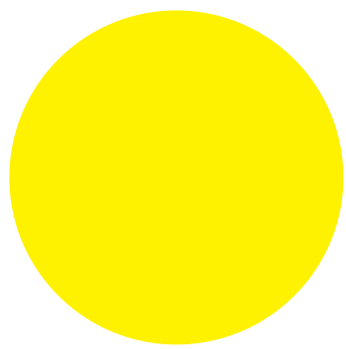




Iran's 3rd presidential debate focused on cultural, social issues

7 >



irandaily.ir

newspaper.irandaily.ir



IranDailyWeb

Leader: Candidates should avoid making remarks that please enemies

7 >

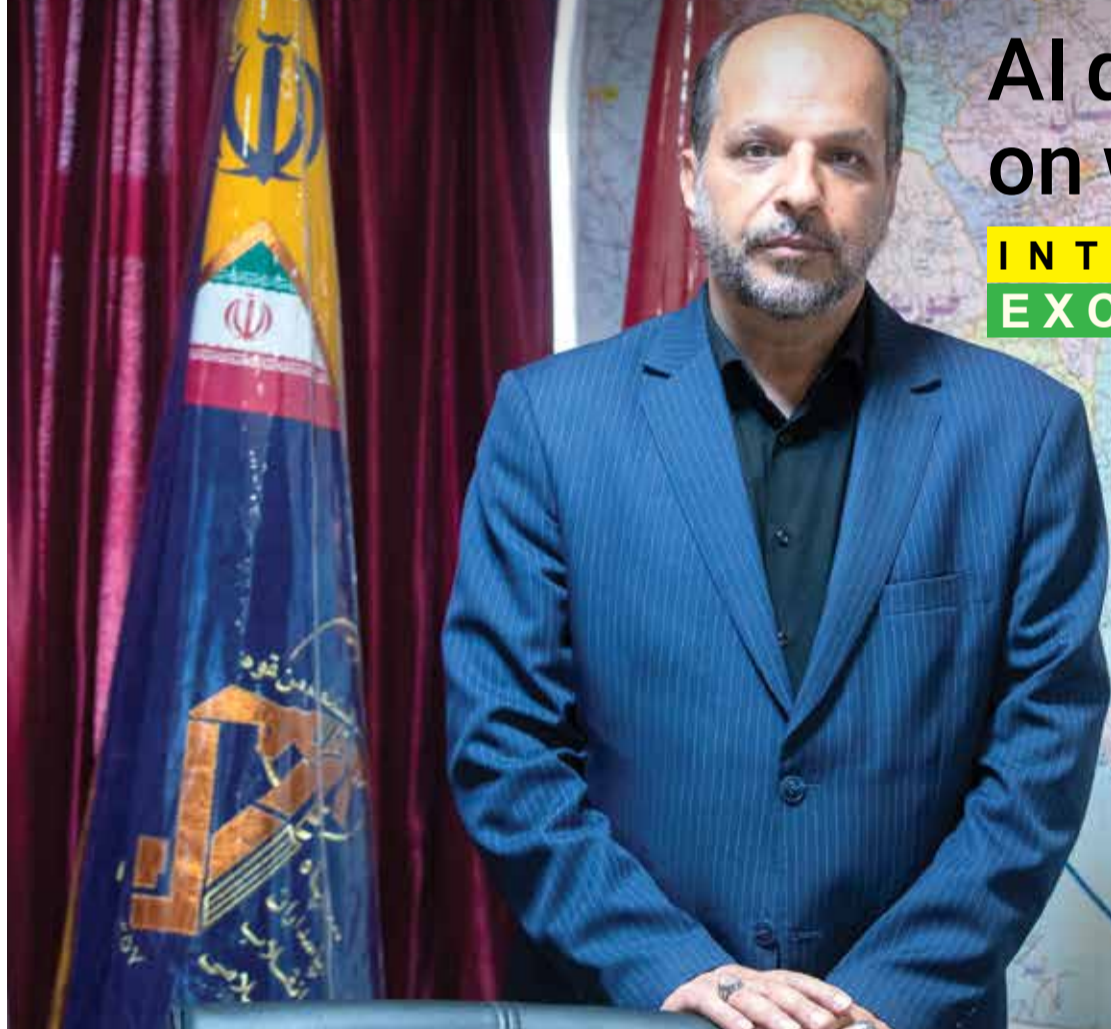
Member of the National Steering Council of AI:

Iran Targets Top Five Global AI Ranking

AI diplomacy efforts on whole new level

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

4-5 >



Asia Cooperation Dialogue: An opportunity to deepen intra-Asian cooperation, interactions



Ali Bagheri Kani
Iran's acting foreign minister

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

On Sunday and Monday, Tehran will host the meeting of foreign ministers from member states of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). Ministers and senior officials from the 35 countries, along with heads of regional and multilateral Asian organizations, will be in attendance. This significant multilateral event takes place while the Islamic Republic of Iran mourns the loss and martyrdom of two leaders in

multilateral diplomacy, President Ayatollah Raisi and Foreign Minister Dr. Amir-Abdollahian. The upcoming meeting in Tehran was planned with the high vision and support of these two esteemed individuals.

The current Iranian government has shown a serious and remarkable commitment, led by the martyred president and foreign minister, to diversify interactions and reduce reliance on the West by focusing on the East. This approach aims to strengthen Asian identity and ultimately ensure that good-neighbornliness policies contribute to collective development and security.

Page 8 >

Names popping up as Persepolis coach quest drags on

6 >



Discovering Kerman Bazaar's history and architecture

3 >

Cinemas drew in 20% more audience in spring

Iranian cinemas across the country attracted an estimated audience of 8.6 million in spring, indicating a 20% increase compared to the same season last year.

The movie theaters had 206,590 film showings in the stated period (March 20-June 20) attracting 8,674,000 viewers, with box office earnings reaching 498 billion and 148 million tomans (\$8,302,000), IRNA reported.

8 >

Iran-Georgia trade expected to double by yearend:

Senior businessperson EXCLUSIVE

2 >

Guaranteed purchase of wheat tops \$1.6b



Iran has purchased a sum of 4.77 million tons of wheat valued at over \$1.63 billion from domestic producers under the framework of a national plan that guarantees the purchase of domestic production of the crop.

According to the data released by the Government Trading Corporation of Iran, the figure is 200,000 tons more than that of last year's corresponding period, IRNA reported.

The government has paid over \$500 million to the farmers and the rest sum will be gradually paid to them.

The wheat harvest is currently underway in 25 provinces and will continue until late September. The southwestern province of Khuzestan has been the number one province in the supply of wheat with 1.6 million tons, followed by the provinces of Golestan, Fars, and Ilam which ranked second to fourth, respectively, the official said, adding that with the beginning of harvest in the temperate provinces, the rankings will change, except for Khuzestan Province which is expected to keep its first place.

Wheat production in Iran has increased by six percent in 2023, putting the Islamic Republic in 14th place among the world's top producers of the strategic grain, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s World Agricultural Production report.

Based on the said report, Iranian farmers managed to produce 14 million tons of wheat in the 2023 crop year, 800,000 tons more than the figure for the previous year in which the total production stood at 13.2 million tons.

According to USDA, Iran was the world's 13th largest wheat producer in 2022.

The department has also predicted that Iran will produce 14 million tons of wheat in 2024, which will not change compared to 2023.

The increase in Iran's wheat production during 2023 comes as the world's total wheat production this year has decreased by about seven million tons to reach 782 million tons.

According to this report, Iran, which is the 18th most populous country in the world, has produced more wheat than many countries, including Brazil and Egypt.



Iran-Georgia trade expected to double by yearend: *Senior businesswoman*

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

Tahereh Soleimani, the head of the Commerce and Marketing Commission of the Iran-Georgia Chamber of Commerce said that bilateral trade between the two countries is expected to double by the end of 2024.

She put Iran's export to Georgia in 2023 at over \$220 million, adding that the country imported about \$30 million worth goods from the Caucasian coun-

try last year.

"Iran's share of Georgian market is expanding, and on the other hand, Georgians are also interested in participating in the Iranian market," Soleimani stated, noting that the two countries have trade exchanges in the field of agricultural products, food and clothing. Pointing to the visit of Georgian business delegations to Iran, she said as Georgian delegations get familiar with Iran's capabilities, their view of Iran changes completely as a result of the paved ground in the country for doing business.

"Holding various commercial and economic exhibitions in Iran is a good opportunity to introduce Iran's economic opportunities to businessmen and economic representatives of different countries."

Soleimani pointed out some weak points of Iran in the field of trade and said our producers are not usually successful in introducing their products and capabilities international markets, so in this regard sending them to foreign exhibitions or holding domestic exhibitions can help solve the problem.

She went on to say that today, some of our neighboring countries, owing to better introduction and marketing of their products, have succeeded in taking over many of our foreign markets.

Pointing to extraterritorial cultivation by the Caucasian state, the senior businessperson said Georgia is engaged in the cultivation of crops such as summer vegetables and vegetables in south of Iran, and they send the cultivated crops directly to Georgia.

Georgia does not share a border with Iran, and trade between the

countries has been comparatively modest. Tbilisi and Tehran have maintained stable relations throughout the years.

Iran has floated the idea of closer economic ties in the past, including by supplying Iranian gas to Georgia through Armenia, but those efforts have not resulted in concrete agreements. Even so, state data shows that gas imports to Georgia from Iran soared by more than 600 percent in 2023. If the two countries are indeed preparing to pursue closer relations, energy supplies are a likely catalyst.

Tehran, Minsk ready to cooperate in making gas turbines



Energy officials from Iran and Belarus emphasized cooperating in designing and manufacturing gas turbines.

On the sidelines of the 4th meeting of the energy ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)'s member states, Iran's Minister of Energy Ali Akbar Mehrabian held talks with Viktor Karankevich, the energy minister of Belarus, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Mehrabian pointed to the special emphasis of late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi on the expansion of relations with regional countries, especially Belarus, and added that the relations between Tehran and Minsk are at a high level, especially in the political field.

Iran attaches great importance to its relation with the Republic of Belarus, he said, adding that high-ranking officials of the two

countries are determined to expand their cooperation in all fields.

He went on to say that Belarus is an innovative country in terms of industry and technology and is at a good level in electronics, mining and mineral machinery and different industrial equipment.

Mehrabian said that Iran has also made significant progress in the field of industry since the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The energy minister of the Republic of Belarus, for his part, pointed to the exchange of experiences between Iran and Belarus in the field of manufacturing and repairing gas turbines and emphasized the need for launching all-out cooperation with Iran for the design and manufacturing of power plants.

Karankevich added that his country is ready to expand cooperation with Iran in all fields, especially in the

areas of trade and economy. Meanwhile, addressing the 4th SCO energy ministers' meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Friday, Mehrabian said that member states can ensure energy security by forging cooperation.

A strategy for energy cooperation among SCO member states until 2030 was approved by the ministers in the meeting.

Iran, like other member states, presented its proposals to strengthen the document, Mehrabian said. Elaborating on the proposals, Mehrabian said that Tehran stressed the importance of creating a regional electricity market between the member states, promoting energy security, and enhancing the capacity of electric desalination devices.

The technical development and commercialization of energy storage systems and electric vehicles, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, the exchange of technical knowledge and scientific cooperation, and the exchange of technical and engineering services in the field of energy were also among the seven areas which Tehran says could lead to enhanced cooperation between SCO member states and sustainable growth and development in the field of energy, according to the minister.

Iran exports oil to 15 countries: Owji

Iranian Minister of Petroleum Javad Owji said on Saturday that the country currently exports crude oil to 15 countries.

Speaking in a joint news conference with Government Spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi and Head of the Department of Environment Ali Salajegheh, the minister added that the gas production volume of Iran has increased by 53 million cubic meters/day in the administration of the late president Ebrahim Raisi, Shana reported. The capacity of storing gas has increased by one billion cubic meters and \$23 billion worth of capital was invested for the development of the joint oil fields, Owji stated.

He also said 153 projects in the up- and downstream sectors, valued at \$34 billion, were launched during Raisi's administration.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Owji pointed to Iran's extraction of gas from the South Pars Gas Field shared with the neighboring Qatar and added that Iran's gas extraction from the joint field is 100 million cubic meters more than Qatar's.

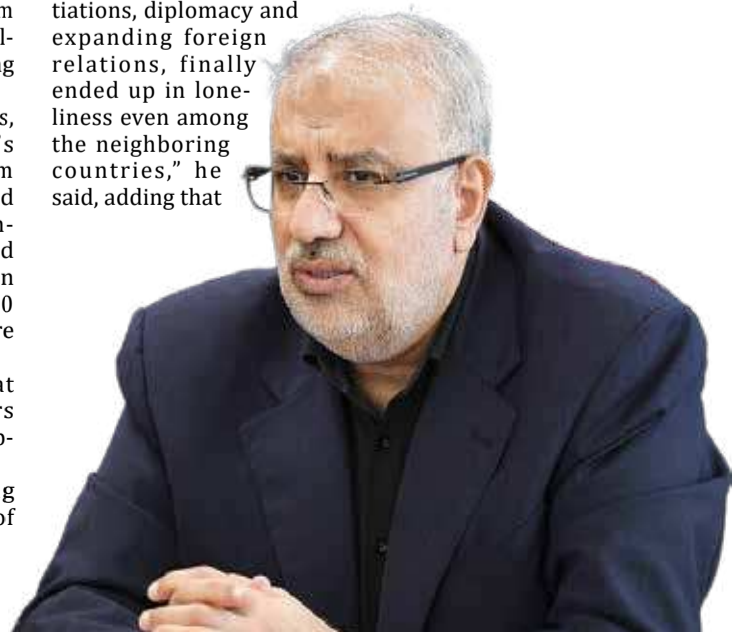
He went on to say that Phase 11 of South Pars Gas Field was put into operation after 20 years. While at the beginning of the administration of

Raisi, which took office in August 2021, the country's oil-selling capacity stood at 300,000 barrels per day (bpd), it rose to 1.8 million barrels per day a year and a half later.

Announcing the above, Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhber added, "When the late president Raisi took power in August 2021, the country was faced with long hours of blackout, especially during peak hours of electricity consumption, but the Raisi administration managed to solve the problem by getting help from the Energy Ministry capabilities," Shana reported.

"Some people who boasted that they were capable in view of carrying out negotiations, diplomacy and expanding foreign relations, finally ended up in loneliness even among the neighboring countries," he said, adding that

Raisi's administration could overcome some shortcomings during his three years in office and improved relations with the neighboring countries. Despite the US presence in a number of countries in the region, they have not been able to join a number of influential regional and international treaties, but during the presidency of Raisi, the Islamic Republic of Iran succeeded in joining some important organizations including Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS group of the emerging economies and Eurasia with close connections to the heads of the member countries, Mokhber added.



Discovering Kerman Bazaar's history and architecture



Vakil Complex
● tamdisth.ir

Iranica Desk

Kerman Bazaar is a national treasure of Iran and a must-see attraction in Kerman Province. Stretching from Arg Square to Moshtaqiyeh Square, it holds the distinction of being the longest bazaar in Iran. Constructed primarily after the 13th century, each section of the bazaar was built under the patronage of different city officials, resulting in a blend of unique features from various historical periods.

Noteworthy among the features of Kerman Bazaar is the presence of the tallest windcatcher, a globally renowned architectural element. The surrounding buildings of Kerman Bazaar, dating back from the Safavid period onwards, are intricately linked to the bazaar, offering visitors a rich tapestry of historical significance. It serves as an excellent destination for purchasing souvenirs and handicrafts specific to the Kerman.

Recognized as a national heritage site in 2001, Kerman Bazaar has withstood the test of time, embodying various historical epochs with its rich and valuable architectural style. Widely acknowledged as the largest and most extensive bazaar in Iran, it has historically been a bustling center for trade and commerce in the province.

Situated on the Silk Road, Kerman Bazaar played a pivotal role in driving the economic prosperity of the region. It facilitated the export of fabrics, copper utensils, and diverse handicrafts to countries like China and India, while also serving as an entry point for imported spices and fabrics.

Comprising a network of alleys and markets, Kerman Bazaar boasts interconnected buildings that constitute a significant portion of Kerman's historical structures. Each market features notable structures such as mosques and baths. The Vakil Mosque, Ganjali Khan Mosque, and Chehelsotoun Mosque are among the prominent landmarks named after their respective main bazaars, adding to the charm and historical significance of the area. Studying the unique architectural designs of these baths and mosques across different markets offers insights into the distinctive styles prevalent during their respective periods.

Kerman Bazaar encompasses various structures related to different markets and constructed during different periods. For example, the Ibrahim Khan Complex, known for its renowned buildings, includes a school, mosque, caravanserai, and bathhouse. Similarly, the Vakil Complex houses both a school and a mosque within its premises.

Kerman Bazaar has been a central hub for the trade of textiles, handicrafts, and copperware for a long time. It is widely recognized as the primary distributor of spices in southeastern Iran, offering everything from the famous cumin to Indian saffron. The Sarcheshmeh Copper Mine, located 50 kilometers from Rafsanjan, has also played a significant role in establishing the distinct reputation of Kerman Bazaar's copper artisans. Visitors can find special souvenirs and sweets from Kerman, such as kolompeh, abundantly available in this bazaar, while its herbalists' market is renowned for providing high-quality herbal medicines.

While exploring Kerman Bazaar, you will come across a central courtyard surrounded by various chambers. The bazaar includes covered spaces known as *timcheh*, each dedicated to specific goods and beautifully adorned with unique decorations. *Chaharsuq* or *chaharsu* also showcases a stunning space reflecting the authentic Iranian architectural style, serving as the intersection point of two main market streets.

The key feature of Kerman Bazaar's architecture is its simplicity. The repetitive design of large and small domes, regular rhythm, symmetry, and predominant earthy colors decorated with blue tiles characterize this architecture. The architectural structures of Kerman Bazaar do not have external facades, except for symbolic elements like windcatchers or copper tops on mosques and caravanserais. Before the surrounding fabric of the bazaar evolved into its current form, the rows of bazaar domes served as the backbone of the city. The city's bazaar was in harmony with the desert, with only minarets and windcatchers visible.

The straw layer on the exterior structure of the bazaar acts as insulation and reflects radiant heat. The high ceiling of the Kerman Bazaar creates a cool airflow inside the market. Additionally, the skylights in the domes help with ventilation and provide natural light. In some buildings, windcatchers are used for air circulation. Traces of oil paintings can still be seen on some parts of the bazaar ceiling. The large Kerman bazaar is comprised of various sections.

Naqarehkhaneh Bazaar

The Naqarehkhaneh Bazaar starts from Arg Square, featuring a large and tall roof adorned with tilework and several rooms upstairs. The architecture of this part seems to belong to the late Qajar period.

Coppersmiths Bazaar

The Coppersmiths Bazaar (Mesgarha Bazaar) is one of the renowned and ancient sections of the Kerman bazaar, offering a variety of copper utensils and objects. Upon entering this bazaar, the first thing that captures your attention is the metallic appearance of the market along with a unique sound. The exquisite copper utensils, each with its distinct design and pattern, give a traditional charm to this market. Here, you can purchase simple copper utensils, enameled items, and various other shapes and objects as souvenirs of Kerman.

Qeisariyeh Bazaar

Another prominent section of the vast Kerman Bazaar is the Qeisariyeh or Zargari Bazaar, also known as "Ibrahim Khan Bazaar". Ibrahim Khan, a ruler of Kerman during the Fat'hali Shah period, constructed beautiful buildings and works in the Islamic architectural style during his reign. This market serves as one of the gold trading centers in Iran, attracting a large number of buyers, sellers, and tourists. With 47 active jewelry shops, this traditional market offers a delightful experience even for visitors not intending to make a purchase.

Ganjali Khan Complex

The Ganjali Khan Complex stands as one of Iran's architectural masterpieces and a landmark of the Kerman Bazaar. Built between 1596 and 1619 during Ganjali Khan's rule over Kerman and completed by his son, Ali Mardan Khan, this complex is situated on the old market of the city and represents one of the most prominent examples of Safavid architecture. Surrounding Ganjali Khan Square, its market connects various functions of the complex, including a school, caravanserai, mosque, mint, mosque, and water reservoir. The mosque or prayer hall of Ganjali Khan, located in the east of the square next to the school, features an area of 27 square meters and showcases a small museum of architectural decorations from the Safavid era, such as stucco work, tilework, calligraphy, painting, and intricate engravings. The Ganjali Khan Bathhouse is considered one of the architectural masterpieces of the country, with all spaces beautifully designed like cut crystals.

The intersection of two market alleys is called *charsuq*. In the past, due to the intersection of two market alleys at the location of Ganjali Khan Charsuq, this place was considered the most important and busiest point in the city. The interior view of the *charsuq* is adorned with plasterwork and oil paintings, and even though 400 years have passed since their creation, they have still maintained their beauty.

Hindus Caravanserai

The Hindus Caravanserai was rented by the English people in the second half of the nineteenth

century and was handed over to the Hindus. Since the Hindus settled there and engaged in trade, it became known as the Hindus Caravanserai. Indian merchants used to sell items such as spices, pepper, cardamom, etc., in this caravanserai, which led to its reputation as the Hindus Caravanserai.

Ekhtiari Bazaar

Another part of the Kerman Bazaar, which starts from the southern end of Ganjali Khan Bazaar and extends to the beginning of Vakil Bazaar, is the Ekhtiari Bazaar. This narrow market can be considered the oldest part of the bazaar, and it is important due to its location between Ganjali Khan Bazaar and Vakil Bazaar. Some elements present in this part of the bazaar include the Chehel Sotoun Mosque, Golshan Caravanserai, three small markets, and at the end of it, the traditional Vakil Bathhouse.

Vakil Complex

The founder of the Vakil Complex was Mohammad Ismail Khan Vakil al-Molk, who ruled Kerman from 1865. This complex is located east of the Ganjali Khan Complex and a short distance from it along the main bazaar and includes a bazaar, caravanserai, bathhouse, and mosque. The Vakil Bathhouse is considered one of the beautiful Qajar-era bathhouses in the city of Kerman and is located near the Ganjali Khan Complex. The Vakil Caravanserai, with two floors, is one of the main and important elements of the complex, and noteworthy features include the windcatcher and clock tower.



Naqarehkhaneh Bazaar
● michael-tour.ir



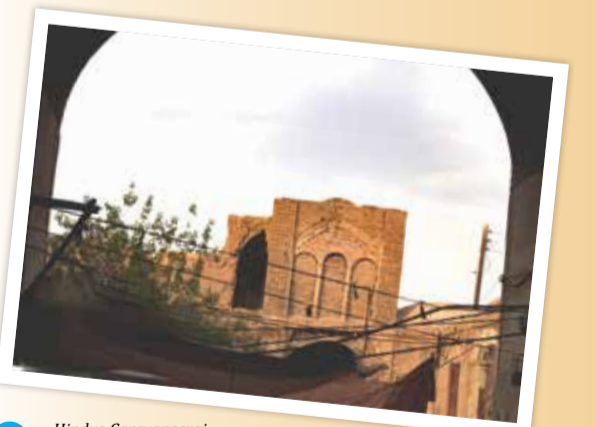
Coppersmiths Bazaar
● RNA



Qeisariyeh Bazaar
● IRNA



Ganjali Khan Complex
● wikipedia.org



Hindus Caravanserai
● mehrnews.com



Ekhtiari Bazaar
● balad.ir

President of Imam Hussein University:

Iran targets top five global AI ranking

AI diplomacy efforts on whole new level



By Amirhossein Somali
Guest contributor

**INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE**

Iran has been making strides in the field of artificial intelligence, with the country's leaders recognizing its potential impact on the global power structure. In an interview with Iran Daily, Mohammad Reza Hasani Ahangar, the president of Imam Hussein University in Tehran and a member of Iran's National Steering Council of Artificial Intelligence, sheds light on the country's ambitions, strategies, and unique approach to this groundbreaking technology. As the world grapples with the ethical, social, and economic implications of AI, Iran is positioning itself as a key player, aiming to leverage AI for its national development and influence on the world stage.

IRAN DAILY: What are some capacities of artificial intelligence (AI) that the Islamic Republic of Iran can leverage for optimal governance?

HASANI AHANGAR: Artificial intelligence represents a new frontier in the distribution of international power. The situation today is comparable to that of the Industrial Revolution, but AI is the driving force behind the recent transformation. We will soon witness a new revolution and extraordinary changes in the world, similar to the profound impacts of the Industrial

Revolution. However, the scope of this upcoming revolution is significantly broader. The technological divide has categorized countries into "leaders" and "followers," and this divide is now evident in the realm of AI as well.

While the Industrial Revolution introduced complex, orderly environments, AI deals with complex, chaotic, and highly unpredictable environments. The serious challenges posed by the latter environment necessitate that rulers approach problem-solving

with knowledge of AI and its technologies.

Fortunately, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, substantial capacities have been utilized so far, driven by the continuous demand from the Leader of Iran's Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in the fields of AI and cognitive sciences, particularly over the past 12 years. These capacities are noteworthy in several areas:

1. Human capital development: There has been a focused effort by Iranian universities and scientific centers to expand disci-

plines that foster the training of specialized human capital in AI.

2. Establishment of laboratories: Numerous laboratories dedicated to AI have been created within our scientific centers and universities. This means our substantial human capital in universities has the environment to demonstrate knowledge, validate it, translate it into technology, and shape the AI ecosystem.

3. Infrastructure mechanisms: Various mechanisms have been designed that can have a significant impact from an infrastruc-

tural perspective.

These three capacities collectively expedite the formation of the AI ecosystem. We believe that the positive strides made in the country over the past decade have brightened the future. The vision for this domain, shaped by the strategies proposed by the Leader, has driven the governance to aim for Iran to be among the top ten countries globally in this field. This means being a leading country, capable of utilizing these capacities to achieve the set objectives.

What specific strategies does the Leader of Iran's Revolution emphasize regarding artificial intelligence?

The Leader believes that while significant and commendable efforts have been made in the field of artificial intelligence in Iran, they are not sufficient. He emphasizes the need for "speed of action" and expects progress in this area to accelerate. This urgency is twofold:

one in relation to the Islamic Republic's own capacity and the other in relation to the advancements of other countries. Success in this field requires a comprehensive and precise understanding of AI — both at a strategic level and with awareness of the plans and strategies of competitors, including their short-term and long-term agendas.

Is there currently a formal document on artificial intelligence approved in the country?

At present, several documents have been drafted by various institutions. The Ministry of Communications and the National Center for Cyberspace have prepared a document, and the Minister of Communications has promised its final presentation. Additionally, the Council

of the Cultural Revolution has developed a document, and the Center for Artificial Intelligence, operating under the Council for Artificial Intelligence, is also working on one.

Each of these documents approaches the topic from a specific angle. Therefore, a comprehensive roadmap for the AI ecosystem is necessary. We face a chain of issues, not just those related to knowledge

and scientific production. The ecosystem encompasses everything from the initial idea to knowledge creation, transforming knowledge into technology, converting technology into products, and commercializing those products. Only after these stages can society truly perceive how AI accelerates their activities. Thus, the AI ecosystem requires a comprehensive roadmap.



A homegrown robotic arm that will be used in medicine is unveiled in a ceremony in Tehran, Iran, on June 16, 2021.
bmn.ir

What do you think is the current major challenge for the Islamic Republic in achieving its AI goals?

Although we have developed numerous strategic maps and documents, I believe we face a significant challenge: institutional mapping. Institutional mapping means creating a national and international division of labor in

AI. It needs to be precisely determined which institutions and universities will play roles in advancing and solving various AI-related issues. This division of labor must be done in a way that fosters synergy and coherence. Alongside drafting national documents, institutional divisions of labor are essential to help achieve the goals set in these documents.

Can mastering AI significantly empower any country that excels in it on the international stage?

AI must be considered in two dimensions. Currently, the technical and engineering aspects of AI receive the most attention, but I believe the core of AI lies in the philosophy of mind. This involves designing a governance system that utilizes AI, and I believe this

area, despite its importance, receives less attention. Yet, the main power struggle among the world's political powers centers on this domain, and the distribution of international power stems from it, rather than from the technical and engineering fields. The technical and engineering aspects are powerful tools for rulers who prioritize the philosophy of mind and cognitive sciences.

How does Iran's approach to artificial intelligence differ from prevalent global approaches?

The difference lies in the guiding principles. For the Islamic Republic, these guiding principles are crucial. For instance, the human and ethical issues of AI are significant topics that the West pays less attention to. A comprehensive document to be drafted will certainly dedicate a section to these issues, deriving its chapters from Islamic principles and the thoughts of the leaders of Iran's Islamic Revolution. This is perhaps the most important distinguishing feature of the document that Iran will draft com-

pared to other AI documents worldwide.

In our comprehensive roadmap for the AI ecosystem, we consider topics such as knowledge and research domains, scientometrics and algorithm standardization, legal infrastructure design, technologies and innovations, products, hardware infrastructure, the expansion of laboratories, platforms and applications, social networks, and language models. These are crucial for intelligent governance, especially in economics, commerce, health, and education. Addressing these topics requires a correct philosophical view of AI.

“

AI must be considered in two dimensions. Currently, the technical and engineering aspects of AI receive the most attention, but I believe the core of AI lies in the philosophy of mind. This involves designing a governance system that utilizes AI, and I believe this area, despite its importance, receives less attention. The technical and engineering aspects are powerful tools for rulers who prioritize the philosophy of mind and cognitive sciences.



Mohammad Reza Hasani Ahangar, the president of Imam Hussein University
● IRAN DAILY

Strategically, what is the significance of AI for the future of Iran?

To answer this question, we must have a proper understanding of the future world and the global power structure. Iran's Leader speaks of a new world order, and we need to see the direction of the serious competitors of the Islamic Republic under such conditions. Unfortunately, the world is controlled by a small elite group, largely from Zionist banking families, who try to dictate their desired direction for the world and pull other countries along with their agenda. However, Iran's Islamic Revolution is not intended to be a player in their scheme. Islamic Iran intends to discover and chart its future independently; it aims to act as a director in the international arena, not just

a player. We are not seeking international power through conquest; instead, we aim to introduce the principles of pure Islam and the ideological framework of the leaders of Iran's Islamic Revolution, which we believe contributes to the well-being of humanity. The current world is thirsty for such ideas because, despite all the advancements in science and technology, Western civilization has not brought peace to the world. Western civilization, in fact, is built on a foundation of blood, with 70 million deaths in World Wars I and II, and the current massacre in Gaza, being the result of advanced technologies of Western civilization. The foundation of our international power is scientific authority, and the driver of scientific authority now and in the future is artificial intelligence.

Currently, the Americans might be the leaders in this field. They focus on software, infrastructure, and hardware, effectively leading global AI efforts. The Chinese have developed their AI plan for 2050, aiming for global AI leadership by then. They focus on infrastructure and human capital development, recognizing their weakness in human resources and thus designing comprehensive programs to familiarize new generations with AI concepts. Russia is pursuing its strategic plans differently; it aims to smarten its weaponry and focus on social capital to establish itself as a leading AI-based global power. Putin unveiled this plan in 2017, describing the main strategy and comprehensive roadmap for Russia over the next forty years. The Islamic Republic of Iran also has its unique strategies, which I have explained.

What is Iran's current position in the field of artificial intelligence compared to other countries?

Presently, the United States, China, and Russia, followed by Germany and Japan, are leading in the automation of factories through the use of various robots to reduce the need for human labor. The European Union is focusing on the risks and challenges posed by artificial intelligence, emphasizing human-centric and ethical approaches. They have formed various consortia and are actively

engaged in this field. Canada and India are also among the leading countries in this area. Currently, Iran ranks among the top 15 to 17 countries worldwide in terms of scientific and academic output. However, in terms of technology and its application, Iran is ranked 75th, which is not very favorable. In practical applications, it ranks 95th. It should be noted that some related data might pertain to classified sectors, which are naturally not reflected in statistical assessments. For instance, in the military domain, artificial

intelligence algorithms are certainly utilized but are less frequently included in metrics and parameters. Our goal is to be among the top 10 countries in the three areas mentioned. The technology gap in artificial intelligence between Iran and the world is not significant. Our objective is to be among the top five countries globally in this field, as the primary foundation for this work is human capital, and fortunately, our country is well-positioned in terms of human resources.



Although we have developed numerous strategic maps and documents, I believe we face a significant challenge: institutional mapping. Institutional mapping means creating a national and international division of labor in AI. It needs to be precisely determined which institutions and universities will play roles in advancing and solving various AI-related issues.

What characteristics define artificial intelligence as a component of power in the international arena?

Artificial intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping international power. Possessing knowledge, technology, and AI-based products will be a power-building factor for the Islamic Republic. Human capital, infrastructure, focus, attention, and data storage and data governance capabilities are extraordinarily important subjects. In the new world where future generations will live, key resources will no longer be fossil fuels, which will not hold significant added value. What will generate high added value will be data, as well as the processing and analysis of data, which brings knowledge. Whoever possesses knowledge holds power. The vast amount of data available on the internet, which is continuously increasing, poses a challenge for future management. Can humans manage this volume of data with traditional programs? Certainly not. The management, governance, and data mining will be based on artificial intelligence algorithms. Any country with this capability will be powerful. In the comprehensive plan to be developed, both national and international levels will be considered, and the development of multinational companies will also be on the agenda.

What are the obstacles and challenges facing the development of artificial intelligence in Iran?

The first challenge is the lack of precise understanding and awareness of the overall impact that AI can have on governance. This issue is fundamental for advancing all scientific fields with the aim of addressing a country's systemic problems. Once a thorough and accurate understanding is achieved, organizing, systematizing, and solving these problems with the help of AI become the next steps. The role of universities in advancing this issue and creating a discourse around it is also crucial. Iran's Imam Hussein University, as a state-owned university, has prioritized addressing these matters. In terms of human capital, we are in a favorable position, and AI has a strong presence in academic disciplines. Our scientific output is relatively satisfactory, but in management and execution, there is still a lack of effective connections with human capital, which needs attention. The country's major automotive, petrochemical, and steel industries, among others, should gradually redefine their activities based on AI technologies. Additionally, knowledge-based companies, tech units, innovation hubs, and startups need to be strengthened. Both public and private sector managers must pay special attention to this policy.



The AI-powered Abu Mahdi cruise missile, unveiled in a ceremony in Tehran, Iran, on July 25, 2023
● TASNIM

Do you think artificial intelligence can surpass humans?

Scientists have two perspectives on this issue. One view is that AI can surpass humans, creating significant risks regarding human control and potentially dominating humans. The second view, contrary to the first, holds that nothing can replace humans in this world. As an expert, I agree with the second perspective. I believe that the principles that have shaped this world, created by God Almighty — the ultimate intelligent creator — will not disappear. However, we must not ignore the natural consequences of mismanaging AI. There are numerous challenges, particularly in cultural, social, and even legal domains, that countries around the world, especially developing countries, face. This is why an international consortium has been formed. AI diplomacy is an extremely important issue that should be prioritized by our country's statesmen. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in particular, should focus on this area. Our legal experts and judiciary must work on this issue. Currently, international legal frameworks related to AI, along with standards, regulations, and guidelines, are being developed. We must diligently follow and sign the most effective global standards and guidelines. About five years ago, a protocol was signed by 192 countries, including Iran. A consortium of leading countries in AI is now forming to control AI development and seeking to monopolize AI discussions among a few countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran must pay close attention to these legal dimensions, and our legal experts must be proactive. Iran has established a team to advance active AI diplomacy. We must ensure that some countries do not unjustly interfere with our legitimate rights to use technology.



Iran's MCI operator unveils its key AI services during GITEX GLOBAL 2023 tech show in Dubai, the UAE.
● digiato.ir

Names popping up as Persepolis coach quest drags on



● BACKPAGEPIX



● PROFIMEDIA



● GETTY IMAGES



● REUTERS

L-R: Marcos Paqueta, Andrea Stramaccioni, Walter Mazzarri, and John van 't Schip have been lined up in the media as the candidates for Persepolis managerial role.



By Amirhadi Arsalanpour
Staff writer

Rumors keep swirling around the future of Persepolis bench with numerous foreign names popping up as the candidates for the managerial role over the past couple of weeks. While Esteghlal and Sepahan, which stood behind Persepolis in the newly-finished Persian Gulf

Pro League season, are expected to continue with Javad Nekounam and Jose Morais at the helm respectively, Reds' supporters are growing frustrated as they are yet to find out who will lead their team's title defense for the start of the new campaign season in August. The Tehran-based club announced on Friday that negotiations have been going on with "several candidates" since Brazilian

interim coach Osmar Loss Vieira refused to take the permanent role. Osmar took over from Yahya Golmohammadi – to whom he served as a number two – in January and led the Reds to a seventh top-flight crown in eight years but decided to move back to Brazil to stay close to his family. Dragan Skocic, who steered Iran to a place at the 2022 World Cup before being replaced by Portuguese Car-

los Queiroz for the finals in Qatar, was the first coach to be approached by Persepolis but a deal fell through over what was reported to be the Croatian's wage demand. Serie A coach Walter Mazzarri looked to be set for the Persepolis job in recent days, according to the Italian media and journalists, but the club's sports deputy Hossein Badamaki said on Friday that the Reds and

former Napoli manager are far from reaching full agreement as "his coaching staff are undecided on joining him for the new role." Another high-profile name brought up in the Iranian media is Dutch coach John van 't Schip, who took charge at struggling Ajax in October before a run of 14 wins in 25 outings saw the club finish fifth in the Eredivisie table and secure a spot in the UEFA Europa League qualifiers. However, Badamaki con-

firmed that the Dutchman's "personal reasons" stalled the negotiations between him and Persepolis. Meanwhile, Iranian website Football360 reported on Friday that Andrea Stramaccioni and Marcos Paqueta have also been lined up by Persepolis for the vacant job. Stramaccioni is a familiar face for football fans in Iran as the 48-year-old Italian was appointed to the managerial role in Persepolis's

city rival Esteghlal for the start of 2019/20 campaign but his reign was cut short after seven months as he stepped down over unpaid wages.

Widely adored by the Tehran Blues' fans, Stramaccioni has been without a team since being sacked by Qatari club Al Gharafa in October 2022.

Brazilian Paqueta, 65, is also no stranger to working in the Middle East, having been in charge of numerous clubs across the region over the past two decades – including Saudi giant Al Hilal as well as Al Gharafa and Al Rayyan in the Qatari top flight. The head coach of Saudi Arabia during the 2006 World Cup, Paqueta led CR Belouizdad to a runner-up finish in the Algerian league earlier in the month.

Iran misses out on Olympic beach volleyball berth



● AVC

Sports Desk

The Iranian beach volleyball failed to qualify for the Paris Olympics in July after back-to-back semifinal defeats against the host in the AVC Beach Volleyball Continental Cup in Ningbo, China. Stepping into the eight-team event – serving as the qualifiers for the sole Asian spot in July's Games – as the Central Asian champions, the two Iranian teams headed into Saturday's last-four clashes fresh from a 2-0 win against Japan in the quarterfinals on the

preceding day. However, the Iranian Team 1, comprising Abbas Poursargari and Alireza Aqajani suffered a straight-set defeat (21-18, 21-15) against Ha Likejiang and Wu Jiaxin, while Abolhamed Mirzzali and Sina Shoukati fell short against Wang Yanwei and Li Jie 23-21 and 21-17 as Iran failed to reach the final showpiece. The Asian Olympic berth will be on the line today when China takes on Australia, which defeated Indonesia in Saturday's double-header.

England players not fit enough to press effectively, claims Southgate

THE GUARDIAN – Gareth Southgate has suggested his England team lack the physical levels to execute his gameplan at Euro 2024. The mood in the England camp was heavy on introspection and soul-searching as they came to terms with Thursday's 1-1 draw against Denmark. It was not so much the result, which has kept them in the driving seat to qualify for the last 16 as Group C winners. Rather the collective performance, which was defined by errors on the ball and an absence of aggression without it. Southgate has made no secret about his fears over the fitness of a clutch of starting players, who have not completed many full games in recent weeks and months. The captain, Harry Kane, did not press or run in behind against Denmark and Southgate took him off in the 70th minute for Ollie Watkins, feeling that he needed fresh energy up front. Bukayo Saka and Phil Foden were substituted at the same time. Saka missed Arsenal's final Premier League game with an injury and played only 25 minutes of England's warm-up matches. "We are not pressing well enough, with enough intensity," Southgate said. "We have limitations in how we can do that with the physical condition. We can't press as high up the pitch as we might have done in the



● ALEX GRIMM/GETTY IMAGES

qualifiers, for example. And we are not keeping the ball well enough. We have to keep the ball better and build with more control." The pressure on the players is intense, the scrutiny unforgiving and it has been possible to wonder whether it has affected them. Southgate admitted after the Denmark game that "if anything they're showing they care too much".

Southgate said: "I am seeing every day that they are loving working together. I don't think it is a lack of spark. At the moment, they ironically care too much and they need firm leadership. We have to guide them through the difficult period that is coming but really stay on track and focused on this challenge ahead. "We are trying to do something

that has never been done before [win the Euros]. So that is going to be a bit of a rollercoaster. It's not going to go smoothly when you are trying to achieve extraordinary things. They are bloody difficult. We have to accept the level of expectations, we have to accept the arena we are in. And we have to find a better way of playing to how we have so far."



Leader: Candidates should avoid making remarks that please enemies



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with Iran's judicial officials in Tehran, Iran on June 22, 2024. khamenei.ir

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei cautioned presidential candidates against making statements that could delight Iran's enemies. His remarks came after Iran held the third televised presidential debate on Friday night, during which six candidates vying for presidency outlined their plans on cultural and socio-economic issues.

"My advice is that these discussions that the candidates have together on TV or the statements they make either in public or individually in order to overcome the rival should not contain anything that makes our enemies happy,"

the Leader said during a meeting country's judicial officials on Saturday. "The words that are uttered should not gratify the enemy of the country, the nation and the system. This is not permissible," he said. "The assumption is that all the candidates love Iran and the Islamic Republic, since they want to become president in this system and to serve the people. Therefore, they should not speak in such a way that pleases the enemy."

Ayatollah Khamenei said the debates give people familiarity with the opinions of the candidates. In their third debate, the candidates presented their blueprints on the country's cultural and social issues. It followed the first held on Monday and the second staged on Thursday, which centered on economic and socio-economic issues respectively.

Israeli forces strap Palestinian to vehicle to use as human shield



In the West Bank city of Jenin, videos have shown an Israeli armored vehicle driving past ambulances with an injured Palestinian man strapped to the hood, in what appears to be a case of using him as a human shield.

"That shocking image of the Jeep ... is something that is repeated in several ways in the West Bank and it is what human rights organizations call the use of human shields. It's been done on several occasions," Nour Odeh, a Palestinian political analyst and activist, said.

Iran's 3rd presidential debate focused on cultural, social issues

Iran's presidential candidates competing to succeed late president Ebrahim Raisi outlined their plans on cultural and social issues during the third televised debate on Friday evening.

Campaigning for the presidential election, scheduled for June 28, is in full swing, with six candidates in the fray - Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Masoud Pezeshkian, Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Alireza Zakani, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, and Saeed Jalili - pulling out all the stops to win voters' favor.

The conservative candidate, Ghazizadeh Hashemi, said he will strengthen the support fund for artists, tourism activists and media professionals. He also said he will deal with filtering (in the virtual space) according to societal norms.

Jalili said if our president or cultural managers

alongside marketing for high-tech technologies also present a cultural product, it can create a world of opportunities. Cultural productions can conquer the world.

The Reformist candidate Pezeshkian pointed to the women's rights, saying that women should be in a position where they can play a constructive role.

There is no difference between men and women in ideological terms. Our women can also occupy the same positions as our men.

He also said that the government should refrain from interference (in art and culture) and should be the policymaker and overseer of programs.

Pourmohammadi also pointed to the role that women can play in the country, saying that, "We should trust the women of our country and utilize their capabilities for the de-

velopment of the country". The conservative candidate, Zakani, said "in the cultural, social, and economic domains, we practically see people's participation. The government serves as a supporter.

"We must consider culture as the axis of other systems and accept education and training as a driving force".

The most prominent candidate who is the current Speaker of Parliament, Qalibaf, said, "We must strive to keep culture away from political decisions and politicization so that it does not suffer damage."

Culture has depth; it has owners, individuals, and pioneers. In the cultural sphere, people produce culture and consume it themselves, he said.

When we talk about culture, we must focus on its infrastructure, artists, cultural practitioners, their livelihoods, and content.

Iran: Israel will be 'ultimate loser' in war with Hezbollah

International Desk

Iran warned Israel that it would be the "ultimate loser" in an all-out war with the Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement as fears of a major Israeli offensive in Lebanon continued to mount.

The mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations in a statement said Hezbollah is capable of defending itself and Lebanon.

"Undoubtedly, this war will have one ultimate loser, which is the Zion-

ist regime. The Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah, has the capability to defend itself and Lebanon - perhaps the time for the self-annihilation of this illegitimate regime has come," the mission said on its X account.

"Any imprudent decision by the occupying Israeli regime to save itself could plunge the region into a new war, the consequence of which would be the destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure as well as that of the 1948

occupied territories." Hezbollah and the Israeli occupation army have been exchanging fire on a daily basis since the beginning of the regime's onslaught on the Gaza Strip, which has claimed the lives of more than 37,500 Palestinians - mostly women and children.

Tensions between the two sides have been intensified in recent weeks especially after the killing of a senior Hezbollah commander by Israel last week.

INVITATION TO TWO STAGE PUBLIC BID - SECOND NOTICE

Phase one of Parsian Combined Cycle Power Plant (500±10% MW) on EPCF Basis

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Parsian Jonoub Energy Intensive Industries Development Company (PEIICD)

INVITATION NO: 2003090246000001

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) with representation of Parsian Jonoub Energy Intensive Industries Development Company (PEIICD), intends to international two stage public bid for Parsian Combined Cycle Power Plant Project. To do this first a short list of eligible experienced companies will be prepared and on next stage they will be invited to technical evaluation. This second notice of invitation for renewal of first stage of Bid is based on the sub-clause 10-B of "Clause C, Article 12, tenders formalities law" dated 16/07/1385 Iranian calendar date.

Herewith, we are inviting eligible candidates (Applicants) to refer Bid No 2003090246000001 on Iran Public eProcurement System (SETAD) available on www.setadiran.ir, should they to be i) a company duly organized, registered, existing and having grade one certificate of EPC for power generation sector from Iran Plan and Budget Organisation for local Applicants or similar certificate from pertinent authorities in their countries, which to be verified by the respective consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for overseas Applicants; or ii) to be a Consortium comprising of two or more companies (members), whose members are organized, registered, existing and collectively having grade one or two certificate of design/engineering for power generation sector and grade one certificate of construction for power generation sector with aforesaid procedure for such certificates as well as valid HSE certificate from Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare.

After preparation of the pertinent short list of qualified Applicant, we invite them for second stage of the Bid. As specified before, participating in the Bid as Consortium is allowed.

Bid in brief:

1) Company/Client: Parsian Jonoub Energy Intensive Industries Development Company (PEIICD) on behalf of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) with the following address: Bids Department, Parsian Jonoub Energy Intensive Industries Development Company (PEIICD), No. 1713, 1st floor of National Iranian Steel Company building, Vall-e-Asr Avenue (Above Vallasr Sq.),

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Postal Code: 1594643118, Tel: +98-21-88906133
Email: parsian_ccpp_tender@psez.ir

- 2) Invitation subject: Selecting the EPCF contractor for Parsian Combined Cycle Power Plant (500±10% MW) project on EPCF Basis (phase one)
 - 3) Project's estimated price: Two hundred eighty-five million (285,000,000) Euros.
 - 4) Bid Bond: The Bid Bond shall be in the form of a bank guarantee in the amount of 2,055,000 € (two million fifty-five thousand euros) issued by an Iranian bank acceptable to the Company According to related circular (governmental transactions guarantees regulation) dated 24/08/1394 as per Iranian calendar (15/11/2015) No. H50659 T/123402. The Bid Bond shall be extendable and shall be valid for six (6) months after the Bid Closing Date. The bank guarantee shall have SEPAM number without any conditional statement.
 - 5) Source of Fund: IMIDRO's internal resources
 - 6) Prequalification Documents obtaining: The Prequalification Questionnaire will be available on the portal of government's electronic procurement system (www.setadiran.ir) from 2024 June23, Sunday, 08:00 AM until 2024 June29, Saturday, 04:00 PM.
 - 7) Prequalification Documents submission: The Prequalification Documents shall be uploaded on the portal of government's electronic procurement system, available on www.setadiran.ir website before 2024 July20, Saturday, 04:00 PM.
 - 8) Bid Opening Date and Place: on the 2024 July21, Sunday at a/m address.
 - 9) Bid Validity Period: Bids shall remain valid for a period of one hundred eighty (180) days after the date of Bid opening.
 - 10) Invitation notice date: The invitation will be noticed on 2024 June23, Sunday through the portal of government's electronic procurement system (www.setadiran.ir).
- All Bidding stages from beginning, i.e. noticing of this invitation, sending/ delivering of Bidding Documents up to opening of the Bids will be conducted via Iran Public eProcurement System (SETAD) available on www.setadiran.ir.
- Therefore, Applicants shall be registered in the mentioned system and receive the electronic signature certificate in order to participate in the Bid if they have not been a member before.

Cinemas drew in 20% more audience in spring



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cinemas across the country attracted an estimated audience of 8.6 million in spring, indicating a 20% increase compared to the same season last year. The movie theaters had 206,590 film showings in the stated period (March 20-June 20) attracting 8,674,000 viewers, with box office earnings reaching 498 billion and 148 million tomans (\$8,302,000), IRNA reported. These figures show that cinemas had a better performance this spring, with a 20% rise in viewership and a 61% increase in sales compared to the same period last year. Last spring, the release

of the movie 'Fossil' by Karim Amini marked a milestone, making it a balanced season, a record that few expected to be broken this spring. The comedy movie attracted about 1,100,000 moviegoers in just 24 days of last March. In the first month of the Iranian calendar year (beginning on March 20), cinemas had 2,332,000 viewers, and box office earnings reached 145 billion and 812 million tomans (\$2,430,000). The statistics were achieved despite many holidays in the month due to the overlap with the holy month of Ramadan, causing cinemas to be closed for several days. The figures that came

out this spring were much bigger than last year's, which were attributed to the high number of closures this spring compared to last as fewer people expected cinemas to improve their viewership by 20% and sales by 61%, which was thought to be a magnificent event. Certainly, the reason for this achievement has been the proper organization of screenings and timely decisions on showing popular films each month. Therefore, when we look at the statistics for the spring, we see that at least six films were able to significantly contribute to the increase in sales and number of audience in the spring chart.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue ...

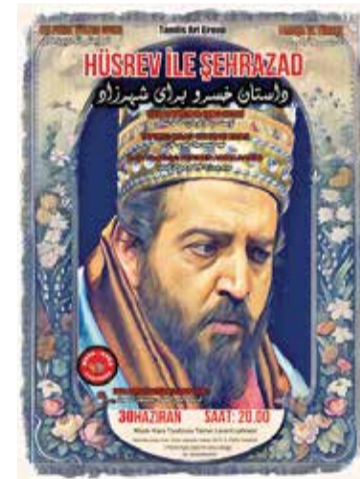
Undoubtedly, regional convergence within the framework of active membership in regional and global organizations can liberate the international community from the harms of hegemonic systems and steer it toward multilateralism as a means of achieving justice in international relations. The current Iranian government's particular focus on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS group, which started with Iran's official membership in these two international multilateral-oriented mechanisms based on multidimensional thinking and continued with its active participation, is noteworthy. In pursuing multilateralism, attention must be paid to identity and aspirations, and the ACD addresses this essential need. The presence of emerging powers in this forum will further energize it and enhance optimism for its promising future. Asia and the world continue to be in deep sorrow and shock due to the ongoing atrocities

and genocide perpetrated by the Zionist regime in the Gaza Strip. More than eight months have passed since the humanitarian catastrophe in Palestine, and the global community, hindered by the hegemonic system, remains unable to stop attacks on innocent people, especially women and children. Meanwhile, members of the ACD have individually made efforts to end these crimes, establish a ceasefire, and deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza. Collective efforts in this regard remain essential and will be emphasized during the Tehran meeting. It is also worth noting that in mid-June, during the meeting of foreign ministers of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation in Turkey, we witnessed the efforts of member states to adopt collective stances to stop the attacks and end genocide in Gaza. The ACD, established in 2002, encompasses a vast expanse of the Asian continent. The 35 member states together represent 56% of the world's population and 35% of the global GDP.

Through dialogue and partnership, these nations aim to develop relations in various fields such as transportation and communication; science, technology, and innovation; education and human resource development; food, energy, and water security; culture and tourism; and inclusive and sustainable development. The Islamic Republic of Iran joined the ACD in 2004 and is considered one of its active members. Since October 2023, the presidency of the ACD has been held by our late foreign minister. In addition to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ACD's members include Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Nepal, Russia, Turkey, Japan, China, Mongolia, South Korea, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Palestine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. One of the ACD's aspirations is the formation of an "Asian Community." Given the rich cultural heritage and enduring values of Asia, as well as the continent's strong potential and actual eco-

nomical and technological foundations, a stronger sense of belonging to an Asian community among its peoples would undoubtedly bring significant benefits. This could also encourage Asian governments to form Asian coalitions and ultimately an "Asian Union" at an appropriate time. The ACD can play a crucial role in this direction. Moreover, the impact of people-to-people interactions and the role of the private sector in achieving these valuable goals should not be overlooked. Intra-Asian tourism, cultural exchanges, and the active participation of the private sectors of ACD member countries in intra-Asian economic and trade interactions are effective drivers in this process. During its presidency of the ACD, the Islamic Republic of Iran took good steps in both areas. The declaration of Yazd as the "ACD Tourism Capital for 2024" has provided a suitable ground for hosting various Asian cultural and tourism activities. Moreover, this year, Yazd will host the meeting of ACD tourism ministers, where they will make decisions regarding future cooperation. In May, Isfahan hosted the chambers of commerce from ACD member countries, resulting in agreements on future joint measures and the issuance of the "Isfahan Pact." Iran's foreign policy includes multilateralism, good-neighborliness, and collective development through regionalism. Thus, countering unilateralism and hegemony, and supporting regional and trans-regional multilateral mechanisms are top priorities in our diplomacy. Accordingly, we have utilized our ACD presidency to strengthen and solidify its dialogue and cooperation structures, and with the support of member states and the ACD secretariat, effective positive steps have been taken in this regard. The meeting of ACD foreign ministers in Tehran will review and make decisions on some of these measures and initiatives.

'The Story of Khosrow for Shahrzad' goes to Istanbul



Arts & Culture Desk

The play 'The Story of Khosrow for Shahrzad,' by Hamed Sheikhi, will be

staged in the Turkish city of Istanbul on June 29-30. After being performed in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, the play is scheduled to be staged at Istanbul's Mask-Kara Theater and Sanatif Yaklasimlar Theater, Mehr News Agency reported. 'The Story of Khosrow for Shahrzad' will be performed in Persian and Turkish language by the artistic group "Tandis." Hamed Sheikhi, Jila Ganjeh, Ali Pilehvar, Yasaman Fazlhashemi, Yasaman Tahbaz, Ghazal Baharestani, Bita Jabari, Maral Abolqassemi, Elnaz Reza, and Mehdi Honarsazan are the actors in the play. This is the eighteenth play directed by Sheikhi and the twenty-seventh production of the artistic group Tandis, which will also be staged in Tehran in the upcoming months.

Over 2000 centers opened for environmental awareness



Social Desk

Head of Iran's Department of Environment, Ali Salajegheh, said that over 2,000 "Houses of Environment" have been established to promote the culture of waste management among the public. During a press conference on Saturday, the deputy president stressed that one of the envi-

ronmental challenges across the country is the excessive production of waste, which requires a cultural shift to cut it down, IRNA reported. Salajegheh emphasized that more than 2,000 centers have been set up as appropriate venues to raise awareness to this end, with a focus on the department's 'Separation at Source' policy.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

