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By Faranak Bakhtiari
Tehran Times journalist

More serious strategies needed to tackle pandemic

The difficult and progressive conditions of the coronavirus pandemic in the country and the high rate of mortality and infection necessitate a serious review of the management methods.

In the press briefing on Tuesday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 6,968 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 581,824. She added that 463,611 patients have so far recovered, but 4,995 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, coronavirus daily deaths and new cases hit the record high, as 346 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 33,299, she added.

Referring to the coronavirus's worst-case scenario for the coming months, Lari said that "With the arrival of winter, the disease will become more prevalent. If we follow the same procedure and do not enforce stricter rules and restrictions, no good condition will come up."

The death toll has been shocking over the past few days, which needs a serious determination among the officials to be contained, she added. Obviously, it is not possible to close the whole country or the capital city of Tehran, however, color schemes have been set to apply restrictions based on the risk of death and hospitalization in each city, she explained, adding, the critical areas in each province should be identified to impose restrictions.

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.

Pointing to the challenges faced during the fight against the pandemic, she stated that there is still a shortage of medical staff and we need to recruit some 7,000 nurses.

Lari noted that so far 4,786,769 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 Kordistan. **→7**

Iran selected WHO regional base for nutrition, food industry

TEHRAN – The World Health Organization (WHO) selected the National Institute of Nutrition and Food Industry Research of Iran as the regional base of cooperation in the nutrition science and food industry for Eastern Mediterranean countries.

The importance of food and nutrition in the world these days is felt more than ever, so much so that in some developed countries the issue of establishing the Ministry of Food and Nutrition has been raised, Jalaleddin Mirzaei Razzaz, head of the Nutrition and Food Technology Research Institute said.

In Iran, the ministries of health and agriculture were commissioned to make arrangements for food independence, he stated, ISNA reported on Monday.

At this time, Iran was in close competition with countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and finally, Iran was

selected with the efforts made by the Ministry of Health, he explained.

He expressed hope that such international cooperation improves food and nutrition in addition to people's health.

Hunger increases worldwide

A report jointly prepared by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO shows that currently around 690 million people or 8.9 percent of the world population are hungry. Compared to the previous figures, this number is up by 10 million people in one year and by nearly 60 million in five years.

"The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020" also indicates that the number of people affected by severe food insecurity has experienced a similar upward trend over the last five years. In 2019, close to 750 million—or nearly one in ten people in the world—were exposed to severe levels of food insecurity. **→7**

Petchem production up 8% in 7 months yr/yr

TEHRAN – Iranian petrochemical complexes produced 35 million tons of products in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20–October 21) to register an eight percent rise from the figure for the same period last year, an official with the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) announced.

"Petrochemical units are producing with a good capacity and despite some external problems, the process of production and sale of various petrochemical products is in an acceptable con-

dition," said Jalal Mirhashemi, NPC's production control manager.

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

Iran has been highly developing this sector over the recent years as the development of the

giant South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) has been supplying more feedstock to the petrochemical units; the country is currently producing nearly 70 million tons of petrochemical products annually.

According to the Head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company Behzad Mohammadi, Iran is going to become the top petrochemical producer in the region after the realization of the industry's third leap in the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts on March 21, 2025). **→4**



Highliners find balance

A highlining event was held in Anjedan Village, east of Arak, Markazi Province from Oct. 23 to 25.

Highlining is an extreme sport in which adventurers walk across a rope from one cliff to another. It's an extreme sport in which athletes traverse a narrow, springy band of rope suspended high above the ground.

Highlining is the most extreme version of the sport because it is done at much higher elevations.

Promoting barter trade a great way of increasing exports

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – Iran plans to implement an oil-for-good barter trade program based on which the country's capable private and government-owned export companies will be given oil to sell to potential buyers and import basic goods in return.

The news of this plan was announced last week, by the Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh in a joint meeting with the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI)

Abdolnasser Hemmati, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini, and the Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi.

In the meeting, Zanganeh said that President Hassan Rouhani has accepted the proposal to create a Single Window System to carry out all the necessary processes for the mentioned program, adding: "We will start operations next week." **→4**

Zarif: U.S. appetite for bullying others only grows by appeasement

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said the United States' appetite for bullying other countries only grows by appeasement.

"Complacency is the oxygen that the U.S. needs to continue its bullying. U.S. appetite only grows by appeasement; by submitting to its unlawful measures against others, in the hope of avoiding its wrath. It does not work, my friends," Zarif said at the 75th session of the UN

General Assembly on Monday.

He began his speech by saying that seventy-five years ago, the United Nations was founded to restore international peace and security in the aftermath of two horrific wars.

"But how successful have we been?" Zarif asked. "According to a new study, since 2001—ironically, the 'United Nations' Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations'—37 million people have been displaced as a result of the U.S. 'Forever Wars'." **→2**

Art Bureau plans to hold Holocaust denial exhibit in response to Macron's cartoons defense

TEHRAN – The Art Bureau of Iran's Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization has announced a plan to organize another Holocaust denial exhibition of cartoons in response to French President Emmanuel Macron's defense of the insulting cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad (S).

"The French president has ignored the

over 1.5 billion Muslim population of the world," the director of the bureau's Visual Arts Office, Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai, said in a press release on Tuesday.

"It's really obvious that we Muslims face a scenario promoting Islamophobia, hate-mongering and racism," noted Shojaei-Tabatabai who is also a veteran cartoonist. **→8**

U.S. protests: Riots & looting in Philadelphia after black man shot dead by police

People broke into shops and torched patrol cars in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania following spontaneous protests sparked by the death of a local man in a police shooting. The cops said the man was armed with a knife.

Protesters, including Black Lives Matter activists, poured into the streets after a 27-year-old man named Walter Wallace Jr. was fatally shot in an altercation with police on Monday afternoon.

A peaceful demonstration quickly descended into chaos as people were filmed breaking into stores and fighting, RT reported.

Rioters hurled various projectiles at police and torched patrol vehicles.

Philadelphia Police Sergeant Eric Gripp told the media that the officers were called to a home for a man with a weapon. Once they arrived at the scene, they were met by Wallace Jr., who was brandishing a knife.

The man ignored the officers' orders to drop the weapon and "continued to follow them around several vehicles that are over there," Gripp said.

A graphic video posted on social media shows Wallace Jr. quickly walking towards two officers while a woman, identified in the media as his mother, tries to stop him. The officers shout "Put the knife down!" before firing multiple shots at the man, who immediately falls to the ground and remains motionless.

Cities across the U.S. have been grappling with mass protests triggered by the deaths of George Floyd and other black Americans at the hands of police. Peaceful rallies have at times been followed by intense unrest and looting. The protests led by the Black Lives Matter movement have also bolstered a broader debate and discussion on police brutality and racial justice in the country.

Hasht Behesht Palace, a gateway to the paradise of color and art

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

Hasht Behesht Palace, meaning "Eight Paradises", is literally a gateway to the paradise of color, art, light, and surprising beauty.

An exquisite Safavid-era (1501–1736) structure in Isfahan, central Iran, the palace bears intricate plasterwork, woodwork, and gorgeous murals even on the ceilings yet retain a domestic simplicity. The exterior tilework on the other hand is a source of charm for having a naturalistic style, depicting peacocks, trees, angels alongside other creatures.

What makes Hasht Behesht exceptional is the energy floating among the palace and the very heavily garden surrounding it, which gives the visitors a feeling of suspension someplace between the rigidity of the earth and smoothness of skies.

The peace and silence that the garden offers along with the eye-catching murals and its unique architecture, cut people from the current stressful high-speed daily life and leaves no doubt that the structure couldn't be named anything but paradise.

Hasht Behesht Palace was completed in 1669 as one of the forty-some mansions erected in Isfahan during the rule of Safavids, as Shah Abbas, the first king of the Safavid Empire, selected Isfahan as the capital city and decided to make it a competent city for his empire.

A long street, Chahar Bagh Street (the four gardens), was built and several gardens were developed in it. However, none of these gardens have remained except for Chehel Sotoun Garden and Hasht Behesht Garden. The beauty of the garden is not fully left for us to explore however the palace is still a lively monument. **→6**

Envoy: Provoking so-called human rights issues part of 'maximum pressure' strategy against Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Tehran's representative to the UN General Assembly's Third Committee on Monday denounced a new report by the UN rights rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran as part of the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against the Islamic Republic, Fars reported.

"Those who have drawn up this report, have manipulated human rights issues against my government to distort our realities through use of incorrect information. It is not secret that taking advantage of the so-called human rights issues is part of the U.S.' maximum pressure' strategy against Iranians," Mohammad Zare'iyan UN representative said.

Following is the full text of Zare'iyan's speech at the committee: The report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/75/213) has been drafted solely based upon unverified, biased and tendentious sources and is nothing short of politically motivated.



It has not been prepared out of the genuine concern of its orchestrators, but rather with the interest of justifying their policy of aggression and hostility while contributing to their declared objective of subverting the constitutional order legitimately established by the Iranian people. This, in turn, constitutes a flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the International Law and International Human Rights Law.

Those behind the preparation of the report have manipulated the issues of human rights against my Government in order to distort our realities with false information. It is no secret that provoking the so-called human rights issues are part of the U.S. "maximum pressure strategy" against Iranians. Terrorists, including those who used to be on the terror list of Western countries until recently, have become sweethearts allies in this evil campaign against Iranians.

The tragedy, however, lies in the complicity of the UN mechanisms which have become part of such scheming. Glorification of criminals whose hands are stained with the blood of civilians and law enforcement officers, as victims of ethnic or religious discrimination, is abhorrent. Although the specific cases have been raised in the report, were responded to separately in detail by the authorities, the author's prejudices have marred the report in its entirety, as different parts of the report have been imbued with personal biases. Propagation of fake news and repeated opinionated interpretations, are among several fundamental flaws in the report.

One may wonder if those who are behind the report were racing against time to line up a number of unsubstantiated allegations against my Government. Had they been sincerely concerned about the human rights of Iranians, they would have immediately prepared a mandate to hold the Government of the United States accountable for its inhumane and illegal unilateral coercive measures, which have systematically been intensified in recent months, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The unilateral and illegal sanctions imposed by the United States against Iran constitute the crime against humanity, violating the human rights of an entire nation. The U.S. sanctions have not only had a destructive impact on the well-being of my people, but also continue to prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights. The U.S. sanction policy has always been an inhumane punishment policy targeting and affecting an entire population particularly children and adults with cancer and rare diseases, however, the novel coronavirus has highlighted the cruelty and malice of this crime. The broad limitations imposed on Iran as a result of cruel and illegal U.S. sanctions, prevent my country from purchasing medicines, medical equipment and other necessary supplies to face the pandemic.

Regrettably, the human rights mechanisms have been unable or unwilling to hold Washington accountable for its cowardly and vicious assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was the all-conquering hero for bringing Takfiri terrorism to its knees in Iraq and Syria in order to restore peace and security to the region and defend human rights. The silence of the so-called flag-bearers of human rights advocates, with regards to this barbaric crime committed by the U.S. with the cooperation and collaboration of certain countries, including Germany, is deafening now more than ever.

The UN Human Rights Bodies and officials, on multiple occasions, have complained that they are facing a funding crisis. One may wonder how it is possible then to have released four reports annually on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. I would like to assure you that such reports have not only been drawn up based on a selective approach, but are also almost identical and in violation of the principles of universality, impartiality and objectivity.

My delegation rejects, in the strongest terms, the allegations contained in the report; the ill-wisher's prejudices and hasty judgments have rendered it unfounded and far from reality.

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IRGC, Army denounce Islamophobia in France

POLITICAL TEHRAN – In separate statements, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Army have denounced French President Emmanuel Macron for voicing anti-Muslim sentiments.

The IRGC said on Monday that Islamophobia is a failed project which will further accelerate the collapse of the U.S. and the Zionist regime, Mehr reported.

It said Macron's Islamophobic remarks will not damage the image of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but rather, it will add further to the dark record of those showing hatred toward Islam in the world.

The satanic scenario has entered a new phase after the recent move by Charlie Hebdo to republish offensive cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the subsequent support from the French president, the IRGC's statement deplored.

The IRGC also said the insults to Islam reveal the great paradox in the West, particularly in the so-called flag-bearer of freedom of expression in Europe, adding that France is attempting to cover up its failure to prevent the spread of Islam and growing enthusiasm for Islamic teachings.

"The rulers of the hegemonic system and Zionism, which are the main supporters of the extremist and Takfiri movements and creation of horror and violence in the world, would be unable to save the crisis-hit and anti-human West from a self-created quagmire," it said.

The IRGC also warned that France should



await an appropriate response from the Muslim community, beyond just a boycott of French products or protests.

Similarly, the Army in its Tuesday statement called on Muslims across the world to become united against the "arrogant criminals" in order to root out Islamophobia throughout the world through their unity.

According to the Army's statement, the false proponents of human rights have linked a student's action against his teacher to Islam and used that as an excuse to target the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and hurt the feelings of hundreds of millions of freedom-seeking Muslims across the world

under the banner of defending freedom of speech.

"The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while condemning such heinous and insulting acts, considers them as a sign of the desperation of the West and Zionism, which are on their way toward collapse," the statement concluded.

The statements came after Macron pledged to fight "Islamist separatism", which he said was threatening to take control in some Muslim communities around France.

He supported a French teacher's displaying of cartoons insulting the Prophet of Islam in his class. The teacher, Samu-

el Paty, was murdered by an 18-year-old Chechen assailant.

Macron's comments, along with his backing of satirical outlets publishing caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), have led to a social media campaign calling for the boycott of French products from supermarkets in Arab countries and Turkey.

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.

"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.

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

Alikbar 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.

U.S.-Israeli plot to besiege Iran to prove colossal failure, says official

POLITICAL TEHRAN – The U.S.-Israeli plot to besiege Iran will lead to a major defeat for the two countries in the region, Secretary of Iran's Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaee said on Tuesday.

Rezaee made the remarks at a forum titled "International Conference of the Decline of the USA, Past Trends and Future Changes."

"The new U.S.-Israeli plan to besiege Iran will face a major defeat in the region," he said, according to Mehr. "The political crisis in the United States and countries like France indicates a philosophical, ideological and value crisis in the West."

He said since 200 years ago, when Europe and the United States came to West Asia, they have treated all regional countries, especially Iran, from the position of a dominating power.

The secretary of the Expediency Council cited U.S. President Donald Trump's ugly behavior toward Saudi rulers as a bitter example of humiliation of Muslim nations.

"Today, their selfish behavior has taken hold of them, and their arrogance and selfishness have reached such a level that they put their knees on the neck of their people, attacking their lives and property, and disrespecting their



personalities," Rezaee added.

He said the U.S. economy is shrinking and due to debts and lack of enough resources, an economic crisis has been created in the West.

"The United States' defense power has weakened, and they have decreased their military forces in the region and faced failure in Syria and Afghanistan," pointed out Rezaee, the former IRGC chief.

Rezaee argued that the current moral, economic and political crises will lead to the collapse of the West and Western values.

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

lateralism. The Trump administration has 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.

In a note on Monday, government spokesman Ali Rabiei wrote that the U.S. is seeking to show a kind of chaos and statelessness in Iran.

"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 said.

Meanwhile, U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said earlier that the U.S. has little opportunity left to impose new sanctions against Russia and Iran, as there are already many of them.

"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.

Tehran summons French envoy over Macron's Islamophobic remarks

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday summoned France's chargé d'affaires Florent Aydalot over President Macron's Islamophobic remarks.

The deputy director-general for the European Affairs of the Foreign Ministry denounced the remarks of the French authorities as unacceptable, saying the remarks have hurt the feelings of millions of Muslims in Europe and across the world.

"Any insult and disrespect to the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and the pure values of Islam are strongly condemned and rejected by every person and in every position," he said, according to Mehr.

"It is deeply regrettable to incite Islamophobia and the spread of hatred in the name of freedom of expression, which should serve communication, empathy and peaceful coexistence between human societies," he added.

In response, the French envoy promised to reflect Iran's objection to the Paris government as soon as possible.

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.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif censured Macron's remarks, 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 earlier 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."

Iran's parliament also strongly condemned Macron's defense of blasphemy against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) under the guise of "freedom of speech."

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

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.

Zarif: U.S. appetite for bullying others only grows by appeasement

"37 million people have been displaced as a result of the U.S. 'Forever Wars,'" Iran's chief diplomat says

I → He said the eight violent wars that the U.S. initiated or joined since 2001—under the rubric of "War on Terror"—have resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives, countless broken societies and families, failed and failing states and unprecedented extremism.

The chief Iranian diplomat asked, "Whether our world is more—or less—secure than it was in 1945? How can we counter the unilateralism and disdain for international law by a bully that only knows wielding a big stick and speaking arrogantly; and how we can contain a power that has spent over 220 of its total 244 year-history in war: from the wars on its native population, to the war on its enslaved population—which continues with extreme brutality—and to

the 39 military conflicts and nearly 120 economic wars—it deceptively calls 'sanctions'—since 1945. Against any entity that hasn't submitted to its whims."

Ironically, Zarif said, it keeps losing its "Forever Wars".

"In fact, no one wins in a war," he said, adding, "It's time to change tack—saving American blood and treasure and sparing the world from further misery."

"Our United Nations at 75 needs to recommit itself to stand up—united—against unilateralism and war," the foreign minister concluded.

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

Zarif says the eight violent wars that the U.S. initiated or joined since 2001—under the rubric of "War on Terror"—have resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives, countless broken societies and families, failed and failing states and unprecedented extremism.



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

Washington's illegal sanctions against Iran, which were not lifted even after the breakout of the coronavirus, have disrupted the country's fight against the virus, making Iran the tenth hardest-hit country in the world.

Iran on peace drive to end Nagorno-Karabakh war

POLITICAL TEHRAN — As Azerbaijan and Armenia announced the failure of the third humanitarian ceasefire, which was brokered by the United States in a bid to end violence in the war-torn region of Nagorno-Karabakh, Iran stepped up to the plate and began new efforts to help de-escalate military tensions between its two warring neighbors.

To this end, Iran's Foreign Ministry announced on Monday that Seyed Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister for political affairs, will embark on a regional tour of at least four capitals to help resolve the crisis in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Seyed Abbas Araghchi is to set off on a regional tour, as Iran's special envoy, to promote Tehran's initiative to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis and the clashes between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement on Monday afternoon.

According to the spokesman, Araghchi will first visit Iranian border regions to see first-hand the latest developments on the ground. Khatibzadeh added that Araghchi's tour will later take him to Baku, Moscow, Yerevan, and Ankara.

On Monday morning, Araghchi began his tour by traveling to the Iran-Azerbaijan borders. He visited Khodafarin's borderline with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Underlining that the security of Iran's borders is a red line that should not be crossed, the deputy foreign minister expressed concerns over problems emanating from the Azerbaijan-Armenia war and its implications for people living in border areas.

"This issue is a matter of serious concern to us, and we are pursuing the issue politically and across borders," said Araghchi, adding, "The security of our borders is one of our inviolable principles and we will not neglect it in any way."

He also paid a visit to the area of Khodafarin's dams, which was recently conquered by Azerbaijani forces. Araghchi said any change in the operation of these dams requires a new political understanding, and the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to start the necessary talks in this regard as soon as possible.

These border dams must be jointly operated in such a way that causes no damage or threat to our border areas, he added.

Zarif outlines Iran's initiative to permanently resolve the crisis

Araghchi also met with the local military and political officials in Tabriz to discuss the latest developments of the Azerbaijan-Armenia war.



nia war. He was expected to leave Tabriz for Baku, where he will present Iran's initiative to resolve the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that Araghchi will travel to Baku, Moscow, and Yerevan to present Iran's initiative to "permanently resolve" the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, the chief Iranian diplomat said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has devised an initiative to permanently resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The initiative will soon be presented after it was approved by the country's high-ranking officials. We will discuss this initiative in Moscow and Yerevan."

According to Zarif, Iran's initiative is based on respecting the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and peacefully resolving differences as well as the unchangeability of international borders.

"In the active diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is based on respect for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the peaceful settlement of the conflict and the unchangeability of international borders, there is a concern about the presence of Takfiri terrorists in the region and possibly other terrorists. We made it clear that it is unbearable for Iran," the foreign minister noted.

The war over the Nagorno-Karabakh region began in late September when Azerbaijani and Armenian troops exchanged fire along the borders of the volatile Nagorno-Karabakh region. Since the early days of the war, Iran called on both sides to immediately stop the violence and resolve their disputes through

dialogue, expressing readiness to help facilitate such a dialogue.

"Iran is closely monitoring the alarming violence in Nagorno-Karabakh. We call for an immediate end to hostilities and urge dialogue to resolve differences. Our neighbors are our priority and we are ready to provide good offices to enable talks. Our region needs peace now," tweeted Zarif shortly after Armenia and Azerbaijan began the war.

Nearly a week after the war began, Iran offered an initiative to put an end to the war while warning the warring neighbors against any encroachments on the Iranian soil, which came under attack over the past weeks. Many rockets and mortar shells and other projectiles landed inside Iran's borders, causing fear of possible damage to civilians living in the border areas. Moreover, a number of combat drones crashed in Iran.

In light of these developments, Iran presented its initiative to end the deadly war and protect its borders.

"Iran has prepared a detailed plan, which will be pursued through making consultations with the two sides [of the conflict]. We hope that the two sides end the war, avoid targeting civilians, and know that Iran cannot tolerate clashes on its borders. We have carefully told our friends in both countries that they need to take the necessary care," Khatibzadeh said at a weekly press conference in early October as the Azerbaijan-Armenia war raged on.

Khatibzadeh also said Iran was in contact with both sides and pursued an "important mission".

The spokesman pointed out, "Iran is one of the few players that enjoys good relations with the two warring sides and other regional

players. From now on, Iran will have a special position and an important mission."

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will by no means tolerate any violation against its borders and soil. To this end, Iran has prepared a plan and it hopes to move forward with it through making consultations with the two sides and with the help of other neighboring countries."

Zarif and Khatibzadeh did not give any details about the Iranian initiative but it seems that the initiative has something with securing Iranian borders and preventing any change in international borders.

Over the past few days, many Iranian officials have underlined the need to preserve the territorial integrity of countries and prevent any change in international borders.

As Araghchi visited Iran's borders with Azerbaijan on Monday, the commander of Iran's Army warned that Iran will not tolerate any change in international borders.

"Respecting the territorial integrity of countries and preserving the official international borders are among our well-known principles and we will not tolerate any changes in these borders. We have opposed these changes and will continue to do so," said Major General Seyed Abdolrahim Mousavi.

Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Ground Forces, also echoed the same red line while visiting Iran's north-western borders.

"We will not accept change in the geopolitics of borders. This issue is the red line of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Pakpour asserted.

In addition to border issues, Iran has another reason to help end the violence in Nagorno-Karabakh: the death of civilians. The war took a dangerous turn on October 17 when Ganja, the second largest city of Azerbaijan, came under a missile attack which resulted in the death of at least 12 civilians.

Iran's embassy in Azerbaijan denounced the attack as a "war crime," calling for an immediate end to the attacks on innocent people.

"The embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Baku roundly rejects the last midnight's missile attack on the city of Ganja, which has left dozens of civilians dead and injured," the Iranian embassy in Baku said in a statement, adding, "[The embassy] while expressing sympathy with the grieving families and wishing a speedy recovery for the injured, reiterates that attacking cities and innocent people goes against all legal principles and the recognized international norms and is considered a war crime that must be stopped as soon as possible."

Iran condemns 'repetitive' U.S. oil sanctions

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian diplomats have denounced the United States' new oil sanctions on Iran as repetitive that will unite the Iranian people and government against the U.S. economic pressure.

"The U.S. government enforces a sanctions law a hundred times and adds ambassadors, ministers or companies to its list every day. But adding members of the government, ambassadors, managers, and political or economic institutions of the country does not solve their problem. The Iranian people and government are united in defeating the U.S. policy of sanctions and maximum pressure," tweeted Hamid Baeidinejad, Iran's ambassador to the UK.

The ambassador was responding to the new oil sanctions that the U.S. announced late on Monday. The U.S. has designated Iran's Ministry of Petroleum along with

"U.S.'s hostility towards Iranian people has no limit. U.S. is sanctioning entities that have already been sanctioned under other phony charges. U.S.' addiction to sanctions has not paid off, as Robert O'Brien admitted, U.S. has out-sanctioned itself," tweeted Alireza Miryousefi, the spokesman for Iran's mission to the UN.

Iran boosts air defenses on northwestern borders amid Armenia-Azerbaijan war

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Major General Seyed Abdolrahim Mousavi, the commander of Iran's Army, said on Monday that Iran has strengthened its air defense systems in the northwestern region of the country.

"Air defense units have been strengthened in the northwestern region of the country and will be further strengthened if needed," said the top general, adding, "The tranquility of the people is of special importance to us."

Mousavi, who also serves as the commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defense Base, underlined the importance of preserving the security of the people, especially those who live in border areas.

General Mousavi added, "Respecting the

territorial integrity of countries and preserving the official international borders are among our well-known principles and we will not tolerate any changes in these borders. We have opposed these changes and will continue to do so."

With respect to the presence of Takfiri elements, Mousavi said, "Takfiri terrorists, Daesh, and the Zionists are seen as ostracized elements all over the world, and their presence everywhere causes hatred and insecurity. Our forces, as they proved many times, will severely counter the presence of these elements."

The commander also directed the Army Air Force and the IRGC air defense forces to strengthen their air defense units.



General Mousavi was appointed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution as the commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defense Base in May 2019. At that time, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei tasked him with strength-

ening the country's air defenses.

"Given the segregation of Air Defense affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army from the Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defense Base, I hereby appoint you as the Commander-in-Chief of this base, while you shall remain in your position of Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army," the Leader said in a decree as he announced the appointment of General Mousavi.

The Leader added, "It is expected that all capabilities and capacities of the country's Armed Forces be used in this crucial position; the country be provided with [with] impervious air defense; and the coherent, complete, strong and up-to-date network of commanding and controlling Air Defense be strengthened."

SPORTS

Bosnia, Iran behind closed doors

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Bosnian and Herzegovina football team will host Iran in a friendly at the Asim Ferhatovic match on Nov. 12.

The match will be held at 18 p.m. local time behind closed doors due to ongoing coronavirus pandemic.



Iran have already played six times with the European team, where they have emerged victorious in four matches and lost a match. One match ended in a draw.

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

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

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

Yakhchali steals show as Rostock beats Bayer Giants

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Rostock Seawolves Iranian guard Behnam Yakhchali helped his team beat Bayer Giants Leverkusen in Matchweek 2 of the Basketball Bundesliga (BBL).

Rostock defeated the Bayer Giants 86-83 thanks to Yakhchali's outstanding performance.

The Iranian international was named as the Man of the Match after he contributed 26 points, hit five three-point throws and also collected five rebounds.

"We played very well today. That was important after we lost last week," said Yakhchali.

"I think we can play even better. But we can build on this victory," the 25-year-old guard stated.

"The team comes first. The most important thing is that we won. Without the passes from my teammates, I couldn't score 26 points," Yakhchali explained.

Cyclist Mohammad Parash passes away at age of 33

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Former Iran national cycling team member Mohammad Parash died on Tuesday.

Parash passed away due to heart attack at the age of 33.

He represented Iran in the men's Keirin at the 16th Asian Games Guangzhou 2010.

Tehran Times offers its heartfelt condolence to his bereaved family.

Amirhossein Toukhete tests positive for COVID-19

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iranian volleyball player Amirhossein Toukhete has tested positive for COVID-19.

Toukhete, who currently plays at Slovenian club Ach Volley, must self-quarantine for two weeks.

A record daily death toll of 346 pushed the total toll to 33,299, health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari told state media.

New cases set a record of 6,968, bringing the total to 581,824 in a third big wave of infections this year.

Iran volleyball league to resume on Nov. 8

The 2020/21 Iran Volleyball Super League will resume on November 8, Shahram Azimi, Director of Competition and Events of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation, said on Tuesday.

The League was postponed on October 10 in order to cut chain of coronavirus' spread.

At a seminar held on Monday in Iran's Olympic Academy in Tehran, chaired by IRIVF President Mohammadreza Davarzani, the clubs' representatives and League's organizers reached a joint decision to continue the League in Tehran.

The remaining matches of the first half of the season will be held simultaneously in three venues in Tehran. The games must be played every 15 days until the end of the first half of the season.

"The competition will resume on November 8 and the first half of the season will finish on December 22," Azimi said.

"The second half of the season phase was scheduled to be held in five weeks but the exact time of the matches will be announced after a meeting with the clubs' representatives," he added.

At the end of the preliminary round, eight teams will qualify for the final round. In this stage, the top team will take on the eighth-placed side, the second-placed team play seventh-placed, the third-placed meet sixth-placed and the fourth-placed team take on the side lying fifth.

Total of 14 teams are participating in the 31st edition of Iran Volleyball League and Foolad Sirjan sit top of the standing after Matchweek 7.

(Source: iranvolleyball.com)

Petchem production up 8% in 7 months yr/yr

→ "Iran's petrochemical industry will be accounting for 6.2 percent of the total global petrochemical output by the year 1404," Mohammadi said in November 2019.

Meanwhile, the country's petrochemical products basket is also going to be more diversified by the mentioned year.

Back in September, Mohammadi had said that major development plans were underway for diversifying the country's petrochemical output considering the wide range of feedstock available.



"The macro development planning that the company is currently making for the petrochemical industry is beyond the second and third leaps of the industry, and we expect the company's projects directorate to follow up and help achieve these plans," he said.

In addition to the projects in the second and third leaps of the petrochemical industry, 34 new projects with an investment volume of \$17 billion, and a total capacity of 19 million tons have been defined, with their implementation, Iran's position will be more privileged, Mohammadi said.

There are currently 56 active petrochemical complexes across the country which receive 33 million tons of feedstock annually (equivalent to 650,000 barrels of crude oil per day).

The number of the petrochemical complexes is planned to reach 83 by [the Iranian calendar year of] 1400 (starts in March 2021), and their feedstock consumption is expected to increase to 62 million tons (equivalent to 1.4 million bpd).

Also according to the Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, the country's annual petrochemical output is planned to reach more than 100 million tons by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 and to 130 million tons or nearly doubled by 1404.

Iran's oil industry will not yield to U.S pressure: Zanganeh

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Monday that the country's oil industry will not yield to pressure from the United States, Shana reported.

Reacting to the news of Washington sanctioning the minister, Zanganeh twitted: "U.S. sanctions against me and my colleagues are a passive reaction to Washington's failure to cut [Iran's] oil exports to zero."

"The era of unilateralism is over in the world. Iran's oil industry will not be hamstrung," Zanganeh added.

Zanganeh is a veteran of Iran's oil sector and widely seen as a skillful technocrat who shepherded the Islamic Republic's revival within OPEC after the 2015 nuclear deal, Bloomberg reported on Monday.

The architect of the Iranian oil industry's post-sanctions recovery, Zanganeh helped secure several multibillion-dollar joint-ventures with foreign investors, including France's Total SA and China National Petroleum Corp, the report said.

According to Bloomberg, the new sanctions are aimed to increase pressure on Iran ahead of the Nov. 3 election, partly to help ensure that a potential Joe Biden administration would find it more difficult to ease sanctions.

The U.S. announced new restrictions on Iran's financial sector this month while adding 18 new banks to the list of its sanctions.

Many experts and analysts believe that the new sanctions are not going to have any meaningful impact on the oil market or on the country's economy.

Earlier on Sunday, U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said that the U.S. has little opportunity left to impose new sanctions against Russia and Iran, as there are already many of them.

"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.

Kish Island connected to national gas network

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's southern Kish Island has been connected to the seventh trans-Iranian gas pipeline, according to the Operator of Kish Gas Field's Development Project Abdollah Mehrabi.

According to the official, the executive operations for branching from the mentioned pipeline was carried out by Marunkaran Company in compliance with international technical and safety standards, the portal of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) reported.

Health instructions and standards were also implemented to prevent the spread of the coronavirus during the mentioned operations, the official said.

Mehrabi noted that this project is aimed to transport natural gas to the Kish Island power plants through the national network.

The construction of this 18-kilometer (km) gas pipeline, which connects Kish Island to Bandar Aftab, was completed on October 18.

The first part of this pipeline, with a length of 2.2 km, was laid using the shore pulling method in the Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22–August 21) and the second phase of the operations began on October 3 using the pipe layer vessel C-Master, according to the official.

Derived from the seventh national line in the north of Bastak city in the southern Hormozgan province, the pipeline will lead to Kish Island gas power plants, Mehrabi had previously said.

Engineering studies, the supply of goods, and the implementation of piping and cabling of the mentioned project have been carried out by Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company (IOECC) as the contractor of the project.

Located below Kish Island in the Persian Gulf, Iran, Kish Gas Field has been under development since 2012.

The field was discovered in 2006 by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and is the world's fifth-biggest offshore gas field.

The field is being developed by Iranian Pars Oil and Gas Company.

Fruitful co-op between NIDC, contractors expedites digging operation

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) dug and completed digging operation of 72 oil and gas wells during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20–October 21).

Some 41,793 meters of digging has been conducted for the mentioned wells, which consisted of 22 development/appraisal wells, 48 workover wells, and two exploration wells.

Digging operations during the mentioned period of time have been completed sooner than the schedule as the result of effective cooperation between the NIDC and the contractors of the projects.

As Saeed Akbari, the acting director of NIDC's digging operation department, has announced, the digging operations of 13 wells have been completed some 233 days sooner than the planned time, which has a high economic value.

Of the mentioned 72 wells, 56 are located in the area under the operation of National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), seven in the area under the operation of Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), five in the Petroleum Engineering and Development



Company (PEDEC)'s under operation zones, and one in the region under the operation of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC).

Holding 70 onshore and offshore drilling rigs as well as equipment and facilities for offering integrated technical and engineering services, the National Iranian Drilling

Company accounts for a major part of drilling exploration as well as appraisal/development wells in Iran.

As previously announced, the company has dug over 240 oil and gas wells across the country in the past two years.

While the development of Iran's oil and

gas industry has never been halted by the U.S. sanctions, and also not hindered by the coronavirus pandemic, the industry has been even experiencing major progress and development in different sectors.

One of the major areas with proper development has been the digging industry.

Not only the digging operations of oil and gas wells have been conducted as expected, this sector has also managed to indigenize the know-how to manufacture some major parts and equipment.

Back in May, an official with the National Iranian Drilling Company said that the company has indigenized the knowledge for manufacturing 6,000 drilling equipment in collaboration with domestic manufacturers and engineers in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

According to Behnoud Mansournejad, the head of NIDC's Technology and Engineering Department, before this success, the technology for manufacturing the mentioned equipment was in the possession of a handful of foreign companies.

Mansournejad said that the use of the domestically-made parts and equipment saved the country 45 billion rials (about \$107 million) in the previous year.

Promoting barter trade a great way of increasing exports

→ Commenting on the matter on Friday, CBI Governor Hemmati also supported the idea and announced plans for increasing the use of oil-for-goods agreements between Iran and other countries.

"The use of barter exchanges of oil for basic goods needed by the country will be expanded along with current methods of trade, to increase the volume of foreign trade and for a better usage of domestic production facilities," Hemmati wrote in an Instagram post.

To learn more details on the matter, the Tehran Times conducted an interview with the Secretary of Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union (OPEC) Hamid Hosseini, what follows is the gist of the interview.

According to Hosseini based on the Oil Ministry decision, several capable candidates among the country's top export companies will be chosen after assessments by the mentioned ministry and the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, and will be authorized to use the mentioned single window system to export oil in exchange for importing the

country's necessary commodities.

"The government should provide the export/importers a list of the country's needed commodities and allow them to export goods (in this case oil) provided that they import only the commodities determined by the government," Hosseini explained.

Of course, we have experience in this regard, and this barter trade program has been used several times in the country, for instance, a program exactly like the one recently proposed, was implemented in the Iranian calendar year 1370 (started in March 1991), the official added.

"In the program implemented that year the government allowed traders to export whatever goods they could manage but expected them to import only the commodity items specified by the government," he explained.

In the current scheme, however, the government has started with crude oil at the first stage, and traders are only supported to export crude oil in exchange for other commodities, according to the official.

Hosseini noted that the supply of essential goods and raw materials required by the production sector is the government's priority in the mentioned barter agreements.

Underlining the CBI governor's remarks on the matter, he noted that barter trade has been, for long, a way to deal with sanctions while developing the countries' foreign trade.

It should be noted that Iran is already exporting significant amounts of oil despite the U.S. sanctions and other external problems like the pandemic.

The latest reports on Iran's oil exports indicate that the country increased oil exports sharply in September in defiance of the U.S. sanctions.

Data from TankerTrackers and two other firms indicated exports were rising in September, although the figures fall into a wide range of between 400,000 bpd and 1.5 million bpd, Reuters reported.

So, it is expected that this method, along with other ways of exporting oil, which the country is currently using, would increase Iran's foreign trade significantly in the near future.

Over 1.3m tons of basic goods loaded, unloaded at Shahid Rajaee Port in 7 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — More than 1.3 million tons of basic commodities have been loaded and unloaded at Shahid Rajaee Port, in Iran's southern Hormozgan province, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), according to a provincial official.

Alireza Mohammadi, the director-general of Ports and Maritime Department of Hormozgan Province, also underscored that the loading and unloading operations have risen at the ports of the province.

In late August, the head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said that the project for the construction of the country's biggest mechanized mineral terminal at the southern Shahid Rajaee Port is going to kick off in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

"One of the most important projects invested by the private sector is the Shahid Rajaee Port's mineral terminal; this project is currently under investor studies and its implementation will begin soon this year," Mohammad Rastad stated.

According to the official, a 50-trillion-rial (about \$1.19 billion) build-operate-transfer (BOT) contract was signed last September between the PMO and private sector for the construction of the mentioned terminal.

The contract's period is 33 years, Rastad added.

Referring to the country's plan for exporting 55 million tons of steel products by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025) and the positive impact of this terminal in accelerating loading and unloading operations at the port for the



achieving the mentioned goal, he added: "This terminal is a base for our future plans."

According to Ali Hassanzadeh, the PMO deputy head, the construction of Shahid Rajaee Port's new mechanized mineral terminal will allow vessels with a capacity of 150,000 tons to berth at the port.

Currently, vessels with a capacity of 60,000 tons are able to berth at Shahid Rajaee Port.

Enjoying the most modern container terminals and port equipment, Shahid Rajaee accounts for 85 percent of the total loading and unloading at the Iranian ports.

Given its significant role in the country's import and export of products as well as transit and transhipment via Iran, the development of the port has been among the most important development projects in the country.

Back in July, Rastad had announced that the third phase of Shahid Rajaee's development plan is going to go operational by the end of the current Iranian year.

"The third phase [of the port] is expected to go operational before the end of the year and it will be able to accept ships with capacities up to 18,400 TEUs," the official stated.

Aras Free Zone exports commodities worth \$240m in H1

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone (AFZ) in Iran's northwestern province of East Azarbaijan exported commodities valued at \$240 million to 10 countries during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20–October 21), according to a local official.

Safar Shafsfand, the deputy head of Aras Free Zone Organization's for investment and economic affairs, mentioned dried fruits and nuts, plastic products, steel ingots, and production lines machinery as the main exported products and Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Czech Republic, and Uzbekistan as the export destinations during the mentioned period of time.

Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone is located in the northwest of Iran in the border point with neighboring Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989–March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote the non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern



Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

Considering the important role that the free trade zones play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran is seriously pursuing the development of its existing zones and establishment of new zones as well.

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

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian free zones; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

Many strides made for increasing activities in the free zones have played a significant part in boosting the country's non-oil exports and brought prosperity in the other economic sectors.

Deals worth €245m to be signed to indigenize industrial equipment

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry is going to set up four domestic production promotion desks in the fields of petrochemicals, refining, auto, and home appliance industries in which deals will be signed for indigenizing €245 million worth of equipment in the said sectors.

Of the mentioned figure, €60 million is related to the petrochemical industry, €80 million is pertaining to the refining industry, €63 million is related to the home appliance industry and €42 million is for the automotive industry.

According to the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry data, relying on domestic production has saved Iran €1.045 billion since the implementation of the program in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) during which 11 desks had been set up on the matter.

Of the mentioned amount, €140 million has been the

share of oil, gas, and petrochemical industries and €120 million has been the share of telecommunications, electricity, and electronics.

Also, the manufacturers of automobile and motorcycle parts and equipment managed to indigenize the knowledge for producing €340 million worth of products, while the steel and copper industry saved €440 million.

As reported, the mentioned program for establishing 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.

Back in August, the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced that domestic production of 19,000 parts in the steel sector has saved the country €1.5 billion in 12 years.

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ANALYSIS / INTERVIEW

Trump's maximum pressure on Iran has been a failure: Italian analyst

"Maximum pressure has been a failure if the goal was a new nuclear deal and a more secure region"

By Amir Mohammad Esmaeili

TEHRAN — Riccardo Alcaro, head of the Global Actors Programme of the Istituto Affari Internazionali, tells the Tehran Times that U.S. maximum pressure campaign on Iran has failed to achieve its goals and the U.S. does not have "the support of its European allies" anymore.

"The U.S. wanted to extend the arms embargo on Iran by making use of a mechanism that can only be used by JCPOA participants. If the Europeans had accepted that, they would have nullified all their efforts to keep the JCPOA alive, as Iran would almost certainly have abandoned the deal and perhaps even the JCPOA," notes Riccardo Alcaro, who is the author of "Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis".

On EU foreign policy toward Iran, he argues, "The Europeans do not have the capacity to protect themselves from American extra-territorial sanctions, but they have been awakened to the problem by Trump's willingness to use such sanctions against allies. This means that the Europeans are now contemplating steps they can take to insulate them more from pressure from the U.S."

Following is the full text of the interview.

■ As you might know the United Nations Security Council rejected the U.S. resolution to extend arms embargo on Iran and now Iran is gearing up to sell and purchase arms in international markets. In your view, why did not European countries come along with the U.S. in this effort?

A: The reason is very simple; the U.S. wanted to extend the arms embargo on Iran by making use of a mechanism that can only be used by JCPOA participants. If the Europeans had accepted that, they would have nullified all their efforts to keep the JCPOA alive, as Iran would almost certainly have abandoned the deal and perhaps even the JCPOA.

To be clear, the Europeans do not support the sales of conventional weapons to Iran (they have their own embargo in place until 2023), yet they do not believe that the best way to limit arms sales to Iran is to destroy the JCPOA. The Europeans were aware that the American push for the arms embargo extension in the UN was less a way to limit arms sales to Iran (the U.S. can still do this through extraterritorial sanctions against potential sellers of weapons to Iran) than it was a way to push Iran outside the JCPOA. That's why they opposed the move by the U.S. firmly. And wisely Iran has not fallen in the trap.

■ Experts believe that the EU is unable to adopt an independent foreign policy from the U.S. toward Iran. What do you think?

A: The experts are right, to an extent. The Europeans do not have the capacity to protect themselves from American extra-territorial sanctions, but they have been



awakened to the problem by Trump's willingness to use such sanctions against allies. This means that the Europeans are now contemplating steps they can take to insulate them more from pressure from the U.S.

In addition, the Europeans have consistently and publicly opposed the Trump-championed policy of maximum pressure. Politically, all EU governments and the UK have remained committed to the JCPOA. If the next U.S. administration opts for diplomacy again with Iran - Biden would surely do so, and even Trump may want to do so given that maximum pressure has not delivered the expected results - the continued existence of the JCPOA will be of paramount importance as a frame of reference. And Europe's continued commitment to the deal is one key reason why Iran has not quit yet.

Since Europe reached out to Iran on the nuclear issue in late 2003, its ultimate goals have consistently been that of facilitating the conditions for meaningful U.S.-Iranian nuclear diplomacy. They managed divergences with the Bush administration in 2003-8, then supported Obama's diplomacy push in 2009-15, and have tried to limit the damage done by Trump since 2018. If diplomacy re-starts - and as I said I think there might be a chance for it even under a 2nd Trump administration - Europe's role in making that possible will have

been important, even essential. Europe is a secondary player, but a very important player nonetheless. It cannot replace the U.S., but it can contribute to making U.S.-Iran nuclear diplomacy start again.

■ How do you assess EU foreign policy toward Iran after the nuclear deal?

A: It's a mixed assessment. The E3 and the EU have failed to persuade the Trump administration not to leave the JCPOA and to persuade it not to threaten European companies with American extra-territorial sanctions, which has forced European companies not to do business with Iran even if legal under European law. French-led attempts at shuttle diplomacy between Iran and the U.S. has not been effective either.

While this seems an utter failure, I think this assessment is too harsh or at least premature. The E3 and the EU have remained politically committed to the JCPOA, have never renounced their ambition to have normal economic relations and a political dialogue with Iran (if the JCPOA is still working), have rejected maximum pressure and have resisted American attempts to re-impose the UN arms embargo.

If the JCPOA is still in place three years after Trump quit it, I think it is because Iran's government appreciates Europe's commitment to the deal as in keeping with Iran's national interest, both as a way to show the world that the U.S. maximum

pressure policy has not the support of America's European allies and - most importantly - as a way to keep in place a platform for U.S.-Iran nuclear diplomacy, which will surely happen if Biden wins the election in November and may still happen even if Trump is reconfirmed as U.S. president.

■ How do you see the future of the JCPOA? If Joe Biden becomes the U.S. president, will he embrace the nuclear deal?

A: I think Biden will surely be willing to re-engage Iran in nuclear talks and contemplate rejoining the JCPOA. But Biden will want to go further than the JCPOA, which I'm not sure Iran is so much interested in.

■ Do you think Trump's maximum pressure on Iran has been successful?

A: It has succeeded in harming the Iranian economy, no doubt about that. Trump has shown that the full unilateral mobilization of unilateral American sanctions has been more damaging for Iran than the partial mobilization of multilateral sanctions. Even in Europe, we did not expect U.S. "secondary sanctions" (that is, sanctions with an extra-territorial reach) could be as effective in binging the Europeans as they have.

This is said, inflicting harm on Iranians was always meant to be a means to a goal. Ostensibly the goal was to press Iran to agree to greater concessions than the ones included in the JCPOA, to limit its ballistic missiles and scale back its support for allies across the region. This has not happened. Iran's nuclear program is more advanced than it was in 2018; the ballistic program is more or less where it was in 2018, and Iran is as involved in the region as it was in 2018 and will always be in the future. Yet the region is significantly more insecure for the U.S. than it was in 2015-16, with clashes between U.S. forces and Iran-allied forces in the region happening on a regular basis, the Strait of Hormuz more militarized than ever. So maximum pressure has been a failure - at least so far - if the goal was a new nuclear deal and a more secure region.

Many argue that maximum pressure's real objective is to provoke so much damage to Iran's economy to foment social unrest, mass protests, and eventually resulting in regime change. I can't really tell from outside, but it seems to me that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not at risk of overthrow. So maximum pressure has also failed in that regard.

This said, let me finish with a warning: if Trump is re-elected, there is a chance he may be tempted to engage in diplomacy again (especially if Iran shows some interest in the matter). More likely however is that he will double down on maximum pressure, as many in his administration - especially secretary Pompeo - believe not so much that maximum pressure has not worked, as that it has not worked yet.

"Ostensibly the goal (maximum pressure) was to press Iran to agree to greater concessions than the ones included in the JCPOA, to limit its ballistic missiles and scale back its support for allies across the region. This has not happened. Iran's nuclear program is more advanced than it was in 2018."

Trump may very well provoke supporters to street violence

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN — An American academic believes the U.S. President Donald Trump may bring his supporters to the streets to influence the election outcome.

Trump may succeed in bringing his supporters to the streets to engage in protest and potentially violence, but this will only be effective if the electoral college count is close, such as in 2000," David Yaghoubian says.

"The Trump regime will use any legal means and especially gray areas within the Constitution to emerge victoriously ultimately," the professor of history at California State University San Bernardino highlighted.

Here is the text of the interview:

■ Some American experts believe that the final winner of the 2020 election may be determined some two or three months after Election Day because it will take more time to count the mail-in ballots. This has raised fears of domestic unrest as incumbent President Donald Trump has also hinted; he is not a fan of a peaceful transfer of power. What is your take on the situation?

A: It is all going to come down to the electoral college totals. Should the vote tally on Nov. 3 produce only a slim victory for Joe Biden, Donald Trump will likely try to use whatever legal means he has at his disposal to emerge victoriously eventually. This includes potentially running out the clock via vote counts and recounts, utilizing the courts in an attempt to challenge or invalidate specific voting blocks, and employing whatever incendiary and decisive rhetoric he can conceive of to create an atmosphere of crisis and distrust and thereby rally his base and favorable media outlets to his defense. An electoral college tie of 269-269 will likely result in a Trump victory since, as per the Constitution, it is the House of Representatives that votes to make the final decision, and Republicans will likely retain a majority of state delegations. I do not believe Trump will seek to contest a Biden landslide, nor do I think Trump will attempt to call on the U.S. military primarily due to the fact that there is virtually no

chance that military elites will take sides in domestic politics. Trump very well may succeed in bringing his supporters to the streets to engage in protest and potentially violence, but this will only be effective if the electoral college count is close, such as in 2000.

■ There also seems to be some controversial laws in the U.S. Constitution, for example, the one which allows the Senate President (now Vice-President Mike Pence) to appoint new electors in states in special circumstances that may potentially change the election outcome. Do you think the scenario is plausible?

A: This is indeed a plausible scenario. Within the 12th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and subsequent Electoral Count Act provisions do exist for Senate President Mike Pence to produce the official count of certified electoral votes. In the case of a very close race, there is justified concern that Pence could use this authority to influence President Trump's vote outcome. The Trump regime will use any legal means and especially gray areas within the Constitution to emerge victoriously ultimately.

■ How do you think the U.S. military will respond to probable domestic unrest and also to probable Trump's refusal to hand over the presidency?

A: Keeping with American tradition, domestic unrest, especially if it involves property damage, will be put down with force, albeit with varying levels of violence depending on the region, as we saw in the 2020 George Floyd/BLM protests against police brutality. With that said, there is no foreseeable circumstance in which the U.S. military will become involved in this presidential contest, including Trump stubbornly refusing to leave the White House. In such a case, Capitol Police will deliver an eviction notice and facilitate its implementation, not a branch of the U.S. military.

■ How much do you think is the influence of the 'U.S. foreign policy' on the result of this election?

A: In my memory, there has never been a U.S. presidential election where foreign policy has played such a negligible role. While average American citizens generally remain uninterested and ignorant of both



U.S. foreign policy history as well as contemporary initiatives, this lack of awareness and concern is particularly pronounced in this election season due to both the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the circus-like atmospherics of the Trump administration and its penchant to incite domestic conflict and culture wars. With that said, the single foreign policy issue that has been continually discussed and regarding which the two candidates have expressed opposing views is Iran-U.S. relations and the JCPOA. This could end up being significant insofar as candidate Donald Trump's anti-war campaign rhetoric arguably pushed him over the top in 2016 by bringing in votes from disgruntled Democrats, Libertarians, anti-imperialists, and peace activists. In the wake of the cowardly murder of General Qassim Soleimani and the subsequent Iranian military response, as well as the ongoing "maximum pressure" campaign and the medical and economic terrorism that it entails, Donald Trump has lost the mantle of anti-interventionist that he tried to cultivate as a candidate. In what is seemingly shaping up to be a very close contest, Trump's belligerent and universally unsuccessful foreign policy track record could ultimately play a decisive role in pushing Joe Biden to victory.

News

Bomb at seminary in Pakistan kills 8 students, wounds 136

A powerful bomb blast ripped through an Islamic seminary on the outskirts of the northwest Pakistani city of Peshawar Tuesday morning, killing at least eight students and wounding 136 others, police and a hospital spokesman said.

The bombing happened as a prominent religious scholar during a special class was delivering a lecture about the teachings of Islam at the main hall of the Jamia Zubairia madrassa, said police officer Waqar Azim. He said initial investigations suggest the bomb went off minutes after someone left a bag at the madrassa, AP reported.

TV footage showed the damaged main hall of the seminary, where the bombing took place. The hall was littered with broken glass and its carpet was stained with blood. Police said at least 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of explosives were used in the attack.

Several of the wounded students were in critical condition, and hospital authorities feared the death toll could climb further. Authorities said some seminary teachers and employees were also wounded in the bombing.

Initially police said the bombing killed and wounded children studying at the seminary but later revised their account to say that the students were in their mid-20s.

Pompeo invokes China threat as India, U.S. sign satellite data pact

India has signed a military agreement with the United States for the sharing of sensitive satellite data as the two sides held a top-level security dialogue aimed at countering China's growing power in the region.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper flew into New Delhi on Monday for talks with Indian leaders at a time when India is locked in its most serious military standoff with China in decades at the disputed Himalayan border.

The two sides signed a key agreement on sharing satellite data for military purposes during the so-called bi-annual "two plus two" meeting.

Yemeni minister of youth, sports assassinated in Sana'a

Yemen says Minister of Youth and Sports Hassan Zaid has been killed in an assassination operation carried out by criminal elements affiliated with Saudi-led aggressors.

In a statement carried by al-Masirah television network, the Yemeni Interior Ministry announced that Zaid was shot while driving with his daughter in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, on Tuesday.

The assassination operation claimed the minister's life and injured his daughter, it added, Press TV reported.

The targeted killing of Zaid is a criminal act, which is part of the aggressors' schemes to remove Yemeni national figures, the ministry said, noting that an investigation was underway to bring criminals to justice.

Saudi-owned Al Arabiya TV channel described Zaid as an important leader of Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement.

So far, no group has claimed the responsibility for the attack.

Nearly 6,000 Afghan civilians killed or wounded in 2020: UN

Nearly 6,000 Afghan civilians were killed or wounded in the first nine months of the year as heavy fighting between government forces and Taliban insurgents rages on despite efforts to find peace, the United Nations said Tuesday.

From January to September, there were 5,939 civilian casualties in the fighting - 2,117 people killed and 3,822 wounded, the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a report.

"High levels of violence continue with a devastating impact on civilians, with Afghanistan remaining among the deadliest places in the world to be a civilian," the mission said in a quarterly report.

Civilian casualties were 30% lower than in the same period last year but UNAMA said violence has failed to slow since the beginning of talks between government negotiators and the Taliban that began in the Qatari capital of Doha last month.

Resistance News

Akhras continues hunger strike for 93rd day

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — Palestinian detainee Maher Al-deek Akhras continues his hunger strike protesting his administrative detention for the 93rd consecutive day Tuesday, amid a serious deterioration in his health condition. Meanwhile, several solidarity activists escalated their calls for saving his life.

Prisoners affairs institutions warned that Akhras suffers from a very dangerous health condition and severe fatigue. He is unable to move and his ability to hear and speak was affected negatively.

The institutions indicated that the doctors expressed their fears that his vital organs will suffer a sudden relapse as he refuses to take any fluids or supplements.

Qadri Abu Bakr, the head of the Prisoners and Ex-prisoners Affairs Authority, warned of the seriousness of the health condition of Akhras.

Akhras is being held in the Kaplan Hospital between life and death, where he suffers from a very critical health condition, severe headache, body aches and strong seizures.

The Israeli occupation authorities (IOA) decided on Friday to cancel the freeze of the administrative detention of Akhras, which was issued on the 23rd of last September.

The Israeli army arrested Akhras on 27/07/2020 and the IOA ordered his administrative detention for four months.

For Rent in Tajrish Sq.

Near Sa'dabad Palace

Two large bedrooms with private roof garden

See photo in WhatsApp

Owner Direct Tel

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Iran forms national committee for gastronomy tourism

TOURISM TEHRAN — A national committee has recently been established for gastronomy tourism, which is globally known as a vital component of the traveling experience.

"Gastronomy tourism is one of the travel branches that can diversify the portfolio of tourism products in our country to revive a wide range of local food and beverages to be offered to domestic and foreign tourists," a tourism official said on Tuesday.

Leila Azhdari made the remarks during a video conference with provincial and local tourism offices in which she explained dimensions, structure, plans, and goals the committee pursues, CHTN reported.



The committee has finished the first phase of compiling a comprehensive atlas for Iranian foods and is working on the second, she added.

Efforts to make television programs, startups, and help top local dishes being registered on the intangible cultural heritage list, and to organize food tourism tours are among the short-term programs for the committee, the official explained.

Earlier this year, Iran joined an online campaign launched by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to promote gastronomy as an essential part of tourism. Experts say that food is not merely an organic product with biochemical compositions.

However, for members of each community, food is defined as a cultural element. Iranian cuisine, usually dominated by fragrant herbs, varies from region to region. It principally accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

Potash salt village, a must-see tourist attraction in Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — Potash salt village, near the city of Khur, central Isfahan province, is one of the most beautiful and must-see tourist attractions in the country.



Located north of Potash Mining Complex, the village has many attractions to offer to geotourists and health tourists as well as those who are interested in traveling to the central desert of Iran.

The salt village has equipped suites, restaurants and coffee shops, sports fields and spas, which gives tourists the opportunity of living in the heart of the desert.

Almost all buildings in the village are white, which reminds the color of salt, and more facilities such as boating lake, safari, and hotel are planned to be established in the near future to attract more foreign and domestic tourists.

One of the village's natural attractions is Potash salt waterfall, with a 25-meter high and eye-catching view that receives a large number of tourists throughout the year.

The neighboring mining complex is the first potash mine in Iran and has the largest potash reserves in West Asia.

However, the area needs to be promoted more properly as it hasn't been introduced well yet.

Zanjan's Chehel Sotoun Mosque being restored to former grandeur

TOURISM TEHRAN — Parts of Chehel Sotoun Mosque in Zanjan, west-central Iran, have undergone some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

With the completion of the first phase of the restoration, the project has entered its second phase, Amir Arjmand said on Monday.



The project involves repairing the mosque's columns, walls, ceiling's insulation, arches, and gutters as well as replacing worn-out materials and lightening roofs, the official added.

The Qajar-era (1789–1925) mosque is located in the historic bazaar of Zanjan. It is the second most prestigious seminary school in Zanjan after Jameh Mosque.

The main prayer hall of the mosque is built in Chehel Sotoun (forty columns) style, which is mostly compared to the 17th-century Chehel Sotoun palace in Isfahan.

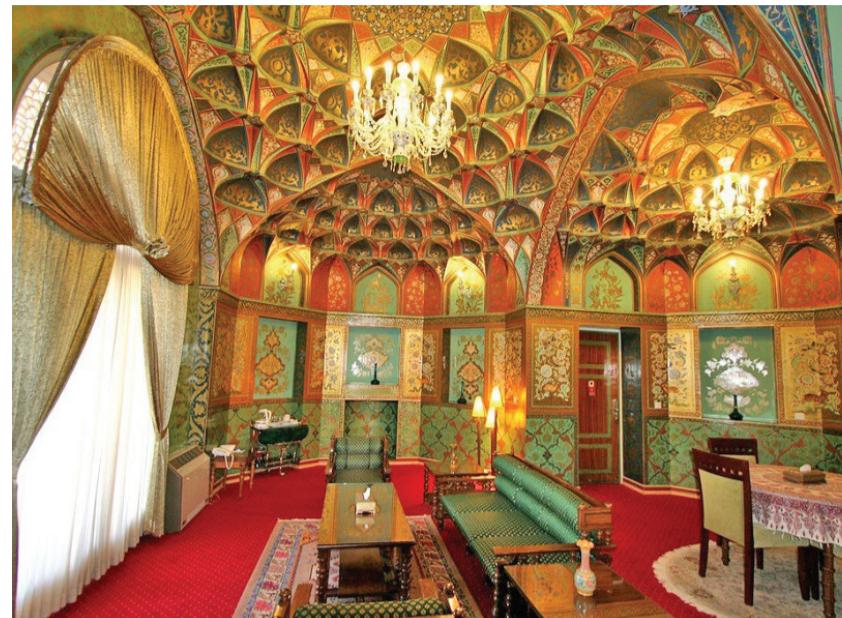
Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180–242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katal-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

Hasht Behesht Palace, a gateway to the paradise of color and art

→ 1 The brilliant architecture of the palace with its design and decoration has made it a legendary palace.

The two-story palace is built two meters above the ground level with four different façades each one visible through a particular angle. The walls of the first floor contain paintings and fascia architecture. The second floor exhibits some rooms, windows, and doors with cachet design. In the middle of the hall, there is a marble pool called "The Pearl Pool". The design of the pool is in such a way that the water seeps through its holes like a pearl. This palace was a house to the eight wives of Shah Abbas. Four of them used to live on the first floor and the four others on the second floor. The artistic and glorious decorative design of the building has made the travelers speechless through all these years.

Despite its modest size, the palace has a rather complicated plan one has the feeling of coming into a labyrinth of interlinked rectangular and octagonal rooms. The ceiling that covers the main section in the building as well as the walls of the rooms is lined with colorful



plasterwork and glamorous paintings.

Some say that in architecture Hasht Behesht refers to a specific type of floor plan common in Persian architecture,

whereby the plan is divided into eight chambers surrounding the central room and each of these eight rooms represents eight levels of Paradise as

Muslims believe.

In its heyday, the palace featured the most exquisite decorations: gilded mosaics and mirror-work, calligraphic friezes and brocade panels, marble slabs, and stucco moldings. But it is for its garden setting and the plaster ceilings cut into a variety of forms (similar to those in the Music Chamber of Ali Qapu) that the edifice is especially noted.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

Brazil seeks enhanced cultural, museology ties with Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Brazilian Ambassador to Tehran Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos on Monday paid a visit to the National Museum of Iran, discussing ways with the museum's director Jebral Nokandeh to expand cooperation in cultural and museology arenas.

During the meeting, Santos highlighted the long-established friendly relations between the two countries, describing it as positive and historical.

He also referred to the success of "Iran, Cradle of Civilization" — a loan exhibition of Iranian relics exhibited in the Netherlands and Spain, adding the role of museums is very effective in strengthening friendship [in the international scene].

"Holding [joint] exhibits of historical, cultural relics lay the proper ground for countries to widen relations," he said.

The development of cultural relations with Iran is of great importance for Brazil, and I will make a special effort to expand relations and cooperation."

Nokandeh for his part attached great importance to

developing cultural and museology relations between the two sides as he welcomed the envoy's proposal of organizing loan exhibits.

"The realization of holding mutual exhibitions is a priority for the National Museum of Iran and we announce readiness to develop comprehensive inter-museum cooperation," Nokandeh added.

The Iranian official said during the current limitations caused by the coronavirus outbreak, the expansion of virtual activities holds a dual function, suggesting to hold joint virtual projects until the end of the epidemic.

"Iran, Cradle of Civilization" featured a selection of 196 valuable historical pieces of a large span of the Iranian history, starting from the pre-historical era to the Islamic period, putting the spotlight on the earliest developments of agriculture and livestock farming from the very beginning to cuneiform clay tablets, gold beakers and ornaments, bronze weapons and beautifully painted ceramics associated with successive Iranian kingdoms.

The National Museum of Iran is somewhat chockfull



of priceless relics that represent various eras of the country's rich history. Its structure was completed in 1928 based on the design by French architect André Godard who was also an archaeologist and historian of French and West Asian Art.

Traces of Chalcolithicera-era settlement revealed in western Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A team of archaeologists has recently discovered traces of a Chalcolithicera-settlement in a previously-found site in Lorestan province, western Iran.

"The three-week archaeological work on [parts of] Keyvan neighborhood [of Azna county] has come to an end, and its scientific results would be announced soon.... However, it is believed that the site was occupied by Chalcolithicera rural settlements based on relics and evidence so far been came to light," provincial tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi announced on Tuesday, CHTN reported.

"An underground troglodyte structure,



which dates back to early Islamic eras, exists in the vicinity of the archaeological hill of Keyvan in a way that the entangle-

ment of two has caused overlapping for their demarcation operations," the official added.

Last year scraps of cultural evidence including stone tools and earthen figurines dating from the 5th and 4th millennium BC were accidentally discovered during a construction project in the ancient neighborhood.

The province was once a cultural cross-road for Paleolithic and Neanderthal residents. In May, an official unveiling ceremony showcased stone tools and a fragment of a fossilized skull, attributed to Homo sapiens, excavated from the Kaldar Cave in Lorestan. The cave has also yielded weapon fragments crafted

by Neanderthals.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. Under Cyrus the Great, Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BCE and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

In the Chalcolithic period, copper predominated in metalworking technology. Hence it was the period before it was discovered that by adding tin to a copper one could create bronze, a metal alloy harder and stronger than either component.

Wooden doors, stone mihrabs, busts added to National Heritage list

TOURISM TEHRAN — Fifty-five moveable properties in Tehran province have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

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

Carved wooden doors, stone mihrabs, a semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque that points out the qibla - the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca, and several busts and statues are among the properties added to the National Heritage list.

The list also includes clay and glass utensils, gold earrings, and bas reliefs, some of which discovered in other province's historical sites but are being kept in



the capital's museums.

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Ray.

Ray, in which signs of settlement dates from 6000 BC, is often considered to be Tehran's predecessor. It became the capital city of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

Tehran has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

Persian handicrafts: 13th-century panel of three tiles from frieze

HERITAGE TEHRAN — These tiles, being kept and displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, were once part of a magnificent frieze in a very important religious shrine in Mashhad, northeast Iran.

This panel of three tiles from frieze is probably handcrafted in the central town of Kashan during the Mongol invasions of Persia (Iran), according to the museum's website.

The main text is from the holy Quran, but it is not continuous, as the tiles are from different sections of the frieze. They have

been mounted together to show their most extraordinary feature - each tile overlaps the one to its left, hiding the join.

The Mongol invasions of Iran in the early 13th century created a close link between West Asia and China since both regions came to be ruled by Mongol viceroys. The Ilkhanids (1256–1353), a branch of the Mongols, ruled Iran at the same time as the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) ruled China.

These dynasties maintained close cultural links with each other through trade by sea and, along the Silk Route, by

land, and there was an influx of Chinese artifacts and designs into West Asia.

The production of tiles in Iran increased under the Ilkhanids, as they supervised repairs to monuments damaged during the Mongol invasions.

These three tiles are identical to a frieze that still remains at the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, an important pilgrimage site for Shia Muslims. The lotus flowers in the projecting upper border of the tiles were one of the Chinese motifs introduced into the Islamic West Asia at this time.



FAO holding eLearning program on Real Water Savings in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is holding an eLearning program in Iran to equip experts with the requisite knowledge and skills to implement the advanced approach of Real Water Savings (REWAS) in the agriculture sector.

As part of its multilateral project to support Iran in reducing the agriculture water consumption in the Lake Urmia basin, FAO in coordination with the Urmia Lake Restoration Program (ULRP) link arms, provides the opportunity for Iranian officers and researchers from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Energy, ULRP and a number of academic institutions, on using REWAS.

Like many other Asian nations, and due to projected population growth, economic development and associated water demands, the country is expecting to experience growing water scarcity over the following years.

In these circumstances, and considering a growing body of evidence revealing that many of the traditional water saving technologies are ineffective, this training enables Iranian experts to estimate real water savings and water productivity in the Urmia Lake basin, and evaluate the impact of field-scale crop-water interventions on basin-scale water



savings, more accurately.

The eLearning program is provided by FutureWater research and consulting organisation under the FAO Water Scarcity Initiative for Asia and the Pacific.

the water productivity of the agricultural sector," said Jonna van Opstal, Water Productivity Expert at FutureWater, who also led this virtual training.

"REWAS is using the concept of 'following the water.' In this approach, drainage, runoff and percolation to the groundwater are no longer considered as 'losses,' because downstream users often use these recoverable waters. This concept resolves a paradox in the water sector where more efficient technologies are expected to reduce water demands, but in reality, lead to higher water consumption and exacerbating the water scarcity problems," added van Opstal.

As per this expert, adopting such an approach can stop the false belief that high-tech irrigation methods (e.g. drip irrigation) save high amounts of water. It likewise supports the development of better water governance, which can regulate the expansion of unsustainable irrigated areas by evaluating real water savings.

FAO, being the lead UN agency in promoting climate-smart agricultural and sustainable rural development, supports its Member Countries in developing and implementing policies, measures and practices that facilitate addressing the risks and threats posed to the agriculture sector and rural communities.

Iran selected WHO regional base for nutrition, food industry

1 → The figures reveal that about 2 billion people in the world did not have regular access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food in 2019.

Considering the widespread impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that the pandemic may add between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished in the world in 2020 depending on the economic growth scenario.

Also, the nutritional status of the most vulnerable population groups is likely to deteriorate further due to the health and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

While the burden of malnutrition in all its forms remains a challenge for the world, current estimates reveal that in 2019, 21.3 percent (144 million) of children under 5 years of age were stunted, 6.9 percent (47 million) wasted, and 5.6 percent (38.3 million) overweight.

The report states that healthy diets are unaffordable to many



people, especially the poor, in every region of the world. The most conservative estimate shows they are unaffordable for

more than 3 billion people in the world. Healthy diets are estimated to be, on average, five times more expensive than diets that meet only dietary energy needs through a starchy staple.

Under current food consumption patterns, diet-related health costs linked to mortality and non-communicable diseases are projected to exceed \$1.3 trillion per year by 2030.

On the other hand, the diet-related social cost of greenhouse gas emissions associated with current dietary patterns is estimated to be more than \$1.7 trillion per year by 2030.

Iran's undernourishment prevalence

According to the report, Iran experienced a relative reduction in the prevalence of undernourishment in its total population, dropping from 5.2 percent in the period of 2004-2006 to 4.7 percent in the period of 2017-2019. However, despite this improvement, the net number of people experiencing undernourishment increased from 3.6 to 3.9 million.

More serious strategies needed to tackle pandemic

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

Deplorable condition

Officials at the Medical Council have written a letter to President Hassan Rouhani that the deplorable condition of the pandemic in the country, and rising number of mortalities and new cases, requires a more serious review of the management methods of this crisis.

Mohammad Reza Zafar Ghani, head of the Medical Council, Mostafa Moein, Chairman of the Supreme Council and Abbas Aghazadeh, director of the general assembly of the Medical Council wrote the letter.

As repeatedly stated by the reformers and scientific experts of the country during the epidemic, without national determination and active presence of all officials and the judiciary alongside the government, military, and security forces this common crisis is not resolved.

Real-time data show COVID-19's massive impact on global emissions

While the ongoing coronavirus pandemic continues to threaten millions of lives around the world, the first half of 2020 saw an unprecedented decline in CO₂ emissions -- larger than during the financial crisis of 2008, the oil crisis of the 1979, or even World War II. An international team of researchers has found that in the first six months of this year, 8.8 percent less carbon dioxide was emitted than in the same period in 2019 -- a total decrease of 1551 million tonnes. The groundbreaking study not only offers a much more precise look at COVID-19's impact on global energy consumption than previous analyses. It also suggests what fundamental steps could be taken to stabilize the global climate in the aftermath of the pandemic.

"What makes our study unique is the analysis of meticulously collected near-real-time data," explains lead author Zhu Liu from the Department of Earth System Science at Tsinghua University in Beijing. "By looking at the daily figures compiled by the Carbon Monitor research initiative we were able to get a much faster and more accurate overview, including timelines that show how emissions decreases have corresponded to lockdown measures in each country. In April, at the height of the first wave of Corona infections, when most major countries shut down their public life and parts of their economy, emissions even declined by 16.9 %. Overall, the various outbreaks resulted in emission drops that we normally see only on a short-term basis on holidays such as Christmas or the Chinese Spring Festival."

The study, published in the latest issue of Nature Communications, shows which parts of the global economy were most impacted. "The greatest reduction of emissions was observed in the ground transportation sector," explains Daniel Kammen, professor and Chair of the Energy and Resources Group and also professor in the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley. "Largely because of working from home restrictions, transport CO₂ emissions decreased by 40 % worldwide. In contrast, the power and industry sectors contributed less to the decline, with -22 % and -17 %, respectively, as did the aviation and shipping sectors. Surprisingly, even the residential sector saw a small emissions drop of 3 %: largely because of an abnormally warm winter in the northern hemisphere, heating energy consumption decreased with most people staying at home all day during lockdown periods."

To paint this comprehensive and multidimensional picture, the researchers based their estimates on a wide array of data: precise, hourly datasets of electricity power production in 31 countries, daily vehicle traffic in more than 400 cities worldwide, daily global passenger flights, monthly production data for industry in 62 countries as well as fuel consumption data for building emissions in more than 200 countries, according to Science Daily.

The researchers also found strong rebound effects. With the exception of a continuing decrease of emissions stemming from the transportation sector, by July 2020, as soon as lockdown measures were lifted, most economies resumed their usual levels of emitting CO₂. But even if they remained at their historically low levels, this would have a rather minuscule effect on the long-term CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere.

Thus, the authors stress that the only valid strategy to stabilize the climate is a complete overhaul of the industry and commerce sector. "While the CO₂ drop is unprecedented, decreases of human activities cannot be the answer," says Co-Author Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, founding director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 44)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

ضمیر فاعلی ← کتاب کار

من، تو، او، ما، ایشان / آنها ضمیرهای چند هستند.

شناسنامه های فعل ضمیرهای پیوسته joined هستند.

در جمله می من می روم، من ضمیر جداست و من ضمیر پیوسته.

در جمله آنها خندیدند، آنها ضمیر جداست و نه پیوسته.

Exercise 2. Write the separate and joined pronouns:

- | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------------------------------|---|
| I | | در کتابخانه کار می کند | ۱ |
| He | | تمرينها را در دفتر من می برسد | ۲ |
| We | | همه کتابها را باز می کند | ۳ |
| They | | در کلاس زیاد خندید | ۴ |
| You (si) | ؟ | دیشب ساعت چند خوابید | ۵ |
| You (pl) | ؟ | دیروز کجا درس خواند | ۶ |

ضمیر ملکی ← کتاب کار

Separate forms of personal pronouns are also used in the possessive case; hence, they may be called possessive pronouns:

ما : کتاب من

شما : کتاب شما

آنها : کتاب آنها

او : کتاب او

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ↔ G

Wildfire risk increases in Zagros foothills

Following heavy rainfall doused the country during the past months, vegetation has covered vast areas of Zagros forest in southwestern part of the country, which easily ignites when temperature level gets higher and wildfire risk increases. Torrential rains over the past few months, has positive consequences like saturating the wetlands and reservoirs, however, led to some natural incidents like flooding which caused losses to the country, Mohammad Mansourpour, an official with the Iranian Space Agency said.

As the result of the rain, plants and vegetation has grown in vast areas of forests and rangelands which soon will be dried due to temperature rise and enhance the possibility of massive fires, he added.

احتمال افزایش آتش سوزی در دامنه های زاگرس

بارش باران طی ماه های خیر باعث رویش علف های پر تراکم در قسمت های مختلف کشور شد که پس از افزایش دما علف ها خشک شده و احتمال آتش سوزی را در دامنه های زاگرس افزایش می دهد. مصطفی منصورپور مدیر کل سنجش از دور سازمان فضایی ایران گفتگو با ایرنا اظهار داشت: بارش های بهاری امسال، علاوه بر فوایدی که داشت و باعث پر آب شدن تالاب ها و ذخایر آبی شد، متاسفانه مشکلاتی و خساراتی مانند سیل نیز به بار آورد. او افزود: با توجه به این بارش ها، برخی از مرتع کشور که بدون پوشش گیاهی هستند، با علف های بهاری با تراکم بالا پوشیده شدند اما طول عمر این علف ها معمولاً دو ماه است و پس از آن خشک می شوند. با توجه به ماهیت اشتعال، تراکم زیاد علف ها و افزایش دما، بحران آتش سوزی قابل پیش بینی بود.

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Heaven lies beneath the feet of mothers.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Manuscripts of Hafez embellish world's major collections of rare books

Part 1

A major concern of 20th-century Hafez scholarship has been the establishment of a reliable text of his poems. While the texts of other poets have also been the subject of critical inquiry and debate, the case of Hafez seems exceptional. This may be partly because his relatively small poetic output appears more susceptible to control than a large *divan* or a lengthy narrative *mathnawi*, partly because many manuscripts exist that were produced close to the poet's own time, and partly because the density of Hafez's poetic language inspires a demand for accurate readings; but it also reflects the poet's iconic status as a symbol of Persian cultural and literary identity.

Hafez's poems are found in numerous manuscript sources, ranging from anthologies and other works to redactions bearing the title *divan*. It is estimated that there are at least 1,000 known manuscripts of the *Divan* in Iran and other parts of the world, and perhaps two or three times that many that are as yet unknown; there is no doubt that many have disappeared. Rather than simplifying the task of establishing a *textus receptus*, this proliferation of sources has only served to complicate it. Since a discussion of the manuscript tradition as a whole would be an impossible task, this article will rather address some of the issues that have preoccupied scholars and critics with respect to establishing the text of Hafez's *Divan*.

It is, by and large, only the ghazals that have received significant attention; Hafez's poems in other forms are generally regarded as marginal. Efforts to establish a reliable text of the ghazals focus largely on four main issues: the number of ghazals in the *Divan*; the number of verses in each ghazal; the correct order of verses; and the correct reading of each verse. Underlying these issues is the assumption that there is an "original" *Divan*, an authentic, authorial (or at least authoritative) redaction, that can be recovered, so that the *Divan* can be reconstructed in the form it would have taken had Hafez himself compiled it.

Historically, lyric poems (*qasidas*, ghazals, and so on) were transmitted in a variety of ways, and were not routinely collected in *divans*. This is especially true of the ghazal, which only acquired major importance from the 12th century onwards, and was transmitted primarily in oral form. A few early poets compiled their own *divans*; others refer in their poetry to a *divan*; but poets continually revised their poems, and the term *divan* simply indicates a selection of poems compiled for a patron, for circulation among friends, or for other purposes (including, perhaps, self-advertisement). A poet's work might be compiled, during his lifetime or posthumously, by someone else (again, usually for some specific purpose); but there was no standard procedure for publishing a poet's work in written form.

Hafez is said to have edited his *Divan* in 1368; but there is no evidence to support this, and in any case it would not have been a complete text. The "Golandam preface" found in many manuscripts of the *Divan* (the authenticity of which was once disputed, but which can now be accepted) states that after Hafez's death he, Mohammad Golandam, collected and recorded the poet's scattered ghazals. This indicates that the earliest sources, oral and/or written, were multiple, and that the hope of reconstructing the "true *divan*" (*divan-e sahiha*) is indeed slim.

The nature of the early manuscript sources further supports this. Even in redactions of the *Divan* as such, the number of ghazals varies considerably; and while it is generally assumed that later redactions became inflated through the addition of poems by other poets mistakenly or falsely attributed to Hafez, the exact number of ghazals in the "original" *divan* — the exact number of ghazals (and other poems) Hafez composed — cannot be securely ascertained. Nor can we be certain that all of his poetic output has survived. It is a remarkably small output: if we assume around 500 ghazals, composed over a poetic career lasting roughly forty years (if not longer), the poet would have composed, on average, one ghazal per month. (This contrasts with the far greater number of ghazals in the *divans* of his close contemporaries — for example Khajju Kermani, Salman Savaji, and Kamal Khojandi the latter poet, like Hafez, specialized in the ghazal.) The number of *qasidas* preserved in the sources varies; and one manuscript is said to include several elegies (marathi), among them one on Shah Shoa.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

"Am I A Wolf?" named best at Turkish animation festival

A R T TEHRAN — The short **d e s k** "Am I a Wolf?" by Iranian director Amir-Hushang Moin has achieved one more honor by winning the award for best film at the 8th Canlandiranlar Film Festival in Turkey.

The festival, which is dedicated to short animated movies, took place in Istanbul from October 16 to 18.

"Am I A Wolf?" produced by Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults is about a group of students who are performing a play called "The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats" in which everybody has a role. The students are totally taken in by their roles in a way that the boundary between reality and acting can hardly be distinguished. Meanwhile, the child who is acting as the wolf and is doomed to be defeated feels lonely and irritated. He takes his role too seriously, and there is a bit of chaos. At the end, the presence of the other children and his friends near him take him out of this atmosphere.

The movie received several awards in Iranian and international events, including the Grand Prix at the 12th Paris International



"Am I a Wolf?" by Iranian director Amir-Hushang Moin.

Animation Film Festival and the Light of Asia Grand Prize at the 15th Indie-AniFest Korea Independent Animation Film Festival

in September 2019.

The film also won the Golden Dove for best-animated film at the 62nd DOK Leipzig

in Germany in November 2019 and a prize worth 1 million yen at the 18th Hiroshima International Animation Festival in Japan in August 2020.

The Canlandiranlar Film Festival is annually organized by the Canlandiranlar Association, a society of Turkish animators.

Any audiovisual animation created frame by frame by whatever technique and made for the cinema, television or any other screening platform is allowed to compete in this event.

The award for best student film went to "Carroll's Face" co-directed by Frederic Schuld and Valentin Riedl from Germany.

"Kantantz" by Camille Geibler and Elisabeth Jakobi from Germany was selected as best first film, while the French animation "Trois Frances Six Sous" co-directed by Clémence Ottevaere, Florence Blain, Louise Leblond, Varoon Indalkar, Morgane Ladje, and Hugo Valdelliévre-rattier from France won the special jury award.

The award for best Turkish film was presented to "The Needle" by Ceylan Beyoglu, whose fellow Turkish animator Ozge Akarsu's "Being with the Other" received the special jury award.

Art Bureau plans to hold Holocaust denial exhibit in response to Macron's cartoons defense

→1 "In an exactly similar form, our program is to publish serious artworks challenging the Holocaust; for one insulting cartoon, we will publish ten cartoons in social media and other virtual spaces; this current will show how much Macron and his friends have tolerance for freedom of speech," he added.

"We plan to retaliate through the language of the cartoon," he stressed.

Earlier in September, Shojaei-Tabatabai said that the Art Bureau plans to organize an international cartoon exhibition on the Holocaust in response to the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo's republication of cartoons insulting Prophet Muhammad (S).

The Art Bureau has previously organized two international cartoon contests to challenge the Holocaust.

The bureau also held the international cartoon exhibition "I Can't Breathe" during June to highlight protests against racism in the U.S.

Shojaei-Tabatabai initiated the International Trumpism Cartoon and Caricature Contest in 2017 and 2019 to criticize U.S. capitalism and hegemony around the world.

The Art Bureau also plans to organize an international cartoon, caricature and poster contest to show solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

The event named "Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest".



A cartoon by Iranian artist Mohammad-Ali Rajabi.

European Film Week to go online in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — A festival **d e s k** of movies from European filmmakers will open in Tehran on November 7, the organizers have announced.

The festival titled "European Film Week" will screen movies from 14 countries including Italy, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece and Austria.

The festival, which was held in various cities of Iran for the past three years, will go online this year in Tehran, and the movies will be available on Hashure, an Iranian platform providing video on demand (VOD) service for documentary films.

The program has been organized as a collaborative effort between Iran's Art and Experience Cinema and the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC).

The two institutions have previously organized the festival in Iran in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The 2019 edition of the festival opened in



A poster for the European Film Week in Tehran.

increasing cultural relations with Iran.

Rieger, who is also the director of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Tehran, added that there needs to be more efforts to make cultural bridges with Iran since cultural exchange can help us understand each other more deeply.

The Dutch Ambassador to Iran, Jacques Werner, in his brief remarks said that a variety of films were selected to be screened at the festival, each bearing a significant message.

He added that all the European embassies in Iran want to share these stories with Iranians, and nothing can act better than cultural exchange.

He hoped that the films would be interesting for the viewers.

The program opened with "The Dark Valley", a 2014 Austrian-German western drama directed by Andreas Prochaska, and "The Silent Army", Dutch director Jean van de Velde's 2008 drama about the hardships of child soldiers in Africa.

Ambassadors and diplomats from different countries including Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia and Italy were among the participating guests at the opening ceremony.

Movies from Bulgaria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Slovenia, Finland, Denmark and England will be screened during the cultural event.

In addition, ten filmmakers from Europe and Iran are scheduled to hold several workshops during the festival.

Dutch director Jean van de Velde, Cypriot producer Marios Piperides and Swiss producer Thierry Spicher were among the cineastes.

Fereidun Jeirani, Rasul Sadr-Ameli, Mohammad-Mehdi Asgarpur, Maziar Miri, Mehrdad Oskui, Mani Mirsadeqi and Siavash Jamali, all from Iran, held workshops at the event.

"Sunless Shadows" honored at Brussels Millennium festival

A R T TEHRAN — "Sunless Shadows" by **d e s k** Mehrdad Oskui was honored with the Human Rights Award at the Millennium International Documentary Film Festival in Brussels, the organizers have announced.

In an Iranian juvenile detention center, a group of adolescent girls are serving time for having murdered their father, husband or another male family member.

Oskui managed to build up a remarkable relationship with these inmates, whose frank conversations and playful interactions he observes, and who gradually open up about the consequences of, and sometimes the reasons for, their terrible act. Mehrdad occasionally leaves them alone with the camera, allowing it to become a means for them to address both their victims and their accomplices, three of the girls having killed their fathers with the help of their mothers. The mothers await execution elsewhere.

"Sunless Shadows" has been screened in numerous renowned international events and won awards in some of them. One of the latest screenings was at the 60th Krakow Film Festival in Poland where it received a Silver Horn for Oskui.

The documentary was named best in a special section dedicated to Iranian cinema at Middle East Now, a film



"Sunless Shadows" by Iranian filmmaker Mehrdad Oskui, festival in the Italian city of Florence, while it also won an honorable mention two weeks ago at ZagrebDox, the Croatian international documentary festival.

Oskui also won the best director award at The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) for his documentary in November 2019.

The Best Film Award of the Millennium festival was given to "The Cave", a Syrian-Danish documentary film by Feras Fayyad. The documentary depicts a touching, real-life drama in front of the viewers with its load of senseless brutality and blindness of war but also of compassion, kindness, selflessness and indeed heroism.

"Smog Town", a Chinese, Dutch and South Korean production by Han Meng, received the Sustainable Development Award.

The jury handed the award to the well documented, constructed and edited film for illustrating in depth how complicated, frustrating but also urgent and necessary it is to fight climate change, and depicting the growing unhealthy quality of life in an urbanizing world.

Iranian director Reza Farahmand's acclaimed film "Women with Gunpowder Earrings" was honored with the special jury prize at the previous edition of the festival last year.

The film tells the story of Nur, a female journalist who covers stories about Syrian and Iraqi women and children in the war against the ISIS terrorists.

Iranian film scholar Leila Hosseini was a member of the international competition jury of the Millennium festival in 2019.

"The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A **d e s k** Persian translation of Dominican-American writer Junot Diaz's bestselling novel "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" has recently been published by Khazeh Publications.

The book has been translated into Persian by Nader Qblei.

Set in New Jersey where Diaz was raised, the novel chronicles both the life of Oscar De Leon, an overweight Dominican boy, who is obsessed with science fiction and fantasy novels.

Things have never been easy for Oscar,

a sweet but disastrously overweight, lovesick Dominican ghetto nerd. From his home in New Jersey, where he lives with his old-world mother and rebellious sister, Oscar dreams of becoming the Dominican J. R. R. Tolkien and, most of all, of finding love. But he may never get what he wants, thanks to the Fuku—the curse that has haunted Oscar's family for generations, dooming them to prison, torture, tragic accidents, and, above all, ill-starred love.

Diaz immerses the readers in the tumultuous life of Oscar and the history of the family at large, rendering with genuine warmth and dazzling energy, humor, and insight the Dominican-American experience, and, ultimately, the endless human capacity to persevere in the face of heartbreak and loss.

A true literary triumph, "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" confirms Diaz as one of the best and most exciting voices of the time.

Diaz was born in the Dominican Republic and raised in New Jersey. He is the author of the critically acclaimed book "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao", which won

the 2008 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, "This Is How You Lose Her", a New York Times bestseller and National Book Award finalist, and a debut picture book, "Islandborn".

He is the recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, PEN/Malamud Award, Dayton Literary Peace Prize, Guggenheim Fellowship, and PEN/O. Henry Award.

A graduate of Rutgers College, Diaz is currently the fiction editor at Boston Review and the Rudge and Nancy Allen Professor of Writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.