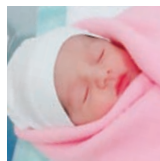


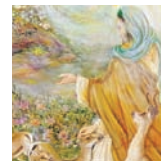
Abdullah Abdullah set to visit Tehran on Sunday 2



Iran likely to meet Bosnia or Panama in November 3



Foreign couples welcome infertility treatment in Iran 7



Farshchian painting "Guarantor of Gazelle" depicts kindness to animals in Islam 8

#SanctionsStory



Iranians tell stories of resistance against sanctions

See page 3

Iran says looking forward to buying, selling weapons to 'many friends'

TEHRAN — An Iranian diplomat has said that the Islamic Republic is looking forward to buying and selling weapons with a number of international partners after a UN arms embargo on Tehran is lifted. The expiration of the decade-old UN embargo, set to take place on October 18, would come after an unsuccessful U.S. campaign to convince countries to defy the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the accompanying

UN Security Council resolution 2231 to extend the arms embargo on Iran. The JCPOA, endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, was signed between Iran, the United States, Britain, Germany, France, the European Union, Russia, and China on July 14, 2018. However, U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the deal on May 8, 2018 in pursuit of what it called the "maximum pressure" policy against Iran. →2

Issuance of industrial unit establishment permits rises 47%

TEHRAN — According to the latest data released by Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), 18,766 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country, which mark a 47-percent increase year on year. As previously announced by the ministry, issuance of permits for setting up industrial units in the country increased 16 percent in the past Iranian calendar

year (ended on March 20, 2019). Most of the issued permits were related to the food industries; and Semnan, Qom, and Khorasan Razavi were the provinces receiving the highest number of permits. Last month, the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced that 670 idle industrial units had been revived throughout the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year. →4

Iranian doc reviews assassination of Imam Hassan (AS) based on study by Western scholars

TEHRAN — Fotros Media, an Iranian center for Shia documentary films, has produced a short documentary reviewing the biological assassination of Imam Hassan (AS), second Imam of the Shias, based on a study carried out by a group of Western scholars.

"Rereading a Biological Assassination" has been made based on scientific studies done in 2016 by a group of secular American forensic science scholars who are not necessarily Muslim," Fotros Media executive Hassan Malakuti told the Persian service of MNA on Friday. →8

It is not new that U.S. supports autocratic rulers: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — An American professor thinks that the U.S. backs autocratic rulers in some countries and it is not something new. "It is clear that the U.S. also supports autocratic rulers in some countries," Professor Robert Y. Shapiro tells the Tehran Times. Shapiro, a professor and former chair of the Department of Political Science at Columbia University, also says, "The U.S. has become detached from multilateral relations and diplomacy, and this has been one of many election issues."

The following is the text of the interview: ■ How do you assess Trump's policies? Is the U.S. isolated because of Trump's impulsive decisions?

A: Yes, the U.S. has become detached from multilateral relations and diplomacy, and this has been one of many election issues, but not the most important one compared to the economy and the pandemic.

■ What is your analysis of the American society toward the presidential election? Are most of the mass media against Trump?

A: The country has long been divided into a state of caustic partisan conflict. Overall, the media are more negative than positive toward Trump, but that is associated directly with what says and tweets and does.

■ Which factors do determine U.S. elections? Media or money?

A: Media and Money matter in the current election in terms of how they can affect voter turnout in the key states for the electoral vote. At this stage, it is what the parties and candidates do to mobilize their voters. And there is the controversial issue now of the use of counting of mail-in votes.

■ Do you think Trump will push the U.S. towards civil war if he loses the November 3 elections?

A: There is the perception of the possibility he might take actions that could provoke his supporters in that direction. If he does, he will have crossed a line that will cause a wide backlash against him.

■ Suppose Trump refuses to accept the election results if he loses and takes the dispute to the Supreme Court, which most of its members are conservative. Give your comments please. →5

Americans have lost trust in their leaders: George Washington University professor

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Hossein Askari, who teaches international business at the George Washington University, says American people have "lost trust in their leaders."

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Askari also says, "Americans don't even trust one another or their institutions as they did 50 years ago."

The professor says the United States has its lowest standing since WWII among its staunchest allies in Europe and "it is popular only in Israel".

Following is the text of the interview:

■ How would you categorize America's standing in the world today?

A: It is at its lowest since WWII. Just take a look at the respected Pew Research poll results. America has its lowest standing since WWII among its staunchest allies in Europe. In the Middle East it is popular only in Israel. The American brand is no longer an asset but is a liability.

■ How much of this is a result of internal developments in America?

A: Look, America boasts about its democratic credentials, but voter rights are at the foundation of democratic societies. How is this a true democracy when there is widespread voter suppression? How is this a real democracy when California with a population of nearly 40 million has two senators, and 6 states each with a population of less than 1 million, have two senators each? How is it a democracy when a man or woman wins the popular vote but does not win the presidency? How is this a real democracy when its senators have lost their voice while one man (Mitch McConnell) decides whether or not a bill comes to the floor of the Senate? How is this a real democracy when at the behest of the president the judiciary investigates the president's adversaries? Can it be a real democracy when the president is above the law? →5

U.S. protests: Portland, Oregon, and Oakland, California sue over federal law enforcement presence for protests

Portland, Oregon, and Oakland, California, sued the Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security over the use of federal agents and officers in their cities during unrest and protests.

The 50-page lawsuit accuses both departments of "unilaterally, unlawfully, and unconstitutionally" instituting a "law and order" policy and deploying federal agents to cities, ABC News reported.

Throughout the summer in Portland, federal agents from the DHS and U.S. Marshals, which fall under the Department of Justice, were deployed, the department said, to primarily protect the federal courthouse. In Oakland, federal agents were also tasked with protecting federal property.

"This lawsuit challenges the unlawful and unconstitutional overreach of federal law enforcement in response to and in anticipation of civil protests in progressive United States cities,"

the lawsuit filed in federal court on Wednesday says. "In particular, the lawsuit challenges the federal government's new policy authorizing the expanded and unbounded jurisdiction of federal law enforcement under the guise of protecting federal property, and the federal government's related and unconstitutional practice of commandeering local law enforcement officers for similar ends."

In a statement, the Department of Homeland Security rallied against the lawsuit.

"Yet again, dangerous politicians and fringe special interest groups have ginned up a meritless lawsuit," a spokesperson told ABC News. "They aim to harm President Trump and distract from his law and order agenda. The Department of Homeland Security has acted entirely lawfully. Instead of condemning the violence we are seeing across the country, these politicians focus on scoring cheap political points to the detriment of the American people."

Ten gorgeous mosques to visit in Iran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — Cascades of photogenic domes and minarets can be seen in every corner of Iran as inseparable elements of mosques some of which widely known as timeless benchmarks of the Islamic architecture.

Mosque, locally called masjed, or masjid ("a place of prostration" to God), is any house or open area of prayer in Islam. Generally speaking, the architecture of mosques in Iran is a combination of symmetry, geometric designs, and vibrant colors.

The architecture of the mosques in Iran varies from one region to another, due to geometric structures, materials, and styles specific to each location. These mosques often have very complex structures in which color variations, tiles, and symbolic designs are used.

Islamic architecture, building traditions of Muslim populations from the 7th century on, finds its highest expression in religious buildings such as the mosque and madrasah. Early Islamic religious architecture, according to Britannica, exemplified by Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock (691 CE) and the Great Mosque (705) in Damascus, drew on Christian architectural features such as domes, columnar arches, and mosaics but also included large courts for congregational prayer and a mihrab. From early times, the characteristic semicircular horseshoe arch and rich, nonrepresentational decoration of surfaces were employed. Religious architecture came into its own with the creation of the hypostyle mosque in Iraq and Egypt. In Iran a mosque plan consisting of four eyvans (vaulted halls) opening onto a central court was used.

Below is ten must-see gorgeous mosques you cannot easily miss while traversing the Islamic Republic. →6



Mourners hold "Khotbeh Khani" ritual in Mashhad

A traditional ritual dubbed "Khotbeh Khani" was held at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad on Friday evening to mark the martyrdom anniversary of the eighth Shia Imam.

Khotbeh Khani (mourning plus eulogy while carrying candles) ceremony is held every year at the courtyards and porticos of the holy shrine.

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Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



Bolton admits receiving money from MEK terror group

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Former U.S. national security adviser John Bolton has admitted to receiving money from the cultish Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) group, at a time when the group was still not removed from Washington's blacklist. "How much of your antipathy towards Iran is to do with geopolitics, and how much is to do with the fact that you have a long association with a group called MEK which was once a terrorist group banned by the State Department while you worked there?" Al Jazeera's Mehdi Hassan asked Bolton in an interview.

Bolton, in a sarcastic tone, said, "You know that I took tens of thousands of dollars for speeches in liberal universities in the United States."



"The fact is that [former U.S. secretary of state] Hillary Clinton, perhaps someone you support, took the MEK off the U.S. list of terrorist organizations," he said.

In response, Hassan argued that "She took it off in 2012 and you spoke with them in 2010 when they were still a banned group ... You were in Paris speaking at a MEK rally in 2010 when they were still a banned group according to the State Department."

The MEK was established in the 1960s to express a mixture of Marxism and Islamism. It launched bombing campaigns against the Shah, continuing after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, against the Islamic Republic. Iran accuses the group of being responsible for 17,000 deaths.

Based in Iraq at the time, MEK members were armed by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to fight against Iran during a war that lasted for 8 years in the 1980s.

In 2012, the U.S. State Department removed the MEK from its list of designated terrorist organizations under intense lobbying by groups associated with Saudi Arabia and other regimes opposed to Iran.

Bolton and some other former and current officials of the Trump administration have attended the MEK's meetings. Bolton has praised the terrorist group as a "democratic alternative" to the Islamic Republic.

Atrianfar criticizes reformists for 'radical slogans'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Atrianfar, a member of the central council of the pro-reform Servants of Construction Party, has advised the reformists if they find no candidate in the upcoming presidential elections turn to "existing qualified candidate" like the 2103 elections in which they backed Hassan Rouhani as their favored candidate.

Atrianfar also rejected rumors that the Construction Party will lean toward moderate principlists if they win the election, saying, "Servants (of Construction Party) have been the core of reforms in Iran and allegations of turning to the right is also among allegations that are being attributed by extremist friends (in the reform camp)."

Atrianfar added, "The government of Mohammad Khatami, which was later called the 'cabinet of reformers', was born out of the continuation of political moves by the Servants, a reality that all agree on it."



He called certain reformist groups as slogan makers who use "radical slogans" but refuse to pay political costs when necessary.

"They do not pay any cost for reforms and just make publicity."

In his interview with IRNA, the political activist also said if the Moderation and Development Party seeks to be politically active and remain loyal to the "management style" of Hassan Rouhani, the current president, it has no alternative other than clarify its status under the reformist front even if the reformists lost the next elections.

"If principlists win the next presidential elections and the Moderation and Development Party turns toward the principlist camp, they will undoubtedly lose greatly, because principlists don't trust their turn toward themselves."

The secretary-general of the Moderation Development Party is Mohammad Reza Nobakht, who currently acts as the director of the Management and Planning Organization. The other key member of the party is Mahmoud Vaezi, Rouhani's presidential chief of staff.

Atrianfar also criticized the new young principlists who have detached themselves from their predecessors.

The traditional principlists have authenticity but groups such as "the resilience front", who were loyal to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, talk in a way as if they want to reinvent "the wheels of politics".

In his interview, Atrianfar also said the principlist camp does not have a better candidate for the 2021 presidential election than Ali Larijani.

Larijani was the speaker of parliament for three consecutive terms.

The presidential election in Iran will be held mid-June 2021.

Aref: Reformers ready to apologize for Rouhani's shortcomings

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Reza Aref, the head of the Iranians' Hope Foundation, has said reformists are ready to "apologize" to the Iranian people for certain shortcomings of the Rouhani administration, ISNA reported on Friday.

Aref, who acted as vice president under the Khatami administration, said deficiencies by the Rouhani government has done a blow to the reformists' social capital.

Reformists backed Rouhani in the 2013 and 2017 presidential elections.

Aref said the Rouhani administration has acted piecemeal. "In the government of Mr. Ahmadinejad the structures were destroyed. Also, in the government of Mr. Rouhani, through piecemeal performance, we are noticing the current situation of the country," Aref stated.

Al-Jubeir predicted defeat of Houthis in three weeks: advisor

"I know the Al Khalifah family closely. They need to mend their relationship with their nation," Amir Abdollahian says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker has said that Saudi Arabia thought it could defeat the Houthis in Yemen in just three weeks but has failed to reach its goal in nearly six years.

In remarks on Friday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian pointed to his meeting as deputy foreign minister with then-Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir in the early days of the Yemen war, saying, "Al-Jubeir emphasized in that meeting that they will annihilate the Houthis in northern Yemen in less than three weeks."

"But today, we are on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the American, British, Israeli, Saudi and Emirati aggression against Yemen," Amir Abdollahian said, adding that the aggressors are desperately seeking to exit Yemen, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks at the 5th International Conference of Mujahedeen in Exile, held at Art Bureau of Islamic Revolution.

He explained that not only the Americans but also the British who used to play a strategic role in Yemen have faced many problems when faced with the people and resistance of Yemeni people.

The war on Yemen by Saudi Arabia and its allies was launched in March 2015. The goal of the war was to return to power the Riyadh-backed former regime of Abdrabbu Mansour Hadi and defeat the Houthi Ansarullah movement that took control after the resignation of the previous government.

Amir-Abdollahian also said one of the characteristics of today's world is that the U.S. is no longer an empire to create its desired world order because it is facing many problems at home and abroad.

Today's global actors are no longer the former Soviet Union and the U.S., rather there are numerous actors across the world



today, the veteran diplomat pointed out.

"Today, Lebanon's Hezbollah has the most influential role in the region in regulating political, international, regional and global arrangements, and Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in Palestine also play the most influential role in disrupting the Zionists' equations for dominance over the region," he remarked.

Pointing out that the Palestinian resistance was able to play a major role in undermining

the aspirations of the Zionists in the world and in West Asia, Amir Abdollahian said, "Today in Yemen we see that with more than five years of resistance by men, women and resolved youth, they are looking for an honorable escape from the area."

"Today, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are not the real actors in global developments, but the actors are those who change the equation," the advisor opined.

Foreign policy advisor to the parliament speaker says, "If they (Americans) do not end their presence today, tomorrow will be late and they will sustain serious damage in the region."

Zarif talks with Azeri counterpart over Karabakh dispute

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was briefed on Thursday by his Azeri counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov about the latest developments surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

In a phone conversation, Zarif reiterated Iran's principled stance with regard to the dispute and highlighted the importance of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

He also voiced Iran's readiness to help bring about peace and a sustainable solution to the conflict within the framework of Iran-Turkey-Russia regional initiative, as a complement to the OSCE Minsk Group mechanism.

The two top diplomats also emphasized the significance and the role of regional initiatives to resolve the decades-old crisis.

The breakaway of Nagorno-Karabakh has long been a source of conflict between Baku and Yerevan since the early years of the 1990s when the two sides fought a years-long war over the disputed region that led to the Armenian forces declaring independence from Azerbaijan and also occupying parts of Azerbaijan's territories surrounding the mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh.

Through a mediation of Moscow, the two sides agreed to a ceasefire starting on October 10 to exchange prisoners and bodies of those killed in the conflict. However,



each side has since accused the other of breaking the agreement. Armenia and Azerbaijan also accused each other of bombarding civilian areas ahead of the ceasefire.

The talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia were held in Moscow and were the first diplomatic contact between them since September 27.

Hundreds of people have died and thousands more have been displaced since the latest clashes broke out.

Several rockets fired since the beginning of the clashes

have hit Iranian soil, prompting Iran to warn the two sides of the conflict.

On Thursday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said it is not at all acceptable that the rockets have struck Iran's border areas.

"Unfortunately, worrying reports have been received today in this regard, and that is not at all acceptable," Khatibzadeh said.

He also dismissed the rumors that Iran's border guards have retaliated, adding that maintaining the security and peace of the Iranian citizens living in the border areas is a red line for Iranian armed forces.

The spokesman vowed that Iran would not remain indifferent in case of a repeat of such attacks.

According to reports, one of the mortar shells that hit a village in Khoda-Afarin county has injured a six-year-old child. Dozens of other shells and rockets have damaged buildings in villages near the border.

Earlier this month, Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami warned the two sides that the Islamic Republic will take stronger measures if shells fired in the fighting continue to hit the country's border regions.

"It is unacceptable at all that a bullet hits Iran's borders due to a mistake or carelessness," Hatami said on October 6.

Abdullah Abdullah set to visit Tehran on Sunday

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Chairman of Afghan Peace Council Abdullah Abdullah is scheduled to arrive in Tehran on Sunday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Saturday.

During his visit, Abdullah is set to

meet with President Hassan Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and other senior officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to ISNA, Zarif and Abdullah are slated to discuss the latest de-

velopments surrounding peace efforts in Afghanistan.

Abdullah has already visited Pakistan and India in efforts to win support for intra-Afghan talks.

The peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban began

on September 12 in Qatar's capital Doha to end decades of war in which tens of thousands have been killed.

Iran has strongly supported talks between the government and the Taliban without foreign interference. Zarif has appointed an envoy for the purpose.

Iran says looking forward to buying, selling weapons to 'many friends'

1 → "It is abundantly clear that the UN and the overwhelming majority of its member states reject the U.S.'s so-called maximum pressure policy on Iran, and that its attempts to even further violate the JCPOA and UNSCR 2231 have led to its isolation," Iranian UN mission spokesman Alireza Miryousefi told Newsweek in an interview published on Friday.

Asked if Tehran had any particular nations in mind, Miryousefi said his country had options beginning on Sunday.

"Iran has many friends and trading partners, and has a robust domestic arms industry to ensure its defense requirements against foreign aggression," he told Newsweek. "In accordance with the timeline stated in resolution 2231, Iran will be relieved from arms restrictions as early as October 18. Naturally, from that date, we'll trade, on the basis of our national interests, with other countries in this field."

The U.S. has made tremendous efforts, from submitting a draft resolution to the UN Security Council calling for the extension of the arms embargo to triggering a contro-

versial mechanism within the JCPOA, to make sure that the UN Arms restrictions on Iran will not be lifted. But all U.S. efforts in this regard have faced firm opposition from the international community. All JCPOA parties along with thirteen of the 15-member UN Security Council have said the U.S. had no legal authority to extend the arms embargo on Iran.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has congratulated the Iranian people on the imminent lifting of the ban, saying that Iran fought with the U.S. on this issue for four years.

"Over the past four years, America used everything in its power to prevent the lifting of the embargo on October 18. The embargo will be lifted due to the endurance of the people," Rouhani was quoted by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) as saying on Wednesday morning.

The president added, "The U.S. failed because of the efforts made by our diplomats. Those who say what the point of the JCPOA was, should know that this is one of the JCPOA's privileges. It lifted the arms embargo and as



of Sunday, we will be able to buy arms from anyone and sell arms to anyone."

Other Iranian officials have also voiced satisfaction over the expiration of the arms embargo.

Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said that the restrictions on Iran's import and export of weapons will be lifted next week, describing the development as a "great success" for Iran.

"The restrictions that we had on exporting and importing weapons will be lifted next week," Vaezi said on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

"Iran has many friends and trading partners, and has a robust domestic arms industry to ensure its defense requirements against foreign aggression," Alireza Miryousefi tells Newsweek.

Iranians tell stories of resistance against sanctions

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — As the United States ramps up economic sanctions on Iran, Iranians from all walks of life take to Twitter and other social media platforms to turn the spotlight on how the U.S. sanctions have negatively affected countless patients in Iran whose access to medicines was hampered by these sanctions.

Right from the start, the U.S. sought to downplay the humanitarian effect of what it calls “maximum pressure campaign” against Iran, which was launched after the White House unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal —officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — on May 8, 2018. Since then, the Trump administration has made efforts to impose “the strongest sanctions in history” against Iran in an effort to make it choose between agreeing to U.S. demands or facing economic collapse.

Nearly two weeks after Trump pulled out of the JCPOA, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo showed up at the Heritage Foundation outlining U.S. requests of Iran and threatening to inflict economic pain on Iran.

“The sting of sanctions will be painful if the regime does not change its course from the unacceptable and unproductive path it has chosen to one that rejoins the league of nations. These will indeed end up being the strongest sanctions in history when we are complete,” he said at the time.

Similarly, U.S. President Donald Trump also described his administration’s sanctions on Iran as “the highest sanctions ever imposed on a country.”

However, U.S. officials denied that their sanctions impeded the humanitarian trade with Iran including the import of food and medicines. The U.S. even sought to portray itself as the facilitator of this type of trade with Iran by launching a Swiss humanitarian trade channel, a move that failed to facilitate the import of food and medicines.

In a bid to bring into focus the humanitarian pain that the Trump administration inflicted on ordinary Iranians, Twitter users in Iran have launched an online campaign to denounce the U.S. “inhumane” sanctions. They used the hashtag “#SanctionsStory” with which they tweeted personal stories of how U.S. sanctions wreaked damage to their daily lives; from the shortage of special medicines to soaring prices of everyday goods.

“The 4-year-old daughter of one of my former Ph.D. students is dying of cancer & there is a shortage of medicine. Because of the illegal U.S. regime sanctions & economic warfare her medicine has also become prohibitively expensive. May the U.S. empire along with its enablers rot & burn,” tweeted Seyed Mohammad Marandi, a professor of English literature and orientalism at the



University of Tehran.

Katayoon Lamezadeh, a journalist, tweeted, “My young first cousin passed away last week because of cancer. She needed special medications that doctors said wasn’t available. Had she taken it, she would have been next to her little daughter now, not in a grave.”

Another Twitter user said the sanctions have not only affected patients but also made life difficult for the Afghan refugees in Iran.

“Sad story of sanctions on Iranians doesn’t end here. A huge population of Afghan refugees in Iran have been devastated by U.S. sanctions. I saw firsthand, working for Intl NGO in Iran that was unable to transfer its \$ from EU to IRAN just b/c of sanctions,” Kowsar Gohwari, an attorney, tweeted.

Another Twitter user who is a pharmacist has enumerated many medicines that the U.S. sanctions prevented them from entering Iran.

“USA sanctions on Iran are resulting [in] lack of most basic medical supplies such as Plavix 75, Telfast120/180, Sertraline Hexal 50/100, Detrusitol 2, Diphereline 3.75, Reuseable insulin pens, Mestinone 60, etc.” tweeted Mahjonja.

A number of Iranian students studying abroad also joined the Sanctions Story campaign to tell their own stories with the U.S. sanctions.

Elaheh is one of these students. She said in a tweet, “Last year, I was a student in UK. I came home for a few days and I realized I needed a VPN to access my student platform from Iran. The company was American and I was banned from using it in Iran.”

Salar Afshar, another student, also tweeted, “I sent an invitation to my parents for my thesis defense. They granted my dad a visa but rejected my mum’s. It felt like they’d taken my mother hostage so my father had

to return. They said sanctions have made Iranians so poor that they might not return.”

Experts believe that these stories clearly show that the U.S. sanctions are illegal under international humanitarian law.

Elham Kadhkhodae, an assistant professor of West Asian Studies at the University of Tehran, tweeted, “Sanctions are a form of collective punishment. They target civilians, irrespective of age, gender, political affiliation, religion. Collective punishment is illegal under international humanitarian law.”

But despite all their inhumane effect, the U.S. sanctions never stopped development projects in Iran, according to Zohreh Sadat, a Ph.D. student.

She tweeted, “Although sanctions cause trouble for Iran, they never halted different projects.”

Some commenters believe that no other country has faced tough circumstances as much as Iran. However, the Iranian people have patiently resisted all U.S. sanctions. Moreover, despite the hue U.S. pressures Iran has become the number one power in the Western Asia region and has made progress in many sectors, especially the knowledge-based sector.

Although the Trump administration has intensified the economic pressure on Iran since 2018, this is not the first time that Iran faces a “U.S. pressure campaign.” Over the past four decades, especially under the Obama administration, the U.S. imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran, but Iran weathered all sanctions’ storms while strengthening its economic self-sufficiency. However, Iran made it clear that it will not forget the cruelty of the powers that seek to dominate other countries. It also underlined that illegal sanctions, the discriminatory nature of the world order, the

oppression of hegemonic powers, and the silence of other countries on the pressure on Iran will forever remain alive in the Iranian people’s memory.

The U.S. stands alone in its pressure against Iran. However, some countries, especially the Europeans, who claim that they do not support the U.S. policy against Iran, have chosen to be complicit in the U.S. crimes against the Iranian people by acquiescing to the U.S. pressure. After the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA, the Europeans pledged to fulfill their commitments by facilitating the trade with Iran, but as the INSTEX mechanism showed, their pledges turned out to be empty promises.

The Europeans have seen how the U.S. sanctions impeded humanitarian trade with Iran but, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, they did nothing to fulfill their JCPOA commitments. This may be the reason why some Iranian people consider Europe to be complicit in the U.S. inhumane sanctions that have blocked the humanitarian trade channels. The European silence was on full display during the imposition of the recent U.S. sanctions on eighteen Iranian banks.

On October 8, the U.S. Department of Treasury imposed new sanctions on Iran, targeting “eighteen major Iranian banks.” U.S. Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin said the restrictions were intended to sever Iran’s ties with the global financial system.

“Today, U.S. Treasury took further action to isolate the Iranian economy from the global financial system as the regime uses the financial sector to advance its malign agenda,” Mnuchin said in a tweet.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said these sanctions were intended to block the remaining channels for humanitarian trade with Iran.

“Amid Covid19 pandemic, U.S. regime wants to blow up our remaining channels to pay for food & medicine. Iranians WILL survive this latest of cruelties. But conspiring to starve a population is a crime against humanity. Culprits & enablers—who block our money—WILL face justice,” Zarif said in a tweet.

Independent analysts also warn that U.S. sanctions are an “act of war” because they cause a shortage of the essentials of life.

“Let me say that the U.S. sanctions on Iran are an act of war. The impact on Iran is as if America was fighting a war but without bombs and bullets. Iran’s economy is being destroyed. There are shortages. Iranians lack some of the essentials of life. Patients are dying in hospitals because of a shortage of supplies. These are the fallouts of war,” Hossein Askari, a professor of International Business at the George Washington University told the Tehran Times after new financial sanctions.

Zarif’s visit to China accelerated strategic partnership: ambassador

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The recent visit by Iran’s chief diplomat to China has accelerated the process of moving forward with a comprehensive strategic partnership plan between Tehran and Beijing, Mohammad Keshavarzadeh, the Iranian ambassador to Beijing, said.

During his two-day visit to China, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and discussed a variety of issues including the 25-year partnership plan. The foreign minister’s visit began on October 9 when he arrived in the southern Chinese province of Yunnan. It was his first visit to China after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The first visit by Dr. Zarif to China after [the outbreak of] coronavirus should be seen as the timely accelerator of the comprehensive strategic partnership which had a deep impact on the China public opinion,” Keshavarzadeh said in a tweet on Friday, adding that the visit was not surprising and it did not pursue a new agenda.

Earlier on October 10, the ambassador had said that Zarif and he held “detailed and good negotiations” with their Chinese counterparts.

Zarif also praised the outcome of his talks with China, saying he held “fruitful talks” with his Chinese “friend Wang Yi.”

Following a meeting with Wang, Zarif tweeted, “Fruitful talks in beautiful Tengchong with my friend Wang Yi on Iran-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.” He added that Iran and China “rejected U.S. unilateralism, and the U.S. attempts to create a unipolar world.”

The issue of the comprehensive strategic partnership between Iran and China was one of the main issues that was discussed during Zarif’s visit. The two countries are negotiating over finalizing a long term partnership plan that, if finalized, would raise the economic cooperation between the two sides to an unprecedented level.

The draft of the 25-year plan, officially known as “Comprehensive Cooperation Plan between the People’s Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran” was approved by the cabinet of Hassan Rouhani on June 21. On the same day, Zarif was asked to continue talking with China in order to finalize the plan. Since then, the foreign minister has held talks with the Chinese officials on many occasions. President Rouhani has also recently

sent a message to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, praising the partnership plan.

“The comprehensive strategic partnership of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People’s Republic of China, which stems from common cultural grounds, long-term historical relations and the two countries’ view of international developments and their determination to fight unilateralism, has provided a great groundwork for developing bilateral relations in various fields,” said Rouhani in the message, which was sent on the 71st anniversary of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China.

On the other hand, China also expressed willingness to deepen its strategic partnership with Iran.

China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said on October 9 that Beijing wants to work with Iran.

Speaking at a regular press conference, she said, “During Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif’s upcoming visit to China, he will have talks with State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. We want to work with Iran to deepen our bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership.”

Iran denounces Ganja attack as ‘war crime’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s embassy in Baku has denounced a deadly missile attack on the Azerbaijani city of Ganja, saying the attack violated international norms and was a “war crime.”

“The embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Baku roundly rejects the last midnight’s missile attack on the city of Ganja, which has left dozens of civilians dead and injured,” the embassy said in a statement on Saturday.

The statement added, “[The embassy]

while expressing sympathy with the grieving families and wishing a speedy recovery for the injured, reiterates that attacking cities and innocent people goes against all legal principles and the recognized international norms and is considered a war crime that must be stopped as soon as possible.”

At least twelve civilians were killed and more than 40 others injured after Ganja, the second-largest city of Azerbaijan, came under a missile attack that the general prosecutors of Azerbaijan said the Armenian

Army was responsible for.

Hikmet Hajiyev, an assistant to the president of Azerbaijan, accused Armenia of firing “SCUD ballistic missile” from its territory, a claim Armenia denied.

“The ballistic missiles have been fired from the territory of Armenia against the city of Ganja. It is far away from combat zone. There was no military necessity. Armenia’s Foreign Ministry in vile manner attempts to deny its state responsibility for these nefarious war crimes,” tweeted the assistant.

Azerbaijan and Armenia are locked in

a deadly war over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but controlled by local Armenia forces. The Azerbaijan-Armenia war began nearly three weeks ago when the two sides began clashing on the contact lines along the borders in Nagorno-Karabakh. Since then, Azerbaijan has insisted on expanding its sovereignty over the disputed region, with Armenia heavily supporting the local forces in Nagorno-Karabakh who are fighting against Azerbaijan.

convoy of state-run Oil & Gas Development Company Ltd (OGDCL) on the Makran Coastal Highway in Ormara. The convoy was on its way to Karachi from Gwadar.

The second attack took place near the Razmak area of North Waziristan where six Pakistan Army personnel were killed in a bomb attack.

An umbrella organization of Baloch militant groups claimed responsibility for the attack in a social media post, according to a Reuters report.

SPORTS

Iran likely to meet Bosnia or Panama in November

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic has revealed that Bosnia & Herzegovina and Panama have sent request to the Iranian federation for friendly match.



The upcoming international window runs from Nov. 11-19. Skocic said that the Iran federation is reviewing the offers.

“The match with Bosnia has not been officially confirmed so far but there is a possibility that we meet them in November,” Skocic said.

Bosnia are scheduled to face Netherlands and Italy in UEFA Nations League on Nov. 15 and 18 respectively and the match against Iran will likely be held on Nov. 12 in the European country.

It could be Iran’s first match against Bosnia since the 2014 FIFA World Cup, where Carlos Queiroz’s side lost to the Dragons 3-1.

The ‘Persian Leopards’ defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 on Oct. 8 in Tashkent in a friendly match and were scheduled to meet Mali in Antalya five days later but the match was called off after two Malian players tested positive for COVID-19.

Iran prepare for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, where they sit third in Group C behind Iraq and Bahrain.

The 2022 World Cup qualifiers scheduled this year were postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

2020 ACL Final to be played in Doha

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC), together with the Qatar Football Association (QFA), have confirmed Doha, Qatar as the venue for this year’s AFC Champions League single-leg Final, which will be held on Dec. 19.

With the successful conclusion of the AFC Champions League 2020 (West) in Qatar recently, as well as the upcoming preparations to host the East region matches next month, the AFC noted that the QFA met all the necessary hosting capability and capacity and medical infrastructure to host the Final of Asia’s premier club competition.

Additionally, the AFC also had to consider the ability of the host to deliver such requirements among others, the Video Assistant Referee technical arrangements, medical requirements and commercial obligations.

The AFC Champions League East region Group Stage will kick-off on Nov. 18, before the Round of 16 takes place on Dec. 6 and 7. The Knockout Stage will commence with the Quarter-finals on Dec. 10 before the Semi-final on Dec. 13. Further details of the Final will be communicated in due course.

Persepolis of Iran have already qualified for the final match as west region champions.

Jahanbakhsh misses Crystal Palace match

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Brighton & Hove Albion winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh will be absent in the match against Crystal Palace this Sunday.

Jahanbakhsh was in fine form for Brighton in this season’s Carabao Cup matches and scored excellent goals in the victories against Portsmouth and Preston.

The Iranian was pushing hard for a starting role in the Premier League at Everton but tweaked his hamstring in the League Cup loss to Manchester United.

He is likely to be back in contention when West Brom visit the Amex on October 26.

Jahanbakhsh has not started a Premier League game this season but has been an option off the bench.

“There is a slight muscular problem with Ali that kept him out of the Everton game. He has not trained with the group this week. It is looking as though Palace might come too soon. We will see how it goes but we will certainly not rush,” Graham Potter said.

Alireza Firouzja 2nd at Norway Chess Tournament

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian GM Alireza Firouzja finished in an excellent second place at the Altborg Norway Chess tournament.

He defeated GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda in the standard game and came second with 18.5 points, obtaining 33,726 euros.

GM Magnus Carlsen came first in the event and won the top prize of 63,803 euros, after obtaining 19.5 points out of 30 possible.

Carlsen appreciated Firouzja, now the biggest talent and a potential future world championship opponent, pledgedtimes.com reported. “It’s a difficult situation,” said Carlsen. “I mean, he’s 17 years old, and he’s playing such a game for the first time. It’s not easy.”

It was a mixture of nervousness and time pressure that made Firouzja spoil an otherwise decent game. He had defended “perfectly up until the last move,” as Carlsen put it.

Khalilzadeh voted as winner of ACL 2020 Goal of the West

Shojae Khalilzadeh’s effort for Persepolis FC against UAE’s Sharjah has been voted as the AFC Champions League 2020 Goal of the West.

Khalilzadeh got the Islamic Republic of Iran champions on the road to a victory they needed to advance to the Round of 16 with his header as Persepolis scored a 4-0 win in their Matchday Six tie.

His goal was voted as the best goal by the fans.

Esteghlal Malian forward Cheick Diabate came second in the voting. *(Source: the-afc)*

Iran condemns attacks on Pakistani troops

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has condemned the terrorist attacks on Pakistani troops in Ormara and Quetta over the past two days, expressing sympathy with the people and government of Pakistan.

In a statement on Friday, the spokesman also rejected all forms of terrorism while underlining the need for the participation of all countries in the region in the ongoing fight against the perpetrators, organizers, supporters, and

sponsors of terrorist acts.

At least 20 Pakistani security personnel and private guards were killed in two separate attacks in Balochistan’s Gwadar district and the North Waziristan tribal district on Thursday, according to the Pakistan military’s media wing.

In the first attack, seven soldiers of Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan and seven security guards were killed during a clash with a “large number of terrorists” while escorting a

Domestic consumption of petchem products increases 24%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Consumption of petrochemical products by the Iranian downstream industries has increased 24 percent in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21) compared to the previous year's same period of time, Shana reported, quoting an official with the National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

"Domestic sales of petrochemical products in the commodity exchange market increased by 24 percent [in the H1] compared to last year, which is an indication of the favorable development of downstream industries in the country," Marzieh Tahmasebi, the head of NPC's downstream development office, said.



Tahmasebi noted that the development of downstream industries will never stop in the country and one of the major plans and goals of the National Petrochemical Company is to develop this sector.

She also pointed out that Iran's petrochemical industry had previously developed on the basis of available feeds, but in the past two years the development of this industry has become smarter, and the project in this sector have been defined based on the needs of downstream industries and the market and according to feasibility studies for pioneering projects.

The country's downstream petrochemical industries, like the upstream sector, have been growing in the last seven years; the sale of petrochemical products on the commodity exchange market has grown favorably in recent years, reaching about five million tons in the previous year, she stressed.

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

Facing the restrictions that the unjust U.S. sanctions brought about for the oil industry, its development has not been halted and, with a change in strategies, the Oil Ministry has been distancing itself from crude selling and is moving toward the production of products with more value-added.

One of the major areas for the realization of this goal has been the petrochemical industry, where a wide range of valuable products can be produced from Iran's vast oil and gas resources.

TSE experiences weekly growth of its main index

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran's major stock exchange, witnessed a 1.3-percent rise in its main index, TEDPIX, during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index gained 21,000 points to 1.561 million during the previous week.

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

TEDPIX, which was experiencing consecutive weeks of falling since mid-August, has climbed in the past two weeks, as it also rose 2.5 percent to stand at 1.54 million in the week ended on October 9.

Since the week ended on August 14 until the week ended on October 9, the TSE witnessed drop of its main index every week, except for the week ended on September 18.

The index dropped 5.7 percent in the week ended on September 25, and 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 weekly drops since mid-August.

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.

Two weeks ago, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand said that the government is going to continue implementing development programs to help flourishing the capital market.

"The stock market situation is not measured only by the fluctuations of its index. The Iranian stock exchange is in the process of becoming a modern stock market," Dejpasand said.

The Tehran Stock Exchange's main index has dropped nearly 600,000 points in less than two months and the shares of some companies have faced a loss of up to 70 percent.

Factors like the increase in the number of members, the growth of the value of transactions, and the expansion of instruments are also indicators of a deepening and growing trend in the market and the index should not be the only factor for evaluating a market, the minister said.

Issuance of industrial unit establishment permits rises 47%

1 → Mohsen Salehinia said: "Despite all the limitations, we are currently witnessing an increase in production in some units, for example those active in the field of home appliances; also, according to the plans made and by solving the problems in the way of the production and industrial units, we will realize the motto of "Surge in Production" by the end of this year."

Strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

To this end, the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) has been named the year of "Surge in Production", and all governmental bodies as well as the private sector are moving in line with



the materialization of this motto.

Regarding its significant role in the realization of the mentioned goal, the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has already defined its main programs for supporting the domestic production in the current year.

The ministry's seven main axes of the surge in production are going to be pursued under 40 major programs.

In this regard, the development of industrial parks and supporting the units located in these areas is one of the major programs underway by the ministry.

While this program is being seriously pursued, lack of necessary infrastructure in the industrial parks is impeding their development, therefore, the creation of needed infrastructure in the industrial parks has been put on the agenda.

Steel products output up 3% in H1

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Production of steel products in Iran hit over 7.265 million tons during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), which was three percent higher than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

Production of the mentioned products also rose nine percent in the sixth month of this year, from that of the previous year.

Over 1.251 million tons of steel products were produced

in the sixth month of the present year.

In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since late September 2019.

Industry Ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the

raw minerals.

As the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced, Iran's annual steel ingot production is planned to increase 3.2 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

The country has defined 16 development projects in the steel sector to boost the output of steel products by 17.3 million tons in five years.

Iran set to export 70 mcm/d of natural gas during winter

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s Dispatching Department said the company has it on the agenda to export 70 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) of natural gas during the cold season, Shana reported.

Referring to the plan for injecting a maximum of 820 mcm/d of gas into the national network in the winter, Mohamadreza Jolaei said: "Of this figure, about 600 million cubic meters per day will be allocated to the domestic sector and 70 million cubic meters is for exports."

Jolaei stated that currently 700 mcm of sweet gas is produced in the country, of which about 300 mcm is consumed in the domestic sector, adding that due to the temperature decline in most parts of the country, the consumption has increased by 120 mcm compared to the last week.

He pointed out that the annual overhaul of the country's gas refineries will be completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (October 21), adding: "With the end of the repairs, we will reach maximum gas production."

The official noted that the outbreak of the coronavirus across the country increased the country's gas consumption by about 30 percent during the summer and it is



expected to impact the consumption also during the winter.

He also mentioned a program for the optimization of the household engine rooms across the country and said that implementing this plan is expected to reduce gas consumption by about 10 percent which could help the NIGC to fulfill its export obligations.

Back in August, Jolaei had announced that Iran's daily gas exports hit a record high of 79 mcm during the Iranian calendar month of Tir (June 21-July 21).

"Iran's gas exports to other countries had never reached 70 million cubic meters per day, but in Tir, a new record was set and [the exports] reached 79 million cubic meters per day," Shana quoted Jolaei as saying.

Households' gas consumption in Q2 up 30% yr/yr

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Natural gas consumption by Iranian households increased 30 percent during the summer of the current Iranian calendar year (June 21- September 21) compared to the same period in the previous year, Head of National Iranian Gas Company announced.

According to Hassan Montazer Torbati, the mentioned increase in gas consumption has been due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and the excess use of hot water for sanitary purposes, IRIB reported.

Noting that the gas produced in gas refineries is used in domestic, commercial and industrial sectors, as well as the country's power plants and as feedstock for petrochemical complexes, Torbati said: "According to the plan announced by the Oil Ministry, the share of power plants will be reduced in winter to prevent the interruption in the supply of gas to other sectors."

"The amount of gas supplied to the power plants and industries in winter depends on the amount consumed by the domestic and commercial sectors," said Montazer Torbati, advising people to manage their gas consumption during the cold season.

He noted that three types of fuels are consumed in the country's power plants,



including natural gas, diesel, and fuel oil, adding: "currently about 250 million cubic meters of natural gas and six to eight million liters of diesel, as well as 15 million liters of fuel oil are consumed in the power plants on a daily basis."

The head of the National Iranian Gas Company added: "Our preference is to use natural gas as a clean and cheap fuel in power plants, but achieving this goal depends on people managing their consumption in the domestic and commercial sectors."

Montazer Torbati put the volume of gas delivered to power plants in winter at 80 to 90 million cubic meters per day, saying that power plants can receive more gas in winter only if production increases or consumption in the domestic and commercial sectors decreases.

Exports of eggs reach 60,000 tons in 6 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran exported 60,000 tons of eggs to the target countries during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), Reza Torkashvand, the head of Producers of Egg-Laying Hens Union, said.

According to the official, Iraq and Afghanistan have been the major destinations for the Iranian eggs in the mentioned period, IRNA reported.

He put the country's egg production in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) at over one million tons and said: "With the current levels of production, it is possible to export about 100,000 tons of this product annually, but it must be done with management and in different seasons to maintain the domestic market stability."

Torkashvand had previously said that the country's aviculture farms are expected to export up to 80,000 tons of eggs in the current year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to the official, 10,000 tons of eggs were exported to the neighboring countries during the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-April 19).

Iranian eggs are currently exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Qatar, Torkashvand said.

Last year, nearly 1.1 million tons of eggs were produced in



the country, of which more than 41,000 tons were exported to target countries.

A total of 900,000 tons of eggs were produced in the preceding year of 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019), 90 percent of which were by industrial units and the rest by local farmers.

According to the Deputy Agriculture Minister Morteza Rezaei, Iran is the 10th biggest egg producer in the world

and fifth in Asia.

Each Iranian person consumes an average of 200 eggs annually.

As previously reported by the Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Mehdi Mirashrafi, the value of Iran's non-oil exports during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year reached \$13.566 billion.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with over \$3.709 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$2.971 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$1.933 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.103 billion as well as Turkey with \$731 million, so the country's top five export destinations remained the same in comparison to previous months, according to IRICA.

China accounted for over 27 percent of Iran's total exports, followed by Iraq, UAE, Afghanistan, and Turkey with 21.9 percent, 14.2 percent, 8.1 percent, and 45.3 percent respectively.

Polyethylene, natural gas, liquefied propane, and other light oils and products are Iran's major export items.

Like all other countries around the world, Iran's trade with its foreign partners has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, however, the situation is getting back to normal.

Honey, royal jelly to be purchased at guaranteed price as of Mar. 2021

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Beekeeping Industry Expansion Support Fund (BIESF) said the fund will start the guaranteed purchase of honey and royal jelly from the beekeepers as of the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2021) to support this industry and increase the production of royal jelly and honey.

Behzad Bankipour noted that considering the increasing demand for the mentioned products inside the country, the Beekeeping Industry Expansion Support Fund has signed an agreement with the country's major beekeepers for the guaranteed purchase of honey and royal jelly, IRIB reported.

According to this agreement, the inputs required by beekeepers for the production of honey and royal jelly will be provided by the BIESF, and in return, the products will be produced according to the standards set by the fund.

"The final products will be purchased by the fund based on a previously agreed price," Bankipour said.

He emphasized that this agreement is going to assure the producers of their product being sold and this will increase their motivation for increasing production, especially the royal jelly production.

Given that in previous years there was no guaranteed market for these products, beekeepers were reluctant to

invest in the production of royal jelly, since the production of this product is very difficult and requires high working capital, but with the taken measures, beekeepers will definitely be more interested in producing these products, the official said.

The Beekeeping Industry Expansion Support Fund also helps to promote beekeepers' products by advertising and developing appropriate branding and marketing, according to the official.

Bankipour finally noted that the fund will purchase at least 30 percent of the beekeepers' royal jelly production, while regarding honey the guaranteed purchase will be done according to the

market demand.

Iran, as one of the leading countries in the honey industry, has a long-established tradition of beekeeping and during recent years could successfully increase its annual production of honey and is now the third-largest honey producer in the world, according to Gerold Boedeker, FAO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Director of Iranian Agriculture Ministry's beekeeping development plan said over 112,000 tons of honey was produced in the country during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), about 22,000 tons more than the figure for the preceding year.

Americans have lost trust in their leaders: George Washington University professor

“U.S. is imploding from the inside” and “the country is divided as it was around the Civil War.”

1 → America is a country where the president professes faith and yet has been accused of rape and other sexual misconduct. When he breaks his word to the people almost on a daily basis? Where the president pardons criminals who happen support him? How can you respect a country when it touts that its president is the leader of the “free” world when the president denies scientific facts and has lied thousands of times to his own people, when he calls himself a billionaire but pays no taxes while a factory worker pays through the nose? A country with the worst income and wealth distribution among all advanced countries? A country where millions don’t have healthcare and where you need a job before you can get healthcare? A country that was built on the backs of African slaves but still discriminates against black Americans in their everyday lives?

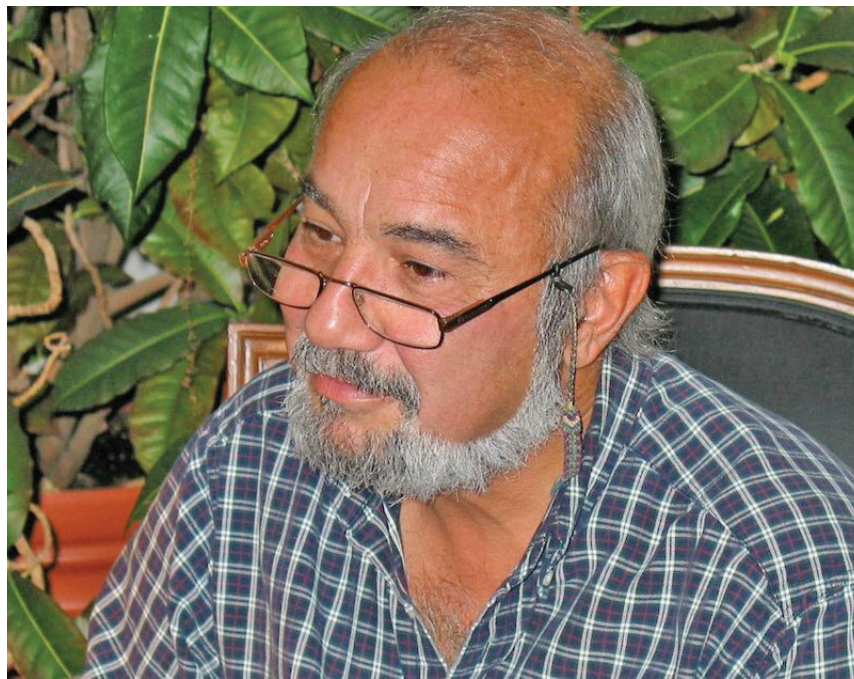
Today, conditions are more dire than ever because all presumed norms of behavior that once held America together have been trashed by Trump and his enablers. In the wake of this, the weakness of America’s constitution and institutions are laid bare. No country can rely on the presumed decency of its leaders without strong enforceable checks and balances.

I could go on and on but my point is this, the rest of the world sees what a large segment of the American population refuses to see and much less admits. The country is imploding from the inside. This process is unfolding before our very eyes. Yes, it will still take a number of years but it has started. How can the rest of the world respect such a country and follow its lead? While America’s leaders are at fault, in a real democracy the electorate are the real masters and ultimately responsible for their country’s fate.

■ How much of this results from the country’s international interferences?

A: After WWII, America was generally admired around the world. America helped re-build a ravaged Europe and assisted other countries around the world. But slowly America started to go down a different road, namely, empire building and support of dictators to do its bidding. There is an excellent book by Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire* that lays out how America has built this hidden empire. My own book *Collaborative Colonialism* argues how the United States has become a colonial power by supporting dictators around

“America has historically helped people around the world when they face natural catastrophes such as storms and earthquakes but today America is causing misery by its inhumane economic sanctions in countries such as Iran where the supply of food and medicine is threatened.”



The George Washington University professor says there is widespread voter suppression in the U.S., asking: “How is this a real democracy when California with a population of nearly 40 million has two senators, and 6 states each with a population of less than 1 million, have two senators each? How is it a democracy when a man or woman wins the popular vote but does not win the presidency?”

the world. Yes, America says that it wants democratic governance throughout the world but it has dozens of bases around the world and uses illegal covert operations and military might to bully most countries into submission. Its use of force is made more potent by its collaboration with oppressive dictators to get what it wants—just look at Saudi Arabia and Egypt to name just a couple. People who suffer and have little freedom see America’s support for their oppressive rulers and are not big fans of the United States. Can you blame them? America has historically helped people around the world when they face natural catastrophes such as storms and earthquakes but today America is causing misery by its inhumane economic sanctions in countries such as Iran where the supply of food

and medicine is threatened.

In sum, whether you look at the United States internally or internationally, there is less to admire with each passing day. Mark my words. All this will come to haunt America in the future.

■ Will conditions change quickly for the better if Trump is not re-elected?

A: To turn this dire situation around will take much time. Trust, cooperation and other such institutions are the key elements for success in any country. Americans have lost trust in their leaders. Americans don’t even trust one another or their institutions as they did 50 years ago. The country is divided as it was around the Civil War and instead of embracing each other Americans are distrustful and uncooperative. Trump has just accelerated this loss of trust and division. To restore trust and strengthen its institutions will not be easy. This is not a light switch. It takes years to build trust but it can be eroded quite rapidly.

First, the Democratic party must get control of the presidency and the Senate.

“Slowly America started to go down a different road, namely, empire building and support of dictators to do its bidding.”

And then it must move deliberately. It will face a hostile federal judiciary at all levels. The “legal” system may thwart efforts to restore decency and a caring social order.

■ What do you believe America should do for a positive turnaround?

A: If Biden becomes president and if the Democrats control the Senate, the new leaders must do a number of things to try to restore trust and confidence and thus to unify the nation.

Appoint qualified cabinet members and other federal officials down the line—no cronies and men and women with scandals in their past or scandals that might come to light while in office.

Avoid all conflicts of interest—there should be no financial entanglement—and if there is ever a whiff of financial or personal misconduct there should be immediate dismissal of the implicated person.

-Overhaul the tax structure to reduce the taxes of lower income earners and increase the tax burden of the wealthy.

-Provide affordable and quality health-care for all Americans.

-Strengthen Social Security.

-Reduce or even better, eliminate the cost of public college education.

-Improve and enhance access to public housing.

-Rejoin the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Accord.

-Rejoin the Iran nuclear accord to bring credence to America’s commitments.

-And yes, pack the courts, for the sake of fairness and to correct the impropriety of the Republican Party the Supreme Court should be expanded from 9 to 13 and the federal court system should also be expanded as America’s population has increased significantly while the federal court system has not kept up. Democrats have been wishy washy for far too long.

-Reform the laws on public broadcasting to disallow public broadcast channels to be the mouthpiece of any politician or political organization and spread lies and misinformation that further divide the nation.

-Repeal Citizens United to limit the role of money in politics.

-Reform and limit president’s right to pardon.

-And finally, all crimes in the Trump administration, including those of the president, must be thoroughly investigated and if proven litigated in the courts. While it may be easier to move on, it is not the correct thing to do. Future presidents and office holders must be put on notice and the American people must be reassured that the United States is a country of laws.

It is not new that U.S. supports autocratic rulers: professor

1 → A: It depends on what case he takes to the Court. The one key controversy will be if state legislatures act to replace the electors elected by state voters with other electors or if vote counts are stopped-- which would lead the Democrats to go to Court. Then the Court would matter. If the votes are counted, and electors are selected, and Trump loses, he has no case to take to

Court. The Court will not interfere with existing state and federal laws and rules.

■ The U.S. claims that it supports democracy all around the world. So, how can we decipher its close ties with tyrannical regime like Saudi Arabia?

A: Then it is clear that the U.S. also supports autocratic rulers in some countries; this is not new.



The U.S. presidential election is rigged

By Myles Hoenig

Trump claims that the election is rigged and out of control, basing it in part on the major mistake of a Republican Secretary of State in Ohio sending out wrong ballots even though it looks like human error, unless it was intentional to compromise the integrity of such ballots, Trump is banking on every instance of voting irregularity to back up his unfounded claim that such voting is inherently fraudulent.

In many ways, the election is rigged. Democrats rig their primaries and engage in voter suppression so that people like Bernie Sanders, who more likely represent the average person’s concerns, are not selected, and only Wall Street’s approved candidates get the nod. They’ve done it in 2016 and 2020. The Republicans rig national elections through voter suppression of voters who are people of color mostly. They do it by selectively purging voters, denying felons who served their time to vote, and now Trump is encouraging his armed white supremacist gangs to intimidate voters at the polls.



Yes, it’s out of control. We have a president who claims the election is rigged just as an excuse not to peacefully step down if he should lose. To him, a loss is proof of fraud, not a proof that the country sees him as a dangerous, incompetent lunatic who was able to beat the only person in America capable of losing to him.

Many people see this as an advent of

civil war, and that is not an unreasonable scenario. Already his thugs have attempted to overthrow the Michigan government by force, even though one of the Proud Boys’ leaders, a participant in this attempted coup, calls Trump a tyrant. And his equivalent of the SA will be out at the polls. We also might see well-armed

black activists standing by to protect the voters, and we never know what the police will do, as they usually support the white supremacists at demonstrations, often because they themselves are often members of such groups.

But the tide is turning. More and more notable Republicans are coming out to support Biden, one of the most Republican of all the Democrats in his positions, and would guarantee to return to a Wall Street, Military Industrial Complex status quo. It took Robert Dole, former Republican Senator from Kansas, to tell Richard Nixon that the end was near and to resign. Unlikely to see something like that, considering most Republicans’ cowardice, but there could be a groundswell of anger if he loses and refuses to accept it that even the most die-hard loyalists might see it time to leave, but prepare for worse things down the road.

Myles Hoenig is a political analyst in Baltimore, Maryland. He ran for Congress in 2016 as a Green Party candidate.

(Source: Press TV)

Trump jokes he might leave U.S. if he loses election

Donald Trump joked he would need to leave the country if he loses the presidential election against Joe Biden - just as he continues to trail in polls.

The U.S. president made the comments during a rally in Georgia as he tried to fire up supporters despite Democrat candidate Joe Biden maintaining a double digit lead with weeks to go.

The Republican president was 11 points behind Biden in a major poll on Thursday while another survey showed Trump three points behind Biden in battleground Florida.

However polls in 2016 were notoriously wrong when they predicted a Hillary Clinton victory that never came.

The two men are focusing their campaigns on the closely-fought states that are expected to determine the winner of the November 3 election.

With 18 days to go, a record 23 million Americans have already voted in the fiercely contested and bitter campaign.

Arab League, Europeans condemn Israel’s approvals for new settler homes in occupied West Bank

Arab League and top European diplomats have denounced Israel’s approval of thousands of new settler units across the occupied West Bank, less than a month after the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain signed agreements to normalize relations with the Tel Aviv regime, which in return pledged to freeze its plans to annex swaths of the occupied territory.

Secretary-General of the Arab League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, in a statement on Thursday censured Israeli officials over giving the green light for the construction of the structures after an eight-month lull in settlement expansion, Press TV reported.

He emphasized that the Israeli settlement expansion activities remain a formidable obstacle to implementing a so-called two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“Netanyahu administration’s insistence on pressing ahead with settlement expansion to satisfy the extreme right-wing reflects its rejection of a solution to the conflict, and even its commitment to eliminate any chances for achieving peace in the future,” Aboul Gheit said.

Aboul Gheit added he had discussed the matter with the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, during a recent meeting.

Separately, Mladenov condemned on Thursday Israel’s approval of thousands of new settlement housing units in the occupied West Bank.

Yemen’s warring sides complete largest prisoner swap in 5 years

Yemen’s warring parties have completed the largest prisoner-swap in the country’s five-year war.

More than 1,000 people were released and transported to their homes over the two-day exchange – completed on Friday – between the Houthis and the Saudi-backed fugitive government in Yemen.

The Houthis said 671 prisoners arrived in the capital Sana’a during the process.

The swap has been two years in the making, with rival sides initially agreeing to it in December 2018 as part of the UN-sponsored Stockholm Agreement, many parts of which have not seen any progress.

Delegates representing the government and Houthis finalized the details for this agreement last month after UN-brokered talks in Switzerland.

Rebel official Abdel-Qader al-Mortada said that the two sides had already agreed on another swap and are currently waiting for the UN to decide where they can meet to finalize the details.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the exchange of detainees, calling it an “important step” in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement.

Resistance News

Israeli forces attack, injure Palestinian protesters in West Bank

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Israeli forces have attacked Palestinians taking part in protests against Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, leaving a number of people injured.

Palestinian media reports said the latest act of violence took place in Burqa Village, north of the Palestinian city of Ramallah, on Friday.

The Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the Palestinian protesters.

Israeli forces also attacked the journalists who were present at the scene, damaging their equipment.

Also on Friday, Israeli settlers set fire to Palestinian agricultural lands in Burqa.

There were also reports of clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian youths near the northern occupied West Bank city of Qalqilya.

According to human rights groups, incidents of sabotage and violence by extremist Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property occur on a daily basis throughout the West Bank.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law.

The United Nations Security Council has condemned Israel’s settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories in several resolutions.

Back in September, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the construction of over 5,000 units in the occupied West Bank, in contravention of international law.

Palestinians have been staging protests against the Israeli settlement construction.

Chest-beating ritual in Hamedan added to National Heritage list

HERITAGE

TEHRAN – Sineh-Zani (chest-beating) ritual, which is held during the mourning month of Muharram in the city of Mohajeran, Hamedan province, has recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list.



The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism announced the inscription on Thursday in a letter to the governor-general of the province.

Iranians, who are mostly Shia Muslims, hold special ceremonies during the first ten days of the lunar month of Muharram to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his 72 loyal companions.

Each city has its special ceremony and ritual during Muharram including Tazieh, a passion play inspired by historical and religious narrations; Sineh-Zani; and Nazri, food offerings.

In the chest-beating ritual, hundreds of men, all clad in black, congregate in Hosayniyas (places used for religious mourning ceremonies) or streets to beat on their chests according to the rhythm of a sung eulogy.

Twelve more items including the skill of cooking yogurt stew and carrot and Ghazyaghi Ash, and the skill of baking Gerdeh bread and Kelva sweets were also added to the National Heritage list.

The list also includes the skill of weaving Nahavand carpets, thanksgiving ritual, and making Faludeh syrup.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. It was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC. Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.

5th-century church in northwestern Iran restored

TOURISM

TEHRAN – The Saint Hovhannes Church in the city of Maragheh, northwestern East Azarbaijan province, has undergone some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The restoration project is complete by 80 percent after almost two years, Ahmad Hamzezadeh announced on Thursday.

The project involves reinforcement and strengthening of the walls and rooftop, replacement of the worn-out building materials, and repairing the church's façade, the official added.

Built in the 5th century, Saint Hovhannes Church is Maragheh city's only church, which was popular during the Ilkhanid era (1256–1353), when Maragheh was one of the Iranian prosperous cities.

The church is an Armenian Catholic church named after one of the apostles called Johannes or John, also known as Hovhannes in the Armenian language.



Sait Hovhannes Church has three sections, the Archbishop's residence, a school, and an altar. The church's domed entrance is in its west wing, which is a conical-shaped dome with a steel cover holding the bell.

The main space of the church is a rectangle with an altar in its east wing. Lighting is provided by the main entrance and small windows in the eastern, northern, and western walls. A string of one-story buildings has been constructed in the west wing of the courtyard which is now derelict. Other rooms, which were used by the poor, are also seen around the courtyard.

The original building has been destroyed many times throughout history, but the present structure was built in 1840 by French and Russian architects.

However, in recent years, the church has been abandoned due to the migration of Armenians to Tehran and other cities.

Iran is home to several ancient and historical churches. Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are the most significant religious minorities in the country with Christians constituting the bulk.

Soaked in history and culture for millennia, Tabriz, which is the capital of East Azarbaijan, embraces several historical and religious sites, including Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few. The city became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295–1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital, it was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

The city retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548 when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin. During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

Ten gorgeous mosques to visit in Iran

→ 1

Nasir Al-Molk Mosque, Shiraz

This is probably the first image coming to your mind when we talk about Iranian mosques. It is also known as Pink Mosque, because of pink color tiles for its interior design. When standing outside the mosque, you cannot guess what waits for you inside. Just step in and see the magic of light and color.

The mosque was constructed during the Qajar era, over the course of 12 years during the late 1800s, but restoration and maintenance efforts continue today. The mosque was built by the order of Mirza Hasan Ali Nasir Al-Molk, and it is designed by Mohammad Hasan-e Memar.

■

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Isfahan

The Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque is a stunning example of intricate Iranian architecture, standing tall since the early 17th century. The design of the building itself is rather simple, but the tile work makes it well worth the visit.

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque is best recognized for its defiantly off-center dome and lack of minarets. The cream-hued tiles shift colors as the sun moves throughout the day, giving them a pinkish tint at times.

Covered in vivid colored tiles inside and out, its dome is without a doubt the focal point of attention with its arabesque designs that become smaller as they approach the center.

■

Shah Cheragh Mosque, Shiraz

Shah-e Cheragh ("King of Light") is a major mausoleum and pilgrimage site in the touristic city of Shiraz, southern Iran.

The dazzling shrine of mirrored tiles is where Sayyed Mir Ahmad, one of the brothers of Imam Reza (AS), is laid to rest. Each day, it draws hundreds of the faithful from all over the country or even abroad.

The mausoleum boasts architectural elements and motifs from various centuries and its courtyard and tile-work represent relatively modern embellishments from



The creamy dome of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Isfahan

the late-Qajar period. Its blue-tiled dome is flanked by dazzling gold-tipped minarets.

There is also a modest museum in the northwestern corner of the courtyard, next to the shrine, which showcases shrine-related objects, including some highly prized old Qurans and an exquisite door embellished with silver and gold.

Visitors are welcome to enter the courtyard in the middle of the complex but the entrance to the shrine is not usually permitted to non-Muslims. Photography with large digital cameras is not permitted.

■

Imam Mosque, Isfahan

The Imam Mosque is situated on the southern side of one of the most beautiful squares in Iran; Naghsh-e Jahan Square. The mosque is an excellent example of Islamic architecture in the country which has been listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO along with other monuments at the square.

The mosque dates back to the 1600s. It's made of mosaic tiles of seven different colors and is considered as one of the most stunning examples of Iranian architecture. It has four towering minarets, 18 million bricks, and hundreds of thousands of tiles. The ornamental entrance of the building is packed with colorful mosaic tiles and elaborate inscriptions.

■

Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, Ardabil

Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble is a microcosm of Sufism where arrays of harmonious sun-scorched domes, well-preserved and richly-ornamented facades and interiors, and, above all, an atmosphere of



A view of Yazd with its Jameh Mosque in the foreground

peace and tranquility have all made a must-see stopover while traversing northwest Iran.

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

■

Jameh Mosque, Yazd

The terms "Jameh Mosque" or "Masjed-e Jameh" or "Friday Mosque" is used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are performed: the phrase is used in other Muslim countries but only in Iran does it designate this purpose.

The mosque, which was first built under Ala'oddoleh Garshab of the Buyid dynasty, is still in use today and is a fine example of Persian architecture.

The entrance to the mosque is crowned by a pair of minarets, one of the tallest in Iran, dating back to the Safavid era and measuring 52 meters in height and six meters in diameter. The entrance is decorated from top to bottom in tile work, which is formed of different colored pieces that are sandwiched together to create the design.

Within is a long arcaded courtyard where, behind a deep-set south-east iwan, is the sanctuary chamber. Its tiled Mihrab is one of the finest of its kind in existence.

The architectural masterpiece was inscribed on the National Heritage List in 1924.

■

Blue Mosque, Tabriz

The Blue Mosque, known as Masjed-e Kabud in Farsi, is one of the valuable historical monuments of Iran that its special architectural style has distinguished this magnificent building from other similar examples.

Covered in spectacular blue tiles, from which it derives its name, the Blue Mosque is also an example of Islamic designs and decorations as there are kufic, naskh, and thulth scripts as well as various arabesque and geometric patterns inside.

Also called the turquoise of Islam due to its beautiful blue tiles, the mosque was completed in c. 1465 and is remarkable for its simplicity, brickwork, and a great size as well.

The mosque survived a devastating earthquake in 1727. However, many parts of it caved in due to a quake struck later in the same century. Many parts of the structure were rebuilt in 1973.

The missing tiles of the mosque's façade are also a reminder of the scars the mosque bears from the damage it suffered from the quakes. Some visitors say "From the outside, it looks first a bit disappointing but the interior is beautiful and worth the entrance price."

In the southern part of the mosque lies a time-honored mausoleum, itself a source of splendor. It is entirely covered with massive marble slabs on which verses from the holy Quran have been engraved with a background of fine arabesques.

Apart from its unique architecture and history, a play of color and light that shines through the mosque's windows, gives photographers a great chance to take unique artistic photos.

■

Goharshad Mosque, Mashhad

The great mosque of Goharshad is a remarkable Islamic structure due to its age, architectural characteristics, and

rich tile decorations. Made of brick and plaster in the 15th century, it used to be served as a free-standing mosque and currently serves as one of the prayer halls within the splendid Imam Reza Shrine Complex in Mashhad. On the margins of the main veranda's entrance, there is an old inscription carved by calligrapher Baysunqur Mirza.

This comprehensive deed of endowment suggests that the mosque was built when Shahrokh, the Timurid king, was on the throne. The construction started in 1418 by the order of Queen Goharshad, the wife of Shahrokh. It took about 12 years to be completed under the supervision of capable Iranian architect Ghavameddin Shirazi by the use of the architectural and decorative manpower supplied from the Iranian cities of Shiraz and Isfahan.

Covering an area of 9410 square meters, the mosque consists of a large azure dome, two 40-meter minarets, four verandas, a courtyard with seven big bedchambers, and a large altar made of a stony dado and mosaic faience shell.

Standing in the courtyard one can recognize the ensemble's exuberant color and solidity among the tower-like minarets, merging with the outer corners of the portal screen extend to the ground together with the high foundation revetment of marble.

■

Vakil Mosque, Shiraz

Masjed-e Vakil (Vakil Mosque), which is part of a bigger 18th-century ensemble, may be tantamount to a trip to Istanbul while missing the Blue Mosque. The atmospheric ensemble of Masjed-e Vakil, Bazaar-e Vakil, and Vakil Bathhouse has always been a bustling tourist destination in downtown Shiraz, and a must-see for both local and international backpackers.

The mosque is connected to the bazaar and almost attached to the bathhouse with a lane in between. As one enters the mosque, they can see a corridor leading to the Vakil Bazaar on the left-hand side.

Karim Khan Zand, the founder of the Zand Dynasty



Nasir Al-Molk Mosque is a popular travel destination in Shiraz

who ruled from 1751 to 1779, ordered the construction of the ensemble in the 18th century, as part of his grand development projects in the heart of his capital city.

The mosque has a recessed entrance decorated with Shirazi rose-pink tiles, a splendid inner courtyard surrounded by beautifully tiled alcoves and porches, two vast iwans (porticos), and a pleasingly proportioned 75m-by-36m vaulted prayer hall. A distinguishing feature of the mosque, however, is the forest of 48 diagonally fluted columns that support the prayer hall, displaying a hypnotic rhythm of verticals and arabesques.

■

Agha Bozorg Mosque, Kashan

Masjed-e Agha Bozorg (Agha Bozorg Mosque) is simply one of many top destinations in central Iran that lure not only the faithful but travelers and architecture buffs.

Standing tall in the oasis city of Kashan, the 19th-century mosque boasts a pleasing symmetry in its traditional design that is embellished by intricate plasterwork, woodwork, mirrorwork, and geometric tilework patterns.

A tribute to the Islamic architecture, the mosque delicately takes elements of Persian architecture as well.

The massive structure includes several congregational halls, adjoining arcades, tiled minarets, massive badgirs (wind towers), and an austere dome. The mud-brick walls, arches, and ceilings are covered with Quranic inscriptions and mosaics as well.

Narratives say that the mosque is named after Mulla Muhammad Mahdi Naraqi (1715-1795) who was nicknamed "Agha Bozorg" for being a Shia philosopher and theologian.

Exhibition to display unseen relics of Sialk

TOURISM

TEHRAN – The National Museum of Kashan is

scheduled to hold an exhibition of the relics discovered in Tapeh Sialk ("Sialk hills"), which are not displayed previously, in an exhibition by the end of the current Iranian year 1399 (ends on March 20, 2021).

The relics have been discovered during several excavation projects at the site, which is one of the oldest and richest archaeological sites in central Iran, mostly by French archeologist Roman Ghirshman during the 1930s, ILNA quoted the director of the site Javad Hosseinzadeh as saying on Friday.

Although the tourists and travelers are allowed to visit the archeological site observing strict health protocols,



the coronavirus pandemic has slashed the number of tourists visiting the site by 90 percent over the past few months, the official added.

However, the exhibition is expected to draw attention to the site, which is

a treasure trove of information about diverse subjects such as paleobotany, palaeozoology, palaeoanatomy, diet, climate change, and ancient metallurgy, he explained.

Situated halfway between Kashan and Fin in Isfahan province, Tapeh Sialk has yielded interesting pottery pieces, metal tools, and domestic implements made from stone, clay, and bone that date from as early as the 4th millennium BC.

Several excavation projects at the site have so far been conducted, beginning with a 1933 French Louvre delegation led by Roman Ghirshman; capping with a most recent project in 2009, which was led by Hassan Fazeli-Nashli, a faculty member of the Archaeology Department,

IranAir to resume Tehran- Cologne service as of Oct. 30

TOURISM

TEHRAN – Iran's flag carrier IranAir is scheduled to resume flights to Cologne, Germany, as of October 30.

This flight, bearing No. 729, leaves Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA) at 17:40 on Fridays every week and arrives at Cologne Airport at 21:00 local time, the Airlines of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced on Thursday, Mehr reported.

The return flight will be operated on the same day with

flight number 728 at 22:30 local time from Cologne airport and will land at Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA) at 6:15 am on Saturday.

With the Covid-19 outbreak, IranAir canceled many flights including to Cologne and vice versa for several months.

IranAir operates flights to three airports in Frankfurt, Cologne, and Hamburg weekly, according to the flag carrier. The airline also operates flights to England, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Austria, and the UAE.



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■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The most generous person is the one who forgives while in power.

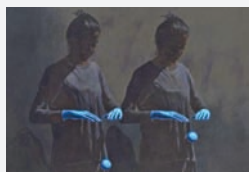
Imam Hussein (AS)

WHAT'S IN TEHRAN ART



Drawing

■ Mahbubeh Hosseini-Musa is hanging a collection of her drawings named "Natural Choice" in an exhibition at Aran Gallery. The exhibition will run until November 2 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



Painting

■ O Gallery on its first floor is playing host to an exhibition of paintings entitled "Streets of Tehran" by Amin Moazzami. On its second floor, the gallery is displaying a collection of paintings by Ali Ganjavi in an exhibition named "Hidden". Both exhibits will run until October 26 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.



■ Kaveh Tavakkoli is showcasing his latest collection of paintings in an exhibition at Outsider Inn Gallery. The exhibit will continue until October 30 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Farrokhi Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near Vali-e Asr Square.

Photo



■ A collection of fetus photographs by Hamideh Peivareh is on view in an exhibition titled "Fetal Utopia" at Shalman Gallery. The collection accumulated by Pejman Dadkhah will be on display until October 21 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

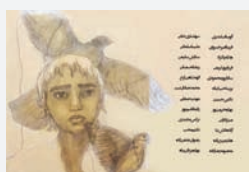
Multimedia



■ Artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Fatemeh Jalali, Shima Taj, Parisa Soltani, Majid Khoshnud, Mittra Akbari and Maryam Jamali, are being shown in an exhibition at Zarna Gallery. The exhibit, which is a sequel to "Art in Quarantine" in March, will continue until October 2 at 10 Esko Alley near Daneshgah St. and Enqelab Ave.



■ An exhibition displaying a collection of artworks in various media by a number of celebrated artists at Negah Gallery. Works by Farah Osuli, Gholamhossein Nami, Hanibal Alkhas, Manuchehr Niazi, Nasser Ovissi, Ali-Akbar Sadeqi and several others have been selected to be put on display at the exhibit that will run until October 28 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.



■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Bahareh Yazdanpanah, Toktam Moheb, Setayesh Salimi, Negin Hosseini, Atusa Eskandari, Mahshid Safai and several other artists is underway at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Imagination" will run until October 21 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



■ Artworks in various media by a group of Iranian art elites, including Ali-Akbar Sanati, Ahmad Efsandiari, Jalal Shabahangi, Ali Golestaneh, Reza Mafi, Sadeq Tabrizi and some other artists are on view in an exhibition at Artibition Gallery. The exhibit will continue until October 24 at the gallery located at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golnabi St., off Shariati Ave.



■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by a group of artists is currently underway at Ayrik Gallery. The exhibition will run until October 21 at the gallery, which can be found at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.

Farshchian painting “Guarantor of Gazelle” depicts kindness to animals in Islam

A R T TEHRAN — Persian d e s k painter Mahmud Farshchian has portrayed the story of Imam Reza (AS) acting as a mediator between a gazelle and a hunter in his two masterpieces named “The Guarantor of the Gazelle” to represent kindness to animals in Islam.

Both of the artworks are on view at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum in Mashhad. “The Guarantor of the Gazelle” is an epithet of Imam Reza (AS), depicting a story in which the Shia’s leader acted as a mediator between a gazelle and a hunter.

The Guarantor of the Gazelle refers to the story of a deer caught by a hunter in a forest. Passing by, Imam Reza (AS) asked the hunter to free the deer so she could raise her babies, but he promised the deer would come back afterward. The hunter accepted and freed the deer.

Months later, the deer returned to the hunter’s home. However, the hunter declined to kill her, as he saw the miracle in what had happened.

“In this second painting, the hunter repents of his plan to kill the gazelle, disposing of



“The Guarantor of the Gazelle 2” on display at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum in Mashhad.

all his hunting equipment,” Farshchian had explained and added, “Furthermore,

the gazelle’s gesture of seeking asylum has been brilliantly depicted.”

Iranian doc reviews assassination of Imam Hassan (AS) based on study by Western scholars



A poster for “Rereading a Biological Assassination”.

→1 “Due to the fact that the scholars had no autopsy report, they conducted their studies based on interviews with Sunni and Shia people and proved that Imam Hassan (AS) had been martyred by means of mercury chloride intoxication,” he added.

He noted that neither the Muslim nor the Shia world has had any involvement in this study, and said that the group scrutinized the historical cases of mysterious deaths based on forensic sciences. He also added that the group has previously carried out a study on Napoleon Bonaparte’s death.

The results of the group’s studies on the biological assassination of Imam Hassan (AS) have been published in a magazine published by the British Academy of Forensic Sciences (BAFS), which has contributed to Fotros Media in making the documentary.

Rasul Jafarian, a historian of the University of Tehran, collaborated with “Rereading a Biological Assassination”, and Nasser Tahmasb did the narration for the documentary

project, which was filmed in Iran, Turkey and England.

The study was carried out by Nicole Burke, Mitchell Golas, Cyrus L. Raafat and Aliyar Mousavi.

In the conclusion of their study, the group wrote, “The fact that neither an autopsy nor a judicial investigation was performed by the authorities at the time should not deter the use of eyewitness accounts as evidence.

“Mineralogical, medical and chemical facts support the hypothesis that al-Hasan’s death was caused by calomel (mercury(I) chloride) intoxication.

“This forensic hypothesis is consistent with the historical position, reflected in ancient (medieval) documents, that al-Hasan was poisoned by Ja’dah, at the instigation of the caliph, and with the Byzantine emperor’s involvement.”

Malakuti called Fotros Media an independent center that is managed by a group of Shia youth who are spiritually aligned with Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Sistani, a top Shia cleric in Iraq.

St. Louis festival picks four Iranian movies

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — A lineup of four Iranian films will be competing in the 29th Annual Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival.

“African Violet” by Mona Zandi-Haghighi, “Tangle” by Maliheh Gholamzadeh, “Crab” by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi and “Malakout” by Farnush Abedi are the four Iranian movies.

“African Violet” will be competing in the Narrative Features category.

The film is about the middle-age Shokuh who finds out that her elderly ex-husband



Reza Babak acts in a scene from “African Violets” by Mona Zandi-Haqiqi.

Fereidun has been placed in a nursing home by their children. With second husband Reza, she decides to remove Fereidun and take care of him in their own home.

“Tangle” is an entry to the Narrative Shorts: Animation category. The short animated film is about the people who lose their homes in wars and are forced to leave all their memories and loved ones behind.

“Crab” will be competing in the Narrative Shorts: Experimental category. The movie tells the story of a shy schoolboy who is interested in performing in a play with his

school’s theater troupe. But the only part offered to him is to play the role of a crab.

And in the Narrative Shorts: International Animation category, “Malakout” will be competing.

It is a horror film about a pianist, who has lost one of his hands and can’t play the piano anymore. Doctors decide to transplant a dead criminal’s hand to his body. The pianist with his new hand starts killing people.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 29th edition of the festival will be held virtually this year from November 5 to 22.

Indian shorts to go on screen at Isfahan children’s festival

CULTURE TEHRAN — A lineup of six short films selected from India’s Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth will go on screen at the International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan, the organizers have announced.

The lineup includes “Roshni” by Ananya Iyer, “Rang” by Neva Singla, “Life” by Krishnam Gupta, “The Photograph” by Ayaan Agnihotri, “Batata” and “Sahaara” by Anant Tyagi.

The films will be screened in the non-competitive section of the festival. The 33rd edition of the International Film Festival for Children and Youth will be held online from October 18 to 23 this year due to a spike in coronavirus cases in the country, the director of the festival, Alireza Tabesh has said.

The festival will be organized in the national and international sections, and the Farabi Cinema Foundation, Cinema Organization of Iran and the Isfahan Municipality are the main organizers of the gala.



A poster for “The Kids of Picture Paathshala” section at the Intl. Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan.

“The only point is about several feature films in the national and international sections, which we guess might be pirated, but for sure the screenings will be coordinated under the supervision of the producers and the filmmakers,” Tabesh said.

“Simple Machines” working at Persian bookstores

A R T TEHRAN — British scholar Felicia Law’s “Simple Machines: Stone Age Science” has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults is the publisher of the book translated by Ali Khakbazan.

In this book, Leo teaches his cat Pallas all about simple machines by applying his knowledge of science to their Stone Age world. Engaging illustrations and stories provide a fun introduction to science concepts, including wheels and axles, levers, pulleys, wedges, screws and more. Information boxes accompany each story to explore real applications of simple machines in the natural

and designed world.

The original book was published in 2015 with contributions from Gerry Bailey and Mike Phillips.

Children’s author and international publisher Law is the managing director of Allegra Publishing, an established and vibrant children’s publishing company located in London.

She is the author of 175 children’s books, which have been published by a range of prestigious publishers worldwide, including Penguin Books, Harper Collins, Octopus, Andre Deutsch, Hodder and Stoughton, Kingfisher, Hamlyn, E.J. Arnold and U.S. based World Book Encyclopedia.

Additionally, she has spent over 20 years



Front cover of the Persian version of British scholar Felicia Law’s “Simple Machines: Stone Age Science”.

heading up children’s publishing companies and divisions worldwide, having served as an editorial director and publisher in U.S., European, Arab and Chinese owned companies based both overseas and in the UK.

Law is also a qualified teacher who founded a flourishing and highly reputable school in London where she served as headteacher for 7 years.

Subsequently, she established a children’s bookstore in London. Her market knowledge and track record in education and in writing, creating and marketing successful educational programs lies behind the success of Allegra Publishing’s dynamic and innovative publishing profile.

Genki Kawamura’s “If Cats Disappeared from the World” comes into Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — Japanese author Genki d e s k Kawamura’s debut novel “If Cats Disappeared from the World” has recently been published in Persian by Negah Publications.

The book has been translated into Persian by Gita Garakani. The book is a beautifully moving tale of loss and reaching out to loved ones, of one man’s journey to discover what really matters in modern life.

The narrator’s days are numbered. Estranged from his family, living alone with only his cat Cabbage for company, he was unprepared for the doctor’s diagnosis that he has

only months to live.

But before he can set about tackling his bucket list, the Devil appears with a special offer: in exchange for making one thing in the world disappear, he can have one extra day of life. And so begins a very bizarre week.

Because how do you decide what makes life worth living? How do you separate out what you can do without from what you hold dear? In dealing with the Devil the narrator will take himself, and his beloved cat, to the brink. “If Cats Disappeared from the World” has sold over two million copies worldwide and has been translated into 18 languages.

Sony Pictures is developing an English-language feature adaptation. His other novels are “Million Dollar Man”, “April Come She Will” and “A Hundred Flowers”.

He has also written three children’s books, “Tinny & the Balloon” “MOOM”, and “Pâtissier Monster”. Kawamura is also a producer, director, and screenwriter. In 2018, his debut directorial short was selected for In Competition, Short Films at Cannes Film Festival.

He is also known for producing “Confessions”, “Villains”, “Your Name”, “Weathering with You” and the Academy Awards nominated animated film “Mirai”.