Iran, Russia discuss implementation of Rasht-Astara railway



Senior officials from Iran and Russia explored the implementation and operation of Rasht-Astara railway in northern Iran.

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash met Igor Levitin, an aide to the Russian president, and Leonid Slutsky, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Russia's State Duma, in Tehran on Saturday, IRNA wrote.

They talked about implementing the strategic railway which is a key part of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

Highlighting the need for increasing the volume of transit through the Iranian soil, they stressed the significance of completing the INSTC corridor.

Bazrpash and Levitin had had another meeting in Tehran in late February.

On Thursday, Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhber described the country's relations with Russia as strategic and founded upon unchanging principles.

Mokhber made the remarks as he was speaking on the phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Complete implementation of all the agreements that have been clinched [between the two sides], including in the areas of trade, transit, and energy, forms the principal agenda of the bilateral ties," the Iranian official said.

Mokhber went on to review the process of the Islamic Republic's bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Russia, especially concerning the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the BRICS group of emerging economies, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Tehran, Canberra can double bilateral trade: *Chamber deputy*



in the field of economy and trade.

Alireza Shamsfard told Iran Daily that the distance between Iran and Australia has caused some difficulties in the relations between the two countries in trade areas, but the main problem that has affected the commercial relations is the sanctions and especially the difficulties in financial exchanges.

He put the official trade between the two countries at around \$30 million per annum, noting that the actual figure is much higher and reaches at least \$150 million.

"A large part of Iran's trade

exchanges with Australia is carried out through third countries, which usually cannot be tracked by official statistics; for example, the United Arab Emirates is the largest re-exporter between Iran and Australia, through which most of the exchanges between Iran and Australia are carried out," Shamsfard explained.

Due to the sanctions that have been imposed on Iran, a very large part of the exchanges between the two countries, which was in the mineral sector, has decreased significantly, and our exchanges in this sector have decreased in terms of technology, machinery and minerals.

The bilateral trade potential had exceeded \$300 million in recent years, as we imported cars from

Australia, or food exchanges constituted a good amount of trade between the two countries, he stated, criticizing that due to the sanctions, we are facing problems in exchanging many goods, even exchange of products such as food, which are not directly subject to sanctions, as our money and bank transfers are facing restrictions due to sanctions.

The Iran-Australia Joint Chamber of Commerce is tasked with facilitating the commercial affairs of the two sides, the trader noted, adding that in this field, it provided favorable help, guidance and advice to businesspersons and companies interested in doing business in Australia and Iran.

"Australia is one of the leading countries in the world in the field of food products and industries including dairy products, textiles and mineral industries, and we

can use their technology in these sectors in addition to imports of final products."

Australia is among top countries in many fields, such as industrial machinery and road construction, and for example, in the field of mining machinery production, it is one of the top three countries, along with the US and Poland, Shamsfard added.

Regarding the presence of Iranian firms in Australian exhibitions, he said, "We always send invitations to participate in these exhibitions to the members along with taking measures in the field of managing affairs, obtaining visas and other related tasks, but due to the difficulty of the process, we often do not get a good reception."

Shamsfard went on to say that we almost have Iranian exhibitors at the Fine Food Australia exhibition which is annually held in September; and we do the required works for the participation of Iranian traders in the expo, which include coordinating with travel agencies and obtaining visas.

Iran-Qatar trade up 41% in two months: *Official*



Iran's commercial envoy to Qatar said the trade and economic ties between the two countries in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March to May 2024) registered a 41-percent growth compared to the same period last year.

Abbas Abdolkhani said the trade relations between the two countries stood at the trajectory of growth in the first two months of the current Iranian year, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Agricultural and food products,

aquatics, dried nuts, carpets, and construction materials were among the main products exported from Iran to Qatar in this period, he stated.

Abdolkhani stressed the need for the expansion and development of the trade and economic relations between the two countries, especially given the good political relations between the two countries. He went on to say that high-ranking officials of the two countries are determined to expand the relations in the fields of trade and

economy.

The commercial envoy pointed to the neighboring advantage and vicinity between the two countries and pointed out that the geographical proximity can reduce transport costs.

Iran possesses diverse natural resources and agricultural productions, and Qatar has a dynamic consumable market, he said, noting that it makes the two countries complementary in the development and expansion of trade and economic relations.

Iran to launch production of solar panels soon

Iran will soon launch the production line of solar panels to generate 1,800 MW of energy per year, an energy expert told IRNA.

Sima Ghaffari said on Saturday that the production of solar panels will also increase the area covered by such panels to 23,000 hectares per year.

The annual solar energy generation of Iran will increase to 2,300 MW once the production of the panels is completed, she said, without specifying the launching date.

In recent years, Iran has been work-

ing on developing its solar energy production as part of efforts to reduce gas emissions and combat air pollution.

In December, the Iranian Energy Ministry unveiled a plan for the construction of 95 renewable power plants.

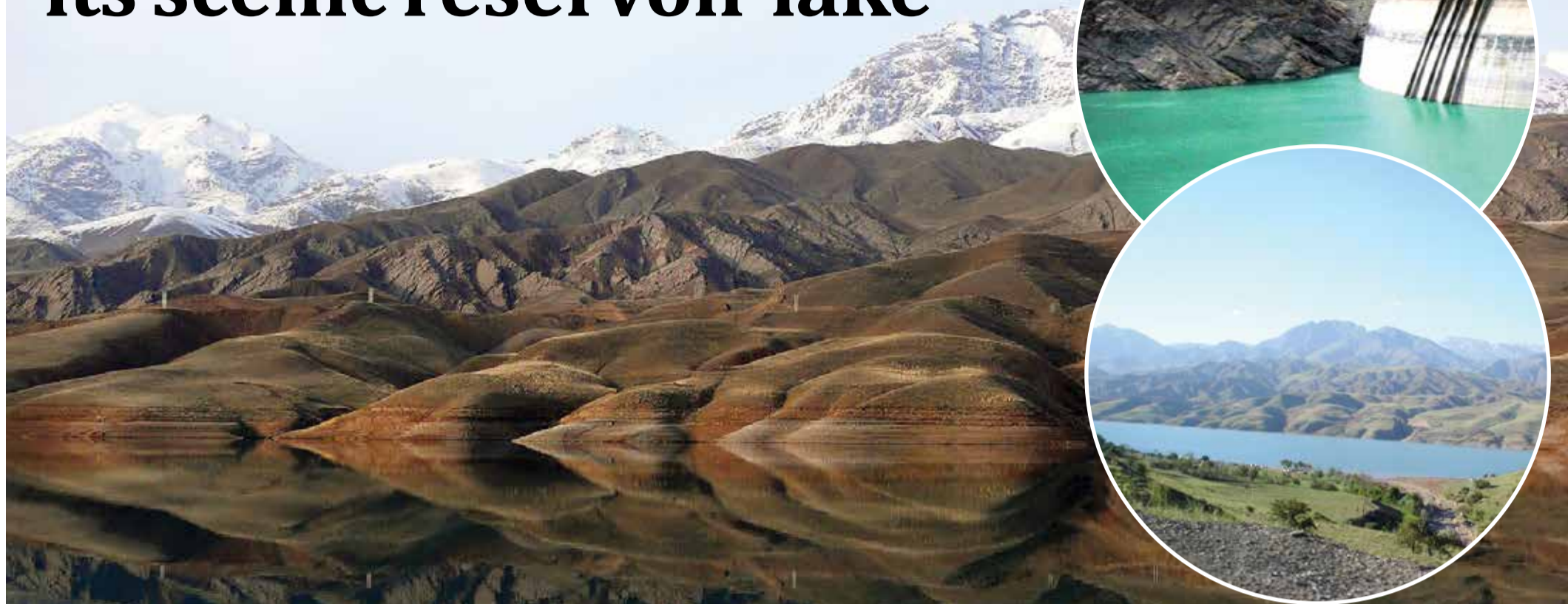
The plan is aimed at removing the imbalance of electricity and power outages. The total amount of electricity generated by the power plants (11,000 MW) will be 11 times that of the electricity generated at the Bushehr Power Plant in southern Iran. The nominal electricity generation ca-

capacity of the renewable power plants in the country stands at 30,000 MW currently.

Also, Deputy Energy Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs Yazdan Rezaei announced that his ministry will set a new record in construction of power stations by the end of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2024). Experts believe that the development of renewable power plants in the country can help remove the electricity imbalance to a great extent and also assist the stability of the power grid.



Taleqan Dam and its scenic reservoir lake



Iranica Desk

There is an embankment dam situated on the eastern side of Taleqan creating a lake in the southern foothills of the Alborz Mountains in Alborz Province. Taleqan, the provincial capital, is located in this region. The lake is primarily fed by water originating from the Shahrud River, flowing 175 kilometers from high elevations before meeting the Alamut River. Ultimately, this water makes its way into the Caspian Sea in northern Iran.

In 1969, initial studies for the establishment of Taleqan Dam Lake began with the purpose of redirecting water from Taleqan to the plains in Qazvin. Additionally, a nine-kilometer tunnel was constructed to facilitate the transfer of water to Ziyaran and the water canals of the Qazvin plain. However, these were not the sole initial projects linked to the Taleqan Dam. In conjunction with the dam's construction, a series of studies were undertaken for a reservoir dam aimed at managing springtime floods in the

Taleqan River. This project was ultimately finished in 2006 and commenced operations simultaneously. The lake formed by the Taleqan Dam stretches over ten kilometers in length and functions as a hydroelectric power source. Notably, the reservoir boasts a volume of around four hundred and twenty cubic meters. The vicinity surrounding the Taleqan Dam Lake has evolved into one of Iran's most scenic and popular recreational spots. Throughout the spring and summer months, visitors from

Tehran and Alborz Provinces flock to the area. The verdant shores provide stunning vistas of the Shah Alborz Peak in the Alborz Mountains, creating enduring memories for years to come. Lush forests with towering green trees, expansive meadows adorned with colorful flowers, and rushing rivers with crystal-clear blue waters combine to form a captivating and heartwarming landscape. The area boasts a rich diversity of plants and animals, offering glimpses of beautiful birds, vi-

brant butterflies, and various wildlife species.

Numerous recreational activities cater to all preferences:

- Thrill-seekers can delight in boating on the lake's waves.
- Fishing enthusiasts can try their luck at catching different fish along the lake's shores.
- Cooling off with a swim in the refreshing waters of the lake during the hot seasons promises a delightful experience.
- Photographers have the opportunity to capture unforgettable moments of the enchanting lake and its

surrounding natural beauty.

● Strolling through the forests and verdant meadows provides a chance to inhale clean air and revel in the unspoiled splendor of nature.

Near Taleqan Lake, a range of accommodations awaits visitors, catering to diverse preferences. Eco-tourism lodges provide a taste of rural life for those interested in a more authentic experience. Camping in nature beckons to adventurers seeking excitement and a closer connection to the great outdoors.

Tomb of Khwaju Kermani is a must-see attraction in Shiraz



Iranica Desk

Tourists, both domestic and foreign, often regard Shiraz as a top destination in Fars Province. The city offers a wide variety of attractions that cater to every visitor's interests. One notable highlight is the collection of poet tombs, which includes the resting place of Khwaju. The tomb of Khwaju Kermani (1280-1351 CE) is a must-see attraction in Shiraz, located across from the Qur'an Gate. This significant site is

near the famous Roknabad Spring. Registered on Iran's National Heritage List, the tomb is one of the many tourist destinations in Fars Province. Khwaju Kermani, born in Kerman in 1290, was a prominent poet of the Mongol era. Situated at the base of Mount Sabui, the tomb marks the start of the Shiraz-Isfahan road. During his youth, alongside his studies, Khwaju Kermani nourished a profound love for exploration. His travels took him to various destinations, including Egypt, Syria, and

Iraq, where he resided in Baghdad for a period. Upon returning to Iran, he settled in Shiraz, where he found companionship and wisdom in a man named Abu Ishaq. Khwaju Kermani passed away in Shiraz in 1351. As per existing records, the Fars Province Archaeology Organization established a chamber in the northern section of his tomb in 1958. Two verses of his poetry are elegantly inscribed in nasta'liq script on the walls of this chamber. Khwaju Kermani is celebrated as one

of the most melodious poets from the Kerman region and a master lyricist of Persian poetry. His profound influence and contributions during his time in Shiraz are well-documented. Notably, his work greatly impacted the renowned poet Hafez Shirazi, shaping the latter's ghazals. The architecture of Khwaju Kermani's tomb is striking. Featuring two columns at its base and top, the tomb is open-roofed, with a distinctive curved surface on the grave within. While there is no specific inscription

marking Khwaju's resting place, a verse from Surah Ar-Rahman adorns the gravestone as the sole adornment. Legend has it that in close proximity to Khwaju Kermani's tomb, three caves exist. According to historical records, his devotees and scholars from that era would select one of these caves for continuous worship and adoration of God, dedicating themselves to praising Him day and night within these sacred spaces.

Hajj without renunciation not a true Hajj

INTERVIEW

During his meeting with Iranian officials in charge of conducting and organizing the Hajj pilgrimage on May 6, 2024, Iran's Leader of the Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei discussed the social aspect of Hajj and how Hajj should resemble Prophet Abraham's (PBUH) firm stance against enemies of Allah, calling this year's Hajj to be "a Hajj of renunciation" against those who show hostility and animosity toward Muslims, namely the Zionists and their supporters.

In this interview, Sayyid Ahmad Suli, a Muslim scholar and preacher, provides a Qur'anic, historical, and political basis for Ayatollah Khamenei's statement.

Considering that Hajj provides one of the largest platforms for solidarity and unity among the Islamic Ummah, how can this immense capacity of Hajj be best utilized to resolve the problems of the Islamic world?

This annual meeting, as the late founder of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini stated, is a grand religious and political gathering. Unfortunately, today we are losing the opportunity that Islam has provided for us. Hajj, which should serve as a gathering where scholars, thinkers, intellectuals, and other Muslims of the Islamic Ummah come together to discuss the political, economic, and social conditions of their nations, the current and future challenges, and strategies to solve and overcome obstacles, has been turned into empty rituals and ceremonies devoid of their sublime content, and are held in an unproductive and useless manner.

As a matter of fact, the attempt to remove the social, cultural, educational, and political dimensions of religion, worship, and religious rituals like Hajj and limit them solely to the connection between the individual and their Lord is simply because the tyrants



A group of Muslim pilgrims from the West Bank get ready to perform their Hajj rituals this year as one member of the group waves the Palestinian flag. **SCENE NOW**

and court preachers have realized that religion is the monotheistic revolution of the prophets (PBUH) and is a program for change, reform, and commanding good and forbidding evil. This is the great danger that threatens the survival of the tyrants and their influence, control, and hegemony.

Hajj presents a unique opportunity for the Islamic Ummah, especially the pilgrims, to declare their sup-

port for the people of Gaza. What actions do you think can be taken in this regard during Hajj?

It is not appropriate or sufficient to express one's disapproval, stance, hatred, and resentment in secret and in hidden corners or in closed rooms. Rather, what is necessary, correct, and beneficial is to do so loudly and publicly, in broad daylight, during busy times, and in the most crowded and populated areas. This will have a

greater impact on people's hearts and minds.

There is no doubt that this scene of general unity among the Muslims and the declaration of the renunciation of the polytheists, the arrogant, the devils, and the oppressors of the world, led by the Great Satan America and its impure protégé Israel, are some of the most prominent and important benefits that Muslims from all corners of the world will witness in Holy Mecca and the venerated places.

Supporting the Gaza Strip is a religious duty, and it is by fulfilling this duty that Hajj is completed and accepted. Imam Khomeini said, "Certainly, a Hajj that has no spirit, and one that lacks movement and rising up [for what is right], a Hajj without renunciation, unity, and a Hajj that does not destroy disbelief and polytheism, is not Hajj." Therefore, it is by aiding the oppressed and standing against oppression that Hajj becomes completed. Believing in monotheism means rejecting submission to the US and other world powers.

How important and necessary is it for Muslims to renounce the enemies of the Islamic Ummah, led by the United States and the Zionist regime, particularly during this year's Hajj, which coincides with the genocide of Muslims in the Gaza Strip?

Renunciation of polytheism is a fundamental political obligation in Hajj, and if we do not adhere to it, our Hajj will not be complete. The Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, "[This is] an announcement from Allah and His Messenger to all the people on the day of Hajj al-Akbar [the greater Hajj]: that Allah and His Messenger repudiate the polytheists" (9:3). This means



that we must say "no" to all idols and tyrants and disavow all polytheists and oppressors. Imam Khomeini said, "Which idol can match the Great Satan and the world-devouring idols and tyrants, who summon all the oppressed of the world to prostrate to and worship them, and who consider all free servants of the Almighty Allah as their obedient subjects?"

Today, we see that the oppressed nations that are facing injustice, tyranny, murder, and war are standing against the arrogant powers and the tyrants and cursing them. Nations are demanding sanctions against the arrogant powers. You can see how they take to the streets to express revulsion and anger towards the inhumane actions of the oppressors. Today, the flags of the oppressors are burning on the streets.

Imam Khomeini taught us the authentic Islam of Muhammad and the necessity of disavowing the polytheists. Indeed, through these statements and through the Islamic and human values, as well as the revolutionary principles that the Imam explained to us, we come to understand the profoundness and accuracy of Imam Khomeini's interpretation of him when he said, "We were dead. Imam Khomeini revived us!"

The full interview first appeared on khamenei.ir.



Shia Muslims burn mock coffins painted with representations of Israeli and US flags during a rally to mark Al-Quds Day in Lahore, Pakistan. Al-Quds Day is the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, declared by the late founder of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as an international day of struggle against Israel and for the liberation of Al-Quds (Jerusalem). **IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA/REUTERS**

Islamic unity in support of Gazans

INTERVIEW

Islamic unity has always been a pivotal point in the thoughts and statements of Iran's Leader of the Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and he has often highlighted how this unity can help the Islamic Ummah to solve the issue of Palestine. During his meeting with Iranian officials in charge of conducting and organizing the Hajj pilgrimage on May 6, 2024, Ayatollah Khamenei called this year's Hajj to be "a Hajj of renunciation" against those who show hostility and animosity toward Muslims, namely the Zionists and their supporters. In this interview, Hadi Kobaysi, a political analyst, looks into those features of Hajj that can make Islamic unity and renunciation go hand in hand to provide broad support for the people of Palestine from across the Muslim world.

Hajj is one of the greatest grounds for unity, cohesion, and empathy within the Islamic Ummah. How can this great capacity be utilized to solve the problems of the Islamic world in the best possible way?

Meeting other Muslims in Hajj is to get to know them face-to-face and learn about their issues and the issues of their countries, especially since many Muslims and many people in the new era have their own personal interests or are engrossed in their own interests and the internal affairs of their countries and do not care about other Muslims and their issues. Therefore, Hajj is a suitable platform for direct and mutual sympathy and to get to know one another closely in order to exchange insights and opinions about those problems and challenges.

Another issue is that Hajj, in essence, is migration from one's homeland and appealing to Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, and freeing oneself from worldly matters for a short period of time. There-



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators hold a huge Palestinian flag during a demonstration in New York, United States, on November 24, 2023.
● SELCUK ACAR/ANADOLU

fore, there is a spiritual and unworldly atmosphere in Hajj that allows Muslims to pay attention to general and comprehensive Islamic issues. Another effective factor in Hajj is Muslims getting familiar with the breadth of the Islamic world, the diversity of the Islamic world, and the greatness of the Islamic world. People of different nationalities come to one place. They breakdown the national, sectarian, language, and ethnic barriers between Muslims and look at Islam as an element involved in all of the individual, political, and social issues.

Hajj is a unique opportunity for the declaration of the support of the Islamic Ummah, in general, and the pil-

grims, in particular, for the people of Gaza. In your view, what actions can be taken during Hajj to that end?

The gathering of Muslims in a place with this spirit and with these psychological and social preparations enables many special activities as well as public and group activities. They put aside their minor affiliations, connect with the vast Islamic world, and make use of it to create momentum and present an image to the whole world and other civilizations. This image reflects the reality of Islamic civilization. Hajj is a mutual identity and force in which pilgrims express their moral and political positions through collective actions such as demonstrations and marches of renunciation, as well as through meetings of multinational groups to discuss the current issues of the Islamic world. To solve these problems, they benefit from different suggestions, ideas, cultures, and experiences in

the Islamic world that are offered there.

What is the significance of "renunciation of the enemies of the Islamic world" in this year's Hajj, which is being held at the same time the genocide of Muslims in the Gaza Strip is unfolding?

The renunciation initiative completes monotheism. When we say "There is no God but Allah," we, first and foremost, reject "the Taghut" (idols, tyrants, etc.); we reject the worship of the Taghut; we reject the worship of any deity other than Allah Almighty. The US, global Zionism, and the temporary Zionist entity are nothing but the Taghut, which invites people to be silent before all moral abominations and be silent in the face of the unprecedented and great crimes that are happening in Gaza. Renunciation is a condition and necessity of this worship. It is not possible for a person to worship Almighty Allah and



At the center of this illustration is US President Joe Biden, whose actions in support of Israeli war crimes in Gaza has triggered widespread protests inside and outside the US.
● NEW ARAB

remain silent in the face of these crimes and not sympathize with the residents of the Gaza Strip and the Muslims of the Gaza Strip. Muslims [in Gaza] have been oppressed for many decades, they love worshipping Allah and reading the Qur'an and memorizing it. They are undoubtedly the real oppressed people and need spiritual and political support in all forms.

Therefore, this renunciation is not a political activity on the sidelines of Hajj; it is at the core of Hajj rituals including Tawaf [walking in circles around the Kaaba] at the core of worshipping Allah. It reflects the readiness of Muslims for self-devotion and confrontation. With trust and confidence in Almighty Allah, renunciation [of polytheists] shows the desire of Muslims to devote themselves to the path of Allah and to answer the divine call, self-devotion, and jihad in the path of Allah. This Jihad and this self-devotion are the sacrifices that every pious person makes. Therefore, this renunciation is an integral part of Hajj, and it is an integral part of the general position of Islam and the general humanitarian position, which has gone beyond the Islamic world in supporting the resistance of Gaza and rejecting the ongoing crimes in the Gaza Strip.

The full interview first appeared on khamenei.ir.

Game will change if all pilgrims raise Palestinian flag

INTERVIEW

Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has issued a powerful call to action ahead of the annual Hajj pilgrimage, urging Muslims worldwide to make this year's journey a "Hajj of renunciation". Speaking to the country's Hajj officials, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized the intersection of religious devotion and geopolitical tensions, calling on pilgrims to disavow the actions of Israel and its supporters, who are hostile towards Muslims, particularly in light of the ongoing crisis in Gaza. As Muslims prepare for the sacred Hajj pilgrimage, Ayatollah Khamenei's directive underscores the importance of using this occasion to confront injustice and oppression, with a focus on unity and solidarity among believers.

In this interview, Dr. Bilal Al-Lakkis, a political researcher, further explains how Hajj can be utilized to become a platform to support the oppressed people of Gaza and Palestine.

How can the Hajj pilgrimage, a powerful platform for unity and empathy within the Islamic community, be leveraged to effectively address the challenges facing the Islamic world?

In the first place, the opportunity of Hajj can be utilized by emphasizing the principles and commonalities among Muslims, especially since all Muslims without exception agree on the necessity of supporting Al-Quds, Gaza, and Palestine, and fighting against the Israeli devil. Muslims agree on many cultural, social, moral, and humanitarian issues. All of these are patterns that cannot be seen in any other society. Muslims getting closer to each other and talking to each other is one of the best ways to strengthen unity because division hurts everyone.

Muslims today are in a strong position, and there is a great opportunity ahead of them that they can make use of at the regional and international levels. The peace and security that God wants to prevail among Muslims and among all humanity will be achieved through direct communication between different sections of the Muslim community and relying on their great common religion, Islam. This peace and security will not be achieved by leaning toward the outside [of Islamic societies].

Hajj provides a special opportunity for the declaration of the support of the Islamic Ummah, especially the pilgrims, for the people of Gaza. In your view, what actions can be taken during Hajj to that end?

Today, the world is looking to the great



The left picture shows a woman wearing ihram clothing next to the Kaaba, raising the Palestinian flag. The right picture shows a few moments later when a Saudi security member (R) is seen approaching her, attempting to stop her from raising it.
● WATAN NEWS



Islamic Ummah to know its position regarding the current genocide in Gaza, which wounds the hearts of all freedom-seeking and honorable people in every part of the world. If the people of the world see disunity in the ranks of Muslim pilgrims in Mecca and in Baitullah al-Haram, then they will come to believe that Muslims will ultimately not succeed in strengthening their unity. Therefore, the realization of unity by pilgrims is very important. The only call that is expected to be heard from the pilgrims is the call for

piety, that is, the call on certain [Arab] regimes to get out of disgrace and humiliation. We should ask those who sold themselves out to these regimes in exchange for a handful of dinars to come to their senses. If today all Muslims shout with one voice, "Victory belongs to Palestine, and disgrace and humiliation belong to Israel", then you will see that Israel will fall due to fear and terror.

What role does the renunciation of enemies play in the Hajj rituals, especially in light of ongoing conflicts involving Muslim communities, such as the situation in Gaza? With the United States and Israel often seen as adversaries by some Muslims, what impact could this collective act of defiance have on the broader Islamic community?

If all the pilgrims of Baitullah al-Haram raise the flag of Palestine, then the game will change. Do you know what will happen if two million pilgrims raise the Palestinian flag and wear shrouds? If their governments are preventing them from demonstrations, they can rise up [during the Hajj season] to express their renunciation of Zionism, even if this action ends up killing them. If this happens, these people (Hajj pilgrims) will become martyrs of the path of Al-Quds.

Such action will guarantee a message to the hypocrites in the Islamic Ummah. Such action will demonstrate Palestinians as the oppressed. I doubt that the ruling family in Saudi Arabia can confront millions of Muslims. Mecca belongs to the Islamic Ummah, and Hajj belongs to God. Mecca and Hajj do not belong to a house or a government that can prevent pro-Palestine slogans with its interferences.

The interview first appeared on khamenei.ir.

Girls cruise to golds as Iran grabs six Asian canoe medals



● IRNA

Sports Desk

Iranian girls claimed double golds on Saturday as the country notched up six medals at the 2024 Asian Canoe Sprint Junior & U23 Championships in Pattaya, Thailand.

Elnaz Shafieian clocked 04:09.940 minutes in the final race to walk away with the ultimate prize in the under-23 1000m K1 event, while Arshin Rezanejad

crossed the finish line in 04:16.635 minutes for the top spot in the discipline's juniors final.

Elsewhere, Iranian duo Mohammad Abbasi and Shayan Hosseini teamed up for a silver in the men's U23 1000m C2 contest, courtesy of a 03:36.117-minute finish in the final, standing second to Mukhammadali Mirismanov and Shokhjakhon Mukhammadiev of Uzbekistan.

This was a second medal for Hosseini on Saturday following a bronze-winning campaign in the 1000m C1 final.

Amirreza Oladian and Abolfazl Jannati won a bronze in the men's junior 1000m K2 final with a third-best time of 03:31.255 minutes, while Mehrab Asayesh Khorshid took the category's singles bronze with 03:46.302 minutes.

Germany's new generation give hope to a nation



Jamal Musiala (10) fires home Germany's second goal in a 5-1 victory over Scotland in the Euro 2024 opener in Munich, Germany, on June 14, 2024.

● SERGEI GRITS/AP

REUTERS - Germany's young attackers sent a clear message that they are ready to lead the team into a new era, with 21-year-olds Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala putting on a sparkling display in their country's opening 5-1 Euro 2024 win over Scotland on Friday.

The two wingers scored the opening goals in the Group A victory, while Kai Havertz, 25, converted a penalty and substitutes Niclas Füllkrug and Emre Can scored in the second half against the reeling 10-man Scots. But it was Wirtz and Musiala who drew the eyes of the expectant, yet anxious, home fans who had been chastened by Germany's underperformance in the past decade - with the team going out of successive World Cups (2018, 2022) in the group stage and losing in the last 16 at Euro 2020.

Wirtz underlined his status as one of European football's most exciting young talents with his goal, having already tested goalkeeper Angus Gunn in the opening minutes of the match.

His 10th-minute strike was a perfect example of his play this past year, with 11 goals and 12 assists for Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen, ghosting in at the edge of the area to power the ball home, despite Gunn getting a hand on it.

It meant Wirtz became the youngest scorer for Germany at a Euros at 21 years and 42 days old, beating the previous record of Havertz who was 22 when he scored at Euro 2020. Musiala, who grew up in England and played for their youth team but then opted to represent the nation of his birth, got a much cleaner strike when he smashed the ball high into the net nine minutes later having been teed up by Havertz in the box. The forward, given the prestigious No. 10 shirt by Julian Nagelsmann, is only 67 days older than Wirtz and ran Scotland's defence ragged with his deft technique while travelling with the ball, which has earned him the nickname "Bambi".

While stalwarts like keeper Manuel Neuer, 38, and captain Ilkay Gundog-

an, 33, are still in the starting lineup, there is a sense of a passing of the torch, particularly in the attacking area of the pitch where Germany have struggled in recent years.

They are ably helped by the precision passing of 34-year-old Toni Kroos. The midfield maestro, who will retire from playing after the tournament, had a 99% passing accuracy rate during his 80 minutes - though tougher opponents will come.

He has won a glut of titles at club level with Bayern Munich and Real Madrid and was part of the Germany team that won the World Cup in 2014. But helping to win their first Euro title in almost 30 years at home would be a perfect climax to his career.

Nagelsmann, who made history on Friday as the youngest coach at a Euros aged 36 years and 327 days, eclipsing Slovenia's Srečko Katanec, could have found the perfect balance between youth and experience to take his country to glory.

Persepolis eyes Italian Mazzarri for managerial role: Report

Sports Desk

Italian head coach Walter Mazzarri is among the candidates to take over at the Iranian club Persepolis, according to Football 360.

A former manager in a number of Seire A clubs, as well as Premier League side Watford, Mazzarri, 62, has been without a job since being sacked by Napoli in February - in the aftermath a disappointing run of four wins in 17 outings across all competitions.

Mazzarri's longest and most successful spell as a head coach also came with Napoli in the early 2010s, when he led his team to the 2011/12 Coppa Italia title before a runner-up spot in the league the following season.

The newly-crowned Persian Gulf Pro League champion is searching for a new manager after Brazilian interim coach Osmar Loss Vieira announced on Thursday that he would not extend his journey in the Iranian

top flight as he wishes to stay close to his family in his home country.

A number two to his predecessor Yahya Golmohammadi, Osmar was promoted to the top job following the Iranian's departure in January - much to the irritation of the Reds supporters, who were eager to welcome back their legendary coach Branko Ivankovic in pursuit of a seventh league crown in eight seasons. Osmar eventually won the fans over thanks to a remarkable run of 12 wins in 15 league matches - suffering a single defeat in the process - which saw the Reds pip archrival Esteghlal to the title by one point.

A former coach of Iranian top-flight sides Malavan, Foolad, and San'at Naft, Dragan Skocic, who steered Iran to the 2022 World Cup before being replaced by Portuguese Carlos Queiroz for the finals in Qatar, emerged as the frontrunner

for the Persepolis job last week but the negotiations have reportedly collapsed over the Croatian's wage demand.



Shot put gold for Saberi at Asian throwing event



● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

Sports Desk

Iran's Mahdi Saberi clinched a second gold medal for the country at the Asian Throwing Championships in South Korea.

A day after Asian Games gold medalist Hossein Rasouli had won the discus throw event, Saberi walked away with the ultimate prize of the men's shot put contest, thanks to a best throw of 19.27m.

His record was below his best attempt (19.41m) in last year's Asian Games in Hangzhou, where Saberi settled for a fifth-place finish, but was still enough for him to edge out opponents from China and the Philippines, who ended their campaigns with 19.26m and 19.22m respectively.

Mavericks beat Celtics to keep Finals series alive

BBC - The Dallas Mavericks kept their NBA Finals hopes alive with a 122-84 victory to deny the Boston Celtics a clean sweep in the best-of-seven championship series.

Luka Doncic top-scored with 29 points while Kyrie Irving added 21 as the Mavericks ended their opponents' 10-game play-off winning streak and claimed the third-largest win in Finals history. But they still have a mountain to climb as they try to become the first team to come from 3-0 down and win an NBA play-off series, with game five to come in Boston on Tuesday.

Doncic and Irving helped their side go 34-21 up after the first quarter, and they dominated defensively after that to lead 61-35 at the break. The Mavs were up 92-57 when the pair left the game with one minute and 29 seconds left in the third quarter.

Tim Hardaway Jr added 15 points off the bench for Dallas and 20-year-old rookie Dereck Lively II added 11.

Boston coach Joe Mazzulla also took his starters out in the third period



as they looked towards game five, which will be their next chance to clinch an 18th NBA crown and break clear of a tie with the Los Angeles Lakers for the most titles.

Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown managed only 15 and 10 points respectively for the Celtics as they suffered their worst loss in Finals history.

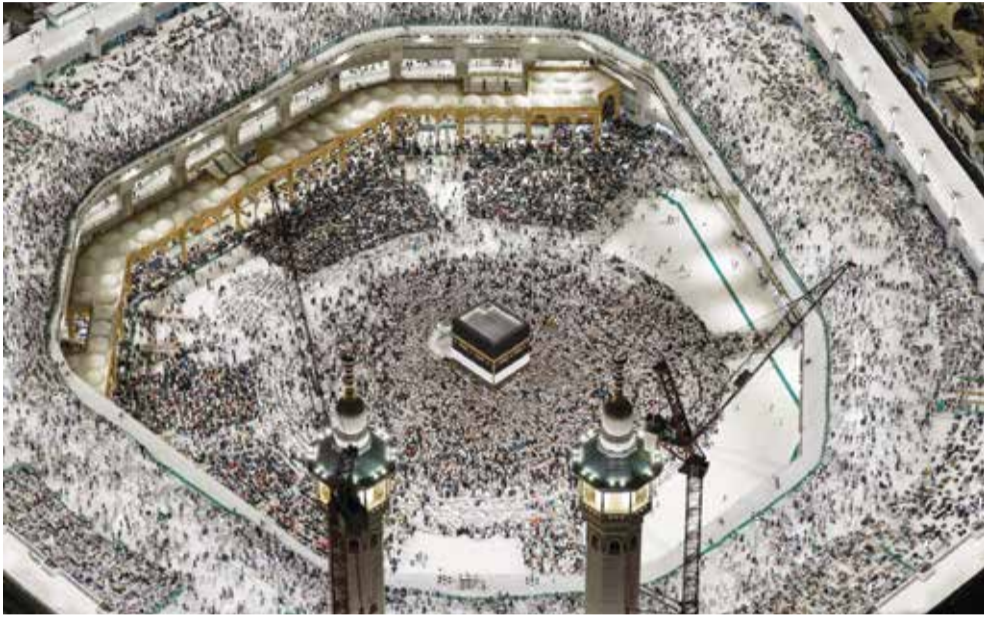
Mavericks' Luka Doncic (77) drives toward the rim in Game 4 of the NBA Finals against the Celtics in Dallas, TX, US, on June 14, 2024.

● CFP

Leader's Hajj message:

Renunciation must go beyond Hajj

Muslim states must tighten noose around Israel



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the renunciation of the Israeli regime and the United States must continue "beyond time and place of Hajj to all Muslim countries and cities across the world" due to their months-long genocide against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. In his annual Hajj message, Ayatollah Khamenei called on millions of Muslim pilgrims from around the globe who started performing their rituals in Mecca on Saturday to demonstrate their "renunciation of the Zionist regime and its supporters, in particular the US, in words and actions."

The Leader said this year's issue of renunciation of the polytheists or bara'at in Qur'anic terms is more significant than ever before as "the tragedies in Gaza, which are unparalleled in

our contemporary history, along with the audacity of the ruthless Zionist regime, which is the embodiment of cruelty and villainy, and of course the declining state of Zionism, leave no room for any consideration or tolerance by any individual, party, government or Muslim denomination." Ayatollah Khamenei also underlined that the "ironclad resistance" of Palestinians in Gaza "must be fully supported in every way." The following is the full text of the Leader's message to the 2024 Hajj pilgrims:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the best of creation, our Master Muhammad al-Mustafa, and upon his Pure Progeny, upon his chosen Companions



An aerial view of Kaaba as Muslim pilgrims perform rituals at the Grand Mosque ahead of the annual Hajj pilgrimage, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia on June 11.

● REUTERS

and upon those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

The appealing Abrahamic call, which by God's command summons all human beings in all eras to the Kaaba during the time of Hajj, has once again this year, attracted the hearts of a number of Muslims from around the world to this center of tawhid and unity.

It has created this magnificent, diverse gathering of a multitude of people, revealing the human spectrum and spiritual power of Islam both to itself and to others. When one contemplates this

magnificent gathering and the complex Hajj rituals, they are a source of reassurance and increase the confidence for the Muslims, while being intimidating and a cause of trepidation for enemies and for ill-wishers. It should not come as a surprise if the enemies and ill-wishers of the Islamic Ummah attempt to ruin and sow doubts about both of these aspects of the Hajj - whether it is by accentuating denominational and political differences, or by trying to diminish the importance of its sacred and spiritual aspects.

The Quran introduces Hajj as a manifestation of worship, dhikr [remembering God], humbleness and the equal dignity of all human beings. [It introduces Hajj as] a manifestation of a human being's organized material and spiritual life, a manifestation of blessings and guidance, and a manifestation of moral peace and harmony between [religious] brothers in practice. And [the Quran introduces Hajj as] a manifestation of repugnance and the establishment of a powerful front against the enemies.

Reflection on the verses related to Hajj and contemplation on the acts and rituals of this unparalleled obligation, reveal these matters and similar secrets and mysteries as these that exist within the intricate arrangement that constitutes Hajj. Brothers and sisters, as pilgrims undertaking Hajj, you are currently in a place where you can practice these truths and luminous teachings. Bring your thoughts and actions closer and closer to these, and bring back to your homes a reformed identity infused with these lofty con-

cepts. This is the valuable, real souvenir of your Hajj journey.

This year, the issue of bara'at [renunciation of the polytheists] is more significant than ever before. The tragedies in Gaza, which are unparalleled in our contemporary history, along with the audacity of the ruthless Zionist regime, which is the embodiment of cruelty and villainy, and of course the declining state of Zionism, leave no room for any consideration or tolerance by any individual, party, government or Muslim denomination. This year's renunciation of the polytheists must continue beyond the time and place of Hajj to all Muslim countries and cities worldwide. It must continue beyond just the Hajj pilgrims and be extended to the general populace.

This renunciation of the Zionist regime and its supporters, in particular the government of the United States of America, must be demonstrated in the words and actions of nations and governments, and it must impede the actions of the murderers.

The ironclad resistance of Palestine and the patient, respected people of Gaza - whose remarkable patience and resistance have earned them admiration and respect globally - must be fully supported in every way.

I implore God for their complete and swift victory. And for you dear pilgrims, I pray that your Hajj will be accepted. May the prayers of the Remnant of God on earth [Imam Mahdi (may our souls be sacrificed for him)] be with you.

May Allah's greetings and mercy be upon you.

A 'competitive election' ...

Therefore, I believe that the media should help guide people to acquire a better understanding of the country's issues and the capabilities of the presidential hopefuls, and not be heavily influenced by the emotional and sensational atmosphere of electoral campaigns.

It appears that economic hardships are a main source of concern for both the candidates and the public. Do you believe that economic issues could emerge as a central point of contention in the competition and electoral debates?

Understanding the primary needs of society at this stage is essential. Economic problems and having a plan to address them will definitely be one of the main topics in the election. However, I believe the root of the existing economic obstacles lies in the quality of management. That is, if management improves and, for example, a candidate with significant managerial experience at various levels becomes president, they can recruit experienced and expert managers. If management improves, then it will have its effects on other areas such as the economy, culture, politics, and social issues. Therefore, it is important to know what the primary needs of society are and which candidate can better respond to these needs, meaning to meet those requirements with robust and expert management.

The candidates' televised campaign has begun. Given the time constraints, it appears that the state-run TV can play a crucial role in the competition. Can these programs assist in familiarizing people with the candidates and their programs?

It can help or it may not. It depends on the candidates' performance in the electoral debates. If the campaign programs broadcasted by the national TV and watched by many viewers tend towards sensational controversies, attacks, and revelations against each other, the atmosphere will definitely become polarized, overshadowing the programs and capabilities of the candidates within it. However, if the candidates adhere to political ethics and focus more on introducing themselves and their programs, it can help people get to know them.

Presidential hopefuls outline blueprints ahead of June 28 vote

With Iran's snap presidential election set for June 28, candidates are in the midst of intense campaigning, making every effort to impress voters.

Six hopefuls - Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Masoud Pezeshkian, Saeed Jalili, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi, and Alireza Zakani - have successfully completed the Guardian Council's vetting process and been approved by the country's 12-member election supervisory body.

On the second day of televised roundtables on Friday, the nominees showcased their plans while fielding tough questions from panel experts.

Also, five live, televised debates on the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) are set to begin as of June 17.

In separate televised appearances on Friday, the presidential hopefuls further explained their strategies and proposals concerning crucial areas like the economy, culture, and foreign policy.

In a live televised roundtable, Qazizadeh Hashemi, the head of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs and a former lawmaker, unveiled his cultural blueprint for the country, placing "family" at the nucleus of his strategic vision, Press TV reported. Saeed Jalili, the former nuclear negotiator and former head of the Supreme National Security Council, accompanied by two advisors, participated in a 90-minute discussion focused on foreign policy issues.

Jalili stressed the importance of leveraging "global opportunities" while miti-

gating threats through collaborative and diplomatic engagements with nations worldwide.

Mostafa Pourmohammadi was next to appear on state TV in an hour-long program, presenting his vision as a potential leader of the Islamic Republic.

Emphasizing his campaign theme centered around fostering societal "well-being," Pourmohammadi stressed the multifaceted advancement of society in areas encompassing "culture, economy, and scientific development." Masoud Pezeshkian, another presidential candidate and former health minister, unveiled a narrative steeped in his personal insights and national service that underscored his commitment to the Islamic Republic. A seasoned parliamentarian, Pezeshkian articulated a vision of empowerment, heralding the "potential embedded within every individual across the nation" as a catalyst for national advancement.

A 90-minute live roundtable discussion unfolded in the presence of a seasoned politician and the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Qalibaf. Delving into the economic realm, Qalibaf underscored his dedication to realizing the objectives outlined in the Seventh National Development Plan, lauding it as a robust blueprint for national advancement.

Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani, who appeared on the IRIB at 22:00 local time, unveiled his economic strategies and blueprint for realizing the objectives outlined in the Seventh National Development Plan.

Ex-Iranian official Hamid Nouri released from Swedish prison

Hamid Nouri, a former Iranian Judiciary official, who had been illegally incarcerated in Sweden on politically-motivated charges, was released from prison.

Welcomed by Head of the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi, he arrived in Tehran on Saturday.

Iran's top human rights official had earlier announced Nouri's release on his X account.

"I am delighted to inform the esteemed nation of Iran that Mr. Hamid Nouri, who has been under detention in Sweden since 2019, has been released and will be returning to our country within a few hours," Gharibabadi said, Press TV reported.

He also attributed this success to the efforts of his colleagues in the Judiciary, the Ministry of Intelligence, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly late foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. In a message on Saturday, Nouri's son also announced the release of his father from a prison in Sweden.

"On the eve of the Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Ghadir festivals, after 1,680 days of captivity, the tireless efforts of our resolute and courageous officials have paid off, and my father, Hamid Nouri, is about to return to Iran," Majid Nouri said.

Nouri was arrested upon arrival at Stockholm Airport in November 2019 and was immediately imprisoned. He has been illegally jailed for three and a half years in solitary confinement in Sweden.

He was put on trial on unfounded allegations staged against him by elements representing the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group that has openly boasted about carrying out terrorist operations against Iranian officials and civilians perceived to be supporters of the government.

A Swedish court sentenced Nouri to life imprisonment in 2022. The court, which was described by Iran as illegitimate in the first place, convicted Nouri of "war crimes and crimes against humanity" entirely based on claims made by MKO



● MIZAN

terrorists living in exile across Europe.

Sweden's Appeal Court then upheld the verdict in December 2023. Nouri himself has vehemently denied the charges brought against him in the case while calling them fabricated.

Meanwhile, a Swedish EU diplomat and another Swede held in Iran have been released and were on a flight home to Sweden, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on Saturday, AFP reported.

Johan Floderus, who had been held in Iran since April 2022 accused of espionage, and Saeed Azizi, who was arrested in November 2023, were on their way home," Kristersson said.

In any case, the country is grappling with a range of issues, and candidates are offering different pledges to tackle them. Are you optimistic that these elections will pave the way for economic growth and resolution of current challenges?

I see a major weakness in the country that has led to problems in various areas, which is the quality of management. If we can strengthen management, we can make better use of facilities. We do not have a serious lack of resources; with professional and scientific management, we can overcome these problems with the existing resources. For example, a dualism has emerged among the political currents, some saying that the root of the problems lies in foreign sanctions, while others argue that sanctions have no impact on the country's status. I do not deny the pressure and negative effects of sanctions, but I believe that a more important issue than sanctions is the poor quality of management in the country, which has become problematic. Even during this period of sanctions, we have examples of highly-qualified managers who have been able to improve the conditions in their relevant areas. Therefore, it is important for people to choose a candidate with high managerial abilities rather than a candidate who lacks robust management skills but has a raucous election campaign. If we improve management, other problems will also be resolved along the way.

Ayatollah Khamenei meets Olympiad medalists

Leader praises elites as 'major asset' to achieve scientific development

Arts & Culture Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the elites are a source of "great, deep and true hope and a major asset" who are the main factor in helping the country achieve its required scientific development. Ayatollah Khamenei on Saturday received a number of Iranian elites and medalists from national and international scientific Olympiads, Press TV reported. The Leader said, "I have complete faith in the youths and the power of youthfulness, and I consider you a great wealth whose value is far greater than your medals." Ayatollah Khamenei acknowledged the rich scientific movement that gained momentum in the 2000s, leading to accelerated

scientific progress in the country. However, the Leader noted a slight decline in this progress in the last few years of 2010s, which has been partially compensated for in the last two to three years. Yet, the Leader emphasized the need for a scientific leap to reach the forefront of global science. Ayatollah Khamenei called on the elites to boost cooperation and synergy to find solutions to different problems and issues. Considering the upcoming June 28 presidential election, the Leader urged collective efforts aimed at increasing participation in the upcoming election. "In the very important upcoming election, it is important to increase the level of participation in the first place," the Leader said. Ayatollah Khamenei called on Ira-

nian students to make endeavors in the universities and among their family members to boost turnout in the June 28 presidential election. The Leader emphasized that Iranian youths and elites should choose a candidate who is closely pursuing the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and has the ability to work towards them. Ayatollah Khamenei described Iran's political independence as a "tangible reality" and said the Islamic Republic has a position and logic as well as interesting perspectives regarding major issues in the world which even the country's opponents can count on. "This political independence should not be undermined," the Leader stated, stressing that every government in the future must safeguard it.



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks in a meeting with a group of Iranian elites and medalists from national and international scientific Olympiads in Tehran, Iran on June 15, 2024. khamenei.ir

Iran nominates author, illustrator for ALMA 2025



The Children's Book Council of Iran nominated an author and an illustrator for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2025.

Navid Seyyed-Aliakbar is nominated in the writers' category, while Alireza Goldouzian is selected for the illustrators' category, IRNA reported.

Established in 2002 in Sweden, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award is an annual prize honoring significant contributions to children's and young adult literature. It is the second most prestigious literary award after the Hans Christian Andersen Award.

Seyyed-Aliakbar is recognized for his work that emphasizes children's freedom and creativity, encouraging them to explore and make decisions independently. His stories often challenge authoritarianism and violence in adult society, inviting children to think critically.

Goldouzian, nominated for his impact in children's book illustration, has been active for over two decades. His work has gained national and international recognition, and he has played a significant role in mentoring young illustrators. His illustrations are noted for their unique style and artistic quality, reflecting both Iranian and global artistic traditions.

Tunisia announces visa-free entry for Iranians

Tunisia announced on Friday that Iranian tourists will be allowed visa-free entry starting June 15. The Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that ordinary Iranian passport holders will be exempt from the entry visa, if they stay in the country up to 15 days. This decision aligns with mutual actions taken by both Tehran and

Tunisia. It follows the Iranian cabinet's approval last year to lift visa requirements for 32 countries, a move supported by Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ezzatollah Zarghami.

In December 2023, Zarghami stated that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts

proposed the visa waiver, aiming to enhance global engagement and attract more tourists to Iran. Alireza Bikdeli, Deputy for Consular Parliamentary and Iranians Affairs of the Foreign Ministry in Tehran, had earlier highlighted that citizens from 28 countries, including Tunisia, do not require visas for tourism in Iran as of February 4, 2024.

Iran ranks 14th globally for highly cited universities: ESI



Iran ranks 14th globally with 134 universities and research institutes listed among the world's most cited institutions, according to the Essential Science Indicators (ESI) database. In the Islamic world, Iran holds the second position after Turkey.

Ahmad Fazelzadeh, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Center

(ISC), reported that between 2014 and 2024, a total of 9,019 universities and research institutes were included in the ESI database. The number of highly cited Iranian universities and institutes has increased from 115 to 134 compared to last year, Mehr News Agency reported. The US and China lead the global list with 1,200 and 742

institutions respectively. Following Iran in the Islamic world are Egypt with 48 institutions (25th globally), Pakistan with 46 (27th), and Saudi Arabia with 45 (28th). The ESI database, maintained by Clarivate Analytics, highlights top researchers, institutions, publications, and countries across various fields. Institutions are ranked based on citations over the past decade. The database is updated bi-monthly, allowing for changes in rankings. Fazelzadeh noted that Iranian institutions are represented in 19 subject areas, with the highest number in clinical medicine (74 institutions), adding that other prominent fields include engineering (67), chemistry (57), agricultural sciences (29), and materials science (28).

Iranian animation awarded at Tribeca festival



The Iranian animation 'In the Shadow of the Cypress', co-directed by Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani, won the Best Short Animation Award at the 23rd Tribeca Film Festival in the US, running from June 5 to 16 in Manhattan, New York.

According to the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, seven short animations from Sweden, the Netherlands, the US, Germany, China, and Iran were nominated for the award, IRNA wrote.

The 19-minute film tells the story of a sea captain suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, who lives in isolation with his daughter by the sea, facing the challenges of a difficult life. The fest, founded in 2001 by Robert De Niro and Jane Rosenthal, has recently focused more on short animations. This year, over 8,000 short films were submitted to the festival.

The animation has previously won the Grand Jury Prize and Best 2D Award at the 19th Animayo Gran Canaria, International Festival of Animation, Visual Effects and Videogames in Spain, qualifying it for the Best Short Animation category at the 2025 Oscars.

Social Desk

An official from the Ministry of Health announced that the habitat of the Aedes mosquito in Iran now surpasses that of malaria and he country's hospitals are ready to tackle dengue fever, a viral infection spread by these mosquitoes.

Iranian hospitals ready to fight dengue fever

Hassan Vaezi highlighted that provinces such as Fars, Khuzestan, Hormuzgan, Bushehr, Sistan and Baluchestan, Mazandaran, Gilan, and Golestan are high-risk areas for this disease, with many imported cases reported.

Vaezi emphasized the global spread of dengue fever and detailed ongoing efforts to train outpatient and inpatient medical staff for timely diagnosis and treatment. Preventive measures

in hospitals include protecting patients from cross-infection, ensuring the safety of medical personnel, and managing waste and sewage effectively. He described dengue fever as a viral infectious disease trans-

mitted to humans by mosquitoes, with its transmission influenced by both biological factors (the virus, vectors, and hosts) and non-biological factors (temperature, humidity, and rainfall). Vaezi stated that emergency

departments, medical teams, laboratories, and epidemiology teams are on the frontline against this virus.

He also noted that children under five who contract dengue fever often require hospitalization, making the coordination of pediatric and neonatal specialists essential.