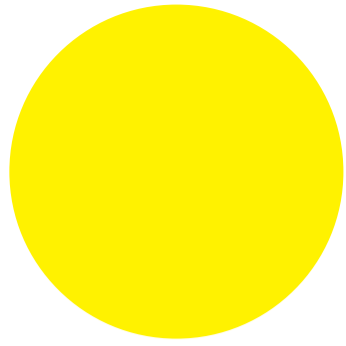




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Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq (2nd R) holds in solidarity the hand of a woman in tears, who lost her father after an explosion hit a coal mine in eastern Iran in September. Sadeq was part of a delegation, headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf (1st left), that visited the city of Tabas on October 31 to pay respect to more than 50 victims of the deadly work incident.

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CBI to launch 'soon' new system for forex market

Economy Desk

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced that a new system for forex market will begin soon in the near future.

Mohammadreza Farzin added that according to the CBI plan, the new system will determine foreign exchange rates for every currency in a mechanism agreed by forex suppliers and the clients, ISNA wrote.

He emphasized that the exchange rate in the market will be specified by the mechanism of supply and demand, and the CBI will offer part of its forex in that market as efforts will be made to make the exchange rate move in a single channel.

"With the start of the new forex market system, the possibility of currency exchange will be provided to all economic actors," the governor added. "The CBI will assume the role of supervisor in the market, and will only intervene in the market as a supplier of currency if necessary, implementing its policies."

Farzin referred to the CBI's policy on forex as a "floating rate," stressing that a floating rate does not mean the currency market is uncontrolled. "Central banks in all countries use economic tools to control and manage floating rates, as we will not be an exception in this issue," he noted.

Emirates, Turkish Airlines resume Iran flights

Foreign airlines of Emirates and Turkish resumed their flights from Tehran-based Imam Khomeini International Airport, according to the head of Public Relations Office of the Imam Khomeini Airport City on Friday.

Ahoura Mohammadi told ISNA that Turkish Airlines resumed its Iran flights from Friday as Emirates Airlines has also started anew regular flights on the Tehran-Dubai route and vice versa as of Thursday.

The flights had been previously suspended due to tensions caused by the Israeli aggression on Gaza and its spillover effects on the region which made the flight routes unsafe.

The airlines have ensured that all necessary precautions and safety measures are in place for the convenience and safety of their passengers.

Iran weaned off wheat imports despite sanctions: *Minister*

Economy Desk

Iran's minister of agriculture announced on Friday that the country has become self-sufficient in wheat output, eliminating the need for wheat imports.

Gholamreza Nouri-Qezeljah added that the government has purchased 12 million tons of wheat from farmers across the country this year. "However, the actual wheat production in the country is far more than the number," he added, ISNA reported.

He called on Parliament to support the Agriculture Ministry in securing the purchase guarantee of agricultural products, including wheat, in the coming years.

"The government and Ministry of Agriculture pay at-

tention to the problems of farmers and are working to provide the necessary support to facilitate the further development of the agriculture sector," the minister stated.

Emphasizing the importance of food security and agriculture, Nouri-Qezeljah noted that his ministry will carefully monitor its plans in this sector.

Referring to the purchase price of 20,500 tomans for per kilo of wheat, the minister said efforts have been made to set a reasonable price for the guaranteed purchase of wheat in the next year.

The import price of wheat and the total cost of production are main factors for determining the figure for purchasing domestic wheat, he stated, adding that the import price of

15,000 tomans for a kilogram of wheat led to putting the figure for guaranteed purchase of the product at 20,500 tomans in the coming Iranian year. Pointing to the water scarcity across the country, Nouri-Qezeljah urged optimal use of water resources and said, "Reforming and implementing the pattern of cultivation and developing greenhouses is a necessity for Iran."

Iran's self-sufficiency in wheat production has been a result of balanced use of pesticides, promotion of modern irrigation systems, increased use of genetically modified seeds and increasing the area under mechanized cultivation.

Khuzestan, Kurdistan and Golestan were ranked among the first Iranian



provinces in terms of producing wheat.

Iran's self-sufficiency in wheat production, while providing food security, has positive security and political upshots. The country is the target of intensified sanctions which

often hit the people's means of sustenance in the most difficult times.

Iranians are among the biggest consumers of bread in the world, where households draw 47% of their daily calorie from wheat products. They ac-

count for 1% of the world population but consume roughly 2.5% of wheat churned out worldwide. There are around 350 operational flour mills in the country with a milling capacity of 24 tons per annum.

Tehran, Caracas sign two MoUs on telecommunications



Economy Desk

Two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were signed in Caracas on Friday, on the sidelines of a meeting between Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Sattar Hashemi and Venezuelan Electricity Minister Jorge Márquez.

Speaking at the meeting, the Iranian minister said Iranian companies that have voiced their readiness to cooperate

with the friendly nation of Venezuela are among the best companies in Iran, according to ict.gov.ir.

Referring to the recent meeting between Iran and Venezuela on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia's Kazan, he emphasized the Iranian government's policy, which supports the private sector and the promotion of joint cooperation between Tehran and Caracas.

Speaking for his part,

Márquez said relations between Iran and his country are being strengthened every day, given the visions of the presidents of both countries. The Venezuelan minister went on to say that there is a lot of work that we can do together in the fields of telecommunications and energy.

Hashemi arrived in Caracas on Friday to boost Iran's tech diplomacy in his Latin America visit.

The minister visited the South American country of Venezuela and Caribbean region to hold high-profile talks with Venezuelan vice-president and head of the Communication Regulatory Authority and also the vice-president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for boosting bilateral cooperation in the relevant field.

Facilitating and expanding cooperation between private companies of the two countries in the field of telecom-

munications and information technology is one of the important topics between the Iranian ICT minister and his Venezuelan counterpart.

"We believe that by utilizing the capacities of the Ministry of ICT, the Vice Presidency of Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy as well as other departments of Iran, we can expand our cooperation, especially in the areas of communication and IT, with Venezuela," Hashemi said upon his arrival at Caracas.

Paving the way for the supply of telecommunications equipment to companies in Venezuela, and the signing of an agreement to establish a fiber optic factory in the Latin American country are other objectives of the visit to Caracas, the minister added.

In addition, Iran's ICT minister will travel to Cuba to ink a MoU between Tehran and Havana regarding the postal cooperation which can boost the volume of postal exchange-

es between the two countries to a great extent.

He will also pay a visit to the 40th Havana ICT Exhibition 2024 which will be held with the participation of Iranian companies and more than 50 countries across the world. Hashemi said in September that Iranian private companies are ready to exchange experiences in Cuba.

He made the remarks at an online meeting with his Cuban counterpart Mayra Arevich Marin.

During the talks, the Iranian minister said that Iran and Cuba are expanding their cooperation in various fields of communications and information technology.

He called for reviewing of previous MoUs signed between the two countries in the realm of communication and information technology.

Arevich Marin, for her part, emphasized the strengthening of relations between the two countries in various fields.

Iran to construct 14 power plants to prevent electricity cuts: *MP*

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

Iran will add a sum of 14 power plants to its electricity grid to prevent power cuts during the hot months of the next year, said a member of Parliament's Energy Committee.

Reza Sepahvand told Iran Daily that over 3,600 MW will be added to the country's electricity generation capacity by launching the new power stations, which are expected to help the country to face no outages next year. Referring to the need to develop renewable energy, Sepahvand said renewable energy is developing rapidly in the world but it is not well-developed in our country.

In the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (2024-28), special attention has been paid to the

development of renewable energies, the lawmaker stated.

"In the budget bill of next Iranian calendar year of 1404 (to start March 21, 2025), the government has allocated proper credits to the development of renewable energies, and on the other hand, the Energy Committee of the Parliament along with the Ministry of Energy is determined to achieve the development goals in the renewable energy sector," he noted.

The parliamentarian went on to say that our country, especially in the field of solar electricity production, enjoys very good capacities, so that in most parts of Iran, solar energy can be used for electricity production, provided that the Ministry of Energy purchases the electricity produced by the private sector in time or allow private sector producers to export their elec-

tricity output.

Last summer, the amount of electricity shortage reached 17,000 MW during peak consumption days, he said, adding that the figure is expected to be lowered to zero next year thanks to the plans of the Ministry of Energy.

Iran is developing and the country's need for electricity consumption in the residential, industrial and agricultural sectors, is increasing day by day, and therefore the country's electricity needs must be met from various sources, whether from combined-cycle power plants or hydroelectric power stations, Sepahvand said, calling for expediting the process of constructing power plants.

He went on to say that, in the meantime, we should make ef-



orts to compensate for the electricity shortages through renewable energy, which is both more economical and cleaner.

If we work on the culture of energy consumption in Iran, we can prevent a large part of ener-

gy wastage, the lawmaker stated. He stressed that electricity is used for lights during the daytime in many offices while sufficient light is available through the windows of the building, so electricity consumption increases due to a lack of attention to these issues.

Ecological significance of Soharin Plain in Zanzan Province



● hamdelizanzan.ir

Iranica Desk

The beautiful Soharin Plain in Zanzan Province is regarded as one of the most significant environmental regions in the country. This plain has the potential to attract numerous domestic and international tourists in the ecotourism sector. It serves as a habitat for valuable animal species, notably the stunning Iranian gazelles.

Geographic features

The Soharin Plain spans approximately eleven kilometers and is situated at an altitude of 1,650 meters above sea level. The average slope of the plain in its southwestern part reaches

two to three percent. The total area of Soharin is about 30,000 hectares.

Climate conditions

The climate of this region is classified as cold and dry, with an average annual temperature of around 10 degrees Celsius and relative humidity of about 71 percent.

Ecological importance

One of the primary reasons for designating the Soharin Plain as a protected area is its role as a habitat for migratory species. During the summer, the plain hosts a large number of Iranian gazelles, which can be observed scattered across the area from June to De-

cember each year. These gazelles represent the last survivors of the Iranian *Gazella subgutturosa* in the northwest of the country.

Protected status

The plain is part of the Sorkhabad Protected Area, located about 40 kilometers away, and lies within the district of the village of Soharin, close to Zanzan Airport.

Flora and fauna

The highlands of the Soharin Plain are home to edible mushrooms, rhubarb, wild artichokes, savory, thyme, and a variety of medicinal and edible plants. Every year, residents from surrounding villages visit

the Soharin Plain to collect these valuable plants. In addition to gazelles, various other animal species can be found in this vast and beautiful plain, including wolves, jackals, foxes, wild boars, rabbits, numerous larks, golden eagles, kestrels, owls, and many more.

Conservation efforts

In 1978, the Department of Environment recognized the significance of this plain as a natural habitat for various animal species and decided to protect the area. However, the expansion of roads, cities, residential areas, and power and gas transmission lines has disrupted the migra-

tory routes of these gazelles, increasing the likelihood of their extinction and hunting. Consequently, in February 1979, the Soharin Plain was designated as part of the Sorkhabad Protected Area, managed by the Department of Environment.

Population decline

As of the last census in October 2017, only 1,105 gazelles were counted in the Soharin region, indicating a declining trend compared to several decades earlier. In 1979, the population of these migratory gazelles exceeded three thousand, but by 2021, it had dropped to below one thousand. This gradual decline in the ga-

zelle population serves as an environmental warning for the area.

Challenges to conservation

Agricultural development in the Soharin Plain has placed the Iranian gazelle's habitat at risk. Unauthorized land-use changes and shifts in cropping patterns have prompted the gazelles to migrate toward the hunting-prohibited area of Fileh Khasseh, located at the end of the Sorkhabad region. Furthermore, the presence of hunters, livestock herds, overgrazing, the drilling of numerous wells, and increased agricultural machinery activity have deprived the gazelles

of the peace and security they once enjoyed in their natural habitat.

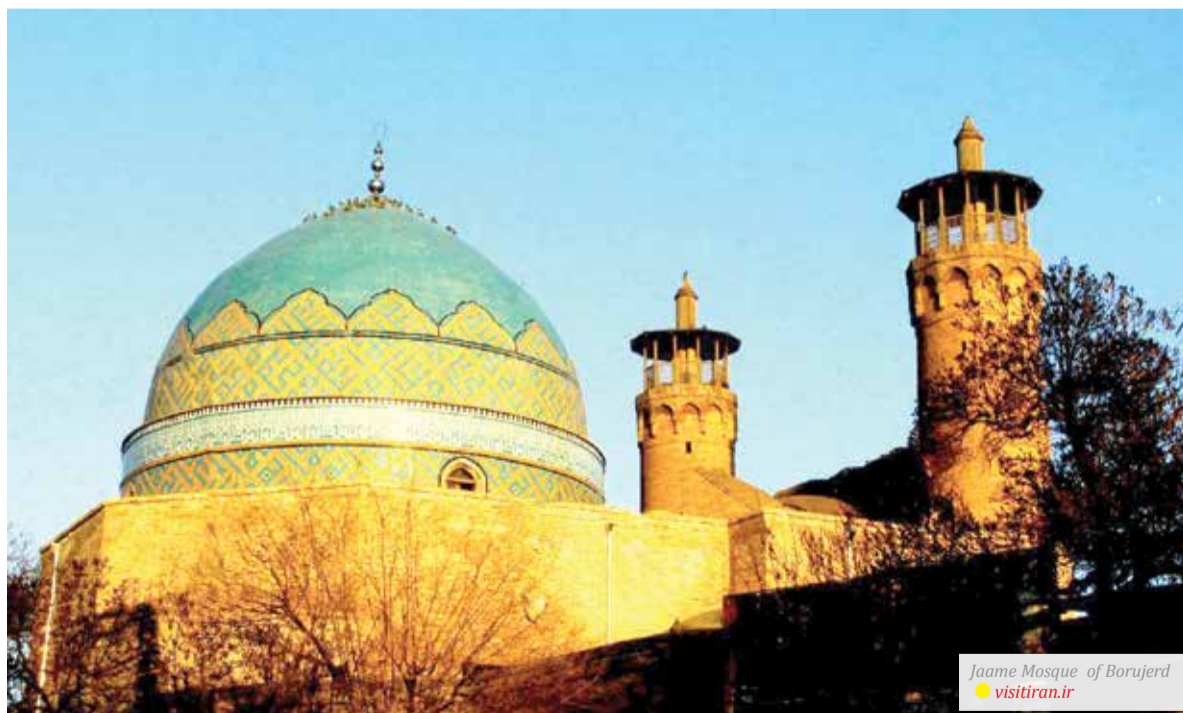
Visiting guidelines

Given that the Soharin Plain is within a protected area and considering the risk of extinction of the Iranian gazelle, it is advisable to coordinate with the regional environmental organization before traveling to this area and to obtain any necessary permits if required. In light of the significance of the Soharin Plain and the valuable Iranian gazelle species, please help maintain the tranquility and silence of the area during your visit, and avoid leaving any traces in this natural habitat.

Discovering historical and natural treasures of Borujerd

Iranica Desk

The city of Borujerd in Lorestan Province is home to over 200 historical structures, which include unique houses, baths, bazaars, mosques, gardens, and garden mansions. Mehdi Goudarzi, the head of the city's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, announced that most of these monuments, which have been registered on Iran's National Heritage List, are situated within Borujerd's historical fabric. He emphasized that these sites can be utilized to promote urban tourism in the city. Borujerd features the most extensive historical fabric in the country, covering more than 280 hectares in the central and eastern regions of the city. Goudarzi highlighted that the significant sites, such as the shrines of Imamzadeh Jafar (PBUH) and Imamzadeh Qasem (PBUH), as well as Imam Khomeini Mosque and Jaame Mosque, are part of this rich historical landscape. Thanks to the Islamic-Iranian architectural style of its ancient buildings, Borujerd is re-



Jaame Mosque of Borujerd
● visitiran.ir

garded as one of the most historically significant cities in Iran, successfully preserving its heritage, chtn.ir wrote.

Most artifacts discovered in the region date back to the Qajar era and earlier. Among its historical treasures is the exquisite residence of Ayatollah

Borujerdi, a prominent leader in Shia Islam during the 1930s and 1940s. The Jaame Mosque of Borujerd, an architectural masterpiece commissioned by Fat'hali Shah Qajar, stands as a symbol of the city's cultural heritage. Resembling the famous mosque in Tehran, it captivates vis-

itors with its splendor. Adjacent to the majestic Jaame Mosque, the bustling bazaar of Borujerd continues to thrive, blending timeless tradition with modernity. This vibrant market is a haven of exquisite craftsmanship, showcasing renowned traditional arts such as knife-making

and woodcarving, earning the city the title of Iran's woodcarving capital. Every corner of the bazaar offers a visual feast, providing insights into the captivating traditions that have endured through the ages. Iran is filled with magnificent destinations for autumn tourism, each



Shrine of Imamzadeh Jafar
● wikipedia.org



Bazaar of Borujerd
● salameno.com

possessing its own unique charm that deserves individual attention. Without careful consideration, the harsh chill of winter or the exhausting heat of summer could overshadow the joy of your journey. Borujerd, located at the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, is one such destination. The

onset of autumn offers an ideal opportunity to immerse yourself in the enchanting sunshine, vibrant nature, and rich historical and cultural heritage of the area. Should you encounter autumn rain during your visit, you'll carry home a priceless experience from this remarkable journey.

Lebanese Americans in Michigan feel abandoned by Democrats



By **Abdelhalim Abdelrahman**
Palestinian-American analyst

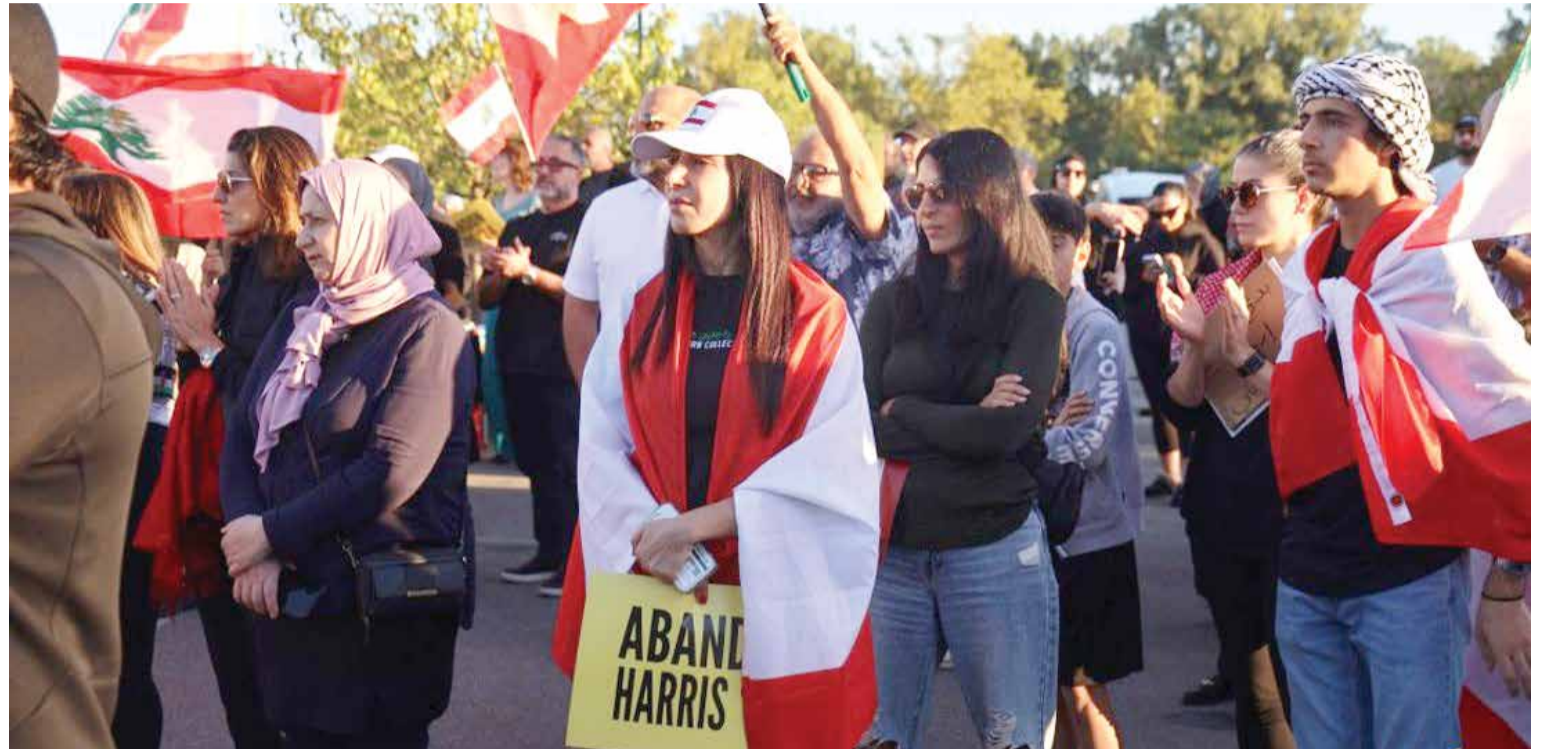
OPINION

As Israel expands its military campaign in southern Lebanon amid escalating conflict in the Middle East, a Lebanese American community in a key swing state could

leave its mark on this year's US election.

Michigan — where Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump are polling neck and neck — is home to more than 82,000 Lebanese Americans, including nearly 23,000 in the city of Dearborn. Most have roots in Lebanon's south, and they are no strangers to conflict: Some are the children of parents to immigrated to Michigan after Israel's invasion and occupation in 1982, while others fled the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War.

Lebanese Americans in Dearborn say that this latest round of conflict is different. There has never been an active interstate war involving Lebanon during a US presidential election, and their fear and anger about the situation will shape their decisions when they vote on November 5. This month, large demonstrations in support of Lebanon and against US military aid to Israel took place in Dearborn. Protesters carried signs criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as Harris and US President Joe Biden.



In August, Arab Americans in Michigan told Foreign Policy that they did not see a difference between Harris and Trump on the issue of Palestine; they now echo a similar sentiment regarding the crisis in Lebanon. Democratic Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud, 34, whose family hails from southern Lebanon, said that Israel's recent campaign has affected much of the community personally — including his own family. "People in our community ask themselves, 'Who in our family has been killed today?'" Hammoud said in early October.

"People in the city are attending funerals [to honor people who died in Lebanon] daily now. Lebanese American families are being carpet-bombed and killed by Israeli forces indiscriminately. All this stems from the fact that our government refuses to put its foot down and end this war, which would end tomorrow with a phone call," Hammoud said.

Arab Americans in Michigan have broadly shifted away from the Democratic Party this year, driven by what they see as US complicity in the suffering of Palestinian, and now Lebanese, civilians. During the Michigan Democratic primary, more than 100,000 people voted uncommitted in protest of the Biden administration's unwavering commitment to Israel. In the months since, the Uncommitted Movement has remained steadfast in advocating for an arms embargo on Israel and a seat at the table with the Democrats. Neither effort has borne any fruit: The Democratic National Convention declined to put a Palestinian American speaker on

stage in August, and the Harris campaign did not meet the Uncommitted Movement's demand for an in-person meeting with its leaders before September 15.

As a result, the Uncommitted Movement has refused to endorse Harris, Trump, or a third-party candidate. "Harris's unwillingness to shift to a conditional weapons policy or to even make a clear statement in support of upholding existing US and international human rights law has made it impossible for us to endorse her," said Abbas Alawieh, an Uncommitted Movement leader and Michigan electoral delegate. He emphasized that the movement did not recommend voting for a third-party candidate and thus likely delivering Trump a victory in Michigan.

The Abandon Harris movement (formerly Abandon Biden) has taken a different approach, explicitly endorsing Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein. According to a survey conducted in late August by the Council on American Islamic Relations, Stein is polling at 40 percent among Arab Americans in Michigan, followed by Trump at 18 percent and Harris at 12 percent.

In the closing weeks of the campaign, both Harris and Trump have engaged in a tug-of-war over Arab American and Muslim votes. Speaking in Waterford Township, Michigan, on October 18, Harris said, "I know this year has been very difficult given the scale of death and destruction in Gaza and given the civilian casualties and displacement in Lebanon. It is devastating." However, the fact that she did not explicitly acknowledge that it

was Israeli bombings with US weaponry that had caused such devastation in both Gaza and Lebanon rankles some Arab American voters.

Meanwhile, Trump has gone on the offensive. He has touted an endorsement from Yemeni American Mayor Amer Ghalib of Hamtramck, Michigan, and attacked Harris's endorsement from former Rep. Liz Cheney and former Vice President Dick Cheney, an architect of the Iraq War, both Republicans.

Polling now indicates that nationally, Arab Americans slightly favor Trump over Harris. In Michigan — which has only gone for a Republican presidential candidate thrice in the past 50 years, in 1984, 1988, and 2016 — polling averages show Harris with a less than 1 percent lead.

Rana — who lives in Dearborn but hails from Saida, Lebanon, where many displaced people have sought refuge from bombardment this month — said that she had lost dozens of family members since Israel's campaign in southern Lebanon began. She fears an Israeli reoccupation of Lebanon, recalling vividly the fallout of the 2006 war. (Rana requested a pseudonym out of concern for workplace retaliation and her family's safety in Lebanon.)

Rana expressed frustration and anger at the Biden administration, saying that she would not vote for Harris or Trump on November 5. "A family of 17 that I knew was killed outside their house when their children were outside playing. It all happened so quickly. I will not support either party — they are both complicit in the



People rally in solidarity with the Lebanese people, who are under Israeli bombardment, in front of the Dearborn Police Station, Michigan, in early October 2024.
● dearborn.org



The fact that Harris did not explicitly acknowledge that it was Israeli bombings with US weaponry that had caused such devastation in both Gaza and Lebanon rankles some Arab American voters. Meanwhile, Trump has gone on the offensive. He has touted an endorsement from Yemeni American Mayor Amer Ghalib of Hamtramck, Michigan, and attacked Harris's endorsement from former Rep. Liz Cheney and former Vice President Dick Cheney, both Republicans.



Green Party presidential nominee Jill Stein (3rd-R) attends a rally in Dearborn, Michigan, on October 6, 2024, receiving endorsement by the Abandon Harris campaign, a Michigan-based Muslim group.
● NIC ANTAYA/NYT

crimes against Lebanon," she said. "When we see Democrats support the onslaught in Lebanon, it sends the message that we as Arab Americans are not seen."

The Lebanese American community in Dearborn is tight-knit: Rana said that she attended high school with Nadine Jawad, the daughter of Kamel Jawad, a US citizen and surgeon who was killed in Lebanon by an Israeli air strike while aiding injured Lebanese civilians on October 1. Other members of the community characterized his death as a direct result of US negligence in the Middle East.

Hammoud, the Dearborn mayor, said that many of his city's Lebanese and Arab American voters feel betrayed by the Biden administration for its support of Netanyahu as regional conflict deepens. There is a "feeling of betrayal in the sense that our government seems to have unlimited resources to supply bombs but not enough resources to address the domestic issues we have here," he said. "But there is also betrayal in the sense that the Democratic Party, a party that Arabs have been loyal to for two decades now, has abandoned them."

Israel's ongoing campaign in southern Lebanon has only compounded criticism of the Biden administration as the election approaches: Lebanese Americans in Michigan have continued to speak out against the White House's unwillingness to impose an arms embargo on Israel. And the issue could end up costing Harris votes in more states than Michigan. Polling from the IMEU Policy Project suggests that withholding weapons to Israel would help her win over independents in Arizona, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. Mohamad, another Dearborn local who requested to go by his first name out of safety concerns, said that many people in the Lebanese American community have become indifferent toward the US election amid Israel's campaign in Lebanon. "For me, I won't be voting in this upcoming election. Neither candidate is good. A lot of people in Dearborn, especially Lebanese, feel they are doomed no matter which they vote, so they may stay home instead," he said.

"It hurts so much to see your countrymen die this way, and it hurts even more to know that I am here in the United States while this very country is responsible for what's happening in both Lebanon and Palestine," Mohamad said. "South Lebanon will be on the ballot come November."

The article first appeared on Foreign Policy.



Wake-up call for Kamala Harris from Muslim, Arab Americans

A pro-Palestinian demonstrator tears down posters of Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic National Convention takes place in Chicago on August 21, 2024.
● JOSHUA LOTT/THE WASHINGTON POST

By Shadi Hamid
Author, columnist
OPINION

The fracture between Muslims and Arab Americans and the Democratic Party has reached a breaking point. If recent surveys are any indication, most will not be voting for Kamala Harris, suggesting a stark shift just years after they had become a key Democratic Party constituency during the Trump years. In a survey of Muslim voters, 29.4 percent say they plan to back Harris, leaving her virtually tied with Green Party candidate Jill Stein, while a survey of primarily religious and college-educated Muslim voters put Harris's support at 14 percent. Meanwhile, 42 percent of Arab Americans intend to vote for the Democratic nominee. These figures are a far cry from the large majorities that voted for Joe Biden in 2020. Something has changed. In my conversations with Arabs and Muslims across the country, the mood has become dark and despairing. They see how the Democratic Party has ignored the preferences of its own members, 77 percent of whom believe the United States should not send weapons to Israel.

Leading Democrats acknowledge the devastation inflicted on Gaza but in the same breath appear unwilling to do anything about it. In a recent interview, former House speaker Nancy Pelosi did the rhetorical equivalent of shrugging her shoulders, saying "death is sad" and suggesting that Arab Americans should be grateful that Democrats "flocked to their protection" after Donald Trump proposed his Muslim travel ban. Initially, it seemed Harris could distance herself from Biden's uncritical embrace of Israel's assault on Gaza. At a campaign event early in the war, Biden had acknowledged Israel's bombing was "indiscriminate" yet chillingly also said, "We're not going to do a damn thing other than protect Israel." As vice president, Harris has struck a different tone, speaking out on several occasions about inhumane conditions in Gaza. But a series of missteps squandered the goodwill she might have had. The problems started during the Democratic National Convention in August. Democrats adopted a big tent approach, featuring a roster of Republican speakers on the main stage. But the tent was only so large. The Uncommitted movement had lobbied for a Palestinian American or a doctor who had volunteered in Gaza to address the convention. The final push was to have Georgia state Rep. Ruwa Romman speak. Her prepared remarks were fairly innocuous, expressing enthusiastic support for Harris while highlighting the need for a cease-fire and freeing Israeli captives

and Palestinian prisoners. Romman's snub showed how sensitive the Harris campaign is to even mild expressions of support for the human rights of Palestinians. During Harris's good vibes moment, it was easy to imagine the Middle East receding into the background. But then on October 1, Israel launched its invasion of Lebanon, which has killed more than 2,700 and forced over one-fifth of residents to flee their homes. Democrats are now in the awkward position of explaining why a war that they hoped would be over has expanded, waged by a close ally that receives billions of dollars of American military aid. The complicity of Biden and Harris in two wars that have deliberately targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure has become hard to deny. Despite public notes of concern, senior administration officials green-lit the invasion of Lebanon. The United States' continued support comes as Israel blocks humanitarian access, with the amount of aid coming into Gaza in September "the lowest of any month during the last year," according to the administration's own assessments. All of this has made it impossible for Muslim and Arab voters to proceed as though this is just another election. I feel it too. The United States speaks out and takes action when mass atrocities are committed against civilians in other conflicts. But not, it seems, in the Middle East. For decades, the United States has funded and armed Arab dictators that deny the most basic rights to their people. An undercurrent of disdain toward the people of the region has been a mainstay of Democratic and Republican administrations alike, even the ones that were supposed to be better. Barack Obama was known to privately joke, "All



I need in the Middle East is a few smart autocrats" while wondering aloud why people in the Middle East couldn't just "be like the Scandinavians". The devastation of Gaza has confirmed for many Arabs and Muslims what they may have only previously suspected: They are not viewed as equal or equally deserving of dignity. Arab and Muslim lives are expendable. As writer Lina Mounzer put it: "Ask any Arab what the most painful realization of the last year has been and it is this: that we have discovered the extent of our dehumanization to such a degree that it's impossible to function in the world in the same way." It is true that Harris has expressed sympathy for Palestinians in a way that Biden has not. Yet with few exceptions, she has avoided addressing Arab Americans directly. She finally did so recently in Michigan but indicated no change in approach. She acknowledged the suffering of Palestinians but made no mention of who had caused it. It was as though a sad natural disaster had befallen them, when, in fact, it was American weaponry that had made their suffering possible. In Detroit, when asked specifically about the anger of Arab American voters over Gaza's destruction, Harris defaulted to old talking points, saying, "The first, most tragic story is October 7" as though Palestin-

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The devastation of Gaza has confirmed for many Arabs and Muslims what they may have only previously suspected: They are not viewed as equal or equally deserving of dignity. Arab and Muslim lives are expendable.

ian suffering must always be caveated and minimized. I hope Kamala Harris wins. But she's not making it easy for Arab and Muslim leaders who would otherwise more forcefully advocate on her behalf. Through her neglect, she has allowed Trump to make inroads. Led by Tiffany Trump's father-in-law Massad Boulos, who is Lebanese, the Trump campaign says it has held over 100 meetings with Arab Americans. Arab and Muslim Americans could tip the election. Political scientist Youssef Chouhoud projects that if 40 percent of these voters abstain or vote third party, the net loss for Harris could be 44,000 votes in Michigan, 28,000 in Pennsylvania, and 12,000 in Georgia. But it goes well beyond Arabs or Muslims, extending to young progressives who support Palestinian rights at much higher levels than their counterparts. And presumably, those who are angry about American complicity in Israel's war talk to their friends and colleagues, further weakening enthusiasm for a campaign that needs all the help it can get. That's not a good place to be days from an election. But until Election Day, it's never too late. The Harris campaign needs a wake-up call.

Republican presidential nominee former president Donald Trump (R) looks on as local Muslim leaders endorse him during a campaign rally at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi, Michigan, on October 26, 2024.
● ALEX BRANDON/AP

People protest in support of Gaza during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August 2024.
● EPA

The article first appeared on The Washington Post.



Wrestling World Championships: Iran finds little consolation in Nokhodi's bronze after late heartbreaks

Sports Desk

The freestyle event of the Wrestling World Championships in Tirana, Albania, was one to forget for Iran after the country had to settle for a single bronze through Mohammad Nokhodi across four weight classes.

While young Iranians Reza Mo'meni and Sina Khalili suffered last-eight exits in the 61kg and 70kg contests respectively, two-time world champion Kamran Qasempour missed out on the 92kg podium on his return to competitions following back-to-back defeats against two of the sport's greats in Russian Abdurashid Sadulaev and American David Taylor.

Nokhodi, a winner of double world silvers and a bronze, seemed to be on his way to a coveted 79kg gold when he finally pulled off an upset against legendary American Jordan Burroughs, who had denied the Iranian in the 2021 and 2022 finals, defeating the seven-time world and Olympic champion 6-4.

Standing between Nokhodi and a place in the final was Georgian Avtandil Kentchadze and the Iranian looked to be cruising to victory when he built up a 6-0 lead in the second period.

However, Kentchadze secured a takedown with 45 seconds remaining and wrapped up Nokhodi's legs and then ripped off three lace-lock rolls.

Nokhodi halted the flow for a moment for a two-point exposure, but he also appeared to injure his knee during the exchange and the Georgian was able to easily add a pair of late takedowns to secure a 14-8 victory.

Nokhodi still managed to pull



Iran's Mohammad Nokhodi (blue) goes for a gut wrench during his victory over Japanese Kota Takahashi in the freestyle 79kg third-place bout at the Wrestling World Championships in Tirana, Albania, on October 31, 2024.

● UWW

ing with a takedown while on the activity clock to lead 2-0 at the break before Taylor bounced back in the second period to score three takedowns, the last coming with two seconds left, to sign off with a world bronze.

Sadulaev, meanwhile, walked away with the ultimate prize, thanks to a 6-0 win against Georgia's Miriani Maisuradze. Elsewhere in the Feti Borova Sports Hall, Japan's Masanosuke Ono ran riot against Ahmet Duman, defeating the Turkish wrestler by technical superiority to grab the 61kg gold, while Nurkozha Kaipanova of Kazakhstan beat Japanese Yoshinosuke Aoyagi 5-3 in the 70kg final. Georgia and Japan shared the top spot in the team ranking with 55 points, with Iran in third on 41 points.

Iranians had more to cheer about in the Greco-Roman competitions earlier in Tirana as Mohammadali Geraei marched past Hungarian Erik Szilvássy (8-0) in the final to add the 82kg gold to his previous three world bronzes.

Pouria Dadmarz won a second successive world medal, a 55kg silver after a final defeat against Azerbaijan's Eldaniz Azizli, as Iran collected 51 points to finish runner-up to Azerbaijan, which dominated with 85 points, courtesy of three golds across four weight categories.

himself back together and, despite struggling with the knee problem, make a quick work of Japanese Kota Takahashi in the bronze-medal contest, delivering a masterclass of takedowns and gut wrenches for a superiority win (10-0) with 2:11 minutes to spare.

Nokhodi shared the third podium with Slovakia's Acharsbek Gulajev, while Kentchadze went on to defeat Russian Magomed Magomaeiev, participating as a neutral athlete, 13-4 in the final.

In the 92kg contests, Qasempour, who stood behind Amir-Ali Azarpira in the pecking order for the Iranian 97kg slot at the Paris Olympics, looked to be back to top form in his familiar territory when he eased past opponents from Japan, Turkey, and Moldova to reach the quarterfinals.

Awaiting Qasempour in the last-eight round was two-time Olympic champion Sadulaev, who was chasing his sixth world gold and stepped onto the mat fresh from a first-round 7-0

hammering of Taylor. Sadulaev went ahead 1-1 on criteria after each received an activity point before Qasempour found a way through and scored a double-leg takedown with 30 seconds left.

Qasempour looked to have done enough for a famous victory but the Russian sensation had other ideas as he snapped the Iranian down, spun behind, then managed to fling him to the mat for a four-point takedown with four seconds left on the clock.

The setback sent Qasempour into what was arguably the most important world bronze bout in the history of the Iranian wrestling against Taylor.

Iranian fans were eager to see Qasempour come out on top against the American, who holds a 3-1 head-to-head record against Qasempour's compatriot Hassan Yazdani in four major 86kg finals and had announced that the tournament in Tirana would be his swan song. Qasempour opened the scor-

Youth World Boxing Championships:

Malek-Khatabi into historic final; Kazemi, Esmaeili win bronze

Sports Desk

Amirreza Malek-Khatabi continued his history-making campaign at the IBA Youth World Boxing Championships by reaching the final showpiece of the men's -92kg contests in Budva, Montenegro.

Stepping into the ring on the back of a 4:1 victory over Russian Oleg Kliuchagin, Malek-Khatabi came out victorious against Tynystan Alybaev – after the referee deemed the Kyrgyz boxer unfit to continue – to become the first Iranian to reach a world final across any age class.

An Asian youth bronze winner in May, the Iranian boxer will take on Khalimjon Mamasoliev of Uzbekistan, who defeated Kazakhstan's Rassul Assankhanov (5-0) for the gold medal.

Elsewhere, Mahdi Kazemi and Amir Esmaeili secured maiden medals for Iran in the competition despite last-four



setback in their respective events.

Representing the country in the -51kg contests, Kazemi fell to a 5:0 loss to Kazakhstan's Bexultan Boranbek, while reigning Asian champion Esmaeili came short against Irish opponent Adam Olaniyan in the +92kg last four.



Iranian Amirreza Malek-Khatabi celebrates his last-four victory at the IBA Youth World Boxing Championships in Budva, Montenegro, on October 31, 2024.

● IBA

Wembanyama hits rare 5x5 as Spurs see off Jazz

BBC – Victor Wembanyama further enhanced his reputation by sealing a rare 5x5 to help the San Antonio Spurs defeat the Utah Jazz 106-88.

Wembanyama scored 25 points with nine rebounds, seven assists, five blocks and five steals.

It is the second time he has accomplished the 5x5 – five in each category – and he joined Hakeem Olajuwon and Andrei Kirilenko as the only players to achieve that feat more than once.

"It tells me I need to get my standards up when I don't get 5x5s because I am able to help my team in all those areas. It should be a consistent thing," Wembanyama said.

The Spurs, who had lost their previous two fixtures, are 12th in the Western Conference, while the Jazz are bottom after losing all five games.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Ja Morant starred as the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Milwaukee Bucks 122-99.

Morant recorded the 12th triple-double of his career by scoring 26 points with 14 assists and 10 rebounds. Giannis Antetokounmpo's game-high 37 points was not enough for the Bucks as they slumped to a fourth successive defeat.

"I thought we played with the right spirit," Bucks coach Doc Rivers said.

"We didn't make shots and you're going to have nights like that. But on those nights we have to find a way to get stops."

Meanwhile, the Phoenix Suns benefitted from a stunning Devin Booker performance to overturn a 21-point deficit and beat the Los Angeles Clippers 125-119. Booker registered a season-high 40 points in Inglewood, California and he was aided by 21 points from



● REGINALD THOMAS II/SAN ANTONIO SPURS

Royce O'Neale and a further 18 from Kevin Durant. Rookie Ryan Dunn, making just his second career start, also chipped in with 16 points.

The Suns' second win in the space of two weeks at the Clippers' new Intuit Dome venue has them sitting third in the Western Conference.

Iran may increase missile ranges to reach Europe, Kharrazi warns

International Desk

Iran might increase the range of its ballistic missiles to reach Europe, a senior adviser to Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Friday, amid strained relations between Tehran and the European Union.

"When they (Europeans) do not take into account Iran's sensitivity, it is no longer necessary for Iran to heed their sensitivity, so it is likely that Iran will develop and increase the range of its missiles," Kamal Kharrazi, who also resides Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, told Lebanese TV channel Al Mayadeen.

Iran's ballistic missiles, including Shahab 3, can hit targets as far as 2,000 kilometers away, enough to pound Israel. Kharrazi also repeated his previous warnings that Iran would change its military doctrine to make a nuclear bomb in case of an existential threat.

"What I said [previously that] if its existence is threatened, the Islamic Republic of Iran will revisit its military doctrine, is still in place and we have the capability to build the whole weapon," the

veteran diplomat said.

The warning came amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel which saw the two archenemies trading strikes in recent months.

Iran's 'inevitable' response to Israel

Iran reiterated on Thursday that it will respond to Israel's recent attack, with top commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) affirming that a response to the regime's aggression is "inevitable."

Iran's Deputy Commander of IRGC Brigadier General Ali Fadavi confirmed in a statement to Lebanon's Al Mayadeen television network that Iran's response to any Israeli aggression was "inevitable," emphasizing that, "For over 40 years, we have never left any attack unanswered."

"We can target everything the Zionists possess in a single operation," Fadavi said, adding that the martyrdom of Resistance leaders "strengthens rather than weakens the Resistance."

General Fadavi's remarks were the first statement from an Iranian official indicating that the

Islamic Republic intended to retaliate against Israel's October 26 strikes on its soil.

He also noted that, "Israel believed it had eradicated Hezbollah with the martyrdom of its leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and other resistance leaders," however, "Hezbollah is now stronger than before."

According to Fadavi, Hezbollah's attacks on Israeli positions have intensified both on the ground and in the air, which indicates that the Resistance is still as dynamic and strong as before.

IRGC's Chief Commander Major General Hossein Salami also warned Israel that it will receive such a great response for its recent act of aggression against Iran that it cannot conceive, saying that the Israelis are mistaken to think that they can change the history by launching a number of missiles.

Meanwhile, Iran's permanent representative to the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva have severely censured the latest Israeli strikes against the country's military sites, stating that the Islamic Republic will not hesitate to exercise its legitimate right



The image taken from video shows missiles fired from Iran over Al-Quds (Jerusalem), on October 1, 2024.

AP

and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In a note addressed to the member states of the Conference on Disarmament on Thursday, Iran's diplomatic mission enumerated a series of the Israeli regime's actions and adventurism that run contrary to international laws and have targeted Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The mission noted that such moves constitute flagrant violations of the fundamental princi-

ples of international law, diplomatic and consular immunities besides Article 2, Clause 4 of the UN Charter and United Nations resolutions, emphasizing that Iran reserves its inherent right to defend its nationals, interests and national security under Article 51 of the Charter.

Cease-fire hopes fade as Israel massacres scores in Gaza, Lebanon

International Desk

Prospects of a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah ran aground on Friday as Israeli airstrikes killed at least 64 people in the Gaza Strip, according to medics in the Palestinian enclave, and battered Beirut's southern suburbs.

Hamas did not favor a temporary truce that US envoys had been working to secure, the resistance group's Al-Aqsa TV reported on Friday. The cease-fire proposals failed to meet its conditions that any deal must end the year-long war in Gaza and include a withdrawal of Israeli forces from there, it said, Reuters reported.

Medics in Gaza said about 64 people were

killed and dozens more injured overnight and into Friday morning in Israeli strikes on the city of Deir Al-Balah, the Nuseirat camp and the town of Al-Zawayda, all in the central area of Gaza as well as in its south.

Fourteen people were killed by an Israeli strike at the gate of a school sheltering displaced Palestinians in Nuseirat, according to medics at the camp's Al-Awda Hospital. Another 10 were killed in a car in Khan Younis in the south of Gaza, medics said.

Israel also pummeled Beirut's southern suburbs on Friday morning with at least 10 strikes, Reuters journalists said. It was the first bombardment on the area - once a densely-packed

district and Hezbollah stronghold - in nearly a week. Resistance media reports said some 40 were killed on Friday in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

The strikes came after Israel issued evacuation orders for 10 separate neighborhoods.

Hamas television, quoting a leading source in the group, said the cease-fire proposals did not meet its conditions. "The proposals do not include a permanent cessation of aggression, withdrawal of occupation forces from the Gaza Strip, or the return of displaced people," the source said. "Nor did they address Palestinians' need for security, relief and reconstruction, and the full reopening of border crossings."

Iran launches 'strong protest' against Germany's closure of consulates

International Desk

The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Friday denounced Germany's "irrational" decision to shut the diplomatic missions of the Islamic Republic in the country and deprive Iranians of consular services.

"The decision by the German government to stop the activities of the consulates of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Germany is an unjustified act," the Ministry's said in a press release.

Iran also summoned German charge d'affaires in Tehran in protest against the European country's decision.

The director of the First Department for Western Europe at the Iranian Foreign Ministry called in the diplomat on Thursday to relay Tehran's "strong protest" and condemn Berlin's "destructive approach" toward the Iranian people, including those residing in Germany.

It came hours after German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock announced that the Iranian consulates in the cities of Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich are to be closed over the execution of German-Iranian convicted terrorist Jamshid Sharmahd. The statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the move "deliberately deprives Iranians of the benefit of consular facilities and services," while it "causes unnecessary trouble for Iranians residing in Germany and violates their basic rights."



A view of Iran's Foreign Ministry building in Tehran

IRNA

Also, in a post on his X account on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated that, "The closure of Iran's Consulates in Germany is a sanction against Iranians residing in that country - most of whom possess German citizenship as well."

"In support of a terrorist who took 14 innocent lives and injured more than 200 others, the German government is sanctioning tens of thousands of other Iranians holding German passport. Anyone can see the wisdom in this decision," he said.

"I assure my Iranian compatriots living in Germany that we are doing our utmost to compensate for this inconvenience by strengthening the consular sections of our embassy in Berlin and other nearby diplomatic missions," Araqchi added.

"Meanwhile, behold the terrorist criminal that German authorities sought to protect." On Monday, Iran's Judiciary executed Sharmahd, the ringleader of a US-based terror group behind a

series of deadly attacks against the Iranian nation. Germany protested to Iran by recalling its ambassador to Tehran and summoning the Iranian charge d'affaires in Berlin.

Announcing the closure of the Iranian consulates, Baerbock said, "We repeatedly made it crystal clear to Tehran that the execution of a German national would have serious consequences."

In its press release, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said Baerbock's "meddlesome" and "unprofessional" statement lacks decency and legal value, noting that Berlin's "unconstructive and confrontational approach is a major miscalculation, and the German government will be responsible for its consequences." It also condemned the German government's disrespect for international law, as well as any support for terrorism and the killing of innocent people.

Tehran-Riyadh ties moving in 'right direction'

International Desk

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said on Thursday that his country's relations with Iran is on the right path.

Speaking on stage at an investment conference in Riyadh, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said, "I think our relations (with Iran) are moving in the right direction," adding, however, that, "Of course, they are complicated by the issues of regional dynamics," Reuters reported.

Bin Farhan revealed that he had emphasized to his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, that any escalation in the region must be avoided.

"Tehran informed us that the continuation of the regional escalation cycle is not in its interest. Saudi Arabia's dialogue with Iran aims to keep relations on the right track," he said.

He also addressed recent reports about a possible joint military exercise between Saudi Arabia and Iran, stating that no such exercises have taken place and it is unlikely they will occur in the near future given the current regional conditions.

'Russia-Iran partnership deal to be inked'

Russia and Iran will sign a strategic partnership agreement "in the near future," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Thursday, as political and military ties between the two countries deepen. "The treaty is being prepared for signing in the near future," Lavrov said at a Eurasian security summit in Belarus on Thursday, The Moscow Times reported.

"It will affirm both parties' commitment to closer defense cooperation and collaboration for regional and global peace and security," Lavrov added in televised remarks.

Terrorist teams disbanded

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) dismantled on Thursday four teams of terrorists during a round-up operation in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan. The operation was part of a boarder war game in the southeastern province, Tasnim reported. Spokesperson for the drill Ahmad Shafaei said the IRGC servicemen killed four terrorists and arrested eight others "acting as proxies for the enemy" in the region. On October 26, gunmen opened fire on a patrol unit of Iranian border guards, killing 10 forces.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Tribute to mine workers

40 days of government support for Tabas mine victims

Social Desk

A ceremony was held on Thursday to pay tribute to the 53 miners who lost their lives in the Tabas mining accident, 40 days after the tragic incident in the eastern Iranian province of South Khorasan. The ceremony was attended by Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd, Minister of Cooperatives, and Labour, and Social Welfare Ahmad Meydari, and other officials. During the ceremony, Minister Sadeq-Malvajerd expressed the government's condolences and support for the families of the victims. "Our message is that

we understand and share your grief," she said. "We have not left you alone in these 40 days, and we will continue to stand by you in the future. In fact, there was not a single cabinet meeting where the miners of Tabas were not discussed." The government has also recognized the importance of providing housing for the families. Minister Sadeq-Malvajerd announced that 53 families received new homes, with the government covering the costs of construction and providing financial assistance for mortgage payments. Minister Meydari also spoke at the ceremony, announcing that the government has allocated a budget to support miners who

are unable to work due to safety concerns. "A budget has been set aside to pay the salaries of miners who are unable to work for three months due to safety issues," he said. Mohammad Jafar Qaempanah, Vice President for Executive Affairs, emphasized the government's commitment to prioritizing human life. "In the government of national unity, human life is precious," he said. "Our country needs production, and if there is a lack of housing, we need to create wealth through production." Parliament Speaker Qalibaf also addressed the ceremony, emphasizing the importance of ensuring safety in mines. "We do not have the right to leave a worker

unemployed, and the worker does not have the right to work in unsafe conditions," he said. "Mining is one of the country's invaluable capacities, and we have cities like Tabas, which is a paradise for mines. Why should people face economic problems?" Qalibaf also stressed the need for preventive measures to avoid such incidents in the future. "We should not create an environment that puts workers' lives at risk," he said. The government's efforts to support the survivors and their families have been multifaceted. The Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade has conducted a thorough investigation into the causes of the accident and has established



Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq (c front) hands over the key of a new home to the family of a victim of the Tabas mine blast on October 31, 2024, during a ceremony held to commemorate the 40th day of the tragedy, honoring the memories of the 53 miners who tragically lost their lives in the disaster. ● MEHR

a special task force to oversee the implementation of safety measures in mines across the country. The ministry has also issued a directive to all mines to conduct regular safety inspections and implement necessary safety protocols. In addition to these measures,

the government has provided financial support to the families of the victims. The Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare has announced a one-time payment of \$3,000 to each family, as well as full insurance coverage, including medical and funeral expenses.

Pezeshkian meets with top Shia clerics in Qom

Political Desk

Qom, Iran's spiritual hub, is a city that punches above its weight in the Islamic Republic's religious and political landscape. With numerous religious centers and seminarians and a large population of clerics, Qom has become a hotbed of Shia scholarship and a key player in Iran's power dynamics. The presence of prominent Shia clerics has catapulted Qom's reputation beyond Iran's borders, making it the epicenter of Shia politics and spirituality worldwide. The city's clerical elite, along with some influential religious institutions based in Qom, wield considerable sway both

among the public and within Iran's theocratic government. In this context, President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Qom on Thursday and his separate meetings with top Shia authorities take on added significance. During such visits, Iranian government officials typically brief the clerics on the country's situation and their policy initiatives, while also seeking their guidance and counsel. As Pezeshkian said upon arrival in Qom, "We aim to pay our respects to the clerics and solicit their advice." Pezeshkian's one-day visit included meetings with Ayatollah Abdullah Javadi Amoli, Ayatollah Nasser Ma-

karem Shirazi, Ayatollah Hossein Nouri Hamedani, Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani, and Ayatollah Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani, as well as a representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the prominent Shia cleric based in Iraq. As per local media, the meetings touched on a range of pressing issues such as the economic situation, people's livelihood challenges, the need to boost national unity, regional developments, Israeli atrocities in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon and the recent escalation of tensions between Iran and Israel. Javadi Amoli, in his meeting with Pezeshkian, emphasized that the Iranian people were not warmongers, but

warned, "If war is imposed on us, we will respond decisively." He also urged officials to redouble their efforts to address the country's economic woes and meet people's needs. Makarem Shirazi called on the president to take swift and firm action to tackle the housing crisis, while Nouri Hamedani commended Pezeshkian's stance on supporting the Resistance Front fighting Israel and standing up to the "child-killing Zionist regime." He emphasized, "America is our enemy, and we should not trust our enemies," he added. Sobhani expressed dismay at the failure of some Muslim countries to condemn

Israel's war crimes, saying, "The silence of so many Muslims in the face of such carnage is unprecedented in Islamic history." After hearing Pezeshkian's remarks, Shobeiri Zanjani pledged his support for the president and the government, saying, "I pray for your success." Throughout the meetings, Pezeshkian highlighted his government's efforts to address problems, alleviate discontent, and foster national unity, as well as the need for unity among Muslim nations. The fact that all the top clerics in Qom received Pezeshkian warmly suggests has a good standing among these great influential figures.

Two Iranians awarded at Qur'an competitions in Turkey

Two young Iranians, Milad Asheghi from Tabriz and Parisa Angoshtan from Babol, earned second place in the 9th International Qur'an Competition held in Turkey. At the award ceremony on October 27, they received plaques of honor from Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan at the Presidential Palace, IRNA reported.



Milad Asheghi, a distinguished Qur'an reciter and a medical student, was one of Iran's representatives in the contest, showcasing his talent in Qur'anic memorization. Hojatolislam Seyyed Shahabeddin Hosseini, Director-General of the Endowments and Charity Affairs of East Azarbaijan, praised Asheghi's achievement, saying he has made the country proud and wished further success to all young talents in both academic and Qur'anic fields. The competition began on October 24 in Şanlıurfa, Turkey, with jury members from seven countries, including Turkey, Malaysia, Morocco, and Kuwait. This year, 47 finalists from an initial 93 countries reached the final stage after preliminary rounds in June, where submissions were evaluated by international judges.

Iranian short film scores int'l accolade in New Zealand

Iranian short film 'Brother' won the Best International Film Award at the 19th Show Me Shorts Film Festival in New Zealand, making it eligible to compete in the Oscars. Directed by Mahdieh Qotbeddin Mohammadi, written by Yasin Pour Azizi, and produced by Mohaddese Pirhadi, 'Brother' was among 126 short films from 85 filmmakers screened at 40 cinemas in Auckland, Mehr News Agency reported. The Show Me Shorts Film Festival aims to showcase the best short films from around the world, support filmmakers, and introduce new talent to the film industry. This year's festival, which runs from October 11 to 31, has been showcasing a diverse range of films that promise to leave a lasting impact on audiences.

The festival has been a launching pad for many filmmakers in New Zealand and has played a significant role in promoting the country's short film industry. The film's international distribution is handled by Soreh Cinema Organization.



Iranian researchers turn plastic waste into battery material

Social Desk

A team of Iranian researchers has found a way to turn unrecyclable plastic waste into material for lithium-selenium battery cathodes, offering a new approach to managing plastic waste and protecting the environment. By using the high-capacity ele-

ment selenium, the team aims to create an efficient cathode material for rechargeable lithium batteries. However, they faced challenges due to selenium's reactivity with the battery electrolyte. Researchers, including Amir Hossein Ahmadian Hosseini and Mohammad Arjmand, addressed

these challenges by encasing selenium in a fine carbon structure derived from waste plastic. This carbon was produced using a two-step process of carbonization and activation. The resulting plastic waste carbon (PWC) acts as a host for selenium, forming a composite cathode through a melting process.

The team developed the cathode electrode with a mix of PWC/Se composite, black carbon, and sodium alginate using a slurry casting method. The process was fine-tuned by heating PWC below 800°C to create a porous structure. They found that increasing the activation temperature improved the surface area

and shifted the structure toward a more mesoporous form, ideal for battery use. The lithium-selenium "coin cell" battery built with PWC heated to 600°C (PWC600) showed excellent discharge capacity, speed capability, and cycle stability, especially at higher current densities. The porous design enables effective

selenium containment, lithium ion diffusion, and charge transfer. This study highlights the sustainable development of porous carbon from waste plastic as a suitable cathode material for lithium-selenium batteries, marking an eco-friendly step forward for energy storage and plastic waste management.