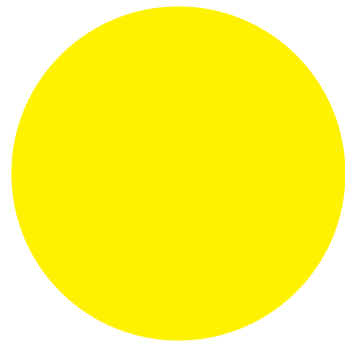


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## Netanyahu's failure led to war cabinet dissolution

By Faezeh Sadat Yousefi  
Guest contributor

As evidenced by the political context behind the rising conflicts among Tel Aviv officials, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dissolved the Israeli war cabinet. The move highlights yet another failure of the occupying forces in confronting the resistance front amidst the escalating crises in the occupied territories. Concurrently, the number of protesters against Netanyahu's policies is increasing day in and day out, with calls for early elections and moving past Netanyahu becoming their primary focus.

### Deepening divisions

The destabilized environment in the occupied territories, exacerbated by Netanyahu's so-called judicial reforms, has entered a new phase of turmoil and desperation following the Operation al-Aqsa Storm and the widening rifts among political figures over war management and the intensification of internal and external crises. Evidently, the consequences of these disputes will extend beyond the dissolution of the cabinet. With ongoing internal protests and multiple crises arising from the lack of decisions in various sectors, such as the economic and security crises, these issues will not only pervade the entire society but also threaten its survival.

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## Iran's economy grew 4.5% in Q4 last year: *CBI*

Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) to the base price (fixed prices in 2016) in the 4th quarter of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023 to March 19, 2024) showed a 4.5% growth compared to the same period a year earlier, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said in its latest report.

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## 14th administration: No time for trial and error



By Mehdi  
Ebrahim  
Staff writer

### OPINION

Iran is gearing up for an early presidential election in less than ten days to choose a successor to president Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash on May 19, with candidates locking horns on the campaign trail to make their way to high office.

The snap vote on June 28 comes as Iran is stuck at a critical juncture, grappling with a string of daunting challenges that must be tackled with utmost urgency before they spiral out of control and snowball into a Gordian knot.

First and foremost, the new president must try to mend bonds between the state and the public within the boundaries of law by winning the hearts of those who have turned their back on the government for any reason such as economic hardships or social and political concerns. The chief executive in question must also be able to forge strong relationships with other branches of power as well as political parties in order to pave the way for advancing his agenda smoothly and without hinderance. It is very important in Iran's intricate political system to bring onboard influential players and organizations to develop synergy between his government and these entities.

Draconian sanctions imposed by the United States and its Western allies have been a thorn in the nation's side for more than a decade, though they were eased temporarily after Iran and world powers clinched a nuclear deal in 2015.

The sanctions have targeted almost all economic sectors, with ramifications affecting other segments such as healthcare as they have made it hard to import much needed medicine for life-threatening diseases like cancer.

The petroleum industry, which serves as a lifeline for Iran, bore the brunt after sanctions came into force in 2018, pushing oil sales down to a rock bottom of 200,000 barrels per day. Although under Raisi's government oil exports bounced back to 1.6 million bpd, they have yet to reach the pre-sanctions levels that hovered around 2.5 million bpd.

Iran has learned how to circumvent sanctions but doing business under such circumstances is not a sustainable long-term solution. Moreover, it is not all about getting around sanctions. US-led embargoes have scared away foreign public and private investors. They have hindered the import of vital high-tech equipment and heavy machinery needed to maintain or expand the country's infrastructure.

The bans have also blocked Iran's access to the international banking system. This has caused extra costs for businesspeople to claim their money for trade as normal banking transactions are out of the question, forcing them to resort to alternative methods to collect it.

It must be the number one priority for the upcoming president to rid the nation of crippling sanctions once and for good while safeguarding Iran's interests. No one should be under the illusion that sanctions "have no impact" and that the country can continue functioning effectively while being subject to the "toughest ever" bans.

Other pressing matters include fresh water and energy shortages, inflation, liquidity, unemployment, immigration and an aging population.

Among them, the most burning issue is water scarcity. Iran is exhausting its ground water sources at an alarming rate. This could be a matter of life and death for a country with a dry climate. Ground water exploitation has already caused widespread subsidence which is absolutely irreversible. No water, no civilization.

Iran's next president is facing a flurry of uphill tasks and needs to make Herculean efforts to get them done. We Iranians need a veteran captain to steer the country through rough waters into safety. It is no time for trial and error and no country for a naive man.

# No US administration can hinder Iran's oil exports: *Owji*

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji said no administration in the United States can curb the Islamic Republic's oil exports and that the oil sales has "jumped" over the past three years despite US sanctions.

Owji made the statement while presenting a report on the country's latest status of oil and gasoline output during a plenary session at the Iranian Parliament on Wednesday, Press TV reported.

He said Iran's crude oil production increased by more than 1.4 million barrels through round-the-clock work and relentless efforts in the past three years, adding, "Despite more than 600 new sanctions on the export of oil and petrochemical products, today, we are witnessing a jump in the export of oil and collection of the country's arrears."

Owji asserted that the amount of Iran's oil exports has tripled compared to the beginning of the sitting administration in 2020 and the foreign exchange revenue has also increased.

Pointing to the fuel imbalance at the onset of the current administration, Owji said the Oil Ministry was taken over at a time that Iran's daily output stood at 2.1 million barrels and that the oil exports had reached its lowest rate in the past decade.

"We had about 87 million barrels of oil aboard tankers at sea, of which 30 million were heavy and extra heavy crude. We had no sales in heavy and



extra heavy oil at the beginning of the 13th administration," he said.

### 'Not even one cent in arrears'

The Iranian Oil Ministry also underlined in a statement on Wednesday that the administration of late president Ebrahim Raisi laid the ground for the sale of oil and gas without the JCPOA and the Western-led financial crime watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

"Today, crude oil and gas con-

densate shipments are exported to many countries, and at the apex of the sanctions, we do not even have one cent in arrears," the ministry said.

The US under former president Donald Trump reinstated crippling sanctions on Iran after unilaterally walking out of Iran's nuclear deal in May 2018, despite the Islamic Republic's full compliance with the terms of the 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers, known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The administration of US President Joe Biden, which has claimed a diplomatic approach to Iran and efforts to return to the 2015 nuclear program, has not only failed to return to the agreement but has also tightened the sanctions regime against the Islamic Republic. Moreover, a bipartisan group of over 40 US House lawmakers has called on the Biden administration to "expeditiously implement" stringent new anti-Iran sanctions targeting the country's oil exports to China. The Iranian oil trade has al-

lowed "the country to raise over \$100 billion just since 2021," the bipartisan group of congresspeople led by Mike Lawler, Josh Gottheimer, and Jared Moskowitz argued in their letter.

"However, Iran does not act alone. China is the largest purchaser of Iranian oil, buying a significant majority of 80-90% of these exports. We have been clear that the US must act decisively to stop the Iran-China oil trade and eliminate this significant source of Iran's revenue," the letter added.

## Iran's economy grew 4.5% in Q4 last year:

**CBI**



Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) to the base price (fixed prices in 2016) in the 4th quarter of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023 to March 19, 2024) showed a 4.5% growth compared to the same period a year earlier, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said in its latest report.

In addition, the country's economic growth without oil included in the mentioned period reached 3.9%, the report added, according to Tasnim News Agency.

The study of the investment situation in various economic sectors (to the fixed prices in 2016) clarifies that the "formation of the fixed gross capital" in the 3rd quarter of the last Iranian calendar

year surged 14.2% compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The 4.5% economic growth signifies an upward trend in Iran's economic activities.

Meanwhile, the CBI chief Mohammadreza Farzin pointed to Iran's 5% economic growth rate in the past three years, as reported by the World Bank, saying it was the highest among regional and neighboring countries.

"Considering the recent average growth rate of the country, particularly in comparison to other countries in 2023, according to a recent report by the World Bank, Iran has the highest growth rate at 5%," he told reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

## Presidential candidates hone in on economy, sanctions



By Ebrahim  
Beheshti  
Staff writer

### PERSPECTIVE

Iran's political atmosphere is abuzz with campaigns as the country braces for a major political event; the June 28 presidential election. With just a week left until election day, the six presidential hopefuls compete fiercely and present their programs. Campaigning headquarters have ramped up their efforts, and candidates are crisscrossing provinces, supplementing their TV campaigns with in-person visits. Social networks continue to reflect the competition between candidates and their supporters. The first televised election debate added excitement to the electoral atmosphere, and it is expected that today's second televised debate will further energize the election fervor.

So far, it seems that the economy, particularly tackling sanctions, has emerged as the most pressing issue among candidates. Conservative candidates are keen on continuing the policies of late president Ebrahim Raisi. They highlight various problems, including economic challenges and public welfare issues, attributing them to the Moderate government of Has-



san Rouhani. Some supporters and political analysts refer to a potential government of Masoud Pezeshkian as a third iteration of Rouhani's administration, supported by Reformists and Moderates.

On the other side, Masoud Pezeshkian and Mostafa Pourmohammadi have taken distinct positions, criticizing policies like Internet filtering and advocating for sanctions removal negotiations. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the foreign minister under Rouhani's government, has also entered the fray. Zarif, known for leading talks on 2015 Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) with world powers, has thrown his weight behind Pezeshkian, creating a polarized atmosphere around foreign policy and sanctions relief. Zarif's advice to Pezeshkian on a TV program has sparked a range of reactions. Pourmohammadi expressed solidarity by reposting a Zarif quote on his X account, while candidates like Mohammad

Baqer Qalibaf and Saeed Jalili have taken to task Zarif's positions.

Another recurring theme among candidates is the call for maintaining national unity and adopting interactive, rather than confrontational, approaches in the next government. They emphasize leveraging domestic elites to tackle existing challenges and adhering to high-level documents like the Five-Year Development Plan and general policies proposed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

However, as the competition heats up and candidates' positions become clearer, the society seems to be engaging more positively with the electoral process. Surveys suggest that voter turnout will be higher than in the last presidential election, particularly since all major political currents have fielded exclusive candidates, and no group has called for a boycott.

# Aal Valley, a delightful retreat for nature- and history-lovers



## Iranica Desk

If you are a fan of rural tourism and eager to explore the beautiful and diverse villages of Iran, a visit to Aal village in Khorasan Razavi Province is a must.

This charming village boasts numerous tourist attractions that will make your trip enjoyable and memorable. After exploring the village's attractions, head towards the magnificent Aal Valley (Darreh-ye Aal in Persian), where you can admire breathtaking nature and listen to the enchanting songs of birds amidst dense trees.

The seasonal waterfalls that cascade down the valley add to its beauty, making it a picturesque destination. The valley is approximately 45 kilometers from Mashhad, the capital city of Khorasan Razavi Province.

The origins of the village's name remain mysterious, with various narratives and local legends offering possible explanations. Some locals claim that Aal Valley was the home of a fearsome and invisible creature called Aal, who has been a subject of strange and mysterious tales since ancient times, IRNA wrote.

Nonetheless, the valley's mountainous terrain offers a cool climate, and its lush vegetation appears greener and more pleasant during the spring season. The abundant rainfall at this time of year ensures that the springs and waterfalls are fuller, adding to the valley's charm.

As such, spring is the perfect time to visit Aal Valley. However, the valley also proves delightful in the summer, although the water flow may be low, and the seasonal waterfalls may not be visible. In autumn, the valley comes to life, showcasing a range of colors, although the cold weather can make your trip challenging. It is not advisable to travel to Aal Valley during the winter as there is a possibility of rain and snowfall.

Regardless of when you visit, the valley offers numerous stunning natural attractions and interesting historical sites, making it an irresistible destination for nature enthusiasts and history buffs alike. One part of the valley, the Fig Valley (Darreh-ye Anjir), is famous for its abundance of fig trees.

A beautiful and calm spring flows alongside the dense fig trees, adding to the valley's picturesque allure.

If you are into cave exploration and have sufficient knowledge in this regard, make sure to bring your equipment and visit the cave nestled within the valley. This cave holds great historical value, with some cave explorers discovering early human remains within its walls.

The cave's mouth is situated in the heart of impassable mountains and is breathtakingly large and magnificent. It ranges in width from one to three meters, reaching depths of up to 100 meters. Located at an elevation of approximately 1,500 meters above sea level, the

cave has remained almost untouched, becoming a habitat for bats. Overall, Aal Valley promises an unforgettable experience for all visitors.

## Aal and Maat castles

Aal and Maat castles are two fascinating historical fortresses situated near Aal Valley.

Dating back to the Timurid period, these castles were constructed at an elevation of approximately 2,300 meters above sea level, on high mountains. Their purpose was to safeguard the region and preserve water resources. Even today, you can still see remnants of the water facilities, reservoirs, and guard towers at these castles.

## Khan Tashi Inscription

If you're interested in exploring the region's history further, you should not miss the Khan Tashi Inscription, also known as Khan Dashi in the local language. This one-meter stone inscription, engraved in ten lines with Thuluth script, provides insights into Muhammad Shaybani Khan's (an Uzbek ruler known as Sheybak Khan) journey to Tus during the late Timurid and early Safavid periods.

The inscription is located three meters above ground, but there isn't a specific sign indicating its location. It is recommended to seek assistance from local residents or visit the Tus Museum, which has a simulated sample of the inscription.

## Waterfalls

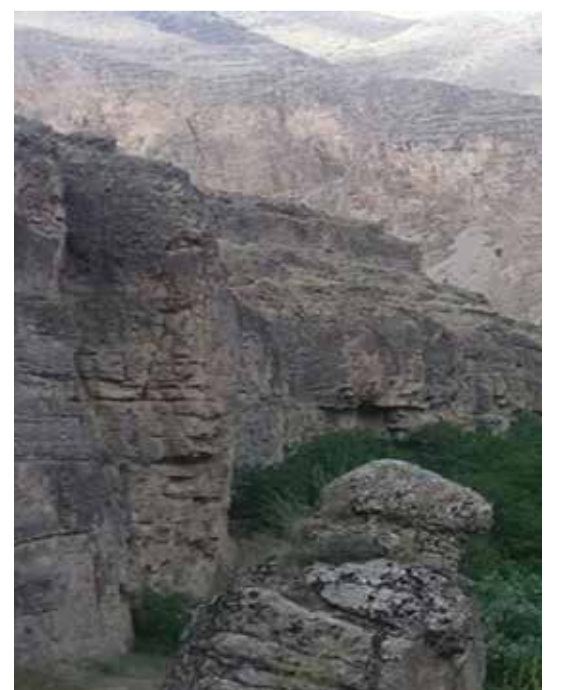
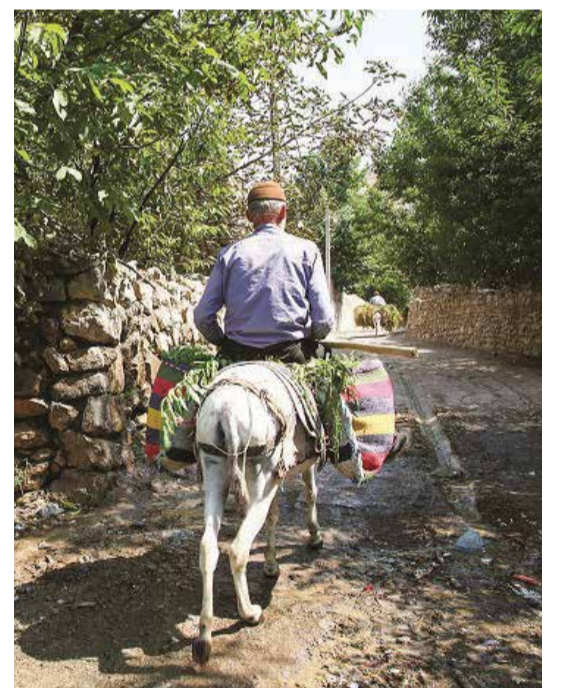
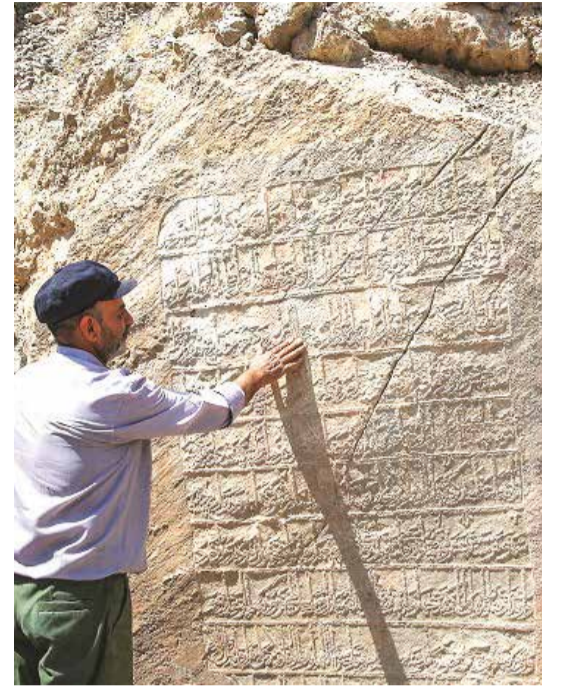
In Aal Valley, there are five seasonal waterfalls that offer a refreshing sight during rainy seasons. These waterfalls flow through the rocks and cliffs of Hezar Masjid Mountains and exhibit crystal-clear water. However, it's important to note that during hotter seasons, the water flow decreases and the falls may dry up. It is advisable to plan your visit to the waterfalls during the spring season when they're at their best.

## Required equipment and accommodation

As Aal Valley is a mountainous area, proper walking and hiking shoes are essential to ensure a comfortable experience. Additionally, don't forget to bring enough drinking water to stay hydrated throughout your journey. When visiting attractions such as caves and castles, it is recommended to seek assistance from experienced individuals and use appropriate caving equipment, including headlamps, ropes, and provisions like food and water.

Unfortunately, there are no accommodations or hotels within the valley or its surrounding village. If you plan to stay overnight, it's best to consider an eco-lodge in Kalat Naderi, or accommodations in the city of Mashhad.

Alternatively, you may be able to rent a house in the village. Since there are no shops along the route, it is advisable to purchase all necessary equipment and provisions before entering the valley.





Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (C) inaugurates an expansion project in the country's flagship Abadan Refinery in the southwestern province of Khuzestan on March 20, 2023.  
● IRNA

# 20 reasons why Raisi resuscitates Iran's economy

## 1. Economic growth after 10 years

President Raisi's government successfully steered the country's economy onto a positive growth trajectory after a decade-long recession characterized by stagnant zero percent yearly growth. They managed to bump it up to three percent initially and then to four percent. This achievement isn't merely based on statistics issued by domestic institutions; it has been confirmed by international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

## 2. Jump in export of crude oil, gas condensate

The late president's government successfully boosted oil sales to 3 million barrels per day, reclaiming the third spot among OPEC members. This feat was achieved despite the country not having seen such sales volumes since 2018, prior to the imposition of extensive sanctions. The oil minister acknowledges that

Iran's oil industry currently finds itself on the front lines of an economic war, bearing the brunt of the most stringent sanctions.

## 3. Reducing liquidity growth

The 12-month growth trend of the monetary base saw a significant decline in the wake of the previous government's disciplinarian approach and the central bank's active monetary and supervisory policies. This downward trend was reflected in the figures, which showed a decrease from 42.8% as of late July 2021 to 39.6% by late October 2023.

## 4. Tripartite gas swap

The signing of Iran's gas swap agreement with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan is significant for the country across three fronts: economic, political, and transitional. It carries multiple advantages and underscores the success of the previous government's policy in fostering enhanced collaboration with neighboring nations.

## 5. Permanent membership in SCO

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) stands as one of the globe's most expansive and influential regional entities, playing a pivotal role in international trade and security affairs.

Iran's permanent membership in this organization unlocks a plethora of opportunities, particularly within the economic sphere, and has spurred the growth of the country's exports to the member states within this organization.

## 6. Rise in wheat purchase from farmers

By the close of the Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 20, 2023), the volume of wheat procured from growers hit 7.2 million tons, marking a 60% uptick compared to the preceding year. All claims were settled by year-end. Projections indicate a continued ascent in these figures by the conclusion of the current calendar year.

## 7. Slashing unemployment rate

According to the announcement of the Statistical Center of Iran, the unemployment rate in summer 2023 ticked down to 7.9%, marking a year-on-year drop of 1.0%.

## 8. Launching North-South Corridor

The country has laid out plans to transit 20 million tons in the short term (targeting a one-year timeframe) and 50 million tons over the long term, eyeing earnings of \$50 billion. Iran is strategizing to realize this income in the upcoming years through infrastructure development and the easing of laws.

## 9. Removing production obstacles

Characterized as economic rent, the distribution at the state-set exchange rate of 42,000 Rials had posed a significant obstacle for businesses lacking access to government-issued currency and the resultant rent creation before president

Raisi took office. For this reason, the removal of the preferential exchange rate for importing basic goods can be deemed a positive step toward making the economy transparent and shifting towards competitive production. Additionally, this measure brought about a tenfold increase in subsidies after a 12-year hiatus.

## 10. Facilitating licensing of businesses

The activation of the National Licensing Portal stood as one of the previous government's notable actions. According to Article 7 of the Law on the Implementation of Article 44 of the Constitution, the portal ought to have been activated as far back as 2007, but conflicting interests within governments prevented its realization. However, during the presidency of Ebrahim Raisi, the Ministry of Economy diligently pursued the matter, and the process of issuing licenses was for the most part improved. The development happened as a result of a modification in the aforementioned Article 7 by Ehsan Khandouzi as a member of the Economic Committee of the Iranian Parliament. He then carried the initiative forward on a larger scale during his tenure as the Minister of Economy.

## 11. Lifting the ban on car imports

In January of last year, Iran's ban on car imports came to an end after a four-year hiatus as the first shipment arrived. Currently, steps are being taken to facilitate the import of electric and affordable cars, which are being introduced into the market owing to the adopted policies.

## 12. Disclosing names of big bank debtors

The previous government's objective in disclosing the names of significant defaulters on bank loans was to raise public awareness and generate demand for action to recoup these debts. The public should be informed about individuals who, after several years, continue to refuse to repay their debts to the banks and

exhibit no intention of doing so.

## 13. Fighting flour smuggling

The integrated flour management system records and oversees the purchase of flour by bakers, its sale by factories, and the transportation of flour within the country, effectively curbing widespread flour smuggling. The rollout of the government's plan resulted in a significant decrease in the country's flour consumption without causing any disruptions to the nation's bread basket.

## 14. Rolling out electronic prescribing

The plan for electronic prescription implementation and the non-acceptance of paper prescriptions, in alignment with fulfilling the Iran Health Insurance Organization's legal duties, came into effect at the beginning of December 2021 after a 16-year hiatus.

## 15. Implementing Nursing Services Tariff Law

The passing of the Nursing Services Tariff Law bestowed upon nurses a sense of identity and independence. Prior to any financial discussion, it is essential to acknowledge the significance of this law in terms of bestowing identity and autonomy upon the nursing profession. This autonomy encompasses various dimensions such as efficiency and income.

## 16. 90% coverage of infertility insurance

The government of president Raisi was committed to reducing out-of-pocket expenses for individuals facing infertility issues. To that end, services at infertility treatment centers, including specialized procedures such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), microinjection (ICSI), intrauterine fertilization, and embryo transfer, are now offered with 90% tariff coverage.

## 17. Unveiling electronic check system

In November of this year, the Central



A ship carrying a shipment of passenger cars, once banned from being imported, arrives in an Iranian port.  
● ABBAS HEYDARI/IRNA

Bank of Iran (CBI) introduced the electronic check system. An electronic check is a novel type of check that adheres to all the regulations governing traditional paper checks but is validated using an electronic signature and issued digitally. This digital innovation surpasses paper checks in terms of security and cashability, and with the goal of utilizing this advantage in mind, the CBI launched the Checkad system to of-

fer a secure digital alternative to physical checks.

#### 18. Ramping up power production

The Raisi government achieved a record increment in electricity production capacity within a single year, successfully adding 6,000 megawatts to the national grid. This feat was accomplished despite the Rouhani government's policy of not

constructing new power plants, a decision that had previously led to significant challenges in the country's power generation infrastructure.

#### 19. Organizing property warehouses

Resolving the issue of the stored away exported cars, which had languished for five years in warehouses, stood as one of the pivotal actions undertaken by the

Ministry of Economy last year. This move generated an income of nearly 30,000 billion Rials (\$54 billion) for the government.

#### 20. Completing half-finished projects

One of the previous government's foremost priorities, as proclaimed by president Raisi from the outset, was the completion of unfinished projects. As a

result, numerous long-awaited halted projects were finalized and inaugurated during the 30 months of Raisi's presidency. Examples include the subway of Parand city, which opened after 18 years, the Saqqez airport that commenced operations after a 20-year wait, the Shiraz-Isfahan freeway completed after 13 years, and dozens of other endeavors, including solutions to water-related challenges.

# Raisi's tireless 1,000 days to fix Iran's economy

 Seyyed Sajjad Hosseini  
Staff writer

## PERSPECTIVE

*During Ebrahim Raisi's presidency, Iran's economy made significant strides forward in key areas. These include getting a handle on monetary variables and stabilizing the energy sector — electricity, gas, and water. The National Housing Movement also took off under Raisi's leadership. These measures resulted in a jump in macroeconomic indicators. The tireless efforts by Iran's previous government and, at its head, late president Raisi, paid off, successfully establishing stability in the food market.*

*During the working days of the week, Raisi was serving his people in the capital, and on weekends, he would usually travel to the provinces to reach out to Iranians and deal with their obstacles and what was troubling them. He even kept at it during the Nowruz holiday. Covering the long list of Raisi's achievements during his rather short stint as president would take several full newspapers; therefore, we will go over only a part of his valuable services.*

*Everyone recalls that Raisi commenced his term amid a backdrop of governmental challenges: issues with paying salaries, near-empty warehouses of basic goods, a negative treasury, a seemingly insurmountable budget deficit, inflation surpassing 60%, frequent power outages and queues for purchasing basic goods, and myriad small and large economic woes. However, during his tenure of nearly two years and ten months, almost all macro indicators have turned positive or made a leap just like the oil sector.*

#### Breaking records in energy production

Although Iran's oil sales statistics aren't officially disclosed due to sanctions, estimates are crafted by domestic and foreign centers. The latest reports indicate that Iran's oil production climbed to at least 3.4 million barrels per day in the Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended March 20, 2024). Oil exports had taken a drastic downturn in the final years of the second to last government, but with the Raisi government's proactive economic diplomacy, they climbed back up to 1.6 million barrels. This figure remains somewhat shy of pre-US withdrawal from the JCPOA levels.

In the gas sector, Iran successfully doubled its production, despite facing sanctions. As a result, the calendar years 1401 (ended March 20, 2023) and 1402 witnessed minimal domestic gas outages. Additionally, Phase 11 of the South Pars joint gas field — a critical energy supply hub for Iran — was brought online last year after two decades, thanks to the expertise of Iranian specialists.

In the summers of the last two years, records for daily electricity consumption were consecutively broken in Iran, with usage surpassing 70,000 megawatts. However, there were no power outages due to shortages. Notably, this year, for the first time in the Islamic Republic of Iran's history, industrial electricity consumption growth outpaced that of the domestic sector. After many years, frequent blackouts and daily power outages were returning to the country, but the previous government turned things around, increasing power generation capacity to 8538 megawatts and putting an end to regular blackouts.

Additionally, at the outset of the previous government, 10,000 Iranian villages were identified as requiring immediate action for water supply, and a decision was made to bring sustainable drinking water to these villages within the four-year term. From the beginning of the government's tenure until the end of the calendar year 1402, nearly 5,000 villages that previously lacked access to sustainable drinking water were provided with this essential resource. Undoubtedly, the efforts to ensure rural water supply will stand as a lasting testament to the legacy of late president Raisi.

#### Liquidity returns to long-term trend

Controlling monetary variables stands as one of the strengths of Raisi's government. The significant, continuous, and simultaneous reduction of the monetary base and liquidity during his presidency has been unprecedented in the past decade. The previous government successfully curbed the point-to-point growth of liquidity, bringing it down from 42.8 percent in October 2021 to 23 percent in April 2024. Additionally, they lowered the monetary base from 45 percent in April 2023 to 29.6 percent in March of the following year.

Therefore, the previous government's track record should be assessed as a success in steering liquidity back toward its long-term trend. The impacts of these actions are currently being felt, with more significant effects anticipated in the future.

#### Inflation ballooning curb

As a result of the decelerating trend in liquidity growth during the calendar year 1402, the inflation rate also followed a downward path for both consumers and producers. According to the data by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), point-to-point consumer inflation peaked at 55.5% in April 2023 but fell to 30.9% in April of this year. Consequently, 12-month inflation decreased from 48% to 38.8%.

non-price tools.

#### From recession to growth

Iran's GDP witnessed a relative improvement over the past two years. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) data, Iran's gross domestic product (GDP), based on the purchasing power parity (PPP) index, reached \$1,730 billion in 2023 (December 2022 to January 2023). This improvement elevated Iran's economy, ranking it as the 19th largest economy globally.

According to the latest data from the SCI, Iran's economic growth in the calendar years 1401 and 1402 reached four and six percent, respectively. This achievement stands in contrast to the average economic growth rate of Iran in the preceding decade, which, according to Central Bank

SCO and BRICS groupings, and, most notably, the lowering of inflationary expectations.

#### Reducing unemployment, wheat self-sufficiency

Iran's unemployment rate dropped to 8.2%, marking the lowest level since the country's Islamic Revolution. This positive development resulted from increased economic growth and the revival of 6,000 stagnant production units.

Additionally, during president Raisi's tenure, the country achieved self-sufficiency in bread wheat production, despite challenges posed by low rainfall levels. The government's trust-building measures, and those of the late president himself, played a pivotal role in this achievement. Recently, the markets for chicken, eggs,

and most basic goods have stabilized as well. Additionally, Raisi's stance against corruption, previously demonstrated in the judiciary by tackling the Head of Iran's Coin Cartel and other major economic criminals, once again became evident in the dismissal of the former minister of Agriculture before any judicial proceedings commenced.

#### Food packages in millions

The previous government had other livelihood schemes in the works. The agenda for the calendar year 1402 included a plan to introduce electronic coupons for food baskets containing 11 basic items. In February 2024, the government rolled out the so-called Fajraneh Electronic Coupon initiative to commemorate the Islamic Revolution's triumph, enabling over 60 million eligible citizens to benefit from the scheme's double subsidy. This initiative wrapped up on May 10, 2024, having distributed approximately 142 million packages to the public. Aside from a handful of queues that formed during the project's early days due to inadequate publicity, there were no further issues with queues or shortages.

#### Satellite launches

Iran's space industry, in general, and the launch and construction of its satellites, in particular, had stagnated for years, but the previous government kick-started a revival. Through its determination, 11 satellites successfully took off into space, setting a record.


#### Raisi epitome of Iranian willpower

Tens of pages are insufficient to review Raisi's economic accomplishments in full as the aforementioned instances merely scratch the surface. On May 20, following the inauguration of the Qiz Qalasi dam, the helicopter carrying president Raisi and his entourage suffered from an accident en route back to Tabriz due to poor weather conditions. It was announced the next morning that Raisi, along with his entourage, sadly passed away.

However, during his brief tenure as president, Raisi demonstrated that by refusing to capitulate to the will of adversaries and rely on agreements like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and FATF, Iran can surmount challenges and take significant, enduring strides forward through tireless efforts and practical measures. These measures include boosting exchanges with friendly and neighboring nations and harnessing the strength of Iranians.

The Raisi government prioritized fundamental reforms over stopgap measures, heeding the Leader of the Revolution's counsel against sacrificing the country's future for short-term gains. As a result, he attained partial success in stabilizing the economy, and had his tenure continued, complete success would have been within reach.



 Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (front-C) participate in the relaunch of a factory in Semnan Province on April 18, 2024.  
[president.ir](http://president.ir)

Producer price inflation reflects the state of inflation within the country's manufacturing sector. The previous government successfully lowered this inflation rate from 103%, which was recorded in the final months of its predecessor's term, to 23.8% in April 2024, underscoring its commitment to supporting production and producers.

The maintenance of stable prices for bread and gasoline, essential commodities for all, and the steadiness of water, electricity, and gas rates for ordinary consumers, despite rising inflation and exchange rates, showcases president Raisi's adept management within the subsistence economy sector, utilizing

statistics, fell below one percent annually and even dipped into negative territory during certain years of that decade.

#### Currency market control

Traditionally, the currency market experiences confusion at the slightest event, but it maintained stability during the previous government's tenure, especially from March 2023 to January 2024. Several factors contributed to this stability over the last two years: increased oil sales and revenue collection, enhanced exchanges with neighboring countries, the establishment of the Iran Center for Exchange, a boost in domestic production alongside reduced import dependence, joining the

and most basic goods have stabilized as well.

Additionally, Raisi's stance against corruption, previously demonstrated in the judiciary by tackling the Head of Iran's Coin Cartel and other major economic criminals, once again became evident in the dismissal of the former minister of Agriculture before any judicial proceedings commenced.

#### Promise turned into movement

The construction of four million houses in four years was president Raisi's pledge, which was allowed by the parliament's legislation. This promise of constructing over 2,500,000 units prac-

## Iran to compete at FIBA U-18 Women's Asia Cup Division B



● TASNIM

Iran's basketball team will travel to China on Friday to compete at the FIBA U-18 Women's Asia Cup 2024 Division B.

The competition will be held in Shenzhen from June 24 to 30, reported Mehr News Agency.

Iran, headed by Eleni Kapogianni, is scheduled to play Hong Kong in its opening match slated for June 24 (Monday).

The Persians will also play Kyrgyzstan and Samoa in their following matches.

The Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Maldives, Samoa, and Syria are the teams that will be competing in the event for a chance to secure promotion to Division A.

## Chamanian named Iran U17 football team coach

Abbas Chamanian was named as head coach of Iran's U17 football team.

He will lead Iran at the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers, where the Persians have been drawn in Group A along with Jordan, Syria, Hong Kong, China and DPR Korea, according to Mehr News Agency.

The 61-year-old coach has previously worked as head coach of Iran U17 and U20 teams.

"First, we have to prepare for the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers because I think that Iran have been drawn in a tough group," Chamanian said.

"We have to pave the way for our young talented players to join the national team, that's why I am here. I think the Asian tournament like this provides an excellent opportunity for the players to show their capabilities," he added.

# Persepolis keeper Beiranvand cancels deal: IPL

Persepolis football team goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand canceled his contract with the club on Tuesday over financial irregularities and unpaid salary.

The 32-year-old keeper had terminated his deal with Persepolis last season but signed a new contract with the Reds, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Beiranvand helped Persepolis win the Iran Professional League (IPL) for a second successive year.

He has been linked with the Tractor football team.

Meanwhile, former Poland football team head coach Czesław Michniewicz has reportedly been shortlisted to lead Persepolis.

Brazilian coach Osmar Loss

Vieira parted company with the Iranian team last week. He led Persepolis to the title in the 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL) but did not agree to extend his deal due to family problems.

The 49-year-old coach had been appointed as Persepolis coach in January as a replacement for Yahya Golmohammadi.

Former Iran football team head coach Dragan Skocic, Croatia's Petar Segrt and Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovic are also among the candidates to lead Persepolis.

Michniewicz, 54, has most recently worked as head coach of Saudi Arabian football club Abha Football Club.



● TASNIM

## Portugal scrape Euro 2024 opening win, Turkey beat Georgia

Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal beat the Czech Republic 2-1 to claim a Euro 2024 debut victory on Tuesday but they needed to come from behind with a 92nd-minute winner from youngster Francisco Conceicao.

Earlier in the section's other clash, Turkey bested Georgia 3-1 in a pulsating match in Dortmund, reported Reuters.

Roberto Martinez's Portugal qualified at a canter with a 100 percent record, but only just scraped victory in Leipzig in their first match, under driving rain. Ronaldo played at a record-extending sixth European Championship and 41-year-old defender Pepe became the tournament's oldest ever player for the Selecao.

The Czechs went ahead against the run of play through Lukas Provod's fine strike from the edge of the box after the hour mark, but Robin Hranac's own goal soon pulled Portugal level before Conceicao's winner.

"We want to do more, but there was also a lot of emotion, a lot of desire and

sometimes we failed to pull off the strategic plan," said Portugal midfielder Vitinha, awarded player of the match.

"We wanted to come out strong, show our strength and unfortunately we conceded the goal first, on the Czech Republic's first opportunity.

ited his "Suuuui" celebration shout as they marched to the game waving flags and in high spirits despite a brief but intense thunderstorm.

Around 8,000 fans attended Portugal's open training session on Saturday, many of whom were just hoping for a glimpse of the

the match but were unable to watch the all-time record Euros goalscorer find the net on a frustrating night against a solid Czech side. Ronaldo was thrice denied by goalkeeper Jindrich Stanek on a record Euros appearance and headed against the post, but was offside.

Ronaldo's infringement.

It did not matter for Portugal in the end as 21-year-old Porto winger Conceicao, son of former Portugal international Sergio Conceicao, struck from close range. "Francisco is the ultimate example of earning it, he deserves to be here and showed he is ready to help the group," Martinez told reporters.

The former Wigan and Everton coach defended his team's performance.

"Today we won, because the group is united, it's a very resilient group, we became resilient over the past few days," he said.

"(After conceding) it would have been very easy to blame each other but we didn't do that. We were a team."

The Czechs were left agonising after battling so hard and almost claiming a point.

"It hurts terribly when you work like this for 90 minutes, you give everything and you lose in the end," said Czech goalscorer Provod.

"Our defenders played an incredible game. We just needed a bit more luck."

### Turkey turn-out

A well-supported Turkey started the Euros in entertaining fashion with an end-to-end win over debutants Georgia.

Real Madrid playmaker Arda Guler scored a brilliant goal, along with strikes by Mert Muldur and Kerem Akturkoglu, to delight the masses of Turkish supporters.

Georgia were dangerous after Georges Mikautadze levelled Muldur's superbly hit opener, and struck the woodwork.

Napoli star Khvicha Kvaratskhelia was below his best but despite defeat his team offered enough to give themselves hope for the matches ahead, against the Czech Republic and then Portugal.

"It was a match worthy of the Euros, we had great support even in difficult moments. This win is also for them and the party that they'll have," Turkey coach Vincenzo Montella told reporters.

"It's my 50th birthday today so it was perfect day of sport and the victory was the best present that the boys could have given me."



● REUTERS

"We showed all our coolness and resilience." Portugal supporters chanted Ronaldo's name and im-

39-year-old former Real Madrid striker.

Thousands of fans sported replica Ronaldo shirts at

Diogo Jota put the rebound into the net but the goal was disallowed after VAR highlighted Al Nassr striker

## New report warns of heat danger at Paris Olympics

A new report backed by climate scientists and athletes warned about the dangers posed by extreme high temperatures at this year's Paris Olympics.

The "Rings of Fire" report – a collaboration between non-profit Climate Central, academics at Britain's University of Portsmouth and 11 Olympians – said conditions in Paris could be worse than the last Games in Tokyo in 2021, AFP reported.

It warned that "intense heat at the Paris Olympics in July-August 2024 could lead to competitors collapsing and in worst case scenarios dying during the Games."

The study adds to a growing number of calls from sports people to adjust schedules

and the timing of events to take into account the physical strain of competing in higher temperatures caused by global warming.

"Rings of Fire" urges organisers of competitions typically held at the height of the northern hemisphere summer -- such as the Olympics or the football World Cup -- to re-think their scheduling.

They should also provide improved rehydration and cooling plans for athletes and fans to avoid the risk of heat stroke, the study argued.

The Paris Olympics, which run from July 26-August 11, are set to take place in what are usually the warmest months in the French capital which

has been struck by a series of record heatwaves in recent years.

More than 5,000 people died in France as a result of searing summer heat last year when new local highs above 40 degrees Centigrade (104 Fahrenheit) were recorded around the country, according to public health data.

A study in the Lancet Planet Health journal last May found that Paris had the highest heat-related death rates of 854 European towns and cities, partly due to its lack of green space and dense population.

### Rainy conditions

Rather than high temperatures, incessant rain is currently the

bigger weather-related concern for Paris 2024 organisers, with regular downpours in May and June leading to unusually strong currents in the river Seine and poor water quality.

The Seine is set to host a boat parade during the unprecedented opening ceremony being planned for July 26, as well as the triathlon swimming and marathon swimming events – pollution permitting.

Organisers of Paris 2024 say they have built flexibility into their schedules, enabling them to shift around some events such as the marathon or triathlon to avoid the peaks of midday heat.

But much of the Games is set to take place in temporary



● AFP

stands that lack shade, while the athletes' village has been built without air conditioning to reduce the Games' carbon footprint.

"Sleep disruption due to heat has been cited in the build-up to the 2024 Games as a major concern by athletes, especially

given the lack of air conditioning in the Olympic Village," the report said.

Olympic teams have been offered the possibility of installing portable air-conditioning units in their accommodation, however, which many have opted to include.

# Israel carrying out 'extermination' campaign in Gaza: UN

## Israel's use of heavy weapons 'intentional' attack on civilians



A new independent report presented to the United Nations' Human Rights Council on Wednesday concluded that Israeli forces have been carrying out several crimes against humanity in Gaza, including a campaign of "extermination" that has ramped up since the current military offensive began more than eight months ago.

The Israeli military's "deliberate" use of heavy weapons in the Gaza Strip has been an "intentional and direct attack on the civilian population", the new report by a United Nations-backed independent commission has found.

Navi Pillay, chairperson of the Independent International

Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said on Wednesday that Israel has committed crimes against humanity, forced starvation, extermination, murder, and inhuman and cruel treatment of Palestinians. She also accused Palestinian groups of war crimes.

As she presented the report to the UN Human Rights Council, Pillay said the Israeli military operating in Gaza "forcibly transferred almost the entire population into a small enclosure that is unsafe and uninhabitable" and used heavy weapons in densely populated areas in "an intentional and direct attack on the civilian population".

Pillay said the commission concluded that specific forms of sexual and gender-based violence constituted part of the Israeli forces' operating procedures.

"Although Israeli officials have repeatedly stated their operations in Gaza are intended to destroy Hamas and release hostages, yet neither of these aims has been largely achieved at the expense of thousands of lives," she said.

### Sexual violence

"We found that Israeli forces committed sexual and gender-based violence with the intent to humiliate and further subordinate the Palestinian community. Palestinian women were targeted

situation is "dramatically deteriorating".

More Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers there since the start of the current war in October than in any other recorded period, Pillay told the council. Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7 have killed more than 37,000 people, 40 percent of them children, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health. The October 7 attacks in Israel killed 1,139 people.

### 'Overwhelming enormity of tragedy'

The report was the UN's first in-depth investigation of the events since October 7 until the end of 2023. The commission was set up by the Human Rights Council in 2021. Pillay said it was "tragic" that Israel has prevented the commission from visiting victims inside Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Ibrahim Khraishi, Palestinian ambassador to the UN, thanked the commission for its report and condemned abuses committed by Israel during the "genocidal war". Israel gave its seat at the council meeting to the mother of one of the dozens of captives held in Gaza, who delivered an emotional speech.

"Mr President, we should be on the same side – the side fighting hostage-taking, never accepting the use of young women as tools for trade. Please help me hug my daughter again," said Meirav Lesheim Gonen, the mother of a 23-year-old captive.



Palestinians flee Israeli bombardment in the area in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on June 19, 2024.

● BASHAR TALEB/AFP

and subjected to sexual violence and harassment online and in person. "Men and boys experienced specific persecutory acts, including sexual and gender-based violence amounting to torture and inhuman and cruel treatment."

Pillay also noted that the daily onslaught in Gaza must not sideline attention to a parallel wave of violence in the occupied West Bank, where UN human rights chief Volker Turk said on Tuesday the

## Russia, North Korea sign mutual defense pact

Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a new pact Wednesday that includes a pledge of mutual defense if either is attacked.

The agreement was sealed at a summit in Pyongyang during Putin's first visit to North Korea in 24 years as both countries face growing confrontations with the West.

In a news conference after the summit, Putin said the agreement, which he called "a truly breakthrough document," reflected the two countries' shared desire to raise relations to a new level — covering security, trade, investment, and cultural and humanitarian ties. Putin also said Russia "does not rule out military-technical cooperation with the DPRK in connection with the treaty that was signed today", referring to North Korea by its official name.

Kim said it was a peaceful agreement that elevated relations to an alliance. Kim, who has been accel-

erating weapons testing and stoking tensions with US ally South Korea, on Wednesday promised his "full support" for what Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, which has triggered rafts of UN sanctions on Moscow.

Kim called Putin the "dearest friend of the Korean people". Putin, in turn, thanked his host Kim — whose country has been under a UN sanctions regime since 2006 over its weapons programs — saying Moscow appreciated the "consistent and unwavering" support. Putin said the two heavily sanctioned countries would not tolerate Western "blackmail" and called for a review of UN sanctions on North Korea.

"The indefinite restrictive regime inspired by the US and its allies at the UN Security Council towards the DPRK should be reviewed," Putin said.

Putin also said Moscow and Pyongyang were fighting "US hegemony" together and commended the North



for its "balanced position" on Ukraine. "Today, we are fighting together against the hegemonism and neo-colonial practices of the United States and its satellites," he said.

The two countries have been allies since North Korea's founding after World War II and have drawn even closer since Russia's war on Ukraine in 2022. Officials in the West are concerned about weapons and intelligence sharing that could both help Putin's army in Ukraine, and threaten the US and its allies in Asia.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday



Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un attend a Gala concert in Pyongyang, North Korea, on June 19, 2024.

● GAVRIIL GRIGOROV/POOL/AFP

that Russia was trying "in desperation, to develop and to strengthen relations with countries that can provide it with what it needs to continue the war of aggression that it started against Ukraine."

He claimed that North Korea had been providing Russia with "significant munitions," as well as other weapons for use in Ukraine.

## Iran's Navy advanced drones increase its combat power

Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said the Navy has acquired advanced drones in the field of unmanned aerial vehicles, which has increased the force's combat power in the area.

Irani made the announcement in a ceremony in the southern city of Sirjan in Kerman Province on Wednesday, saying the Navy has made "good progress" in the operational areas and that there will be new additions ahead, which will continue to keep the force at the point of authority and progress, according to Press TV.

"Soon, we will see accessions in the Navy and effective presence in all oceans is on the agenda and a priority," the top commander said. "Our achievements are those of the people and the country as the Navy is a showcase of the country on the international stage."

Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient.

## Netanyahu's failure led ...

Many Israeli officials have warned that continuing on the current path could lead to the imminent collapse of the regime.

Thus, the dissolution of the cabinet, coupled with the current regional and global isolation of the illegal entity, can be seen as the starting point of an irreversible political collapse for the occupiers, the effects of which will become apparent in the near future.

### Cabinet inefficiency and intensifying protests

It is clear that one reason influencing Netanyahu's decision to dissolve the cabinet is its inefficiency and failure to achieve declared objectives in the eight-month war on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, such as eliminating or at least containing Hamas and liberating prisoners in exchange for intensified attacks on the besieged territory. The decision comes amidst growing dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war in Gaza and daily calls for protests by anti-government groups. In this environment replete with increasing anti-government sentiment, Netanyahu's decision may serve as a means to escape the mounting criticisms directed at him and his decisions regarding the Gaza war and related issues.

### Platform for disputes instead of unity

One of the key motivations for forming the war cabinet after the al-Aqsa Storm was to display unity among all Israeli parties and groups in decision-making for the Gaza war and to present a united front to the world. However, the subsequent emergence of disagreements and even clashes among cabinet officials revealed that Israel not only lacks a cohesive strategy for the Gaza war but also cannot reach an agreement on how to conduct or end the war. This fragmented image, exacerbated by the presence of extremists like Ben Gvir, pushed Netanyahu towards dissolving the cabinet to at least minimize the portrayal of disarray in decision-making within the Zionist community and to the world. According to Israeli media reports, over the past nine months of the Gaza conflict, Netanyahu has repeatedly rejected attempts by extremist coalition members, including Israel's security minister Itamar Ben Gvir and finance minister Bezalel Smotrich, to join these discussions. Additionally, the resignation of Benny Gantz from the cabinet in protest at Netanyahu's policies and the subsequent formation of a political opposition movement against his war policies demonstrated that the cabinet could serve as a pressure tool against Netanyahu's decisions.

Therefore, rather than being a body for making crucial wartime decisions, the cabinet became a focal point for political conflicts and, subsequently, a tool for the opposition to pressure Netanyahu and his party within the political framework of the Israeli regime. Consequently, Netanyahu sought to dissolve the cabinet to both reduce discord and eliminate the pressure against himself.

On a deeper level, Netanyahu could no longer manage the cabinet, and his incompetence in handling the Gaza war had altered the trajectory of his political life in the eyes of the public and other officials. Currently, the demand for Netanyahu's resignation from power is growing among officials and the public, escalating with each step he takes in committing atrocities and genocide against the people of Gaza, following the lack of achievements. Thus, Netanyahu attempted to enhance his decision-making power in the war by making it solely dependent on himself. Immediately after the dissolution of the war cabinet, the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth speculated that some key decisions would now be made by a cabinet that might include over 50 members, where the voices of warmongers are more dominant, providing Netanyahu with greater political cover to continue the conflict.

### Consolidation of extremism

Netanyahu issued the dissolution order when faced with demands from far-right ministers like Ben Gvir and Smotrich to join the cabinet. One of the significant reasons for the existing rifts among officials was the pressure from extremists on Netanyahu and their direct, detrimental impact on US-Israel relations. Two far-right ministers threatened to collapse the ruling coalition by resigning if Netanyahu accepted US President Joe Biden's peace plan. Additionally, in response to Biden's recent threat to halt arms exports to Tel Aviv, they labeled him a friend of Hamas. These contradictory and aggressive stances of the extremists were unpalatable to the US, raising concerns that their presence in the war cabinet could strain the close Israel-US partnership and affect financial support. Therefore, Netanyahu aimed to dissolve the cabinet to restore the credibility of the extremists and ultimately his government while reducing tensions with the US. With the war cabinet dissolved, the management of the Gaza conflict is now limited to a few radical ministers and the Israeli minister for military affairs, allowing the extremists to implement their plans for continued genocide in Gaza.

# Two Iranian actors picked for Italy's AmiCorti festival jury



Two Iranian actors were selected to evaluate the films at the sixth edition of Italy's AmiCorti International Film Festival. Renowned Iranian actress-cum-director Fatemeh Motamed-Arya will preside over the jury, which also includes Iranian actor Hossein Soleimani, according to a report by Mehr News Agency. This year's festival continues to feature a strong presence of Iranian artists, following last year's appointments of Milad Mansouri and Deniz Motevasseli as official members. Another notable Iranian figure at the festival is singer Fariman Jab-

barzadeh. Known for his recent collaboration with Italian singer Al Bano, Jabbarzadeh will serve on the jury for the music video category. Under the leadership of Italian producer and artistic director, Rossi, the AmiCorti festival takes place annually from June 25 to 30 in Italy. The festival features competitions in six categories: Short films, feature films, international short films, and music videos. Awards will be presented on June 29 during the festival's closing ceremony, with winners celebrated in the presence of film crews and the jury.



## Iran's composer Abdi awarded at Bulgaria's FEMI

Iranian composer Behzad Abdi won the Best Music and Best Sound Design Award for the documentary 'Majesty of Zagros' at the Golden FEMI Film Festival in Bulgaria. Directed and produced by Behnam Rezaei, 'Majesty of Zagros' was also nominated to receive best director award,

ILNA wrote. Abdi has previously won the Crystal Simorgh for Best Score at the Fajr Film Festival. The documentary depicts the hunting, birth, and migration of various fauna over five years. 'Majesty of Zagros' has been featured in numerous festivals and has received several awards.

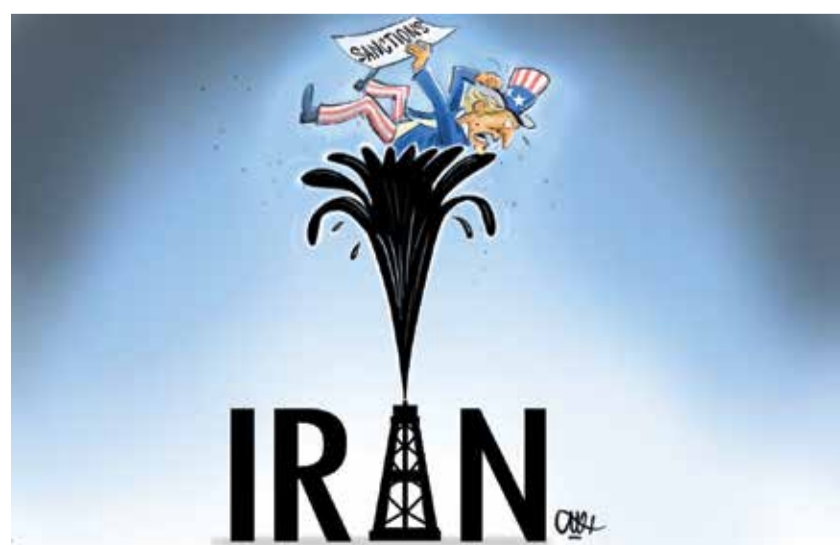
## Iran, Iraq to launch first family tourism rally

The first family tourism rally between Iran and Iraq will take place this fall following the signing of an official agreement. Mohammad Ali Erfani, director of the automobile department of Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran, announced the launch of the "Haramain" family tourism rally, IRNA wrote. This event is organized in cooperation with Iraq Automobile and Motorcycle Federation, covering the route from Karbala to Mashhad and back. The agreement was

signed during a meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, attended by Mohammad Hossein Sufi, CEO of the Iranian club, and the president of the Iraqi federation. Erfani explained that the rally will feature 25 cars and around 50 Iraqi families starting from Karbala after visiting the shrine of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam. Participants will cross the Mehran border into Iran, traveling through Iham, Hamedan, Tehran, Mazandaran, Golestan, North Khorasan, and Razavi Khorasan provinces, visiting var-

ious tourist, historical, and cultural sites. The event aims to strengthen bilateral relations, foster cooperation, promote safe driving with a pilgrimage theme, and create social excitement among families. Upon reaching Mashhad, participants will visit the shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH) and stay for two days. Iranian participants will join the rally in Mashhad for the return journey to Karbala. This cross-border rally will cover nearly 4,000 kilometers over approximately 15 days, concluding in Karbala.

 **Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## 'Iranians' Festivals' translated into Italian

An Italian translation of the book 'Iranians' Festivals' by Askar Bahrami was published in Italy, announced Iran's Cultural Attaché in Rome, Mohammad Taqi Amini, on Tuesday. The book showcases Iranian traditions, heritage, ancient holidays, and the grandeur of Persian culture, Amini told IRNA.

The translation aims to introduce ancient Persian traditions and culture to Italian society, fostering solidarity between the two nations, he added. 'Iranians' Festivals' explores the philosophy behind Iranian festivals and holidays. Amini emphasized that Persian traditions belong to all Iranians, who have strived to

preserve them. He cited Nowruz and Sadeh as examples of ancient Persian festivals. Sadeh, celebrated 50 days before the Iranian New Year (Nowruz), honors the elements of fire, water, wind, and soil. The Italian publisher IRFAN, known for its collaboration with the Iranian cultural consultation center in Rome,

published the book translated by Mahdi (Giuseppe) Aiello with an introduction by Amini. The publication is part of an effort by Iranian cultural consultation center in Italy and Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO)'s translation program to promote Iranian culture through translations.

## Hepatitis C eliminated in hemophilia, dialysis, thalassemia patients: **Official**

### Social Desk

The hepatitis C was eradicated among hemophilia, dialysis, and thalassemia patients in Iran, according to the head of the Iranian Association for Liver Study of the Liver Diseases. However, the disease remains prevalent among high-risk groups, particularly prisoners and injection drug users. Seyed Moayed Alavian said that one of the association's key priorities is addressing these high-risk populations. He credited the Health Ministry's sustained efforts over the years for significantly reducing hepatitis B and C cases, IRNA wrote. Screening donated blood for hepatitis C since 1996 has significantly lowered its prevalence among high-risk groups, including hemophilia, thalassemia, and dialysis patients. Free screening and treatment for all

special patients have also contributed to eradicating the disease in these groups. Alavian noted that over 20,000 special patients with hepatitis C have received free treatment, drastically reducing related mortality rates. In many provinces, there are no longer reports of special patients with hepatitis C. Hepatitis, caused by a virus, often begins with flu-like symptoms such as fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite, followed by jaundice and dark urine. Alavian emphasized the production of affordable, insurance-covered medications in Iran, contributing to the low hepatitis B and C prevalence. To prevent water and foodborne diseases, including hepatitis A and E, Alavian recommended proper hand hygiene, safe water consumption, and thorough



cleaning and disinfecting of fruits and vegetables. The 10th Hepatitis Conference and the 3rd Iran Gastrointestinal Liver Conference will be held from June 18-20 at the Razi Conference Center, where physicians will discuss the latest prevention and treatment methods for hepatitis and liver diseases. According to the Health Ministry, the hepatitis A incidence rate is 12.87 cases per million people. Last year, 10,094 cases were reported. About half of the

hepatitis A cases occur in children under 10, highlighting the need for improved education and prevention programs for this age group. The infection rates are 48% in women and 52% in men, with 93% of the majority of cases (59%) occur in rural areas, 39% in urban areas, and 2% among nomadic populations. The high urban infection rate is concerning due to environmental and hygiene factors.