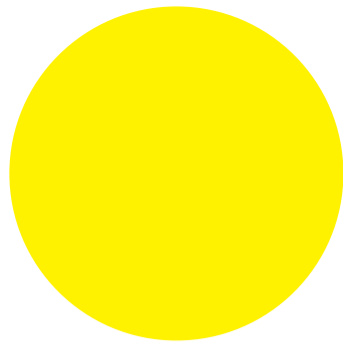


'The Son of Gaza', a narrative of Ismail Haniyeh



2 >



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7 >

Avenge of Haniyeh's blood a duty: **Leader**

Pezeshkian warns terrorists will regret 'cowardly act'

Hamas: Assassination to take war to 'new levels'



Political message of an assassination

By Diako Hosseini
Strategic affairs expert

EXCLUSIVE OPINION

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas politburo leader in Tehran, must be examined in the context of recent events. Israel has found itself entangled in a quagmire as a result of the months-long conflict in Gaza, where its prolonged and criminal endeavors have not achieved their intended goals. Meanwhile, global outrage and condemnation of this regime's inhumane actions have been mounting across the world, including

in the United States. In this context, a new election took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran, leading to the election of a new president who aims to establish a national unity government and foster dialogue and engagement with the world. Masoud Pezeshkian has opened up a brighter future for diplomacy. The return of skilled diplomats - who are symbolic of dialogue - to the Iranian government has illuminated this diplomatic horizon, yet cast a shadow for Iran's enemies. Simultaneously, on the eve of the US presidential elections, Kamala Harris replaced Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee and has garnered significant growth in polls in just a few days.

Page 2 >

Iron age footprint discovered in Markazi Province



8 >

Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship:

Iran coach Mo'menimoqaddam hails 'commanding' title run



6 >

Director of BRICS Competition Law and Policy Centre in exclusive interview:

World economy don'ts BRICS states agree on

4-5 >



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

'The Son of Gaza', a narrative of Ismail Haniyeh

International Desk

Hamas Politburo Chief Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran in the wee hours of Wednesday, with Palestinians now calling him "The son of Gaza" over his sacrifices for the besieged enclave amid a chorus of grief and anger.

He is the second high-profile Hamas leader to be assassinated by the Israeli regime since Operation al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023 after Salah al-Arouri's assassination in southern Beirut on January 2. Haniyeh was killed in an Israeli strike in Tehran along with a bodyguard early on Wednesday. The former Palestinian prime minister was in Tehran to attend the inauguration of Iran's new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, on Tuesday.

The Hamas leader had emerged as a major force in the Palestinian liberation movement and, like his colleagues and earlier generations of Palestinian politicians and activists, had long been in Israel's crosshairs.

Hamas announced his death on Wednesday, saying in a statement, "Brother, leader, mujahid Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the movement, died in a Zionist strike on his residence in Tehran after he participated in the inauguration of the new (Iranian) president." Considered a pragmatist within Hamas and known for his calm demeanor, Haniyeh was born in 1963 in Gaza's al-Shati refugee camp to a family that had fled Ashkelon, several kilometers north of the occupied territory, during the creation of Israeli regime 15 years earlier.

As a young man, Haniyeh was a student activist at the Islamic University in Gaza City, where he studied Arabic literature. While at university

in 1983, he joined the Islamic Student Bloc, an organization widely seen as the forerunner of Hamas.

As a Palestinian uprising broke out in December 1987 against the Israeli occupation, known as the first Intifada (uprising), Haniyeh was among the youth taking part in protests. That was also the year Hamas was founded, with Haniyeh among its younger members. Intifada lasted until 1993.

During that time Haniyeh was imprisoned by Israel at least three times and then expelled to south Lebanon for six months. In 1992, after serving his longest sentence, a three-year stint, he was expelled to south Lebanon for six months along with hundreds of other members of Hamas, including senior leaders Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi and Mahmoud Zahhar, and members of other Palestinian resistance groups. He returned to Gaza in 1993 after the signing of the first Oslo Accord by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Negotiator Mahmoud Abbas. Haniyeh became a close confidant of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Hamas's spiritual leader and founder.

After Israel released Yassin from prison in 1997, Haniyeh was appointed as his assistant. Haniyeh, then, became a target for assassination.

In September 2003, Haniyeh and Yassin survived an assassination attempt together, emerging alive from a house on which an Israeli aircraft had dropped a bomb. Yassin was killed a year later.

Haniyeh's prominence within the Palestinian movement increased in 2006 when Hamas participated in the Palestinian legislative elections for the first time since its founding.



In a surprising outcome, the group secured the most votes, dealing a setback to Fatah and elevating Haniyeh to the position of prime minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

The outcome caught the United States, which had called for the elections, unprepared. Unhappy with Hamas' central role in Palestinian governance, Western governments halted aid to the PA, placing the body under severe financial strain. The US and many other Western governments view Hamas as a "terrorist" organization. Amid Western pressure and heightened tensions between Hamas and Fatah, PA President Mahmoud Abbas dismissed Haniyeh and dissolved his government. This resulted in an independent Hamas-led

government in Gaza in 2007, headed by Haniyeh.

As Hamas took over the government of Gaza, Israel, in cooperation with neighboring Egypt, imposed a siege on the enclave, which has continued for 17 years.

Appointed as head of Hamas's political bureau in 2017 and replacing Khaled Meshal, Haniyeh led Hamas' diplomacy from a number of locations, including Turkey and the Qatari capital, Doha. He served as a negotiator in ceasefire talks or engaged in talks with Iran, a key supporter of Palestinian liberation.

After the October 7 attacks on southern Israel, the Israeli regime made it clear that senior Hamas leaders were effectively on its hit list. Many

of Haniyeh's close relatives have been killed in Gaza since then. In April, three of his sons were killed in an Israeli airstrike that targeted their vehicle. Four of his grandchildren were also killed – three girls and a boy. In total, Haniyeh stated that 60 of his relatives have died in the past 10 months.

"All our people and all the families of Gaza residents have paid a heavy price with the blood of their children, and I am one of them," Haniyeh said in an interview.

Haniyeh's assassination marks the latest killing of a senior Hamas leader. Most recently, senior Hamas official Saleh al-Arouri was killed in January in an Israeli drone strike in Beirut.

Political message of ...

Therefore, both the recent Iranian presidential election and the

Page 1 >

victory of a moderate president advocating dialogue and cooperation, coupled with the potential triumph of Kamala Harris in the US elections, have heightened concerns for Benjamin Netanyahu and his hardline cabinet.

As anticipated, Netanyahu will likely voice dissatisfaction and resentment regarding the establishment of a national unity government in Iran. Ongoing internal conflicts and daily disputes in Iran would present the most favorable scenario for Israel. It is natural for the US Democrats to undermine the campaigning efforts of Kamala Harris while bolstering those of the pro-Republican camp and Donald Trump.

Accordingly, the assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran, only hours after the presidential inauguration, should be evaluated within

this framework. Each time, Israel crosses a red line to keep Iran entangled in domestic discord and provoke a reciprocal reaction from Tehran, ultimately drawing the US into confrontation. In this context, the Democrats' position in the US elections is also weakened, paving the way for Donald Trump, who is closely aligned with Netanyahu.

It is known that the possibility of Haniyeh's assassination existed in other parts of the world, including Qatar. Even if the intention was to assassinate him in Iran, the question arises as to why this action was not taken in previous visits and instead occurred at the onset of the new government's term? In response, it should be said that the objective or message of the assassination of Haniyeh in Iran at this juncture was a political message, not necessarily a mere assassination. Tel Aviv sends this message to Iran that it is capable of such ac-

tions in the capital of Iran, disregarding all international laws, norms of international relations, and even political considerations. Tel Aviv expects Iran to respond seriously and reciprocally to this crime, diverting public attention and political forums from Gaza's atrocities towards Iran and somehow dragging the US into a confrontation with Iran.

The reality is that Israel has crossed Iran's red lines, and thus, these actions cannot and should not go unanswered. The crucial issue is that this response should not align with Netanyahu's calculations and objectives. It is also evident from the positions of Iranian authorities and officials that they are attentive to this matter. Therefore, it is anticipated that Iran's reciprocal action, as necessitated by security and political assessments, will occur at an appropriate time and place. Undoubtedly, Iran will not play in Israel's game.

A breach of security



By Syed Ali Hassan

Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

PERSPECTIVE

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's political bureau and a key figure in ceasefire negotiations, in Tehran is a significant blow to global politics and diplomacy. It is widely believed that Israel, with the collaboration of Mossad, CIA, and MI6, executed this assassination. Planning for the assassination of Haniyeh and other key Hamas leaders has been ongoing for several years, and the Israeli regime's targeted killings were a major reason behind Operation al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023.

Attempts to target Hamas leadership were previously made in Turkey, but Ankara's security system thwarted these efforts and arrested both local and foreign agents. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had warned Israel that any attempt to target Hamas lead-

ers on Turkish soil would result in severe consequences for Israel. Despite such warnings, Mossad agents continued to plot assassinations in Turkey, which were again foiled by local authorities. Israel has also targeted resistance movement members in Lebanon, Syria, and Qatar. On October 17, 2023, Israel's special forces attacked the home of Haniyeh's family in Gaza, killing 14 people, including his brother and nephews, while they were sleeping. On April 17, 2024, during Eid al-Fitr, Israeli troops conducted a covert operation in Gaza's al-Shati camp, killing Haniyeh's three sons, Hazem, Amir, and Muhammad, as well as his three granddaughters and one grandson.

In a Facebook post, Haniyeh's eldest son confirmed the deaths of his brothers and expressed gratitude for their martyrdom. Hamas and Islamic Jihad displayed similar resilience following Haniyeh's assassination, vowing that Israel's cowardly attacks would only strengthen their resistance.

The killing of Haniyeh, considered as one of the best Palestinian diplomats, will impact cease-

fire negotiations and escalate tensions, for which Israel will have to face the consequences. This assassination, alongside the killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in southern Lebanon, highlights Israel's relentless targeting of resistance leaders.

The Israeli media have reported on the success of the secret operation, but the incident exposes a significant breach of Tehran's security. This breach poses a severe challenge to Iran's security system, which must address the flaws in its air defense systems and counter the collaborative efforts of Israel, the US, and Europe. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei vowed to deliver a severe response to Israel for Haniyeh's killing. He stated that Israel's actions indicate its desire to expand the war, which could lead to devastating consequences for Tel Aviv. Ayatollah Khamenei affirmed that avenging Haniyeh's blood is a duty as he was martyred on Iranian soil and that Iran will ensure retribution for this grievous act.

Harnessing ecotourism for sustainable development in Semnan Province



Shahmirzad
wikimedia.org



Molladeh village
kite.ir



Rudbarak Forest
kite.ir

Iranica Desk

Cultural promotion among local communities and tourists is essential for the advancement of ecotourism, a cornerstone of contemporary tourism development. Mohammad Jahanshahi, Secretary of the National Ecotourism Working Group of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, emphasized this viewpoint during a recent meeting in Semnan Province. He pointed out that Semnan is endowed with diverse resources that position it as a potential model for the effective and responsible application of ecotourism throughout the country, as reported by IRNA.

Jahanshahi drew attention to the availability of skilled professionals in the ecotourism sector, both from the public and private spheres, alongside Semnan's rich environmental diversity and its protected areas that harbor endangered species such as the Asiatic cheetah and the Iranian wild ass. This unique combination could position Semnan as a national exemplar in the sustainable development of green tourism. He further noted that Semnan's proximity to Tehran, the capital and largest urban center in Iran, presents a unique opportunity to attract tourists, particularly in the ecotourism sector. However, he stressed the importance

of involving local communities in fostering sustainable tourism development. Collaboration between public entities and local residents is crucial to ensure the safeguarding of natural attractions while also leveraging the economic benefits and employment opportunities that tourism can facilitate.

Jahanshahi remarked that despite the successful initiatives implemented since the rise of modern ecotourism, there remains a critical need to bolster cultural awareness among local communities and nature tourists alike. He cautioned that poor management of nature tourism could lead to detrimental outcomes, asserting that while the promotion of ecotourism is a collective responsibility, certain activities — such as the use of off-road vehicles, livestock grazing, crop cultivation, and plowing — can hinder this progress and require direct policy intervention. Additionally, he noted that public sensitivity and advocacy are pivotal factors capable of advancing goals within ecotourism development. He highlighted Qaleh Bala village as a standout example of successful ecotourism in Semnan Province, advocating that the lessons learned from this success should be shared and communicated effectively throughout other regions in the country.

Bahman Akhlaqi, the head of



Kalpoosh Plain
kojara.com

the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Semnan Province, participated in the discussion, highlighting that the sustainability of ecotourism hinges on achieving a balance between the utilization of attractions and their preservation. He pointed out that modern tourists are increasingly gravitating toward ecotourism, which, while beneficial, presents certain threats to the local environment. It is essential to mitigate these threats through a careful equilibrium between allowing tourists to enjoy natural sites while also ensuring their protection. Akhlaqi emphasized the need for the establishment of the ecotour-

ism working group, an initiative that has emerged after many years of efforts on both national and provincial scales. This group is designed to foster cooperation among various executive agencies to ensure that green tourism development goes hand-in-hand with the preservation and protection of natural resources. Given Semnan Province's diverse climatic and environmental characteristics — ranging from forests and mineral springs to deserts, plains, and mountains — the region has become a notable destination for ecotourism, attracting both domestic and international visitors. Consequently, establishing regulations

governing the managed presence of tourists is paramount.

To foster a sense of responsibility among tourists, it is crucial to enhance their awareness regarding their roles and responsibilities towards nature and the preservation of natural attractions. Effective educational methods should be employed to inform ecotourists of their obligations with respect to natural sites.

Moreover, local communities and non-governmental organizations can play a pivotal role in environmental protection and the preservation of natural attractions, underscoring the importance of grassroots participation in sustainable tourism efforts.

The selection of Semnan as Iran's sole representative in the "Union of Cities along the Silk Road" presents a significant opportunity for economic transformation and the enhancement of global trade relations, positively impacting the city, province, and nation. To realize this vision and capitalize on this invaluable opportunity, it is crucial to allocate appropriate national and provincial funding, implement coordinated planning, and foster a strong commitment and collaboration among various stakeholders.

Semnan Province boasts an impressive array of 983 nationally registered historical, natural, and cultural sites, presenting a diverse landscape that encom-

passes lush forests, vast deserts, and towering mountains—all of which offer a stunning array of natural attractions for visitors. An ongoing challenge is facilitating easy access for tourists to these sites with minimal travel distance, thereby positioning Semnan as an appealing destination for nature enthusiasts.

Geographically, Semnan Province is strategically situated, bordered by North Khorasan, Golestan, and Mazandaran provinces to the north; South Khorasan and Isfahan provinces to the south; Razavi Khorasan Province to the east; and Tehran and Qom provinces to the west. This advantageous location makes Semnan a viable stop on travel itineraries for those seeking to explore Iran's rich cultural and natural heritage.

With over 1,833 identified historical, cultural, natural, and spiritual sites — of which 983 are registered as national heritage sites — Semnan Province also features 69 tourism villages, complemented by one designated tourism area. The diversity of these attractions positions Semnan as a burgeoning leader in Iran's ecotourism landscape, where a concerted commitment to sustainable practices can enrich both the local economy and the preservation of its extraordinary natural and cultural heritage.

Vibrant Fuman Bazaar, a tapestry of culture and business

The local markets of Gilan Province beautifully reflect the lifestyle and customs of the region's people. Within these bustling bazaars, visitors are greeted by colorful displays and a variety of souvenirs, including fresh vegetables and fruits. These markets, which have stood the test of time without major changes, immerse you in the lively world of sellers of all ages, each striving to showcase their goods.

The local bazaar is intricately tied to the lives of many residents. Here, some vendors provide local agricultural products to their fellow community members, while others fulfill their shopping needs. Women are often seen selling their husbands' products, donning worn yet vibrant clothing and speaking with warm accents, enticing customers to consider their items.

Fuman Bazaar, in particular, stands out as one of the most diverse and colorful markets in the country, drawing both tourists and locals alike.



As dawn breaks, sellers arrive at the marketplace to lay out their mats. The early birds secure the best spots, but most vendors maintain a belief that their daily bread is provided by a higher power. Weekly markets are an

ideal setting for stocking up on necessities; here, the prices are generally lower, and the quality of goods tends to be superior to other sales venues. These markets also play a vital role in stabilizing prices and pre-

venting disproportionate price increases, though this benefit may not apply to every market. Additionally, they serve as social hubs where friends and acquaintances gather, as shopping at weekly markets is a common practice.

In Fuman's Tuesday market, beyond rice and tea, one can find unique offerings such as mat-weaving and pottery products. Notably, Fuman cookies have gained popularity, making them standout items in the

market. Harvesting tools, hand-made knives from Masouleh, rugs, felt, and livestock products from Shulam and Gesht-e Rudkhan village also contribute to the rich tapestry of goods available at this vibrant marketplace.

By Mostafa Shirmohammadi &
Amir Mollae Mozaffari
Staff writers

INTERVIEW

In the words of a 19th-century essayist, "Nature hates monopolies and exceptions," but so does everyone else except for those who benefit from monopolies and exceptions. The US and its club of closest allies have for decades tried to carve out pseudo-monopolies for themselves in the world's political and economic orders to great success while letting others "compete" for the scraps, but their efforts have not gone unnoticed. Cries of criticism got louder and louder until some of the major players that were left out of these clubs joined hands to form a formidable foe and bring balance. BRICS bloc of emerging economies is one such group that is pursuing a similar goal. Whether it has been successful so far and what its desired state of affairs looks like are some questions that Iran Daily put to Alexey Ivanov, director of the BRICS Competition Law and Policy Centre, in this exclusive interview.



Director of BRICS Competition Law and Policy Centre in **exclusive interview**:

World economy don'ts BRICS states agree on

IRAN DAILY: How has the rise of BRICS countries reshaped the global economic landscape, and what does this mean for traditional powerhouses like the US and the EU?

IVANOV: The 2023 expansion of BRICS has resulted in new political narratives. These narratives span a spectrum, between perspectives that emphasize the continuity of the existing global order on the one end and those that note the dawn of a new era and the conclusion of a unipolar world on the other.

Up-to-date economic data show a notable shift in the global macro-economy, marked by the rise of BRICS and a relative decline of G7 countries. However, it is a more complex and nuanced picture. In terms of trade, BRICS controls a significant share of the world's crucial resources such as oil, gas, and critical minerals, but the G7 continues to maintain a disproportionate share of global goods and services trade, despite experiencing a gradual decline relative to the BRICS over time. The G7 countries also remain the dominant investor, resulting in their technological superiority and trade advantage. It is evident that the world is changing but in more complex and nuanced ways than what is often portrayed, challenging the oversimplified narratives.

In light of the BRICS countries' efforts to promote the use of local currencies, how might this challenge the US dollar hegemony in global trade?

This could be a milestone in the history of BRICS, an alliance of newly industrialized countries formed in 2001. According to information circulated by the Russian Embassy in Kenya, current BRICS members (i.e. Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, and Ethiopia) have repeatedly expressed their intention to introduce their own cur-

rency. It would be backed by gold and/or other raw materials such as silver or rare earth metals. From the point of view of BRICS states, the creation of their own currency would facilitate international trade. But above all, de-dollarization will make the Global South more independent of the much-weakened reserve currency (the US dollar) and help the emergence of a multipolar world order.

Is BRICS likely to emerge as a major rival to longstanding power blocs such as the G7, and what could be the broader ramifications for international relations and global decision-making?

As the BRICS countries represent the world's majority and strive to preserve and further develop their growing and diverse economies, they are alarmed by a persisting increase of power imbal-

ances and structural inequalities in the global economy. Dominant players, most notably those in the Western world, that abuse their economic power undermine the fragile foundations of the interconnected globalized economic order that is supposed to rest on equality, equity, and the mutual respect of its participants. These abuses suppress healthy competition, hinder the smooth functioning of global markets, and reduce the efficiency and resilience of the global economy. This leads to economic imbalances that directly harm the most vulnerable people in the BRICS countries. Abuse of economic power and crippling monopolization disrupt the smooth functioning of global value chains, create unnecessary bottlenecks and disparity in bargaining positions, deter both innovation and proliferation of technologies, and lead to exploitation of consumers and exclusion of small and

medium-sized entrepreneurs.

Global competition agenda is based on the dominant (Western) narrative, and the BRICS academia is under-represented in the market of ideas often due to the lack of demand for BRICS-focused research. Addressing the current complex reality requires an effective platform for new BRICS thinking and academic research with the aim of adding diversity and new voices to the global market of ideas.

Now that Iran has joined the BRICS bloc, how might this help the Middle Eastern country offset Western sanctions and bolster its economy through increased energy trade and cooperation with key member states like China and Russia?

Iran stands to benefit on two fronts from a future full integration in BRICS: increased legitimacy despite domestic



Alexey Ivanov

unrest and more trade with growing economies. The first benefit provides the Iranian government with diplomatic inclusion in yet another global process from a political standpoint. The second benefit, however, is economic in nature and allows the government to broaden its trade relations with the BRICS member states. This potential would be particularly advantageous if the Iranian government could sell oil at its desired volume. Practically speaking, the US faces a significant challenge in imposing sanctions on several nations once they are engaged in trade with Iran, as BRICS will collectively represent nearly half of the world's population. That being said, the Iranian government also has the potential to boost its oil and non-oil exports to BRICS members.

Russia also has a lot to learn from Iran in overcoming sanctions. In 2023, Prof. Mohammadreza Seyed-Nourani, chairman of the National Competition Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, gave a guest lecture at the BRICS Competition Law and Policy Centre, at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. He noted that the political unity of the country was the foundation of its successful development under sanctions and at the same time emphasized that the protection of competition within Iran is of great importance. Prof. Seyed-Nourani noted that any monopoly limits the capabilities



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (front 2nd-L) poses in a BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 24, 2023, with fellow BRICS leaders and other summit delegates.

of the state. If any structure inside Iran acquires a monopoly position, it can only serve as a source of abuse, and it is very important that the fight against monopolism in Iran is based on the ideas of Islam, which considers competition an important condition for the discovery of the individual.

In what ways does the growth of BRICS affect the strategic alliances and economic partnerships within and beyond the bloc? What are the potential consequences of maintaining the traditional power structures in international relations?

Without healthy competition, market economies run out of steam and lose energy. This happens, as a rule, due to the concentration of market power "in the hands of one" — whether it is the

result of collusion or other monopolizations of markets. Holding all or most of the market power allows privileged market participants to act not according to a competitive, but a monopolistic logic, parasitizing consumers and other participants of economic relations. It cannot be said that the architects of the modern regulation system of the world economy do not understand this. Initially, the design of the World Trade Organization (WTO) contained a universal agreement on the protection of competition in the global economy, similar to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which introduced uniform standards of intellectual property protection for all WTO member countries. Such uniform standards of competition protection at the world

level could well balance the processes of globalization.

The BRICS countries are an interesting group of economies that are united by the fact that, for a number of reasons, they are not members of the "closed clubs" of the "capitalist core" countries. In many ways, they are strangers to the US, the EU, and their closest allies that are still dominant in international affairs. And each country is alien to this close group for different reasons and to different degrees.

The grouping has many differences — economic, social, and geopolitical. However, it is precisely because of their differences that the BRICS countries can agree on what they do not want the world economy to be. And the key word that already unites them on this issue is "multipolarity" — in other

words, the diversity of formats, ways, and means of organizing economic life. What the BRICS countries lack is diversity in global economic life. There are too many rigid forms imposed by the dominant group. Such a struggle for diversity is not very profitable for the dominant actors, as it reduces their monopolistic rents. However, a more diverse, multi-format organization system of the world economy seems to be important for countries that are already capable of competing at the global level but are in a less advantageous position due to this mono-organization of the world economic system.

The chart compares the real GDP growth forecasts of G7 member states (blue) and BRICS member states (orange) for 2024. IMF



BRICS as alternative rule maker in global governance

By **Nabi Somboli**
Senior expert at Institute for Political and International Studies
OPINION

The West, led by the US, has been the main global rule-maker for decades. However, the "Rest" have not been satisfied with the global rules made by the West. In order to address how we must develop an alternative world order, we need to understand the shortcomings of the one which currently exists. The main problems with the present international order are not with its values or institutions, but with how they are practiced and managed. What the US calls a rules-based international order, in practice, has mostly been an order based on US rules and interests, not based on the UN or global rules.

From a strategic point of view, the US+ (by plus I mean the West, in general, and G7, in particular) have divided Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia. After the Cold War, the US and its partners tried to engage Russia economically and in the energy sector in order to stabilise global energy markets; however, they excluded Moscow from European security mechanisms. Russian exclusion and the undermining of its security led to the Ukraine conflict. In the Middle East, they excluded Iran for more than four decades from any mechanism and targeted Tehran using economic, political, and, indirectly, military means. US allies in the Middle East also tried to impose their security costs on the US by engaging Washington in regional and domestic conflicts; consequently, they destabilised the whole region.

"enemies" (who, in fact, do not exist). By outlining "enemies" in regional or global contexts, the US tries to control and influence its allies and partners. Without such an approach, US allies in Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia would be much more interested in pursuing strategic autonomy and independent foreign policies. Manipulating allies and partners helps the US undermine its rivals (Russia, Iran, and China). By concentrating on "threats," the US rivals will not be able to utilise opportunities and realise their economic and strategic potential. Geographically, the US has been far removed from regional and global wars and conflicts. For the US establishment, war is a business by other means. More than 2.5 million people work for MICs in different US states, and ap-

the most important shortcoming. The United States preaches about the rules-based international order, but when we look at the US and its allies' behaviour in Ukraine and the greater Middle East (Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Palestine, etc.), we see that they do not practice what they preach. Violations of human rights, international, and humanitarian laws; occupation, invasion; the development of nuclear weapons; and even committing genocide are all allowed if it is done by the US and/or its allies and partners. Reliance on destructive power and burden-sharing is another shortcoming of the current international order. During the past three decades, the US has not tried enough to engage others (sometimes even its allies) in making

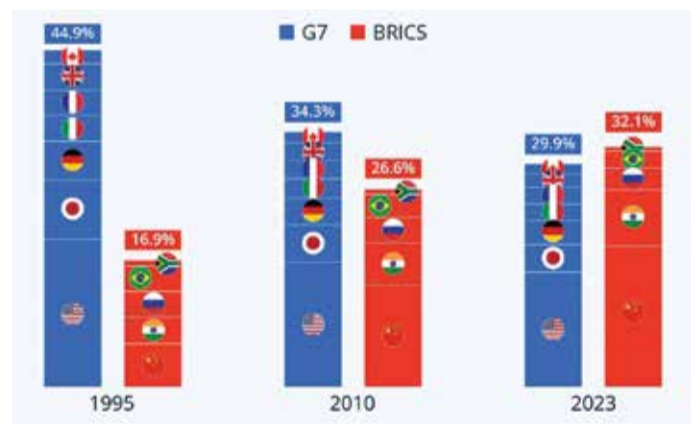
and more to economic and financial sanctions to impose their positions and undermine those who "are not with them". These are some of the shortcomings of the current world order — in fact, disorder — that has made many countries, companies, and societies dissatisfied and interested in looking for alternatives at regional and global levels. The alternative order needs to be globally acceptable and respectable. Such an order should be based more on the UN and global values and interests, including non-intervention, respect for international and humanitarian law and human rights; multi-polarity; indivisible security; peaceful development; peaceful coexistence; opposition to unilateral coercive measures; cultural diversity, etc. These values, sup-

provision of advanced technologies for Ukraine has not helped the country achieve decisive victories on the battlefield. In purchasing power parity terms, the BRICS+ GDP has surpassed that of the G7: in 2023, BRICS' share of global GDP was 32%, while that of the G7 was 29%. Based on IMF statistics, in 2024 emerging markets and developing economies' share of global GDP will be 59%, while the developed economies' share will be 40%. BRICS, in total, has bigger markets and more natural resources, and mostly enjoys younger, educated populations and a greater economic growth rate than advanced, developed countries. Geographically, BRICS+ is more global and more inclusive than G7. Aside from Japan, the G7

mechanism to be able to defend member states, their companies, and other companies that work in/with BRICS member states against the extraterritorial laws and regulations of the US/EU. **Synergy:** The levels of cooperation and coordination among BRICS member states, in comparison with G7, are not sufficient yet. As long as BRICS member states observe US/EU unilateral/multilateral coercive measures against other countries, willingly or not, they strengthen the current US-dominated international order, and the Rest will not regard it as an alternative. **Connectivity:** Connectivity is the third important component of an alternative competitive global governance system. Corridors play a key role in this regard; especially developing corridors



G7 leaders watch a skydiving demo during their summit at Borgo Egnazia, Italy, on June 13, 2024. Felice De Martino/ZUMA



The chart shows the share of the member states of G7 (blue) and BRICS (red) from global GDP at purchasing power parity in 1995, 2010, and 2023 based on IMF estimates as of 2023. IMF WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK



Russian President Vladimir Putin (2nd-L) meets with Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf (2nd-R) on the sidelines of a BRICS parliamentary forum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on July 11, 2024. VALERY SHARIFULIN/POOL

In East Asia, they are doing the same with China. The US benefits from the Chinese market and engages with China economically; however, in order to benefit from China's rising military power, they need to compete with Beijing. That's why, when it comes to security, China is defined as a "threat". Emphasising this Chinese threat helps the US limit Beijing's economic power and influence. There are others who benefit from this approach, too. Construing Russia, Iran, and China as threats helps the US battle its own budget at home, control allies abroad, and undermine rivals. By fabricating "enemies and rivals," it's much easier to over 800-billion-dollar military budgets at home every year and convince the people that "we are defending the country" against

proximately the same number of people work in military-related businesses in countries that are US allies and partners. For that reason, supporting the wars in Ukraine, Gaza, and other regions is a component of America's domestic politics and the war business. Those who benefit from conflicts and instability are not interested in ending them, and it was partly the business aspect of conflicts that prolonged them in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, the Korean peninsula, etc. That's why the US has been engaged in wars around the world more than any other country because the costs are paid by others. Consequently, North America benefits from peace and prosperity, and other parts of the world are engaged in regional and domestic conflicts. Politically, double standards are

important decisions regarding wars and conflicts. The US makes small coalitions and launches war by using its destructive power first and then, Washington tries to organise an international conference for "peace-building" and "burden-sharing"; and whenever others are not ready to cooperate, and/or the conflicts are too costly, the US leaves the conflicts for others to suffer. Afghanistan was the latest case, and it imposed huge costs on the region, especially on Iran. The last, but not least, problem with the US rules-based order is the weaponisation of finance and business as a new tool; it has left many countries, and even Western companies, dissatisfied. Since direct conflicts have become too expensive and Western societies are not interested in paying, the US and its allies have turned more

ported by BRICS member states, are more global and inclusive. However, having common values is not enough. Words should have weight. Are the BRICS member states strong enough to push forward an alternative order based on the UN and global values? Yes. Militarily, almost all BRICS member states are able to defend themselves. There are three nuclear powers among each grouping (the US, the UK, and France in the G7 and Russia, China, and India in BRICS). Although the G7 members may have access to more advanced technologies, these have not helped them win most of the important wars since the Vietnam War. The US failed in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Israel, with all the advanced weapons provided by the US, has not been able to win a war against a small group in Palestine; and NATO's

members are all Western countries, while BRICS ranges from China in the Far East to Brazil in South America and from Russia in the North to South Africa; recently, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt in the centre joined the group. BRICS+ has the capacity to create a global network that is very important in making global rules. However, to play as an alternative rule maker engaged in global governance, there are some shortcomings that BRICS+ needs to find a solution to. Some of them include: **Financial mechanisms:** The US/EU sanctions are effective, I think, mostly because of the effectiveness of existing financial institutions, which force companies and countries alike to comply and sometimes over-comply with them. BRICS needs to develop its own financial and legal

in the regions that the US has less control over, like the Silk Road and the North-South Corridor connecting India as well as the Arab and African countries to Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Russia through Iran. **Comprehensive/indivisible security:** Security cannot be limited to the military and intelligence. Economic, social, and cyber security are also very important; BRICS needs to concentrate and invest more in economic and social development in West Asia, Central Asia, Africa, and South America. By connecting different developing regions around the world, BRICS can really present itself as an alternative rule-maker in global governance, based on UN rules.

The article first appeared on Valdai Club.

Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship:

Iran coach Mo'menimoqaddam hails 'commanding' title run

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Gholamreza Mo'menimoqaddam lavished praise on his team after retaining the crown at the Asian U20 Volleyball Championship in emphatic fashion.

Iran outclassed South Korea in straight sets (25-12, 25-18, 25-22) in Tuesday's final showpiece in Surabaya, Indonesia, for a record-extending eighth trophy – third in succession – in the competition. The game was a second meeting between the tournament's two most-decorated sides after Iran had surrendered a two-set lead but still managed to come out on top in the decider to top Pool F.

"Congratulations to the Iranian people and volleyball family. My players produced a commanding performance in the final. I just have to thank my staff for all the hard work over the past three-and-a-half months. They, along with all coaches in the country, have done an excellent job to help this group of young talents flourish," said Mo'menimoqaddam, who also hailed his players for "showing great determination throughout the event."

Tuesday's title was a third successive major trophy in as many years for Mo'menimoqaddam on Iran's youth team bench, as he also steered the country to the world under-21 crown last year in Manama.

"Thank God we have won two Asian titles and a world crown, not losing a single match, during the three years that I've been in charge of the team. That's only a testament to the potentials and prowess



Iran head coach Gholamreza Mo'menimoqaddam celebrates with his players after winning the title at the Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship in Surabaya, Indonesia, on July 30, 2024.
● PAYAM SANI/volleyball.ir

of Iranian volleyball. We have decent young players who could help the seniors team succeed in the world and Asian events again in the near future," added

the Iranian head coach, whose team made a clean sweep of seven victories – six in straight sets – en route to the title. There were further glories for the Ira-

nian team in the competition, as four of Mo'menimoqaddam's boys walked away with the individual awards. Pouya Aryakhah was named the Most

Valuable Player of the tournament, while Emran Kook-Jili grabbed the Best Setter award, with Taha Behboudnia and Armin Qelichniazi sharing the prize for Best Middle Blocker.

"I'm thrilled to be named the best setter, though the team title was much more valuable than the individual prize for me. I just hope my teammates and I could keep up the good work to find our ways into the seniors' squad," Iranian captain Kook-Jili said.

"South Korea is a decent side and has only been beaten by Iran over the past two years, which is why I they were a bit intimidated by us prior to the game. We had to dig deep for the victory against them in the group stage, but we played with much more hunger today. We began preparation for this event with a champion's mindset since day one," added the Iranian setter.

Behboudnia, meanwhile, was glad to his team "take lessons from the incidents of the previous game against the South Koreans" for the final.

"Their coach tried to drag us into mind games in that game and his behavior cost us in the third and fourth sets. The coaches told us to stay fully focused on our own performance today and that's exactly what happened."

Iranian left-handed outside hitter Aryakhah was full of gratitude for his teammates helping him pick up the MVP award, saying: "I wouldn't have won this, had it not been for their contribution with the best receptions and passes throughout the tournament."



Paris Olympics:

Biles leads U.S. gymnastics team to gold; swimming glory for GB, Australian McKeown

REUTERS – Simone Biles clinched her fifth Olympic gold medal as she made a triumphant return to the women's gymnastics team final at the Paris Games on Tuesday, reinforcing her status as one of the world's greatest athletes just three years after abruptly withdrawing from the same event at the Tokyo Games. Biles, the most decorated gymnast of all-time, earned the United States their fourth Olympic gold in the women's team event with dazzling performances on all four apparatus.

The American has been on what she described as a "redemption tour" at the Paris Games after she shocked a global TV audience by suddenly withdrawing from the team final in Tokyo suffering from the "twisties," a condition involving temporary loss of spatial awareness experienced by gymnasts while performing high-difficulty elements.

The United States finished with a total of 171.296, an impressive 5.802 points ahead of second-placed Italy.

Biles said it was too soon to reflect on her legacy and was surprised to hear from a reporter that she has now won a jaw-dropping 38 world and Olympic medals combined. "I'm doing what I love and enjoying it, that's all that matters to me," she said. "Yes, it's amazing but I don't think I'll truly understand the depth of it until I walk away from the sport."



Simone Biles (C) and her American teammates pose with their gold medals after winning the women's gymnastics team final at the Paris Olympics in Bercy Arena, Paris, France, on July 30, 2024.
● LIONEL BONAVENTURE/AFP

Swimming

Australian dominator Kaylee McKeown crushed Regan Smith to extend her reign over the 100 metres backstroke before Irish trailblazer Daniel Wiffen became his nation's first man to win an Olympic swimming medal with 800m freestyle gold on Tuesday.

Great Britain capped the night session on day four by defending

their men's 4x200 metres freestyle relay crown at a heaving La Defense Arena.

Britain's late triumph was their first gold medal of the Paris swimming meet and condemned the United States to a second straight day without a title.

Instead, Americans had to settle for minor medals in all three events as Australia extended

their lead at the top of the table with four titles to the U.S. team's two.

Three years after driving Australia to a record haul of nine gold medals at Tokyo, the nation's brilliant women have again done all the heavy lifting. Backstroke queen McKeown may well end up the best of the lot, having stared down American rival Regan Smith, the would-

be challenger who snatched her world record weeks before the Games.

She joins teammate Titmus and swimming icons, Ian Thorpe and Dawn Fraser, among Australians with three individual gold medals.

Fencing

Top-ranked Italy silenced a partisan crowd as they claimed the women's epee gold medal by beating arch rivals France 30-29 in a high-octane, sudden-death fencing contest, Juliette Jabkhiro and Julien Pretot report.

Italy's Alberta Santuccio let out a deafening scream as she touched her opponent's arm to guarantee the gold medal as France's Auriane Mallo-Breton, who received raucous backing from the home fans, failed to overturn Italy's one-point lead going into the final leg.

"It was not easy to play in their home. We worked in practice to be ready to have the fans against us. The girls were good at getting past that," Italy coach Dario Chiaido told reporters.

Triathlon

AP – Cassandre Beaugrand of France won the women's Olympic triathlon on Wednesday, making her way through a Seine River that was under scrutiny for its water quality and navigating slick roads that turned the cycling portion into a series of spills.

Her time of 1 hour, 54 minutes, 55 seconds edged Julie Derron of Switzerland by six seconds. Beth Potter of Britain captured bronze.

In the men's race, Alex Yee of Britain held off Hayden Wilde of New Zealand by six seconds to win gold. Leo Bergere earned another medal for France by taking bronze.

Biles, the most decorated gymnast of all-time, said it was too soon to reflect on her legacy and was surprised to hear from a reporter that she has now won a jaw-dropping 38 world and Olympic medals combined. "I'm doing what I love and enjoying it, that's all that matters to me," she said. "Yes, it's amazing but I don't think I'll truly understand the depth of it until I walk away from the sport."

Hamas chief assassinated in airstrike in Tehran

International Desk

Ismail Haniyeh, chief of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, was assassinated in a targeted attack blamed on Israel in the Iranian capital in the wee hours of Wednesday. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in a statement said Haniyeh and one of his bodyguards were assassinated early on Wednesday July 31, 2024 at their accommodation in Tehran as a result of a terrorist act perpetrated by the cowardly and criminal Israeli regime.

The IRGC stated that the late Hamas chief was among the distinguished personalities of about 110 foreign delegations, who had been invited by the Iranian Parliament to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

The IRGC warned Israel of a harsh and stinging response from the forces of the Axis of Resistance, particularly Iran, in retaliation for the assassination of Haniyeh.

"Undoubtedly, the heinous crime committed by the Zionist regime concerning the killing of Ismail Haniyeh, chief

of the political bureau of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, will be met with a harsh and painful response from the powerful Resistance Front, especially the Islamic [Republic of] Iran," the elite force said in a statement released on Wednesday.

According to Iranian media reports, the 2:00 a.m. strike targeted "the special residences for war veterans in north Tehran" where Haniyeh was staying.

Iran declared three days of national mourning for the loss of the Palestinian resistance leader.

An "official and public" funeral ceremony for Haniyeh will be held in Tehran today before his body is flown to Qatar, his base in recent years, for burial on Friday, Hamas said.

Haniyeh, 62, was born in a refugee camp near Gaza City and joined Hamas in the late 1980s during the First Intifada or uprising.

As Hamas grew in power, Haniyeh rose through the ranks and was appointed part of a "collective leadership" in 2004 and reached the Hamas top job in 2017. Three of his sons were killed in an Israeli airstrike on Gaza in April.



International Desk

The assassination of Hamas's Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh drew strong warnings from Iran, with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei vowing of a "harsh response" to Israel. Ayatollah Khamenei said it is the Islamic Republic's duty to

avenge the blood of the Palestinian resistance leader.

The Leader made the remarks on Wednesday, hours after Haniyeh, who had traveled to Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's new president, was killed in a dawn attack in the capital.

"The criminal and terrorist Zionist regime martyred our dear

Avenge of Haniyeh's blood a duty: *Leader* Pezeshkian warns terrorists will regret 'cowardly act'

guest in our homeland and left us bereaved, but it also set the ground for a harsh punishment for itself," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei commended Haniyeh's years-long sacrifices in his fight against the Israeli occupation and said he was ready for martyrdom and sacrificed his children and households on this path.

"He was not afraid of embracing martyrdom in the way of God and saving God's servants, but we consider it our duty to avenge his blood in this bitter and horrific incident that came to pass in the Islamic Republic's

territory," the Leader asserted. Haniyeh was in Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of new Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday. Pezeshkian issued a statement saying Tehran will defend its territorial integrity and dignity. The Islamic Republic of Iran will defend its territorial integrity, honor, dignity and pride, and make the terrorist occupiers regret their cowardly action."

Israel violates int'l law

The Iranian president said Israel's terrorist act violates international law and demands united

action by the world, especially Islamic countries, to deal with this criminal and occupying regime.

"Yesterday, I raised his victorious hand and today I should carry him on my shoulders," Pezeshkian wrote in a message posted on his X account.

"The bond between the two proud nations of Iran and Palestine will be stronger than ever, and the path of resistance and protection of the oppressed will be followed stronger than ever."

Also on Wednesday, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf reacted to the as-

sassination of Haniyeh, saying that the Islamic Republic and the resistance front will avenge the blood of Haniyeh.

"May God have mercy upon the brave leader of the Palestinian resistance, the courageous fighter and wise mentor, protector of the dignity of the resilient Palestinian nation and guardian of Islamic values, martyr of al-Quds, Haj Ismail Haniyeh," Qalibaf said. "The two nations of Iran and Palestine are grieving over this great tragedy together. Iran and the resistance front will avenge the blood of their martyred brother," he added.

Haniyeh targeted killing reverberates across world

International Desk

The assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in a targeted attack in Tehran on Wednesday blamed on Israel has stunned the international community and drew condemnations from many countries, international bodies and figures. Hamas's armed wing said that the assassination of its political leader Ismail Haniyeh would take the war with Israel to "new levels," warning of repercussions for the entire region.

"The criminal assassination of leader Haniyeh in the heart of the Iranian capital is a watershed and dangerous event that takes the war to new levels and will have enormous consequences for the entire region," the Ezzedine al-Qasam Brigades, whose fighters are engaged in fierce battles with Israeli troops in Gaza, said in a statement.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of Yemen's Ansarullah movement's political bureau, called it a "heinous terrorist crime," saying that the assassination is a flagrant violation of laws and

ideal values.

Lebanon's Hezbollah group also condemned the killing of Hamas leader, warning his death will only increase the resolve of resistance groups. "The martyrdom of leader Haniyeh... will increase the determination and stubbornness of the resistance fighters on all fronts... and will make their resolve stronger in confronting the Zionist enemy," Hezbollah said in a statement. The group described Haniyeh as "one of the great resistance leaders of our time who stood bravely against the American hegemony project and the Zionist occupation."

Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas slammed the killing as "a cowardly act and a serious escalation," his office said in a statement.

'Shameful assassination'

Haniyeh was based in Qatar, which has been a mediator in the Gaza conflict, but also spent time in Turkey after going into exile. Qatar's Foreign Ministry called the killing a "heinous crime" and "shameful assassination."

The ministry said, "This assassination and the reckless Israeli behavior of continuously targeting civilians in Gaza will lead to the region slipping into chaos and undermine the chances of peace."

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan condemned what he called the "treacherous assassination" of his "brother" Haniyeh.

"This shameful act aims to sabotage the Palestinian cause, the glorious Gazan resistance and our Palestinian brothers' just fight, and to intimidate Palestinians," Erdogan added in a social media post.

Call for cease-fire

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that the United States was "not aware of or involved in" the killing of Hamas's political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran. "I can't tell you what this means. I can tell you that the imperative of getting a cease-fire, the importance that that has for everyone, remains," Blinken said in an interview with Channel NewsAsia in Singapore.

Germany stressed international calls for restraint to avoid "a regional conflagration," with a foreign ministry spokesman saying, "The logic of tit-for-tat reprisals is the wrong path."

Reactions from Russia, China

Haniyeh went to Moscow in September 2022 for talks on the Israel-Palestinian conflict while Hamas and rival Palestinian faction Fatah held talks in Beijing last week.

"It is a completely unacceptable political assassination, and this will lead to a further escalation of tensions," Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said, "We are highly concerned about the incident and firmly oppose and condemn the assassination."

Threat to West Asia's security

Egypt's Foreign Ministry said that Israel's "dangerous escalation" in recent days "risks igniting a confrontation in

the region that could yield to dire security consequences." Iraq's Foreign Ministry also called Haniyeh's killing "a threat to security and stability in the region." Oman also condemned the action.

Afghanistan's Taliban rulers called Haniyeh's death "a great loss."

Syrian government condemned Haniyeh's assassination, accusing Israel of launching an attack against Iran that constitutes "a violation of international law."

Jordan has accused Israel of the assassination of Haniyeh. Jordan's foreign minister described the assassination as a heinous crime and violation of international law.

The UK Foreign Ministry called for de-escalation and an immediate cease-fire following Haniyeh's assassination. Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered condolences to Haniyeh's "family and the people of Palestine," expressing "serious concern" over "growing Israeli adventurism in the region."

Iraq on Wednesday condemned the killing in Tehran, warning that it threatens the region's

stability. Iraq's Foreign Ministry in a statement described the killing as a "flagrant violation of international law and a threat to security and stability in the region."

Extrajudicial killings

The European Union "has

a principled position of rejecting extrajudicial killings," said Peter Stano, the EU's spokesperson for foreign affairs and security policy.

He said the EU was closely following developments around the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh.



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Iron age footprint discovered in Markazi Province



Arts & Culture Desk

The deputy head of cultural heritage of the Markazi Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department announced the discovery of Iron Age pottery shards during an excavation at the historic Alishar Hill site. According to Hossein Mahmoudi, the one-hectare site, which was examined for the first time, used

to be a mud-brick castle that has now turned into a 27-meter-high hill, ILNA wrote. "The excavation, led by archaeologist Alireza Goudarzi, was carried out to determine the boundaries of the historic site, and maps of the area have been prepared," Mahmoudi explained. The pottery shards uncovered during the excavation indicate that the site was inhabited during the Iron Age. It is be-

lieved that the settlement was abandoned in the late Zandiyeh period and fell into disrepair in the early Qajar era. With an apparent area of 40,000 square meters, Alishar Hill is located in the Kharghan district of Zarandieh county and is a settlement dating back to the Islamic period. This valuable site was registered on Iran National Heritage List in the year 2001 with the number 5614.

Iran's Dramatic Arts Center, ECO Cultural Institute to expand collaboration

Arts & Culture Desk

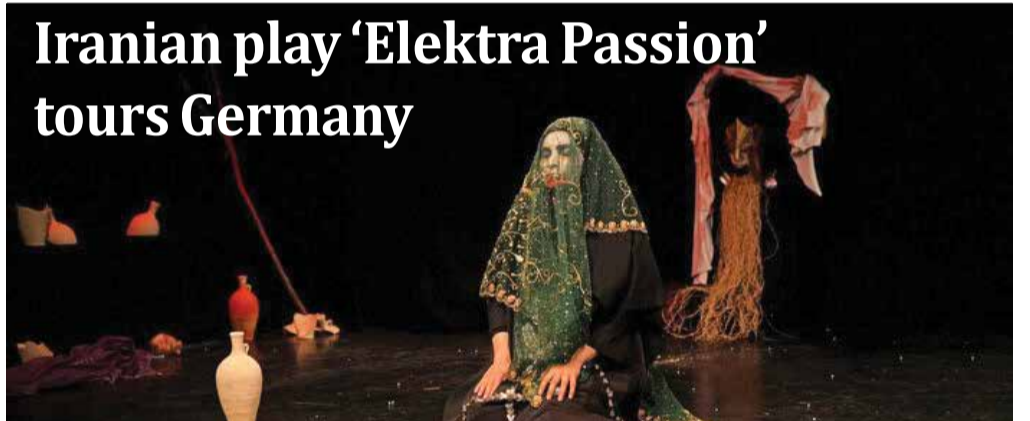
Iran's Dramatic Arts Center and the ECO Cultural Institute held a meeting to discuss potential collaboration and invite theatre groups from ECO member countries to participate in Iran's international theatre festivals. The meeting was attended by Hamid Nili, Director-General of Iran's Dramatic Arts Center, Saad S. Khan, Director of the ECO Cultural Institute, Tohid Masoumi, Senior Advisor to Iran's Dramatic Arts Center, and Mojgan Vakili, Head of International Affairs for Iran's Dramatic Arts Center, IRNA wrote.

Nili emphasized the potential for

bilateral cooperation, including inviting theatre groups from ECO member countries to participate in Iran's prestigious theatre festivals such as the International Theatre Festival, the Children and Adolescents Theatre Festival, the Puppet Theatre Festival, and the Street Theatre Festival. He also highlighted opportunities for joint projects with theatre groups from ECO countries and the potential for Iranian theatre groups to participate in international festivals in ECO member states. Saad S. Khan expressed his commitment to facilitating the participation of professional theatre groups from ECO countries, particularly at the 43rd Fajr Interna-

tional Theatre Festival. He emphasized that since his presence in Iran over the past year, he has been working to expand the cultural and artistic activities of the institute across various art forms, including theatre, music, and visual arts. The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to mutually support and promote cultural and artistic exchanges, ensuring the presence of countries such as Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan at future festivals and cultural events in Iran, with the collaboration of the ECO Cultural Institute.

Iranian play 'Elektra Passion' tours Germany



Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian play 'Elektra Passion,' directed by Farzad Amini, got kudos in Germany and after three successful performances from June 28 to 30 at the Brotfabrik Bühne in Berlin, the play is now gearing up for the renowned Darmstadt Theater Festival. 'Elektra Passion,' which previ-

ously played at the Tehran City Theater Complex in 2022, explores the dark depths of human existence and the capacity for cruelty and evil. In his director's notes, Amini describes the play as a statement on the "domino effect of bloodshed on the human spirit, country, and family." Born on March 21, 1977, Amini holds a Ph.D. in philosophy and

has authored works on Hegel's philosophy and dramaturgy. 'Elektra Passion' marks his third foray into European theater, following performances in Greece and Italy. In 2019, he was invited to attend Eugenio Barba's rehearsals at the Odin Theater in Denmark, showcasing his growing reputation in the world of theater.

Four Iranian films set to be screened in Zanzibar

Arts & Culture Desk

Four Iranian films, including one feature and three shorts, are set to be showcased at the 27th Zanzibar International Film Festival, known as ZIFF, in Africa. The Zanzibar International Film Festival, the largest and

most prestigious film festival in East Africa, will feature the Iranian feature film 'Killing a Traitor' by renowned director Masoud Kimiai, along with three short films: 'Nietzsche-Style Suicide' by Payam Kurdestani, 'Side by Side' by Amir Raisian, and 'Footprint' by Mostafa Alami, ISNA wrote.

The festival, taking place from August 1 to 4, 2024, in the historic Stone Town of Zanzibar, Tanzania, is a prominent platform for African and international cinema. The festival is one of the largest multidisciplinary art and culture festivals in East Africa. Each year, it showcases over

150 films from the continent, along with selections from the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, the US, and Asia. Founded in 1997, ZIFF aims to promote and develop the film industry in Africa while inspiring and uniting global audiences through the magic of cinema and other cultural industries,

serving as a catalyst for social and economic growth. The festival strives to provide a platform for African and international filmmakers to showcase their work, encourage and support the development of the film industry in Africa, and foster cultural exchange and dialogue through art.



Social Desk

First of its kind NURSING CAREX to spotlight Iran's healthcare innovations

The first-ever exhibition of nursing care equipment and patient, elderly, and childcare in Iran and the Middle East is set to take place in Tehran, showcasing the country's advancements in healthcare and the vital role of nurses. The Nursing CareEx (NURSING CAREX) exhibition and scientific seminar, organized in collaboration with the Nursing Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran and Saba Nik Fater Company, will be held from November 5 to 8 at Tehran's Olympic Hotel, coinciding with Nurses' Week, IRNA wrote. Highlighting the significance of

the event, Ahmad Nejatian, Head of the Nursing Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran, said, "This exhibition will be the first of its kind in Iran and the Middle East, showcasing the economic power of nursing and the importance of the equipment nurses use to serve the public." Emphasizing the changing landscape of healthcare, Nejatian added, "The focus on in-home care underscores the growing importance of this sector. With the

aging population and the shift in disease patterns, home care will soon rival hospitals in terms of patient volume and services provided." The exhibition aims to elevate the status of nurses and expand the scope of nursing services in Iran. It will also showcase the latest innovations in nursing care equipment and provide a platform for knowledge exchange through scientific programs and seminars.

Hessam Goudarzi, CEO of Saba Nik Fater Company, emphasized the economic and cultural impact of the nursing profession, stating, "There are 300,000 nurses in Iran, and their role during the COVID-19 pandemic brought their contributions to the forefront. With the growing emphasis on home care and an aging population, new markets for nursing services are emerging, shaping the future of the healthcare market." The exhibition will bring together

er companies specializing in various nursing equipment groups, creating a dedicated platform to showcase their capabilities and connect with both domestic and international attendees. Manouchehr Jamali, Secretary of the Policy Council of the first exhibition, emphasized the potential for nursing to gain more ground in the future regarding job opportunities, income, and reputation. He stressed the need to enhance

the quality of nursing services to elevate the profession's prestige. The event also aims to foster collaboration between the nursing community and the Nursing Organization, ultimately elevating nurses to their rightful position in society. Qassem Sadeghi, a member of the Policy Council of the first NURSING CAREX in Iran, emphasized the importance of teamwork in the healthcare sector. He believes that the exhibition and its accompanying scientific events will strengthen teamwork among healthcare personnel while providing valuable updates for nurses through seminars and scientific programs.