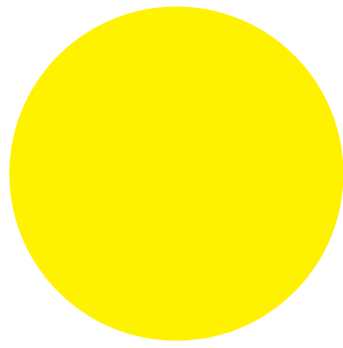


Hemmati:
Tehran seeking
halt to FATF
countermeasures
'based on national
interests'



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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) shakes hands with his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar upon his arrival at Pakistan's Foreign Ministry in Islamabad on November 5, 2024.
● AFP

Iran not After Escalation but Reserves Right to 'Legitimate Defense': **FM**

Tactical differences between Trump and Harris

By Hassan Beheshtipour
International relations expert

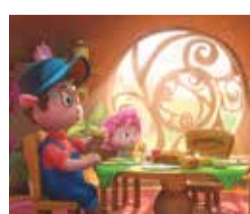
OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Is the US presidential election important to the world? Yes, it is, because American policies have a significant impact on many parts of the globe. In fact, the president of the United States not only influences the 50 states but also could shape developments in numerous countries around the world through US foreign policy. The US has a military or intelligence and security presence in around 120 countries, plays a key role in global trade and its dollar is used in three out of every four international transactions. With a military budget of more than \$700 billion, the US has the largest military budget in the world. Therefore, it is natural for such a country to have a profound impact on international developments. Consequently, US policies have a significant bearing on the West Asia region, which is grappling with various long-standing crises. Even in the recent conflict involving Israel, the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon, the US remains the main player behind the scenes. Israel's attacks are integral to the US strategy for the region, aimed at imposing a new order by eliminating Islamic resistance groups. This strategy will persist regardless of whether Trump or Harris wins, though it may be executed with different tactics and approaches. However, this should not be taken to mean that one should remain passive in the face of US policies. On the contrary, a shrewd observer or a savvy statesman should pay close attention to these tactical differences and details and try to find opportunities for their country or region within these differences. For instance, despite the US' unwavering support for Israel, Democrats have been critical of Israel's settlement policy and have backed a two-state solution (an independent Palestinian state and an independent Israeli state).

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Iran oil prices to China at multi-year high as discounts narrow: Reuters



Discounts on Iranian crude oil sold to China are at their tightest in around five years as lower exports drive up prices amid concerns that Middle East tensions may disrupt supply, trading sources said. The discounts are the narrowest since Chinese independent refiners, known as teapots, stepped in as buyers in late 2019, filling a vacuum left by the country's state refiners wary of sanctions reinstated on Iran by the United States a year earlier, Reuters reported. Differentials for Iranian Light crude have firmed to a less-than-\$4 per barrel discount to global benchmark ICE Brent, with Iranian Heavy at minus \$7, said four sources involved in or familiar with Iranian oil transactions.

A deal in the first half of October was priced at minus \$3.80 on a delivered, ex-ship basis (DES) for November arrival, said two of the people, declining to be named due to the sensitivity of the transactions.

A December-arriving shipment was heard offered last week at minus \$3, said one of the people, a Shandong-based trading manager with an independent plant.

The Iranian Light discount held around \$5 to \$6 earlier this year after tightening from double-digits in late 2023, traders said. A separate trading executive with a Shandong refiner said sellers had "pushed up" prices as loadings fell, and also as the price of Saudi Arabian oil rose in October.

Teapots are experiencing one of their worst periods since beginning to import crude oil in 2016, operating just above 50% capacity, with some running at losses, traders said.

"We are barely making money overall, losing heavily on diesel production," said the first Shandong refinery source.

Iran's former oil minister Javad Owji had struck back at allegations in June that the 13th administration has been discounting the price of the oil it exports, saying the rebates under the government were in fact smaller than those during the previous administration.

Hemmati: Tehran seeking halt to FATF countermeasures 'based on national interests'

Iranian Minister of Economy Abdolnaser Hemmati said the country is taking the necessary steps to suspend Financial Action Task Force (FATF) countermeasures and lift financial restrictions on the country based on Iran's national interests.

The ministry is pursuing suspension of the FATF countermeasures based on national interests, he wrote on his X account, IRNA reported.

He further said that normalization of Iran's case in FATF means removal of monetary and financial restrictions of 200 countries and international organizations against all Iranian natural and legal entities and neutralizing the project of isolating the monetary and financial system

of our country by the US and its allies.

He further said normalizing the banking relations of Iranians, from students to businessmen and economic activists all over the world and increasing costs for US government in case of threatening and bribing countries and international institutions to implement sanctions against Iran are other moves to normalize Iran's case in the FATF.

"The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance will carry out the necessary follow-ups and take necessary measures to remove the restrictions and suspend the countermeasures of the 'Financial Special Action Group' (FATF) based on the national interests of our country," he reiterated.



Cuban president welcomes business collaboration with Iran



The Cuban president acknowledged the willingness of Iran's

business community to collaborate with Cuba as he praised the expansion of Tehran-Havana ties. In his post in Spanish language on X, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez wrote, "I confirmed the will and decision of our government to continue strengthening and expanding bilateral ties of friendship and cooperation."

The president of the Latin American state wrote in another post that, "On the opening day of FI-

HAV2024, I met with Dr. Seyed Sattar Hashemi, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, whom I thanked for his presence at the Fair."

IRNA wrote on Tuesday that cyber security, artificial intelligence (AI), and human resources training were among the most important issues discussed during Hashemi's second day of visit to Cuba.

The minister said on Tuesday that the cruel sanctions imposed on Iran and Cuba by the United States had failed to prevent the two countries from making technological progress.

Referring to a training program for half a million people seeking to master in AI fields in Iran, Hashemi said AI and robotics will be important topics in Iran-Cuba relations.

He also announced Iran's read-

iness to train Cuban human resources in the field of robotics and AI.

The minister also attended the 40th edition of the Havana International Fair (FIHAV) which is being held from November 4 to 9, 2024 at the EXPOCUBA fairgrounds in the Cuban capital city. Sixty countries from all regions of the world and 800 companies are expected to participate in the exhibition.

Iranian space tech roaring through skies

In a milestone for Iran's private space sector, the satellites of "Kowsar" and "Hodhod" were successfully launched into orbit aboard a Russian Soyuz launcher, marking the country's initial private effort in satellite production and space deployment.

The Iranian satellites were sent into space as part of a payload carried by the Russian Soyuz launcher, which delivered 53 satellites to orbit, Tasnim News Agency reported.

The launch represents a significant advancement for Iran, highlighting the first satellite manufacturing and launching attempt from its private space sector. The Kowsar satellite, weighing 30 kilograms, is a high-resolution sensing satellite designed for applications

in agriculture, natural resource management, environmental monitoring, and disaster response.

With a resolution capability of 3.45 meters, Kowsar surpasses Iran's goal of producing satellites with 10-meter ground sample distance (GSD) cameras by 2025.

Kowsar has a lifespan of 3.5 years in orbit, positioned at an altitude of 500 kilometers, and is capable of capturing six frames per second over a 15-kilometer range.

Its imaging is achieved using an RGB camera with 3.45-meter resolution and an NIR camera with 5.5-meter resolution, supported by a maximum platform weight of 35 kilograms. The satellite's orbital period is 5,677 seconds, with pointing and



stability accuracies of 1 degree and 0.05 degrees per second, respectively.

Power is sustained by its 44-watt production capacity, and it consumes 29 watt-hours to operate its payloads. Meanwhile, Hodhod serves as a small communications satellite intended to create satellite-based communication networks and enhance Internet of Things (IoT) connectivity.

Targeted at regions with limited terrestrial communication access, Hodhod offers communication solutions in remote and inaccessible areas.

Built to the CubeSat standard, the satellite operates in a 500-kilometer orbit and supports precision agriculture, transportation, logistics, and environmental monitoring. Its primary mission focuses on expanding IoT capabilities.

FM urges removal of EU bans on Iranian airlines after Zelensky's assertion



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has called on the European Union to immediately end its flight ban on the country's airlines, stressing that even Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has denied the European bloc's claims about Iran supplying missiles to Russia for the war in Ukraine.

Araghchi said the flight ban only affects ordinary Iranians and other travelers, Press TV reported.

In a post on X on Tuesday, Araghchi condemned the EU's ban as being based on a "false and unfounded claim," just a day after the Ukrainian president confirmed that there is no evidence yet that Russia has used Iranian ballistic missiles against his country.

"The EU recently targeted ordinary Iranians and other travelers by banning our airlines from Europe. It did so, on the basis of the false and unfounded claim that Iran has delivered ballistic missiles to Russia for use in Ukraine," Araghchi said.

"Now, even President Zelensky himself has explicitly stated that no Iranian missiles have been delivered to Russia. High time for the EU to end this farce. The targeting of ordinary Iranians based on thin air is immoral and plain wrong. It must be immediately reversed," he stressed.

In mid-October, the EU imposed sanctions against flagship carrier Iran Air, Saha Airlines and Mahan Air over the alleged transfer of ballistic missiles and drones to Russia for use in the Ukraine war.

The ban caused major hardship to passengers, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities, as they now have to use connection flights rather than direct flights.

This is while Iran has vehemently dismissed the arms transfer claim, reiterating on numerous occasions that drones supplied to Russia were delivered to Moscow long before the Ukraine war started in February 2022.

Iran renewables' capacity hit 1.2 GW by September

The latest official figures demonstrated that the capacity of Iran's renewable energy had reached 1.2 gigawatts (GW) by September.

According to figures released by the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization – an

affiliate of the Energy Ministry – solar power plants come first in total renewable capacity, accounting for 60% of renewable electricity production, IRNA wrote on Tuesday. Wind is regarded as the second renewable energy source in the country, ac-

counting for 29% of the production, the figures showed.

Small hydropower plants and biomass plants are next, accounting for 8% and 2% of the total renewable capacity respectively by September. Iran's Vice President Mohammadreza



Aref has said that the sitting government attaches importance to the use of solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources.

Natural beauty of Heydarabad village



Iranica Desk

A significant portion of Ilam Province's tourism potential resides within its villages, many of which remain undiscovered due to their obscurity. The Haftav Valley, a lush and forested area near the city of Ilam, features an enchanting blend of forests, orchards, springs, and rivers. This valley, with its abundant rice paddies and extensive fruit orchards, produces a substantial share of Ilam Province's fruits, including figs, apricots, and apples. Notably, the apricots from this region are renowned throughout the country, and the villages nearby also boast significant ethnological tourism potential.

The rural architecture in the Haftav Valley is particularly appealing, characterized by numerous windows that draw admiration. Window crafting has become a traditional and respected occu-



pation for many locals, adding to the village's charm. The villages of Jafarabad, Heyderabad, Zardaloabad, and Tulab in this region possess tourism potential and anthropological appeal, with Heyderabad being the most notable among them, IRNA wrote. Heyderabad village, situated in the Sivan district of Ilam, enjoys a pleasant climate conducive to cultivating a diverse array of fruits during the summer months. Its breathtaking landscapes have led to its designation

as a tourism target village since 2005. Heyderabad lies approximately 25 kilometers from the city of Ilam and extends towards Tulab village.

The architecture of Heyderabad, known for its distinctive tourism offerings, is captivating, with organized alleys, each possessing its own unique name. The mosaic-paved streets and the cleanliness of the village signify that rural development projects have been largely implemented successfully, en-

hancing the overall experience for visitors.

This beautiful and mountainous village has developed into a vibrant community over the past 200 years. Located at an altitude of 1,400 meters above sea level, it experiences a temperate, mountainous climate, with mild weather in spring, summer, and early autumn, followed by colder temperatures in winter. The flowing river and small streams that meander through the narrow alleys of the village contrib-

ute a refreshing element to the atmosphere, while the water-rich Haftav Valley, situated 30 kilometers from the city of Ilam, extends up to the heights of Tulab near the village.

The combination of forests, fruit orchards — particularly walnut trees — and the presence of springs and rushing rivers creates a stunning landscape in this mountainous valley. Within the village, various facilities, including designated trash bins, restrooms, and water coolers, have been established to enhance the visitor experience. The local community actively participates in the development and implementation of diverse projects, further contributing to the village's appeal.

The economy of Heyderabad is primarily based on agricultural, service, and handicraft activities, with both irrigated and rain-fed farming practices prevalent. Most of the village's land is cul-

tivated using rain-fed methods. The picturesque paddy fields surrounding the village present a beautiful view, and the aroma of rice fills the air during the harvest season.

In and around the village, lush and dense farms and orchards create a picturesque setting that is ideal for recreation and enjoyment for tourists. The village holds considerable national potential, particularly due to its apricot trees, which have led to the annual celebration of the "Apricot Harvest Festival" held in June.

The apricots from this village are highly esteemed throughout the province, and a nearby area has even been named Zardaloabad in their honor. With the abundance of apricot trees in the village, the festival has the potential to gain recognition at a national level, celebrating the rich agricultural heritage and cultural significance of the region.

Uncovering archaeological significance of Turang Tappeh

Turang Tappeh (Turang Hill) is located northwest of Turang village, approximately 20km from Gorgan, the capital of Golestan Province, and 60km from the Caspian Sea coast. This ancient hill, dating back 5,000 to 6,000 years, has been preserved as part of Iran's National Heritage List, drawing comparisons to the Hesar Tappeh and Sialk Tappeh civilizations.

The first excavations at Turang Tappeh were conducted in 1878 CE by the archaeologist Clement Augustus de Bode during the Qajar era and the reign of Muhammad Shah. Significant discoveries from these archaeological expeditions included tools, cups, containers, and weapons made of gold, silver, and bronze, indicating that agriculture, irrigation systems, and pottery-making were prevalent in ancient times at this site.

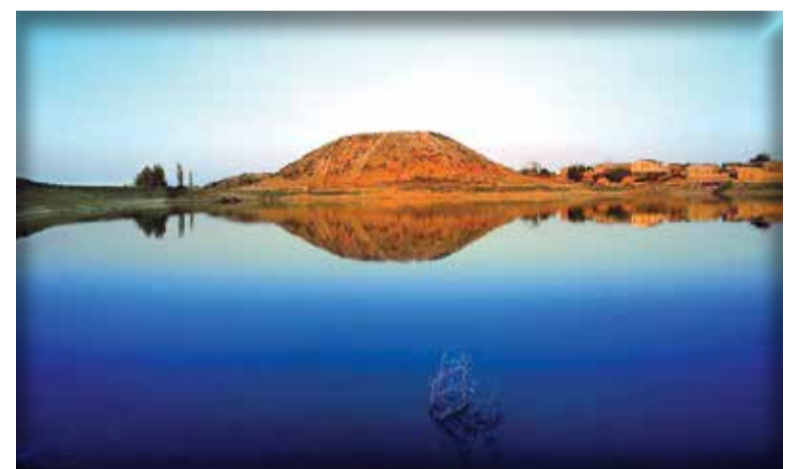
In 1889 CE, Jean-Jacques de Morgan further explored Turang Tappeh, uncovering copper and bronze daggers, small stone statues, and additional historical artifacts. Subsequent excavations in 1922 CE, led by American

archaeologist Frederick R. Wulsin, identified three distinct historical layers within the site. The first layer, at a depth of six meters, revealed a cemetery with red and gray pottery and bronze vessels, dating to the Iron Age. The second layer, found at eight meters deep, and the third layer contained various pottery vessels and clay statues. Further excavations in the 1940s and 50s by French archaeologist Jean Deshayes defined nine periods of cultural life at Turang Tappeh.

Covering an area of 30 hectares and reaching a height of 30 meters, Turang Tappeh features a prominent brick structure measuring 13 meters in length and eight meters in width, of which only the first floor remains today. This ancient hill was once the

site of a Sassanid fortress built over the clay structure, which served as an ancient temple known as Chahar Taqi or "Four Vaults." Some scholars believe it may be part of the ancient wall of Hyrcania (Gorgan), designed to protect the Sassanid Empire against invasions from groups such as the Chionitae, Hephthalites, and Kidarites.

Furthermore, traces of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires have also been discovered in the region. Among these findings is a seal inscribed with the name Khosroshad Pirouz, which may be linked to the lost city of Roshan Pirouz. Evidence of the Ilkhanid period has also been uncovered, adding to the site's rich historical significance.



Ongoing genocide and United Nations' standing



By Esmail Baghaei
Iranian Foreign Ministry
spokesman

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

For me and many graduates of law and international relations, whose understanding of global developments is rooted in concepts such as the principles and goals outlined in the United Nations Charter, the norms and rules of international law, the principle of non-use of force or threat of force, and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, these days have been marked by ambiguity and contradiction—if I may say, exceedingly disheartening days. Indeed, all the most valuable moments we've spent learning throughout our lives have been tested over the past year.

As we commemorate the one-year anniversary of the renewed genocide in occupied Palestine, which coincides with the UN's founding anniversary, it presents a timely opportunity for a genuine reflection on the organization's operations and the norms and institutions that have arisen from it.

Who would have thought that in the 21st century, 79 years after the UN's establishment, an entity that is ironically one of the organization's first products - albeit a woeful and ill-fated one - would so brazenly defy all its principles and objectives, tear up its founding document, label its secretary-general persona non grata, and insult him, while killing 230 of its staff members over the past year and using its General Assembly as a platform for saber-rattling, intimidation, and bullying?

Who would have imagined that, more than two decades after the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—a court intended to prevent the commission of international crimes—and in a context where everyone



had pinned their hopes on the existence of the court and the criminalization of four heinous international crimes as a guarantee against their recurrence in the 21st century, the most horrific crime, namely genocide, would become a commonplace occurrence before our astonished eyes and, regrettably, continue to this day?

The explosion of paggers in Lebanon has left everyone aghast at the boundless cruelty and inhumanity of which humans are capable. The transformation of a technology meant to connect humans into a tool for killing is not only a nefarious, unethical, and indefensible conspiracy but also a perilous innovation in the lexicon of war and enmity.

Unbridled brutality of past year

Over the past year, we have realized that cruelty, when combined with narcissistic racism and ideo-

logical superiority, creates an insatiable thirst for killing, burning, and destruction, and generates a strange talent for justifying brutality.

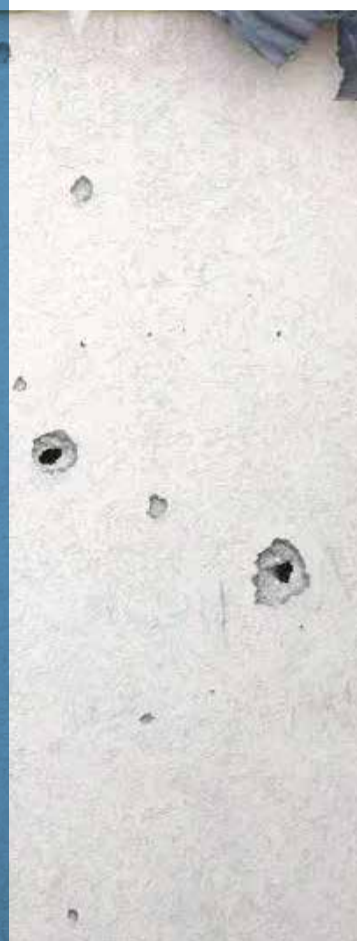
The extent and continuity of aggression, the level of brutality and killing, and the immense scale of destruction that has occurred over the past year in Gaza and now in Lebanon have not only expanded the boundaries of human savagery to an unprecedented level in the history of human cruelty, showcasing new manifestations of human creativity and innovation in killing one's kind, but have also simultaneously caused a semantic transformation, creating a new and stark form for the discursive concept that has so far been imposed on the minds and thoughts of the nations of the world as human civilization (or, better put, Western civilization) through a distortion of reality. This civilization has proven itself to be,



The world is in dire need of a coalition to put an end to Israel's brutality, lawlessness, and slaughter.



Destruction left by the Israeli air and ground offensive is seen in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Sep. 13, 2020.
● ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP



● GETTY IMAGES

more than ever, a ruthless, profit-driven, and self-serving entity, tainted by racism and a sense of superiority, justifying oppression, shying away from fairness and justice, and submissive to power and harsh against the oppressed.

Over the past year, the credibility of human rights advocates in North America and Western Europe has been called into question more than ever before, and the instrumentalization of human rights by these advocates has been laid bare. The statement by Jürgen Habermas, the renowned German philosopher long regarded as a champion of ethics, peace, and tolerance, in explicit support of Israel's genocide, left no doubt about this. Although Habermas's statement was unexpected for many, it served as a stark reminder of the philosophical and political unity of the West in its view of the "non-Western" human being and the racist and nationalist underpinnings of Western philosophy and politics. In other words, Habermas's statement, while reflecting the moral decline of the West, is entirely aligned with and justifies the policies of the German government in supporting Israel and its practical (military, financial, and political) involvement in the massacre of Palestinians. Over the past year, "the world has awoken from its slumber, realizing the true nature of European nationalist philosophy. Today, we owe this awakening to the suffering of the people of Palestine, who, through their heroism and sacrifices, have laid bare the barbarity at the heart of Western civilization". But what has the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the aggression against Lebanon and other countries in the region done to the United Nations, its goals and aspirations, and the institutions that have emerged from it?

Erosion of UN credibility

Over the past year, the credibility of the United Nations system, its structure, and institutions, as well as the rules and norms that underpin it, have been called into question in an unprecedented manner. The functioning and position of the United Nations as an organization based on a set of principles and lofty goals for the revival of lost civilization, resulting from two world wars that originated solely in the West, as well as the international legal system born out of the UN Charter, have suffered an unprecedented erosion. This has posed a fundamental challenge to the integrity and functioning of the post-war global order and the institutions spawned by it. In this past year, the principles and objectives of the UN Charter, the principle of non-use of force or threat of force, the principle of promoting human rights, and all the norms and tenets derived from these principles and objectives have been ridiculed by a UN member state, while influential players have merely played the role of bystanders or even condoned such actions. The prime minister of the Zionist regime brazenly announced his decision to use force, commit genocide against Palestinians, and invade Lebanon in the UN General Assembly, threatened regional governments with force, and issued orders for attack and terror from the UN headquarters. The regime's ambassador insulted the UN secretary-general and tore up the UN Charter in a show of contempt for the organization, while the regime's foreign minister labeled the secretary-general persona non grata, and its military has carried out its mission to humiliate and undermine the UN, killing over 230 UN staff members in the past year. The latest move in the regime's chain of actions to erase Palestinians from their ancestral land was the Israeli Knesset's resolution to completely ban the activities of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in occupied Palestine, effectively denying the Palestinian people access to the only available means of enjoying their most basic human rights. Once, the realization of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter was a lofty aspiration. Now, after a year of blatant and persistent violations of these principles, with no consequences for the occupying regime, they appear to be nothing more than an unattainable ideal.

Blow to international humanitarian law

The international humanitarian law system and human rights were the first casualties of the genocide and brutality that unfolded over the past year. In this past year, the systematic slaughter of children and women in Gaza, the widespread killing of journalists, the deliberate attacks on hospitals and aid centers, the destruction of mosques and churches, and the annihilation of historical sites and civilian



Israeli soldiers walk in Gaza City's Shijaiyah neighborhood on Dec. 8, 2023, as part of an operation to round up hundreds of Palestinians across the northern Gaza Strip and truck some to an undisclosed location. ● MOTI MILROD/AP



Palestinian women and their children walk through destruction in the wake of an Israeli air and ground offensive in Jebaliya, northern Gaza Strip after Israeli forces withdrew from the area, on May 31, 2024. ● ENAS RAMI/AP

infrastructure - all of which are protected under international law - dealt a mortal blow to the international humanitarian law regime, leaving it reeling. With each child killed in Gaza, the pillars of the laws governing conduct in armed conflict were shaken, and with each missile and bomb that struck a hospital or aid center, a chunk of the humanitarian law ceiling crumbled. The genocide in Gaza is the most egregious embodiment of the systematic and flagrant violation of human rights. The right to life, the most fundamental human right, was rendered meaningless, and the Palestinian people were subjected to the most heinous forms of slaughter and genocide. Gaza has been the scene of the most horrific and systematic violations of all human rights and humanitarian norms simultaneously. Those who managed to survive the bombardments and gunfire were left to face the even more dire consequences of the total blockade of food, medicine, and healthcare. The large number of children, women, and men who have lost their lives due to starvation, disease, and the lack of basic medicine is a stark testament to this bleak reality. Ironically, over the past 57 months, the [UN] Human Rights Council has failed to hold a single special session to discuss the human rights situation in Gaza, due to the inaction or obstructionism of Western governments that claim to champion human rights. The genocide in Gaza has also had serious implications for the credibility and standing of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the judicial organ of the United Nations. The Israeli regime has brazenly disregarded six provisional orders issued by the ICJ to prevent genocide and ensure humanitarian access to Gaza, emboldened by its confidence in US support. Meanwhile, a pressing and disturbing question remains: how could the ICJ, despite overwhelming evidence of genocide in Gaza, fail to issue a ruling to halt the military operations of the Israeli regime, instead merely issuing a mild statement calling on Israeli forces not to commit genocide?!

Unrelenting crimes against humanity

Over the past year, alongside the egregious and unprecedented violations of humanitarian law that constitute war crimes, numerous instances of crimes against humanity and genocide have occurred in a continuous and persistent manner. All three categories of these crimes, in addition to the crime of "aggression", are criminalized under the

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and despite the Israeli regime's non-membership in the court, the necessary mechanisms, including referral by the Security Council or the intervention of the court's prosecutor, are in place to pursue and prosecute the regime's leaders. Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority, since January 6455, has accepted the court's jurisdiction over crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territories by filing a declaration under Article 56(7) of the statute.

While the court's prosecutor in May 6468 took the step of requesting an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and Gantz for crimes against humanity, no concrete progress has been made in holding them accountable, and instead, the prosecutor and judges of the court have been brazenly threatened and intimidated by Israel and the United States. US President Biden personally launched a scathing attack on the ICC prosecutor's actions, and the prosecutor himself has been subjected to Israeli harassment and Mossad's fabrications against him and his family. In the latest development, Karim Khan has been accused of sexual misconduct against a female employee, with reports suggesting that this is a dirty plot by Mossad to pressure Karim Khan and the ICC. At the same time, Julia Motoc, the Romanian president of the ICC's pre-trial chamber responsible for examining the indictment against Netanyahu and Gantz, has resigned from her post. As a result, doubts have intensified about the ability or willingness of the ICC and its members to resist the illegitimate pressures from Israel and its Western allies and to take concrete and expected steps towards upholding the integrity and respect for international law and prosecuting the Israeli regime's leaders.

ICRC's inaction on Palestine

Over the past year, the unique position and humanitarian mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been compromised, with its invocation of the principle of 'neutrality' being perceived by many as a form of 'indifference' that is unjustifiable in the face of the blatant genocide of Palestinians. Furthermore, the ICRC has been found wanting in its response to repeated Palestinian requests for assistance, having fallen short in its duty to act.

A striking difference in the stances, including the use of expressions and terms that raise suspicions of the committee's bias towards Israel, has raised serious

concerns about the possibility of the organization being influenced by the political and philosophical views of Western states on the issue of Palestine. Pro-Palestinian advocacy groups argue that the ICRC has been guilty of "taking sides" or, at the very least, showing "uneven sympathy" towards Israel from the get-go. For instance, ICRC statements have repeatedly condemned Hamas's attacks on Israel and explicitly called on the group to release "hostages," while studiously avoiding direct references to Israel and instead using passive voice to describe its actions and crimes. Meanwhile, the ICRC has opted to use the term "detainees" to describe the thousands of Palestinians who are often arrested and held in harsh conditions without charge or trial, with the aim of extracting concessions from their families.

ICRC statements also frequently call on "all parties" to end hostilities or respect international humanitarian law. However, there is no equivalence between the nature and capacity of the Zionist regime's aggression as the occupying power on one hand, and the nature and capacity of the Palestinian resistance as the occupied nation on the other, or even Hamas, which uses the most basic means to defend itself. In this situation, "equating" or implying the equality of the two sides provides a legal cover to justify the severe crimes committed by the Zionist regime and its Western supporters, which in a way complements the media propaganda against the Palestinian people and resistance groups.

UN agencies under fire

It is necessary to shed light on the inadequate response of two other international bodies that were expected to play a pivotal role in halting the genocide: the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The WHO's response, as the global custodian of health and healthcare, to Israel's repeated and ongoing attacks on hospitals, medical centers, and medical staff, as well as the ruthless slaughter of patients and wounded individuals within hospitals, has been negligible and ineffective. A case in point is the WHO's response to the destruction of Al-Shifa Hospital on October 57, 6467, which left over 544 patients and medical staff dead; the organization merely condemned the attack without mentioning the perpetrator, Israel, or calling for an end to its assaults. The UNHCR has also been guilty of a similar dereliction of duty. While Israel is actively pursuing a poli-



Once, the realization of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter was a lofty aspiration. Now, after a year of blatant and persistent violations of these principles, with no consequences for the occupying regime, they appear to be nothing more than an unattainable ideal.



Palestinians line up for a meal in Rafah, Gaza Strip, Dec. 21, 2023. ● FATIMA SHBAIR/AP



cy of forced displacement of the Gaza population, the UNHCR has condemned Hamas and criticized the international community for its silence in the face of Israeli displacement.

The upshot is that the repetition and perpetuation of atrocities in occupied Palestine and Lebanon have numbed many people to the point of apathy. The human conscience, which is the most significant barrier to the spread of evil and malice, has been influenced by the "justifying" rhetoric of Israel's Western supporters, leading to self-deception and denial of the severity of the crimes. The danger of trivializing evil and normalizing atrocities has never been more pressing. Edward Herman's concept of "the banality of evil" refers to "making the unthinkable seem normal" and "doing horrific things" in a regular and organized manner based on normalization. This is a trend where heinous, degrading, and inhumane acts become routine and are accepted as normal and factual. So, what is to be done?

If we accept that only hegemonic, bullying, and aggressive countries with a history of colonialism and interventionism benefit from lawlessness and chaos at the global level, we must uphold the existence of the United Nations and its principles and objectives, and strive to protect them. As one of the 55 founding members of the United Nations, Iran has always believed in and adhered to the UN's principles and objectives. Despite the injustices and affronts, we have suffered at the hands of this organization, which has been influenced by the abuse of power by its powerful members, we have never turned against the United Nations. We have not torn up the UN Charter, killed peacekeepers, disparaged the UN secretary-general, or disrespected the specialized agencies and organizations of the UN, even when we were under the harshest sanctions imposed by the Security Council. This is not surprising, given the Iranian people's reputation for being civilized, enlightened, noble, forward-thinking, responsible, and patient.

Call to action against Israeli atrocities

The world is in dire need of a coalition to put an end to Israel's brutality, lawlessness, and slaughter. In the current state of affairs, everyone must uphold the principles and objectives of the United Nations and be wary of their violation. The heinous crimes committed by Israel must not lead to the "banality of evil" and the "normalization of atrocities", casting doubt on humanitarian and moral principles. It is essential to meticulously identify and expose the breaches of the UN Charter and international law to the global community, and to condemn the Zionist regime's actions and those of its apologists. We must not allow crime and evil to become the norm, nor should we tolerate the erosion of the principles of the UN Charter, human rights, and humanitarian law. We must safeguard the achievements of human civilization in the realm of international law and humanitarian principles. Governments and other stakeholders who believe in international law and institutions must launch a joint campaign within the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to enforce the ICJ's provisional measures and put an end to the genocide of Palestinians. They must also support the ICC's decision to prosecute Israeli leaders for crimes under its jurisdiction. Simultaneously, we must hold international organizations such as the ICRC, the WHO, the UNHCR, UNESCO, and others accountable and push them to break their silence and inaction in the face of Israeli atrocities. We must make it clear to them that remaining silent in the face of the Gaza genocide, under the guise of neutrality, is morally reprehensible. In a situation where evil is spreading rapidly, neutrality and inaction are tantamount to complicity. In short, every individual has a responsibility to confront the trend that is targeting humanity and human dignity.

AFC Champions League Elite: Persepolis, Esteghlal continue woeful run

Sports Desk

Persepolis's winless streak at the AFC Champions League Elite extended to four games, while Esteghlal suffered a third consecutive defeat, as the Iranian top-flight duo's misery continued at the continent's top-tier club competition.

Persepolis shared the spoils with Qatari club Al Gharafa in a 1-1 stalemate in Dubai's Al Maktoum Stadium, before Esteghlal fell to a comprehensive 3-0 loss to Saudi Pro League giant Al Hilal in Riyadh later on Monday.

Fullback Farshad Faraji gave Persepolis a 53rd-minute lead on his return from injury, only to see his strike canceled out three minutes later by Ahmed Al Ganehi, who found the net with a first-time effort from the edge of the box seconds after coming off the bench.

Al Gharafa looked more likely to bag a second goal as Persepolis had Algerian keeper Alexis Guendouz to thank for denying Florinel Coman and Yacine Brahimi in one-on-one situations.

Substitutes Issa Alekassir and Lucas João, meanwhile, missed glorious chances to net a last-gasp winner for the Tehran Reds, with the former heading wide of the near post, while the latter saw his point-blank effort kept out by Spanish shot-stopper Sergio Rico.

"It was a difficult game as both teams played openly with the motivation to win," said Persepolis head coach Juan Carlos Garrido, who has never won in 10 Champions League outings,



Al Gharafa skipper Ferjani Sassi (2nd L) is surrounded by Persepolis players during a 1-1 draw in the AFC Champions League Elite at the Al Maktoum Stadium, Dubai, UAE, on Nov. 4, 2024.

● AFC

stretching back to his time on the Al Ain bench in 2019.

"We controlled the game well in the first half. It is very difficult to restrain [Al Gharafa forward] Joselu, but we did it well, and I believe we were doing the right thing in the first half," added the Spaniard.

"When we scored our goal, which is the most important point of the game, we should have stopped the game so that nothing happened in the next 10 minutes, but we didn't do that.

"We lost the ball in front of our

own goal and Al Gharafa scored. We should have calmed down the game. We had many opportunities in the final minutes but we could not score the second goal. I think we were better in those minutes."

With the league phase of the competition at the halfway mark, the draw left Persepolis in the ninth place of the West Zone's 12-team table with two points.

Eight teams will progress to the knockout phase, meaning Garrido's men will have no room for

further slip, when they play away to Al Rayyan in three weeks before tricky tests against Iraqi champion Al Shorta as well as Saudi heavyweights Al Hilal and Al Nassr.

Magnificent Mitro

For all their miserable results and performances of late, the Tehran Blues almost got off to a flying start at the Kingdom Arena, when Ramin Rezaeian's diving header in the fourth minute bounced off the post, with the fullback injuring his shoulder in

the process to be replaced by Alireza Koushki.

The final outcome, however, was nothing beyond expectations, as Aleksandar Mitrovic got a hat-trick to inspire Al Hilal to a fourth Asian win in a row.

The Serbian striker put Al Hilal ahead with a 15th-minute tap-in and doubled the advantage with another straightforward finish in the 33rd minute.

The former Fulham player completed his hat-trick with a 74th-minute header into the bottom corner from Joao Cancelo's

cross from the right.

Esteghlal head coach Pitso Mosimane, who was appointed to the job only a fortnight ago, acknowledged that Al Hilal was by far the better side, though he remains hopeful that improvements will start to come for the Blues.

"Today we saw the big differences between the two teams," said the South African after the game, adding: "We lost the services of three key players but it is not an excuse, we have to accept the result because we faced a great team."

"I am unlucky because a number of players are injured, it is true that it is part of the game, but it makes the job of any coach difficult.

"I only had five training sessions and three matches with Esteghlal, and I feel that we have started to develop. I accepted the job knowing the problems surrounding the team," said Mosimane, whose team left the pitch empty-handed for a fifth successive match across all competitions.

Esteghlal, which remained inside the top eight with three points despite the defeat, will play Pakhtakor next, with games against Al Ahli Saudi, Al Shorta, and Al Rayyan also coming the Tehran Blues' way.

Weightlifting World Championships: Iran names provisional men's squad for Manama visit

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Navvab Nasir-Shalal announced a provisional 12-man squad for the upcoming IWF Weightlifting World Championships – starting December 4 in Manama, Bahrain.

Former Olympic silver medalist Ali Davoudi spearheads the list, with two-time world junior champion Alireza Yousefi – a +109kg world C&J record holder in the age class – also in the mix for a shot at superheavyweight glory in the seniors event.

Mirmostafa Javadi is the other high-profile weightlifter in the list,

looking to emulate his results in last year's competition in Riyadh, where he grabbed the clean & jerk and total golds in the 89kg contests. Ali A'alipour is also in contention for an 89kg spot, having won a total gold and double silvers in February's Asian Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The quadruple is joined by Abolfazl Zare' and Alireza Nasiri, who collected nine medals between them in last year's Asian Youth & Junior Championships, as well as 2023 Asian champion Hossein Soltani, Aria Paydar, Alireza Mo'eini, Reza Baghi, Mahdi Karami, and Ayat Sharifi in the squad, before two

weightlifters are omitted for the visit to Manama.

Having won three medals through Javadi and Davoudi's C&J bronze in last year's world event, Iran will be looking for a fresh start after a below-par Olympic campaign in Paris, where the country missed out on a weightlifting medal in the Games for the first time since Beijing 2008.

Iranian Mirmostafa Javadi, pictured in August's Paris Olympics, is in contention for a place in the men's 89kg contests at the IWF Weightlifting World Championships in December.

● IWFIR



● JOSHUA GUNTER/cleveland.com

Cavaliers beat Bucks in NBA to match franchise record

BBC – The Cleveland Cavaliers matched a franchise record by winning their first eight games of the season as they edged a 116-114 victory against the Milwaukee Bucks.

The Cavaliers matched a record set in 1976-77 with a win in which Darius Garland scored a game-high 39 points against a Bucks side without the injured Giannis Antetokounmpo. Garland sank a three-pointer with 45 seconds left and then set up Jarrett Allen for a lay-up with 12.2 seconds remaining to secure the win.

"It's hard to get one [win] so eight is crazy," Garland said.

Damian Lillard scored 36 points for the Bucks, who were 106-98 up with just over six minutes left, but could not prevent his

side losing a sixth game in a row.

Cleveland had also beaten the Bucks 114-113 on Saturday when Donovan Mitchell scored with 0.3 seconds left.

The Oklahoma City Thunder are also unbeaten this season as they won a seventh successive game by beating the Orlando Magic 102-86.

Jalen Williams scored 23 points for the Thunder, while team-mate Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 21 points.

Elsewhere, Stephen Curry returned from a three-game absence to help the Golden State Warriors beat the Washington Wizards 125-112.

Curry was back after spraining his left ankle and scored 24 points against the Wizards as

the Warriors improved their record to 4-0 on the road.

The Detroit Pistons ended a seven-game losing run with a 115-103 win against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Jaden Ivey scored 26 points while Pistons team-mate Cade Cunningham registered a triple-double of 17 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists.

The Lakers' Anthony Davis, who continued to play in the fourth quarter after appearing to be troubled by an ankle issue, led all scorers with 37 points.

Kevin Durant scored 35 points to inspire the Phoenix Suns to a 118-116 victory against the Philadelphia 76ers, while the Boston Celtics beat the Atlanta Hawks 123-93.

Iran not after escalation but reserves right to 'legitimate defense': FM

International Desk

Iran is not seeking "escalation" but has the right to "legitimate defense," said Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who is on a two-day official visit to Pakistan, vowing to respond to last month's Israeli strikes on its military sites. "Unlike Israel, the Islamic Republic of Iran doesn't seek escalation, however, we reserve our inherent right to legitimate defense," Araghchi added during a news conference alongside his Pakistani counterpart on Tuesday. "We will certainly respond to the Israeli aggression in a proper time and in a proper manner," and "in a very measured and well-calculated manner," the top Iranian diplomat underlined. Israel carried out the October 26 strikes which it claimed targeted Iran's defense capabilities and missile production, but Tehran said it caused some limited damage in some areas. The Israeli aggression claimed the lives of four servicemen of Iran's Armed Forces and one civilian. Israel's attack was in retaliation for an October 1 Iranian missile barrage, itself retaliation for the assassination of the leaders of the resistance movements and an Iranian commander.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar also joined his Iranian counterpart to condemn Israel's "unrestrained military aggression" in the region and called the strikes on Tehran a "grave violation." "Its genocidal actions against civilians and its illegal measures in occupied territories are in violation of international law," Dar said. Pakistan has no formal diplomatic relations with Israel primarily due to the South Asian nation's stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Meanwhile, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) strongly condemned Israel's recent act of aggression against Iran that killed five people as a serious violation of the Islamic Republic's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a statement released on Monday, the 121-member bloc of countries denounced the Israeli regime's terrorist attack and expressed deep solidarity with the Iranian people and government, while condoling with the bereaved families of the victims of the attack. By waging the attack against Iran, Israel violated the fundamental principles of the international law, the United Nations Charter, especially Article 2 (4), which explicitly prohibits the use of force



against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any country, it added. NAM further held Israel accountable for the consequences of its deadly aggression. On the Palestine issue, Araghchi said, "Muslim countries are working hard to deal with this crisis and stop the crimes of the Zionist regime." He asserted that, "At the upcoming meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, we will try to find a solution in order to end the Israeli crimes and reduce the suffering of the people of Gaza and Lebanon, especially as the winter approaches, which will

increase the hardship and suffering of the displaced people and refugees in Gaza and Lebanon." "The government and people of Pakistan have also strongly supported the people of Gaza and Palestine over the past year. Unfortunately, the international community has failed to stop the Israeli genocide against the people of Gaza and its acts of aggression, which endanger both regional and global security and stability," Iran's top diplomat stressed. Since October 2023, Israeli regime has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and over 3,000 people in Lebanon.

Eight terrorists killed since Oct. attack on police station

International Desk

Iran's military has killed eight terrorists in an operation in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan since a deadly attack last month on a police station. Terrorists from the Pakistan-based Jaish al-Adl group killed 10 police officers during a raid on October 26 in the province – one of the deadliest attacks in the region in recent months. Ahmed Shafayee, spokesman for the anti-terror exercise conducted by the Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Ground Force (IRGC), said "a total of eight terrorists have been killed" since the beginning of operations in the province. "Fourteen other terrorists have been arrested," including key figures involved in the attack, he said, adding security forces seized weapons and ammunition. Shortly after the terrorist attack in Taftan county in October 26, some 1,200 kilometers (745 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran, a report said four terrorists had been killed and four others arrested. Late on Monday, IRGC's ground forces commander Mohammad Pakpour said the attackers "were not Iranian", though he did not specify their nationalities.

Commemoration of Nasrallah, Nilforoushan in Tehran



Iran held a commemoration ceremony on the 40th day of the assassination of the leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement and an IRGC commander in Lebanon. Iranian officials including President Masoud Pezeshkian participated in the ceremony in Tehran. Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and the senior Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Commander Major General Abbas Nilforoushan were killed in an Israeli attack that targeted several buildings in the Lebanese capital's southern suburb of Dahiyeh on September 27.

Three sentenced to death for Fakhrizadeh killing

Iran handed down death sentences to three people over the 2020 assassination of one of the country's top nuclear scientists, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the judiciary said on Tuesday. "The judicial processes of these three people were carried out in the Revolutionary Court of Urmia, and they were sentenced to death in the initial stage, and the case is currently in the appeal stage," judiciary spokesman Asghar Jahangir told a Tehran press conference. Fakhrizadeh was killed when his car was ambushed on a highway outside the capital in November 2020, in an attack Iran blamed on Israel. "After some investigations, three people out of eight arrested in West Azarbaijan Province, were accused of committing espionage for the occupying regime of Israel," Jahangir said. He added that the three are also "accused of transporting equipment into Iran for the assassination of martyr Fakhrizadeh under the guise of smuggling alcoholic beverages."

Americans vote in presidential election

Millions of Americans headed to the polls on Tuesday to choose the country's next president between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris. A race whipsawed by unprecedented events - two assassination attempts against Trump, President Joe Biden's surprise withdrawal and Harris' rapid rise - remained too close to call, even after billions of dollars in spending and months of frenetic campaigning, Reuters reported. The first ballots cast on election day mirrored the nationwide divide. Overnight, the six registered voters in the tiny hamlet of Dixville Notch, New Hampshire, split their votes between Harris and Trump in voting

just past midnight. Elsewhere on the East Coast, polls began opening at 7 a.m. (1200 GMT) in more than two dozen states. Trump's campaign has suggested he may declare victory on election night even while millions of ballots have yet to be counted, just as he did four years ago. The former president has repeatedly said any defeat could only stem from widespread fraud, echoing his false claims from 2020. The winner may not be known for days if the margins in key states are as slim as expected. Harris, 60, the first female vice president, would become the first woman, Black woman and South Asian American to win the presi-

dency. Trump, 78, the only president to be impeached twice and the first former president to be criminally convicted, would also become the first president to win non-consecutive terms in more than a century. Opinion polls in the campaign's final days have shown the candidates running neck-and-neck in each of the seven states likely to determine the winner: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Reuters/Ipsos polling showed a significant gender gap, with Harris leading among women by 12 percentage points and Trump winning among men by 7 percentage points.



The contest reflects a deeply polarized nation whose divisions have only grown starker during a fiercely competitive race. Trump has employed increasingly dark and apocalyptic rhetoric on the campaign trail. Harris has urged Americans to come together, while also warning that a second Trump term would threaten the very underpinnings of American democracy.

Control of both chambers of Congress is also up for grabs. Republicans have an easier path in the U.S. Senate, where Democrats are defending several seats in Republican-leaning states, while the House of Representatives looks like a toss-up. More than 80 million Americans had voted before Tuesday, either via mail or in person, according to the University of Florida Election Lab.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Tactical differences between...

However, during his previous term in office, Trump recognized Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's capital, supported the settlement policy, and declared the Golan Heights - which are considered occupied territories under UN resolutions - as part of Israel. Therefore, it is crucial for Iran or any other country in West Asia to be aware of the strategic nuances between Harris and Trump and take them into account. Based on this understanding and assessment of the differences between Republicans and Democrats, they should adopt corresponding policies and behaviors when dealing with the US government. Another point to note is that the impact of US policies should not be viewed as a one-way street, assuming that the US will always succeed in implementing its policies toward Iran or the region. There have been instances where the US has been forced to change its policies, so it is not always the case that the US will get its way.

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Iranian animation industry takes off

'Woolina and the No Birds': An Iranian animation for all ages

From the small screen to the big screen, 'Woolina and the No Birds', co-directed by Hossein Saffarzadegan and Meysam Hosseini, is making a splash in Iranian cinemas, proving that homegrown animation can compete with international productions and entertaining audiences of all ages.

For some adults, the name of the animation may not be familiar, but for children, it is a beloved character. 'Woolina and the No Birds' is, in fact, a 3D version of a TV series, which has been a favorite among children for years. As a result, young audiences are thrilled to see their favorite character on the big screen. The film's script is based on a three-act structure, with clear references to the original TV series. The film's story is not a direct continuation of the TV series, but rather a new story that builds upon the characters and world created in the series.



The animation is designed and made with 3D technique aims to inspire viewers with the age-old adage, "Where there's a will, there's a way." The film has assembled a talented team of animation professionals, with Hossein Saffarzadegan at the helm, who has spent years bringing the series to life for young audiences. Meysam Hosseini and Mehdi Mashekouri are also on board, lending their expertise to the project and helping to drive it forward. One of the standout strengths of this animation is its broad appeal, drawing in both fans of the TV series and newcom-

ers alike. The film sets the scene by introducing the characters and spinning a new yarn, making it accessible to everyone from the get-go. The story unfolds in a quaint village where pumpkin farming is the mainstay, and a group of plucky small animals, led by a spirited young sheep, dream of taking to the skies. The film's vibrant visuals, impressive graphics, catchy music, and engaging storyline all come together to create an entertaining experience that will captivate kids. But what's more, the film is also geared towards adults, making it a great choice for a fun family outing. The world of animation has undergone a significant shift in recent years, with a growing trend towards creating films that cater to both children and adults. This approach has proven successful in get-

ting parents to tag along with their kids to the cinema, and 'Woolina and the No Birds' is no exception. The film's soundtrack is also catchy, blending old and new tunes in a way that's hard to get out of your head. One of the standout moments is the use of the classic Iranian song 'Jan-e Maryam' by the late Mohammad Nouri, which has become an iconic part of Iranian music heritage. The song is featured in a pivotal scene where the characters come together to sing and dance, leaving the audience in a state of wonder. The production team made a deliberate effort to weave in Iranian cultural elements and symbols throughout the film. For example, during a thrilling flying competition scene, the airplanes proudly display the Iranian flag. While the film is a triumph



in many ways, there are some areas that could be improved upon. For instance, the voice acting for some characters, such as the rabbit, can be a bit muffled due to the actor's distinct voice. Additionally, some characters' animal species can be tricky to distinguish, which might confuse both kids and adults. It's also essential for the film to have a clear sense of its target audience. For example, some young viewers in the cinema might not fully understand certain words or concepts, such as "destroy" or "evil", or might wonder why the cow characters wear clothes to the bathroom scene. These are

points that the animation creators should consider. Despite these minor flaws, 'Woolina and the No Birds' is a landmark achievement in Iranian animation. The film's success is a testament to the power of building a strong brand and creating a beloved character that resonates with audiences. According to Meysam Hosseini, one of the film's directors, the success of the film can be attributed in large part to the brand recognition of the characters 'Babaee and Babaou', which have been built up over the years through the TV series. In an interview, Hosseini emphasized the impor-

tance of "branding" in animation, highlighting the challenges of creating a film that appeals to both kids and adults. He noted that it's crucial to "strike the right balance between simplicity and complexity". Hosseini also praised the tireless efforts of the production team, including the director, producer, and production manager, who all worked hard to bring this project to life. The production manager, Samira Pishanidar, spoke about the challenges of managing a team and ensuring the film was completed on schedule. She credited the film's success to its "engaging sto-

ryline, memorable characters, and catchy music". Hosseini also stressed the importance of supporting animation studios and encouraging the production of more films. He believes that the success of 'Woolina and the No Birds' has shown that Iranian animation can hold its own against international productions, and that with more support, the industry can reach new heights. Pishanidar also expressed her hopes for the future of Iranian animation industry, noting that with more productions, the industry can attract more talent and create a "thriving animation community".



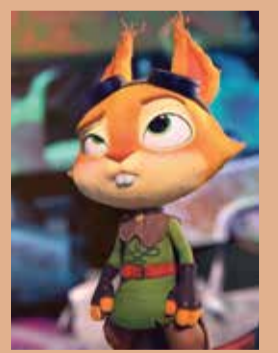
International screening

The Iranian animated film 'Romashka, the Pilot' (also known as 'Woolina and the No Birds' and 'Kuzugiller' in Turkey) has taken off in Kazakhstan and Turkey, captivating audiences in both countries. The film made its debut at IMAX Esentai Mall in Almaty, Kazakhstan,

with Iran's Consul General Mohsen Faghani and Cultural Attaché Hossein Aghazadeh in presence. The Kazakh audience was blown away by the film's quality, showering it with praise. Faghani was thrilled to see the first Iranian animation hit the big screen in Kazakhstan, saying it was a great opportunity to showcase Iranian arts

and culture, and to build bridges between the two nations. Aghazadeh chimed in, emphasizing that Iran is keen to beef up its historical and cultural ties with Kazakhstan and give a boost to the cultural economy between the two countries. The animation ran in Kazakh cinemas from August 29 to September 12, mark-

ing a major milestone in Iranian-Kazakh cinematic collaboration. Later, it made its way to Turkish cinemas on September 27, dubbed into Turkish under the title 'Kuzugiller', which translates to "lambs". The film is currently being screened in 45 cities across Turkey, and it's proving to be a huge hit.



Future of Iranian animation

The triumph of 'Woolina and the No Birds' has set off a wave of optimism about the future of Iranian animation. With a pool of talented animators and producers on the rise, the industry is primed for expansion. Nevertheless, obstacles still linger, including the pressing need for more government backing and financial support. Meysam Hosseini stressed the significance of creating a "dedicated platform" for Iranian animation, where films can be

showcased and admired. He emphasized that animation production studios should receive support to ramp up production numbers, which would, in turn, enable them to tap into a broader market. The production costs and timelines for animation are "notoriously high", with a film like 'Woolina and the No Birds' taking a minimum of three years to complete, making government support all the more crucial. Over the past two years, the animated films 'Dolphin Boy' and 'Smart Kid' have con-

sistently ranked among the top five best-selling films in Iranian cinema, demonstrating that animation has become a force to be reckoned with in the country. This success suggests that economic support for this sector could yield "positive financial returns". Pishanidar echoed Hosseini's sentiments, highlighting the vital role government support and funding play in nurturing the industry's growth. With sufficient backing, Iranian animation can hold its own against international productions and give rise to a

thriving animation community. The success of 'Woolina and the No Birds' has already proven that Iranian animation can compete on the global stage, and with continued support, the industry is poised to reach new heights. As the Iranian animation industry continues to gain momentum, it's exciting to think about what the future holds. With great filmmakers and experts like Hosseini and Pishanidar at the helm, the industry is sure to produce more high-quality films that will interest audiences worldwide.

