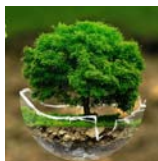


Russia says intends to trade with Tehran when arms ban expires **2**



Esteghlal players ready for Pakhtakor: Namjoo Motlagh **3**



National contest to be held on environmental projects **7**



Artworks represent bittersweet images of Iran-Iraq war **8**



By M.A. Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

Terrorist-producing factory and blame game

Saudi monarch King Salman made absurd accusations against Iran while addressing the annual UN conference on Wednesday.

In his speech, Salman, the 84-year-old monarch who ascended the throne in 2015, claimed Iran's policies have "produced nothing but chaos, extremism, and sectarianism".

It is both tragic and ridiculous that the Saudi monarch make accusations against Iran. The Saudi kingdom is notoriously famous for nurturing, inspiring, and financing terrorism.

To clearly show that Saudi Arabia is a terrorist-producing factory, it is just enough to remind that that 15 out of 19 September 11 attackers were Saudi citizens.

Saudi citizens formed the second-largest group of terrorists operating in Iraq which followed the 2003 invasion of the country by the United States and Britain.

According to TIME magazine, a 2016 study for the national bureau of economic research also showed that the Saudis formed the second largest Daesh (ISIS) militants.

The country is the birthplace of Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies which have affected the youth not only in Saudi Arabia but in some other countries. Foreign men and even women who poured into Iraq and Syria to join Daesh and other terrorist groups were influenced by the Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies propagated by Saudi Arabia. These extremist ideologies had attracted youths from European countries, Muslim-populated Russian republics, Central Asian republics and some Southeast Asian nations.

Saudi Arabia's record in fanning the flames of sectarianism, extremism and terrorism are so deep and extensive that it can never be purged from the memory of history.

The tribal Saudi rulers may themselves don't like Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies but they have been using them to achieve their vicious goals.

Just in the 1980s, Saudis were facilitating the flow of the youth from Saudi Arabia and North African countries to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets whom they considers as pagans, a move that produced al-Qaeda. They also continued to arm and finance terrorists first in Iraq and then Syria in the 21st century. **→2**

Mining sector increases share of non-oil trade

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — In line with Iran's major plans for distancing the country's economy from oil and moving toward a resilient, oil-free economy, the mining sector has become one of the major areas of focus in recent years, since the country is one of the world's top 10 mineral-rich countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world's largest deposits of copper, zinc, and iron.

Expansion and exploitation of these huge sources of income have become a top priority for the government in recent years, and various programs have been defined for the improvement of this industry.

Reviving idle small mines, increasing the tariffs on the exports of some raw minerals, defining new exploration projects, signing memorandums of understanding with domestic and

foreign manufacturers for the renovation of the country's mining equipment and machinery, and allocation of funds for the completion of semi-finished projects in this sector can be mentioned as some of the programs introduced by the government for the development of the country's mining sector.

As the government body in charge of the affairs in the mentioned sector, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has provisioned operational targets in the mining sector's three major areas of exploration, extraction, and processing in the current year to further increase the share of this industry in the country's non-oil trade basket.

The ministry has targeted a 25 percent increase in the production of mineral products, and it also plans to add about 20 percent to the previous reserves by implementing new exploration operations. **→4**

Saddam rewarded his Arab backers against Iran by capturing Kuwait: Iraqi expert

By Mohammad Mazhari

Part 1 **TEHRAN** — Najah Mohammad Ali, an Iraqi analyst, says that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia took a very hostile position against Iran during Saddam Hussein's war against Iran in the 1980s but Saddam rewarded them by capturing Kuwait.

Noting that Arab countries decided to support Saddam despite their political contradictory positions with him, Mohammad Ali tells the Tehran Times that

after his failure to defeat Iran, Saddam occupied Kuwait and almost occupied the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Following is the text of the interview: **■** What was the real reason for the start of the Iran-Iraq war? Did Iran incite Iraq to attack?

A: I do not think that war is an Iraqi-Iranian war. This term cannot be used. We must say Saddam's war against the Iraqi and Iranian people. **→5**

27 pioneering projects underway in Iran's petchem sector

TEHRAN — Head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said that 27 pioneering projects aimed for the smart development of the country's petrochemical industry are currently underway, IRNA reported.

"Seven of these projects are being implemented in the second and third leaps of the petrochemical industry, while the studies on the other 20 projects, which

are in four groups of propylene, methanol, benzene and ethylene, have been completed," Behzad Mohammadi stated.

Speaking in the inauguration ceremony of a propylene plant in Tehran, Mohammadi said: "In the way of developing this industry, we should move towards the diversification of products and try to make the country's petrochemical industry a stable and resilient industry." **→4**

Iran Book and Literature House to showcase publications acclaimed by Leader

TEHRAN — The Iran Book and Literature House in Tehran plans to organize an exhibition displaying 57 books praised by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The book fair is part of a large exhibition the institute is currently organizing at the Sacred Defense Museum to feature Iran's cultural achievements during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The exhibit has been initiated to observe the 40th anniversary of the war,

the institute announced on Thursday.

The Leader usually praises books he likes by writing commendations, which are officially published by his office. Most of the books are war memoirs or on other topics that revolve around the war.

Among the books is "Those 23 Individuals" written by Ahmad Yusefzadeh about 23 young Iranian volunteers who were captives during the war. Mehdi Jafari made a screen adaptation of the story in 2018. **→8**

U.S. protests: Outrage over lack of charges in Breonna Taylor's death

It was heartbreak and fury following the news that none of the three officers involved in Breonna Taylor's death were charged with her killing in the United States.

More than six months after Taylor was shot dead after Louisville police officers broke down the door to her apartment while executing a warrant, a grand jury decided to indict only one of the three officers involved on first-degree wanton endangerment charges, CG TN reported.

The charge applies to the risk put on Taylor's neighbors but does not aim to hold the officer responsible for her death.

From Louisville to Los Angeles, Atlanta and New York, masses of people congregated to protest the decision. Police in Portland declared protests outside the justice center there a riot. And in Seattle, 13 people were arrested after a night of fires and protesters throwing glass bottles and fireworks

at police, authorities said.

Taylor's case has been a rallying point for protesters nationwide as they've demonstrated against racial injustice and police brutality.

For months, chants of "Say her name" echoed across the country, along with calls to honor other Black people killed or hurt in police custody, including George Floyd.

"We somehow got our hopes up in this case. We wanted to believe the system would change," Sadiqa Reynolds, president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League, told CNN. Instead, Wednesday's announcement by Attorney General Daniel Cameron, she said, was "devastating."

Taylor, a 26-year-old Black emergency room technician and aspiring nurse, was described by relatives as a hard-working, goal-oriented young woman who put an emphasis on family.

Tehran slams report on Iran human rights as 'custom-tailored'

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has rejected a recent report published by the Guardian newspaper, saying it is quite clear why such "custom-tailored reports" try to blackwash the situation of human rights in Iran, especially at this juncture.

Iran believes the politically-motivated behavior and selective moves of the U.S. and certain European governments have always dealt the heaviest blow to the principle of human rights, Khatibzadeh said in a statement on Wednesday.

Earlier, the Guardian reported that Britain, France and Germany were summoning Iranian envoys in a protest against Iran's "detention of dual nationals and its treatment of political prisoners."

The report also said that Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baedinejad was summoned by the Foreign Office on Tuesday and the ambassadors to Paris and Berlin are also being called in this week.

Khatibzadeh said the approach, remarks, and moves of certain European countries are an instance of interference in Iran's domestic affairs,

adding that the authorities at the relevant level have taken, and will continue to take, necessary measures in reaction to the move.

"It is quite surprising and unbelievable to us that these countries have not only refused to show any reaction to the blatant violation of the Iranian nation's rights caused by the U.S. inhumane policy of maximum pressure and its cruel and anti-human sanctions, but are also fanning its flames and practically joining it through their inaction," the spokesman added.



Sacred Defense exhibitions inaugurated in eight provinces

Through a videoconference on Wednesday morning, the Sacred Defense exhibitions were inaugurated in eight provinces. The exhibitions were attended by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri. The two political and military officials were attending the Islamic Revolution Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran for the inauguration ceremony.

Stunning discovery: Iranians were making '20th-century' chromium steel 900 years ago

TEHRAN — Chromium steel – similar to what we know today as tool steel or stainless steel – was first made in Persia (ancient Iran), nearly a millennium earlier than experts previously thought, according to a new study led by the University College London (UCL).

The findings are of very significance as material scientists, historians and archaeologists have long considered that chromium steel was a 20th-century innovation.

Published in the Journal of Archaeological Science, the discovery was made with the aid of a number of medieval Persian manuscripts, which led the researchers to an archaeological site in Chahak, southern Iran. The site of Chahak is located in the southwest of Iran, in the eastern part of the Fars province, close to the Zagros mountain range.

"Our research provides the first evidence of the deliberate addition of a chromium mineral with-in steel production. We believe this was a Persian phenomenon," said Dr. Rahil Alipour from the UCL Institute of Archaeology. She is the lead author of the study as well.

"This research not only delivers the earliest known evidence for the production of chromium steel dating back as early as the 11th century CE, but also provides a chemical tracer that could aid the identification of crucible steel artifacts in museums or archaeological collections back to their origin in Chahak, or the Chahak tradition," UCL quoted Alipour as saying on Westaway. **→6**

Russia says intends to trade with Tehran when arms ban expires

Lavrov says Russia will in no way build its policies based on aggressive illegal demands

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Russia on Thursday dismissed the threat of U.S. sanctions and attempts to isolate Iran, saying it intended to trade with Tehran once a UN arms embargo expires next month.

The embargo on conventional arms shipments to Iran is set to expire on October 18 after the United States failed to win support for a new UN resolution.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump says it has decided to unilaterally reinstate virtually all of the UN sanctions on Iran lifted under a 2015 nuclear accord with Tehran.

Washington has said it will seek to prevent Iran from purchasing Chinese tanks and Russian air defense systems.



Speaking alongside Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Moscow, Russia's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov dismissed those threats as illegal.

«Russia will in no way build its policies on the basis of these aggressive illegal demands which have no legal force,» Lavrov said, according to AFP.

He expressed hope that other countries cooperating with Iran would follow suit.

«The fact that the United States threatened to introduce sanctions on all those who will contradict the U.S. interpretation of the current situation once again confirms that Washington wants to behave like a bull in a china shop,» Lavrov added.

«In my opinion, the current (U.S.) administration has lost diplomatic skills almost beyond retrieve,» Lavrov said.

He added however that Russia and European countries continued talks with Washington on the subject.

Following the U.S. announcement on the reinstatement of UN sanctions on Iran, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that UN Security Council Resolution 2231 was “unchanged,” which means that Russia still believes that no UN sanctions have been restored even though the U.S. announced their restoration.

“There is no embargo and there would be no limitations whatsoever after the expiration of this timeframe established by the Security Council,” Lavrov said in an interview with Al Arabiya in New York.

■ Zarif calls Russia one of Iran's strategic friends

At the end of his two-day visit to Russia, Foreign Minister Zarif said Iran and Russia need to constantly hold talks with Russia, calling Moscow one of Iran's “strategic friends.”

“We need to have constant and continued talks with the Russian friends given the regional and international circumstances as well as our bilateral relations,” the Fars news agency quoted the foreign minister as saying on Friday.

Zarif visited Moscow on Wednesday and Thursday amid soaring tensions between Iran and the U.S. over the White House's unilateral move in announcing the return of all previously terminated UN sanctions on Tehran.

The chief Iranian diplomat said he discussed with Russians the situation around the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – and the role Russia has recently played in the United Nations Security Council and the UN nuclear watchdog's Board of Governors.

On August 20, the U.S. unilaterally initiated the so-called snapback mechanism by submitting a complaint against Iran to the UN Security Council. One month later, the U.S. announced the return of all UN sanctions on Iran over the objections of all JCPOA participants, particularly Russia, which strongly rejected the U.S. measure.

As the U.S. turned up the heat on Iran, Zarif paid at least three visits to Russia in the last few months. Zarif said these visits were aimed at “closely coordinating positions” on the developments in the UN Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors. According to the foreign minister, the two sides had a “very successful move” in the two UN bodies.

“Russia is a neighboring country and permanent member of the Security Council. It's also one of Iran's strategic friends. I think these talks are a mutual need for the two countries, and God willing, they will continue,” said Zarif, adding that his visit to Moscow was a “very good opportunity” to hold talks with Russia.

The Iranian ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, said Zarif's visit came after the U.S failed to restore the UN sanctions on Iran. The ambassador also linked the visit to Iran-Russia joint military exercises in the Caspian Seas and the Black Sea.

“Russia, as a supporter of the JCPOA, has recently opposed the resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors. Despite the inhumane and unilateral sanctions of the U.S., Iran and Russia fully stand together in solidarity,” Jalali pointed out.

■ ‘Iranian and Russian presidents to pursue implementation of agreements’

Talking to reporters alongside Lavrov on Thursday, Zarif also said, “The Presidents of Iran and Russia will seriously follow the implementation of agreements and the process of developing cooperation between the two countries.

Zarif also said, “We also hope to have good cooperation in the fight against the Coronavirus.”

Terrorist-producing factory and blame game

1 → In addition, Saudi Arabia itself openly invaded neighboring Yemen in March 2015, creating an indescribable crisis that the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian disaster. Striking Yemeni schoolboys on a field trip in February 2019 and bombing wedding ceremonies in the country have been described as instances of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In view of such things, ranging from invading Yemen and causing famine in the country to backing and financing terrorists in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan that led to emergence of Daesh and al-Qaeda, it is ridiculous to hear that the Saudi king attributes such accusations against Iran.

Iran assails Saudi Arabia as ‘source of instability’ in region

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran has assailed Saudi Arabia as a source of instability in the region, rejecting Riyadh's “unfounded allegations” against Tehran.

“Saudi Arabia has been a source of instability in the region for decades,” Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, said in a statement, IRNA reported on Friday.

“It is a well-established fact that Saudi Arabia was the main financial supporter of the Iraqi dictator, Saddam, in his eight-year aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran in which he committed numerous crimes, including the use of chemical weapons against Iranian and Iraqi cities and citizens,” he added.

On Wednesday, King Salman of Saudi Arabia used his UN General Assembly speech to attack Iran for what he called “the forces of extremism and chaos” in West Asia.

“The Kingdom's hands were extended to Iran in peace with a positive and open attitude over the past decades, but to no avail,” the Saudi king claimed in his speech, accusing the Islamic Republic of targeting Saudi oil facilities in missile strikes.

“Our experience with the Iranian regime has taught us that partial solutions and appeasement did not stop its threats to international peace and security,” Salman said.

A day earlier at the UN General Assembly, President Hassan Rouhani had said Iran as a peace-loving force for good in the region and the world.

He described Iran as the axis of peace and stability, the harbinger of dialog and tolerance and the champion of the fight against occupation and extremism.

“Such a nation does not deserve sanctions,” President Rouhani said, referring to the U.S. government's “maximum pressure” policy against Iran, which includes sanctions and threats of war. “The response to peace is not war,” Rouhani added.

■ ‘Saudi Arabia is the main financier of terrorists’

In his statement, Takht-Ravanchi said through a series of fabrication and disinformation, Saudi Arabia is desperately attempting to distract attentions from its dark, long record harboring, financing,



inducing and arming the most dangerous terrorist networks.

He said Riyadh has disseminated hate speech and extremist ideology, sowed the seeds of sectarian division, pursued destabilizing, disruptive and subversive policies and practices in the region, and committed crimes for over six years in Yemen.

“With respect to the role of Saudi Arabia in supporting terrorist groups, it has now become quite evident that this country's Wahhabi ideology is the main inspiring source of the most dangerous terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaeda and through its petrodollars, Saudi Arabia has served as the main financier of such terrorist groups,” the ambassador maintained.

King Salman had also taken the UNGA podium to express sympathy for the people of Lebanon over a port explosion last month, to claim that the blast was “the result of the hegemony of Hezbollah” in Lebanon, and to express support for the Trump administration's role in normalizing ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia's allies, Bahrain and the UAE.

However, he failed to address other issues, such as Saudi Arabia's assassination of the Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey two years ago, or Saudi Arabia's military aggression against Yemen, which has turned the country into

the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

“Another living example of the destructive policies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the region is its almost six years of aggression, death and destruction in Yemen, in which thousands of civilians, including women and children, have been killed, and homes, mosques, hospitals, schools, marketplaces, diplomatic missions and even wedding and funeral ceremonies have been targeted,” Takht-Ravanchi said.

“Such crimes have been so brutal and horrible that the United Nations placed this country at the top of the list of global child-killers,” he added.

He also reiterated President Rouhani's call for restoration of peace and security in the region, saying that relying on foreign forces whose main interests are to sell more deadly weapons to West Asia has not produced security for the region.

“Instead, the regional countries should resolve their differences through dialogue and rely on their own capabilities to promote peace and security in the region. In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is called upon to accept such a call for dialogue among all littoral States of the Persian Gulf,” the envoy noted.

■ ‘Riyadh has become delirious due to defeats in Yemen’

Iran's Foreign Ministry also categorically rejected Salman's charges as unfounded.

Zarif urges action against U.S. economic, medical terrorism

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has urged the international community to confront the United States' economic and medical terrorism, especially as the world is fighting off the coronavirus pandemic.

“We need to jointly confront the destructive impact of unilateral coercive measures on efforts to combat the pandemic,” Zarif told the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on Thursday.

Kazakhstan has assumed the chairmanship of CICA for 2020-2022.

“They are nothing but economic and medical terrorism, and we must refuse to comply with these unlawful measures in our collective endeavor to tackle this common affliction of humanity,” he said, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

He called for international cooperation within the framework of CICA to secure a pivotal role for the organization, to advance multilateralism, and to ensure inclusive collaboration.

“It is imperative for us to pool our resources to jointly tackle the enormous challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Foreign Minister Zarif said through a videoconference.

Chairing a virtual meeting of the foreign ministers of the CICA members on Thursday, Kazakh Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi said his country will continue promoting cooperation between CICA members and enhancing the body's status in the international arena during the chairmanship.

Hinting at Washington's unilateral doctrine, Zarif said,



“We all need to embrace multilateralism and reject unilateralism in addressing a global challenge of this magnitude; one that has defied all geographical, political and socio-economic divisions.”

Since assuming office, U.S. President Donald Trump has adopted a foreign policy of unilateralism, dismissing other countries' collective efforts to resolve world issues.

Trump has withdrawn from a number of key international organizations and agreements, including the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, which was signed in 2015 under his predecessor Barack Obama

Washington's sanctions against Iran, which were not lifted after the breakout of the coronavirus, has disrupted the country's fight against the virus, making Iran the tenth

hardest-hit country in the world.

“We need humility and multilateral cooperation to grapple with a microscopic enemy that has brought major powers to their knee—without deference to their military might, economic wealth and propaganda machines,” Zarif remarked.

As CICA members, he said, “We should strive to strengthen cooperation within the framework of our organization—in coordination with the UN and WHO—to ensure full, free and fair access to health services, medicine, and medical equipment for our peoples. We must also act to ensure that no one can arbitrarily challenge professional international organizations.”

The chief Iranian diplomat also said the only way to overcome common challenges is to work together to find common solutions that effectively and decisively address the sources of the threats.

“My country stands ready to join our friends and neighbors in CICA and exchange knowledge and expertise in this collective mission,” he underlined.

Also, China on Thursday called on the CICA states to make concerted efforts in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic. CICA members should work together to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, firmly support the World Health Organization (WHO) in playing a leading and coordinating role, and oppose politicizing the pandemic and stigmatizing specific countries, said Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Tehran slams report on Iran human rights as ‘custom-tailored’

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has rejected a recent report published by the Guardian newspaper, saying it is quite clear why such “custom-tailored reports” try to blackwash the situation of human rights in Iran, especially at this juncture.

Iran believes the politically-motivated behavior and selective moves of the U.S. and certain European governments have always dealt the heaviest blow to the principle of human rights, Khatibzadeh said in a statement on Wednesday.

Earlier, the Guardian reported that Brit-

ain, France and Germany were summoning Iranian envoys in a protest against Iran's “detention of dual nationals and its treatment of political prisoners.”

The report also said that Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baedinejad was summoned by the Foreign Office on Tuesday and the ambassadors to Paris and Berlin are also being called in this week.

Khatibzadeh said the approach, remarks, and moves of certain European countries are an instance of interference in Iran's domestic affairs, adding that the authorities at the relevant level have taken, and will continue

to take, necessary measures in reaction to the move.

“It is quite surprising and unbelievable to us that these countries have not only refused to show any reaction to the blatant violation of the Iranian nation's rights caused by the U.S. inhumane policy of maximum pressure and its cruel and anti-human sanctions, but are also fanning its flames and practically joining it through their inaction,” the spokesman added.

U.S. President Donald Trump exited the Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCOPA), in



May 2018. Since then, Trump has adopted a “maximum pressure” policy in the form of economic war against Iran.

Diplomat rejects U.S. envoy's comments on Iran's role in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — The Iranian foreign minister's special envoy for Afghanistan slammed his American counterpart's “untrue and irresponsible” remarks on the Islamic Republic's role in Afghanistan.

In comments on Thursday, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian said the untrue and irresponsible remarks made by the U.S. special representative about Iran's role in the current developments of Afghanistan clearly demonstrate Washington's inaccurate understanding of the developments in Afghanistan.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has officially and openly supported the launch of negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban and has expressed readiness to help advance the process of real and sustainable peace in that country,” he added.

“Stability in Afghanistan is an indispensable and permanent part of our policy on that country,” the Iranian envoy noted.

“The remarks made by the American official result from the gradual revelation of the mistake that architects of the

Doha deal made in advancing the peace process and their resort to the blame game in order to justify the ineffectiveness of this policy by accusing the other countries,” he concluded.

His comments came after the U.S. negotiator on Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, accused Iran of seeking to bog down its archenemy in its longest war in Afghanistan.

In remarks at a virtual event of the U.S. Institute of Peace, Khalilzad said the United States would target any Iran-backed groups “taking action against us,” saying Washington was “monitoring them very closely.”

Rear Admiral Khanzadi: Sooner or later Arab states will be left with no allies

By Ali A. Jenabzadeh

TEHRAN — In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times on Thursday, Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi addresses several developments in the region, including the recent U.S.-brokered normalization deals between Israel and some Arab states.

Khanzadi said the relations between Israel and some Arab states were improving in secret but “what’s going on right now is the publicization of the secret relations,” which will pave the way for the Israelis to expand some of their activities in a more public way.

The top navy commander also touched on the U.S. presidential election, saying the normalization deals were unlikely to tip the balance of the presidential election in favor of Donald Trump.

Following is the text of the first part of the interview:

■ Following the U.S.-brokered normalization deals between Israel and some Arab states, namely the UAE and Bahrain, many military experts said that the military situation in the region will change. Considering the direct presence of Israel in the region, many military strategies may need to be changed. Some believe that the deals between Israel and Arab states were in fact a publicization of relations, not normalization. Will this publicization affect the military equations in the region? And if it will, what is the strategy of the Iranian navy in return?

A: I think part of the relations between Israel and these Arab states was secretly normal. This means that what is going on right now is the publicization of the secret relations, which means that the Israelis were already exploiting what they wanted to. However, this was not overt. The publicization of this exploitation will not seriously and massively affect the process of making use of normal relations. However, the publicization of relations will certainly pave the way for the Israelis to expand some activities in a more public way. In other words, if they were refraining from doing some activities because of some limits in the past, today it would be easy for them to freely and publicly do these activities.

The side that will reap the rewards of the publicization of the relations between Israel and subservient states in the region, is the Americans who will use the publicization in their presidential election. Perhaps, it may look very journalistic to say that Trump will use the publicization of relations between Israel and Arab states to boost his reelection chances. But, in reality, the publicization of relations does not carry much weight for Trump in the election. Because, unlike other societies, American society does not care about politics. The ordinary people of America are not aware of their country’s major policies. Of course, the situation in many countries around the world is similar. For example, I spent one year in the War University of Pakistan’s navy. Many officers from many countries were also studying there. Some of them were from countries in the vicinity of Iran such as Bangladesh, which is not far from the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. When we discussed the falsification of the name of the Persian Gulf by Arabs, some of the foreign officers were not aware of the issue and they didn’t even know where the Persian Gulf is. Political awareness among ordinary Americans is similar to those officers. There is a huge gap of information and awareness between American society and the global community. Ordinary Americans don’t know global issues very well. If you ask them where Iran is, they may fail to show you where Iran is located on the map.

Therefore, exploiting the normalization deals will not greatly affect voters. It will influence them but this influence won’t be strong. Through publicizing the normalization deals, the Americans seek to suggest to Arab states that they support the idea of normalizing relations with Israel. The U.S. seeks to break the taboo of normalizing relations with Israel among Arab societies. When a strong ally such as the U.S., which pursues terrorist policies, throws its weight behind



“The window of our heart has always been open to them (Persian Gulf Arab states). But they engaged in more attractive games or more attractive toys that the Americans provided them with.”

normalization deals, these societies may feel that the obscenity of normalizing relations is not that much. But, in reality, Muslim societies and those who made efforts to stop this disgraceful stain [normalization deals] along with the meaningful states, which don’t need to sell their soul and their country to protect themselves, don’t accept these deals, because they see them as insulting. Pakistan is one of these countries, which announced that it will never accept normalization deals and will never normalize relations with Israel. These countries enjoy more independence and are not subservient. They understand that Israel’s influence will further complicate the security climate and create non-linear developments and dealings. In a linear climate, friendly behavior prevails and everything is overt and transparent. In such an atmosphere, there are no relations that destroy friendly relationships.

Wherever the occupying regime of Israel and the U.S. go, the first thing they do, they change the security arrangement there in a way that undermines friendships and engagements. To this end, they go after the weak countries in the region that lack strategic depth. These country’s governments are not legitimate.

Saul Cohen has introduced the Shatter Belt theory with regard to our region. He names a set of countries located in Shatter Belts. He says that these countries are not independent and enduring, and thus they will certainly collapse in the future. Under the Shah rule, Iran was located in a Shatter Belt region. The kingdom of the Shah was one of the first Shatter Belt region countries to collapse. The glorious Islamic Revolution has disrupted the regional security balance that the Americans were after. The Islamic Revolution did so to promote independence and help countries refusing to buckle under global arrogance.

Now, the U.S. and its allies in the Persian Gulf seek to create a new security arrangement. All Persian Gulf’s Arab littoral states are located in a Shatter Belt region. They are like a domino. The collapse of one of them will lead to the collapse of all of them. If one of these countries collapses socially or politically, other countries will follow suit like a domino. That’s why the Americans came to the region to manipulate it in a way that the domino effect in the Persian Gulf would be prevented unless they want to bring about it. The Americans want to set the time of the domino effect according to their interests. The time of the domino has not come yet. When the region’s capacities cease to serve the American interests, we will certainly see

the domino effect. The Shatter Belt countries will collapse. All Persian Gulf’s southern Arab states relying on foreign powers such as the U.S. will inevitably collapse. Then we will see a different region. But now the presence of Israel in the region will complicate the region’s security equations. If there was a level of covert economic and political cooperation between the region’s countries that protected the unity among these countries, this cooperation is now targeted by the Israeli presence in the region. The Israeli presence in the region seeks to downgrade the cooperation to its lowest levels. There is a schism in the Arab League with regard to normalization with Israel. Some countries seek to protect their political independence by opposing the normalization. Others try to strike a balance by taking neutral positions. The Americans want to prevent this schism from spreading into Arab societies and protect the status quo by tightening the noose on Arab states. They think the presence of Israel in the region would help in this regard.

However, we will see that the Islamic Resistance front will disrupt their plots. Besides, the change of major players such as the U.S. president and others will seriously affect the equations. Such changes could result in the change of equations. Of course, the U.S. major policies are unlikely to change.

■ You mean the change that could happen as a result of the upcoming U.S. presidential elections?

A: Yes. The U.S. pursues general policies in hidden layers of their foreign policy and it doesn’t matter who is the president, whether it’s Donald Trump or Joe Biden.

The West Asia region with all its 16 countries is a sensitive and important region. The geopolitical theories that provided a theoretical basis for military expeditions and wars in history are still working. Theories depicting the region as the heart of the world - also known as the Heartland or Pivot Area- that most military expeditions were done to contain its capacities or bring them under control, are still working. Part of the Islamic Republic of Iran is located in the heartland area, which means that if others want to access the area, Iran is one of the access points. There is another theory called the Rimland, which was introduced in connection to the heartland theory. Countries located in the Rimland belt are in the conflict between ground and navy powers. The ground power is centered in Russia and some parts of central Europe. But navy power is mainly centered in the U.S. and global arrogance, which also include coalition forces such as the UK and France.

In our region, there is no country that

seeks to change the balance of navy power except for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the region spanning from Oman to Eastern Africa, there is no Blue-water navy. Of course, navy forces are present there, but there is no Blue-water navy in that region. There are no countries that try to build a coalition for maintaining the security of this region, other than Iran. The Iranian navy is present in that region and its field of operation is extended to the 10th parallel north area. India and Pakistan have sizable navies but neither are Blue-water navy.

So the region’s countries need to join forces to maintain security through collective efforts and to break the complicated security atmosphere that the U.S. tries to build by bringing illegitimate players such as Israel to the region. First of all, the Persian Gulf region’s countries should step up to the plate to create a new security atmosphere. Because the neighbors are not going to go anywhere. I think that the global navy power of the U.S., as the leader of the Islamic Republic said, is declining. Sooner or later their disgraceful influence in the region will come to an end, especially after the oil loses its importance. At that time, Arab states in the region would be left with no allies. Because they chose to build relations with allies outside the region. When the oil and American protection comes to an end, the Arab countries will also come to an end because they will have nothing in terms of politics, economy, and security. The day their collapse is triggered - which is not unlikely - they will lose everything they have. They didn’t keep any regional allies. One time, I visited the United Arab Emirates to participate in a summit. The former commander of their navy told me “whenever we look at the map, we see a strong brother over our head, and we are willing that you open the window of your heart for us.” The window of our heart has always been open to them. But they engaged in more attractive games or more attractive toys that the Americans provided them with. However, if the Americans abandon them today, these toys will not benefit them. If you took the American equipment away from the Arab countries, they will get back to their primitive desert life. They have no native technology or knowledge. Everything they have is imported. Therefore they need to move in the direction of creating convergence in the region. The region’s countries can ensure the future of the region in a way that serves everybody’s national interests. Bringing global arrogance and illegitimate forces to the region will erode the capabilities of the region.

Navy, IRGC to receive new combat vessels

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The naval forces of the Army and Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) are set to receive new combat and logistics vessels in the current Iranian year, according to the forces’ commanders.

The current Iranian calendar year ends on March 20.

Speaking during a live televised interview on Thursday, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said that his force will unveil its first dock ship in November during the country’s Navy Day, Press TV reported.

He noted that with a span of 231 meters, the vessel will be 24 meters longer than Iran’s Khark logistical vessel and can carry up to seven helicopters and a vast array of drones, missiles and electronic warfare equipment.

Khanzadi added that the Dena destroyer, a vessel of the Jamaran-class, is undergoing its final trial stages and is more advanced than the previously produced Jamaran vessel.

He said that Dena, the Saba mine-hunter and the Zereh

missile boat will also be unveiled in November.

Khanzadi added that he inspected Iran’s second and third indigenous Fateh submarines under construction on Wednesday.

He said that a fourth Fateh submarine is being developed with air-independent propulsion (AIP), allowing the craft to remain submerged for a longer duration.

The Iranian navy commander added that two Iranian missile boats were currently taking part in the Russian “Caucasus 2020” war games in the Caspian Sea.

He noted that naval maneuvers with other states were being planned for the end of the current year.

■ **‘U.S. forces under surveillance the moment they set sail from port’**

Addressing the recent deployment of the American USS Nimitz aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf, Khanzadi said that Iran monitors U.S. naval forces “the moment they set sail from port”.

He added that the Iranian Navy conducts its operations,

such as monitoring and controlling the movements of U.S. vessels with complete coordination with the IRGC.

“The American terrorists are monitored by the Iranian Army’s Navy in the Arabian Sea. Once they enter the Persian Gulf, it’s the IRGC which monitors them,” he said.

Noting that the American fleet had avoided the Persian Gulf in the past ten months, he said that the American navy had been previously positioned about 600 to 700 kilometers away from Iran’s shores.

“They thought they were safe from our range, not knowing that they were continuously being monitored by us,” he added.

Khanzadi also said the Americans’ presence is meant to give mental assurance to their minions in the region, noting that the waters under Iranian rule are highly secure, and that upon receiving any signal from a vessel, the name of its commander, the courses he has undertaken and his characteristics are displayed as they are all stored in our databases.

SPORTS

Esteghlal players ready for Pakhtakor: Namjoo Motlagh

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN — Esteghlal coach Majid Namjoo Motlagh says that his players are tired but they will be ready for Pakhtakor match.

Iran’s Esteghlal will face Uzbek champions Pakhtakor in the 2020 AFC Champions League Round of 16 at Al Janoub Stadium on Saturday.

“We’ve analyzed our opponents and identified their weaknesses and strengths. I hope we show a good performance against them,” Namjoo Motlagh said in the pre-match news conference.

“We played well against Al Ahli but we have several injured players for the match against Pakhtakor. Our players still are a little tired of the previous match but we will do our best to prepare them physically and mentally,” he added.

Al Wahda of the UAE pulled out from the competition due to COVID-19 and Esteghlal advanced from Group A as runners-up behind Al Ahli. Namjoo Motlagh believes that they could have qualified for the knockout stage as the table toppers.

“Esteghlal could have advanced to the Round of 16 as the first team, if Al Wahda had not withdrawn from the competition,” he added.



Five Iranians shortlisted for ACL MD6 Player of the Week

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN — Five Iranian players have been shortlisted for the 2020 AFC Champions League Matchday Six Player of the Week.

Esteghlal football club star Mehdi Ghaedi received an impressive 8.6 OPTA rating following a goal and an assist in match against Al-Ahli.

Sepahan forward scored a goal against Al-Sadd and received 7.7 OPTA rating, the-afc.com reported.

A third man from Iran rounds out the top three as Ehsan Pahlevan’s role as creator in Persepolis’s stunning 4-0 win over the UAE’s Sharjah was recognized by OPTA. The 27-year-old winger earned 7.7 OPTA rating.

Persepolis pair Shojae Khalilzadeh and Isa Alkasir, both of whom scored and registered matching 7.5 OPTA scores.

Al-Ain striker Kodjo Laba’s impact was such that he made it into fourth place in OPTA’s rankings for Matchday Six with a 7.6 score.

Pakhtakor’s Jololiddin Masharipov, who registered a 7.6, scored the Uzbek side’s only goal in a 1-0 win over Shahr Khodro FC, while Al-Sadd striker Hashim Ali also found the net in the Qatari side’s defeat to Sepahan for his 7.6 rating.

The winner will be decided by the Asian football fans in a poll.

Persepolis rout Sharjah to seal Group C top spot

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN — Persepolis of Iran football team defeated Emirati side Sharjah 4-0 to seal top spot in Group C of the 2020 AFC Champions League.

On Thursday, Persepolis and Sharjah needed a win to book their berth in the knockout stage but the Iranian team dominated their opponents from the start of the match.

Shoja Khalilzadeh needed just 65 seconds to open scoring for the Reds. Ehsan Pahlevan dribbled past two players and sent a curling pass for Khalilzadeh who headed home his second goal of the campaign.

Issa Alekasir made it 2-0 in the 41st minute, powering in a header that clipped Adel Al Hosan’s hand and went into the back of the net despite the Sharjah goalkeeper’s best efforts.

Vahid Amiri scored Persepolis’s third goal before the break.

Persepolis managed the match in the second half but substitute Mehdi Abdi scored one more goal in the added time after he was left unmark inside the box.

“It was a really important match for us, and it was important that we score early,” said Golmohammadi. “We wanted to start strong and after the goal things were a bit easier, but we did not ease the pressure, we kept going and got a second and third goals before half time.”

“I am thankful for our analysts who identified our opponents’ weaknesses, and even though we did not have a lot of time to train, the players were focused and were able to apply things very well with concentration in the match.

Al Taawoun’s 1-0 win over Al Duhail in the other Group C fixture means Persepolis top the group and will face Group D runners-up Al Sadd in the Round of 16, while Al Taawoun progress as runners-up and set-up an all-Saudi clash against Al Nassr in the next round.

Sepahan end 2020 ACL campaign in style

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN — Iran’s Sepahan football club ended their 2020 AFC Champions League on a high after defeating Al Sadd of Qatar 2-1 in Group D on Thursday.

Sepahan had already been eliminated, having collected just four points from their previous five games, while Al Sadd had booked their place in the Round of 16 with a game to spare.

Al Sadd coach Xavi made 10 changes to his starting XI that played out a 1-1 draw against Al Nassr three days earlier, with only center-back Tarek Salman retaining his place in the team, before being swapped for Abdelkarim Hassan at half time.

Reza Mirzaei dribbled past Salman before firing with his left into the bottom corner to open the scoring in the 14th minute.

Sajjad Shahbazzadeh extended Sepahan’s lead in the 53rd minute and eight minutes before the final whistle, Hashim Ali made it 2-1.

The result means Al Sadd finish in second place of Group D with nine points and will face the Group C winners in the Round of 16.

Sepahan end their campaign in third place with seven points.

Energy minister discusses boosting ties with Syrian, Tajik counterparts

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian held talks with the Syrian and Tajik ministers of water resources on the sidelines of the 11th meeting of the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management (RCUWM) which was held via video conference on Wednesday. In the meeting with Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources Osman Ali Osmanzade, the officials who are the chairs of the two countries' joint economic committee discussed the preparations for holding the committee's 14th meeting in the Q3 of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22-December 20) through video conference.



Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian (R) and Syrian Minister of Water Resources Tammam Ra'ad.

Emphasizing the deep cultural and historical ties between the two countries and the existence of great capacities for cooperation, they emphasized on the further development of relations in all fields, especially in the fields of economy and energy.

As reported, the two countries' next joint economic committee meeting will be focusing on the realization of the agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOU) reached in their 13th meeting.

Ardakanian also held talks with the Syrian Minister of Water Resources Tammam Ra'ad during which the two sides stressed the need to form a strategic committee chaired by the deputy ministers of energy and water resources of Iran and Syria over the next two weeks to follow up on the outcomes of an MOU signed between the two countries on water cooperation.

Iran and Syria had signed an MOU on water cooperation in early December 2019.

During the meeting, the Syrian minister expressed satisfaction with participating in the 11th RCUWM meeting and called for the further development of bilateral cooperation in the field of water and sewage.

He also expressed satisfaction with the presence of experienced and capable Iranian companies in his country's water projects and welcomed a more significant presence of such companies in projects related to water and wastewater treatment plants.

Ra'ad further stressed the need for his country to use the experience and technical knowledge of Iranian companies in the reconstruction of Syrian water and sewage facilities.

Over 40% of Iran's exports done through free, special zones

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 40 percent of Iran's exports is done through the country's free trade zones and special economic zones, according to Morteza Bank, the secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council.

Bank believes that the figure would have been higher if there had not been the banking limitations due to the sanctions.

The current government has defined special programs for the development of these zones and commodities worth \$169 billion have been exported from these areas in the past seven years.

The mentioned programs have also led to the attraction of domestic and foreign investment to the free and special zones.

Bank has previously announced that the value of exports from Iran's free trade zones and special economic zones stood at \$17 billion during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

He said that commodities worth \$5 billion produced in these zones have been sent to different areas in the country during the previous year.

Bank put the value of products imported to the free trade zones and special economic zones at \$5 billion in the past year.



Emphasizing that the value of imports to these zones is very low compared to the worth of exports from them, the official said, "We are planning to reach the same level of exports in the current year as well."

Free trade zones and special economic zones are expected to play an important role in Iran's exports and imports and the prosperity of trade and commerce, according to the secretary of Free Zones High Council.

In recent years, considering the important role that free and special zones play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran has been seriously pursuing the development of its existing zones and the establishment of new zones as well.

More development measures in this field have been taking since the U.S. re-imposition of sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as Iran is reducing its dependence on the oil income while elevating its domestic production and non-oil exports.

In a ceremony earlier this month for the inauguration of 58 development projects with a total investment of about 150 trillion rials (over \$3.5 billion) in the country's free trade zones and special economic zones through video conference, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said these zones are no longer only distribution hubs and have become production centers.

As the secretary of Free Zones High Council has announced, the production sector accounts for over 40 percent of the employment in the country's free trade zones and special economic zones.

The official also announced that the services sector accounts for over 30 percent of the employment in these zones.

Bank has said that the figure for the production sector employment is 95 percent in the special economic zones.

According to the official, the whole investment in the special economic zones is made in the production sector and by the private sector.

27 pioneering projects underway in Iran's petchem sector

1 → He said that of the total 49 projects defined for the second and third leap of the petrochemical industry, seven pioneering projects with a total capacity of 810,000 tons are being implemented.

Noting that five percent of the country's basic petrochemical products include propylene which is one of the main indicators of the development of the petrochemical industry in the world, he added: "This figure will not change much with the completion of the second and third leap projects, so we have defined pioneering projects in this regard."

Mohammadi stated that the country's petrochemical production capacity which stood at 66 million tons at the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) has reached over 70 million tons, saying: "Last year, the marketable output of this industry was 30 million tons and its revenue was about \$15 billion. Of this amount, 22 million tons worth \$10 billion were exported



and about eight million tons worth \$5 billion were supplied domestically."

Referring to the increasing demand for petrochemical products in the world, he said: "The demand for oil products in 2040 will increase from 100 to 125 percent, but the demand for petrochemical products will reach 240 percent."

Noting that 985,000 tons of propylene is currently produced in the country, the official said: "This figure will reach about 2 million tons by [the Iranian calendar year] 1404 (starts in March 2025), but with the implementation of pioneering projects, this figure will reach 4 million tons annually in 1405."

The petrochemical industry is playing a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, so that based on official data, petrochemical exports constitute the second-largest hard currency earner in Iran after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already make up nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Number of approved industrial projects up 32% in 5 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — According to the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry data 49 industrial projects have been approved in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21), 32.4 percent more than the last year's same period.

During this period, the volume of foreign investment was more than \$850 million, registering a 37.4 percent increase compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

Based on the mentioned data, the approved projects in the said five months are going to create 322,371 job opportunities, 29.4 percent more than the figure for the same period last year.

The total investment made in the approved projects in the first five months of this year was more than 1.76 trillion rials (about \$41.9 billion) and recorded a growth of 31.5 percent compared to the same period last year.

Based on the data, 83.6 percent of the ministry's foreign investment was attracted by the industry sector,

followed by trade and mining with 10.2 percent and 6.2 percent, respectively.

The largest volume of foreign investment in the mentioned period was attracted by the groups of manufacturing chemical products (\$405 million of investment), basic metals (\$45 million), food products and beverages (\$32 million), and equipment and machinery (\$26 million).

Accordingly, the first four countries in terms of the value of investment were Germany, United Arab Emirates (UAE), China, and Turkey, with \$341 million, \$54 million, \$32 million, and \$30 million of investments, respectively.

The largest number of investments were made by Afghanistan with 17 cases, followed by China, Turkey, and India.

Also, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khuzestan, Tehran, and East Azarbaijan provinces were the top four provinces in terms of the volume of approved foreign investment.

Back in July, the Industry Ministry published the foreign investment data for the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20),



based on which the figure stood at nearly \$800 million.

As previously reported by the Industry Ministry, Iran expects a 10-fold increase of foreign investment in industry and mining sectors by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2021).

Natural gas consumption exceeds 104 bcm in H1

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The cumulative consumption of natural gas in Iran reached 104.79 billion cubic meters (bcm) during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), Head of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s Dispatching Department said.

"The total amount of natural gas consumption in the country during the first half of this year was 104.79 billion cubic meters, of which 39.63 billion cubic meters was consumed by the domestic, commercial and non-major industries, 23.82 billion cubic meters by major industries, while



41.34 billion cubic meters was used as the fuel for power plants," Mohammad Reza Jolaei told Shana.

According to Jolaei, a total of 122.25 billion cubic meters of gas was injected

into the national gas network in the first six months of this year, which shows a five percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Natural gas consumption in the first day of autumn (Tuesday, September 22) was 554 million cubic meters, the official said.

He also announced the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s complete readiness for a stable supply of gas during the winter and added: "The National Iranian Gas Company has started very effective preparations in all areas including the production, transmission, and distribution, so this year we will not have a problem with

the gas supply, especially in the domestic sector."

Iran is currently producing over 810 mcm of natural gas on a daily basis which is mostly used inside the country for the domestic sector and also as fuel for the power plants and a small portion is also exported to the neighboring countries like Iraq.

Currently, about 30,000 villages with 4.6 million households as well as 1,148 cities with over 18 million households are connected to the national gas network in Iran.

Gas is supplied to 97 percent of people in the urban areas and 82 percent of people in the rural regions.

Mining sector increases share of non-oil trade

1 → The ministry has defined 16 development projects only in the steel sector to boost the output of steel products by 17.3 million tons in five years, according to the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

All and all, a lot has been done over the past few years and positive steps have been taken for the development of the country's mining industry.

These efforts seem to have been paying off, so that in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21), despite all the limitations created by the outbreak of the coronavirus, the minerals and mining industry accounted for about nine percent of the country's total non-oil exports.

Based on the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry data, the country's total non-oil exports stood at \$24.6 billion in the mentioned period, of which \$2.176 billion was the share of the minerals and mining industry.



Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year, the global markets have been hit by the negative

impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, and global trade has declined significantly compared to the previous years. This makes developments in the mining sector even more significant.

The Industry Ministry data show that in the first five months of this year, more than three million tons of steel chain products worth more than \$1.118 billion were exported to target markets, the exports of aluminum products and aluminum ingots has even increased by 44 percent compared to the previous year.

The continuing of these constructive measures taken in this industry will ensure a sustained source of income for the country in the future and will pave the way for a smoother transition from an oil-dependent economy to the targeted oil-free one.

Supporting this industry in their efforts for reviving idle small mines and development of the already active mines will encourage more activity in this sector and accelerates its growth rate.

TSE experiences another weekly drop of its main index

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TSE, Iran's major stock exchange, witnessed falling of its main index, TEDPIX, in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IRNA reported.

As reported, TEDPIX fell 93,000 points, or 5.7 percent, to 1.611 million in the previous week.

The indices of Bank Mellat, Mobarakeh Steel Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Ghadir Investment Company, Isfahan Oil Refinery, Iran Khodro Investment Development Company, and Iranian Investment Petrochemical Group Company (IIPGC) were the most traded indices during the past week.

TSE, which had witnessed drop of its main index in five consecutive weeks, ex-

perienced growth in the week ended on September 18.

Although, the index had dropped four percent in the week ended on September 11, while it 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.

TEDPIX had hit the record high of two million points on August 2, and while it had been experiencing an unprecedented trend of rising over the recent months, it witnessed several days of drop in five weeks.

While Iran's stock market has not received any external shocks such as those form the foreign currency exchange rate,



inflation, parallel markets, and international issues, some internal factors have caused the recent drops in this market.

One of the major factors was canceling the offering of shares through the second exchange traded fund (ETF) on due time.

On May 2, the Tehran Stock Exchange listed the first ETF from a series of three ETFs, through them shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

Liberalization of "Justice Shares", so that trading them in the stock market would be possible, was another contributing factor for the drop in the market.

The government's plan named "Economic Breakthrough" was the other issue affecting the stock market, as no details were announced about this plan.

There are also some other factors leading to the recent drops in the stock market, of them it could be referred to reducing the value of brokerage credit, and conducting trades in two shifts per day at the TSE.

News

Syrian protesters condemn U.S. sanctions, Turkey occupation in Hasakah

Local people in northeastern Syrian province of Hasakah have organized a protest rally to denounce US' coercive economic measures against their country while demanding expulsion of both US and Turkish occupying forces.

According to Syria's official news agency SANA, the latest rally on Thursday, which was held in village of Tal Sateeh near the city of Qamishli in northeastern province of Hasakah, demanded action against the "American occupiers" and the US-backed mercenaries as well as the Turkish-backed militants.

The Syrian protesters also voiced their determination to liberate all Syrian territories from occupation of foreign forces and terrorist groups.

The participants stressed their resolve to extend moral and material support to the Syrian government forces and popular resistance until the full expulsion of foreign-backed militants.

According to Press TV, they also hailed the achievements of the Syrian Armed Forces on the battlefield against foreign-backed militant groups across various parts of the country.

Ankara, which backs Syria's anti-government militants, has currently stationed thousands of Turkish troops in the northwest of the Arab country.

Over the past four years, the Turkish military has staged at least two unauthorized incursions into northern Syria to push back against Kurdish militants, whom Ankara says seek to overthrow the Turkish government.

Netanyahu brings his dirty laundry to Washington

Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, on multiple occasions brought with them from Israel suitcases of clothes to be laundered and dry cleaned while staying at the White House guesthouse, the Washington Post reported . Netanyahu's office said the story was untrue.

The story reinforces earlier claims dating back a decade that the Netanyahus prefer to deal with their dirty laundry overseas following similar disclosures from a top former aide-turned-state's witness in the Netanyahu corruption trials.

Visitors staying at the White House guesthouse routinely get their laundry taken care of as a perk, but it usually only consists of a shirt or two, given their brief stays. "The Netanyahus are the only ones who bring actual suitcases of dirty laundry for us to clean," the Washington Post quoted a U.S. official as saying. "After multiple trips, it became clear this was intentional."

Kim Jong Un apologizes for killing of South Korean

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has apologized after the fatal shooting of a South Korean fisheries official by the military earlier this week, Yonhap news agency reported on Friday, citing the presidential office.

In a formal letter sent to Seoul, the North conveyed Kim's message that he felt "very sorry" for "disappointing" South Korean President Moon Jae-in. Moon is facing intense political pressure over the incident, which coincided with a renewed push for policy to engage Pyongyang.

The official disappeared from a fisheries patrol boat on Monday when it was about 10km (six miles) south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL), a disputed line of military control that acts as the de facto maritime boundary between the two Koreas.

South Korea said on Thursday the man had been shot dead by North Korean troops and his body burned.

Resistance News

Fatah, Hamas say deal reached on Palestinian elections

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The two biggest Palestinian factions, Fatah and Hamas, have agreed to hold the first elections in Palestine in nearly 15 years.

Polls will be scheduled within six months under a deal agreed by Fatah, Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas political chief Ismail Haniya.

"We have agreed to first hold legislative elections, then presidential elections of the Palestinian Authority, and finally the central council of the Palestine Liberation Organization," said Jibril Rajoub, a senior Fatah official, on Thursday.

The last Palestinian parliamentary elections were held in 2006 when Hamas won by an unexpected landslide.

Netanyahu endorses construction of over 5,000 new settler units in occupied West Bank

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has approved the construction of thousands more homes in the occupied West Bank, in complete defiance of international outcry against the Tel Aviv regime's policies of land grab and illegal settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian lands, a report says.

Palestinian Arabic-language Ma'an news agency, citing a report published by Israel's Channel 7 media network, reported that the 70-year-old chairman of Likud political party had given the green light for plans to build over 5,000 units, after more than six months during which such construction had been frozen.

The report added that there have been contacts between settlement leaders and Netanyahu over the past few days, where Jewish extremists have called on the Israeli premier to end the freeze on settlement construction activities in the West Bank or face large-scale protests against his administration.

Saddam rewarded his Arab backers against Iran by capturing Kuwait: Iraqi expert

1 → It was Saddam who took the decision to wage war against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which had been just established after a massive popular protests that overthrew the Shah regime.

It is a war against the Iranian people who went to a public referendum on April 1, 1980, and on this basis, it is Saddam's war against the Iranian people. This was also a war against the Iraqi people because Saddam forced the Iraqi people by arms and drove them to the battlefields to fight the Islamic Republic.

The evidence that the Iraqi people were not convinced is that thousands of Iraqi army personnel, whenever they found and opportunity, tried to escape from battlefields or preferred being captured by Iranians. I was a journalist at that time. I met these prisoners of war from various military ranks on the battlefronts, including senior officers; even those who commanded a warplane.

I met these officers in special rooms at the beginning of the war, and they explained that they were forced to participate in this war. There is a minority who participated in the fighting, believing that Saddam made the right decision. They also changed their mind after noticing health and social services that they were receiving from the Islamic Republic.

I say it is Saddam's war, not the Iraqi regime's war because the regime is headed by Saddam, which is made up of a group that rules Iraq. The regime did not play a role in this war.

The evidence is that Saddam Hussein carried out a campaign of executions before the beginning of the war that included his closest generals in the Al-Khalid Hall. He gathered them there and accused them of treason.

After he forced Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr, the former Iraqi President, to retire and resign, Saddam became the president of the Iraqi Republic. The leaders close to Saddam Hussein admitted in some interviews that Saddam was the main cause of that war, and so much evidence confirms that Saddam alone made the decision to go to the war, and he waged war on Iran. Saddam also occupied Kuwait, and his forces advanced to Khafji on the Saudi border in the 1990 war.

■ Critics of the Islamic Republic say that Iran raised extremist mottos after the Islamic Revolution's victory, which incited the Arab leaders. What is your comment?

A: As for the Islamic Republic, it did not incite Iraq because Iran's revolution was young, preoccupied with its internal situation; it did not have a strong army. In fact, the Iranian army was disbanded. The Iranian government was trying to collect the weapons that were distributed between citizens after the collapse of the Shah's regime.

Some religious figures spoke against Saddam, but they were not officials, and this is not an acceptable excuse to wage war on Iran. The war has its reasons and definitions. On September 17, 1980, Saddam Hussein tore apart the Algiers agreement on television that had been signed with the ousted Shah in March 1975 through the

"I do not think that war is an Iraqi-Iranian war. This term cannot be used. We must say Saddam's war against the Iraqi and Iranian people."



"They (Westerns) particularly wanted to push the Shiites to fight among themselves because most of the Iraqi army personnel are Shiites, and of course, most of the Iranian forces in the army and the Revolutionary Guards are Shiites."

mediation of the late Algerian President Houari Boumediene.

When Saddam tore up this agreement, immediately he launched the war, and this denies what some media outlets like Arabic language Russia Today are trying to say and give the impression that the war began on September 4, to present Iran as the initiator, as Saddam and his regime claimed.

This must be documented. The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Peres, in December 1991, sent a committee to the two countries, which affirmed that the initiating party in this war was Iraq, meaning Saddam Hussein.

■ What was the role of Western and European countries in helping the continuation of the war between Iran and Iraq and undermining the power and capabilities of the two countries?

A: Of course, it is not a secret to anyone that the United States and the entire Western countries helped Saddam's regime in the war. Rather, the war could not have occurred until after a visit by the then British foreign secretary and the U.S. deputy secretary of state to Baghdad when Saddam Hussein was Vice President of Iraq.

An agreement was reached with Saddam about the war. After these two visits, when Saddam went to Basra near the borders with Iran, he was accompanied by the chief Iraqi journalist at the time, the editor-in-chief of the Alif Baa magazine, Hassan Al-Alawi. He mentioned this in many of his interviews and wrote that he asked Saddam the reason for this visit, and Saddam replied that he is thinking of launching a war. Several British newspapers, including The Independent, published a study prepared by Patrick Kockburn, a correspondent in international affairs. He addresses the Iran-Iraq war's ramification in the Middle East (West Asia).

He talks about the beginnings of the war and the mass genocide committed by Saddam's regime against the Shiites and the Kurds and the American role in prolonging the war's duration, describing the American role as hypocrisy.

Kockburn remarkably indicates that the United States of America wanted this war to affect the unity between the Iraqi and Iranian people, especially the Shiites.

The impact of the war on the politics of the region and the Middle East (West Asia) in particular, and the relationship between

Sunnis and Shiites, was another goal of Saddam and the West. They particularly wanted to push the Shiites to fight among themselves because most of the Iraqi army personnel are Shiites, and of course, most of the Iranian forces in the army and the Revolutionary Guards are Shiites.

One of the West's most important objectives is split Shiites and driving a wedge between Sunnis and Shiites.

Now the results are clear. When we go to Iraq, especially after the October demonstrations last year, which were preplanned and non-spontaneous, you will see the results of the war launched by Saddam, meaning the children, the young generations of Shiites and Sunnis who their fathers were killed or captured in the war, and you will find them among the most enthusiastic in these demonstrations against Iran. They forget the positive Iranian role in fighting ISIS and its martyrs in supporting Iraq. Even during the blockade imposed on Iraq at the time of Saddam Hussein, Iran broke this siege and helped Iraq to smuggle its oil. These are the confessions of Issam Mulla Huwaish, governor of the Central Bank of Iraq at the time, confirming that the Islamic public was selling Iraq's oil and its derivatives to help Iraqis to obtain food and medicine, while the United States of America, with its blockade, caused the deaths of more than two million Iraqis.

This is interesting and important. America and its Western allies did not mediate to stop the war until after they saw that the Islamic Republic was about to enter Iraq, topple Saddam's regime, and to realize the slogan of the "Jerusalem road passes through Karbala".

If there was a connection between Iraq and Iran, the Islamic Republic would be able to reach Syria as far as the Golan Heights, and this matter, of course, poses a danger to the Zionist regime and facilitates the process of liberating Jerusalem.

So the U.S. intervened directly after it helped Saddam's regime by its intelligence service and Satellite images and aircraft that provided to Saudi Arabia to support Saddam in the war.

America directly targeted an Iranian passenger plane over the Persian Gulf waters that killed more than 290 civilians. It struck Iranian oil installations while Western countries remarkably turned a blind eye to Saddam's crimes in using

poisonous gases and chemical weapons in a large scale in the war. After twenty years of war, official documents from the U.S. State Department confirmed that Saddam's regime had been using chemical weapons every day since 1983.

Propaganda by the Western media outlets, especially by the Americans, in addition to the Arab media, were talking about false Iraqi victories that exaggerated the political and military power of Saddam's regime before and after the war. They tried to leave Iran preoccupied with itself and its problems and undermine its expanding influence in the region, but they failed. In any case, the West, the United States in particular, stood by Saddam with all their might.

■ What support did the Persian Gulf states give to Saddam during the eight-year war against Iran?

A: Although they recognized the Islamic Republic, the Persian Gulf states, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, felt threatened by a different political system. Suddenly in the region, a new regime arose, neither a royal nor an Emirate nor a sheikhdome, but a democratic Islamic system based on the opinion of the citizens, while in the Persian Gulf states, the people have no voice or opinion.

These countries decided to support Saddam despite their political contradictory positions with him and the Baath Party.

Based on various forms of financial funding, logistical support, and political endorsement from these countries, Saddam's regime continued its crazy and disastrous war against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iraqi people. It is clear that this funding became one of the reasons that pushed Saddam to invade Kuwait, given that Kuwait demanded the return of these funds that were given to Saddam in the form of a loan, while Saddam considered them a gift to defend these countries from the eastern gate and block what he called the Iranian tide and the Islamic revolution. Of course, many of the Persian Gulf states were forced to provide this support because there was a contradiction between political systems and positions. Some, such as Oman, turned a blind eye to the ships carrying weapons and equipment to the Islamic Republic of Iran, but Kuwait and Saudi Arabia took a very hostile position alongside the Iraqi regime, but Saddam rewarded them by launching a war on them. He occupied Kuwait and almost occupied the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Arab media outlets used to strongly incite people against Tehran and always convey the Saddam regime's viewpoint, focusing on weakening the morale of the Iranian forces.

With clear Persian Gulf funding, the media concentrated on sowing discord between the Revolutionary Guards and the Iranian army and also created contradictions within Iran's ruling establishment. At that time, I produced a program under the title "We and What around Us" specialized in misinformation by these countries, especially Arab radio stations, in particular those directed by the Persian Gulf states.

"They (Iraqi prisoners of war) changed their mind after noticing health and social services that they were receiving from the Islamic Republic."

Restoration of Pahlavi one of Saddam's goals of invading Iran: British analyst

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

TEHRAN — In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Anthony Tucker-Jones talked of Saddam's intentions and miscalculations in attacking Iran, including his attempt for the restoration of the royal family, Pahlavi.

In late September 1980, Iraq invaded Iran, triggering a bitter eight-year war that destabilized the region and devastated both countries. The then Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein claimed a territorial dispute over the Arvan Rud, the waterway, which forms the boundary between the two countries as a reason for the invasion.

During the War, Saddam Hussein, who was backed by several western countries, including Germany, France, the US, and some Arab monarchies of the region, waged several chemical attacks on Iran's cities, leaving behind many victims who are still suffering after decades.

In June 1987, the Iraqi Air Force targeted four most populated areas of Sardasht in West Azarbaijan province of Iran with chemical bombs. The attack on the city immediately martyred about 130 people and injured thousands of others. Sardasht is the third city in the world after Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which became the target of weapons of mass

destruction. Unfortunately, many citizens of Sardasht are still suffering from negative effects and consequences of this attack. But, despite this awful crime, international circles did nothing to halt the continuation of the invasion and even did not blame the Iraqi regime for that and instead ignored it as before.

Around 200,000 Iranians were martyred during the eight-year war, which is imposed by Iraq's dictator to Iran.

To know more about the reasons behind Saddam's aggression on the Islamic Republic of Iran and the support of some European countries for his regime, we reached out to Anthony Tucker-Jones, former British defense intelligence officer.

Following is the text of our interview with him:

■ What were the goals of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein of starting a war against Iran?

A: Saddam Hussein planned a swift campaign to seize control of the Shatt al-Arab Waterway and the oilfields of southern Iran. He hoped this would trigger an uprising against Ayatollah Khomeini and result in the restoration of the Iranian royal family. Instead, he sparked a terrible eight-year-long conflict

that became known as 'the war without end.'

■ As you know, some European countries, such as Germany and France, supplied Saddam's regime with chemical weapons that he used against his own nation and the Iranians. What was the reason for such support from those countries for Saddam's regime?

A: Many countries feared and thought the Iranian Revolution would be exported and therefore saw Saddam Hussein's Iraq as the lesser of the two evils. This resulted in him being supplied with billions of dollars of weapons that only served to prolong the war. Saddam lacking the manpower of his larger neighbor, resorted to using chemical weapons as a way of breaking up Iran's massed infantry attacks and as a way of defeating the Kurdish guerrillas. It has been estimated that up to 100,000 Iranian soldiers and civilians were gassed. The international community, while publicly deploring this, shamefully did nothing to stop him.

■ Despite the arms and political support of most powerful countries for Saddam, shortly after his invasion of Iran, Iran was able to step out of its defensive position and take the initiative and make extensive progress. What do you think was the reason?



A: Saddam Hussein very badly underestimated how quickly the Iranian armed forces would take to recover from the chaos of the Iranian Revolution. He assumed his attack would cause it to collapse, leaving Iran at his mercy completely. This proved to be a fatal error. Instead, along with the Revolutionary Guard, they were able to turn the tide against Saddam's blitzkrieg. Once this happened, Iran was able to take the fight to Iraq. The Iran-Iraq War then became a conflict of attrition with both sides fighting each other to a standstill.

Anthony Tucker-Jones, former intelligence analyst, spent nearly 20 years in the British Intelligence community before establishing himself as a respected defense writer and military historian.

Meet Iranian man who couch-surfs around the world in his wheelchair

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — Mohammad Moghadamshad, 44, has been suffering from a genetic muscle condition since he was 20. He is developing muscular dystrophy, an incurable condition that ultimately weakens body muscles over time, to some extent that endangers the functioning of the lungs and heart.



Iranian psychologist and globetrotter Mohammad Moghadamshad poses for a photo while in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2020.

The weakening has been steady and some two years ago he could no longer walk by himself and had to use a walker for some time and a wheelchair afterward. For the time being, his hand muscles are so weak that he cannot easily uncork a water bottle by himself.

These severe health issues, however, have not put a barrier on his path to make his dreams come true. Couch-surfing, as a way to meet locals, make friends for life, feel new destinations and cultures, is what he does for. He has so far traveled to many countries including Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and Kenya.

Moghadamshad started his world adventure in 2018 when he arrived in South America. He then extended his journey to West Africa last September. He usually carries only a small backpack wherever he goes; containing some shirts, pairs of trousers, and some health products.

"I wanted to travel cheap; not to go to hotels or luxury establishments," he told Nation, a popular Kenyan media outlet while visiting the country earlier this year.

"I believe in humanity; I try to be nice. Wherever I go, I try to be kind to people, to communicate well with them," he says. "I came here completely by accident, but I'm very happy now."

"I don't have too much time... But I don't care. The quality of life is what is important to me, not the quantity," the globetrotter says.

Moghadamshad is married to a wheelchair-bound Iranian lady woman. He is also a psychologist and sometimes holds online consultations mainly to those living in rural and remote areas.

Based on official statistics, over 1.3 million people suffering from disabilities live in Iran and the figure rises by 50,000 every year. About 15 percent of the world's population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4 percent experience significant difficulties in functioning.

National Museum of Iran reviewing defense themes through online exhibition

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The history of war and defense in the ancient land of Iran is being reviewed through an online exhibition by the National Museum of Iran.

The exhibit is being held on the occasion of the Sacred Defense Week, which marks the beginning of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, the official website of the museum announced on Friday.



Entitled "Defense Themes", the exhibit is showcasing 40 items dating back from the Paleolithic era to the Qajar-era (1789-1925), including shields, daggers, maces, swords, and bas reliefs discovered in different historical sites across the country.

The highlight of the exhibition is the millennia-old Gold Bowl of Hasanlu, which is internationally known for its unique engraved images of gods and rituals.

The Iraqi army invaded Iran on September 22, 1980, nearly 19 months after the Islamic Revolution, setting the stage for eight years of war.

The war drew to a close in August 1988. The United Nations declared Iraq as the initiator of the conflict.

In Iran, Sacred Defense Week is commemorated every year from September 21st.

Iranian cuisine: Morasa Polo

Morasa Polo (Jewelled Rice) is an eye-catching Persian rice dish, which boasts an amalgam of delightful sweet and sour taste. To make it, vegetable materials such as carrots, almonds, raisins have been used.

The sweet festive dish of Persian tradition is often served at weddings to bring sweetness to the wedded couple. Morasa Polo is sometimes referred to as the king of all Persian dishes is also known as "Javaher Polo" which is translated to Jeweled Rice.



Every element represents a special kind jewel! Barberries represents rubies and pistachios for emeralds. This is one a rare sweet-and-savory Persian dishes and is made of loads of nuts and dried fruits, namely pistachios, almonds, candied orange peel, barberries, carrots and saffron.

It is prepared using a little sugar to balance the sourness of the barberries. It is basically served with chicken cooked with saffron.

Stunning discovery: Iranians were making '20th-century' chromium steel 900 years ago

→ 1 The team used radiocarbon dating of a number of charcoal pieces retrieved from within a crucible slag and a smithing slag (by-products left over after the metal has been separated) to date the industry to the 11th to 12th c CE.

The researchers contributed to the study believe it marks a distinct Persian crucible steel-making tradition – separate from the more widely known Central Asian methods in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan – for the production of low-chromium steel (produced at around 1 weight percent of chromium).

The team says that manuscripts from the time praised Chahak steel for its intricate patterns, but pointed out that swords made of the material were quite brittle. That's consistent with its high phosphorus content, according to the study.

"Chahak is described in a number of historical manuscripts dating from the 12th to 19th century as a once-famous steel production center and is the only known archaeological site within Iran's borders with evidence of crucible steel making. While Chahak is registered as a site of archaeological importance, the exact location of crucible steel production in Iran remained a mystery and difficult to locate today, given numerous villages in Iran are named Chahak," according to the study.

The manuscript 'al-Jamahir fi Marifah al-Jawahir' ('A Compendium to Know the Gems', 10th-11th c. CE) written by the Persian polymath Abu-Rayhan Biruni, was of particular importance to the researchers



A sample of crucible slag from an 11th-century archaeological site in Iran, which was found to contain chromium. (Credit: Rahil Alipour, UCL)

given it provided the only known crucible steel making recipe. This recipe recorded a mysterious ingredient that they identified as chromite mineral for the production of chromium crucible steel.

Crucially, analyses using Scanning Electron Microscopy enabled them to identify remains of the ore mineral chromite, which was described in Biruni's manuscript as an

essential additive to the process.

They also detected 1-2 weight percent of chromium in steel particles preserved in the crucible slags, demonstrating that the chromite ore did form chromium steel alloy – a process that we do not see used again until the late 19th and early 20th century.

Professor Thilo Rehren (UCL Archaeology and The Cyprus Institute), the co-author

Eight museums, featuring Sacred Defense scenes, relics inaugurated

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A total of eight museums dedicated to the Sacred Defense (the 1980-1988 Iraqi imposed war) were inaugurated across the country during a ceremony through a video conference on Wednesday.

The opening ceremony was attended by tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan; Majlis speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf; chief of staff of the armed forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri; and Brigadier General Bahman Kargar, CHTN reported.

The museums are located in the provinces of Ardebil, Alborz, Ilam, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Khuzestan, Khorasan Razavi, Qom, and Markazi.

Ghalibaf and Kargar were amongst the officials who delivered speeches at the ceremony which was held to commemorate the Sacred Defense Week (started September 21). The officials emphasized the need to pre-

serve the values of the Sacred Defense era such as the continuation of the path of the martyrs of the Islamic Revolution with the use of existing capacities such as museums, the report said.

"Till the year 1404 (starting March 2025) at least one museum dedicated to the Sacred Defense will be inaugurated in each provincial capital," Kargar noted.

The museums are equipped with the state-of-the-art visual system including projections and video walls, while audio recordings relevant to each period contributes to its charm.

The re-creation of the liberation of the city of Khorramshahr by the means of virtual exhibits and video projections is amongst the main features of the museums. A strategic port city in western Iran, Khorramshahr fell into Iraqi hands on October 26, 1980. It recaptured by Iranian forces on May 24, 1982.



Tourism projects worth \$255m inaugurated nationwide

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated 87 tourism projects worth 10.67 trillion rials (about \$255 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) across the country during a ceremony through video conference on Thursday.

Implemented in 15 provinces of Gilan, Khorasan Razavi, Yazd, Fars, Mazandaran, Ardebil, Kermanshah, East Azarbaijan, Bushehr, South Khorasan, Khuzestan, Qazvin, Markazi, Golestan, and Tehran, the projects will generate over 1,700 job opportunities.

The mentioned projects include accommodation centers such as hotels and apartment hotels, tourist complexes, traditional restaurants, and eco-lodge units.

On the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony, the president referred to the country's rich history and cultural heritage, saying, "We need to invite people of the world to see these great works and know what a great history this nation has had."

"No matter how many history books are read, it won't replace seeing beautiful and magnificent works in Iran's tourism hubs in Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Tabriz and other cities," he added.

A 20-room hotel apartment in Tehran with an investment of 800 billion rials (\$19 million) was also inaugurated by the Cul-



tural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan during the ceremony.

The number of the accommodation centers has increased by 50 percent over the past seven years, while over 2,000 eco-lodge units have come on stream over the same period of time, which leads to economic prosperity and creating jobs in rural areas, the minister mentioned.

He also noted that some eight million foreign nationals visited Iran during the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended March 20), however, the outbreak of the coronavirus in the last two months of that year brought everything into a halt.

Back in August, the minister announced that Iran's travel sector has suffered a loss

of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, however, he mentioned that all the tourism businesses across the country will have the capacity to fully resume their activities both in domestic and foreign markets.

"Many tourism projects have been completed, or are being implemented, showing that a very good capacity has been created in the field of tourism in the country and [this trend] should not be stopped," he explained.

Mounesan went on to say that 2,451 tourism-related projects worth 1,370 trillion rials (around \$32 billion) are being implemented across the country that signals a prosperous future for Iran's tourism sector.

The tourism minister also said the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

Some experts believe that the coronavirus pandemic may turn tours and travels into luxury items as observing health protocols will raise the cost of travel in the country.

Mohammad Ali Vaghefi, the vice president of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, warned earlier in June that with the continuation of the coronavirus outbreak, tourists may prefer individual travel rather than tours, adding that they may also choose to go on a trip by their vehicles and stay in tents or in nature instead of hotels.

In the global scene, part of the new travel puzzle is the jet-set mindset focusing on tough hygiene care and social distancing as cardinal guidelines for slowing the spread of the virus. So the average expenditure will be raised for a typical traveler particularly inbound passengers so lesser ones can afford to buy privacy and space and safer travel amenities.

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).

Historical sites demarcated in West Azarbaijan to curb illegal digging, land grabbing

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Nearly all historical and archaeological sites in northern parts of West Azarbaijan province have recently been demarcated in a bid to restrict illegal digging and land grabbing, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

"The reason for carrying out this project was due to the fact that in recent years, the amount of encroachment and occupation of (local) residents into the surrounding areas of the [ancient] hills were increasing greatly," said archaeologist Leila Gargari, wholed the project.

"The project was carried out due to the fact that in recent years encroachment and trespassing by (local) residents into the surrounding areas of the [ancient] hills has increased greatly," Gargari noted.

Elsewhere in her remarks, the archaeologist announced the termination of another archaeological project conducted



on the eastern side of the centuries-old Jameh Mosque of Urmia that stands tall at the provincial capital. Last year,

excavations were carried out on this side of the mosque, leading to the discovery of artifacts which were similar to the remains of the stone pillars that currently exists at shabestan of the mosque.

Consequently, a theory that the currently-existing shabestan would once have existed on other sides of the mosque is strengthened, according to experts. Shabestan is an underground space that can be usually found in Iran's traditional mosques, houses, and schools.

The provincial capital of Urmia, also spelled Orumiyeh, lies just west of Lake Urmia on a large fertile plain that yields grains, fruits, tobacco, and other crops. The population is mainly Azeri Turkish, with Kurdish, Assyrian Christian, and Armenian minorities. The remains of ancient settlements are scattered over the plain, as are traces of the ancient kingdom of Urartu.

108 NGOs active in Lake Urmia restoration

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Some 108 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working in three fields of environment, sustainable livelihood development, and surface water control with the aim of revitalizing Lake Urmia.

Some 32 other non-governmental organizations are about to be established in this regard, Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province said.

Lake Urmia, located in the northwest of Iran, was once the most extensive permanent hypersaline lake in the world. Unsustainable water management in response to increasing demand together with climatic extremes has given rise to the lake's depletion during the last two decades. The lake's restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program.

In August, Sarkhosh stated that a new budget amounting to 6.4 trillion rials (nearly \$152 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) will be allocated for the Lake Urmia revival, which will be spent on completing



semi-finished projects.

He pointed out that the water volume of Lake Urmia has reached 3.6 billion cubic meters, adding that the level of the Lake has increased to 1271.36 meters.

At the beginning of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program in 2013, the Lake's level was about 1270.32 meters, 1783 square kilometers in surface area, and 1.14 billion cubic meters in volume, which indicates a 50 percent increase in the lake's surface area in comparison to the current water level.

Achieving sustainable rehabilitation requires countless efforts, such as preventing the lake's water flow from entering the agricultural land. Lake Urmia's condition stabilized with a positive trend due to heavy rainfall, but there is a fear that this trend will be reversed by drought in the coming years.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve the Lake Urmia, however, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level of 1274.10 meters.

Free online education for Iranian students abroad

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iranian virtual school has been set up abroad so that students can receive educational content for free from this system, head of the international affairs department of the Ministry of Education Gholamreza Karimi has announced.

All educational centers in Iran were closed in late February due to the coronavirus pandemic, but 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.

Also, a similar virtual school called "Iranian Virtual School" has been set up abroad.

Schools abroad are run on a government budget, and students attend these schools free of charge, Karimi stated.

Overseas schools are required to operate within the framework of the host country. Therefore, in areas such as Kuwait, where schools are not allowed to reopen,



education continues virtually, he explained.

While, in some countries, such as Qatar and the UAE, education is followed by a combination of in-person and online, he noted.

In Iran, Education Minister, Mohsen Haji Mirzaei, announced that all schools for the new academic year start on September 5. He said urban and rural schools with high population density will be divided into two groups, with attendance diverted into odd-even days. He added that low-density population areas with lower risk will have a normal routine.

Three weeks earlier, over 15 million students attended schools nationwide for the new school year under strict health protocols.

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, Haji Mirzaei said.

UNICEF, IRCS build playgrounds in flood-affected Golestan province

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Youth Organization have jointly built and equipped four playgrounds for children in the most severely flood-affected areas of Golestan province.

Gilles Chevalier, UNICEF Iran Deputy Representative, and Mohammad Golfeshan, head of the IRCS Youth Organization inaugurated one of these playgrounds in Gomishan town, Golestan province, on September 15.

These playgrounds were constructed in the areas hit by the floods last year, in close collaboration with the relevant district governors' offices and municipalities, and with funds donated by the Government of Japan, with a view to providing child protection services during and after emergencies.

Following the flash floods of March-April 2019, which affected 25 out of 31 provinces of Iran, the IRCS Youth Organization and UNICEF Iran implemented a series of priority interventions for children, including the establishment of community-based psychosocial support, case management, and child-friendly spaces, and construction of playgrounds in the severely-affected areas of Golestan and Lorestan provinces.

Globally, the establishment of child-friendly spaces and playgrounds is among key child protection interventions in emergencies. These spaces provide safe and nurturing environments for children to play in and benefit from recreational activities and help to reduce the negative mental health consequences of emergencies on children.

National contest to be held on environmental projects

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — A national competition will be held on October 1, for students and graduates of engineering and medicine to test their ability to implement a team project.

The national contest called "Rah Zist 3" will be held in cooperation with the National Elites Foundation and the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, in the fields of water and environment, energy, transportation, biotechnology, and intelligence.

All students and graduates of engineering, medical sciences, and basic sciences of the whole country, can attend this competition to test them in carrying out real projects required by the country.

The selected ones will benefit from the facilities of the National Elites Foundation, and they will also experience cooperating with hi-tech companies.

Martyred Commanders of the Sacred Defense

Commander of Division 27 Mohammad Rasoul Allah	Shahreza	Ebrahim Hemmat	Abbas Babaei	Qazvin	Deputy Chief of Operations of the Army's Air Force
1984-03-07	1955-04-02			1950-11-25	1987-08-06
Commander of Brigade 10 Seyed-al-Shohada	Tehran	Mohsen Vezvaei			Tehran
1982-04-30	1960-07-27				1956-03-16
Minister of Defense and Support of the Armed Forces	Seyyed Mousa Namjouy				Hassan Bagheri
1981-09-29	Bandar-e Anzali				1983-01-29
	1938-12-17				
Deputy Commander of the IRGC	Yusef Kolahdouz				Mahdi Bakhtiari
1981-09-29	Ghouchan				1954-04-19
	1946-12-22				
Commander of Division Special Martyrs	Mahmoud Kaveh				Hossein Basir
1986-09-02	Mashhad				1944-01-15
	1961-05-22				
Deputy Chief of the Joint Staff of the Army	Valiollah Fallahi				Mostafa Chamran
1981-09-29	Taleghan				1981-06-21
	1931				
Advisor of Deputy Chief of the Joint Staff of the Army	Tabriz	Javad Fakouri			Ali Chitsazan
1981-09-29	1939-01-07				1962-12-11
					1987-11-27
Deputy Commander of Division 27 Prophet and Caretaker of Division 27 Prophet	Tehran	Mohammadreza Dastvareh			Hossein Kharrazi
1986-07-04	1960-01-22				1957-08-23
					1987-02-27
					Commander of Division Imam Hossein

place of birth

Date of birth

Last responsibility

Date of martyrdom

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Only trust those who believe in Allah and are afraid
of His questioning on the Day of Judgment.

Imam Hussein (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



■ Paintings Samira Eskandarfar are on view in an exhibition entitled “I Was Here” at the Tarrahan-e Azad Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until October 6 at the gallery that can be found at No. 41 Salmas Square off Fatemi St.



■ Maede Salar is hanging her latest painting collection named “Man and Novelist Series” in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibit runs until October 5 at the gallery located at No. 8, Forth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ O Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Sara Nazari. The exhibit titled “Dark Night” will continue until October 6 at the gallery, located at 18 Shahn St., Sanai St.



■ Saye Gallery is showcasing a collection of paintings by Ali Hamidi-Moqaddam in an exhibition named “Reincarnation”. The exhibit will run until October 13 at the gallery that can be found at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.



■ Paintings by Mahin Monfared are on display in an exhibition at Negar Gallery. The exhibition named “Revelation” will run until October 6 at the gallery located at 154 near Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Blvd.

Drawing



■ Negah Gallery is displaying a collection of drawings by Babak Amjad in an exhibition entitled “About Home”.

Amir Zia is the curator of the exhibit that runs until October 9 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.

Photo/video



■ Photos and videos by Maryam Takhtkeshian are on view in an exhibition at the Silk Road Gallery. The exhibit runs until October 21 at the gallery located at No. 210, Vesal St., Keshavarz Blvd.

Multimedia



■ A large collection of artworks in various media by Mahsa Nuri, Sahar Najafi, Hossein Mohammadi, Samaneh Salehi, Alireza Rajabi, Leila Eskandari and several other artists is on display in an exhibition at Mohsen Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Episode 06” runs until October 7 at the gallery located at 42 East Mina Blvd., Naji St., off Zafar St.



■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Afsaneh Golmohammadi, Narges Farahani, Mahshid Razi, Sara Bakhtiari, Haleh Maadi, Hadis Kalantari and several other artists is underway at Ehsan Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Flying” will run until September 30 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



■ Artworks in various media by Behnam Kamrani, Farshid Larimin, Roshanak Azizi, Mahmud Saki, Setareh Hosseini, Bahar Alizadeh and several other artists are on view in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibit titled “Dropped, But Did Not Break” will run until October 5 at the gallery that can be found at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Artworks represent bittersweet images of Iran-Iraq war

A R T **TEHRAN** — An online exhibition displaying artworks in various media on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war opened on Thursday.

The exhibit entitled “8X40” has been organized by Iran's Institute for Development of Contemporary Visual Arts to mark the 40th anniversary of the war, which is known as the Sacred Defense in Iran.

The artworks on view at the exhibition were created during the war or a few years afterwards, and reflect the views of the artists in those years.

The collection includes paintings, graphic designs, sculptures, photos and cartoons, which directly or indirectly center on war and its aftermath during the eight years.

The photographers are the individuals who have been in close contact with the war, having recorded the events on the frontlines.

Afshin Shahrudini in one of his photos depicts an elderly woman at the grave of



A photo by war photographer Jasem Ghazbanpur on display at the online exhibit “8x40”.

a martyr, upon which a punctured war helmet is seen.

In another photo taken by Amir-Ali Javadian, a soldier is seen on the frontline busy praying, and war photographer Jasem Ghazbanpur has portrayed a lonely boy wandering among the broken palm trees in the southwestern region of the country.

The visual artists have also painted the war moments. Iraj Eskandari has painted a tired soldier who is back home. Habibollah Sadeqi has painted the martyrs like flying angels, and Nasser Palangi has painted a number of women who are mourning for one of their family members who has been martyred.

Graphic designers have focused on the Iraqi invasion of Iran.

Ebrahim Haqai has symbolized the war as a battle between a lion and dragons.

The exhibition can be found on Instagram. com/tajasomi.

Iran Book and Literature House to showcase publications acclaimed by Leader

→1 Another highlight of the collection is “All My Life at Thirteen”, the memoir of Iranian war prisoner Mehdi Tahanian.

As an Iranian volunteer, Tahanian was captured by Iraqi forces during the war when he was at the age of 13. Dar al-Hadarah, a Beirut-based publishing house, has recently purchased rights to the book.

The Leader also praised Tahanian's other memoirs, “Imam Khomeini's Little Soldier”.

“The Girls of the Sun”, a novel about social issues affecting women, which was co-authored by Amir-Hossein Banki,

Behzad Daneshgar and Mohammadreza Rezaayatmand in 2008, was also praised by Ayatollah Khamenei.

Another different book in the collection is “Thirsty Windows”, writer Mehdi Qezeli's diary on his trip to Karbala during November and December 2012 when he accompanied a caravan transferring the new zarih (outer sarcophagus enclosure) of the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) from Iran to the Iraqi city.

Iran Book and Literature House director Ayyub Dehqankar has said that so far, 18,232 titles have been published on the war since 1980.

Stage director Shahab Raheleh blends war memories, observations for “Sales of Love”

A R T **TEHRAN** — Director Shahab Raheleh said on Thursday that he has blended his memories of the Iran-Iraq war and perceptions on the issue for his latest theatrical production, “Sales of Love”.

In “Sales of Love”, Raheleh said that a salesman, who sells the costumes of world superstars, doesn't want to sell the dusty attire of a person named Javad, and tells others why he does not want to sell these costumes through the story he narrates for the audience.

Amir-Hossein Mehmandoost performs the monologue, which is part of a theatrical program organized by the Sacred Defense



Amir-Hossein Mehmandoost performs “Sales of Love” by director Shahab Raheleh at the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran. (Iran Theater/Milad Mirza-Ali)

Museum in Tehran to mark the 40th anniversary of the Iran-Iraq war.

Raheleh lamented that typical plays are performed only during a limited time and not throughout the year.

“For example, war plays are only performed during the war anniversary or religious and ritual plays are only performed during the two months of Muharram and Safar,” he said.

He also criticized the increasing number of festivals and said that festivals should not be a major priority, and topics such as religious culture, martyrdom and the war need to be taken into increased consideration.

“Typical works also need to find their ways into festivals and should not be limited to special times. We need to give more space

to artists and writers to write and work. I hope those who come to watch the play ‘Sales of Love’ enjoy the play, and I wish we could tell more about those who defended the country,” he concluded.

The 40th anniversary of the Iran-Iraq war is being observed by performing several plays at the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran.

“War and One Thousand Years of Solitude” written by Masud Mehrbi and directed by Parvaneh Alizamani, “In Color of Jujube” by Mohammad-Hadi Atai, “Fulfillment of the Promise” by Ahmad Samimi, “The Soldier” by Pejman Shahverdi and “The Lost” by Abuzar Chehel-Amirani are among the performances.

Resistance festival unveils nominees for Health Defenders, Festival of Festivals

A R T **TEHRAN** — The organizers of the 16th Resistance International Film Festival have announced the nominees for the two sections of the “Health Defenders” and the “Festival of Festivals” categories.

The nominees for the feature film category are “The Glass Agency” by Ebrahim Hatamikia, “Standing in the Dust” by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian, “The Survivor” by Seifollah Daad, “Journey to Chazabeh” by Rasul Mollaqaolipur and “Track 143” by Narges Abyar.

Six short films are competing in the Health Defenders category. The films are “Don't Worry” by Mana Pakseresht, “Last Visit” by Mohammad-Mehdi Fekrian, “Shock Troop” by Amir-Masud Eslah, “Mask” by Shewta Kumar Das and “My Mom” by Rakesh Moirangthem both from India, as well as “Gratitude” by Jorge Salgado Ponce from Mexico.

The short documentaries of the section also include “In

the Silence of Night” by Javad Yaqmuri and Mehdi Amini, “Block 65” by Vahid Hosseini-Nami and “Volunteer” by Nasrin Gudarzi, all from Iran, and “Italy Lockdown: How the Coronavirus Has Forever Changed Our Lives” by Carla Falzone and Sacha Biazio from Italy.

Films focusing on the endeavors health workers have made during the pandemic will be competing in this “Health Defenders” section.

The Festival of Festivals section also reviews movies produced over the past 40 years on the Islamic Revolution, resistance and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is known as the Sacred Defense in Iran.

The 16th Resistance International Film Festival opened at the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran last week, paying tribute to five cineastes of the Iranian war cinema who have died over the past year.

Iranian films to compete in Warsaw festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Four movies by Iranian filmmakers will be competing in various sections of the 12th Warsaw Film Festival, which will take place in the Polish capital from October 9 to 18.

“The Black Cat” Karim Mohammad-Amini will have its world premiere in the official competition of the event.

The film is about underground rap music in Iran and the Iranian new generation whose hopes and dreams have been changed due to the prevalence of the internet and social networks.

The film's star, Bahram Radan, who is also the producer of the film, will attend the



“The White Whale” by Amir-Hossein Mehran. festival to promote the movie.

Directed by Masud Bakhshi, “Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness”, a co-production of Iran, Germany, France, Lebanon and Luxemburg,

will also be screened in this category.

The film is about Maryam, a young woman who has been sentenced to death for murdering her husband, Nasser. Iranian law allows for the victim's family to forgive her and spare her life, so Maryam's fate will be decided by Nasser's daughter, Mona, on the country's most popular televised reality show.

In front of millions of viewers during Yalda, the winter solstice celebration, Maryam and Mona discover that forgiveness can be difficult as they relive the past.

The film won a special mention for best screenplay at the 24th Sofia International Film Festival in Bulgaria in July.



A scene from “Standing in the Dust” by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian.

They were filmmaker Khosro Sinai, producer Hadi Meshkat, documentarians Hossein Fahimi and Gholamreza Janantkha, and composer Reza Atarodi.

The animated short “The White Whale” by Amir-Hossein Mehran has also been selected to be screened in the festival.

The animation tells the story of a man who has lost his close friends in an air attack during the war a long time ago. After 30 years, he is looking for their remains in a big river while a White Whale is the only sign he has.

“Witness” directed by Ali Asgari will be screened in the short competition.

The co-production between Iran and France is about a mother who goes to a shopping mall and leaves her young daughter waiting in her car. Helping an elderly woman, she sets a chain of events in motion.

Iran's Niki Karimi on Turkish festival panel

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian actress and director Niki Karimi has been selected for the jury of the 57th International Antalya Film Festival, running from October 3 to 10 in the Turkish tourist resort, the organizers have announced.

She will be judging the films in the international competition along with Romanian producer Ada Solomon, Turkish director Emin Alper, artistic director of the Tribeca Film Festival Frederic Boyer and Brazilian filmmaker Sandra Kogut.

A lineup of 10 movies has been selected to be screened in the international competition of the event.

Iranian writer and director Masud Bakhshi's drama “Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness” is one of the films.

The film is about Maryam, a young woman who has been sentenced to death for murdering her husband, Nasser. Iranian law allows for the victim's family to forgive her and spare her life, so Maryam's fate will be decided by Nasser's daughter, Mona, on the country's most popular televised reality show.

In front of millions of viewers during Yalda, the winter solstice celebration, Maryam and Mona discover that forgiveness can be difficult as they relive the past.

Karimi, 49, has since performed in more than 60 films

and won many national and international awards, most notably in San Sebastian, Cairo and Nantes.

In 2001, she made a documentary, “To Have or Not to Have”. She made her directorial debut feature, “One Night”, in 2005, which premiered in Un Certain Regard at the Cannes Film Festival.

Her credits also include “A Few Days Later”, “Final Whistle” and “Night Shift”. She made her latest film “Atabay” in Iran's Azarbaijan.

Karimi has also served as a jury member for numerous festivals, including Cannes, Berlin, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, Edinburgh, Dubai and Damascus.