



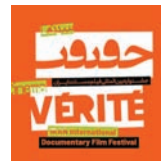
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New academic year begins amid pandemic

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Health Minister Saeed Namaki addresses the opening ceremony of the new academic year at the University of Tehran on Sunday, while President Hassan Rouhani is present via a video conference link.

Iran should jump-start COVID-hit tourism under health protocols: VP

TEHRAN — First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri on Saturday tasked the tourism ministry with implementing strategic plans to help jump-start the country's traveling sector ravaged by the coronavirus over the past couple of months.

Today, almost all businesses have been activated in compliance with health protocols, which have been defined by national headquarters for fighting the spread of the coronavirus, Jahangiri said. "This way, the tourism ministry, and the national headquarters should deepen cooperation to formulate necessary health instructions needed for the tourism sector under health instructions."

The first vice-president made the remarks in a meeting with Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan and his deputy for tourism Vali Teymouri in attendance.

"Today is a tough time for the tourism industry as the global medical professionals recommend people to stay home and not to travel. This trend, however, has caused the tourism industry to suffer abundant financial losses," Jahangiri explained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior official pointed out to vast tourism potential that the country holds, saying "Iran has unique characteristics in are arenas of civilization and history.... and many tourists around the world are interested in visiting nature, forests, beaches, and other religious, historical and archaeological attractions of the country."

Referring to the negative impacts of the U.S. sanctions on the national economy, he said that while the country is facing restrictions on foreign currency exchange and sanctions on its oil sales, the development of tourism industry can meet the need to foreign currency to some extent and yet increase people's incomes, and help create job opportunities.

He also appreciated efforts made by the tourism ministry for developing a strategic plan for the development of the national tourism industry, which is recently gained ratification from the cabinet.

The ministry of tourism should try its best to implement the strategic plan as soon as possible, Jahangiri noted.

Mounesan, for his part, delivered a report on tourism and hospitality sectors of the country during the coronavirus era and said: "Due to the fact that many provinces of the country have traditional destinations for domestic and foreign tourists, ➔6

Combining theory and practice, a must for indigenizing oil equipment

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Strengthening domestic production and indigenizing the knowledge and technology for production of the products and equipment that Iran imports from other countries has become one of the major programs that the country is pursuing in recent years.

To materialize this objective, knowledge-based companies have played a noticeable part, especially in indigenizing the products and equipment used in the oil industry, which is the major sector in the country's national economy.

Cooperating with capable domestic knowledge-based companies and startups that are working on indigenization projects, Eslami noted that the ministry has taken several positive steps so far, however, most of this steps can be categorized as theoretical measures and there is still a long way to the full implementation of them in practice.

"Promising decrees and regulations have been defined in this regard and all three major subsidiaries of the Oil Ministry (NIOC, NIGC, and NPC) have been ordered to follow up on these regulations for supporting the indigenization program in their areas of work, ➔4

Industries Equipment Manufacturers Association (IOIEMA) Mojtaba Eslami to discuss the Oil Ministry's programs and the challenges in the way of realizing these programs, in detail. What follows is a gist of the conversation.

Theoretical measures

Asked about the Oil Ministry's programs and strategies for supporting knowledge-based companies and startups that are working on indigenization projects, Eslami noted that the ministry has taken several positive steps so far, however, most of this steps can be categorized as theoretical measures and there is still a long way to the full implementation of them in practice.

"Promising decrees and regulations have been defined in this regard and all three major subsidiaries of the Oil Ministry (NIOC, NIGC, and NPC) have been ordered to follow up on these regulations for supporting the indigenization program in their areas of work, ➔4

Chinese military calls U.S. biggest threat to world peace

China's Defense Ministry Sunday blasted a critical U.S. report on the country's military ambitions, saying it is the U.S. instead that poses the biggest threat to the international order and world peace.

The statement follows the Sept. 2 release of the annual Defense Department report to Congress on Chinese military developments and goals that it said would have "serious implications for U.S. national interests and the security of the international rules-based order."

Defense Ministry spokesman Col. Wu Qian called the report a "wanton distortion" of China's aims and the relationship between the People's Liberation Army and China's 1.4 billion people, AP reported.

"Many years of evidence shows that it is the U.S. that is the fomenter of regional unrest, the violator of the international order and the destroyer of world peace," he said.

U.S. actions in Iraq, Syria, Libya and other

countries over the past two decades have resulted in the deaths of more than 800,000 people and displacement of millions, Qian said.

"Rather than reflecting on itself, the U.S. issued a so-called report that made false comments about China's normal defense and military construction," he said in the statement. "We call on the U.S. to view China's national defense and military construction objectively and rationally, cease making false statements and related reports, and take concrete actions to safeguard the healthy development of bilateral military relations."

Running to more than 150 pages, the Defense Department report examined the PLA's technical capabilities, doctrines and the ultimate aims of China's military buildup. It said it includes becoming a "practical instrument" of China's statecraft with an active role in advancing Beijing's foreign policy and "aims to revise aspects of the international order."

E3 face stark test over snapback mechanism

TEHRAN — As the 30-day U.S. process of restoring the UN sanctions on Iran is nearing its end, the European signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal ratchet up efforts to find a way forward while preventing a total collapse of the 2015 nuclear deal.

However, an expert on international relations tells the Tehran Times that Europe has a little leeway to stand up against the U.S. efforts to restore UN sanctions on Iran, given Europe's close economic relations with the U.S.

"The Europeans are not independent of the U.S.

influence. Europe is unable to stand up against the U.S.," Ali Bigdeli, a retired university professor specialized in international relations told the Tehran Times, adding that Europe is heavily under the U.S. economic influence.

According to the professor, the U.S. and the EU have deep relations, although they have differences over some issues.

European signatories to the nuclear deal – France, Germany, and the UK (E3) – step up efforts to find a common ground on the nuclear deal as the

U.S. prepares to announce the return of all UN sanctions on Iran.

E3 foreign ministers held a meeting at Chevening House in Sevenoaks, Kent on September 10 to discuss the situation around the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

During the Kent meeting, the foreign ministers reached a consensus on the U.S. bid to trigger the snapback process, according to a report published by the Guardian. ➔3



© Mehr/ Maryam Davarnia

Pistachio harvest begins in northeast Iran

Jajarm county in the northeastern province of North Khorasan is a major producer of pistachio in the country. The harvest season begins in the end of summer and runs through the early autumn.

The country's pistachio production is predicted to increase by 55,000 tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021) compared to the previous year, reaching 220,000 tons. The country exported 35,000 tons of pistachio during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year.

China was the main destination for the Iranian pistachio, followed by Germany, Iraq, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

Normalization between some Arab governments and 'Israel': Facts and figures

By Khalid Qoddoumi

Palestinian scholar

The term itself says that something is not "normal". It needs to be normalized, or something that was a taboo is converted into permissible. This is the situation of the relations between Arabs and "Israel" since the Palestinians' catastrophe (Nakba) in 1948 when the "Israeli" occupation started. Hence, no doubt this topic is controversial and paradoxical.

A few ideas on the subject is given below:

(1) Where has the normalization process reached after 42 years of the first attempt at Camp David 1978?

In 1978 the Egyptian government forged its official diplomatic relations with "Israel" brokered by the United States government. On the 20th of January 2000, The Economist published an article titled "Israelis whom Egyptians love to hate." The article endorsed the negative "Israeli" character portrayed by the cinema producers in Egypt. "Their women are sluttish schemers. Their men scowling thugs, prone to blood-spilling and to strange guttural barking," the Economist said. Irrespective of decades of relations, the Egyptians still have their "unwelcoming" attitude to the newly imposed and alien "friend."

In 2016 another study was published where Dr. Abdulaleem, the senior advisor to the Center of Pyramids for political and strategic studies, said, "Egyptians are least interested in any sort of normalization with "Israel". The paper mentioned that such a relationship is only at the security apparatus level and few desks at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry. It is a "cold peace," it wrote. ➔5

Rouhani, Raisi, Ghalibaf meet

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The heads of the three branches of government - President Hassan Rouhani, Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi, and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf - met on Sunday afternoon.



It was the first joint meeting in which the parliament speaker attended. It was also the first meeting of its kind in the current Iranian year, which began on March 20, 2020.

The meeting was hosted by President Hassan Rouhani. Economic issues was the cornerstone of the talks between the three senior officials.

Ghalibaf was elected parliament speaker after the new parliament convened on May 27.

Iran spins 1,044 centrifuges at Fordow plant: nuclear chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Salehi, the director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), announced on Sunday that Iran is currently spinning more centrifuges at the Fordow nuclear facility than the number permitted under a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

Under the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran is unauthorized to enrich uranium at Fordow.

However, Iran resumed enriching uranium there in response to U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA under a policy of gradually reducing its commitments under the deal in five phases.

"We have committed in the JCPOA not to spin these 1,044 centrifuges [at the Fordow plant]. But according to [the policy of] reducing JCPOA commitments we enrich [uranium] as needed and we will stockpile the enriched materials," Salehi, a nuclear physicist, told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA).

He said, "The fourth phase of the policy of reducing JCPOA commitments by the Islamic Republic of Iran has been fully implemented. Accordingly, we have activated a wing at Fordow."

Salehi was responding to remarks by lawmakers criticizing the AEOI over not implementing the fourth phase of reducing Iran's nuclear commitments.

"1,044 centrifuges are enriching uranium at Fordow in accordance with the policies of reducing the JCPOA commitments. So we have done our part completely," the AEOI director pointed out.

Jalili says Iran-China partnership will neutralize U.S. maximum pressure

1 → Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on June 23 that Iran and China have drafted a 25-year plan for comprehensive cooperation which proves failure of the plots to isolate the Islamic Republic.

"This plan proves failure of the United States' policies to isolate Iran, sever Iran's relations with the international community and also to harm Iran's will to expand relations with other countries," Rabiei said during a press conference.



He said that the 25-year plan is based on a win-win approach which "heralds long term cooperation".

"Recognizing cultural commonalities, encouraging multilateralism, supporting equal rights of the nations and insisting on domestic development are parts of this plan," the government spokesman explained.

In a meeting on June 21, the cabinet of ministers approved the final draft of the 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan between Iran and China.

Rouhani hails nation's resistance against challenges

TEHRAN (MNA) – President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday hailed the Iranian nation's resistance against the current challenges, stressing the need to continue the health protocols amid pandemic.

Addressing the ceremony to begin the new academic year at universities via videoconference, Rouhani stressed that through careful observance of health protocols the new wave of COVID-19 will be prevented.

He also underlined the significance of virtual education as a requirement for social distancing to contain the spread of the pandemic.

The president thanked the universities for rendering a combination of in-person and virtual education during the pandemic. Noting that the Iranian nation has been entangled with two challenges of pandemic and U.S. sanctions in the past months, Rouhani said we must both rely on our own capabilities and provide the conditions for interaction with the world.

"Today is a day of double resistance for the Iranian nation: Resistance against the unprecedented sanctions with conspiracies against the nation and resistance against the dangerous coronavirus."

"Such resistance will be possible through trust and hope. If a nation does not trust itself and feels defeated in the face of enormous external pressure, that nation will not succeed in its lofty national goals."

Bahraini rulers seek to gain legitimacy from the devil: Mohsen Rezaee

POLITICAL **TEHRA** — Secretary of Iran's Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaee has said that the "illegitimate" regime of Bahrain seeks to gain legitimacy from Zionism which is the most devil enemy of Islam.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Friday, September 11, that he brokered what he called "a historic deal" between Israel and Bahrain.

Under the deal, Israel and Bahrain have committed to begin the exchange of embassies and ambassadors, start direct flights, and launch cooperation initiatives across a broad range of sectors, according to a White House statement issued on September 11.

Rezaee said in a tweet that the agreement between the Zionist regime and Bahrain has nothing to do with the Bahraini people.

"The regimes which publicize the relations had ties with the Zionist regime before, but they concealed it. However, it has been proved in history that their throne will not be protected by betraying Islam and the Islamic community. This is tradition of God," he said in another tweet.

He also said in another tweet that normalization of ties with the Zionist regime is a gift of certain Arab countries to Donald Trump.

The former IRGC chief described the Arab countries' action a dagger in the back of the Islamic community and an endorsement of



the occupation of Palestine.

Trump announced normalization of ties between Bahrain and the Zionist regime 29 days after the United Arab Emirates agreed to fully normalize ties with Israel.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the parliament speaker on international affairs, has also censured rulers in Manama

for agreeing to establish full diplomatic ties with Israel, saying the move is a "great betrayal to the Islamic cause and Palestinians".

Bahraini regime's compromise w/ #Israel is a great betrayal to the Islamic cause & Palestinians. The imprudent leaders in UAE, #Bahrain must not pave the way for the Zionist schemes. They should learn lessons

Jewish lawmaker says Charlie Hebdo's insult is height of imprudence

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Jewish lawmaker Siamak Moreh Sedgh has said that the republication of cartoons insulting the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo is the height of imprudence and impoliteness.

"Charlie Hebdo's insult against Quran shows height of imprudence and impoliteness of this magazine which insults values of millions of Muslims through abusing the name of freedom," he told the Fars news agency in an interview published on Sunday.

He added that the magazine's action yield no result but division.

The Jewish lawmaker also said, "Freedom of expression makes sense when it is in line with freedom of thought and serves the people and not when its objective is insulting other societies."

In a reckless and provocative move, on September 2 Charlie Hebdo republished the same cartoons about Prophet Muhammad (S) that prompted a deadly attack on the magazine in 2015.

The cartoons were republished so as to mark the start of the terrorism trial of people accused as accomplices in the attack. The magazine posted the cartoons online on September 1 and they appeared in print the next day.

13 men and a woman accused of providing the attack-

ers with weapons and logistics went on trial on charges of terrorism.

Twelve people, including some of France's most famous cartoonists, were killed on January 7, 2015, when two French-born brothers of Algerian descent, Said and Cherif Kouachi, went on a gun rampage at Charlie Hebdo's offices in Paris.

The brothers identified themselves as belonging to the terrorist group al-Qaeda and cited "avenging the prophet" as their reason for the attack. The attack touched off a wave of killings claimed by Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group across Europe.

On January 9, 2015, Said and Cherif's friend, Amedy Coulibaly, took hostages and killed four people at a kosher supermarket in Paris. Coulibaly and the Kouachi brothers, who were in contact during the attack, were killed in standoffs with the police.

10 months later, in November 2015, a group of Daesh gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people and injured more than 400 at multiple sites across Paris, which became the deadliest of the attacks.

Many analysts see the publication of the cartoons as a renewed provocation by Charlie Hebdo, which has a history of publishing material considered racist and anti-Muslim.

Tehran on September 3 strongly condemned the French



magazine, saying any insult against the prophet of Islam and other divine prophets is not acceptable at all.

"The French magazine's offensive move, which has been repeated on the pretext of freedom of speech, has hurt the feelings of the world's monotheists, is a provocative move and an insult to the Islamic values and beliefs of over one billion Muslims in the world," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement.

How Iran-China strategic partnership may hammer final nail in coffin of U.S. maximum pressure policy

A draft of an economic and security deal between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran previously leaked by The New York Times is continuing to reverberate in the international media. Iranian political analyst Mahan Abedin has explained the fuss over the accords and shed light on Iran's strategic shift towards the East.

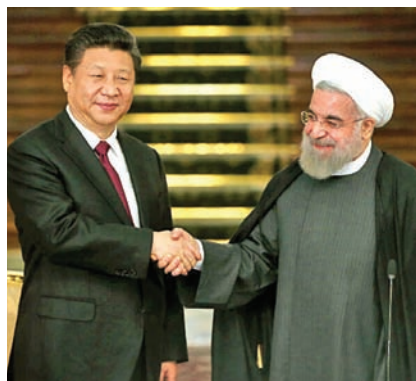
The 18-page Persian-language document envisages multi-billion-dollar Chinese investments in the Iranian economy as well as considerable oil discounts for the People's Republic. The agreement also includes security cooperation, intelligence sharing, and joint military drills. Commenting on the leak, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif admitted that his country had indeed been negotiating a 25-year strategic partnership with China, adding, however, that the accords have yet to be passed by the Iranian parliament. The authenticity of the document in question has not been confirmed by Tehran so far.

■ Why Western states are raising the alarm

The prospect of a long-term Sino-Iranian collaboration has prompted mixed reactions from international observers: thus, Foreign Policy claimed that the deal is "bad news for the West", foreseeing a geopolitical reshuffle in the Middle East and Asia, with China boosting its foothold in strategically important locations. For its part, War on Rocks threw the accords into question, claiming that although "real and harmful dangers of Chinese-Iranian cooperation remain", the leaked grand design does not seem to be a workable idea anyway.

On 2 August, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo joined the chorus of alarmists, asserting on Fox News that China's entry into Iran "will destabilise the Middle East" and put Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE "at risk".

There's nothing particularly surprising about Western mainstream media and Western governments' opposition to the Sino-Iranian pact, which symbolises a decisive shift towards the East by Iran, elaborates Mahan



Abedin, a veteran journalist and analyst of Iranian and Middle Eastern politics.

"For more than 150 years Iran has looked to the West - and especially Europe - for trade, investment, education and general engagement", he says. "Even the Islamic Revolution of 1979 did not stop this process and over the past four decades lively debates have raged inside Iranian policy circles as to the utility (or otherwise) of deeper engagement with the West. But the failure of the nuclear deal (JCPOA), coupled with European impotence in the face of U.S. bullying, has resulted in a loss of faith in the West in Iran".

The analyst points out that although the agreement may not be signed yet, "there is no doubt that both sides, Iran and China, are in the final stages of formalising a long-term pact, most likely of quarter-century duration".

Both Tehran and Beijing appear interested in intensifying security cooperation, Abedin notes, rubbishing Western mass media assumptions that the People's Republic would station military forces on Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf: "For a variety of constitutional, historical, political and ideological reasons Iran will never accept foreign forces on its soil", he stresses.

■ 'Iran and China are two authentic Asian powers'

Responding to sceptics who doubt the

seriousness of the intentions of Tehran and Beijing, as well as China's apparent fear of alienating the UAE and Saudi Arabia by teaming up with the Islamic Republic, the Middle East expert draws attention to the fact that "Iran is important to China's Belt and Road Initiative in so far as it would allow the latter to secure its West Asian flank".

"Iran is vital for overland access to Europe and in general Iran's highly strategic location (with close proximity to Central Asia, the Arabian Sea, Europe and even Russia) makes the country very attractive for Chinese investors", he highlights, adding that the People's Republic is unlikely to drag its heels about Sino-Iranian collaboration over the threat of U.S. sanctions or potential discontent from Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

For its part, Tehran is likely to accommodate China's needs as it "needs foreign investment to boost its infrastructure in a wide range of sectors and Chinese finance (and potentially know-how) can be helpful", according to Abedin.

"Iran and China are two authentic Asian powers, arguably the two most important powers which dominate the Asian continent at both ends", the political analyst says. "There is deep mutual respect between the two countries and it is only fitting for them to align more closely at the economic, political and potentially even military levels".

■ 'Failure of Washington's policy of maximum pressure'

Touching upon Washington's unilateral sanctions regime against the Islamic Republic, the Iranian journalist emphasises that the Trump administration's policy of "maximum pressure" has clearly not worked.

"Iran is a resilient country with an expansive foreign policy", Abedin observes. "Moreover, Iran has been used to sanctions for four decades and so it has developed the know-how to circumvent and defeat sanctions. Furthermore, the Iranian economy is more complex and self-sufficient than most realise and this economic resilience means Iran can continue to function - indeed to thrive - in the absence of selling crude oil".

from history. Tomorrow is late! The US lifeline has worn out for years," Amir-Abdollahian tweeted.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has also called the move "disgraceful and humiliating".

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has asserted that the UAE has betrayed the Islamic world by deciding to establish ties with the Zionist regime of Israel.

"The United Arab Emirates betrayed the world of Islam, the Arab nations and the regional countries, and also Palestine," the Leader said on September 1.

"The Emiratis will be disgraced forever for this treachery," the Leader remarked.

"Of course," Ayatollah Khamenei predicted, "this situation will not last long, and the stain of shame will remain on the face of those who forgot the occupation of this country (Palestine) and the displacement of the Palestinian nation and allowed the Zionists into the region."

He also said, "We hope the Emiratis will wake up soon and make up for this action."

Iran's Foreign Ministry has called the action a "strategic stupidity".

All Palestinian factions have censured the peace deal as a stab in the back of the oppressed nation. The agreement has also drawn angry reactions from Muslim countries and other supporters of the Palestinian cause against the Israeli occupation.

(Source: Sputnik)

SPORTS

Namjoo Motlagh hopes Esteghlal can win ACL title

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal interim coach Majid d e s k Namjoo Motlagh hopes that they can win the AFC Champions League (ACL) title.

Esteghlal were scheduled to meet Al Wahda on Monday in Group A but the Emirati side have announced that they would not be able to travel to Qatar after a number of their club members tested positive for COVID-19.

“Esteghlal are one of the powerful teams in Asia and we have already qualified for the final fourth time,” Namjoo Motlagh said in the pre-match news conference.

“First of all, I would like to thank the AFC and Qatar for centralizing the West zone fixtures in Doha. We are here to book a place in the knockout stage since we have the potential to do that,” he added.

“Iranian teams always have the high potential and are favorites in the tournaments since they benefit from good players. We know that the Asian teams have progressed in the recent years and it makes our job difficult but we are Esteghlal too,” the former midfielder of Iran national football team stated.

The centralized West zone fixtures will take place across four air-conditioned venues; Khalifa International Stadium, Al Janoub Stadium, Education City Stadium and Jassim bin Hamad Stadium.

Esteghlal have collected one point from the two Group A matches in February, where the team lost to Saudi Arabian Al Ahli and were held against Iraq’s Al Shorta.

Ghoochannejhad, Beitashour on Tractor’s radar

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ex-Iran national team players d e s k Steven Beitashour and Reza Ghoochannejhad are reportedly on Tractor’s radar.

Beitashour, who was a member of Los Angeles FC last year, is a target for the Iranian top flight football team.

The -33-year-old defender represented Iran at the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Ghoochannejhad, 32, is also a candidate to join Tractor to strengthen the team’s attack.

The former Iran forward currently plays for Dutch club PEC Zwolle.

Tractor won Iran’s Hazfi Cup and automatically booked a place in the next year’s AFC Champions League.

Jafar Salmani reaches agreement with Portimonense

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian winger Jafar Salmani d e s k has reportedly reached an agreement with Portuguese football team Portimonense.

The 23-year-old left winger played for Sanat Naft football team in Iran Professional League (IPL) last season.

Portimonense Sporting Clube are a Portuguese sports club based in Portimão.

Founded on 14 August 1914, they are most notable for their professional football team, which currently play in the Primeira Liga, the top flight of Portuguese football.

Portimonense also field various youth teams and the veterans team in football, as well as teams in basketball.

Ebadipour steals the show at PlusLiga Week 1

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Milad Ebadipour stole the d e s k show with an eye-catching performance in the 2020/21 PlusLiga opener.

PGE Skra Belchatów defeated Cuprum Lubin 3-1 (20-25, 25-22, 30-28, 26-24) on Saturday.

Belchatów outside hitter Ebadipour finished the match’s top scorer with 17 points, Iranvolleyball.com wrote.

He was also chosen in the Week 1 Dream Team along with Konarski, Zniszczol, Andringa, Huber and Lomacz.

Belchatów are scheduled to meet Warta Zawiercie next week. Zawiercie are headed by ex-Iran coach Igor Kolakovic.

ACL 2020: Shahr Khodro looking for first win

Iran’s Shahr Khodro FC target their first-ever AFC Champions League win when they face 2015 runners-up Shabab Al Ahli Dubai FC on Matchday Three of Group B on Monday.

The first of two Monday fixtures in the group sees the Mash-had-based side in pursuit of a first goal in the competition as well, having lost their AFC Champions League debut to title holders Al Hilal SFC 2-0, then succumbed to a 3-0 defeat at the hands of Uzbek champions Pakhtakor FC on Matchday Two.

In finishing fourth in the 2018-19 Iran Pro League season, then overcoming Bahrain’s Riffa SC and Qatar’s Al Sailiyah SC in the qualifying rounds, Shahr Khodro became the 12th different team to represent Iran in the AFC Champions League, a record for any AFC nation.

With more continental experience than its opponent, Shabab Al Ahli’s best result in the competition came in 2015 (then known as Al Ahli).

Under the guidance of current Jiangsu Suning boss Cosmin Olaroiu and with 2015 AFC Player of The Year Ahmed Khalil leading the line, the Dubai side reached the final, losing 1-0 to Guangzhou Evergrande.

In 12 previous encounters against Iranian clubs in the competition, Shabab Al Ahli won six times, drawing three and losing the remaining three, according to the-afc.com.

Intriguingly, the Dubai side have never won by a margin of one goal, while they were on the receiving end of a 5-3 defeat to Saba Battery in the 2009 group stage and a 4-2 defeat by Mes Kerman the following year.

Having lost both its opening matches against Pakhtakor and Al Hilal with the same 2-1 score line, the double header against Shahr Khodro offer coach Gerard Zaragoza’s men the opportunity to turn things around and mount a serious challenge for a place in the next round.

The match will be held at the Al Janoub Stadium in Qatar.

(Source: the-afc)

Commanders: Enemies would have attacked Iran if country had not been strong

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Commanders d e s k of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) and the Navy have highlighted the importance of the Iranian military’s power, saying the enemies would have attacked Iran a hundred times if the country had not been strong enough.

In a TV program broadcast on Saturday night, IRIAF Chief Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh and Navy Chief Admiral Hossein Khanzadi spoke about a range of subjects including the military’s readiness to counter possible threats and the recent joint military exercise held by the Army.

“It is the defensive might that creates sustainable security, and we can have all kinds of developments under sustainable security,” Nasirzadeh said.

Khanzadi also said his forces are ready to respond to any kind of threat, but “we fully respect the territorial integrity of neighboring, friendly countries.”

The Iranian Army on Saturday concluded a three-day joint military exercise, which kicked off in Iran’s southern waters on Thursday.

A variety of surface and subsurface submarine units of the Navy, such as destroyers, missile launchers and Tariq, Ghadir and Fateh-class submarines displayed their strength during the last day of the drills, codenamed Zolfaghar-99.

The three-day war game showcased some of the latest achievements of the Army’s units, which were produced to counter the threats by Iran’s enemies.



“They (enemies) are concerned and they are trying to convey their concern, through the media outlets they own, to the nations of the region to make it a collective concern,” says Navy Commander Admiral Khanzadi.

On Thursday, F-27 and P3F aircraft as well as reconnaissance drones conducted naval patrols to monitor the drills.

Iran’s F-4 fighter-bombers conducted long-range flights from their bases to attend the war game. They destroyed surface targets using optimized precision strike missiles. The F-4 Phantoms stroke at mobile targets at sea and bombed their designated targets on the coast.

On Friday, the Army successfully fired an

anti-ship coast-to-sea cruise missile, dubbed “Qader”, at a mock enemy vessel over 200 kilometers from the coast.

Another anti-ship cruise missile, dubbed “Nasr”, was fired from Iran’s Najm missile boat to hit designated target in the southern waters of Iran.

The Army’s first combat drone, named “Kaman-12”, also conducted surveillance operations during the joint military exercise.

IRGC: Israel-Bahrain détente will refresh Muslim resolve to repel cancerous Israeli tumor

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution d e s k Guards Corps (IRGC) on Saturday strongly condemned the normalization of ties between Bahrain and Israel, saying the Bahraini regime should await a harsh revenge from the country’s freedom-seekers and its Muslim people.

The move will reinvigorate the resolve of the Muslim world to repel the cancerous Israeli tumor from the Muslim world, it added.

“The shameful action of Al Khalifah and the vassal ruling regime in Bahrain to establish relations with the Zionist regime, which took place against the will and ideal of the country’s Muslim people, was an enormous stupidity which lacked any legitimacy, and it will receive an appropriate response,” the IRGC said in a statement on Saturday, Mehr reported.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Friday that he brokered what he called “a historic deal” between Israel and Bahrain.

Under the deal, Israel and Bahrain have committed to begin the exchange of embassies and ambassadors, start direct flights, and launch cooperation initiatives across a broad range of sectors, according to a White House statement issued on September 11.

This deal came roughly a month after the normalization agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. Bahraini officials are expected to join Israeli and Emirati representatives at the White House for a formal signing ceremony next week.

“The domino of normalization of the Zionist regime’s relations with rulers of some Arab countries, which is engineered by the White House and the loathed and unwise president of the U.S. after imposing humiliation and degradation on Muslim nations and looting their resources and wealth as well as creating security for the occupiers of Palestine and usurpers of Quds al-Sharif, will never achieve its wicked goal,” the IRGC stated.

The IRGC warned the Al Khalifah regime and other puppet rulers of the region against paying the way for the Israeli regime’s infiltration into the strategic Persian Gulf

The Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee condemned the normalization of ties with Israel, saying the consequences of such provoking move would directly affect Bahrain and the UAE.

and the Sea of Oman.

The evil act of the cruel Bahraini regime may fail to have any achievement for the U.S. and supporters of the child-killing regime of Israel, it added.

All Palestinian factions have unanimously denounced the normalization of ties between Israel and the Arab countries. The Hamas resistance movement staged a demonstration in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, when people burnt portraits of Israeli, American, Bahraini and Emirati rulers.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry also condemned the move, saying the Palestinian people and Muslims around the world “will never accept” the normalization of ties with Israel.

“Undoubtedly, the oppressed and rightful people of Palestine, along with free Muslims around the world, will never accept the normalization of relations with the usurper

Velayati says the move demonstrated that the rulers of Bahrain and the UAE have been fooled by the United States.

Normalization with Israel aimed to implement ‘deal of century’: professor

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Bahrain and d e s k the UAE’s move to normalize ties with Israel is a step to implement the U.S.-brokered plan of the “deal of the century”, says the director of the West Asian Studies Group at the International Association of Muslim University Professors.

In an interview with Iran Press published on Sunday, Massoud Asadollahi said Israel’s agreements with Bahrain and the UAE will

serve U.S. President Donald Trump, who needs to win the upcoming presidential elections.

Asadollahi said the UAE and Israel already had security, economic, and intelligence ties, but the relations have just become overt.

He pointed out that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had stated that Washington’s ultimate goal was to form an anti-Iranian alliance, because the U.S.-led coalitions in Syria, Iraq, and other countries had failed.

“The rulers of the Emirates think that if their interests are threatened, the United States will help them, but experience has shown that the United States and Israel wage war only for their own interests,” said the professor.

Assadollahi also underlined that Tehran has warned Abu Dhabi that if Israel wants to attack Iran through the UAE, the whole UAE will be targeted.

Bahrain’s normalization of ties with the

and rogue regime of Israel. This disgraceful act will forever remain in the memory of the oppressed and suppressed nation of Palestine and the free nations of the world,” the ministry said

in a statement on Saturday.

The Foreign Ministry said the government of Bahrain has sought refuge in the occupying regime of Israel instead of seeking legitimacy from its own people.

■ ‘Ties with Israel will not save cowardly and dictatorial regimes’

In a statement on Sunday, the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee condemned the normalization of ties with Israel, saying the consequences of such provoking move would directly affect Bahrain and the UAE.

“Alliance with the occupying and aggressive regime not only would be ineffective in the survival of the cowardly monarchical, dictatorial and unpopular regimes, but it will accelerate their decline and collapse,” the statement read.

The committee also said the Islamic Republic of Iran will follow up on the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people and liberation of the occupied Palestinian territories as the primary issue of the Islamic world.

It added that the move would be a threat to the peace, stability, security and peaceful co-existence of Islamic countries of the region.

■ ‘Tracherous move’

Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, also issued a statement saying the normalization of ties with Israel is a “treacherous move” against the Palestinian people’s cause.

“Once again the enemies of pure Islam and the hypocrites removed the mask from their face and shouted out their dishonor and betrayal to the world,” Velayati wrote in his statement which was published on Sunday.

He added that the move demonstrated that the rulers of Bahrain and the UAE have been fooled by the United States, which has the blood of thousands and thousands of innocent Muslims on its hands.

■ ‘The exercise almost reached a hundred percent of its goals’

Nasirzadeh said holding the joint exercise was a very complicated task that needed coordination among all units. “The exercise almost reached a hundred percent of its goals,” he said.

He argued that in today’s world, economic, political and cultural developments are not possible without establishing security.

“We sat around a [negotiating] table with the enemies that we are facing, but you saw how they behaved,” the general said, pointing to the nuclear talks that led to the signing of the 2015 nuclear agreement that the United States unilaterally exited in 2018, only to reimpose sanctions on Iran.

Khanzadi, for his part, said the message of the war game was “power, peace and security”.

The enemies know that if they act mischievously, they will receive a decisive reaction, he said, adding, “They are concerned and they are trying to convey their concern, through the media outlets they own, to the nations of the region to make it a collective concern.”

“The sea is a continuous arena, and the enemies that threaten Iranian targets are the countries that have expanded their reach in oceans and have entered international waters with bullying,” he remarked.

The admiral said that the only water that is an exceptional is the Iranian waters, which the enemies do not dare to approach.

Khanzadi also warned the enemies of the consequences of trying to invade Iran’s territory through water, saying, “We are capable of thwarting the conspiracies.”

➡ The snapback process is a mechanism built into the JCPOA to allow parties to the deal to restore the UN sanctions on Iran in case it didn’t comply with its commitments under the nuclear deal.

On August 20, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo traveled to New York to notify the UN Security Council of Iran’s “significant non-performance” of the nuclear deal as defined in UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

All JCPOA participants, along with 13 members of the 15-member UN Security Council, rejected the U.S. notification. They said that the U.S. had no legal authority to initiate the snapback process because it lost the right to do so by withdrawing from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018.

However, the U.S. keeps insisting that the 30-day process of snapback was triggered after it submitted the notification on August 20, and that the process will end on 20 September.

While the U.S. looks forward to restoring the international sanctions on Iran by September 20, European signatories to the nuclear deal still reject the U.S. efforts to reimpose the sanctions. The Europeans, especially the UK government, are facing “intensified pressure” from the U.S. to fall in line, according to the Guardian.

In a tweet after the Chevening meeting the German foreign office said, “The E3 agree: reject the U.S. snapback attempt and remain committed to preserving the nuclear agreement,

but Iran urgently needs to return to full compliance.”

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab stroke a different note after the Kent meeting. He tweeted, “Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon. It must comply with its nuclear commitments & preserve the JCPOA – that was the conclusion of the E3 when I met with Heiko Mass and Jean-Yves Le Drian. We are committed to holding Iran to account.”

Raab’s tweet on Iran raised questions about the UK stance on the JCPOA. The tweet could be an attempt by the UK to strike a balance between the U.S. and the EU.

Bigdeli believes that the UK is caught in the middle between the U.S. and the EU over the Iran nuclear deal. According to the professor, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson seeks to strengthen trade ties with the U.S. after the Brexit while preserving UK economic interests with the EU.

“Britain sought to boost its trade ties with the U.S. after the White House withdrew from the JCPOA. However, it failed to secure what it wanted. And now it is caught in the middle. The UK is afraid of losing both the EU and the U.S. after it leaves the EU,” Bigdeli remarked.

The Guardian said the Europeans understand the UK need to balance its relations with the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The newspaper wrote, “Germany and France, co-operating with the UK over Iran despite the Brexit backdrop,

acknowledge there are special UK sensitivities about defying its closest partner the U.S. on such a critical security issue. The European diplomats recognize that the UK wants a free trade deal with the U.S., and defying the U.S. on snapback may infuriate Donald Trump.”

The Europeans are expected to have another round of talks with Iran when Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif pays a visit to Europe this week. The chief Iranian diplomat is planning to visit seven European countries including Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, according to NHK WORLD-JAPAN, the international service of Japan’s public media organization NHK.

NHK said Zarif’s trip “is likely aimed at dissuading key European powers from agreeing with the United States’ efforts to restore UN sanctions on Tehran” and boosting “ties with European countries, with a goal of blocking the U.S. initiative.”

The Foreign Ministry of Iran has confirmed that Zarif will be traveling to many counties but it didn’t give further details. “Zarif seeks to dissuade the Europeans from supporting the triggering of the snapback process by the Trump administration. His trip to Europe is indicative of some concerns in Iran. But Zarif could fail to dispel these concerns during his Europe trip,” pointed out Bigdeli, adding that the trip wasn’t necessary.

29 development projects underway in Iran’s PETZONE

1 → Last July, the managing director of Iran’s National Petrochemical Company (NPC) unveiled a plan for the construction of a new petrochemical hub in Mahshahr Petrochemical Special Economic Zone in order to add up to six million tons (mt) of new capacity to the zone.

Speaking in the annual general assembly of the Petrochemical Special Economic Zone at that time, Behzad Mohammadi noted that NPC is seeking two main goals in Mahshahr zone, one of which is maintaining the current output levels and the other, which is more important and of higher priority, is the development of the zone and attracting and facilitating investment.



“In Mahshahr’s grand scheme, development of downstream and midstream industries is given great importance,” he said adding that the zone’s development plan is going through revision and preparation.

The petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran’s non-oil economy, as the petrochemical export is the second-largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country’s non-oil exports.

Iran has been highly developing this sector over the recent years as the development of the giant South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) has been supplying more feedstock to the petrochemical units.

Also, the U.S. sanctioning Iran’s oil exports has encouraged more development of the petrochemical industry to boost exports from this sector.

TEDPIX falls 5,568 points on Sunday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran’s major stock exchange, dropped 5,568 points to 1.578 million on Sunday, IRNA reported.

As reported, 9,332 billion securities worth 106.015 trillion rials (about \$2.524 billion) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market’s index fell 3,864 points and the second market’s index dropped 12,084 points.

In the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), TEDPIX fell four percent to 1.556 million points.

In this way, the index experienced the fourth weekly drop in a month.

TEDPIX had also experienced a five-percent decrease in the week ended on September 4, a two-percent fall in the week ended on August 28, an 11.3-percent drop in the week ended on August 21, and a two-percent fall in the week ended on August 14.

Value of weekly trade at IME increases 70%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose 70 percent in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), according to a report released by the IME Public Relations and International Affairs Department.

The report said that 923,380 tons of commodities valued at \$2 billion were traded at the IME in the past week, indicating also a 98-percent weekly growth in terms of the amount of traded goods.

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 477,117 tons of various products worth \$1.3 billion were traded.

On this trading floor, 462,825 tons of steel, 6,540 tons of aluminum, 8,180 tons of copper, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 12 tons of precious metal concentrates, 140 tons of zinc ingot as well as 10 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 440,856 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$712 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 106,400 tons of VB feed stock, 165,124 tons of bitumen, 69,771 tons of polymer products, 42,229 tons of chemical products, 39,500 tons of lube cut oil, 1,310 tons of insulation, 2,107 tons of base oil, 140 tons of argon as well as 14,275 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 5,407 tons of commodities were traded on the same trading floor.

As previously reported, more than 2.787 million tons of commodities worth over \$5.368 billion have been traded at the IME in August.

Meanwhile, commercial property was offered at the IME’s side market for the first time on August 19.

Also on August 21, the IME director of economic studies announced, “The exchange will start preselling trades of residential units via standard parallel salaf bonds by the next month.”

Javad Fallah said, “IME is seeking attraction of liquidity by the capital market to provide financing for the construction of houses; so, we are intending to offer salaf bonds to achieve this goal.”

The official said that the IME has received the salaf bonds from Housing Investment Company, which is affiliated to Bank Maskan (Housing Bank).

These bonds enable the people to pre-purchase the residential units based on the amount of their money.

A standard parallel salaf is an Islamic contract similar to futures, with the difference being that the contract’s total price must be paid in advance.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

On April 21, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market’s new outlook plan, which depicts IME’s development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of the Iranian year, which is “Surge in Production” is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

Combining theory and practice, a must for indigenizing oil equipment

1 → however, theoretical steps are just one aspect of the equation, we cannot just define some regulations and refer some decrees and expect them to become materialized,” he explained.

So the Oil Ministry needs to take its efforts one step further to ensure the realization of the mentioned plans in practice, Eslami said.

■ Practical solutions

Explaining the measures that the Oil ministry or the government, in general, must take for ensuring the practicality of their decisions and programs, Eslami said: “well, after setting the basics, it’s time to take action, for instance, holding exhibitions (both online or physical) for introducing the industry’s needs, creating a system for the major companies to submit their required technologies or equipment, and financing knowledge-based companies, are some very beneficial measures that can be taken for a starter.”

According to Eslami, the first and foremost step in realizing the goals of domestic production in the oil industry is the identification of the equipment, parts, and machinery



that the industry needs and presenting them to the knowledge-based companies so that they would know which areas to work on.

The second step would be reassuring the companies about the long-term purchase of their products, he said.

“It is not enough to buy a prototype and then leave them on their own, they need to

be sure that the investment that they are making and the time and resources that they spent for indigenizing the knowledge and then manufacturing a product will be worth their while.”

Most of the knowledge-based companies and startups are not financially strong and their main asset is their knowledge and

expertise, so the government should take supporting such companies into serious consideration if it wants to ensure the realization of the goals of its indigenization programs.

According to Eslami, there are currently about 4,000 knowledge-based companies active in Iran, 300 of which are working in the oil and gas industry areas.

“Only 170 of the mentioned 300 companies are especially active in the manufacturing of oil industry equipment and all of them are the members of our association,” he noted.

“These companies have a huge potential and can go beyond the expectations if given the opportunity and resources,” Eslami stressed.

Instead of defining theoretical models and repeated rules and statements, we should focus more on implementation and operationalization, he concluded.

“Preparing the basis for bringing supply and demand, as well as theory and practice together is the first and most important step in this regard.”

Effective and timely decisions to keep stock market attractive

By Farhad Morsali

Over the last few weeks, the TEDPIX has dropped by approximately %25 recording a sharp slump in the last year. The investors have been rushing to sell their stocks, a situation which seems to be a panic selloff. The market has been experiencing a run on the stocks by the frightened and apprehensive investors. However, with the recent decisions made by the market macro-policy setter, namely, the Securities and Exchange High Council, and the market regulator and supervisor, the Securities and Exchange Organization of Iran, the stock market witnessed a rise by 1/77 percent in index which promises the investors foreseeable better days to come.

Unanimously agreed, volatility is the true nature of stock markets all across the world and Iran is no exception. What has brought the TSE’s dramatic plunge in the limelight is the fact that the investors were experiencing and enjoying daily rises in their portfolios for the last year, almost non-stop, more noticeably in spring 2020. Behaviorally studied, the investors’ decisions seem these days to be highly affected by their tendency toward loss aversion bias where in order to avert losses, investors jump into hasty decisions.

Allusion is made to the last year’s reports of the New York Times as <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/13/business/iran-stock-market.html> and Bloomberg as <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/audio/2020-01-10/what-it-s-like-to-be-an-investor-in-iran-s-market-now-podcast> which shed enough light on the attractiveness of the Iranian stock market from different vantage points and compared to the competing markets, the TSE stands among the top three emerging markets based on the reports of the World Federation pf Exchanges (WFE). However, the unilaterally imposed sanctions of the U.S and its widespread propaganda against Iran have kept the stock market of Iran still untapped.

The macro-policy setter, namely, the Securities and Exchange High Council, and the market regulator and supervisor, the Securities and Exchange Organization of Iran, have, as always, taken effective and timely decisions to keep the market still attractive and win the investors’ trust again and ultimately keep and lead the liquidity in and to the market. These timely and effective decisions are aimed to harness the emotional and

immature decisions that may be made due to different factors, one of which is the biases of investors leading to panic selloff. One of the main functions has been deregulatory measures with the final objective of managing and mitigating systemic risk.

■ 1. Embedded put Options

“Embedded put options give investors the power to prematurely redeem a security” and sell their securities to the issuer whenever they fear they will undergo losses. Since the stocks on the TSE have deviated downwards from their fundamental values and the issuers are sure their stocks will return to its rising track, they are writing embedded put options on their stocks and offering them in the market. The first issuer has been Mellat Investment Bank whose options will mature in one year.

■ 2. Repealing of banks’ limitations to invest directly in the market

Formerly, the banks were not allowed to make investment in the market. Ameliorating the status quo and also inviting more market makers, the SEO has decided to nullify the previous limitations levied on the banks to invest in the market. As of today, banks can play the role of market makers and invest directly in the bank.

■ 3. Using Capital Market Stabilization Fund

As common in most international markets, Iran’s market has established its own Capital Market Stabilization Fund to use in rainy days. This Fund is set up to quell the probable turmoil in the market which can occur due to panic self-off or other reasons. It tries to inject liquidity into those sectors which experience a run on their fund. Part of the recent decisions, it has been agreed to increase the Fund’s resources to contribute to the betterment of the market and stabilize and balance its trend. One percent of the National Development Fund is supposed to be transferred to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund.

■ 4. Capital market consultative and advisory committees

The SEO has recently formed some consultative and advisory committees to professionally give guidelines and propose the best ways to overcome the hurdles in the market. These working groups are in fact the think-tank sharing the proposals and savvy of the capital market experts will add more transparency and efficiency to the capital market.

There are 5 main working groups that cover important is-

sues of the market and are supposed to play an advisory and decision-making role for the SEO and the other entities of the capital market.

“Development of Financial Institutions” WG aims to touch upon the challenges facing the development of financial institutions in the capital market, the measures needed to make the activities of institutions more effective, facilitate the process of granting new licenses to institutions, monitor different types of financial institutions and finally propose diverse ways to improve and facilitate the business environment.

“Technology and IT” WG aims to examine the challenges facing the technological infrastructure of the market, investigate technological developments in the capital, and review the development of technical infrastructure of the market.

“Market Management and Risk Assessment” WG aims to investigate various strategies to maintain market liquidity; review the market infrastructure to enhance liquidity; investigate the strategies to attract liquidity to the market; facilitate indirect investment, analyze the market, offer strategies to remove the relevant obstacles and to promote the market stability and soundness; and to manage the beneficiaries of inside information.

“Media, Cyberspace and Legal Affairs” WG aims to deregulate the capital market, examine the need to amend existing regulations, provide legal infrastructure for the development of the capital market, deal with violations and crimes, and increase the use of cyberspace potential.

“Debt Market Development and Financing” WG aims to review the existing regulations to facilitate financing, new methods of corporate financing, primary market development strategies, and debt market development strategies.

The Iranian stock market has been experiencing highs and lows in terms of depth, width, and diversity over the last two years and established its place among the top paramount indicators of the national economy and among the top three high yielding markets in the emerging markets. As most creditable gurus in finance have shown and historical market statistics and data have proved, stock markets are the true haven for investors with a long-term investment horizon and as all markets have their own winners and losers, the investors with this strategy will be the real winners of this market.

TPO to hold meeting on saffron export this week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) will hold the meeting of the National Saffron Export Desk this week, a senior official in the organization announced.

According to Mahmoud Bazari, the director-general of TPO’s Export Coordination Office for agro crops and processing industry products, the mentioned meeting is aimed at investigating the

ways for the promotion of saffron exports and releasing the reports on the subject by related organizations including Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), and National Saffron Council, TPO’s Public Relations Department reported on Sunday.

TPO has recently set up a special task force on the trade of saffron.

Overhaul operations for South Pars platform SPD8 completed

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) has finished the annual overhaul operations for Platform SPD8 of the South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf waters, the company’s production and operations director announced.

“With the completion of overhaul operations and the replacement of the three main gas pipelines, production on this platform has resumed,” Shana quoted Alireza Ebadi as saying.

As published on the POGC website, Ebadi noted that after the final studies and reviews on the SPD8 platform in the previous

Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) the required points for improvement were identified in this platform, and those improvements were made during this year’s overhaul operations.

Ebadi said the annual overhaul program of the mentioned platform, which is one of the platforms of phases 6 to 8 of South Pars, was started on August 11 and took 25 days to complete.

According to the official, the overhaul operations for this platform included the calibration of about 50 safety valves on the platform, inspecting seven main platform tanks and eliminating the leakage of defective valves, replacement of three

main platform gas pipelines, and performing welding and fit-up operations with more than 90 welding points in different sizes of 32, 12, 8, 6, 4, 2 inches, as well as performing radiographic and complementary tests on the welded areas.

The overhaul of South Pars gas platforms is carried out in the first half of the year due to the reduction in natural gas demand across the country.

These repairs are aimed at monitoring, troubleshooting, and preparing platforms for safe and stable gas production in the second half of the year.

Iran, Turkey customs discuss expansion of cooperation

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi held a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Riza Tuna Turagay, via video conference to discuss expansion of cooperation, IRIB reported on Sunday.

In the meeting, Mir-Ashraf suggested holding a physical meeting at Bazargan-Gorbolagh Customs on Tuesday, September 15, for the implementation of technical tests on the electronic exchange of customs information between the two sides.

The official also announcing IRICA’s readiness to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Turkish side on the implementation of a mutual Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) project and also launching a green corridor to facilitate customs procedures.

Following the meeting, Mirashrafi told the press that the Turkish Deputy Minister had promised to make the necessary arrangements for commuting up to 350 trucks a day between the two countries under strict health and safety protocols.

He also mentioned the two sides’ cooperation for launching a system for online inquiry of certificate of origin and noted that Tulgay was going to refer the matter to the relevant authorities and announce the result.

Regarding the development of rail transport between the two countries, Mirashrafi clarified: “A request was made to increase the acceptance of wagons at the Razi-Kapikoy land border, and the Turkish Deputy Minister of Trade promised to follow up on this issue through his country’s railways.”

Considering the significant decrease in trade between the two countries in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21) compared to the same period last year, the two sides finally stressed the need to compensate for this decrease in the remaining months of this year.

Mir-Ashrafi had previously held talks with Turagay, via video conference in early May, during which the officials had discussed reopening of trade borders with the implementation of health and safety protocols.

News

Ayatollah Sistani backs early election after UN meeting

Iraq's top Shia cleric Sunday endorsed early parliamentary elections set for June 2021, following his first meeting in nearly a year with a senior United Nations official.



"The parliamentary elections scheduled for next year are of great importance," said Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, 90, in an online statement after the bilateral meeting.

Iraqis should be encouraged to participate "widely," he added, while warning that failing to hold the polls on time or in a free and fair way would "threaten the unity and future of Iraq's people."

Sistani does not make public appearances and typically issues a weekly Friday sermon through a representative, AFP reported.

He avoids meeting political figures, but has traditionally made an exception for the UN, which is seen as unbiased.

Group says Zakzaky's health 'seriously deteriorating', urges his release

A Shia group affiliated with the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) has expressed concern about the worsening health conditions of prominent cleric Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky and his wife, demanding their "unconditional release" from prison.

The Academic Forum, which is a branch of the IMN and focuses on intellectual, cultural and civilizational advancement of the movement, raised fresh concerns on Saturday over the deteriorating health of the 67-year-old leader and his wife, Zinat, in a jail in the northwestern Nigerian state of Kaduna.

The group said information at its disposal revealed that bullets lodged in Zakzaky's skull and body during the December 2015 clash with Nigerian soldiers were threatening his life, Press Tv reported.

"Available information reaching us revealed that the health condition of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky and his wife Malama Zinat Ibrahim is seriously deteriorating," the Academic Forum's spokesperson Abdullahi Muhammad Musa said.

Bahrainis protest normalization, set fire to Israeli flags

Bahrainis have rallied throughout the island kingdom, condemning the ruling regime's normalization of relations with Israel and setting Israeli flags on fire in defiance of a government ban on protests.

On Saturday, Bahrain's main opposition group, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, posted pictures of the rallies that were held in the capital Manama as well as many other places across the country.

According to Press TV, Bahrain's normalization of ties with the Israeli regime was announced Friday by U.S. President Donald Trump roughly a month after Washington brokered a deal enabling a similar rapprochement between the United Arab Emirates and the occupying regime.

The U.S.-mediated agreements have been met with uniform condemnation from all Palestinian factions, who call it a "stab in the back" of the Palestinians and sheer betrayal of their cause.

According to reports, Bahrainis rose in protest in the northern villages of Karrana and Abu Saiba, the north-central village Shakhura, the village of Sanabis on the capital's outskirts, and Sadad Village that lies on the country's west coast.

Resistance News

Unified national Leadership calls for uprising

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — In its first founding statement, the Unified National Popular Resistance Command in Palestine called for the activation of popular resistance under the banner of the Palestinian flag.

It also declared September 15 as a day of popular uprising in which the Palestinian flag is raised in all Palestinian cities at home and at all areas of Palestinian presence abroad to emphasize the refusal of the UAE and Bahrain normalization deals with Israel.

"We call on all active forces, and civil, community, student and feminist institutions throughout our beloved Arab world to raise the Arab banner of pride and the flag of Palestine, denouncing and rejecting the agreement of shame on this black day," the statement on Saturday evening added.

It also called for allocating next Friday, September 18th, as a day of mourning in which black flags are raised denouncing the normalization deals in all squares, buildings and houses. It called on churches to ring bells of mourning and Friday mosque voice sermons condemning the betrayal of the central Arab and Muslim cause.

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Normalization between some Arab governments and 'Israel': Facts and figures

1 → Alzaytouna's study center conducted an opinion poll in 2019 about the popularity of the relations with "Israel" among some Muslim countries. The poll concluded that only 3% of Egyptians, 4% of Pakistanis, 6% of Turkish, and 15% of Indonesians may welcome some sort of relations with "Israel". Many conditioned it after a just solution for the Palestinians.

The study stated that such a process has nothing to do with any fair demands of the Arab nations nor brought any benefit for peace attempts or any economic interests for the nations that the politicians tried to market their causes.

After Israel protested over a contract to sell American F35 jets to the Emirates, the former chief of the "Israeli" army Gadi Eizenkot told "Israel Hayom": "in the Middle East (West Asia) your new friends may turn to be your enemy. Hence, the "Israeli" surpassing quality power (over the Arabs) is highly essential."

An obvious "Israeli" skeptical mentality and policy towards Arabs prevents any type of so-called normalization.

■ Money talks, or something else?

If we agree to the mentioned pragmatic notion, one may expect some economic boost even at the bilateral level between the Emirates and "Israel." On the 8th of September 2020, the Minister of "Intelligence" of "Israel", Eli Cohen, said that "In three to five years the balance of trade between the Emirates and us may reach four billion dollars."

First, why should a minister of "Intelligence" announce such economic news?

Second, let us compare this balance of trade with the balance of trade between the



Emirates and a neighboring country like Iran. In that case, the figure may exceed 13.5 billion dollars. Here one may say that something else other than "Money talks."

Many analysts refer to such a process as an intense and vital need for the current leaders in "Israel" and the U.S. to get re-elected.

Netanyahu is facing corruption trials, and many riots and rallies are being held

against him that may qualify the situation for a fourth election. On the other hand, Trump faces a series of fiascoes at different levels; his government's disastrous approach to the COVID-19 pandemic that infected millions, the racial discrimination, and the people in the streets protesting the police behavior against the civilians.

Bibi and Trump initiated such a process to safeguard their own endangered political

Some "Israeli" commentators have accused Netanyahu of forging new relations with "countries that have no geopolitical importance like Bahrain and the Emirates but at the same time are neighbors to Iran," which may lead to more escalation and expected violence in the region.

Paris wishes to revive its colonial past: Turkish researcher

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Dogacan Basharan, a Turkish researcher, says France wants to play a key role in the events evolving in the eastern Mediterranean by filling the gap left in the region now that the U.S. is leaving the region.

The comments by the Turkish research comes as Paris is siding with Greece in the recent dispute between Ankara and Athens in the eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey and Greece have long disagreed over the extent of their continental shelves. Tensions rose in August after Ankara sent an exploration vessel into disputed waters, accompanied by warships, days after Greece signed a maritime deal with Egypt.

Basharan tells the Tehran Times that Paris wants to revive its colonial past, especially after the Beirut blast.

Recent developments show that France wants to fill the authority gap left in the regions as the U.S. is packing its bag, says Basharan, an expert on international relations.

This is the text of the interview:

■ European Union foreign policy chief Joseph Borrell has warned that sanctions could be imposed on Ankara if talks on the eastern Mediterranean crisis fail. What is your comment?

A: Turkey is the European Union's eastern neighbor, and they have common borders. It's not possible that the EU can impose sanctions on Turkey. In that case, the Eurasian tendencies accelerate in Turkey's foreign policy. It will push Turkey towards more cooperation with Russia and Iran. This is why the European Union cannot impose

European Union's sanctions will push Turkey towards more cooperation with Russia and Iran.

sanctions on Turkey.

■ Turkey has been trying to join the European Union for many years. But now the EU opposes Ankara's activities in the eastern Mediterranean. How much will this affect the process of Turkey's membership in the EU?

A: Turkey's objective is full membership in the EU. Because the goal of adjustment to a free-market economy is parallel with the vision to become a more democratic country. However, by using accession requirements as an element of pressure against Turkey, the EU wants to interfere in Turkey's domestic affairs.

It ignores sovereign rights. This issue was seen very clearly in the Cyprus issue and the tension over the eastern Mediterranean. Of course, Turkey will refuse to surrender to pressures from the West. So, it was predictable that the cold wind will blow in Turkey-EU relations in recent years.

■ Turkey is getting entangled in disputes not only with Greece but also with France. What is the reason for the French opposition to Turkey's influence in the eastern Mediterranean?

A: France is not actually a concerned party in the problems of the eastern Mediterranean. It seems that Paris has missed its colonial heritage. In this context, they try to play a key role in the events in the eastern Mediterranean after the Beirut blast. However, there is no legal reason to intervene in this region.

On the other hand, it is known that the Trump administration wants to withdraw from the Middle East (West Asia). The U.S. criticizes EU countries for the cost of NATO. Recent developments show that France wants to fill the authority gap in the regions while the U.S. is reluctant to extend its presence there.

■ In an article analyzing the eastern Mediterranean issue, Der Spiegel writes that Erdogan is in danger of being involved in a conflict with Greece. Do you think there is a possibility of a conflict between the two countries?

■ Greece is arming the islands aggressively. In the eastern Mediterranean, France, Israel, and Greece want to encircle



the South through alliances with countries such as Egypt. This is not acceptable. Turkey does not allow its right to be encroached.

Turkey wants to solve the problems in a diplomatic way. However, if Greece maintains its stance, there is a possibility of conflict.

■ Do you see any possibility of solving problems between Turkey and Egypt?

A: Turkey is in favor of democracies everywhere in the world and never approves of coups. Therefore, Ankara's idealistic foreign policy pushes it to see the administration in Cairo as illegitimate. But Turkey should be able to disrupt the alliance of Greece. Turkey has to counter attempts to isolate it. This can lead to establishing relations with Egypt in terms of a realistic view. Turkey should be in contact with Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel.

■ Do you expect a comprehensive solution in Libya crisis?

A: In the medium and long term, the experiences in the Astana Process in the Syria case will be carried to Libya. Turkey and Russia support the different actors in the current situation. However, I think a compromise will be reached. Ankara and Moscow could be the architects of the Libyan peace.

Trump 'certainly' after using Afghan peace for re-election

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN — A former Iranian Ambassador to Afghanistan believes that U.S. President Donald Trump is trying to use the Afghan peace negotiations in Doha as a card in the November election.

The first round of talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban kicked off on Saturday in Doha, Qatar. There are mixed reactions to the negotiations as some hope that the talks could end decades of war and insecurity, and some others believe the peace in Afghanistan cannot be established soon and easily.

To shed more light on the issue, we interviewed former Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan Abolfazl Zohrehvand.

Here is the text of the interview:

■ What has forced Afghan sides to come back to the negotiating table?

A: Afghan sides have their own issues. For example, the Taliban does not have a coherent structure, so it is not clear who is leading the group behind the scenes and what branches it has. As far as the Afghan government is concerned, Mr. Ashraf Ghani and Mr. Abdullah have different points of view, and the High Council for National Reconciliation has not been active. There is no consensus on the agenda of negotiations. Meanwhile, Americans are decreasing their assistance and presence because they



have had no achievement, and on the other hand, they have turned these measures into a tool to put pressure on the government to come to the negotiating table. Both the people and the government officials are confused.

Any peace process goes through a path based on national capacities and clear definitions of concepts such as national security and common ideals, and none of these exist in this case. In this volatile situation, they say 'hope springs eternal.'

■ How do you predict the results of the

peace meetings?

A: Due to different reasons, these negotiations will not have any result.

Firstly, the two sides have no commonalities in different areas, including in governing, foreign policy, viewpoint towards people, and Afghanistan's future. The Afghan government seeks to maintain the constitution and the structure, which are the results of international efforts in the past 20 years. After crossing this structure and establishing an Islamic emirate that they had once experienced some 20 years ago, the Taliban is crossing this structure.

Secondly, the Taliban, on the one hand, does not consider the current government as legitimate, and on the other hand, the agenda of the talks is vague. The Afghan government seeks to reach a ceasefire and offer the Taliban a share in the governing body, but the Taliban has come to reach its overt and covert goals.

■ What are the reasons for choosing Qatar as the host of these meetings?

A: Arab states have always had a bias in

"Trump did not have any achievement regarding the JCPOA, North Korea, ties with the European Union, relations with China, and the so-called Deal of the Century, among others."

Magnificent Ganjali Khan caravanserai undergoes restoration

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — A restoration project has been commenced on the magnificent Ganjali Khan caravanserai, which is part of a 17th-century complex in Kerman, southeast Iran.

“Currently, a lightening job, which entails debris removal [from the rooftops], arching, roofing, and bricklaying are underway at the eastern side of Ganjali Khan caravanserai,” deputy provincial tourism chief announced on Sunday.

The caravanserai is based on the four-iwan typology, with guest rooms constructed around a courtyard. Shah Abbas I (1571-1629) is credited with building a network of caravanserais across Iran during the much later Safavid dynasty.



A major tourist destination, the historical complex is also home to a madrasa, mosque, hammam (public bathhouse), water reservoir, and a labyrinth bazaar, all centered on a large public square. Covering an area of 11,000 square meters, the compound was built upon the order of Ganjali Khan who governed Kerman and some neighboring areas during the late 16th to early 17th centuries under Safavid Shah Abbas I (r. 1571-1629).

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Traditional wrestling style added to National Heritage list

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Gurash, a traditional wrestling style being practiced in the northeastern province of North Khorasan, has recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

In this sport, which is mainly popular among Turkmen people, the wrestlers use towels to hold their opponents, and their goal is to throw their opponents off the feet.



Some more 7 items in the region including skills of making Chapati bread, silk weaving, Monadikhani ritual, and reciting elegies were also added to the National Heritage List, IRNA quoted deputy provincial tourism chief Ali Mostofian as saying on Sunday.

Though North Khorasan province may not be the first choice of travelers, its tourism is getting momentum.

According to Lonely Planet, most foreign tourists pass straight through North Khorasan in transit between Mashhad and Gorgan, but if you have time to explore, it's worth diverting south from the capital, Bojnurd, towards Esfarayen, famed for its wrestling tournaments, the remarkable citadel of Belqays and the partly preserved stepped village of Roeyn some 20km north. Although a lot of new building spoils the effect in parts of the village, Roeyn is considered Khorasan's answer to the well-known Masuleh and is a possible starting point for hikes to little-visited mountain villages.

Kang where roof of a house is yard of another

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — More than a thousand meters above sea level on the slopes of Mount Binalud, northeast Iran, sits a remarkable village of Kang with an antiquity of more than 3,000 years,



The atmospheric village is situated at a distance of some 30 km from Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province. It is also adjacent to Nishabur, known for its turquoise handicrafts and mines.

The village offers its visitors a bizarre scene of architecture that can more or less be found in other parts of the country; each house is built on another's rooftop, most of which having porch-balconies and earthen roofs.

Upon getting there and all along the way towards atop, sightseers can perpetuate their visit by capturing amazing pictures of hospitable people and their hillside houses.

Kang is a contender as 'Khorasan's Masuleh' that is also a homogenous stepped village of stacked mud-brick homes in northern Iran.

The country plans to try its luck on registering the millennium-old Masuleh as a UNESCO World Heritage site in the coming years.

Iran should jump-start COVID-hit tourism under health protocols: VP

➔ **1** the closure of the tourism industry in the country as one of the impacts of the virus pandemic, has caused serious damage to people's living and to travel agencies, hotels, eco-tourism units.... in those provinces.”

The tourism sector of the country has suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic till the month of Mordad (started July 22), Mounesan said.

Last week, Jahangiri declared the strategic plan, giving all related bodies, organizations, and institutes a clear mandate to assume defined duties to bolster the country's tourism sector through coordinated policymaking by executive bodies, academics, and the private sector.

The strategic plan is based on Article 100 of the Fifth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), and it pursues sustainable tourism development through coordinated, inter-sectoral, and integrated policies with the cooperation of executive bodies, university professors, the private sector activists, according to a governmental press release. The plan also touches upon elements such as tourism management, business environment is-



First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri (C) holds a meeting with Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan (R), and his deputy for tourism Vali Teymouri at the presidential headquarters in downtown Tehran, September 12, 2020. The senior officials exchanged views on ways to jump-start coronavirus-battered tourism of the country under health protocols.

sues, tourism infrastructure, manpower, cultural concerns, and issues relating to foreign travelers, as well as spheres of advertising and marketing.

Defining main policies in the field of

tourism, creating the ground for developing a national tourism development plan, implementing goals most dynamically and efficiently possible, a more competitive environment, as well as empowering local

tourism, natural and cultural tourism are among the other objectives of the strategic plan.

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has plunged the travel and tourism industry and economy in the global scene over that past couple of months as passenger traffic on airlines and hotel occupancy rates have fallen off a cliff compared to the same periods previous years. However, some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Tehran to host online meeting on tourism capacities of Islamic revolution, Sacred Defense

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — An online meeting on the tourism capacities of the Islamic revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, known as the Sacred Defense, will be held in Tehran on Thursday on the occasion of the Sacred Defense Week.

As Tehran is home to the Sacred Defense Museum, the Peace Museum, and the Sacred Defense Cinema Town, it could be promoted as a tourist destination for those who are interested in such issues, provincial tourism chief Ali Rafiei said on Sunday.

It could be a unique experience for war tourists as there are fascinating stories about Iranians sacrifices during the war, which are different from other places in the world, the official added.

The Sacred Defense Museum on a landscaped site of 21 hectares in north-central Tehran is a gigantic war memorial with its collections concentrated heavily on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

A total of seven halls lead through the history of the sacred defense in forensic detail. The Hall of Butterflies

greet visitors on arrival, the place is dedicated to martyrs and victims of the war filled with personal belongings found on the various battlefields.

Outside, a patchwork of domestically-manufactured armaments such as rockets, tanks, and artillery pieces are on show. The complex has vast garden areas, water features, and children's play areas as well.

The Sacred Defense Museum is equipped with a state-of-the-art visual system including projections and video walls, while audio recordings relevant to each period contribute to its charm.

The Tehran Peace Museum is a member of the International Network of Museums for Peace. The main objective of the museum is to promote a culture of peace through raising awareness about the devastating consequences of war, with a focus on the health and environmental impacts of chemical weapons.

Located in a building donated by the municipality of Tehran within the historic City Park, the museum opened its doors to the public in 2007.



Measuring 550 hectares in area, the Sacred Defense Cinema Town was established in 1994. It is a unique location for making films and series on the subject of war. Over a thousand movies, series, and short films have been made in it so far.

National Museum of Iran to hold loan exhibits in Chinese cities

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The National Museum of Iran will be holding loan exhibits at major museums in some Chinese cities based on a previously-discussed initiative aimed to revive the glory of arts, architectures, and civilizations along the ancient Silk Road.

The exhibits will be held in line with China's One Belt and One Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exchange Forum, IRNA quoted Tehran's Ambassador to Beijing Mohammad Keshavarz-Zadeh as saying on Sunday.

The National Museum of Iran will hold lone exhibitions in different Chinese cities to showcase Iran's art treasures, Keshavarz-Zadeh added.

“The National Museum of Iran has already participated in various Chinese



Tehran's Ambassador to Beijing Mohammad Keshavarz-Zadeh (R) stands by a Chinese official during a meeting on the collective intangible cultural heritage nations have along the ancient Silk Road.

fairs including exhibitions of Asian civilizations, intangible cultural heritage,

and Canton Fair.”

The Belt and Road Initiative- a development strategy first announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013- is a transportation and investment move that follows cooperation among the world countries in different continents.

The cooperation between Iranian and Chinese museums is at a “good” level, and the two countries enjoy profound historical and cultural relations, the ambassador tweeted.

Last year, Iran's tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said that the Islamic Republic backs China's initiative for reviving the glory of the ancient Silk Road, which existed for thousands of years, passing through many different empires, kingdoms, reigns, and societies

throughout history. And, as one of the countries under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Iran enables cultural communication between the East and the West.

UNESCO says that the ancient Silk Road has connected civilizations and brought peoples and cultures into contact with each other from across the world for thousands of years, permitting not only an exchange of goods but an interaction of ideas and cultures that has shaped our world today.

The Islamic Republic has waived the visa requirement for Chinese nationals willing to visit the country. The decision was made in 2019 to attract more foreign tourists to the country; however, it was a unilateral measure, because Iranian tourists visiting China still need visas.

Some \$2.3m allocated to Sheikh Safi Ensemble project

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Some 100 billion rials (about \$2.3 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to a project for leveling of the surrounding area of the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardebil, northwest Iran.

The buildings around the complex have been purchased by the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department and are being demolished to expand the area around the historical complex, provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi said on Sunday.

The project aims at introducing the complex more properly as well as facilitating the tourists' visits, the official added.

He also noted that after the leveling project is carried out completely, the surrounding area will be open to the public.



Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble is a microcosm of Sufism where arrays of harmonious

sun-scorched domes, well-preserved and richly-ornamented facades and interiors, and, above all, an atmosphere of peace and tranquility have all made a must-see stopover while traversing northwest Iran.

The ensemble is named after Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardebili (1253-1334), who was a Sufi philosopher and leader of Islamic mystic practices. It embodies the essence of Sufi traditions by having a microcosmic ‘city’, which embraces a mosque, a madrasa, a library, a cistern, a bathhouse, kitchens, a hospital, as well as religious houses amongst others. The place also boasts a remarkable collection of antique artifacts.

Developed between the early 16th century and the end of the 18th century, this place of spiritual retreat enjoys principal elements of traditional Iranian architecture to make the best use of existing space for accommodating a variety of functions.

Fire incident causes no harm to Sassanid-era Qa'leh Dokhtar castle

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The fire that broke out in the ancient Qa'leh Dokhtar castle in the southeastern province of Kerman on Friday has inflicted no damage to the Sassanid-era structure.

Situated on a mountain slope neighboring the Firouzabad-Kavar road, Qa'leh Dokhtar (literally meaning the Maiden Castle) was made by Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian Empire (224–651) in 209 CE.

The cause of the fire is under investigation and the result will be announced soon, provincial tourism chief Dorna Shahbazi

announced on Sunday.

Based on narratives, the castle is named after the ancient Iranian goddess Anahita, to whom the term “Maiden” refers.

The entrance to the castle is through a tall gateway within a large, rectangular tower. Inside, a broad stairway leads up to a rectangular hall, with blind niches on either side of two large buttresses at the east end.

The fortified palace contains many of the recurring features of Sasanian architecture such as long halls, arches, domes, recessed windows, and stairways.

The construction is uniform of roughly



shaped stone and mortar, but the surfaces were obviously all finished with a

thick coating of plaster or stucco, giving a smooth and elegant appearance, which could have been decorated with ornamentation or painting.

Under the Sassanians, Iranian art experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as the palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, one of the most characteristic and striking relics of Sassanian art is rock sculptures carved on abrupt limestone cliffs, for example at the historical sites Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rostam.

New academic year begins amid pandemic

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The new academic year of universities and higher education centers officially began with a special ceremony on Sunday amid the national efforts to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

The ceremony was attended by Science Minister Mansour Gholami and Health Minister Saeed Namaki at the University of Tehran with the virtual speech of President Hassan Rouhani.

According to the Ministry of Science, the new academic year of the universities started earlier than previous years due to the outbreak of coronavirus on September 15, and each university determines the start time and implementation of educational programs for students according to its conditions.

Some courses will be held virtually or a combination of face-to-face and virtual.

Service facilities such as dormitories and other services will be provided to fewer students than the total capacity of the university.

Schools reopened under strict health protocols

A week earlier, over 15 million students



attended schools nationwide for the new school year under strict health protocols to protect teachers, staff, and students against the coronavirus pandemic.

Each year, Iranian students start the school year on September 23, which marks the first day of autumn on the Iranian calendar, after

three-month summer vacation, while this year, in the light of the pandemic, the school year was started 18 days earlier.

This year, education is followed in three forms of in-person, virtual, and television-based, but our priority is school attendance, all schools should strictly follow

the health regulations so that the students are protected, Education Minister Mohsen Haji Mirzaei said.

Students have been banned from morning ceremonies and sports activities in schools this year.

All educational centers in Iran were closed from late February and reopened on May 16, after almost three months of closures in the wake of the pandemic after a TV announcement by the education minister. The schools also ran the final year exams in the third week of May.

In order for students to keep in touch with their studies, the Ministry of Education launched a homegrown mobile application on April 9, called SHAD, providing students with distance learning programs. He added that more than 60 percent of students and 94 percent of teachers attended 64 percent of classes through the SHAD app, whose acronym in Persian translates as the Students Education Network.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) also began to broadcast televised educational programs on a daily basis after school closures.

Geno Biosphere Reserve: elevation variability comes with unique diversity

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — The Geno Biosphere Reserve is located in southern Iran, where the variability of elevation, varying from 50 to 3,000 meters, comes with a great impact on the unique vegetation diversity in the area.

The Geno Biosphere Reserve is situated to the very south of the Zagros Mountains, close to the Persian Gulf and the Hara Biosphere Reserve. Mountain ranges reach 3,000 m above sea level and separate the warm and humid Persian Gulf from the arid deserts of central Iran. Vegetation and microclimatic conditions vary with elevation throughout the biosphere reserve, while the valleys are home to several hot springs, according to the UNESCO website.

Inscribed in the UNESCO's List of the biosphere reserves, the mountains play a great role in the precipitation rate of the province, while being a good option to hikers who choose winter late autumn to early spring for climbing as it has temperate climates during this season.

Ecological characteristics

The biosphere reserve is formed by the Geno Mountains, which rise above the Persian Gulf plains. Shallow slopes and plains surround the reserve to the south and east, while low hills are found in the north and west. The climate is arid but becomes semi-arid and cold at elevations of 2,300 m above sea level.

There are several endemic plant species, a high diversity of bird species, as well as endangered mammals.

Topographic Characteristics of Geno

Since a long time ago, Geno Mountain has been an area for escaping from the heat for the local people of Bandar Abbas as it has snowy and cold weather and, as a result, the lush slopes. The summer highland pastures of Kahnootj, Baq-e Kashaan, and Chaho are some examples.

Due to the interstitial position of Geno Mountain and the rapid elevation changes, different microclimates exist in different geographical directions. The valleys and slopes of the Geno Biosphere Reserve have experienced impressive features and varieties in terms of phytogeography.

Flora of the region

The vegetation of this biosphere reserve consists of more than 360 species of vascular plants. Few of them are ferns and gymnosperm and most of them are flowering plants. As it is common in arid and desert regions, the two groups of woody plants and shrubs and annual short-lived plants are the most diverse.

Annual short-lived plants are able to grow rapidly and complete their life cycle during the short wet and rainy pe-



riods, and they usually spend long periods of drought as a seed. Shrubs and woody shrubs are also able to absorb deep soil moisture and withstand the dry season by creating a deep wide-spread root network, according to the destinationiran website.

Geographically, the vegetation of the Geno Biosphere Reserve belongs to Saha-Rasandi and Irano-Turani vegetation zones. However, there are sometimes one or more elements from other vegetation zones among Geno plants.

Geno Area is home to a number of Iranian exclusive plants, some of which are limited to Geno Mountain, including, Wendelboi, Onobrychis, Rechingerorum, Kickxia, Chamophytica, Isat, Raphanifolia, Fortuynia, Garcin, Donsia, Revolute, Andrachne, Amygdalus, Merxmuelleri, Mentha, Mozaffariani, Zhumeria Majdae, Rosularia, Modesta, Pteroccephalus, etc.

The vegetation of Geno Biosphere Reserve ranges varies from slopes to mountain peaks, including a variety of tropical trees, desert steppe, foothill steppe, and cold region vegetation species.

The different species of bushes have grown at the foothills among which there is a variety of Grasses, Astragalusgenus, and Acacia nubica.

Further up the slope, the species of plants change so that the wild almonds form the dominant species at a height of 1,800 meters. However, there are other species at a height of 2,300 meters.

Due to lower temperatures, cold trees such as pine, cedar, wild olive, and wild box have grown massively. It is surprising to see the pile of these trees in Hormozgan Province located in a warm and humid climate. Lightning burns the trees occasionally in this area. Other plants of the Geno altitudes are the different kinds of medicinal plants that attract researchers' interest.

Fauna of the area

Among the invertebrates of the area, living especially around springs, we can mention the aquatic snails, terrestrial snails, and some kinds of worms. Most of the invertebrates in the area are arthropods, especially insects.

The researchers have identified and introduced several species of false scorpions and scorpions among the arthropods of Geno Mountains. There are also various kinds of orthopterans, coleopterans, Lepidoptera, bees, and Diptera in the area.

The vertebrates of this reserve include fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Aphanis guinois is the only fish in the Geno area and is a unique fish of the Geno warm water in the world.

Five species of toads and frogs, mostly found in still waters around rivers and springs, form the amphibians of this biosphere reservoir, in the area.

Reptiles of this area are more diverse than amphibians and belong to two groups of lizards and snakes, including braid snake and echis.

The birds of Geno Biosphere Reserve live mainly in trees and shrubs. They are usually Passeriformes. However, there are also a number of predatory birds among the Geno birds. Today, as the extent of the area and the plain region has decreased, the previously reported birds living in the area such as grey francolin, francolinus, and bustards do not exist anymore.

The mammals of this area are not exceptional species and we can generally find in other natural habitats. But these species are remarkably diverse.

The accessible mounds and highlands of the Geno Area and the surrounding down-and-ups have been the perfect habitat for urials. But today, as a sheep habitat, Geno has not the same safety as the past. The rocky and inaccessible mountains of the area contain the last remnants of goats and bezoar ibex.

Other species of mammals in the region include leopard, hyena, wolf, fox, jackals, porcupine, and rabbit.

Socio-economic characteristics

According to a 2006 census, there are eleven villages, 1,683 households, and 7,581 people inside the reserve, comprising mainly indigenous communities of the Bandar Abbas tribe. The main activities of the villagers are farming, horticulture, and animal husbandry.

There are eight religious shrines in the reserve. These sites are well respected and draw pilgrims from surrounding areas. The cultivation of fruit trees, such as apple, lemon, and palm, has created a pleasant environment, which attracts visitors for recreation.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Plans on agenda to address sand and dust storms in 4 provinces

Studies to combat sand and dust storms are almost completed and next year (starting on March 21) plans will be implemented in four provinces of Khuzestan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Kerman and Hormozgan, director of the national headquarters for combatting sand and dust storms has said.

Ali Mohammad Tahmasbi-Birgani explained that the national document to fight sand and dust storms will be hammered out next week and will be implemented once it is approved.

The five-year plan will set strategies and guidelines for developing early warning systems for sand and dust storms and restoration plans for wetlands and also task responsible bodies to tackle the environmental issue, ISNA quoted Tahmasbi-Birgani as saying on Friday.

۴ استان جنوبی در اولویت مقابله با گرد و غبار

مدیر ملی ستاد مقابله با پدیده گرد و غبار از تهیه سند ملی مقابله با گرد و غبار و نهایی شدن مطالعات طوفان ماسه و گرد و غبار خبر داد و اظهار کرد: سال بعد استان‌های خوزستان، سیستان و بلوچستان، کرمان و هرمزگان در اولویت مقابله با گرد و غبار قرار می‌گیرند.

علی محمد طهماسبی بیرگانی با اشاره به تهیه سند ملی مقابله با پدیده گرد و غبار اعلام کرد: این سند هفته آینده بررسی خواهد شد و بعد از تصویب اعمال شود.

به گزارش روز جمعه خبرگزاری ایسنا وی ادامه داد: برنامه پنج ساله مقابله با گرد و غبار برنامه‌ها و رهنمودهای کلی را در حوزه سیستم‌های پیش‌بینی هشدار گرد و غبار، عملیات اصلاحی و روش‌های احیایی را شامل می‌شود و وظایف همه دستگاه‌های اجرایی را مشخص می‌کند.

Guidelines for trawling in Persian Gulf, Sea of Oman prepared

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The Department of Environment (DOE) in cooperation with the Fisheries Organization has developed the guidelines for trawling in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman, the DOE deputy chief for marine ecosystems, has stated.

The International Maritime Organization has declared the Persian Gulf a special environmental zone, which is a semi-closed sea and is exploited by many countries, Davood Mirshekar said.

These exploitations, including the construction of desalination plants, aquaculture, transportation of petroleum products, etc., have put pressure on the habitat of the Persian Gulf, he lamented.

He went on to say that with this in mind, if the aquatic resources of the sea are not exploited in principle, such as trawling in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, habitats and important species on which the ecological health of the Persian Gulf depends, will be destroyed and the fishing community will suffer the first loss.

Stating that the lack of constant supervision by the responsible bodies, including the Fisheries Organization, the police, and the DOE, has caused some people to commit violations, he highlighted that each of these bodies cannot properly perform monitoring operations due to lack of manpower, equipment, and credit.

Hence, profiteers who do not care about national interests commit violations like trawling in order to benefit more from economic activity, he noted.

This fishing method imposes a serious threat to the environment, if not done properly, he emphasized.

In trawling, the fishing nets have very small holes, which does not allow the small fish to escape, and therefore catches any living creatures in the sea, he lamented.

Referring to the serious threat to marine biodiversity, he said that trawling may generate high income in the short term, but in the long term it will cause irreparable damage to the sea and many fishermen will lose their source of income or face job loss.

He stated that in some cases trawling is inevitable, like shrimp fishing which cannot be done in other ways, so we have to carry out trawling in certain ways trying to cause the least damage to the marine ecosystem. The instructions for trawling in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman specify which vessels can trawl in what area and at what time, he explained.

If a vessel trawls outside the specified time and place, it will be stopped by the order of the judicial authority, he said, noting that several online monitoring systems will be installed on the trawling vessels to be monitored continuously.

If these systems are turned off, heavy penalties for the vessel will be considered, such as revocation of the license, but in addition to this, fishermen training is very important which is on the agenda, he stated.

Trawling, which has been widely criticized for its use, causes damage to the seabed and coral reefs. It is estimated that each time the trawl net is pulled, about 5 to 25 percent of the seabed living environment is lost. Recently, the Fisheries Organization announced that about 134 trawlers are active in the country.

Meeting on “role of family in Iran” held in Japan

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Following a series of specialized meetings on various cultural issues relating to Iran, the office of the cultural attaché of the Iranian Embassy in Japan held a virtual meeting on “the role of the family in Iran.”

In the beginning, the program was attended by more than 70 Japanese enthusiasts.

The family has been of great importance in Iran both in the past and today and has always been preserved and protected due to its important role as an important social, educational, and training institution, Hossein Divsalar, the Iranian cultural attaché said.

A family is a place of living, growth, and development, life flows in the family, children grow and education is formed, and all human behaviors are directed to other members of the family.

Living with the family is living with kindness, compassion, sadness, and happiness, and in Iran, the connection of family members on the one hand, and families with each other, on the other hand, is considered very important, and undoubtedly the stronger the family is, the more prosperous and beautiful a society will be.

Toyoko Morita, professor at Kagoshima University, Iranologist, and professor of Persian Language and Literature, said that family protection law, especially for orphaned and neglected children and adolescents in Iran, cannot be found in countries in the Islamic world.

Iranian women are effective in all fields, including work, family, community, etc. They play important role in universities, higher education, politics, and social activities, and in this regard, Iran is like the developed countries in the world, she explained.

Earlier, the office of the cultural attaché had held other specialized meetings in this field, with the themes of “the position of the family in Islam and Shinto”, “contemporary Iran and the position of women”, “the position of women in Iran, yesterday, today, future”.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 24)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Exercise 4. Write the stressed words assuming normal condition:

۱. من استاد نیستم.
۲. من دانشجو هستم.
۳. شما دانشجو نیستید؟
۴. ما استاد هستیم.
۵. این اتاق بد نیست.
۶. آن اتاق خوب است؟

Intonation – In general, all indicative sentences, positive or

negative, end on falling intonation:

- این کتاب است.
- آن دفتر نیست.

Questions with no question word end on a rising intonation:

- این کتاب است؟

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SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Visiting relatives and keeping in touch with them will bring you a longer and more substantial life.

Imam Hussein (AS)

Cinema Vérité 2020 launches new section for COVID-19 docs

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Cinema Vérité, Iran's major international festival for documentary films, has launched a new special section this year that is dedicated to the competition of documentaries on COVID-19.

Films concerning the various aspects of the coronavirus pandemic, its impacts on people's lives across the world, and health workers' battle against the virus will be screening in this section, the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), which is the main organizer of the event, announced on Sunday.

The festival will be organized entirely online during December due to a spike in coronavirus cases in the country over the past few months.

The organizers plan to design platforms to guarantee the festival entries against piracy as it will be noncompetitive in its international section.

DEFC director Mohammad Hamidi-Moqaddam earlier announced the center's plan to pay tribute to celebrated filmmaker Khosro Sinai who died of coronavirus on August 1.

French theaters screen IIDCYA animation “The Crow and a Funny Sparrow”

A R T **TEHRAN** — French movie theaters started screening the Iranian animated film “The Crow and a Funny Sparrow” last week on Wednesday, the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), the producer of the film, announced on Sunday.

The movie is composed of three short movies: “Once a Crow” Abdollah Alimorad, “A Raven Who Wanted to Be the Most Powerful” by Mohammad-Ali Soleimanzadeh and “The Sparrow and the Cotton Seed” by Morteza Ahadi.

The movies have been acquired by Les Films du Whippet, a Paris-based children's film distributor and DVD publisher.

“Once a Crow” tells the story of a greedy crow who steals everything in its reach: soap, door keys, buttons, coins and jewels, stirring up ill-feelings in the quiet village. The story becomes complicated when he steals the diamond from the king's turban and an

innocent man is accused.

“The Sparrow and the Cotton Seed” is about a little sparrow, which, tempted by a cotton seed serving as bait, is caught in a hunter's trap. His luck changes when he is rescued by a young girl. The freed bird then puts the seed to multiple uses. His determination and desire lead him to overcome a number of hurdles, which help to develop his understanding of the world.

In “A Raven Who Wanted to Be the Most Powerful”, a raven from the time of birth feels different from his brothers and sisters, and wants to become the strongest of animals. He challenges all the animals he meets and emerges victorious in all fights. But one day, he sees his reflection in the waters of a lake.

The animations were previously screened in France in 2007. Les Films du Whippet planned to screen the animation collection in March to celebrate the company's 15th anniversary. However, the plan was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.



A poster for Iranian animated film “The Crow and a Funny Sparrow”.

“Wasteland” named best in Orizzonti, “Sun Children” star crowned best at Venice

→1 The “Sun Children” is about child labor in Tehran and won the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February.

“The Wasteland” is about an old brick manufacturing factory that is going to be shut down, and all that matters to the factory supervisor is to keep his lover unharmed.

Iranian director Shahram Mokri's latest film, “Careless Crime”, won the best original screenplay of the Venice festival a few days ago.

The Venice 77 jury, chaired by Cate Blanchett, and comprised of Matt Dillon, Veronika Franz, Joanna Hogg, Nicola Lagioia, Christian Petzold and Ludvine Sagnier honored the winners in the official section.

The Golden Lion for best film went to “Nomadland” by Chloé Zhao from the U.S., while “New Order”, a co-production between Mexico and France by director Michel Franco, won the Grand Jury Prize.

The award for best director was presented to Kiyoshi Kurosawa for the film “Wife of a Spy” from Japan.

“The Disciple” written by Chaitanya Tamhane from India won the award for best Screenplay.

Vanessa Kirby won the award for best actress for her role in the film “Pieces of a Woman”, a co-production between Canada and Hungary by Kornél Mundruczó, and Pierfrancesco Favino received the award for best actor for his role in the film “Padrenostro” by Claudio Noce from Italy.



Ruhollah Zamani acts in a scene from Iranian director Majid Majidi's “Sun Children”.

Movies from Iran line up for Leloun festival



Mitra Hajjar and Saeid Pursamimi act in a scene from “Nargese Mast” by Jalaeddin Dorri, which has been selected to be screened in the official competition of the Leloun International Film Festival.

A R T **TEHRAN** — A large number of Iranian films will be competing in the first edition of the Leloun International Film Festival, which is scheduled to take place in Rojava, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES) from September 21 to 25.

The event will be organized in the region which has a large Kurdish population.

The Iranian movies “White Fish Season” directed by Qorban Najafi, “Shahin” by Salar Tehrani and “Nargese Mast” by Seyyed Jalaeddin Dorri will be screened in the official competition.

“The Old Man and the Singer” by

Amir Osanlu and “Zhirleh” by Nahar Ruhbani are other Iranian movies to be screened in the documentary section.

Ten short movies by Iranian filmmakers will also be competing in the event. Among the movies are “The Castle” by Saba Qasemi, “Tumor” by Javad Ganji, “Playing with Pain” by Hamid Shahi and Marzieh Shamlu and “Finish” by Saeid Naqavian.

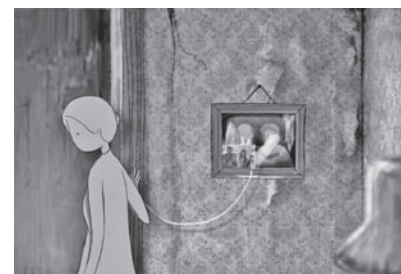
“Saad's Olive Tree” by Ahmad Zayeri, “Lowest Floor” by Omidreza Kheirkhah, “This Side, Other Side” by Lida Fazli, “Password” by Hassan Mokhtari, “Command” by Farshid Abdi and “Mountain” by Teimur Qaderi will also be screened in this category.

Iranian movies receive nominations at Poland Grand Off awards

A R T **TEHRAN** — Four Iranian movies have received nominations in the different categories of the Grand Off World Independent Film Awards, which will be held in the Polish capital of Warsaw in November.

“The Land of Ants” by Issa Babai has been nominated for the best cinematography award, and Siavash Cheraghpur has been nominated for the best actor award for his role in “Saba” by Mohammadreza Khavari.

“Command” by Farshid Abdi has been



A scene from “Tangle” by Maliheh Gholamzadeh.

nominated for the best fiction award, and “Tangle” by Maliheh Gholamzadeh received a nomination in the best animation category.

The short animated film “Tangle” is about the people who lose their homes in wars, and are forced to leave all their memories and loved ones behind.

The festival, which will be held from November 23 to 30, is the most important initiative promoting independent cinema in Poland, and is one of the most significant events of its kind in the world.

Visual Arts Festival for Youth opens

A R T **TEHRAN** — The 27th edition of the Visual Arts Festival for Youth opened online on Sunday as the entries are physically on view at the Iranian Artists Forum.

The festival is organized every year in the categories of drawing, painting, calligraphy, miniature, sculpture, cartoon, photography and illustration for artists aged from 16 to 25.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the festival, Visual Arts Office director Hadi Mozaffari said, “While the health of the young artists and their masters has been of great concern, we did not want to close the festival. This is why we decided to hold the festival online, and the workshops will also be virtual.”

“The festival enjoys high significance in discovering young talent, and the participating masters find the best talent. And this year, they will also introduce the

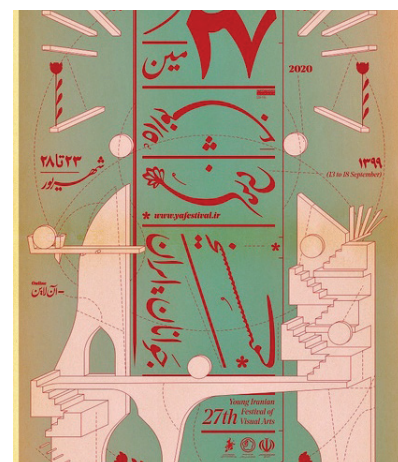
best for the workshops,” he added.

In his message to the festival, Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini said that the organizers have tried to provide facilities for the young artists to hold online workshops and experience a new form of the festival.

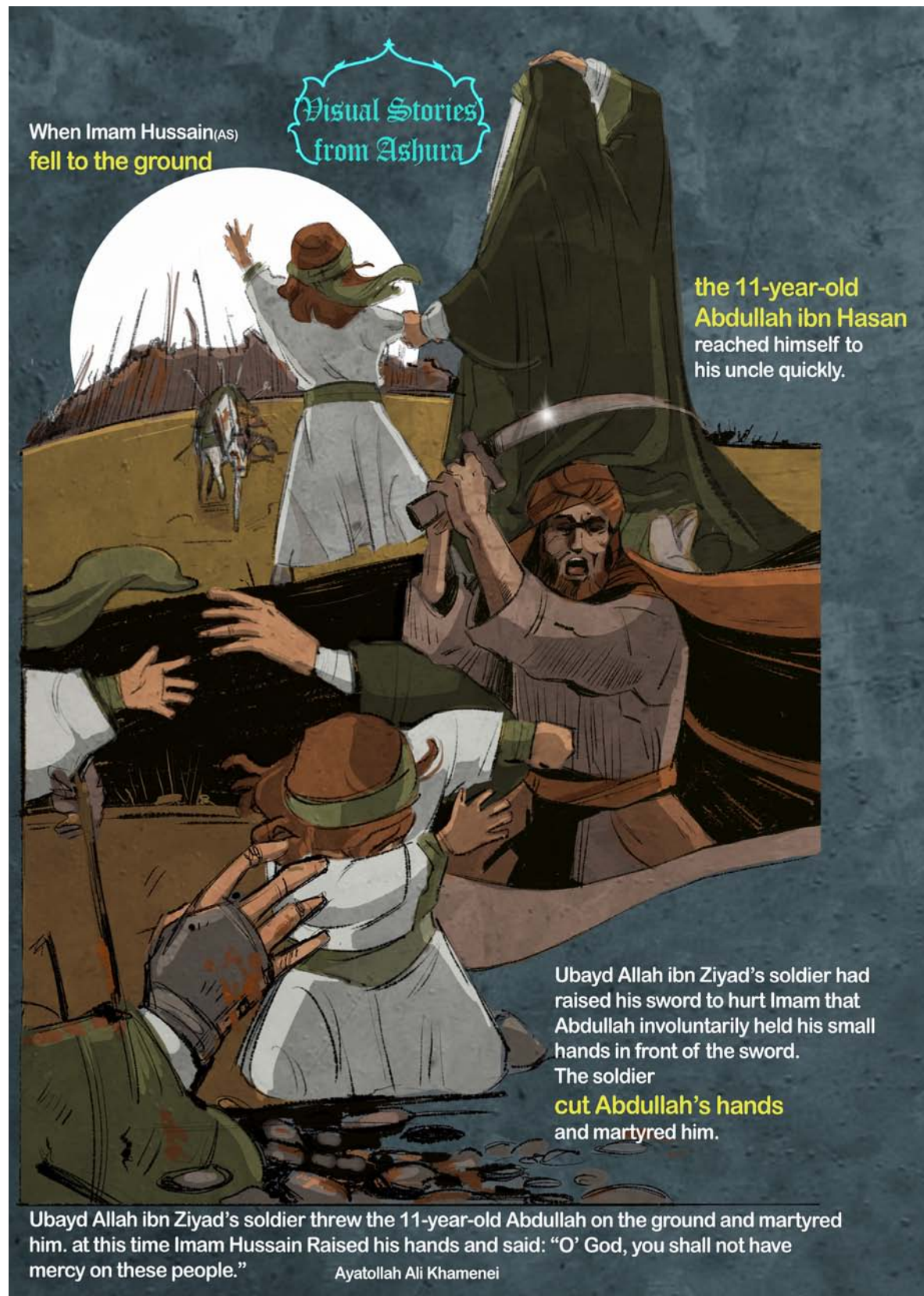
He hoped that the young artists practice patience and know that art will not be stopped with any excuse.

Secretary of the festival Rezvan Sadeq in his message said that not organizing the festival would mean giving up against the danger of the coronavirus, but the master artists decided to attend online workshops to keep this wonderful national festival alive.

The festival will be running until Friday. 127 young artists competed in the 26th edition of the festival, which ran from August 21 to 25 in the western Iranian city of Ilam.



A poster for the 27th Visual Arts Festival for Youth.

When Imam Hussain(AS)
fell to the groundVisual Stories
from Ashurathe 11-year-old
Abdullah ibn Hasan
reached himself to
his uncle quickly.Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad's soldier had
raised his sword to hurt Imam that
Abdullah involuntarily held his small
hands in front of the sword.
The soldier
cut Abdullah's hands
and martyred him.

Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad's soldier threw the 11-year-old Abdullah on the ground and martyred him. at this time Imam Hussain Raised his hands and said: “O’ God, you shall not have mercy on these people.”

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei