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© Tehran Times / Illustration by Bahman Vakhshour

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Over 70m tons of goods loaded, unloaded at Iranian ports in 7 months

TEHRAN — Over 70 million tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded at the ports of Iran during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), according to the Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad. While the coronavirus pandemic has created many limitations for the economic activities all around the world, operations at Iranian ports are underway continu-

ously, and even the U.S. sanctions could not halt activities at the ports. As announced by the PMO head, loading and unloading of commodities are being conducted continuously at the ports of Iran while the health requirements are completely met. Rastad reiterated that all port operations are done observing healthcare protocols and the principles set by the Coronavirus Containment Headquarters. **→4**

Few new sanctions left to impose on Iran, Russia: Robert O'Brien

TEHRAN — The U.S. has little opportunity left to impose new sanctions against Russia and Iran, as there are already many of them, U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien has said. "One of the problems that we have faced with both Iran and Russia is that we now have so many sanctions against these countries that we have very little (opportunity) to do anything about it," O'Brien told journalists on Sunday.

"But we are looking at all possible deterrent measures that we can apply to these countries, as well as others, including China and some states not yet mentioned, that are trying to influence Americans on the voting issue. This is unacceptable," he said when asked how Washington could answer the question of how Russia and Iran allegedly received some information about the registration of American voters and wanted to influence the elections. **→2**

War literature under spotlight at Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards

TEHRAN — The organizers of the 13th edition of the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards, Iran's most lucrative literary prize, announced on Monday that books written on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is known as the Sacred Defense in Iran, will be reviewed this year to honor top

works of the past four decades. "Novels, short stories, reviews and documents produced over the past 40 years on the Sacred Defense will be selected by a number of journalists and representatives of the media active in the literature arena," director of the awards Behruz Jalali said. **→8**

By Farrokh Hesabi
Tehran Times journalist

Persepolis race against the clock

Persepolis are racing against the clock to bring peace and unity to the club ahead of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League. The Iranian giants beat Al-Nassr 5-3 on penalties to reach the final of the Asian Champions League for the second time in three years in early October. They were crowned as West Asia's soccer champions at Jassim bin Hamid Stadium in Doha, Qatar.

But with the sweet taste of success still resonating in the mouths of Persepolis fans from their big win, the club faced controversies due to management problems and the departure of two key players.

It will be important to see how they handle this new, different, and difficult challenge. Persepolis and Iran national football team defender Shoja Khalilzadeh made a shock move to Qatari football club Al Rayyan amid disagreements with the acting general manager, Mehdi Rasoul-Panah.

Then it was Rasoul-Panah's turn to step down from his role as Persepolis football club acting general manager. He was forced to retire in the wake of a video going viral in which he was insulting Persepolis player Shoja Khalilzadeh.

He may have been asked to resign or may have been forced into retirement after his remarks caused public discontent.

And the final blow was the departure of defender Mohammad Naderi who joined Persepolis archrivals, Esteghlal, and left the Reds' fans furious.

As FIFA bans Persepolis from signing new players in the next transfer window due to failure to pay their due to their former coach, Branko Ivankovic, the team are not able to replace their departed players.

Currently, the priority of the club's board of directors is to choose a new general manager who is eligible to handle current club's challenges and also being accepted by the fans as well.

These problems once again show the need for privatization of Persepolis and also Esteghlal teams. Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth owns two significant clubs and appoints their board of directors.

A private club allows its fans to elect their desired person as the general manager or the boss of the club. In practice, an electoral approach encourages the elected president to think about the club's long-term health by investing on youth and diversifying revenue streams, and having plans for financial transparency.

Islam perfectly compatible with development: San Diego State University professor

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Ahmet T. Kuru, professor of political science at San Diego State University, says Islam was historically perfectly compatible with development, and contemporary problems are created by class relations, rather than Islam.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Kuru also says, "Violence, authoritarianism, and underdevelopment constitute a vicious circle in not only the Muslim world but also all around the world."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ You compared the history of Islam and Europe in your book entitled "Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment: A Global and Historical Comparison". What was the reason for this comparison? According to this comparison, what were the most important reasons for Western Europe's development?

A: Many thanks for this interview. Iran has always been very important for Muslim intellectual life. I am happy that my new Islam book is now being translated into Farsi by Mehri Publication. The answer to your question about my comparison depends on my life story: I grew up in Turkey and have lived in the United States since 1999; thus, I spent half of my life in a Muslim-majority country and the other half in a Western country. Comparing these two is natural for me. Moreover, my academic field is also comparative politics.

My first book, "Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey," which was published by Cambridge in 2009, compared secular state policies in Turkey with those in France and the United States. It asked, "Why was there a ban on Muslim females' headscarves in Turkey and France, whereas there was no such ban in the United States?" **→5**

U.S. protests: Black Lives Matter organizers say right-wing backlash was expected as movement grew

During a Black Lives Matter march in late May, Nia Miranda says she decided to take a stand when she saw something that marred what she described as "a beautiful protest."

Miranda said she spotted two women, both apparently white and dressed in black, tagging the exterior of a Starbucks at The Grove mall in Beverly Hills. The 30-year-old filmmaker and actress said she started recording video on her cell phone and approached the pair, who were spray painting the letters "BLM" on the front of the store, ABC News reported.

"I remember looking around and realizing what they were doing and that no one else was saying anything. I had to capture it and confront them at the same time," Miranda told ABC News. "I knew that I had to say something because if the news would have reported the vandalism without seeing who did it, I know who they would have said committed that

crime: It would have went on Black people and it would have been told that the protesters became rioters and it became looting, and that wasn't the case at all."

The Los Angeles Police Department said the mostly-peaceful protest on May 30 in Beverly Hills devolved into multiple incidents of vandalism and looting of stores at The Grove, on ritzy Rodeo Drive and elsewhere in the city, leading to 500 arrests. It was unclear if the women Miranda confronted were among those arrested.

Miranda's video instantly went viral and inspired Grammy-winning music producer Skrillex to write a song "Sullen Sunday" featuring the raw words of Miranda: "When they see the vandalism on these places, know that it wasn't us. And when you see stuff like that you're supposed to stand up and say something."

Tehran slams Macron over Islamophobic remarks

TEHRAN — Iran has strongly criticized French President Emmanuel Macron over his anti-Islam stance after Macron described Islam as a religion "in crisis" worldwide.

"#Macron's irrational behavior in public #AntiIslamism shows his crudeness in politics, otherwise he would not have dared to embrace Islam in his quest for leadership in #Europe," Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), wrote in a tweet on Monday.

"I suggest that he read more history and not rejoice in the support of a declining America & #Zionism," Shamkhani added.

Earlier this month, Macron pledged to fight "Islamist separatism", which he said was threatening to take control in some Muslim communities around France.

His comments, along with his backing of satirical outlets publishing caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), has led to a social media campaign calling for the boycott of French products

from supermarkets in Arab countries and Turkey.

Hashtags such as the #BoycottFrenchProducts in English and the Arabic #NeverTheProphet trended across countries including Kuwait, Qatar, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

"Muslims and monotheists of the world condemn in the strongest form the blatant enmity of the foolish and stubborn leaders of France toward the prophet of mercy (PBUH) unanimously," Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf tweeted on Monday. **→2**

Iran's petchem industry moving toward complete self-sufficiency

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Over the past two decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been taking serious steps for cutting reliance on external sources for meeting the country's industrial and technological needs, and in this regard indigenizing the knowledge for manufacturing machinery and equipment has been a major focus in a variety of sectors.

As a major pillar of the country's economy, the petrochemical industry has been one of the pioneers in the mentioned efforts and the government has been taking serious measures to expand the industry and move toward self-sufficiency.

Cooperating with capable domestic knowledge-based companies and startups has been one of the very fruitful steps that the oil ministry has taken in its efforts to reach complete independence from the foreign resources for meeting its equipment needs.

In this regard, the country's Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC) has played a very significant role in collaborating with such companies for working on innovative research projects for producing various equipment and base products needed in the industry.

Back in March, the PRTC's Managing Director Ali Pajouhan announced that National Petrochemical Company (NPC), in collaboration with domestic companies, is planning to indigenize the knowledge for producing nine major catalysts used in the petrochemical industries within the next two years. **→4**



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Farmers harvesting 'red gold' in northeast Iran

Photo depicts a farmer is pouring the newly-picked flowers of saffron crocus, commonly known as the red gold, into a sack in northeastern North Khorasan province, October 26, 2020.

Saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to the physical and spiritual medicine.

Every year, the saffron harvest season begins in early November. While most other vegetation is gone, the bright purple flowers cover the fields and create an outstanding landscape in dry regions in Iran.

Few new sanctions left to impose on Iran, Russia: Robert O'Brien

1 → Washington has sanctioned five Iranian groups that it claims attempted to interfere in the November 3 presidential contest between President Donald Trump and Democratic candidate Joe Biden.

In a statement on Thursday, the U.S. Treasury announced it designated Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), the IRGC's Quds Force, and the Bayan Rasanah Gostar Institute "for having directly or indirectly engaged in, sponsored, concealed, or otherwise been complicit in foreign interference" in the upcoming election.



It also designated the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union and International Union of Virtual Media "for being owned or controlled by" the IRGC's Quds Force, the department said.

In response, Iran summoned the Swiss envoy on Thursday to protest against what it described as "baseless" U.S. claims.

"Iran's strong rejection of American officials' repetitive, baseless and false claims was conveyed to the Swiss ambassador," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told

state television. "As we have said before, it makes no difference for Iran who wins the U.S. election."

Switzerland represents U.S. interests in Iran as Washington and Tehran have no diplomatic ties. Tensions have risen between the two states since 2018, when Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and imposed sanctions on Iran.

Alireza Miryousefi, the spokesman for Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations, has also said that Iran does not interfere in other countries' elections.

Miryousefi told Newsweek on Friday that "we do not comment on election issues and are not interested in entering the debate."

He made the remarks when asked to respond to Biden, who said during Thursday's final presidential debate that he has "made it clear that any country, no matter who it is, that interferes in American elections will pay a price."

The Democratic presidential candidate said it was "overwhelmingly clear" during this election "that Russia has been involved, China's been involved to some degree, and now we learn that Iran is involved."

"They will pay a price if 'm elected. They're interfering with American sovereignty. That's what's going on right now," he warned. Miryousefi brushed off the warning, declaring Tehran's neutrality in the affair.

Guardian Council spokesman Abbas Ali Kadhodaei has also ruled out the allegations of interference in U.S. presidential election, saying the Islamic Republic does not meddle in the internal affairs of other countries.

"Iran has announced numerous times that it does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and more importantly, it does not see any need to interfere," Kadhodaei said via Twitter on Saturday.

"The U.S. election is also a matter in which Iran is not interested nor it sees any reason to interfere," he said, adding, "Of course, Trump should also know that the era of meddling in other countries' internal affairs is over."

IRGC seizes cargo of smuggled guns in northern Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) discovered and seized a large number of smuggled guns in Fereidounkenar, a city in the northern province of Mazandaran.

Commander of the Basij (volunteer) forces of Fereidounkenar Mohammad Barmar made the announcement on Sunday afternoon, saying that the weapons were seized during special operations in cooperation between the Judiciary and the IRGC security forces.

"A Peugeot taxi car and a truck were seized and 64 guns were discovered and confiscated," he added.

Barmar said that two non-local suspects were also detained during the operations.

Earlier this month, a senior advisor to Iranian intelligence minister warned of enemies' plots to arm people in the country with smuggled weapons to foment insecurity.

"The enemy is attempting to bring people to the streets to spark two incidents," said the senior advisor who is also the director-general of the intelligence ministry's office in Khorassan Razavi province in Northeastern Iran.

"The enemy wants to make the internal equations in Iran violent, specially in the streets of the big cities, by supplying smuggled weapons among people," he added.

Late last month, the border guards forces in the town of Qasr-e Shirin in Kermanshah province, Western Iran, discovered and seized weapons smuggled into the country.

An informed source told FNA that the border guards of Qasr-e Shirin started intelligence operations after receiving reports on an arms cargo possibly destined towards Iran.

"After several days of efforts, chasing and conducting intelligence operations, the border guards of Qasr-e Shirin border regiment succeeded in seizing a backpack containing 9 pistols with 18 magazines and 9 covers of weapons," the source added.

In a relevant development in August, Iranian border guards in the Western province of Kermanshah discovered and seized tens of U.S.-made rifles from smugglers.

"After receiving tips on a possible transit of a weapons and ammunition cargo by smugglers into the country, a team of border guards and intelligence forces at Salas Babajani border area were immediately sent to Chafteh border checkpoint (in Kermanshah province)," an informed source said.

The source added that the border guards traced the smugglers with the help of electro optical equipment as they were crossing the borderline, noting that the smugglers who faced the Iranian forces' rapid action left the cargo and fled the mountainous region to the other side of the borders.

According to the source, 33 U.S.-made rifles were discovered and seized in the operations.

Correction

In our Oct. 22 issue the news story headlined "Fly-by-night countries" on page 1, the Indian flag was wrongly published among certain others. The mistake is regretted.

Editor

Zarif hits back at Macron, says Muslims are victims of the 'cult of hatred'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has censured French President Emmanuel Macron for anti-Islam stance, saying Muslims are the primary victims of the "cult of hatred".

"Muslims are the primary victims of the 'cult of hatred'—empowered by colonial regimes & exported by their own clients," Zarif said via Twitter on Monday.

"Insulting 1.9B Muslims—and their sanctities—for the abhorrent crimes of such extremists is an opportunistic abuse of freedom of speech," he said, adding, "It only fuels extremism."

On Wednesday, Macron supported a French teacher's displaying of cartoons insulting the Prophet of Islam in his class.

"France will never renounce caricatures," Macron said, defending the teacher for "promoting freedom".

The teacher, Samuel Paty, was murdered by an 18-year-old Chechen assailant. Commenting on the attack, Macron described Islam as a religion "in crisis" worldwide, trying to suggest that the assailant had been motivated to kill the teacher by the faith rather than radicalism.

Macron insisted on his position again on Sunday by tweeting, "We will not give



in, ever."

The comments drew a wave of condemnation throughout the Muslim world.

Iran's parliament on Monday strongly condemned Macron's defense of blasphemy against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) under

Zarif says insulting 1.9 billion Muslims and their sanctities for abhorrent crimes of extremists is an "opportunistic abuse of freedom of speech".

U.S. after showing chaos, statelessness in Iran: Rabiei

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei says the U.S. is seeking to show a kind of chaos and statelessness in Iran, according to Mehr. "The U.S., beside trying to dominate the world and fomenting Iranophobia and using tools such as sanctions and pressure on people's life, is waging a psychological war to show a kind of chaos and statelessness in Iran," Rabiei wrote in a note published on Monday.

"In my opinion, a society whose actors are aggressive, will have a very weak domestic security," he said.

The government spokesman further called for unity, especially during such times that the biggest enemy of Iran is in the White House.

Since U.S. President Donald Trump came to power almost four years ago, he has pushed the United States toward unilateralism. The Trump administration has

Whistleblowing is not necessarily fighting corruption, says Judiciary chief

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi has highlighted the need to fight corruption, saying that whistleblowing without presenting any evidence should not be regarded as part of the country's fight against corruption.

"Some people whistle-blow under the guise of fighting corruption without proper evidence, but not every piece of news is correct and it should be investigated beforehand," Raisi said in remarks on Monday.

"Whistleblowing and revealing corruption is not per se fighting against corruption," he emphasized.

He also invited people who have evidence about any individual's corruption to hand

out their evidence to the Judiciary.

Under the chairmanship of Ebrahim Raisi, the Judiciary has launched a campaign against financial corruption.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has permitted the Judiciary to take special measures in order to confront economic corruption and called for "swift and just" legal action against financial crimes.

The Leader has described the "outright and unequivocal" approach toward economic corruption as one of the Judiciary's major duties, stressing that confronting the corrupt must be decisive and effective.

Ayatollah Khamenei has also said that the campaign against corruption is at its height



and it must continue.

"Without connivance, fight against corruption, which is at its height, must continue based on law, justice and without aggression and wrong against the innocent people," the

the guise of "freedom of speech."

In a statement the lawmakers, shunning acts of sacrilege against Islam, said the French government "once again proved its evil nature," Press TV reported.

They said "enmity on the part of non-believers towards Islam's illuminating messages goes back long in history," adding those seeking to attack divine prophets would usually resort to the "threadbare method of mockery".

The MPs said rather than advancing "freedom of speech," supporting such acts of sacrilege amounted to "the biggest instance of oppression against freedom" and profanity against the sanctities of more than one billion Muslims worldwide.

The Iranian legislators, meanwhile, said Macron was actually "extremely alarmed" at the rapid pace of gravitation towards Islam in France.

"His (Macron's) effrontery and insolence is part of a bigger plan that seeks to slow down the expeditious trend of the French people's attraction towards Islam," the statement said.

The statement, however, assured that "Macron and his cohorts would soon come to face the practical result of this policy," and asserted that the world's Muslims would stand up to attempts at normalizing insult against Islam and its Prophet.

withdrawn from a number of key international treaties, including the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The U.S. then tried to force Iran to renegotiate a new deal through imposing illegal sanctions on Tehran.

Iran has vehemently rejected the U.S. calls for negotiations under sanctions, insisting it will not negotiate a new deal.

Leader said in June.

Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has also voiced his forces' readiness to help the Judiciary in ensuring security, fighting corruption, and punishing criminals.

In a message to Raisi in June, Major General Hossein Salami lauded the top judge for launching a battle against corruption and said such efforts have built public trust in the establishment's resolve to defend the oppressed.

The IRGC is fully prepared for cooperation with the Judiciary in ensuring public health and security, promoting justice and fighting corruption, Salami said.

Tehran slams Macron over Islamophobic remarks

1 → Ghalibaf added that such wickedness shows the French leaders' enmity toward all the heavenly religions.

On Friday, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned what it said was France's continued attack against Muslims by insulting religious symbols.

The secretariat of the Jeddah-based organization said in a statement it is surprised at the official political rhetoric issued by some French officials that offend French-Islamic relations and fuels feelings of hatred for political party gains.

■ Velayati calls extremism and offending the prophet two sides of the same coin

Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said extremism and offending the prophet are two sides of the same coin which the international Zionism and the global arrogance have adopted against Islam.

"In extremism the bodies of people are targeted and in insult their souls," Velayati said, criticizing the French government's pretext of freedom of expression to foment hatred between people.

The veteran politician also called on all Muslims across the world to be vigilant in the face of such conspiracies against Islam.

France has for long tried to impose its own secular culture on its Muslim population, but this has disastrously backfired.

With this regard, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said that the West's imposition of its culture on others is a form of "silent violence", saying that terrorist groups such as Daesh are the result of such cultural invasion.

"I do not deny the importance and value of cultural interaction," Ayatollah Khamenei wrote in an open letter to the youth in Western countries after the November 2015 attacks in France.

"In extremism the bodies of people are targeted and in insult their souls," Velayati says.

Iranian hospitals hobbled by sanctions in fight against Covid: Financial Times

In a neighborhood of the historic city of Isfahan, workers toil day and night to build a new hospital as Iran's overwhelmed health system struggles to cope with the soaring number of Covid cases.

The work on the 1,000-bed seven-story Isfahan Eram Center Hospital has been expedited by the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic, which has been hobbled by U.S. sanctions, Financial Times correspondent reported from Isfahan on October 20.

The hospital, a private enterprise, is part of Isfahan Healthcare City, a 70 hectare compound that will be the first place in Iran to provide drive-through coronavirus tests. "We will have about 300 beds ready in the first half of 2021 which will be allocated to coronavirus patients," said Reza Heybati, the operations manager.

Authorities in Iran have in recent weeks warned that hospitals are running out of capacity as the number of Covid-19 patients has surged. More than 30,000 people have died in Iran so far this year of Covid, making it one of the worst-hit countries in the region. This week, Iran has reported the largest number of deaths in a single 24 hours since the crisis began.

Isfahan is one of the most affected cities in Iran. In the coming months, hospitals in Isfahan province will have as many as 2,000

inpatients, up from about 1,200 earlier this year, said Dr Tahereh Changiz, head of Isfahan Medical University, which is in charge of tackling the disease in the province. "Our staff in hospitals are exhausted which is turning into the biggest problem," she said.

Iran's economy had opened up in the wake of a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, but the U.S. abandoned this deal in 2018, reintroducing sanctions and imposed a total ban on Iran's oil export, the main source of the country's income.

The lack of export dollars has hindered President Hassan Rouhani's efforts to support the health sector during the pandemic, officials say. The Health Ministry says the government has so far allocated only 30 percent of the €1bn promised from the country's sovereign wealth fund for the battle against the virus. While global companies are still able to sell medical goods to Iranian companies, sanctions on financial transactions often mean they employ circuitous routes, forcing prices higher, officials say.

"For sure, our death tolls would have been lower if the U.S. sanctions were not enforced and had not caused a delay in treatments," said Kianush Jahanpur, a Health Ministry spokesman. "The U.S. administration is directly responsible for this."

Certain Iranian officials, including Foreign

Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, has said sanctions on Iran are synonymous with war crimes. Zarif has said the U.S. "economic terrorism" is supplanted by its "medical terrorism".

The clinics in Isfahan Healthcare City boast some of the latest equipment: the dental clinic uses kit made by Germany's Siemens, imported in the wake of the 2015 nuclear deal, and in a digital laboratory the dental prostheses can be made in just a few minutes.

But sanctions have made it harder and more expensive to access equipment now, officials at the Isfahan complex say. "A German light for some of our equipment which was almost \$10 more than a year ago, costs \$200 now," said one official in the Isfahan complex. "If equipment needs a spare part, we never know when that part will arrive and at what price."

A laboratory official in the same complex said that even kits for blood sugar tests are not always available. "Some equipment, such as pumps in laboratories which separate blood components at high speed have dual purposes and the U.S. has sanctioned their importing," he said. On the impact of sanctions, he said: "We still manage to buy the world's latest technologies from Europe, U.S. or Japan but at higher prices and over longer periods." Officials say they have increased domestic production to

meet demand, including of ventilators, which Iran previously imported.

The impact of the pandemic is felt beyond the walls of the healthcare complex. Isfahan, long a tourist destination, has been hit not just by the virus but also the economic blow it has dealt. In the vast Naqsh-e Jahan Square, a UNESCO world heritage site that features stunning mosques with blue tiles, shopkeepers say the combination of the pandemic and sanctions have paralyzed their businesses. "The coronavirus pandemic has struck the last blow on us," said Sajjad, a 31-year-old shopkeeper of handicrafts. "It has killed the spirit of the city with few Iranian and foreign tourists around."

For now at least, there is construction work at the hospital. In these difficult economic times, one entrepreneur in Isfahan Healthcare City said the development of the health sector was a national duty. "We have been struggling with not only the U.S. sanctions but more importantly the domestic sanctions by which I mean crippling bureaucracy and lack of insight and perspective in the state health sector," the entrepreneur said.

"It makes no economic sense to invest so much money in a healthcare compound with little return on investment but we consider this a moral obligation."

Hopes to put Iran-Bolivia ties back on track

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — With a socialist politician securing a landslide election victory in Bolivia, conditions appear to be ripe for revitalizing relations between Iran and Bolivia.

After about a year of political mayhem, Bolivia appears to be on course to embark on a new path that could revive socialism in the country and boost the country's ties with the world, including Iran. On Friday, Bolivia's Supreme Electoral Tribunal formally announced the victory of Luis Arce in the presidential election.

Arce, a candidate of former President Evo Morales' Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party has gained 55.1% of the votes while his chief rival, former centrist president Carlos Mesa, received 28.8%, according to official results.

Conservative Luis Fernando Camacho, one of the leaders of the protest movement that helped drive Morales out of the country a year ago, received only 14 percent of the vote, according to Aljazeera.

"Now our great challenge is to rebuild our homeland in peace, to regain joy, stability, and hope for a better tomorrow for all Bolivians," Arce said on social media following the announcement of the results. "We won't let down the trust that people have placed in us."

His rival accepted the results and congratulated him on his landslide victory. "The election is done," Mesa wrote on Twitter.

In addition to the presidency, the MAS party also won majorities in both houses of Congress, another sign that Bolivian people were determined to place trust in a party led by Morales.

The turnout also was remarkable. Salvador Romero, the head of Bolivia's electoral authority, said there had been a huge turnout despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

"With 88 percent participation, Bolivians set the second highest record in our history and one of the highest in Latin America in the 21st century," he said in a press conference.

The victory of Arce came a year after the former socialist president of Bolivia was deposed and forced to leave the country, a move that was seen as a major blow to socialism in Bolivia and the country's relations with countries that are in the United States' bad graces. However, Morales made a major comeback after the candidate of his party won the election.

Morales plunged into the known following his forced resignation on November 10, 2019. A general election was held in Bolivia on October 20, 2019, which was marred by allegations of election fraud that led to mass protests and counterprotests in the country from right after the election until late November. In fact, the opposition groups succeeded in forcing Morales into resigning and ultimately leaving the country.



Morales called his removal from office "forced" and a "coup" while underlining that his resignation was intended to stop the bloodshed in Bolivia. Mexico immediately granted him asylum, prompting the deposed president to leave Bolivia for Mexico and then to Argentina. But Morales did not stop his efforts to make a political comeback in his homeland. His efforts came to fruition after Arce won the election.

Arce served as minister of economy and public finance from 2006 to 2017 and in 2019 under President Evo Morales. His victory is widely seen as the comeback of Morales. This explains why some countries and leaders started to ingratiate themselves with the former president who is now poised to play the role of kingmaker.

Following the announcement of the election results, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who granted Morales asylum last year when he resigned, managed to praise the Bolivian people while also reminding them that it was he who granted Morales asylum when his life was in danger in the midst of post-election unrest.

"We have just learned the results of the election in Bolivia and we are very pleased," Lopez Obrador said on Thursday. "We greet, embrace and congratulate the people of Bolivia because they knew how to face a serious conflict through peaceful and democratic means, and they elected a president from the same movement to which former President Evo Morales belongs, who was deposed and faced threats."

The Mexican president added, "He was granted protection and asylum. That was a task headed by [Minister of Foreign Affairs] Marcelo Ebrard and I gave the instruction."

The return of Morales' party to power is expected to boost Bolivia's relations with countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, and Iran. The three countries warmly welcomed the victory of Arce.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro

and Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel have underlined that the Bolivian people had defeated the "coup d'etat" against Morales in November 2019 when the Organization of American States (OAS) claimed in a report that the 2019 Bolivian general election was rigged.

Diaz-Canel tweeted that the MAS party "regained in the polls the power usurped by the oligarchy, in collusion with the OAS and under the guidance of the empire."

Iran also welcomed the victory of Arce, setting the stage for deepening ties with the Andean nation. In a congratulatory message to the Bolivian president-elect, President Hassan Rouhani said the "decisive victory" of Arce "was not only a strengthening of the foundations of democracy but also a glorious demonstration of the administration of justice by the great nation of Bolivia," according to the Iranian president's official website.

Rouhani also expressed willingness to revive bilateral relations with Bolivia.

"In the new era of returning power to the people's representatives, I express support for the Your Excellency's elected government, and express the readiness of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to revive bilateral relations and expand cooperation with the friendly country of Bolivia in all fields."

Iran expressed its "full support" for the new government of Bolivia.

In a statement on October 20, Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, congratulated Bolivia on holding its presidential election, expressing Tehran's full support for the elected government of Luis Arce.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran sees a good omen in the restoration of democracy and power to the real representatives of (Bolivian) people after a year of tensions, congratulates the elected president of that country Mr. Luis Arce, and expresses full support for the elected government and readiness to revive cooperation and

strengthen friendship bonds with that country (Bolivia)," the statement said.

Khatibzadeh offered Iran's congratulations to the Bolivian people and winners of the polls after the South American country held a nationwide presidential election in a "calm atmosphere and with a remarkable voter turnout."

One day later, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held phone talks with Morales, the former president of Bolivia, and the leader of the party that won the country's recent elections. Zarif congratulated Morales on his party's victory in Bolivia's political scene and wished success for the country's new government. He also expressed Iran's preparedness to promote bilateral relations with Bolivia's new legitimate government.

Morales' return to the "political scene" in Bolivia could mark a new era in Iran-Bolivia relations, given his long-standing inclination to counter imperialist countries and embrace those who counter these countries. Following his win in Bolivia's 2014 presidential election, Morales said, "This win is a triumph for anti-imperialists and anti-colonialists." He also dedicated his win to both Castro and Chávez.

Iran has welcomed the victory of Arce and expressed readiness to boost ties with Bolivia. Arce has also expressed willingness to restore relations with Iran and other countries that the outgoing government had severed ties with.

"We are going to re-establish all relations. This government has acted very ideologically, depriving the Bolivian people of access to Cuban medicine, Russian medicine, and advances in China. For a purely ideological issue, it has exposed the population in a way unnecessary and harmful," the president-elect said.

Arce underlined that his government will open the door to all countries based on mutual respect and sovereignty, according to the Telesur, adding that he would carry out a foreign policy of restoration of relationships with Venezuela, Cuba, and Iran.

A former Bolivian diplomat also told the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) that Bolivia and Iran are determined to further develop friendly relations.

Elaborating on the prospect of Iran-Bolivia relations, former Ambassador of Bolivia in China Luis Fernando Rodriguez Urena pointed out that undoubtedly tangible changes will happen in international relations of Bolivia.

With the victory of an anti-imperialist president in Bolivia, Iran-Bolivia relations seem to be heading toward a new phase that could result in the two countries resuming diplomatic relations and strengthening their economic ties.

SPORTS

FFIRI confirms date for General Assembly

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — The General Assembly of the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) will be held on Nov. 28.

FFIRI acting president Heydar Baharvand has said that the federation's General Assembly will be held on Nov. 28 via video conference due to coronavirus outbreak.

After several months of controversies, the draft statutes of the Federation is on the verge of being approved by football's world governing body.

It started more than a year ago when FIFA ordered the Iranian federation to observe some requirements in its statutes.

The FFIRI has tried to amend the statutes based on the observations made by Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA, as well as considering the country's law. The federation sent the amended statutes to FIFA after months of negotiations and discussion in the FFIRI's Executive Committee.

However, FIFA rejected the draft statutes several times and even in May 2020, it set a short deadline for the Iranian football federation to either amend its statutes or face global suspension.

The international governing body of football had objected to FFIRI's drafted statutes due to concerns over potential government interference in the federation's affairs. So, FIFA demanded the amendment of the FFIRI's statutes according to FIFA's rules.



There's no limit to what Iranian women can do: Farmani

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — RCSC Charleroi player Yasaman Farmani says that there is no limit to what the Iranian women football players can accomplish.

Farmani joined the Belgian top-flight football club from Iran's Malavan in August.

She is the wife of Iran international Ali Gholizadeh. They are the first Iranian couple to play at a European based football team.

"I started football since I was 12 and joined Iran U14 football team one year later. Since then, I've played at all age levels for Iran," Farmani said in an interview with Iran's Football Federation's website.

"In my opinion, there is no limit to what the Iranian women football players can do and they must keep progressing. From the bottom of my heart, I wish the Iranian talented players all the best and I hope they shine at the world level," she added.

Farmani is optimistic about his future in the Belgian football, saying "Joining a team from Belgium was a great opportunity for me. I hope I can earn more success in the future. Fortunately, Ali is always encouraging and advising me and it helps me keep moving forward," Farmani concluded.

Our priority is health of our players: Davarzani

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) president Mohammadreza Davarzani says that the health of the Iranian players and coaching staff is the federation's priority.

Many sports events have been cancelled or postponed around the world due to the coronavirus outbreak.

At a seminar held on Monday in Iran's Olympic Academy in Tehran, the clubs and league's organizers reached a joint decision to continue the league in Tehran as a centralized venue.

"Iran national volleyball team have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics and the team will have to take part in the Volleyball Nations League as well and we didn't have enough time to postpone the league. So, we have to finish our league ahead of the competitions," Davarzani said.

"The league has been kicked off behind closed doors with stringent health protocols due to COVID-19 pandemic because the health of the players and coaching staff is the federation's priority," he added.

Iranian basketball teams complete signing of foreigners

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Two Iranian basketball clubs Chemidor and Exxon have completed the signing of foreign players.

Chemidor have signed Dominican center Eloy Vargas. The team have also penned a contract with Canadian-Nigerian guard Kelvin Amayo.

Exxon Sport Club have completed the signing of Croatian basketball player Zoran Vrkc.

Vrkc, 33, was a member of Exxon last year but left the team to join Slovak club Patrioti Levice.

The Iranian club had already signed American point guard Corin Henry. The new edition of Iranian Basketball Super League will kick off on November 5.

Khalilzadeh pens two-year deal with Al Rayyan

Persepolis defender Shoja Khalilzadeh has penned a two-year contract with Qatari football club Al-Rayyan.

The 31-year-old center-back joined Persepolis in 2017 and assisted in the Tehran-based club winning three successive Iran Professional League titles as well as back-to-back Iran Super Cups.

His departure from Persepolis ahead of 2020 AFC Champions League final match has left the Persepolis fans furious.

Khalilzadeh left Persepolis after having a problem with the club interim general manager Mehdi Rasoul Panah.

Rasoul Panah also stepped down from his role on Saturday. Al-Rayyan finished second in the 2019-20 Qatar Stars League season, and are currently ranked fifth in the standings after suffering a 2-1 defeat to defending champion Al-Duhail on Sunday.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran calls on UN to contain U.S.

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a tweet on Monday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called on the United Nations to contain the United States and prevent it from waging further wars.

"UN at 75 should contain its host, which spent 220 of its 244-year year history in war, & since 1945 alone waged—and mostly lost—39 military & 120 economic wars vs anyone refusing to submit to its whims," tweeted the

foreign minister.

Zarif pointed out that, in reality, no one wins in a war. He also announced that he will be delivering a speech at the UN on its 75th anniversary.

Iran has found ways to circumvent U.S. sanctions: MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Monday that Iran has found ways to get around U.S. sanctions and tackle economic challenges.

"The other side has been reneging over the past years, inflicting heavy losses by imposing sanctions on the Iranian nation and government, and even blocking access to humanitarian goods such as food and medicine. Of course, the country has found ways to circumvent sanctions and solve problems, but the point is that U.S. policy has caused damages to the country that must be compensated by the other side," Amouei said in an interview with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

The lawmaker stressed the importance of using domestic capacities and increasing interaction with neighbors to prevent the impact of sanctions on the country's economy and counter U.S. policies.

He added, "Asian countries are a unique opportunity for the Islamic Republic to revive its economy and create new capacity."

According to Amouei, Iran should place overcoming the U.S. sanctions high on its agenda in such circumstances.

"We must strengthen the domestic economy in such a way as to eliminate the effect of sanctions. In other words, when the country's domestic economy is strengthened, no foreign power can use its power to put pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Amouei pointed out that if Iran boosts domestic production, countries using sanctions in their foreign policy will be unable to impose sanctions on Iran.

In 2010, the Americans threatened to impose sanctions on the import of gasoline to Iran but when Iran built the Persian Gulf Star refinery, the country's gasoline production capacity increased in such a way that Iran was no longer in need of importing gasoline and thus the option of sanctioning



Iran's gasoline imports was removed from the U.S. table, according to Amouei.

"This strategy can be effective against countries that try to use sanctions against Iran, so the country's economic sectors are expected to strengthen domestic production," he stated.

The lawmaker also pointed to U.S. presidential election, saying this election provides a good opportunity for the U.S. to reconsider its "hostile policy" against Iran.

"The Americans should ultimately abandon the maximum pressure policy against Iran. The coming election is a good opportunity for the U.S. to reconsider its hostile policy against Iran," Amouei remarked. "Democrat candidate Joe Biden said in a recent interview with CNN that he was also seeking to put pressure on Iran, with the only difference being that he would take smarter steps."

The lawmaker said, "On the other hand, the positions of Biden advisers such as Anthony Blinken and Jake Sullivan show that the policy of the Democratic candidate for the U.S. presidency in hostility toward the Iranian nation is similar to Trump's position, and they also seek to exploit economic pressure against the republic Islamic of Iran."

Amouei responded to a Trump claim that Iran will call and ask him to make a new deal with it if he wins the election.

"Trump claims that, if he wins the coming election, he will receive a call from Iran within a week. But it's better for him to know that he will not receive such a call. Rather, he will have to reconsider his foreign policy," Amouei suggested.

Coronavirus is worse in Iran because of U.S. sanctions: Foreign Ministry

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a tweet on Monday that coronavirus has been a deadly disease everywhere but it is worse in Iran due to U.S. sanctions.

"Corona's proven deadly, vicious & brutal everywhere, but it's worse in Iran as it has a cruel collaborator: U.S. regime," tweeted the Foreign Ministry.

It added, "U.S. has elevated maximum pressure to Health Terrorism & targeted Iranian people with inhuman sanctions while they're fighting the pandemic. We'll overcome but NEVER forget."

The ministry also posted a video showing the impact the sanctions had on Iran's humanitarian trade, which the U.S. claims to be exempt from sanctions. But Iranian officials said many times that the U.S. sanctions have impeded the humanitarian trade with Iran.

"U.S. has gone from sabotage and assassinations to waging an economic war and economic terrorism on Iranians — to medical terror amidst Covid-19. This even exceeds what would be permissible on the battlefield. STOP aiding WAR CRIMES. STOP obeying IMMORAL and ILLEGAL U.S. sanctions," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted in late March.

United Nations experts have confirmed that U.S. sanctions have impinged on many countries' abilities to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

"People in countries under sanctions cannot protect themselves against COVID-19 or get life-saving treatment if they fall ill because humanitarian exemptions to the sanctions are not working," UN human rights experts said in a report on August 7, 2020.

"Sanctions are bringing suffering and death in countries like Cuba, Iran, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen," said Alena Douhan, special rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. "Sanctions



Over 70m tons of goods loaded, unloaded at Iranian ports in 7 months

1 → Activities at Chabahar Port (Iran's only oceanic port in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province), and Shahid Rajaei Port (Iran's largest container port in southern Hormozgan Province) in the recent months prove and underline Iran's outstanding performance under the difficult condition of the sanctions and the pandemic.

In a statement on October 15, PMO declared that loading and unloading of commodities are underway continuously at the country's ports.

While the enemy is trying to halt Iran's exports and imports through imposing sanctions, operation at Iranian ports are underway without interruption as the result of the all-out efforts of the organization's personnel, the statement reads.

Meanwhile, as the PMO head has announced, 11 new development projects with 59 trillion rials (over \$1.4 billion) of investment are currently underway at the Iranian ports.

Not only the sanctions could not stop development activities at the ports of Iran, some new development projects have been also defined, Rastad has underscored.

The third phase of the development plan of Shahid Rajaei Port is one of the major projects which is going to go operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play some significant role in this battle, and the ongoing operation at the ports indicates that they are playing their part perfectly.

As reported, loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Iran have risen six percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

CBI governor calls controlling inflation ‘a major priority’

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati stressed controlling inflation as a major priority of the bank in the current economic condition, IRIB reported.

“Given the threats of escalating inflation [for the economy] by imposing serious damage to the middle and lower classes of society and creating uncertainty as well as preventing sustainable production, it is logical that society expects the central bank to focus on controlling inflation,” Hemmati wrote in an Instagram post on Sunday.

Despite the hardship that people are enduring because of the sanctions, Iran's economy has not collapsed as the United States imagined, and it is showing signs of moving away from the recession; so all efforts by the central bank should be aimed at controlling inflation in any way possible to further stabilize the economy, the official said.

“Over the past two years, the central bank has been under increasing pressure, mainly due to the sanctions and the negative supply shocks, especially at a time when the accumulated liquidity force is being drained on prices, since other problems, including the coronavirus outbreak and the budget deficit, have led to the inevitable escalation of liquidity growth,” he wrote.

Implementing monetary policies to deal with negative supply shocks is difficult even under normal circumstances, let alone in the Iranian economy, which also faces a lot of structural problems, he said.

“The main task of the central bank is to stabilize prices and then to prevent a recession and maintain production, however, according to economic theory, clearly it is not possible to achieve many goals with a limited number of tools,” the governor added.

Hemmati had previously said that the positive balance in Iran's non-oil trade is an indication that the country's economy is moving forward.

Like many other countries around the world, Iranian economy has been struggling with the negative impacts of the coronavirus outbreak in addition to the problems caused by the U.S. sanctions.

Time to start 2nd ETF’s trades unclear

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — It's unclear that what time the trades of Iran's second exchange-traded fund (ETF)'s units will start, the fund's director stated.

Davoud Razaqi said, “As two of the four refineries, whose shares are due to be offered via this fund, have increased their capital, but the capital boosting has not been considered in the ETF's asset, the fund's index cannot be opened yet.”

As he said, the capital boosting has occurred at Tehran Oil Refining Company and Isfahan Oil Refining Company.

In May, the Iranian government sold shares in three banks and two insurance companies via the first exchange-traded fund (dubbed Dara First).

The bank-based ETF holds 17 percent of government stake in Tejarat Bank, 17 percent in Bank Mellat, 18.32 percent in Bank Saderat Iran, 17.34 percent in Alborz Insurance Company and 11.44 percent in Amin Reinsurance Company.

Dara First, listed on Tehran Stock Exchange, which is Iran's major stock exchange, was the first fund from a series of three ETFs, through them shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

The shares to be offered via the mentioned Iranian ETFs belong to those governmental bodies defined in Iran's privatization program, a comprehensive plan seriously followed up by the government to downsize and reduce its role in the economy.

The second ETF (dubbed First Refinery, or Dara Second), which holds government shares in four major oil refining companies, namely Tehran Oil Refining Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, Tabriz Oil Refining Company and Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, was offered on August 26.

The government owns 20 percent of shares in each refinery.

It has also a plan to divest shares in giant auto and metal companies through a third ETF (dubbed Dara Third). The third fund is expected to hold 12.05 percent of government stakes in the National Iranian Copper Industry Company, 17.2 percent in Mobarakeh Steel Company, 14.04 percent in Iran Khodro, and 23 percent in SAIPA (the two main domestic carmakers).

Meanwhile, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dajpasand said on September 7 that the government's remaining shares in three aforementioned banks will be offered via the third ETF.

An ETF is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, much like stocks. An ETF holds assets such as stocks, commodities, or bonds and generally operates with an arbitrage mechanism designed to keep it trading close to its net asset value, although deviations can occasionally occur.

TCCIMA holding business forums online during coronavirus pandemic

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), which used to hold business forums between Iran and other countries regularly, has not stopped such activity during the coronavirus pandemic, while the chamber is holding such events online.

Of the recent business forums that TCCIMA has held online it could be referred to the Iran-Russia business forum on October 3.

The virtual event was attended by officials and businessmen from the two sides.

In the meeting, Iranian traders and businessmen active in the fields of telecommunications, IT, training and technology transfer, oil and gas, agricultural machinery and products, medical equipment and services, and metals held some B2B talks with representatives of 20 companies from Russia's Samara region.

During the forum, Hessameddin Hallaj, the TCCIMA's deputy head for international affairs, said that holding such events by the Tehran chamber is in line with promoting Iranian traders' knowledge and information about trade with Russia.

Addressing the same event, Elena Den-



isova, the advisor to the minister of economy of Samara, named Iran an important trade partner of Russia.

The two sides stressed expansion of long-term economic trade during the forum.

The Iran-India online business forum held on October 14 was another event in

this regard.

The forum titled “Iran-India Trade Expansion, Challenges and Opportunities” was held in collaboration with India's PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The event was a platform for the B2B talks in the fields of medical and pharmaceutical

Iran’s petchem industry moving toward complete self-sufficiency

1 → According to NPC officials, the company has signed a total of 20 contracts with knowledge-based companies for mass production of catalysts used in the industry and 70 research projects are also underway in this regard.

In early January, NPC also held a seminar on the indigenization of petrochemical industry catalysts in Kish Island.

Alongside PRTC, other organizations and government bodies have also been taking serious measures for promoting domestic production in the petrochemical industry.

In October 2019, National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company (NIOEC) also signed an agreement with two domestic companies namely Machine Sazi Arak and AzarAb Industries for cooperation on indigenizing the manufacturing of some equipment used in the petrochemical industry.

According to the Head of the Domestic Production Center of Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohammad-Mehdi Hadavi, relying on domestic production has saved

the country over €160 million since the implementation of a program during which three expert desks have been held on the matter.

The mentioned program for holding domestic production promotion desks was defined by the government to supply products, equipment, and machinery needed in various industrial fields using the capacities of the domestic producers and to increase self-sufficiency in the mentioned areas.

A fourth such desk is going to be held in near future, during which a deal worth €60.8 million is expected to be signed with domestic companies for the manufacturing of various equipment needed by the petrochemical industry, Hadavi said on Monday.

In the first expert desk held for the promotion of domestic production in the petrochemical industry a deal valued at €40 million was signed with two domestic companies for manufacturing heavy equipment for Dehloran petrochemical complex, according to the official.

During the second desk, another contract worth €64 million was signed with Machine Sazi Arak for the domestic production of the equipment required in the industry, while in the third desk of the petrochemical industry, 13 domestic companies signed deals with a total value of €52 million for manufacturing equipment and parts required by Salman Farsi Petrochemical complex.

Petrochemical is Iran's most important industry after oil and gas, and the National Petrochemical Company hopes to lift output capacity to 120 million tons per annum by 2022.

This industry has played a key role in domestic economic growth as it creates value-added and reduces the sale of oil and gas on which the economy has been dependent for decades.

With abundant hydrocarbon reserves and new private sector investments, Iran is working hard to broaden the scope of its petrochemical industry, and indigenizing the equipment and machinery needed in this industry would be a huge step toward a brighter future for the country.

‘TSE’s main index may start growth trend in coming weeks’

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 9.6 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on October 23).

A number of factors contributed to the drop of index in the previous week, among them it could be referred to the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's pricing of steel products at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), according to Jamal Razaqi, the head of Shiraz Chamber of Commerce.

While TSE has been witnessing drop of its main index over the past two months,

many experts believe that TEDPIX may return to the growth trend, as it has experienced enough correction over the past two months, Razaqi stated.

The government's decisions to compensate for the budget deficit is also one of the factors to affect the stock market in the coming weeks, he noted.

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.

Van manufacturing rises 39%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian carmakers have manufactured 39,521 vans during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), which was 39.4 percent more than the figure for the first half of the past year, according to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

Car manufacturing in the country has risen 23.4 percent in the first half of the present year.

During the mentioned time span, 468,699 vehicles have been manufactured.

Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manu-

factured 863,263 vehicles during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Iran has been following a program for supporting domestic manufacturing of auto parts since due to the U.S. sanctions the country's automakers have been facing some problems in supplying their needed parts and equipment.

Increasing OR in power plants saves Iran over \$3.5b

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH) said that a 10-percent increase in the Operational Readiness (OR) of the country's thermal power plants over the past decade has saved the country more than \$3.5 billion.

According to Mohsen Tarzatab, the OR of the mentioned power plants stood at 83.4 percent nearly 10 years ago and the figure has currently exceeded 93 percent, the Energy Ministry portal (Paven) reported.

Referring to the measures taken by the TPPH for the development of the electricity industry during the last decade, Tarzatab said: “In the early days of [the Iranian calendar year] 1390 (started in March 2011), the nominal capacity of the country's thermal power plants was about 54,000 megawatts (MW), which has now increased by 25 percent to exceed 68,000 MW.”

The electricity generated by thermal power plants in the first half of the mentioned year was about 121 trillion kilowatt-hours (KWh) while in the first six months of the last year (ended on March 19) the figure reached 152 trillion KWh and it has exceeded 167 trillion KWh in the current year.

According to the official, 10 years ago the annual fuel consumption of the country's power plants was about 57 billion cubic



meters, which reached 74 billion cubic meters last year.

“In those years, 62 percent of the power plants' fuel was supplied by natural gas and 38 percent by liquefied fuel; this caused increase in the emergency shut-off rate of the units, the difficulty of operating the power plants, and the damage to the boilers,” Tarzatab said.

Emphasizing that in the first half of the current year, about 90 percent of the power plants' fuel was supplied through natural gas, he added: “Measures taken over the past few years have resulted in such a great achievement.”

The efficiency of power plants which was about 36.9 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1390 is now increased to 38.7 percent with measures such as converting gas power plants to combined cycle ones, Tarzatab stressed, adding “it will reach about 39 percent by the end of the year, according to the Ministry's plans.”



south of the country to one million barrels a day, was inaugurated in late June by President Hassan Rouhani.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the project, President Rouhani said this project was currently the country's most strategic project.

“We hope that exports from Jask will begin as the government's most strategic project by the end of this [calendar] year (March 20, 2021),” the president noted.

So far, a total of \$300 million has been invested in the project while another \$800 million to \$850 million is needed for its full operation.

According to the head of Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), considering the current rate of progress in the Goreh-Jask oil pipeline project, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will be able to export its first oil cargo from Jask terminal by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

Islam perfectly compatible with development: San Diego State University professor

“Iran has always been very important for Muslim intellectual life”

➡ My new book asks, why were Muslim countries philosophically and economically superior to Western European countries between the ninth and twelfth centuries, and why are they less democratic and less developed than Western Europeans today? Answering these comparative questions is crucial to understand the historical roots of Muslim-majority countries' contemporary problems of authoritarianism and socioeconomic underdevelopment.

My book reveals that between the ninth and twelfth centuries Muslim countries had dynamic intellectual and merchant classes, which support each other, whereas Western Europe was dominated by the alliance between the Catholic Church and the military aristocracy.

Later, however, class relations changed in Western Europe. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Western Europe experienced three interrelated processes. First, the Catholic Church and royal authorities tried and failed to dominate one another, leading to the institutionalization of the separation between them. This substantially contributed to decentralization in Western Europe. Second, universities were opened and provided an institutional basis for the gradual emergence of the intellectual class. Third, the merchant class began to rise in Italian and other European city-states. Subsequently, decentralization, intellectuals, and merchants became the engine of Renaissance, the Printing Revolution, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment.

■ You believe that in the Seljuk period in the 11th century a powerful “religion-state” alliance was formed. What effects did this have on class relations and what similarities did it have with medieval Europe? Also, what were the long-term effects of the domination of the military elites and clerics on the society and the weakening of the flourishing grounds of the influential thinkers and merchants in this period? How does this historical process explain underdevelopment of the Islamic world compared to Western countries today?

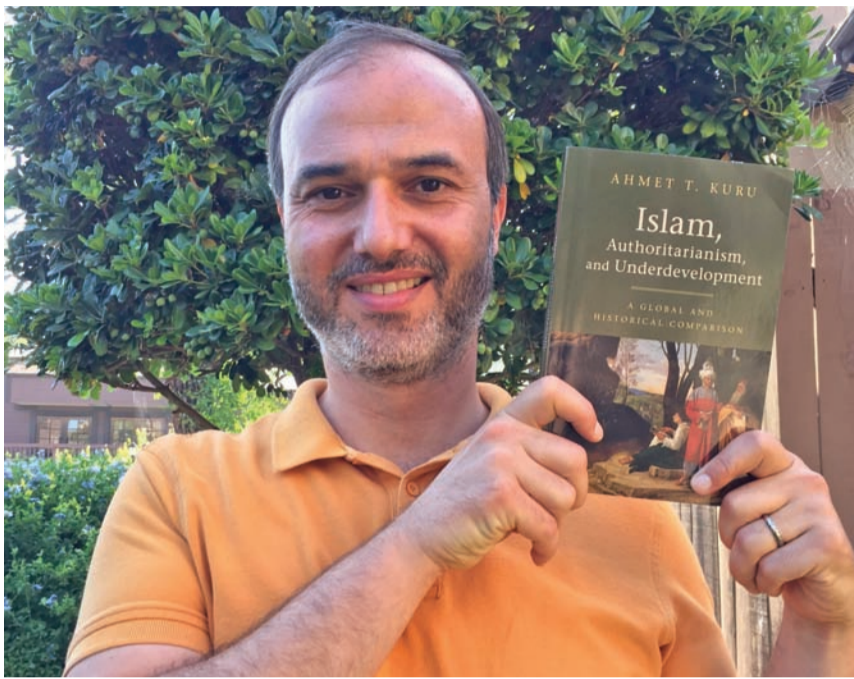
A: My book explains that the period between the ninth and eleventh centuries was Muslims’ “Golden Era” in terms of scientific

“If Muslims keep blaming Western imperialism, they will not solve their own ideational and institutional problems.”

and economic development. Iran produced many world-renown polymaths during this period. At that time Muslims had creative intellectuals and a dynamic bourgeois class in Iran, Transoxiana, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Andalus. During this period, there was a certain level of separation between Islamic scholars (the ulema) and political rulers. This separation led to socio-religious diversity and dynamism, which did not exist in early medieval Europe.

The separation between the ulema and political authorities started with the Umayyad rulers' persecution of Prophet Muhammad's family members and continued with the oppressive policies of certain Abbasid rulers. Hence, most Sunnis and almost all Shiis regarded political authority as corrupt and contradicting morality. Both Sunni ulema, such as Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and Shii ulema, such as Jafar al-Sadiq, refused to serve the state and put a distance between themselves and state authorities.

Nonetheless, the eleventh century experi-



“Iran produced many world-renown polymaths during this period.”

enced a multi-dimensional transformation. Economically, the iqta system of centralized land distribution began to replace the market economy. Politically, the Ghaznavid and Seljuk sultanates made the state structure more militaristic. Religiously, the Abbasid caliphs Qadir and then Qaim declared a Sunni orthodox creed against the Shiis and the Mutazilis. These transformations weakened the merchant class and made the Sunni ulema ready to accept the state patronage.

The Seljuk vizier, Nizam al-Mulk, established a madrasa network, the so-called Nizamiyyas. These madrasas became the institutional basis of the Sunni orthodoxy and the ulema-state alliance. The most well-known product of these madrasas was Ghazali, a genius scholar. Ghazali wrote important books to attack Ismaili Shiis and philosophers. In sum, the newly emerging ulema-state alliance began to marginalize the merchants and the intellectuals in Central Asia, Iran, and Iraq in the eleventh century.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Mamluk Sultanate spread this Seljuk model of ulema-state alliance to Syria and Egypt. In later centuries, the Ottoman Empire institutionalized this alliance in Anatolia and the Balkans, while the Safavid Empire built a Shii version of the ulema-state alliance.

In the twentieth century, the secularist rulers dominated most Muslim countries. Yet, these authoritarian secularist rulers could not solve their countries' problems. So, versions of the ulema-state alliance re-emerged in many parts of the Muslim world. Consequently, the intellectuals and the economic entrepreneurs remained marginal. This is the main reason for the scientific stagnation, authoritarianism, and socioeconomic underdevelopment in many Muslim countries.

■ Contrary to the view that the main reason for the underdevelopment of Muslims is “Western colonialism”, you believe that the main problem of Muslims has been the union of “ulema-state”. This alliance, which existed and continued centuries ago, has left a legacy of authoritarianism and socioeconomic underdevelopment in the Islamic world of the twentieth century.

A: Very important question. You are right that my book criticizes both of two dominant explanations of problems in the Muslim world. One explanation singles out Islam as the culprit. Throughout my book,

I show that Islam was historically perfectly compatible with development, and contemporary problems are created by class relations (the dominance of the ulema-state alliance and the marginalization of intellectuals/bourgeoisie), rather than Islam.

The second explanation singles out Western colonialism as the main source of problems in the Muslim world. On the one hand, my book has elaborated negative impacts of foreign invasions on Muslim countries, from the Mongols and Crusaders to modern European colonization. Western colonizers destroyed institutions and exploited resources in many Muslim countries.

On the other hand, I criticize this explanation because it focuses on foreign attacks by ignoring Muslims' domestic problems. If Muslims keep blaming Western imperialism, they will not solve their own ideational and institutional problems. Moreover, despite Western colonization many East Asian countries have achieved economic development, which shows that colonization does not have a deterministic impact.

■ Why do we see underdevelopment in Islamic countries where religion and government are not linked at the moment and the government is secular?

A: This question deserves a pages-long answer. Let me briefly explain. Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington argued that the main reason for the lack of democracy in most Muslim countries was the lack of secular state. Nonetheless, Chapter 2 of my book analyzes 49 Muslim countries and shows that 22 of them have constitutionally secular states. Most of these secular states have problems of authoritarianism and underdevelopment. Hence, Lewis and Huntington were wrong.

Secular states in the Muslim world were generally founded and ruled by authoritarian rulers, who imposed top-down modernization projects. Many of these rulers had military background. They were not different from the ulema-state alliance in terms of being anti-intellectual and anti-bourgeoisie. So, intellectuals and economic entrepreneurs were marginalized in both countries ruled by secular autocrats and countries ruled by ulema-state alliances. As a result, the problem of underdevelopment persisted in all Muslim countries.

■ Do you believe that “violence”, “authoritarianism” and “underdevelopment”,

which have formed a vicious cycle in Islamic countries, are currently related to each other? What is the reason for this connection?

A: Another important question. Again, I will briefly answer. Violence, authoritarianism, and underdevelopment constitute a vicious circle in not only the Muslim world but also all around the world. For example, in his famous book, Robert Putnam examines how Southern Italy has a vicious circle of conflict, corruption, distrust, and economic inefficiency. In early Islamic history, Muslims had a virtuous circle—they had self-confidence and thus were not afraid of embracing sciences of Greeks, Sasanians, Egyptians, and others; intellectual dynamism helped Muslims develop economic institutions; economic wealth further strengthened Muslims' self-confidence; and all these processes supported each other. Today, unfortunately, most Muslim countries experience a vicious circle, rather than a virtuous circle.

Q: You believe that Muslim countries need creative intellectuals and productive bourgeoisie in order to solve these root problems. On the other hand, in many Muslim countries, the class of artisans and merchants appeared, but they were somewhat oppressed and limited inside the country, and therefore, they could not form an independent bourgeoisie. What are the reasons for the problem and what is the solution to this problem?

A: One dimension of the problem is historically rooted ideas and institutions, which should be challenged and changed. Another dimension of the problem is oil-based rentier economic systems. Many Muslim countries are oil-rich and this means a curse for their long-term economic growth. In these countries, governments control the economy by monopolizing oil revenues. This hinders the rise of an independent bourgeois class. In the future, the depletion of oil or the emergence of alternative energy resources may limit the influence of oil. This may make the rise of bourgeois possible in these countries.

■ You believe that the main problem of Muslims has been the union of “religion and state”. This unity means overcoming the political and jurisprudential interpretation of Islam. At the same time, in the age of glo-

In the future, the depletion of oil or the emergence of alternative energy resources may limit the influence of oil.

balization, we are witnessing the spread of democratic interpretations of Islam. How do you evaluate this process? That is, interpretations of Islam that consider political development. Can these interpretations prevail and enter political structures?

A: Thanks for asking this timely question. In many Muslim countries, the young generation seems to be supporting new, prodemocratic interpretations of Islam. They want to see their religion and their aspirations about freedom to be compatible. A certain level of separation between such various spheres of life as religion, politics, science, economy, arts, and sports is important for each of these spheres to be productive, to follow its own principles autonomously, and to maintain justice. If some of these spheres dominate the others the result is generally stagnation, corruption, and injustice. I hope the new generation will build more democratic and just systems so that Muslims can revive intellectual and economic dynamism they had between the ninth and eleventh centuries.

‘Boycott French products’ launched over Macron’s Islam comments

Several Arab trade associations have announced a boycott of French products, in response to recent comments made by President Emmanuel Macron on Islam.

Earlier this month, Macron pledged to fight “Islamist separatism”, which he said was threatening to take control in some Muslim communities around France.

He also described Islam as a religion “in crisis” worldwide and said the government would present a bill in December to strengthen a 1905 law that officially separated church and state in France.

His comments, in addition to his backing of satirical outlets publishing caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, has led to a social media campaign calling for the boycott of French products from supermarkets in Arab countries and Turkey.

According to al Jazeera, hashtags such as the #BoycottFrench-Products in English and the Arabic #NeverTheProphet trended across countries including Kuwait, Qatar, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Renewed fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh threatens U.S.-backed truce

Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other on Monday of violating a new U.S.-brokered ceasefire in fighting over the mountain enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, casting doubt over the prospects of the latest international push to end a month of clashes.

Azeri President Ilham Aliyev said in a televised address that he wanted to resolve the conflict “by political and military means” and reiterated a demand that ethnic Armenian forces must agree to leave the region for fighting to stop, Reuters reported.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan wrote earlier on his Facebook page that the Armenian side “continued to adhere to the ceasefire.”

Russia strikes kill 78 Turkey-backed rebels in Syria

Air strikes by Russia killed 78 Turkey-backed rebels in northwestern Syria Monday, a monitor said, in the bloodiest surge in violence since a truce almost eight months ago.

More than 90 others were wounded when Russian warplanes targeted a training camp of the Faylaq al-Sham faction in the Jabal Duwayli area in Idlib province, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, AFP reported.

In early March, a truce brokered between Moscow and Ankara stemmed a deadly months-long Russia-backed regime military offensive on the country's last major rebel stronghold in Idlib.

U.S. INF withdrawal increases risk of renewed nuclear arms race: Putin

Russia President Vladimir Putin of Russia says the United States' last year “grave mistake” in abandoning a landmark nuclear treaty with Moscow threatens the world with the risk of another nuclear arms race as the Kremlin puts forth a proposal to negotiate new verification measures with Washington.

Putin said on Monday that Washington's exit from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) was a “grave mistake,” which increases “confrontational potential” between the world nuclear powers.

“We consider the U.S. withdrawal from the INF Treaty, as a result of which it has ceased to operate, a serious mistake that increases the risks of unleashing a missile arms race,” Putin said.

China to sanction Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon over U.S. Taiwan arm sales

China and the United States seem to be headed toward a new high in tensions, with Beijing announcing plans to slap sanctions on major American firms involved in arms sales to Taiwan

Chines Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a news conference in the capital Beijing on Monday that Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defense and Raytheon were among the U.S. businesses facing Chinese sanctions over arm sales to Taiwan.

“To safeguard China's national interests, the central government decided to take necessary measures to impose sanctions on U.S. entities participating in the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, including Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defense and Raytheon,” Zhao told reporters during his daily press briefing.

Resistance News

UN calls on Israel to end administrative detention, release Akhras

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— The United Nations has called on the Israeli regime to put an end to the practice of administrative detention and immediately release Maher al-Akhras, a Palestinian prisoner who is on hunger strike for the past three months and is going through the medically critical phase.

Michael Lynk, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, strongly called on Tel Aviv to end administrative detention, in which Israel keeps the detainees for up to six months, a period which can be extended an infinite number of times, sometimes for years

In a statement, he also called on the Israeli regime to release Akhras, who entered the 91st consecutive day of his open-ended hunger strike on Sunday in protest against his administrative detention, Press TV reported.

“Mr. Al-Akhras is now in very frail condition, having gone without food for 89 days,” said Lynk.

“Recent visits by doctors to his hospital bed in Israel indicate that he is on the verge of suffering major organ failure, and some damage might be permanent,” Lynk added.

Fake U.S. ‘debate’ can’t hide death throes of a spent Empire

By Daniel Patrick Welch

This whole debate fiasco is just depressing. Every time I'm asked 'did you see the debate' you know, 'what do you think of the debate,' it makes me think of the old George Orwell thing where porn could only be vetted by hardcore party members who could be trusted to read questionable material without being corrupted.

Or the Monty Python sketch where they wanted the funniest joke in the world translated into German, and they would let loose and destroy the German soldiers. But they had to translate it one word at a time so that the translators wouldn't get sick, and one translator translated a whole phrase and wound up spending several weeks in the hospital.

So, yes, it was a little smoother, but you have the same old, you have Trump's spouting blustery nonsense and Biden responding with slightly better-behaved nonsense. And then you have the fact that facts don't matter as much as the bluster--and that goes for both parties.

The fact is that Trump is right when he said that kids in cages started under Obama, and he's right when he said that Biden and the Democrats do have a long, sordid history of complicity in white supremacy. This is a two-horse wagon. They both pull their weight in the so-called American democracy scheme, and they are in sync with all the questions that matter. Look at the stuff about the foreign policy where Biden attacks again from the right. Democrats have a long history of attacking their Republican opponents from the

right, an 'he's dealing with a thug,' and how he would never do such a thing.

And then this whole Oz style showmanship: Pay no attention to that agenda behind the curtain! It's meant to distract from the death throes of a spent Empire. And now the lies have to grow even more outrageous all the time to keep this in check--I mean, they are insane.

U.S. election sham: Presidents may change, policies won't Iran is now colluding with Russia and China, and they're interfering in our splendid sacrosanct democracy. Is there such a thing? The Carter Center said they couldn't even certify a vote in the U.S. Interfering in our democracy? What a crock of shit. I mean, Iran of all places, right? I don't know if it's funny or insulting or which in a greater degree. These people whose country was destroyed; whose democracy was overthrown when Mosadegh was taken down by the CIA.

And then ushered in 25 years of SAVAK and the Shah, of these death squads, then why pick them? You have no evidence; why don't you pick anybody else?

It seems like they're going to take an alphabetical list of all the countries that the US has interfered with, but they'd have to go like they're doing with hurricanes now. They'd have to go into the Greek alphabet. We'd be way beyond epsilon because you have Abkhazia to Zanzibar and everything in between.

The U.S. has done nothing but meddles in other people's countries, in other people's elections, in other people's democracy. They use this fraud that they're building at home to construct the myth of democracy, and where do we get it

from the FBI? Are these people serious?

They call themselves part of a resistance, and they're looking for proof of leaks from the FBI? What is wrong with these people?

The FBI literally murdered the only-- one of the only--chances this country has had for revolutionary change.

They slaughtered the Black resistance in their beds literally, Fred Hampton through a closed-door; 45 bullets. Come on! They were implicated in the murder of Martin Luther King through Taylor Branch's book. These are settled issues.

Hoover's FBI? Who believed strongly that the greatest threat to American stability was Negro unity-- in his own words? They have nothing to say. As Minister Farrakhan said, they should be quiet; the U.S. should be quiet when it comes to human rights when it comes to what to do around the world.

It is a shame and a horrific thing that they have done in this world, and to use this WWE cage match to show off this wonderful democracy, I think is pretty fitting. Right? This is like mixed martial arts. It's just crap. And it's touted as some debate--which it's not; between opposing--which they're not; candidates, which they're not--they're basically robots filled with money from various factions of the ruling class.

And to have them go at it and really duke it out is just a waste of airtime, a waste of television, and frankly a waste of our time.

So, we can take a sip, watch from a distance, pass the popcorn, and just see the Empire circle the drain.

(Source: Press TV)

A Jewish pilgrimage: Harav Oursherga shrine in Yazd

By Seyed Hossein Hosseini

Yazd is a historical city that has attractive sights for tourists, especially for experts in architecture, design, and photography. A UNESCO World Heritage, Yazd embraces countless mudbrick wind-catchers; historical places such as Dolatabad Garden, which has set the record for the tallest wind catcher in its name; Zoroastrian fire temples; cisterns; Qanats (water underground channels); and Yakhchals (dome-shaped subterranean structures for ice storage) to name a few.

The synagogues and shrine of Harav Oursherga is another travel attraction of the ancient city, named after the Iranian religious scholar and mystic who lived during the Qajar period. Oursherga was a Sabzevar Jew who moved to Yazd with his father as a child.



The monument is one of several Jewish shrines in Iran that has always been respected by other compatriots and shows the roots of the Jews in this region, peaceful life with non-Jewish compatriots that are several centuries old.

Because of his great knowledge in the field of Torah and Kabbalah, he was noticed and loved by the Jews of Yazd. Many virtues have been narrated from him. Harav Oursherga died in 1172 Sh. based on the Persian calendar, coinciding with the 28th month of Heshvan the year 5554 Hebraic period, and his tomb in Yazd is pilgrim by Jews, especially every year on the anniversary of his death.

Every year, with the arrival of November, on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of the rabbinical scholar Harav Oursherga, a large number of Kalimids or Iranian Jews from different cities of Iran depart to Yazd to pilgrim the tomb of Harav Oursherga every year.

Harav Oursherga is said to be the one hundred and thirty-fifth descendant of the lineage of Prophet David, and although more than two hundred years have passed since his death, he is well known among Jews and Gentiles. He is considered one of the greatest Jewish religious authorities of his time and has been and is highly respected by Jews and non-Jews due to his virtues and extensive knowledge of Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah).

In the week leading up to the day of Harav's death, the Jewish residents of Yazd receive many guests from Tehran, Shiraz, and Isfahan. Some people personally take the pain of travel and go on pilgrimage, but many people also go on pilgrimages with travel tours that are more active in the community.

In the past, more Jews lived in Yazd and engaged in business and livelihood alongside other compatriots, but today very few Jews still live there and still resist immigration to the capital. But the presence of this small number has kept the central synagogue of Yazd afloat.

The tombs of Harav Oursherga and his sons are located in a large garden full of olive and pine trees. The architecture of the building is traditional and beautifully designed, and its color is cream and brown like most of the buildings in Yazd. Due to the small space inside the tomb, pilgrims are forced to enter and perform the pilgrimage in order. There is also a special room where pilgrims light candles and ask for their needs.

Qajar-era mansion undergoes restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The mirrorwork, tilework, and interior decorations of parts of the Qajar-era (1789–1925) Mofakham historical-cultural complex in Bojnourd, the northeastern province of North Khorasan, has undergone some rehabilitation works.



A budget of 4.9 billion rials (about \$117,000) has been allocated to the project, deputy provincial tourism chief Ali Mostofian said on Monday.

The mansion was built in 1921 by Mohammad Khan Shadloo, also known as Sardar Mofakham, to live in along with his family.

The complex has different sections including the mirror house, the mansion, the pavilion, and the hoz khaneh, all of which are located in Mofakham Garden with an area of several hectares.

The complex, which was restored and turned into an anthropology museum in 1991, has been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

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

According to the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, 1,200 historical structures have been identified in the province so far, of which 655 have been inscribed on the National Heritage list by the end of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Treasury of National Jewels: simply jaw-dropping!

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — For one **d e s k** who is not a fan of museums, their perceptions would be turned upside by this incredible place! Here is a selected comment made by a foreign visitor to the treasury: “Wooooo! This place is just a wow! We were amazed! Speechless! I can’t put any comments... it’s something that if you visit Tehran it must be in the first place to visit.”

Owned by the Central Bank of Iran and accessed through its front doors, the incomparable Treasury of the National Jewels is a collection of the most expensive jewels of the world, collected over centuries. Commonly known as the ‘Jewels Museum’, it is not to be missed while in the Iranian capital.

Every piece of this collection is a reflection of the tumultuous history of this great nation, and the artistry of the residents of this land. Each piece recalls memories of bitter-sweet victories and defeats, of the pride and arrogance of rulers who were powerful or weak.

These jewels and rarities were decorations for the rulers during the past eras, and often showed the glory and extravagance of their courts, as well as their power and wealth. The Safavid, Qajar, and Pahlavi monarchs adorned themselves and their belongings with an astounding range of priceless gems and precious metals, making this collection of bling quite literally jaw-dropping. Star pieces include the Globe of Jewels and the Peacock Throne.

This Treasury, according to the Central Bank, on one hand, depicts the culture and civilization of the Iranian people who have had an adventurous past, and on the other, repeats the silent tears of oppressed people who worked hard and instead the rulers, could show off their arrogance and power with their gold and jewels.

“Our intention in presenting these jewels is to get you more acquainted with the rich culture and civilization of Iran. And to learn from history the fate of those who pursue power and hoard wealth. For this goal, we present this rich collection, which we have inherited and hope to preserve and pass on richer to our inheritors.”

The value of the objects in the Treasury of National Jewels is not limited to their economic value, but is also a reflection of the creativity and taste of Iranian craftsmen and artist over the different eras of history, and represents the artistic and cultural heritage of the vast country on Iran.



The Daria-e Noor (“Sea of Light”) Diamond from the collection of the Treasury of National Jewels; Weight: 182 carats (36.4 g); Color: Pale pink

Pick up a guidebook at the shop as you enter, or take one of the regular professional tours in English, French, German or Arabic – it’s included in the ticket price and worth waiting for as there are few descriptions in English. Cameras, phones, bags, and guidebooks must be left at reception. Be careful not to touch anything or you’ll set off ear-piercing alarms.

How much is the value of this collection?

No one knows the answer to this question. Because this collection contains gems that are unique in the world. The answer to this question can be as the following: from the artistic viewpoint, historical background, and containing incomparable jewels, the Treasury of National Jewels is on a level that even the most expert evaluators of the world have not been able to calculate the price of this collection.

History

There is no information about the quality and quantity of the treasures before the Safavid period. It can be said that the

recorded history of the Treasury of jewels began with the Safavid monarchs. In short, the history of the amassment of the present collection is as follows:

Before the Safavid dynasty, certain jewels existed in the government treasures, but it was with the Safavid dynasty that foreign travelers (Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Chevalier Chardin, the Shirley brothers, George Mainwaring, and others) began to mention these treasures. The Safavid monarchs, over two centuries (907 to 1148 LH equal to about 1502 to 1735 CE), started to collect rare and beautiful gems. The gem specialists of the Safavid court brought fine stones to Isfahan, the capital of Iran at that time from the markets of India the Ottoman Empire, and European countries like France and Italy.

After the rule of Shah Soltan Hossein and the entry of Mahmoud the Afghan to Iran, the treasury was scattered and some of the jewels were taken by Mahmoud the Afghan and transferred to Ashraf the Afghan. After the entry of Shah Tahmasb II and

Nadir to Isfahan, these jewels fell into the hands of Nadir, and thus were preserved inside the country.

Later, in order to regain the jewels that had been transported to India, Nadir wrote several letters to the India court but did not receive any favorable reply. After Nadir’s victory in India in 1158 LH (1745 CE), Mohammad Shah delivered cash amounts, jewels, and weapons to Nadir as booty. Part of the treasures, which were obtained in India never, reached Iran and was lost during transportation. According to the tradition of that time, after returning to Iran, Nadir sends part of the booty as gifts to neighboring rulers. He also presented some beautiful and rare objects to the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), while some were distributed among the soldiers of his army.

After the assassination of Nadir in 1160 LH (1747 CE), Ahmad Beg Afghan Abdali, one of his commanders, looted the treasury of Nadir. One of the famous jewels that left Iran at this time and never returned was the famous “Kooch-e-Nur” (Mountain of Light) diamond. This diamond passed on to the hands of Ahmed Shah Durrani and then to Ranjit Singh of Punjab. After his defeat by the British government, the Kooch-e-Nur diamond fell into the hands of the East India Company, and in 1266 LH (1850 CE) it was given to Queen Victoria as a gift.

After this event, there was no major change in the treasury until the time of the Qajar dynasty. During the Qajar period, the Treasury was collected and recorded. Some of the stones were mounted on the Kiani Crown, the Nadir Throne, the Globe of jewels, and the Peacock Throne (or the Sun Throne).

Two other items that were gradually added to this Treasury, are the turquoises, the genuine precious stone of Iran, extracted from the local turquoise mines, and the other is pearls, hunted from the Persian Gulf.

According to the law approved on 25th Aban 1316 SH (1937 CE) a major portion of the Treasury was transferred to Bank Melli Iran and formed part of the reserves for note issues, and later became collateral for government liabilities to the Bank.

The present collection was constructed in 1334 SH (1955 CE). In 1339 SH (1960 AD), by the establishment of the Central Bank of Iran, the Treasury was transferred and deposited with the Central Bank. Now it is also safeguarded by The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Corona stops archeological work in Burnt City

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Archeological excavations in the UNESCO-registered Burnt City, southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, have been stopped over the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

Called “Shahr-e Sukhteh” in Persian, the Burnt City is associated with four rounds of civilization, all burnt down by catastrophic sets of fire. It is situated in Sistan-Baluchestan province, which was once a junction of Bronze-Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau.

As the archeologists need to work in teams in small places and due to the current situation, the social distancing and health protocols could not be followed, therefore the excavation projects have been canceled to the end of the current Iranian year 1399 (ends on March 21, 2021), ILNA quoted senior Iranian archaeologist Seyyed Mansour Seyyed Sajadi as saying on Monday.

However, the archeologists have focused on researching and analyzing the data and findings of previous years, he added.

He also noted that the collaboration between the Iranian team and Italian archeologists, who were scheduled to accompany their Iranian fellows during the new rounds of excavations, will be followed virtually.

Founded around 3200 BC, the Burnt City was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC. Previous rounds of excavations showed that its residents had great skills in weaving, creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving, and pottery painting.

The world’s oldest animated picture, as well as the earliest-known dice, backgammon set, caraway seeds, and artificial eyeball, are among the most significant discoveries at the site.



Forgotten craft of weaving Chador Shab revived

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The traditional craft of weaving Chador Shab, a kind of fabric with geometrical patterns, which had fallen into oblivion, has been revived in the northwestern province of Qazvin, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Chador Shab is a kind of homemade colorful checkered cloth, which is used as an outer garment for women, mostly in the country’s northern villages. Women wrap it around their waist during farming and



working, they also use it for carrying their babies on their back.

In order to preserve the handicrafts and traditional arts, reviving neglected handicrafts in different regions of the province is one of the priorities of the province’s cultural heritage department, Seyyed Meysam Hessari said on Monday.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were ex-

ported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Turkish Airlines resumes flights to Tabriz after seven months halt

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Turkey’s flag carrier Turkish Airlines resumed its flights to Tabriz on Monday after seven months of suspension over the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the schedule, three flights per week will be carried out between Tabriz and Istanbul under strict health protocols, Ramin Azari, the director general of East Azarbaijan province’s airports, said on Monday, IRNA reported.

Last month, and following months of ups and downs, the flag carrier resumed its flights to Tehran after six months of halt.

Outbound passengers are required to hold a health certificate with a negative coronavirus PCR test result, otherwise, the boarding pass won’t be issued for them.

In late August, Turkish Airlines extended the suspension of its flights to Iran until October 1, reneging on its



previous announcement for resuming flights to Tehran and four other cities of Tabriz, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Isfahan

as of September 1.

Although Turkey resumed flights to many countries in June and July after few months of suspension over the COVID-19 pandemic, it kept its common borders with Iran closed, while these repeated delays in the reopening Iran-Turkey borders have damaged the tourism ties between the two countries.

As Turkey is a country through which many trips of Iranians living abroad and foreign nationals to Iran are made, the flight suspensions prevented several businessmen and students from continuing their activities and even left patients who want to go abroad for further treatment helpless.

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on Iran’s civil aviation sector with reports showing that airlines lost hundreds of millions of dollars because of flight cancellations during the busy New Year travel season in late March.

43 cities in Iran go into tough coronavirus lockdown

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions for a week as of Monday in 43 cities that have the highest rate of infection in the country.

According to IRNA, shopping malls, gyms, mosques, salons, universities, schools, libraries, kindergartens, cinemas, museums, cafes, zoos, and amusement parks will be closed for a week.

Two weeks ago, the government set fines for people who endanger the whole society due to non-observance of health protocols or not using face masks.

The violators will be forced to work in hospitals to provide services to coronavirus patients, Reza Asgari, the governor of Zanjan said.

“To prevent the incidence of COVID-19 in Zanjan, a plan called “alternative punishment to imprisonment” approved by the judiciary to punish those who do not follow the health guidelines by working in hospitals to serve COVID-19 patients,” he said.

■ Deplorable situation

Massoud Mardani, a member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, said that the pandemic condition in the country is deplorable and there are no empty beds in the hospitals.

In the current situation, basic measures must be considered to deal with the third wave of the virus, he highlighted.

Lamenting that unnecessary gatherings and trips speeded up the disease transmission, he urged people not to travel and heed the advice of health officials, because if the current situation continues, the virus will get out of control.

According to him, using a mask outdoors is essential for everyone and everyone is required to follow the hygiene principles.



Provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardebil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Hamedan, Yazd, and Kordestan are the high-risk “red” zones highly affected by COVID-19 in Iran.

COVID-19 is a newly-emerging disease that can be described as the most complex

threat to human health which leads to severe respiratory problems, he noted, add-

ing that the virus is transmitted through direct contact with the respiratory droplets of an infected person through sneezing and coughing.

Public education is informing, empowering, and increasing community participation with the aim of observing health principles and paying attention to the recommendations of health officials as a way to prevent the disease. Proper use of personal protective equipment is the most important strategy to control the virus, he explained.

The coronavirus can stay on the surface for several hours, and the proper use of disinfectants also plays an important role in controlling it, he concluded.

■ COVID-19 toll in Iran

In the press briefing on Monday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 5,960 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 574,856. She added that 459,250 patients have so far recovered, but 4,982 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

In the past 24 hours, 337 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 32,953, she added.

Lari noted that so far 4,753,357 COVID-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

She said the high-risk “red” zones include provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardebil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Hamedan, Yazd, and Kordestan.

The provinces of Hormozgan, Fars, and Golestan and Sistan-Baluchestan are also on alert.

Migratory birds embark on winter trip to northeastern Iran

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — The first group of migratory birds from Siberia landed in the wetlands of North Khorasan province to spend the winter, the head of the provincial department of environment has stated.

The mallard and Eurasian teal are the forerunners of migratory birds that have landed in some of the province's reservoirs, IRNA quoted Mehdi Allahpour as saying on Monday.

In January and February bird migration reaches its peak in the province, because they migrate to warmer southern areas to spend the winter, he noted.

Mallard, cormorant, bitterns, Eurasian teal, and heron are among the aquatic species that come to this province from the cold regions of Siberia.

Every year, with the onset of the cold season, different areas of the province such as rivers, reservoirs, and dams host 40 species of migratory birds, he concluded.

Annual census for migratory birds in Iran begins in the middle of the Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22-January 20) and ends in the middle of the month of Bahman (January 21-February 19), through which Iran hosts rare species of migratory birds heading from north to the southern countries due to reduced seasonal temperatures and food availability.

In December 2018, Majid Kharra-



zian-Moqaddam, head of aquatic animals and wildlife affairs at the Department of Environment said that the total population of migratory birds took a flight to spend the cold season in the country increased by 26.5 percent last winter compared to a year earlier, with increased rainfall averages and accordingly wetlands being filled with water.

In North Khorasan, there are 65 species of mammals out of 197 species in the country and 141 species of birds out of 532 species in the country, 68 reptiles out of 228 species in the country, four species of amphibians out of 20 species, and 8 species of fish and aquatic animals out of 160 aquatic species living in the country, some of which, such as cheetahs, saker falcon, Bustards, Caspian snowcock and Egyptian vultures, are in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in critical and endangered categories.

“Cultural Dialogue, Peace and Development on the Silk Road” to be held online

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The International Conference on “Cultural Dialogue, Peace and Development on the Silk Road,” will be held online on November 10 within the framework of the UNESCO Silk Roads Program.

Organized by the “Iranian Research Center for the Silk Road (IRCSR)” of Shahid Beheshti University, the event will be held in close cooperation with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and ECO Cultural Institute.

The conference coincides with the “World Science Day for Peace and Development” and is expected to bring together the scientists and researchers to discuss and disseminate ideas on the role of Silk Roads with special emphasis on the cultural dialogue, diversity, and peacebuilding.

Celebrated every 10 November, World Science Day for Peace and Development highlights the significant role of science in society and the need to engage the wider public in debates on emerging scientific issues. It also underlines the importance and relevance of science in our daily lives.

This year, at a time when the world is struggling with the global COVID-19 pandemic, the focus of World Science Day is on “Science for and with Society in dealing with the global pandemic.”



Throughout this unprecedented health crisis, UNESCO, as the UN Agency with the field of science in its mandate, has endeavored to bring science closer to society and to bolster the critically needed international scientific collaborations. From the science perspective, UNESCO's response to COVID-19 has structured around three major pillars: promoting international scientific cooperation, ensuring access to water, and supporting ecological reconstruction.

The Iranian Research Center on the Silk Roads was established under Shahid Beheshti University as a research institution with a focus on the Silk Roads. The Center comprises the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies on the Silk Roads and the Department of Common Heritages of the Silk Roads and aims to explore the cultural and historic relations in Central Asia and countries along the Silk Road.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Cabinet disapproves production of carbureted motorcycles

While the ministries of industry and interior have demanded the cabinet to reconsider its decision to ban the production of carbureted motorcycles and allow issuance of license plates, the cabinet of ministers rejected the proposal on June 17, ISNA reported on Friday.

Resuming the production of carbureted-motorcycles and issuing license for carburetor motorcycles is against the law, Tehran city councilor Zahra Sadr-Azam Nouri has said.

Referring to the fact that the interior and industry ministers' request was against the law, she said it seems that supporting the private sector and manufacturers as well as employment and income generation is prioritized over public health.

تولید مجدد موتورسیکلت‌های کاربراتوری خلاف قانون است

به گزارش روز جمعه خبرگزاری ایسنا با وجود درخواست به وزیر کشور و وزیر صنعت و معدن مبنی بر تولید موتورسیکلت‌های کاربراتوری هیات دولت هفته ی گذشته شماره‌گذاری این موتورسیکلت را ممنوع اعلام کرد.

زهره صدر اعظم نوری رئیس کمیسیون سلامت شورای اسلامی شهر تهران با اشاره به مصوبه هیات وزیران مبنی بر ممنوعیت تولید و شماره‌گذاری موتورسیکلت‌های کاربراتوری، گفت: تولید مجدد موتورسیکلت‌های کاربراتوری خلاف قانون است.

وی با اشاره به اینکه درخواستی که وزیر کشور و وزیر صنعت و معدن در این زمینه از هیات دولت دارد خلاف قانون و مصوب هیات دولت است و نباید مجوز داده شود، گفت: بیشتر نگاه حمایت از بخش خصوصی و تولیدکنندگان است و به نظر می رسد اشتغال و درآمدزایی بر مباحث سلامت افراد ارجح است.

Nine insect-eating bird species in Amazon in sharp decline, scientists find

Bird species are in decline even in the remote parts of the Amazon, far from human interference, a study shows.

Scientists have found a sharp decline in nine insect-eating bird species in the lowlands of the central jungle in the space of a few decades. No equivalent decline was found among fruit-eating birds. This, they said, indicated that the climate crisis and its effect on insect populations may be to blame.

The research, published in the journal Ecology Letters, makes use of data collected more than 30 years ago by the conservation biologist Thomas Lovejoy and others to study the impact of deforestation.

At the time, the Brazilian government was encouraging ranchers to turn rainforest into pasture, but requiring them to keep some land intact. Lovejoy and his colleagues convinced some ranchers to leave patches of forest of various sizes inside large clear cuts, isolated from the rest of the forest, in the hope that they would discover how small a fragment of rainforest could support healthy flora and fauna. They used birds – well studied and easy to catch – as a proxy for the animal kingdom.

To survey bird numbers, they unfurled impenetrable “mist nets” made of almost invisible fine polyester fibre, three times as high and 20 times as long as a tennis net. These captured a proportion of birds in flight without harming them. The captives were let loose after being counted, weighed and measured.

The researchers also studied control plots in large tracts of untouched forest. Camp 41, located deep in the control forest 65km north of Manaus, became a central base, the Guardian reported.

Years later, in 2008, Prof Philip Stouffer, of Louisiana State University, the lead author of the new paper, was asked by a birder at Camp 41 why they had not seen any wing-banded antbirds, a bulbous bird with a dramatic turquoise eye ring. Although never common, the bird had previously been seen from time to time. Other birds scientists would have expected to see were also absent.

The forest fragments project had not been designed to measure changes in bird abundance at the control sites but, in an unrelated study, Stouffer and colleagues were already repeating the biggest mist-netting at these sites since the 1980s. This data, they realised, could be used to work out whether the local birds were in decline.

The new paper compared the abundance of 79 species caught between 2008 and 2016 with sampling from the early 1980s. Stouffer said the results surprised him. Nine species had become less common, including eight that were at least 50% less abundant. All but one of the declining bird species were members of two insect-eating groups: near-ground insectivores and terrestrial insectivores. Significantly, according to Stouffer, almost no fruit eaters were declining, with a handful found to be more common in the recent count.

“Something different is going on for birds that forage on arthropods on or near the forest floor,” said Stouffer.

The paper ruled out several explanations for the declines, including hunting, an invasive predator, or some pathogen. Lovejoy, one of the authors of the new paper, said the only other explanation that seemed to make sense was the climate crisis: “There's no other smoking gun,” he said.

He said the drier and warmer conditions in the central Amazon may either cause direct “physiological stress to birds”, or “structural change to the forest” that reduced food supply or otherwise made the habitat less suitable.

Stuart Pimm, a conservation biologist at Duke University, who was not involved with the new research but had previously collaborated with several of the co-authors, questioned the conclusions, pointing out that the current sampling sites were close to, but not exactly the same as, the original areas. “They can't be sure that there aren't some differences in the natural history of these two sets of sites that might explain the results,” he said.

However, Stouffer said he believed it was fair to compare the two datasets. “It would become really difficult to find the [original] plots,” he said. He said some of the original research camps had been swallowed up by jungle, and the precise locations from the era before GPS had been lost.

In any event, he said, the natural evolution of the forest, such as normal tree falls that open up clearings or new trees that close them, constantly changed the suitability of any given location. “We are deceiving ourselves if we think the ‘forest’ is the same 35 years later,” he said.

Vitek Jirinec, a PhD candidate at Louisiana State University and second author of the paper, said: “This is the best we have to show what happened to the forest community of birds.”

Since 2017 he has been strapping miniature data loggers to birds to monitor them during the hottest hours of day, which has shed more light on the subject. This, he said, hinted at their response to a hotter climate.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 43)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

■ Persian Writing (نَستعلیق Nasta'liq):

ساختار

استاد دانشگاه دکتر کتاب کلاس پاپ ثانی

■ Number (11 to 19)

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یازده، دوازده، سیزده، چهارده، پانزده، شانزده، هفده، هجده، نوزده

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● Exercise 1. Write in letters:

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

What is learned during youth, like an engraving
on a stone, will never be forgotten.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Divine Commander Theater Festival unveils official lineup

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Twelve plays will be performed during the 2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival as the organizers announced the official lineup on Monday.

The festival was established after the assassination of Commander Qassem Soleimani during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3 in memory of the chief of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.



A poster for the 2nd Divine Commander Theater Festival.

"When the Muscles Turn to Stone" by writer and director Kianush Ahmadi is among the entries picked by a selecting committee that is composed of Shahram Ahmadvadeh, Mehdi Nasiri and Maziar Rashid-Salehi.

"Carnelian" by Shahram Soltani is another highlight of the lineup, and director Morteza Asadimaram will stage "Standing like a Cypress to Watch the Sun" written by Hashem Purmohammadi.

"Dragunov" written by Zeinab Zavalan will be directed by Doosti Irani, and director Mohammad-Hamed Esmailpur will stage "Tiny Little Birds" written by Govan-Mehr Esmailpur.

"1:20 AM" by Pejman Shahverdi, "Soldier" by Mohammad-Hossein Nazari, "Cold Breathe" by Mohammad Qasemi and "January 3" have also been selected.

The lineup also includes "The Sociology of Death" by Asghar Garusi, "Wave" by Sajjad Mansuri and "An Appointment in Damascus" by Nasser Hajibaqeri.

The 2nd edition of the festival will take place in the southern Iranian city of Kerman, Commander Soleimani's hometown, from December 21 to 26.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater and the Revayat Foundation are the main organizers of the event.



A scene from "Parcelles S7" by director Abtin Sarabi.

In the documentary, the mad profusion of the wind gives the trees strange outlines. The wet thread of slumber ruptures in the night. The hand plunges into the beginning of the fire. Burning entrails of the fields suddenly appear at dawn. Here the man is alone. In this loneliness, the shadow of sugar cane flows into eternity.

The animation "Crab" by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi will also be competing in the official section of the festival, which will be running in the Spanish city from November 13 to 20.

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.

A jury composed of Fernando Franco, Nahikari Ipina, Marcel Jean, Susana S. Rodrigues and Reem Shilleh will judge the movies in the international competition.

Non-actor to play Leader's role in TV series "Unfinished Mystery"

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN — IRIB Deputy Director in Provincial Affairs Abbas Fatemi said on Monday that a non-actor will portray the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in the TV series "Unfinished Mystery".

The series, which is in the pre-production stage, is a biopic about Mohammad-Javad Bahonar, Iran's second prime minister after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, who was assassinated by the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) on August 30, 1981.

Bahonar had earlier been selected as the secretary-general of the Islamic Republican Party after the assassination of the former president of the party, Ayatollah Mohammad-Hossein Beheshti, by the MKO on June 28, 1981.

The series will be co-directed by Ali and Amin Amani. Amani is also the producer of the project, the script of which has been written by Seyyed Jalaeddin Dorri.

Farhad Jam, an actor in the popular series "The Spouses" co-directed by Bijan Birang and Masud Rasam in 1994, has been cast as Bahonar in "Unfinished Mystery", which is expected to be broadcast in June 2021.

In addition, Ramin Rastad, star of



President Seyyed Ali Khamenei took the oath of office at the Iranian parliament on August 9, 1982.

acclaimed movies "Conditional Release" and "Friday Evening", will play the role of Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a member of the Islamic Republican Party.

The producer has not yet revealed who will play the role of Ayatollah Beheshti, Fatemi said and added that members of the cast will be announced after the casting is completed.

"However, the role of the Leader will certainly be played by a non-actor; the main point in the series is that the roles are played perfectly," noted Fatemi.

The shooting of the 26-episode series will begin in January 2021 in Iran, and the crew will leave the country to film some scenes on location outside the country.

The series will also center on Masud Keshmiri, a member of the MKO who infiltrated the Islamic Republican Party and, coming up through the ranks, reached the position of secretary of the Supreme National Security Council before planting an incendiary bomb in his briefcase that detonated in the prime minister's office, martyring then president Mohammad-Ali Rajai and several others who were present.

Following the assassination of Bahonar and Rajaei, Ayatollah Khamenei was selected as Iran's third president after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

War literature under spotlight at Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards

"Teahouse Painting", the memoirs of Kazem Darabi, an Iranian suspect in the 1992 Mykonos Restaurant assassinations case in Berlin, won the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Award during the 12th edition last year.

In the book, Darabi explains how he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1997 for having a hand in gunning down four members of the Kurdish opposition in the Mykonos Restaurant in the German capital in 1992 and his life during 15 years in captivity in Germany.

"Teahouse Painting" published in early 2019 received the honor in the documentation category.

"Trainspotter", Ehsan Noruzi's studies on the history of railroads in Iran, won an honorable mention in this section.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, attending the awards ceremony, said that Iranian culture and civilization both historically and geographically have many subjects to study, however,

there is a wide gap between what has been carried out and what must be done.

No winner was announced by the jury in the novel section. However, "The Shamelessness Situation" by Hamed Jalali, about a young man during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, and Mohammadreza Marzuqi's "Turning on the One-Way Street", about a hero who intends to solve a puzzle that even its designers cannot decipher, won honorable mentions in this category.

The short story section also had no winner. "We Were Traveling Through the Heyran Pass" by Hossein Lalbazri received an honorable mention.

"Domestication of Magic Realism in Iran" by Mohammad and Mohsen Hanif and "Theory and Literary Criticism" by Hossein Payandeh shared the award in the literary criticism section.

"About Eternality and Mortality" by Ahmad Shakeri won an honorable mention in this category.

Director Alireza Khushk-Jalali's troupe rehearsing for Cologne performance

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Cologne-based Iranian director and playwright Alireza Khushk-Jalali is preparing his troupe to restage his play "Barefoot, Naked, Heart in His Hand" in the German city.

"Coronavirus has transported the world into shutdown, and we have no solution except to lead the world toward the life path," Khushk-Jalali told the Persian service of ISNA on Sunday.

"This tiny virus also rules Germany ruthlessly but the stage artists in the country are resisting against the disease with the help of their government so as not to abandon the stage of theater and life," he added.



Director Alireza Khushk-Jalali in an undated photo.

Members of his troupe are rehearsing for the play online in Iran and Germany, and the play will be performed in German.

The pandemic has failed to stop Khushk-Jalali as he has held online workshops on writing, directing and acting for his pupils from across the world.

"Barefoot, Naked, Heart in His Hand", which is a dark comedy on racial violence, narrates the story of a Turkish Muslim migrant living in Germany who loses his family and house in a fire rooted in a racist attack.

Written in the German language in 1993, the play has previously been performed over 650 times in different countries, including Iran, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Ukraine and Russia.

Michael Morgenstern is the sole actor of

the monolog and only 20 people are allowed to attend each performance based on the protocol for the pandemic era.

The Horizont Theater in Cologne will host the performance on November 4, 13, 18, 19 and December 8.

"During the pandemic in Germany, no troupe can perform a play without support from governmental organizations. However, even with all this support the artists in the country are under pressure," Khushk-Jalali said.

A Persian version of "Barefoot, Naked, Heart in His Hand" has recently been published by Mehr Noruz Publications in Tehran.

Iran's Regional Music Festival to go online in Kerman

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 13th edition of Iran's Regional Music Festival will be held online in the southern Iranian city of Kerman from October 31 to November 2, director of the Kerman branch of Iran Music Association Suraj Yasai said on Monday.

The participating artists will be giving their performances every night mainly at the Ganjali Khan Caravanserai, a 17th-century monument in Kerman, and the performances will stream online on the Instagram page of the association, he added.

"The performances will also be available on Aparat, an Iranian video sharing service," he said, adding that besides the performances of the regional musicians from across the country, a special section has also been dedicated to folk performances by a number of Kerman's musicians.

In addition, the organizers plan to produce a series of documentaries on veterans of Iranian regional music to be



Musicians perform at the opening ceremony of the 12th Regional Music Festival in Kerman on November 7, 2019. (IRNA/Abuzar Ahmadizadeh)

preserved after the festival ends.

The organizers also had planned to arrange some public performances during the festival, but the plan was canceled due to a spike in coronavirus cases in the country.

The 12th edition of the festival hosted three ensembles from Turkey and Afghanistan, in addition to several groups from different Iranian provinces.

An Afghan group led by musician Mohammad-Nasim Khoshnavaz and two Turkish ensembles led by artists Ubeydullah Sezikli and Yavuz Selim Kafkasyali gave performances during the festival last year.

Ganjali Khan Square and several other historical sites were the main venues for outdoor performances, while halls in universities and hotels in Kerman hosted several other performances.

An exhibition of musical instruments, photos and music books and CDs as well as workshops, meetings and seminars were also organized on the sidelines of the festival last year.

Kayhan Kalhor to perform with Amsterdam Sinfonietta "On the Road to Iran"

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The celebrated Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor will be giving performances with the Dutch professional string orchestra Amsterdam Sinfonietta in a project named "On the Road to Iran", beginning on October 29.

Despite the pandemic, Amsterdam Sinfonietta has joined other musicians including Iranian-Austrian cello star Kian Soltani.

"Sus-Septed Tempus", a composition by Iranian composer Farrokhzad Layeq scored for a Western string orchestra, has been selected for the performance that adds a new dimension to classical Persian music.

The American composer Colin Jacobsen's poetic "Iranian" tribute to Kalhor "Atashgah" will also be performed by Kalhor.

Amsterdam Sinfonietta, Soltani and Kalhor will build musical bridges between the East and West with works by Layeq, Austrian composer Franz Peter Schubert and a new commissioned piece by jazz pianist Rembrandt Frerichs.

The performances will be running in several other Dutch cities until November 8.

In addition, Kalhor, Soltani and the Rembrandt Frerichs Trio will be giving another concert in the Bimhuis jazz club in Amsterdam on October 30.

Kalhor won the Artist Award of the



Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor in an undated photo.

globalFEST, North America's most important world music industry event, which was held in New York in January.

The Artist Award is one of the three main awards of the festival, which is presented to those artists who have made a lasting impression in the U.S., their homeland or around the world.

Four-time Grammy Award nominee Kalhor has won several awards at Iranian and international music events.

He won the Artist Award at the WOMEX Awards, the World Music Expo, in Finland last August.

He was also one of the two winners of the Isaac Stern Human Spirit Award at the Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition in August 2018.