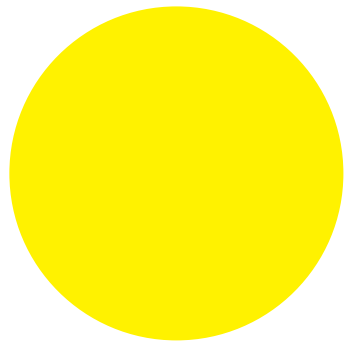


Iran to back Hezbollah in case of all-out Israeli war

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IranDailyWeb

Iran exports crude to 17 countries: *Oil minister*

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Foreign Policy Dominates 1st Runoff Debate

Masoud Pezeshkian and Saeed Jalili, the two candidates running for presidency, locked horns in the first televised debate ahead of the Friday's runoff election. The candidates presented their plans on political, cultural and economic issues. Pezeshkian, a former health minister and current lawmaker, touched on the important issue of sanctions which have had significant impacts on the country's economy for several years.

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Iranian presidential candidates Masoud Pezeshkian (R) and Saeed Jalili greet each other after taking part in a live election debate at the Iranian national television studio in Tehran on July 1.
● MORTEZA FAKHRINEJAD/IRIB

From crisis to conservation: Iran's endangered wildlife, preservation efforts

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EXCLUSIVE

Iran is home to a diverse range of animal species, but over the past few decades, around 86 species have become endangered due to various factors. In response, the country's Department of Environment has developed a targeted action plan to safeguard 23 species at risk and is actively implementing it.



Iran urges European action against Israel's crimes in Gaza

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Iran can become BRICS's corridor for agricultural exports: *Official*

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Iran capable of winning 10 Asian Games medals: *New athletics chief*

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Israel pushing Lebanon, region toward full-scale war

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Iran-Turkey trade up 5% in five months: *TURKSTAT*



The trade between Iran and Turkey in the first five months of 2024 (January to May) reached \$2.3 billion, registering a five-percent growth compared to last year's corresponding period.

The Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) had already put the trade exchanges between the two countries from January to May 2023 at \$2.189 billion, IRNA reported.

According to the report, Turkey exported \$1.34 billion of commodities to Iran from January to May 2024, showing a 16 percent hike compared to the same period last year.

Turkey had exported over \$1.151 billion of products to Iran from January to May 2023, it said.

It added that Turkey exported \$285 million of products to Iran in May 2024, indicating a 14-percent growth compared to the same period last year.

Turkey imported \$262 million of goods from Iran in May 2024, registering a 20 percent growth compared to last year's corresponding period.

Turkey had exported over \$249 million of products to Iran in May 2023 and also had imported \$217 million of goods in this period, the report added.

Figures by the European Union's statistics agency, Eurostat, published in the Iranian media on Sunday showed that Turkey had resumed importing oil from Iran in March this year nearly four years after it cut shipments to zero to comply with US sanctions on Tehran.

Eurostat data showed that Turkey had imported 576 metric tons (mt) of oil from Iran in March and another 485 mt in April.

The last time Turkey had imported oil from Iran was in August 2020 when the country bowed to US pressure and stopped the imports.

Turkey imports sizable amounts of natural gas from Iran via a new scheme which allows Iran to import Russian gas and supply it to countries located to its west and east.

The country is seeking to increase gas imports from Iran via a new scheme which allows Iran to import Russian gas and supply it to countries located to its west and east.



Iran exports crude to 17 countries: *Oil minister*

Iran's oil minister said the country is currently exporting crude oil to 17 countries, including some in Europe, and that the Iranian petroleum exports, concerning the preparations already made, will face no obstacles as to what administration assumes of

the United States.

Speaking at a ceremony on Tuesday, Javad Owji stated that good investment has been made in the past three years in the oil industry, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Iran produced 2.2 million barrels of oil per day (bpd) at the outset

of the administration of the late president Ebrahim Raisi (August 2021) but the current oil production is about 3.57 million bpd, showing a considerable hike, Owji underlined.

He went on to say that Iran's oil exports rose from 182 million

barrels in 2019 to 565 million barrels last year.

In addition, the value of the export of oil and gas condensates and other oil and petrochemical products rose from \$10.8 billion in 2019 to \$36 billion last year, registering a 3.5-fold growth, the

oil minister added.

Iran, thanks to its strategic position and huge natural gas and oil resources, can play a major role in the sustainable energy supply in the region and the world, especially in view of the changing market dynamics.

Economic growth hit 5.7% in three years: *Acting president*

Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhber said on Tuesday that Iran's economic growth reached 5.7% during the administration of late president Ebrahim Raisi.

Mokhber noted that the country's economic growth was 0.7% in August 2021, when Raisi took office, IRNA reported. He said Iran's inflation rate cur-

rently stands at 39%, adding that the figure was 103 percent in May 2021.

Stating that one of the country's biggest problems was the liquidity rate, the interim resident said with the measures taken by the government, the liquidity rate plunged from 57-58% to 22-23%.

In its latest report, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) said the

growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the year ending in March 2024 at the constant prices of 2017 is equivalent to 5.7% of the total GDP and 3.4% of the GDP excluding oil.

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



Iran can become BRICS's corridor for agricultural exports: *Official*

Iran will turn into the corridor of the agricultural export of the BRICS member states, an Iranian official with the Ministry of Agriculture said on Tuesday.

Iran is located in a region that allows for exporting many products of the BRICS member coun-

tries through the international north-south, east-west, rail and air corridors, according to Iran's Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Agricultural Affairs Alireza Mohajer, as reported by Mehr News Agency.

He made the remarks at the

14th meeting of the agriculture ministers of the BRICS group of the emerging economies held last week in Moscow, where he also said that BRICS member states make up more than 40% of the population in the world and account for 30 percent of the world's economy, so that the BRICS member states can create a special condition in producing, trading and exporting food products.

The official also pointed to the potential created for the removal of the import and export barriers.

About 40% of the grain in the world is traded by BRICS member states and these countries can easily export these products to the world through Iran's southern ports, he stated.

Also, Iran can play a part in the imports of the corn and soybean products of the countries like Brazil to the BRICS states, the deputy minister of agriculture

added.

The BRICS countries will develop and approve a new action plan for cooperation in the field of agriculture in 2025, taking into account the countries that have joined, Russia's Agriculture Minister Oksana Lut said on Friday, stressing that Russia is ready to actively participate in its development.

"Another result of the chairmanship was the general report on the implementation of the action plan for cooperation between BRICS countries in the field of agriculture in 2021-24, which was approved at a meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Agriculture. I would like to note that we have achieved significant successes in the implementation of the provisions of the plan. Looking ahead, I would like to note that within the framework of the Brazilian BRICS presidency in 2025 we will have to develop and ap-

prove a new plan, taking into account the accession countries," Lut said.

According to her, the BRICS countries have "the best resource base." For example, the share of agricultural land in the BRICS countries exceeds 30% of the global area. "BRICS countries have significant potential to strengthen their position in the global agricultural market and provide uninterrupted food supplies to ensure global food security," the minister said.

"In 2024, BRICS has significantly expanded and new countries have joined us. I would like to welcome Brazil, India, China, and South Africa, as well as the new BRICS members - the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt, and Ethiopia. I am confident that we will continue to develop the political and economic partnership between our countries in the field of agriculture and food security," she added.



Gilan Province, home to historical castles and bridges

Lisar Castle
● IRNA



Iranica Desk

Gilan Province, in northern Iran, not only boasts natural attractions but also features historical sites, scattered throughout the region, which draw the interest of numerous tourists. Throughout history, this province's strategic location has led to the construction of several fortresses for the Islamic era, with archaeological digs revealing that the majority of them date back to the Safavid period.

Roudkhan Castle

Roudkhan Castle is located in Fouman, Gilan Province, and is the largest historical military structure in the region. This castle, with an area of about seven hectares, consists of two sections, Seljuk and Safavid. The foundation of this structure is made of stone materials, while the upper part is made of brick with sarooj mortar. In the past, this fortress housed royal dynasties. In the travelogue of Aleksander Chodzko, mention is made of a stone inscription at the entrance of this building describing the restoration and reconstruction of the castle. This historical building is now one of the tourist attractions in Gilan Province.

Lisar Castle

Lisar Castle is one of the most historical and beautiful castles in the Gilan Province. Situated in the town of Lisar, it is located 15

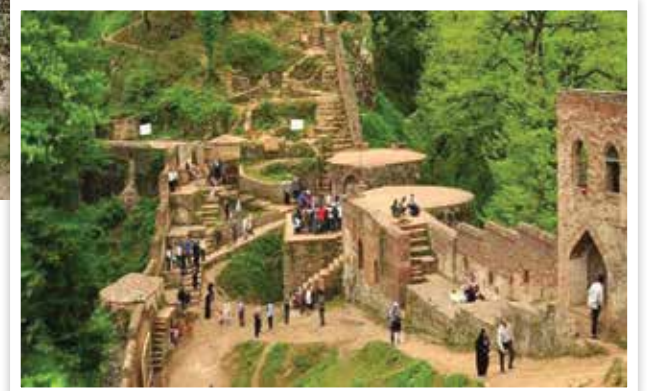
kilometers away from the road between Talesh and Astara. The castle covers an area of about 5000 square meters and is constructed using materials such as stone and brick. Lisar Castle is visible from a distance, and one of its notable features, due to being abandoned after a war, is the castle's dominance over the surrounding environment. Perched on a hill with an approximate height of 90 meters, this Seljuk-era castle is considered a valuable historical site and is registered on the national heritage list. It is regarded as a local and provincial tourist attraction.

Historical bridges

Gilan, being the rainiest province in Iran, features numerous small and large rivers flowing through its landscape. As the most densely populated area in Iran, there is a substantial demand for constructing multiple bridges to fa-

ilitate the movement of people and goods across these rivers. All the bridges in Gilan Province are constructed using mineral materials like brick and sarooj. Given the watery environments in which these structures were built, resistance to moisture from the flowing water was a critical factor in ensuring the longevity of these bridges. Additionally, the application of engineering principles in bridge design was crucial. For example, the incorporation of breakwaters in the foundations of historical bridges, providing the highest resistance to fast-flowing waters, has played a key role in preserving the resilience and durability of many of these bridges over time. This is in stark contrast to modern bridges made with contemporary materials, which often succumb to floods, highlighting the meticulous craftsmanship and robustness of traditional Iranian archi-

ecture evident in the historical bridges of Gilan Province. In terms of historical periods, most of these structures are attributed to the Qajar era, with some remnants dating back to the Safavid period, such as the Loshan Bridge positioned at the southern entrance of the province over the Shahroud River. Gilan Province boasts a collection of at least 400 historical bridges, although some have unfortunately succumbed to destruction. Despite the aging beauty of these bridges, Gilan Province stands out as the hub of historical bridges in Iran. Examples include Lahijan's Brick Bridge, Astaneh Ashrafiyeh Bridge, Chaboksar Bridge, and the composite bridges of Anzali. Over the past forty years, following the victory of the Islamic revolution, one of the tallest bridges in Iran—a 700-meter marvel—was gracefully erected over the Sefidroud river.



Roudkhan Castle
● rasekhoon.net



Lahijan's Brick Bridge
● wikipedia.org

Davatgari, the art of crafting metal utensils



● destinationiran.com



● destinationiran.com



● beytoote.com

Davatgari is a type of forging that involves the craft of creating utensils and tools from metals like copper, brass, silver, gold, nickel silver, and others through hammer forging. During this process, skilled smiths start by bending metal plates precisely and methodically through hammer strikes, before adding components like handles or bases. They then secure these parts using solder-

ing or welding techniques to form the tools in their entirety. A key indicator of the creator's expertise is ensuring the final product is without any holes and maintains consistent metal thickness throughout. The art of davatgari was historically widespread throughout Iran, with contemporary strongholds found in cities like Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Arak. Davatgari, or cold

forging, is considered one of humanity's earliest professions, dating back thousands of years. Initially, craftsmen shaped cold metals using rocks to create basic utensils and objects. Today, three methods are employed in utensil production, integrating modern technology: one-piece (seamless), multi-piece (with seams), and a method utilizing metal bending machines. In the one-piece method, the

metal plate is cut into circles with a radius at least equal to the height of the desired object. The plate's center is then placed on the anvil, and consistent hammer strikes are applied from the center outward to shape the plate into a bowl. Next, the plate is repositioned, and by striking the edges, the opening narrows, transforming the product into a vase or similar object. In the multi-piece method, the

artisan begins by cutting the metal into rectangular shapes. The height and width of this rectangular piece are determined to be suitable for the maximum height and circumference of the desired object. Subsequently, the edges of two adjacent pieces are thinned to half their original size through hammering. In the third method, a machine called the "seh nezam" or Three Jaw Lathe Chuck is utilized. Sim-

ilar to the first method, a circular plate is cut and placed into the machine alongside a cast iron mold shaped like the intended product. As the machine operates, the plate and the mold rotate in unison, while metal bars measuring fifty centimeters in length push the plate against the mold, shaping it accordingly. Trays, large plates, bowls, mirrors, and candle holders are among the various products crafted through davatgari.



Israel-Hezbollah war: Cataclysm in making?

Getting ready for showdown?

An Israeli soldier walks at the site of a Hezbollah anti-tank missile direct hit on a building near the Lebanon border in Moshav Shtula, northern Israel, on June 19, 2024.
● KOBİ WOLF/
BLOOMBERG

By Ali Zubair Soomro
Columnist

OPINION

Following Israel's attack in Khirah in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa area and Hezbollah's drone attack on Beit Hillel, northern Israel — in response to the attack which resulted in the assassination of the Jamma'a Islamiya group's commander in Lebanon — the tension between Hezbollah and Israel has heated up. The exchange of fire between them has been ongoing since October 8 in order to compel Israel to stop the Gaza massacre. In the conflict, about 350 Hezbollah fighters and more than 90 Lebanese civilians have been killed so far, while in Israel, 15 soldiers and 10 civilians have been killed, but after the assassination, the situation has been exacerbated. Both of them claim readiness for an all-out war, but the diplomatic resolution of the tension is underway. Here questions arise: will Israel afford to open another front to war? Can Hezbollah outsmart Israel? Will the US support Israel? Can the region afford another war? Is another cataclysm in the making?

The exchange of fire between Israel and Hezbollah has constrained denizens to flee from both sides of Israel and Lebanon. More than 90,000 Israelis have fled their homes in the north of the country since the skirmish triggered with Hezbollah on October 8, and at least 90,000 people have also fled their homes in southern Lebanon after Israeli attacks. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under domestic pressure to drive Hezbollah from the border and

allow displaced residents to return to their homes in Israel's north as the school year approaches, and they are under fear that they won't be able to live in security as long as Hezbollah operates nearby.

The Israeli public wants both things: returning to their homes and military operations against Hezbollah, which seem difficult to achieve within months as Bibi is unable to move some forces to the north because of the ongoing massacre in Gaza. Here, it is noteworthy

that Hezbollah has claimed it will mitigate tensions with Israel if the genocide in Gaza is terminated. Besides, Hezbollah has warned Cyprus, a member of the European Union, that if it opens Cypriot airports and bases for the Israeli forces to target Lebanon, it means that the Cypriot government has become part of the war and will be dealt with accordingly. However, another front for all-out war is a herculean task for Israel for some reasons. Firstly, its forces are engaged in heavy

fighting with Hamas in north and central Gaza. So, its forces cannot be moved to the northern side of Israel to engage in war with Hezbollah for the time being. But some experts opine that Israel can open another front, but the financial and human costs will be immense. Secondly, the Israeli defense system's Iron Dome anti-missile batteries are at risk of being overwhelmed in the opening strikes of any escalated tussle with Hezbollah. Thirdly, the assessment by US officials and recent analysis by experts in Israel and the US are replete with fears that a war with Hezbollah could be far more devastating than the 2006 second Lebanon war. Last but not least is the dearth of military aid from the US that renders Israel incapable of fighting a greater war. Netanyahu declared in a video that in the past few months, the US administration has been withholding weapons and ammunition from Israel. The statement was dubbed perplexing by US officials since they noted that only one weapons shipment had been paused since the inception of the war, while billions of dollars of weapons had flowed unimpeded. The conflict of statements depicts that Israel does not have enough weapons and ammunition to wage a full-scale war with Hezbollah. Apart, Hezbollah is not the same as in the 2006 war. It has



Hezbollah fighters carry out a training exercise in Aaramta village in the Jezzine District, southern Lebanon, on May 21, 2023.
● HASSAN AMMAR/AP

“

Greater war will not be affordable by both sides and the entire region. So, averting a greater war will be in favour of both sides. And it can help a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas because one of the core rationales behind Hezbollah's assaults is to stop Israel from destroying the entire Gaza.

improved its skills at fighting war. In Syria, they gained new skills in urban warfare and intelligence. Its Special Forces unit is trained to infiltrate Israel in the event of a war that will surely provide ground for Hezbollah to inflict serious damage on Israel. Despite being out-matched, it is capable of inflicting considerable cost on Israel. Recently, Hezbollah published drone footage of an Israeli military base at the port of Haifa, exposing possible vulnerabilities in the country's air defense system. According to that video, potential

targets include Israel's main airport, Ben Gurion, power plants in Ashkelon and Hadera, the Leviathan gas field, a plutonium-based facility in Dimona, a large natural gas field in the Mediterranean Sea, and Ashdod. Besides, Hezbollah has exponentially expanded its arsenal and capabilities, including a widely expanded array of missiles, which experts believe are between 120,000 and 200,000, an anti-aircraft missile capability, and suicide drones, which Israel has struggled to counter. Additionally, in the second war

in Lebanon in 2006, Israel damaged Lebanon overwhelmingly, killing more than 1,200 Lebanese, including 250 fighters, and destroying 30,000 homes, 109 bridges, and 78 medical facilities, according to the International Committee for the Red Cross. Hezbollah could only kill 165 nationals of Israel. However, the number of Hezbollah fighters was 3,000 to 5,000, and they had short-range missiles to hit Israel. But, since then, the number of Hezbollah fighters has expanded to about 60,000, and it has

acquired rockets and missiles in huge numbers. So, it is obvious that if Hezbollah cannot defeat Israel, it can surely inflict a terrible loss on Israel. Notwithstanding that the Israeli military seems to be acquainted with Hezbollah's capabilities, many in Israel, including some far-right ministers, are pushing for military solutions over diplomacy. Even one of them gave the idea of reoccupying south Lebanon. The US seems unwilling to assist Israel in a full-blown war. As per US officials, it would not be able

to help Israel in a wider war with Hezbollah in an effective manner, as it helped Israel fight off an Iranian barrage of missiles and drones in April. In this regard, the US is continuously in talks with Israeli leaders and is warning against widening the conflict. Apart from this, the US is unable to provide adequate military aid to Israel to engage in an all-out war with Hezbollah. So, it is attempting to resolve the matter diplomatically. For this, the US's special envoy, Amos Hochstein, has made visits to the region to curtail any chances

of an all-out war. Greater war will not be affordable by both sides and the entire region since it will result in the devastation of much of Lebanon and major infrastructure in Israel. So, averting a greater war will be in favour of both sides. And it can help a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas because one of the core rationales behind Hezbollah's assaults is to stop Israel from destroying the entire Gaza.

The article first appeared on Pakistan Today.

Israel stoking all-out war

And Canada complicit



By Owen Schalk
Author

OPINION

Israel's genocide in Gaza is catapulting the Middle East, and the broader world, toward further destabilization. Only a few months ago, open war between Israel and Iran seemed like a possibility. Now, an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah may send the region careening into further chaos and uncertainty. Following the Hamas-led October 7 attacks, military clashes between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Hezbollah along the Lebanon-Israel border have been nearly daily occurrences. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced. In recent weeks, however, things have escalated.

On June 7, Hezbollah declared that, for the first time in its history, it had used an anti-aircraft missile to force an Israeli jet to retreat from Lebanese airspace. As William Christou writes in *The New Arab*, Hezbollah's use of anti-aircraft weaponry is a "revelation". Christou explains:

Prior to the advent of the new anti-aircraft missile, Hezbollah's most advanced air defence feat was the downing of an Israeli helicopter in the 2006 war — something which does not require advanced weaponry. Hezbollah's possession of more sophisticated anti-aircraft technology would mean Israel could not conduct aerial sorties over the country with abandon as it previously had.

On June 18, amid intensifying exchanges between Hezbollah and the IDF, Hezbollah released a 10-minute video showing that one of its drones had covertly entered the northern city of Haifa, drifted over civilian areas, identified military targets, and returned to Lebanon. The message was clear:

The drone video proved to Israel that Hezbollah had the capacity to penetrate deep into its territory without being detected. Though this was a surveillance drone, the prospect of a suicide drone or drones carrying warheads hovering over Haifa has a significant psychological potency to both

the civilian residents of Haifa and the Israeli military.

The next day, Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah stated that the group had prepared a "complete bank of targets" in Israel should the war expand.

The Israeli military appears under-terred. Following Hezbollah's publication of the drone video, the IDF asserted that "operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated." Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz added: "We are getting very close to the moment of deciding on changing the rules of the game against Hezbollah and Lebanon... In an all-out war, Hezbollah will be destroyed, and Lebanon will be severely beaten."

Israel appears to be laying the groundwork for an attack on Lebanon, despite

aggression on Gaza."

Far from ending the genocide in Gaza, the Israeli military continues its brutal assaults on the besieged strip of land while retaining the military and diplomatic backing of many Western states, including Canada.

Over almost nine months, Israeli assaults have killed tens of thousands of Palestinians (disproportionately women and children) and displaced almost two million. Israel's vicious actions have prompted military responses from resistance groups across the region, including in Iraq and Yemen.

Canada has backed Israel against these resistance groups, especially the Houthi-led government of Yemen. In December 2023, Canada joined the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian, a



Black smoke billows after an Israeli air strike that targeted a house in the southern Lebanese village of Khiam, near Israel's northern border with Lebanon, on June 21, 2024.

● RABIH DAHER/AFP

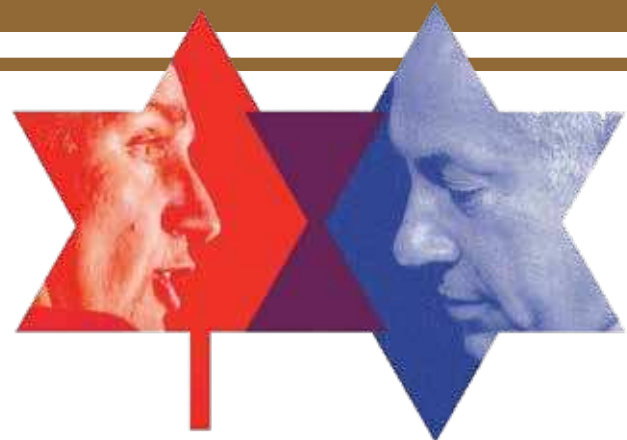
the fact that a war with Hezbollah would almost certainly create a multi-front conflict with allied groups in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, all of whom would receive substantial Iranian backing. The level of hubris is astonishing. Israel has been unable to defeat the Palestinian resistance in Gaza — despite its merciless onslaught against Gazans, Hamas is stronger now than it was on October 7 — yet the IDF is preparing for an all-out war against Hezbollah. Benjamin Netanyahu has even said, "We can fight on several fronts and we are prepared to do that."

To pull the region back from a wider war, the killing in Gaza must end. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said as much at the beginning of the year: "If the Americans had a brain... they would understand very well that security of the Red Sea, the calmness of the front with Lebanon, the situation in Iraq, all developments in the region rely on one issue: putting an end to the

failed mission to end Houthi strikes on Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea. One month later, Canadian Armed Forces personnel deployed in support of the US-UK bombing of Yemen. In a statement following the bombings, the government of Canada "condemn[ed] the reckless Houthi attacks against commercial ships and crew operating in the Red Sea". In February, Canada again participated in the bombing of cities in Yemen.

In April 2024, Israel's reckless decision to bomb the Iranian consulate in Damascus, killing at least eight Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) officers and two Syrian civilians, almost led to a full-blown war with Iran. The Iranian government responded with a pre-announced strike on military targets within Israel, a reaction that sidestepped further escalation while demonstrating Iran's willingness to hit Israel directly.

Despite Israel's provocations against



The illustration shows Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (L) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

● BRYAN GEE/
THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Iran, Ottawa sided unequivocally with the Israeli cabinet. This is despite the fact that the Israeli strike also damaged the Canadian embassy, which, though closed, remains the property of the government of Canada. Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly could only bring herself to reference Israel's damaging of the Canadian embassy in the passive voice: "What I can tell you is indeed we have an embassy in Syria that was not occupied because we've closed this embassy, and indeed it is an embassy that has been damaged."

horrors perpetrated against Gaza.

Meanwhile, Canadian police have attempted to suppress anti-genocide activism. For example, a June 2024 piece in *The Breach* details an expansive police operation in Toronto to infiltrate and destroy protests against Canadian participation in the genocide of Palestinians. Under an operation titled Project Resolute, police utilized heavy-handed tactics to disrupt anti-genocide organizing, including "pre-dawn raids, snatching people on the street, trying to turn arrested individuals into informants, showing up unannounced at university lectures, and capitalizing on years of surveilling activist movements".

Since October 7, the Canadian government has participated in military assaults against Palestinians as well as regional forces opposed to the genocide in Gaza. Now, Israel's war is threatening to spill into Lebanon, and Ottawa is actively enflaming tensions through its participation in the war on Gaza and its refusal to pressure Israel to relent.

Rather than attempting to defuse the conflict (the first step of which would require Canada to end its participation in the Gaza genocide), Ottawa seems resigned to the prospect of a wider war.

On June 21, Israel Katz spoke with Joly, who told Katz that Ottawa had dispatched military forces to the region for "the largest evacuation we have ever undertaken". At the same time, Katz told Joly that, if Ottawa wants to prevent a wider war, she needs to "put pressure on Hezbollah's Iranian backers". Canada's foreign minister apparently did not object.

A few days later, Joly urged Canadians to leave Lebanon, stating: "The security situation in Lebanon is becoming increasingly volatile and unpredictable due to sustained and escalating violence between Hezbollah and Israel and could deteriorate further without warning."

In her statement, Joly does not mention the root cause of the "volatile and unpredictable situation" — Israel's violent assault on Gaza, in which Canada is complicit.

If the Hezbollah-Israel conflict spirals out of control, Canadians must remember that their government had myriad opportunities to end its military and diplomatic support for Israel and instead promote genuine efforts for regional peace. Instead, Canada has backed Israel to the hilt, helping push the region to the brink of all-out war.

The article first appeared on Canadian Dimension.

Taekwondo World Cup Team Championships Series: Iranian girls lift historic trophy



Iranian girls celebrate on the top podium at the WT World Cup Team Championships Series in Chuncheon, South Korea, on July 2, 2024.
● IRNA

Sports Desk

Iranian girls made history on Tuesday by claiming a first women's title for the country at the WT World Cup Team Championships Series in Chuncheon, South Korea. Stepping into the final on the back of a 2-0 victory over the defending champion in their own backyard, the Iranian team came out on top against Morocco 2-1 (180-175, 120-

145, 145-79) to walk away with the ultimate prize. Melika Mirhosseini, Yalda Valinejad, Mahla Mo'menzadeh, and Saghar Moradi represented the Iranian team in Chuncheon, with Nahid Kiani and Mobina Ne'matzadeh skipping the tournament to continue preparation for the upcoming Olympic Games – starting July 26 in Paris. The girls' historic triumph

came a day after the Iranian four-man team – comprising Mahdi Abedini, Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani, Ali Khoshraveh, and Abolfazl Zandi – had also won the title, thanks to a straight-round victory over South Korea in the final. The three-day event will conclude with the mixed contests today, with Iran taking on China or South Korea for a place in the final.

Iran capable of winning 10 Asian Games medals: New athletics chief

Sports Desk

Ehsan Haddadi, the newly-elected president of the Iranian Athletics Federation, said the country is capable of grabbing 10 medals in the Asian Games in the near future. The sole Olympic medalist – a discus throw silver in London 2012 – in the history of the Iranian athletics, Haddadi garnered 40 votes in the electoral assembly of the federation on Monday to beat Abbas-Ali Maddih, who had 17 votes, to the four-year reign in the governing body of the sport. Widely regarded as the all-time greatest Iranian in the sport, Haddadi, 39, dominated the discus throw contests of the Asian Games between 2006 and 2018 before calling time on his

illustrious career last year in Hangzhou, where he settled for the silver at the Games – finishing second to fellow-countryman Hossein Rasouli. "I dedicated 23 years of my life to the athletics and I am proud of it. That is what I am going to do from now on," said the new chairman of the federation. "The burden of the responsibility is definitely going to be great, but I can promise you that the Iranian athletics will flourish, should we all stay united," added Haddadi, for whom the job is the first administrative role in his career. "Iran has won a single medal in the history of the Olympics, but I am sure the country has the potential for more.

"We are capable of winning 10 medals in the Asian Games, a feat that will make the athletics the number one sport in the country," said Haddadi, also a 2011 world bronze medalist and a winner of six golds at the Asian Championships. The discus throw top-two was Iran's only athletics achievement in the medals table in Hangzhou, with the 2010 event in Guangzhou, where Iran collected double golds and three silvers, remaining the most successful campaign in the recent history of the Games for the country. The 1974 edition on home soil was the most prolific campaign for Iran with eight medals, including three golds.



Ehsan Haddadi, the new president of the Iranian Athletics Federation, is seen with his discus throw silver medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games in October 2023.
● IRNA

Persepolis, Esteghlal looking to reunite with former stars



Sports Desk

Tehran archrivals Persepolis and Esteghlal are keen on bringing back two of their former strikers ahead of the next Persian Gulf Pro League season. Having lifted a seventh league trophy in eight years in June, Persepolis has approached Ali Alipour in recent days, according to Football360, after the Iranian parted ways with Portuguese club Gil Vicente at the end of the newly-finished season. The Reds' all-time leading marksman

Ali Alipour (L) and Mahdi Qayedi

in the Iranian Pro League with 56 strikes, Alipour left Persepolis for the Portuguese top-flight in 2020 but an injury-hit spell saw the 28-year-old manage 14 goals across four seasons with C.S. Marítimo and Gil Vicente – including two in 19 appearances last term. Persepolis is set for a new era under new Spanish head coach Carlos Garrido but faces the prospect of parting ways with several key players, namely Mahdi Torabi and Danial Esmailifar, who are on their way out as free agents. Meanwhile, Esteghlal, is eager to resign Iranian international Mahdi Qayedi for a second loan spell.

A member of the national team in January's AFC Asian Cup, Qayedi, 25, enjoyed an impressive season at Ittihad Kalba on loan from fellow-Emirati club Shabab Al Ahli, bagging 16 goals and six assists in 34 games across all competitions. Esteghlal, which finished second to its city rival in the league by a single point, has reportedly made contact with Qayedi's parent club, though the Emirati side's asking price could keep the winger wizard from returning to the Tehran Blues, with whom he was first introduced to the Iranian top flight in 2017.

Costa's heroics highlight match-winning goalkeepers at Euro 2024



REUTERS – Goalkeeper Diogo Costa was the match-winner for Portugal in their round of 16 victory, opens new tab over Slovenia on Monday but no keeper at the European Championship has been busier than the overworked Giorgi Mamardashvili from Georgia. Costa, 24, saved three penalties in the shoot-out, a record for a Euros final, as Portugal advanced to a meeting with France on Friday. Before that he produced an excellent stop to deny Benjamin Sesko on a one-on-one in extra time. He became the third keeper to receive a Man of the Match

award at the tournament after Mamardashvili in a 1-1 draw with Czech Republic and Poland's Lukasz Skorupski when they drew 1-1 against France. "I think this was the game of my life," Costa told reporters. "Maybe the game where I was most useful. I am very, very happy and I am also very excited that I helped the team." Mamardashvili, 23, stands head and shoulders above the rest of the keepers at the tournament in terms of shots saved, though he will not thank his defence for that. He made 29 stops in the four games he played, including the

4-1 round of 16 loss to Spain, more than double the next highest for a keeper at the tournament. Italy's Gianluigi Donnarumma, Koen Casteels of Belgium and Jan Oblak from Slovenia all made 14 saves and are out of the tournament. Georgia allowed 106 attempts on goal, so Mamardashvili deserves a great deal of credit for conceding only eight times. His performances have not come out of the blue and the Valencia keeper has been attracting interest from top clubs for some time, coming close to a move to Bayern Munich at the start of last season.

"My move to Bayern Munich was almost done," he told reporters. "My agent was in Munich with my father to find an apartment. But as far as I know, in the end they refused to pay 35 million (euros) for me." He has started all but one of Valencia's LaLiga matches over the last two seasons and his exploits in the last few weeks may reignite interest elsewhere. The keepers at Euro 2024 who played four games and had the fewest saves to make are Costa and Switzerland's Yann Sommer with six each. Germany's Manuel Neuer has made one more stop with seven.



Portugal's Diogo Costa saves a penalty during the shoot-out victory over Slovenia in the Euro 2024 last 16 in Frankfurt, Germany, on July 1, 2024.
● WOLFGANG RATTAY/REUTERS

Foreign policy dominates 1st runoff debate

National Desk

Masoud Pezeshkian and Saeed Jalili, the two candidates running for presidency, locked horns in the first televised debate ahead of the Friday's runoff election.

The candidates presented their plans on political, cultural and economic issues. Pezeshkian, a former health minister and current lawmaker, touched on the important issue of sanctions which have had significant impacts on the country's economy for several years.

Pezeshkian said he considers the sanctions a serious detriment to the country, stressing that his foreign policy aims to normalize relations with the world. He also said that he supports the implementation of FATF and the 2015 nuclear agreement from which the United States unilaterally withdrew and reimposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

"For me, foreign policy means interaction, economic growth, and engagement — for peace and for people, not at their expense," he underlined.

In response, Jalili said that in the cases of FATF and the nuclear deal, "We should ask the other side to fulfill its commitments. But we shouldn't stall ourselves. We should also pursue other avenues in parallel."

"If the other side says they won't fulfill their commitments, we shouldn't bow down," he added.

Jalili said that, "We must definitely remove the tool of sanctions from the hands of the opponent. One way is through dialogue and compelling the opponent to fulfill its commitments."

Jalili said that no one in Iran prevented the implementation of the nuclear agreement.

"Let's not accuse our own nation and absolve the other side. The (UN nuclear) agency said Iran fulfilled its commitments, and I say we even went beyond our commitments. But what was the result? They withdrew and sanctions increased from 800 to 1500."



Iranian presidential candidates Masoud Pezeshkian (R) and Saeed Jalili participate in a live election debate at the Iranian national television studio in Tehran on July 1.

MORTEZA FAKHRINEJAD/IRIB

Sanctions and their impacts

Pezeshkian also referred to the impacts of the sanctions on the country's economy, saying that right now, due to lack of oil extraction technology, Iran is extracting 18 percent of oil from the ground, while in the world it is 48 percent.

"We are currently selling oil cheaply and not even disclosing its price," he said.

He said that Iran has lost its markets and Qatar is taking away Iran's gas. A country that holds the second largest gas reserves in the world shuts off gas in winters for factories.

"Why doesn't China return our money and rips us off with any shoddy goods it feels like? Why doesn't it execute the 25-year (strategic) contract? Why doesn't Iraq, which we have served so much, return our money?" Pezeshkian asked during the debate.

The Reformist candidate said the division among officials as the main problem in the country.

"When a government is in power, FATF is opposed, but when the next government takes over, it supports it."

Pezeshkian also pointed to the fate of the nuclear agreement also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"(Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu was doing everything to prevent the JCPOA from being implemented. We also fought internally to prevent the JCPOA. When you make a deal and negotiate, you give something and get something in return.

"Do you know how much we are losing right now because of FATF and JCPOA? We are losing several thousand billion daily. Some people are profiteering from sanctions."

Cyberspace

Both candidates also talked about the cyberspace and its economic capacities. Jalili believes that a significant portion of opportunities today lies in cyberspace.

"If we say cyberspace is an opportunity, we need to have a plan for it and clearly tell people what we want to do. Foreign platforms can operate in Iran if they act responsibly," the Conservative candidate Jalili said. He said that the people should be active,

not passive, in cyberspace.

Pezeshkian pointed to the people's problems in access to internet, saying that "Today people spend more money on VPNs than on the internet itself, and these VPNs don't have the same restrictions or controls."

"You cannot say we want to live in a cage and have no connection with the world. Many people lost their businesses due to actions taken in cyberspace," Pezeshkian added.

Low turnout

Both candidates also pointed to the low turnout in the first round of the election. The interior Ministry announced that voter turnout was around 40%.

Pezeshkian said that the participation is concerning. It is unacceptable that 60 percent of the people did not come to the polls.

"We must have an ear to listen to the voices of 60 percent who did not come to the polls.

Jalili also said that the reasons behind the decrease in people's participation should be considered.

Iran to back Hezbollah in case of all-out Israeli war

An adviser to Iran's Leader warned that if Israel launches an all-out offensive against Hezbollah resistance movement in Lebanon, it would risk triggering a regional war in which Tehran and the "axis of resistance" would support the Lebanese movement with "all means".

Kamal Kharrazi, foreign affairs adviser to Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, told the Financial Times that the Islamic republic was

"not interested" in a regional war and urged the US to put pressure on Israel to prevent further escalation.

But asked if Iran would support Hezbollah militarily in the event of a full-blown conflict, Kharrazi said: "All Lebanese people, Arab countries and members of the axis of resistance will support Lebanon against Israel."

"There would be a chance of expansion of



Kamal Kharrazi

the war to the whole region, in which all countries including Iran would become engaged," he said in an interview. "In that situation, we would have no choice, but to support Hezbollah by all means."

He added: "The expansion of war is not in the interest of anyone — not Iran or the US." Since the beginning of Israel's onslaught on the Gaza Strip in October, Hezbollah has traded almost daily cross-border fire with Israel. Fears of a full-blown war grew this month after Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was preparing for "a very tense operation" on the border with Lebanon.

Iran's mission to the UN on Friday warned of an "obliterating war" if Israel launched an offensive against Hezbollah, saying "all options" were on the table.

"All options, [including] the full involvement of all Resistance Fronts, are on the table," the mission wrote in a post on X.

It also called Israel's threats to attack Hezbollah in Lebanon "psychological warfare" and "propaganda".

Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah has also threatened a war with "no restraint and no rules and no ceilings" in case of a major Israeli offensive against Lebanon.

Hezbollah's strikes started on 8 October, the day after the Hamas attack on Israel. The group has said the campaign, in support for Palestinians amid Israel's war on Gaza, will stop only when there is a ceasefire in Gaza.

Most of the violence has remained contained to areas along the border, although Israeli strikes have increasingly hit targets deeper into Lebanon. Hezbollah attacks have also reached far into Israel. So far, more than 400 people have been reported killed in Lebanon, the vast majority Hezbollah fighters, and 25 in Israel, mostly soldiers.

Iran urges European action against Israel's crimes in Gaza

International Desk

Iran's interim President Mohammad Mokhbar called on Italy, Hungary, Spain, Serbia, Finland and Australia to take measures to stop Israel's crimes in Gaza.

He made the remarks in separate meetings with new ambassadors of the European countries who submitted a copy of their credentials in Tehran on Tuesday.

During his meeting with Italy's new ambassador Paola Amadei, Mokhbar said that Iran expects Italy, as a country with a rich and ancient civilization and culture, to take effective measures to stop the Israeli crimes in the Gaza Strip despite the support of certain countries to the occupying entity.

Italy's ambassador, for her part, said her country is doing its utmost to cooperate with different countries, including Iran, to find solutions to the crisis in Gaza.

The Israeli regime has so far killed at least 37,900 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 87,060 others, since it waged the brutal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023, according to the Gaza-based health ministry. It has also imposed a "complete siege" on the territory, cutting off fuel, electricity, food, and water to the more than two million Palestinians living there.

On Tuesday, Israeli forces bombarded several areas of the southern Gaza Strip and thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes in what could be part of a final push for Israel's intensive military offensives in nine months of war.

The latest strikes on Tuesday killed at least eight people and wounded more than 30 in several neighborhoods of Khan Younis.

The wave of attacks, just weeks after Israeli tanks left the area, caused panic among residents, many already displaced multiple times and with no clear path to safety.

The Israeli military's newly declared evacuation zone in Khan Younis encompasses an area where 250,000 people live, said Sam Rose, planning director at the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The order "means yet another day, week, chapter of misery for these hundreds of thousands of people — we expect 250,000 people in areas under the evacuation order," Rose told Al Jazeera from Nuseirat in central Gaza.

Some had just returned from Rafah, also in the south of the enclave, where they were displaced a few weeks ago.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran's Farhadi to speak at Amman festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Much-admired Iranian director and screenwriter Asghar Farhadi will be a special guest at the fifth edition of the Amman International Film Festival in Jordan, slated to be held from July 3 to 11. According to ISNA, the festival's "First and Latest" section, which honors seasoned filmmakers, will explore the evolution of Farhadi's cinematic language over the years. Farhadi will share the experiences that have shaped his visual and narrative style with the audience. In addition, Farhadi will discuss the lessons he has learned throughout his career, the challenges he has faced, and how these difficulties have contributed to his growth as a director. In the introduction to his book *Seven Screenplays*, Farhadi wrote: "I reviewed all my screenplays, searching for one common thread amongst them all, and found that the biggest commonality is the 'question'. I started by asking questions, then my questions

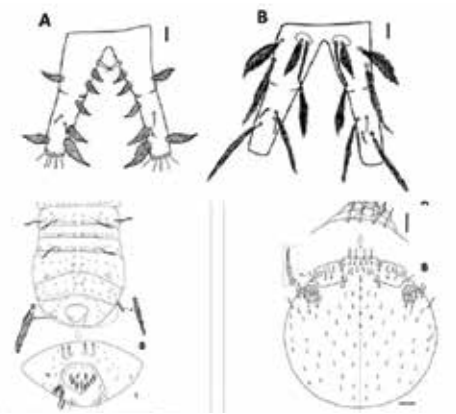


grew bigger and heavier over time, and their facets multiplied (...). Our world needs those who ask questions more than those who volunteer to give answers; it needs those who place a question mark before anything, no matter how definitive it appears." The festival will witness the participation of about 53 films from 28 producing and participating countries, and includes a mix of Arab and international feature films and documentaries, in addition to Arab short films.

New fauna discovered in Iran's caves

Social Desk

Iranian researchers discovered new species of arthropods in Danial and Moghan caves. A new species named *Plutomurus danialensis* was found in one of Iran's largest water caves, Danial Cave, in Mazandaran Province, while a microscopic insect was identified in the Moghan Cave, one of the oldest caves in Iran, in Khorasan. Javad Nezamdoust, a member of the task force and one of the founders of the Iranian Cave and Speleology Association, told ILNA that the discovery and study were conducted by the cave explorers club of Mashhad. The project was led by Mahmoud Mehrafrouz in collaboration with professors from Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Slovakia and Ilia State University in Georgia. "The new and unique species, *Plutomurus danialensis*, is a rare type of arthropod found only in Danial Cave," Nezamdoust said. The discovery has been published in *Zootaxa*, a peer-reviewed sci-



entific mega journal for animal taxonomists. On the new microscopic insect discovered in Moghan Cave, he said, "This insect is another species whose only habitat is in Moghan Cave, one of Iran's oldest caves."



From crisis to conservation:

Iran's endangered wildlife, preservation efforts

By Zohreh Qanadi
 Staff writer

PERSPECTIVE

Iran is home to a diverse range of animal species, but over the past few decades, around 86 species have become endangered due to various factors. In response, the country's Department of Environment has developed a targeted action plan to safeguard 23 species at risk and is actively implementing it.

Biodiversity in Iran

The country's geography is vast and diverse, encompassing plains, deserts, foothills, mountains, wetlands, historical forests, and various types of swamps and rivers. This has made it a large habitat for numerous animal and plant species. Statistics show that 160 mammal species, 492 bird species, 175 fish species, 197 reptile species, and 20 amphibian species have been identified in the country. These statistics are up-to-date, meaning the numbers may increase as more species are discovered.

Endangered species, conservation efforts

Iran has been recognized in-

ternationally as one of the top countries in terms of biodiversity, a fact supported by experts. However, in recent years, there has been a concerning decline in the population of certain species as they are seemingly pushed towards extinction.

Factors such as land use changes, drought, agricultural expansion, climate change, and mining activities have destroyed natural habitats and decreased prey populations, leading to the decline of wildlife species like the Iranian lion and the Mazandaran leopard, which once roamed the country in significant numbers. Recent statistics show that the Asiatic cheetah as well as Iranian yellow deer, brown bear, leopard, black bear, zebra, birds of prey, and houbara bustard are among the 86 species of animals facing extinction.

The Department of Environment has developed an action plan to protect these species. Director General for Wildlife Conservation and Management Bureau Gholamreza Ebdali has said that these plans involve census-taking, species revival, and population relocation. Additionally, 20 more action plans for other endangered species are on the agenda, with the aim of covering 50% of these species in future programs.

If we do not take action to protect species at risk of extinction in Iran, they too will face the same fate. If we fail, future generations will most certainly only see their names and pictures in books. Iranians must be good stewards of their heritage for future generations.

Three near-extinct species of note

- **Brown Bears:** Typically found in the Hyrcanian, Alborz, and Zagros forests, they are often seen in lower forested areas or valleys in late summer and autumn.
- **Iranian Yellow Deer:** Listed as "EN" (Endangered) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), these deer were rediscovered 50 years ago in the Dez and Karkheh regions. For better reproduction, they were scattered across different regions of Iran. The Iranian yellow deer is larger than roe deer, the other native deer of Iran, and smaller than Caspian red deer, another indigenous deer species of Iran.
- **Houbara Bustard:** Estimates show 3,000 to 5,000 individuals in the country, though many have been trafficked to Arab countries. This bird helps control agricultural pests but is threatened by drought, habitat destruction, and trafficking.

Historical, cultural context of conservation

Iranians have respected nature for as long as we can remember, going back to the teachings of Zoroastrianism. Protection of the environment was ingrained in the Iranian culture, with the first protected areas established during the reign of the Achaemenid Empire. During military campaigns to Asia Minor, the protection of their cypress forests was entrusted

to the royal guard, leading to the creation of the world's first protected area several hundred years before the birth of Christ. Today, more than 300 protected areas cover 19.5 million hectares, approximately 11.8% of Iran's land. In May, five regions covering an area of 230,000 hectares have been added to the country's protected areas. The new protected areas include:

- 1. Gavkhouni Wetland in Isfahan Province:** Covering about 63,000 hectares, the condition of this wetland has been elevated by preventing land use changes and protecting its vegetation and bird populations.
- 2. Mount Kalateh and Tang-e Sorkh in Fars Province:** Spanning about 11,000 hectares, this area is rich in vegetation and wildlife, affirming its importance as a natural reserve.
- 3. Padena in Samirum County:** With an area of about 30,000 hectares, this region holds the Dena Protected Area, which facilitates wildlife movement and conservation efforts.
- 4. Kalateh Desert Region in eastern Isfahan:** Covering approximately 126,000 hectares, this area is crucial for desert species like onagers, houbara bustards, wild goats, and wild sheep.
- 5. Sheikh Mohammad Lou in Ardabil:** A small area of about 200 hectares, known for its fossil trees and registered as a national

natural site.

Gene conservation, cloning

In 2014, April 4 was declared in the Iranian calendar as the National Day of Genetic and Biological Reserves in order to emphasize the importance of protecting wildlife species. The Department of Environment signed an agreement with the National Center for Genetic Resources to safeguard the gene pool of endangered species. Living samples of cheetahs, leopards, and brown bears are maintained through cell culture at this center, enabling the future possibility of reviving extinct species. The Persian leopard, a subspecies in crisis, now has a habitat limited to certain areas in Khar Turan National Park of Shahrud, Semnan Province.

The Department of Environment has another gene bank and genetic laboratory, which is a subset of the National Museum of Natural History of Iran. Protecting the endangered species is crucial to maintaining Iran's rich biodiversity and preserving it for future generations. By implementing effective conservation strategies and respecting the cultural heritage of nature protection, the country can ensure the survival of its unique wildlife.

The information and data were sourced from IRNA.

PIC OF THE DAY



The concert by Iranian singer Alireza Qorbani, the first live music performance at Persepolis, is held on July 1, 2024.
 ● IRNA