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Canada's propaganda on Ukraine plane crash hampering probe: ambassador

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
TEHRAN – The ambassador of Iran to Ukraine and Republic of Moldova says Canada's propaganda campaign over the Ukrainian plane crash not only does not help resolve the issue, but will "hamper Iran's efforts to exercise rights of the victims' families."

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Manouchehr Moradi points to the progress achieved in the two rounds of negotiations with the Ukrainian side over the downed

passenger plane, emphasizing transparency and cooperative steps of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Ukrainian airliner was shot down shortly after taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini airport on January 8, killing all 167 passengers and 9 crew members.

On January 11, the Armed Forces General Staff released a statement saying the plane was mistakenly downed near the airport.

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Iranian-made warship joins IRGC naval fleet

TEHRAN — The naval fleet of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Thursday received a domestically-built warship capable of carrying aircraft, drones and missile defense systems.

The warship joined the IRGC Navy during a ceremony, with senior military and government officials in attendance, Press TV reported.

The multipurpose vessel, which is 150 meters long and 22 meters wide, can carry different types of aircraft, drones, helicopters and operational vessels as well as missile, air defense and radar systems.

It was named Shahid Roudaki warship after martyr commander Abdollah Roudaki from the IRGC Navy.

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IRIB to launch radio network to remember Commander Soleimani's martyrdom anniversary

TEHRAN – Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting plans to launch a radio network to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Commander Qassem Soleimani.

The director of the channel, Reza Kuchakzadeh, has said the network will air programs promoting the culture of sacrifice for a month.

"The network named Radio Moqavemat (Radio Resistance) will be launched on December 21 to help explain the concept of resistance

in the Islamic Revolution and introduce the school of martyr Soleimani," he added.

"Explaining the goals of the Islamic Revolution and promoting the culture of martyrdom inspired by the thoughts of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, are among the major goals of the channel," he explained.

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Reimagining a better future for every child

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
November 20th is an important date as it is the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is also the date in 1989 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

World Children's Day offers each of us an inspirational entry-point to advocate, promote, and celebrate children's rights, translating into dialogues and actions that will build a better world for children.

This year, the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in a child rights crisis. The costs of the pandemic for children are immediate and, if unaddressed, may last a lifetime.

Children population in a declining trend

As a proportion of the nation's total population, children have accounted for a dwindling share since the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017) due to a falling fertility rate.

There are about 7 million children aging four years or younger and about 6.4 million children aging 5-10 years in the country, Shahla Kazemipour is a demographer told ISNA on Friday.

The reason for the higher number of children aged four or younger than children aged 5-10 is the reduced age of marriage in the 1360s (falling on 1980s), she stated.

She went on to say that the total number of children under the age of 10 is about 13.5 million, equivalent to 17 percent of the total population of the country, with boy's population of 51 percent, equivalent to 6.9 million, while the population of girls is about 49 percent, equivalent to 6.6 million.

However, the country is facing a decline in the population of children over the past few years, she highlighted.

2% of children are out of school

According to Kazemipour, about 5 million of the total population of children are studying in primary school, and about 2 percent are deprived of primary education for various reasons, such as living in impassable areas, absolute poverty, etc.

On the other hand, not all of the children in school have access to sufficient facilities, and as a result, they experience a decline in the quality of education, she said.

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Transport projects worth over \$748m inaugurated across Iran

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated several transport projects including 10 airport projects as well as some freeway and highways with a total investment of 31.43 trillion rials (about \$748.3 million) in eight provinces across the country on Thursday.

Held online, the inauguration ceremony was attended by the Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami and officials from Isfahan, Semnan, Golestan, East Azarbaijan, Kerman, Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Khorasan Razavi Provinces.

As reported by IRNA, the inaugurated projects included 63 kilometers (km) of freeways in Isfahan and 97 km of highway in Hormozgan, as well as a highway in Kerman province.

The development of Gorgan International Airport terminal with an area of 8,700 square meters, apron development and landscaping with an area of 58,000 square meters, and

ceremonial building with an area of 2,100 square meters were also among the inaugurated projects.

Also in Isfahan, the development and improvement of the Isfahan Airport's international terminal, landscaping, and construction of a 9,000-square-meter engine room, as well as the development and improvement of a 93,200-square-meter apron, were inaugurated.

At Mashhad airport, a landscaping project with an area of 170,000 square meters was put into operation.

With the new airport projects going operational, the passenger transportation capacity of the country's airports will increase by 2.8 million people per year.

Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), President Rouhani has been inaugurating development projects in various provinces every week.

Khan-e Tabatabaei: another superb mansion of amazing harmony, architecture

BY AFSHIN MAJLESI

Built for a famous Iranian merchant of the 19th century, this elegant house is composed of several sections each decorated with various types of art and architectural features, such as stucco, mirrorwork, tilework, woodwork, and stained glass. The fully restored house is now open to the public.

Khan-e (the house of) Tabatabaei is named after the late affluent merchant Seyyed Jafar Tabatabaei and his family.

Constructed specifically according to the desert climatic and conditions, the house is located in the ancient city of Kashan. To find this house, walk south past the Khan-e Borujerdi towards a distinctive blue conical tower. The tower belongs to a shrine that neighbors the Hammam-e Sultan Mir Ahmad. Turn right after the tower and the entrance to the house is on the left.

Having some 40 rooms, four yards and basements, three Badgir (wind-catchers), and two qanats and water reservoirs, the house may fascinate you for hours.

The main structure overlooks a large central courtyard with several secondary courtyards, accessed through passageways off of the central courtyard and its adjoining rooms. The result of this plan is that most rooms open onto more than one courtyard.

The hall on the northwestern side of the courtyard is a single-story room that opens onto a raised platform flanked by two galleries. The hall on the southeastern side is fronted by a portico rising two stories and opening onto the courtyard through three arches. The facade of the portico is ornately decorated with carving.

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Home-to-home COVID-19 screening conducted

On Thursday, a group of charitable foundations carried out a home-to-home screening plan in a southern Tehran neighborhood to identify people who may have the COVID-19 virus but appear healthy or have only mild symptoms.

Screening for COVID-19 can include temperature checks or PCR tests.

Last week, Namaki expressed hope that the country will introduce the home-grown COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2021).

The U.S. is on the brink of a civil war

BY SONJA VAN DEN ENDE

The U.S. election is far from over, even though, the Western MSM (regular media) was quick to announce that Joe Biden won the election. President Trump promised his voters, that he will fight until it becomes clear, that according to him a massive 'fraud' has been conducted by the Democrats and therefore, as he, Trump, calls it the Deep-state, will not recognize the outcome.

The vast majority of the Americans are well-armed, private arms sales rose with 33% late August 2020, people are scared, due to the deep-state (George Soros) sponsored BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement, who rose-up after the George Floyd killing by policemen. The situation is deteriorating; the U.S. is actually bankrupt, for that matter, large part of Europe as well. So, now when the re-counting and legal cases are underway in the U.S., things are quiet, until President Trump, I guess, will give the 'green' sign and then we will see revolts erupt.

Some experts argue that the U.S. is on the brink of a civil war, I guess they are right. There are many reasons for this statement. Not only the outcome of the elections are the trigger, but also poverty, homelessness and a corrupt system, on top of that the bad economy due to COVID-19. Also, a lot of people are now seeing we're large parts of the Western world are heading to; the World Economic Forum (WEF) in cooperation with the United Nations (UN) are implementing Agenda 2021, we're another 50% percent of the population will become unemployed due to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Artificial Intelligence. This is the real threat to the Western world, even bigger for the U.S. Trump's voter's think he can save the U.S. from this revolution, his slogan is 'make America great again'.

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Producing hard, soft power needed to lift sanctions: advisor

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker, has said producing hard and soft power is needed to remove the United States' sanctions on Iran.

"Removal of sanctions is top priority & to achieve it, (re) producing hard/soft power is needed," Amir Abdollahian wrote in a tweet on Thursday.

"Trump's & Biden's approach differs, but #Biden is not Iran's friend & master key. Change to WH is taken into account. Iran is a 'man of action & logical, dignified negotiation,'" he added.

The outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump has pursued the "maximum pressure" policy against Iran in order to force Tehran to succumb to its demands. The policy was implemented after Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of the historic nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers.

Washington then slapped several rounds of harsh sanctions on Iran, claiming it was pursuing to negotiate a better deal with Iran than the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was clinched under his predecessor Barack Obama.

Meanwhile, U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has voiced support for the JCPOA, saying his administration will rejoin the deal.

In response, the Trump administration has been trying to do whatever it can, after Trump's defeat in the election, to make it more difficult for the Biden administration to return to the JCPOA.

■ U.S. sanctions Mostazafan Foundation

In its latest round of sanctions, the U.S. Treasury Department blacklisted the Mostazafan Foundation of Islamic Revolution, a large charitable organization for the poor and the disabled.

The sanctions, announced on Wednesday, also target Parviz Fattah, the head of the foundation, and 50 of its subsidiaries in sectors such as energy, mining, logistics, information technology, and financial services.

The U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) described the Mostazafan Foundation as a "multibillion-dollar economic empire" and "an immense conglomerate of some 160 holdings in key sectors of Iran's economy, including finance, energy, construction, and mining."

It designated several Mostazafan Foundation deputies, who are appointed by and report directly to Fattah, for what they called key business functions for the organization.

The U.S. Treasury also imposed sanctions on Iran's Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi, and accused him of having played "a central role" in human rights abuses against Iranian citizens.

Firms, individuals and other entities targeted by U.S. sanctions are subject to asset freezes and Americans are generally barred from doing business with them.

In response, Fattah on Wednesday tweeted, "The struggle of the declining U.S. government cannot influence the foundation's anti-sanction activities and its productivity."

Calling Trump a "loser", Fattah also said Trump proved that the foundation is on the right track.

Senator Murphy calls Trump's Iran policy 'unmitigated failure'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chris Murphy, the U.S. Senator from Connecticut, said on Thursday that U.S. President Donald Trump's maximum pressure campaign against Iran has been and "unmitigated failure".

The senator also said that none of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's demands from Iran have been realized.

Speaking at the Heritage Foundation in Washington on May 21, 2018, Pompeo listed 12 conditions for Iran. He said Iran should cease its uranium enrichment program permitted under the JCPOA — the 2015 nuclear deal - and put an end to its ballistic missile program.

"NOT A SINGLE ONE HAS BEEN MET," Murphy tweeted in capital letters.

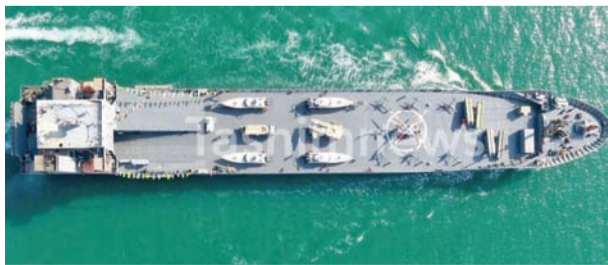
The Democratic senator went on to say that Iran's nuclear enrichment stockpile has increased by ten times since the U.S. abrogated the deal and introduced sanctions against Iran.

"Instead, Iran now has 10x the enriched uranium as 2016," Murphy remarked.

In a tweet on Nov. 18, Pompeo claimed that the "maximum pressure campaign against the Iranian regime continues to be effective."

Iranian-made warship joins IRGC naval fleet

1 → It is equipped with three-dimensional phased-array radars, surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, advanced communication systems for electronic warfare, and a Khordad 3 air defense system, all of which are designed and put into operation by Iranian experts.



The warship can carry out combat, logistical and intelligence-gathering missions in the ocean aimed at establishing stable security in maritime transportation lines and providing assistance to the commercial and fishing fleets belonging to the Islamic Republic and regional countries.

Speaking at the ceremony, IRGC Chief Hossein Salami said the main mission of the Shahid Roudaki ocean-going warship was to ensure the security of sea routes and perform assistance, rescue and combat operations in special circumstances.

"Today we are witnessing a combat and logistic support ship join the IRGC Navy that can both defend itself, defend our interests at sea, and play a role in securing our country's maritime lines near and far," Salami explained.

Ex-defense chief warns of 'full-fledged war' if Trump attacks Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Former

Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan has warned of the consequences of a full-fledged war between the U.S. and Iran, saying while Iran is ready to defend itself, it does not welcome war.

"A limited, tactical conflict can turn into a full-fledged war," he said. "Definitely, the United States, the region and the world cannot stand such a comprehensive crisis," Brigadier General Dehghan said in an interview with the Associated Press published on Thursday.

"We don't welcome a crisis. We don't welcome war. We are not after starting a war," he said. "But we are not after negotiations for the sake of negotiations either."

Dehghan, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said the Islamic Republic will not negotiate its defensive power with anybody under any circumstances.

Missiles are a symbol of the massive potential that is in our experts, young people and industrial centers, he stated.

He further warned against any American military escalation in U.S. President Donald Trump's final weeks in office.

The remarks came in reaction to a recent report in which The New York Times, citing four current and former U.S. officials on Monday, said that Trump has asked senior



advisers in an Oval Office meeting whether he had options to take action against Iran's main nuclear site in the coming weeks.

A range of senior advisers dissuaded the president from moving ahead with a military strike, said the Times, adding that the advisers — including Vice President Mike Pence;

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Christopher C. Miller, the acting defense secretary; and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — warned that a strike against Iran's facilities could easily escalate into a broader conflict in the last weeks of Trump's presidency.

Dehghan also warned about Israel's regional expansionist ambitions that saw the regime normalizing its relations with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Sudan earlier in the year. He warned that the ambitious march was a "strategic mistake" that could put Tel Aviv in a parlous state.

"It is opening an extensive front," he said. "Just imagine every Israeli in any military base can be a target for groups who are opposed to Israel."

He also referred to possible negotiations with the U.S., saying the U.S.'s atrocities under Trump had made it extremely difficult for Iran to accept its return to the negotiation table.

Among the rest, he referred to the U.S.'s assassination of Iranian senior anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani on Trump's direct order near Baghdad's international airport in January.

He called the IRGC's retaliatory missile strikes against U.S. bases in Iraq that came almost immediately after the assassination a mere "initial slap," and said that the Islamic Republic continued to seek the expulsion of all American forces from the region as revenge for the barbaric assassination.

"We do not seek a situation in which (the other party) buys time to weaken our nation," said Dehghan, who was defense minister in President Rouhani's first administration.

Tehran rejects anti-Iran human rights resolution

Among the countries that back the Canadian-proposed resolution are Israel, S. Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, and Albania

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Tehran has dismissed as "unacceptable" a draft human rights resolution against Iran which was put forward by the Canadian government at the United Nations.

"It is regrettable that some countries, including Canada, use human rights and its international mechanisms as a tool to advance their objectives and political ambitions," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Wednesday.

"Such unconstructive actions will not only not help promote the status of human rights and respect for human rights at the international level, but will only trigger moves to form negative clichés against, and attach political stigmas to independent countries," Khatibzadeh said, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

Last week, the third committee of the UN General Assembly, which deals with human rights, adopted the resolution with 79 'yes' votes, even though 32 countries had voted against it and 64 others abstained from voting.

The resolution expressed "serious concern" about executions for drug-related crimes and against minors, and urged Iran to ensure humane treatment of prisoners and cease "widespread and systematic use of arbitrary arrests and detention".

It further called for the release of prisoners arrested during the November 2019 unrest and said Iran should address the "poor conditions of its prisons".

The Israeli regime, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Albania, Britain and Canada were among the countries that voted in favor of the resolution.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Khatibzadeh urges Canada to stop hosting economic offenders and looters of Iranian people's wealth, who have found Canada a safe haven for the transfer and investment of the assets they have looted.

Tehran denies contact between Araghchi, Biden team

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran has denied a New York Times

claim that the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has tried to contact with the team of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, saying such rumors have become a norm in the mainstream media.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Friday that the Times report was completely made-up.

He added that no direct or indirect contact has been made between Tehran and the Biden camp.

The New York Times reported on November 17 that Araghchi has tried to pass on



to Biden's advisers through intermediaries Tehran's insistence that the United States

return to the Iran deal unconditionally before any talks resume.

Earlier this month, Khatibzadeh had dismissed speculations that Tehran was in contact with the Biden team before or after the U.S. presidential election, saying Iran will not be in contact with anyone outside of issues completely related to the nuclear pact.

Iran awaits the formation of the new administration in the U.S. to see what will happen, the spokesman said on November 9.

"We should see where the measures of the U.S. will lead to," he said. "It is measures that matter not words, analyses, and speculations."

Iran says disregards 'demagogic noises' by U.S., Israeli regimes

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations says the Islamic Republic does not deem any value on "unfounded and demagogic noises" made by the U.S. and the Israeli regime whose main purpose is to put pressure on Iran and divert the attention of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"The U.S. cannot be seen as honest in its claims about having non-proliferation concerns, when it has thousands of nuclear warheads, proliferated such weapons and the related know-how, used it against a non-nuclear-weapon State, and threatens the others with the possible use of them," Kazem Gharibabadi said in a Thursday address to the Board of Governors of the IAEA.

"Indeed, such a country is not even entitled to talk about nonproliferation concerns," said Gharibabadi, adding, "On the same line, the Israeli regime is the only one in the Middle East (West Asia) which is not a member of any of the Weapons of Mass-Destruction Instruments and developed various types of such weapons."

He said the IAEA's officials, including its late director

general, Yukiya Amano, have asserted that the landmark nuclear deal clinched by Iran and six world powers in 2015 constituted an exemplary model for the verification regime, which would hopefully be implemented in other members of the agency.

The JCPOA is a concrete highly elaborated deal composed of balanced commitments made by its participants and like any other deals, it is supposed to benefit its participants, he said.

In fact, Gharibabadi continued, with the persistent United States' irresponsible conducts, through adopting malign policies and imposing unlawful unilateral sanctions, the deal has lost its balance of commitments, leading to the loss of the perceived benefits for Iran.

The Iranian envoy further said that although the U.S. administration didn't abide by its obligations completely, the situation was aggravated when the administration announced its unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA on 8 May 2018.

"That very announcement and the subsequent coercive measures taken by the U.S. administration and lack of

full and effective implementation of the commitments by EU/E3 members enshrined in the JCPOA to remedy the situation have brought about serious challenges to the Deal," he added.

Gharibabadi then criticized the European members of the JCPOA for failing to fulfill their commitments following Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the deal.

"Unfortunately, the EU/E3 didn't fulfill its sanctions-related commitments, and commitments related to the civil nuclear cooperation with Iran in this period either. Hence, calling on Iran to fully implement its commitments while knowing the fact that Iran's legitimate benefits from the deal have not been realized, is neither reasonable nor a practical approach," he said.

"I would also like to reiterate the already pronounced position of the Islamic Republic of Iran that whenever the lost balance between the rights and commitments of the JCPOA participants as stipulated by the deal is restored through lifting sanctions and implementing commitments in this field, Iran is ready to reverse its remedial actions," the envoy added.



Khatibzadeh urged the Canadian officials to correct their anti-human rights performance both inside and outside that country and not only stop their systematic policy of committing genocide against Canadian aborigines, but also answer for their complicity in anti-human crimes committed by the Saudi and Israeli regimes against Yemeni and Palestinian people.

In remarks on Monday, Head of the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights Ali Bagheri-Kani said Canada has a record of systematic violation of human rights, including against the country's native population while being among top countries in terms of violence against women and girls.

"Those who are behind this resolution are the same countries, which have given refuge to terrorist groups that have killed thousands of Iranians ... or have been following suit with the United States' 'maximum pressure' campaign by implementing Washington's unjust and illegal sanctions against the Iranian nation," the official said.

He then noted that the Canada-drafted resolution is based on a report by Guterres, which "suffers from many shortcomings and contradictions."

SPORTS

Iran to send four wrestlers to Individual World Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran Wrestling Federation (IRIWF) will send four wrestlers to the Individual World Cup in Serbia.



IRIWF president Alireza Dabir has said two freestyle and two Greco-Roman wrestlers will participate in the competition. Hassan Yazdani, who was chosen as the world's most popular freestyle wrestler according to a poll by United World Wrestling (UWW) on Thursday, will represent Iran at the 86kg weight category.

Kamran Ghasempour will also take part in the competition at the 92kg category.

Greco-Roman wrestlers Hossein Nouri (87kg) and Mohammadhadi Saravi (97kg) are to represent Iran in the event.

The "Individual World Cup" will be held in Belgrade, Serbia from Dec 12 to 18.

The event will include a prize pool of 300,000 CHF spread evenly across the 30 weight categories.

Foolad fight back to beat Esteghlal

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Foolad football team claimed a 2-1 comeback victory over Esteghlal on Matchday 2 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Friday.

Esteghlal captain Vouria Ghafouri gave the visiting team a lead in the 63rd minute from the penalty spot but Farshad Ahmadzadeh headed home from Luciano Pereira's cross in the 72nd minute.

Pereira scored the winner in the added time from the penalty spot.

In Kerman derby, Gol Gohar defeated Mes Rafsanjan 2-0 thank to a brace from Godwin Mensha in the second half.

Machine Sazi were held to a 1-1 draw by 10-man Zob Ahan in Tabriz. Vahid Mohammadzadeh received a straight red card in the first minute of the match.

On Saturday, Paykan will meet Shahr Khodro and Persepolis host Sanat Naft.

Piacenza complete signing of Mousavi

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Italian volleyball club Gas Sales Piacenza have completed the signing of Iranian player Mohammad Mousavi.

The 33-year-old middle blocker won a bronze medal with Iran national team at the Grand Championship Cup in Japan as well as three Asian Volleyball Championships and two Asian Games.

Mousavi also helped Iran qualify for the next Olympic Games in Tokyo in the competition held in January in China.

No details with the SuperLega side have been revealed.

"Mousavi is a quality player. At the international level, he has performed well in the recent years," Piacenza vice president Giuseppe Borgogni said.

"He is an experienced player and can help us grow. Mousavi's visa problems had made the situation complicated for us but he will arrive in Italy soon," he added.

Iranian referees nominated to officiate at FIFA Women's World Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian referees Mahsa Ghorbani and Ensieh Khabbaz Mafinejad have been shortlisted to officiate at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

Ghorbani is a FIFA international referee since 2017, while Khabbaz is an assistant referee for 11 years.

FIFA has nominated 750 referees and assistants for the event and will finally choose 56 referees and 100 assistants from the list.

The competition is the 9th edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, the quadrennial world championship for women's national football teams organized by FIFA. The tournament will be jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand, during a reserved period in the FIFA Women's International Match Calendar between 10 July and 20 August 2023.

The 2023 tournament will see the Women's World Cup expanded from 24 to 32 teams.

The United States are the defending champions going into the competition, having won the previous two tournaments in 2015 and 2019.

Masoud Armat named Iran U19 volleyball coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Masoud Armat was named as head coach of Iran U19 volleyball team on Wednesday.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF)'s technical committee, chaired by President Mohammadreza Davarzani, chose Armat as the team's new head coach.

Armat will lead the Iranian team at the 2021 Asian Boys' U19 Volleyball Championship.

"First, I would like to thank the federation for trusting me. We must find new talents who can join the senior team in the future. To identify the talents and train them is our first priority," Armat said.

The 2021 Asian Boys' U19 Volleyball Championship will be held in Shiraz from Jan. 9 to 16.

Two similar claims, a whole world of different reactions

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — As Democrats move forward with their efforts to remove Donald Trump from the White House, observers point to the similarities between the United States' 2020 presidential election and that of Iran in 2009.

The U.S. November election has created fissures and divisions in the country that are rarely seen in recent American history. Former President Barack Obama has expressed concerns over these divisions, saying the election results, in which each candidate received more than 70 million votes, show the nation remains bitterly split.

"What it says is that we are still deeply divided. The power of that alternative worldview that's presented in the media that those voters consume -- it carries a lot of weight," Obama said in an interview with CBS.

Obama has put the spotlight on what can be called "popular divides" or divides that split the American people into almost two equal groups, with each one "operating on just completely different sets of facts."

But these divides are even more severe among politicians than ordinary people, a fact that Obama and his fellow Democrats try to sweep under the rug by highlighting the popular divides and favoring them over the political ones.

The Democrats are busy working to downplay Trump's claims over what some Republicans call massive voter fraud in the living memory of the American people. And this stands in stark contrast to what Democrats did during the 2009 presidential election in Iran when they supported a losing candidate who raised eyebrows by declaring premature victory.

Declaring victory prematurely is only one of the similarities between the two Iranian and American presidential elections. On November 4, while the election results were not called in several key battleground states, Trump announced that he had won the election.

"You just look at all of these states that we've won tonight, and then you take a look at the kind of margins that we've won them by," Trump told supporters at the White House. "This is a fraud on the American public. This is an embarrassment to our country. We were getting ready to win this election, frankly, we did win this election."

The Democrats were quick to rail against Trump because of his remark. Joe Biden blasted the president's remarks as "out-



rageous, unprecedented, and incorrect."

"Donald Trump does not decide the outcome of this election. Joe Biden does not decide the outcome of this election. The American people decide the outcome of this election. And the democratic process must and will continue until its conclusion," Biden campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said in a statement.

While Democrats strongly criticized Trump for declaring victory prematurely, they strongly supported Mir-Hossein Mousavi, a presidential candidate in Iran's 2009 presidential election who strongly protested the results of the election, accusing his rival then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of rigging the election to secure his reelection.

Mousavi had acted in a way quite similar to Trump, according to Hadi Seyed Afghahi, an expert on West Asia.

The expert said, "Mousavi declared victory even before the votes were counted, creating chaos in the country for nearly six months."

At that time, Mousavi famously said that he "will not surrender to this dangerous posturing in reference to what he called voter fraud."

Democrats, who were in power at the time, made efforts to exploit the voter fraud allegations made by Mousavi to impose their demands on Iran, according to Seyed Afghahi.

Mousavi was the first candidate in the Iranian election who did not believe his defeat. While the Iranian people were getting ready to celebrate the most glorious presidential election ever held in Iran, Mousavi

declared victory prematurely in his first statement after the election. He said in this statement that he will not surrender to what he called voter fraud.

Mousavi declined to provide evidence to support his allegations. Instead, his wife, Zahra Rahnavard, used a jaw-dropping logic that laid bare the truth behind her husband's allegations. Rahnavard is an ethnic Lur hailing from the Lur-populated province of Luristan and Mousavi is an ethnic Azeri Turk who has come from the Azeri Turkish-majority province of Azerbaijan.

In an interview with BBC Persian following the election, Rahnavard claimed that the Lurs and Turks were impossible to vote for Mousavi's rival, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Because the Lurs would not let down "Luristan's son-in-law" and the Azeri Turks would not let down "the son of Azerbaijan." This kind of reasoning shocked many political analysts and prompted BBC Persian to delete the interview at a later time.

Rahnavard's logic of Luristan's son-in-law seems to have resonated with some Americans who find it difficult to understand Trump's logic in terms of refusing the result of the November election. Trump has shockingly asked why mail-in ballots came in favor of his rival Joe Biden while he spent months urging his supporters to vote in person and refrain from voting by mail.

"Last night I was leading, often solidly, in many key States, in almost all instances Democrat-run & controlled. Then, one by one, they started to magically disappear as surprise ballot dumps were counted. VERY STRANGE, and the "pollsters" got

Zarif to visit Moscow, Baku

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will be visiting Moscow and Baku on Monday and Tuesday to discuss a variety of bilateral and regional issues such as the crisis in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the foreign ministries of Iran and Russia have said.

"The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a visit to Russia and Azerbaijan on Monday and Tuesday next week, November 23-24, with the aim of holding talks with the regional parties. Nagorno-Karabakh and the latest developments in the region, as well as bilateral issues, are on the agenda," the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a tweet on Thursday.

This is the first visit by Zarif to Russia and Azerbaijan since the outbreak of the war in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh in late September. The 44-day war was brought to an end on November 10 when Baku and Yerevan signed a Russian-brokered ceasefire deal that entailed the return of occupied territories to Azerbaijan and the establishment of "transport links" between the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia as well as between the landlocked Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan and mainland Azerbaijan.

Iran has welcomed the ceasefire agreement while underlining that the current international borders in the region should not be changed.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the agreement reached among the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation, which led to a ceasefire and a cessation of hostilities, and hopes that this agreement, the principles of which were included in the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, will lead to the establishment of lasting peace in the Caucasus region in such a way that includes peace and prosperity for the people in all countries of the region and removes existing concerns," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement following the signing of the ceasefire agreement.



The statement also underlined the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity, and inviolability of the official international borders while calling for the liberation of occupied territories, the return of refugees, and respect for the rights of minorities, as well as the withdrawal of all Takfiri forces and foreign fighters from the region.

Iran also expressed readiness to assist in the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran also declares its readiness to assist in the deployment of peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation along the contact lines in accordance with clauses 3 and 4 of the ceasefire agreement," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said, referring to the clauses in the peace agreement that articulate the mission of the Russian peacekeeping forces.

Clauses 3 and 4 of the peace agreement outline the places where Russian peacekeeping forces will be deployed.

The third clause stipulates that "along the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor, a peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation shall be deployed in the amount of 1,960 military personnel with small arms, 90 armored personnel carriers, 380 units of automobile and special equipment."

And the fourth clause further stipulates that "the peace-

keeping contingent of the Russian Federation shall be deployed in parallel with the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces. The peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation shall be deployed for a period of five years with automatic extension by further five-year periods if none of the Parties declares six months before the expiration of the period of its intention to terminate the application of this provision."

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also provided some details about Zarif's upcoming visit to Russia, saying Zarif will discuss with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov a variety of issues including the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, the spokeswoman said, "The sides are expected to continue the exchange of views on a range of the most relevant international issues, including the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, developments in Syria, Afghanistan and the [Persian] Gulf area. Sergey Lavrov and Mohammad Javad Zarif will certainly discuss the bilateral agenda, primarily trade and economic cooperation in key joint energy and transport projects, and the possibilities for deepening cultural and humanitarian ties."

Zakharova also praised Tehran-Moscow relations, underlining that they are expanding quickly.

"Russian-Iranian relations continue to expand quickly; this much is evidenced by the intensive and trust-based dialogue at the highest level – the presidents of Russia and Iran have spoken by telephone on at least four occasions this year," the spokeswoman pointed out, adding that "despite the spread of the coronavirus infection, regular contacts are maintained between our countries, including between the Foreign Ministers – this will be Mohammad Javad Zarif's fourth visit to our country this year. We also maintain an active dialogue at the level of representatives of parliaments, ministries, and other government agencies in Russia and Iran."



Israel, and America to deeply move into the geopolitics of the Caspian Sea," the lawmaker noted.

Bighash pointed out that while important regional developments are occurring, the Parliament "in the deadly neglect of Iran's foreign policy apparatus," is busy discussing "superficial issues."

Iranian MP rails against Turkey's role in Nagorno-Karabakh

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ahmad Bighash, an Iranian lawmaker, has criticized "Turkey's direct interference" in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, calling on the Parliament to take a firm stance against the country's role in the Azerbaijan-Armenia crisis.

Speaking at an open session of the Parliament on Wednesday, the lawmaker said the Parliament should firmly respond to "Turkey's interference in the internal affairs" of Azerbaijan and Armenia, according to the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA).

"If we don't take a revolutionary action, we will face a huge geographical disaster," Bighash warned.

He added, "Today, in order for you to witness and record it in history, I declare that strategic studies and political analysis show that Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are just like Iraq, Libya, and Egypt on the way to be depleted of geopolitical power in the Middle East [West Asia] region through the mysterious policies of the UK, U.S., and Israel."

The lawmaker regretted that Turkey does not understand this danger.

"Unfortunately, Turkey does not realize this great danger, and recently, by directly interfering in the internal affairs of the two independent states of Azerbaijan and Armenia and changing the political map of the region, paved the way for NATO,

TSE registers weekly growth of main index

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 124,000 points, or 10 percent, to 1.345 million points during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Group, Amin Investment Bank, Behsaz Kashaneh Tehran Company, Tamin Cement Investment Company, and Abadan Power Generation Company were the most traded indices.



Since the week ended on August 14, the TSE, which is Iran's major stock exchange, witnessed drop of its main index every week, except for the week ended on September 18, the week ended on November 6, and the previous week.

TEDPIX had hit the record high of two million points on August 2, and while it had been experiencing an unprecedented trend of rising for some months, the index has witnessed several weekly drops since mid-August.

Hassan Zamani appointed new managing director of IIEC

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini on Thursday appointed Hassan Zamani as the new managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC).

Zamani replaced Bahman Hosseinzadeh who served the post since February 2019.

Hassan Zamani previously served as the deputy industry minister for legal affairs.

The Iran International Exhibitions Company oversees and operates all international and specialized exhibitions held in Iran. IIEC is affiliated with the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry. The company is located at the Tehran permanent international fairgrounds.

Sweets, chocolates, cereal products export rises 5%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's value of sweets, chocolates, and cereal products export has risen five percent in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to an official with Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Mahmoud Bazari, the director-general of TPO's office of agricultural products and processing industries, also said that export of the mentioned products has increased 13 percent in terms of weight.

Given the importance of the industry's products in the country's non-oil export basket, it is possible to expand exports of these products through adopting coordinated policies in the field of non-oil export management and removing obstacles that the exporting companies faces, including temporary import of raw materials, supply of raw materials, liquidity and working capital, the official noted.

The confectionery and chocolate industry is one of the oldest food industries in Iran, and it is now the second-largest exporter in the country's food sector after the dairy industry.

About 100 percent of the investment in this industry belongs to the private sector and most of its products are competitive globally.

The advantage of the confectionery and chocolate industry is the supply of its raw materials inside the country.

With this advantage, any investment will bring profit to this industry.

As a result of supporting domestic producers and products and banning the import of foreign products in this sector, Iranian producers are now able to meet the needs of the domestic market and are welcomed by domestic consumers.

This industry is also targeted to boost export to different markets all around the world.

Iran exports sweets and chocolates to 66 countries and the annual export of \$1 billion has been planned for this industry.

The Chairman of the Association of Iranian Confectionery Manufacturing Companies Jamshid Maghazei says that the country's annual export of sweets and chocolates is estimated to reach \$550 million-\$600 million this year.

Steel ingots export drops 16%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's export of steel ingots fell 16 percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Over 3.191 million tons of steel ingots have been exported during the seven-month period of this year, while the figure was 3.809 million tons in the same time span of the previous year.

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

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

Some 10 years ago Iran exported more than 20 million tons of unprocessed iron ore and the figure fell to a maximum of six million tons last year.

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

Expansion of trade ties with Pakistan a priority

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — Pakistan has a relatively large consumer market with a population of over 200 million.

According to the World Trade Organization, imports constitute over 66 percent of Pakistan's trade.

Expansion of trade with Pakistan, and boosting exports to this neighbor is one of Iran's priorities.

In a recent visit to Pakistan, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum met with Pakistan's deputy economic affairs minister to discuss the expansion of trade ties with the neighboring country.

In the meeting, the officials reviewed important axes of trade, investment, and transportation between the two countries, and decided that the next meeting of the Joint Economic Committee of the two countries will be held in Tehran next month.

To be hosted by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, the fifth meeting of the two countries' Free Trade Committee was also decided to be held on the sidelines of the joint economic committee meeting.

Further in the meeting, representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, and the Energy Ministry held talks with their Pakistani



counterparts to discuss a variety of issues including electricity exports, and maritime, road, and rail transportation cooperation.

The TPO head had visited Pakistan along with a high-ranking delegation headed by Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Iran's exports to Pakistan in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) was \$1.18 billion, but in the meantime, financial and banking problems have still

created obstacles in the way of trade relations with this country.

And although due to the banking and financial problems, barter trade with Pakistan is still emphasized by Iran; experts and those active in the economic fields believe that Iran should seriously pursue the idea of a bilateral joint bank with Pakistan, while taking trade facilitation measures in line with signing agreements.

Comprehensive program begins for renovating Iran's power grid

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH)'s distribution supervision office announced the start of the Energy Ministry's extensive program for renovating the country's electricity grid.

According to Masoud Sadeqi, for the first time in the country, the overhaul of the power network will be carried out simultaneously in all provinces in a two-day maneuver.

Over 1300 kilometers of electricity lines will be repaired and renovated in the first phase of the mentioned program, Sadeqi said.

More than 3,900 specialized personnel in the form of 1,327 operational teams will be participating in this nationwide maneuver to repair worn-out electricity distribution networks, he added.

The official underlined the significance of this program considering the beginning of the cold season in the country and the possibility of natural crises such as rain, snow, and flood, saying: "This can increase the stability of the network through retrofitting, reducing the time to solve problems and re-launching the network in times of crisis."

He also mentioned the conversion of copper wire networks into self-supporting cable ones, removal of loose connections, improvement of the substations equipment including boards, counters, and metal base valves as other axes of this nationwide maneuver.

Earlier this month, the Deputy Coordinator of Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) Gholamali Rakhshani-Mehr had announced the launch of the program for renovating the country's electricity network.

The official mentioned implementing the policies of the resilient economy, improving and upgrading the network's performance indicators, increasing network stability and reliability, reducing the number and time of power outages, reducing network losses and balancing network load, improving customer satisfaction, and improving the readiness of operational teams in the face of potential crises as some of the goals of this program.

Having one of the vastest electricity networks in the region, Iran has been emerging as a power hub in West Asia.

All the Iranian urban population is enjoying electricity



through the national power grid while nearly 99.7 percent of the country's rural population is also supplied with electricity, while according to the information provided by the International Energy Agency (IEA), this figure is 86 percent in Central and South America, 85 percent in Asia, 78 percent in West Asia and 36 percent in Africa.

Iran-Italy Business Forum held online

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — A Webinar on "The Iranian Market between Restrictions and Opportunities. The Instruments to support SMEs" was held on November 18 by the Italian Embassy in Tehran, in cooperation with the Italian-Iranian Chamber of Commerce in Rome, the embassy reported.

The event, which hosted 130 Italian SMEs, provided participating companies with practical and updated information on the opportunities for joint cooperation and highlighted various instruments made available to Italian companies by Italian and EU institutions to support their business with Iran.

In his greetings, the Italian Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone said that the meeting was

part of a series of initiatives organized by the embassy to provide concrete support to bilateral trade relations.

The Italian Embassy had organized, on July 22, a Business Forum on "Economic Relations between Italy and Iran in the current context: non-oil sectors, EMS's role, EU support", in cooperation with the European House Ambrosetti and the Tehran Chamber of Commerce. More than 800 entrepreneurs and professionals both from Italy and Iran took part in that event with hundreds of virtual B2B meetings held.

Chairman of Iran-Italy Joint Chamber of Commerce Ahmad Pourfallah said in late July that despite the U.S. sanctions Italian companies are still willing to engage in trade

with Iran.

According to Pourfallah, despite the U.S. pressures, small and medium-sized Italian enterprises have not cut their ties with Iran and Italy still holds the first place among Iran's European trade partners.

"In the post-sanctions era when the sanctions were removed from Iran's economy, over 1000 business firms and more than 300 companies from Italy came to Iran," he stated.

He noted that Italian companies are still looking to find ways to continue their economic ties with Iran, adding that every month four or five Italian companies visit Iran to hold trade talks.

"The two sides had on the agenda to boost

their mutual trade to \$13 billion," Pourfallah said.

Mentioning the negative impact of the U.S. sanctions in the trade turnover between the two countries, the official noted that in recent years, Iran's exports to Italy were around seven billion euros, but the sanctions reduced the figure to less than €1.8 billion.

"However, in 2018 the trade turnover between the two sides stood at €5 billion," he added.

In early June, head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) said Italy is one of the major trade partners of Iran in the European Union and expansion of trade ties with the country is a priority for Iran.

Petchem output, export rise despite sanctions

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Secretary-General of Iran's Association of Petrochemical Industry Corporation (APIC) said the country's petrochemical production and exports have increased in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21) despite the limitations caused by the pandemic and the U.S. sanctions.

Ahmad Mahdavi Abhari noted that the country's petrochemical production in the first half of this year has increased by at least five million tons compared to the same period last year.

"We expect the figure to increase by eight million tons by the end of the current year," he said.

Mentioning the decline in the price of petrochemical products during the first two months of the current year (March 20-May 20) due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, the official noted that despite the decline in the prices the sales of Iranian products did not fall.

"Many of Iran's petrochemical products have been pre-sold, and for some products, if someone wants to make a purchase, they must wait in line for at least three months, because some products have been pre-sold for the next



three months," he said.

According to Abhari, in addition to increasing exports, the supply of petrochemical products to the domestic market for use in downstream industries has also increased.

He further said that many of the country's petrochemical complexes now produce more than their nominal capacity, adding that in the first six months of this year, the supply of

and a value of \$42 million.

According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the total value of Iran's zinc ingot exports in the five-month period was \$73 million.

Zinc is used in alloys such as brass, nickel, silver, and aluminum, and also in galvanizing steel structures. Furthermore, the metal is

widely used in the manufacture of products such as paint, rubber, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, plastic, ink, soap, batteries, textile, and electrical equipment.

According to the United States Geological Survey, Iran holds the world's largest zinc, ninth largest copper, 10th largest iron ore, fifth largest gypsum and barite, and 10th largest uranium reserves.

Over half a million tons of lead, zinc extracted in 7 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Lead and zinc extraction reached 584,248 tons during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21).

Of the mentioned figure, the share of Angouran mine in Zanjan Province was more than 94 percent.

Also, the extraction amount of lead and

zinc in the seventh month of this year was 81,682 tons, which was seven percent more than the figure for the same month in the past year.

According to the foreign trade data in the mining and mineral industries, Turkey was the first buyer of zinc ingots from Iran in the first five months of this year (March 20-August 21) with a share of 57.5 percent

➡ The incident happened a few hours after Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a U.S. airbase inside Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani.

The airplane had been mistaken for an invading missile.

The victims of the crash included 82 Iranians, 63 Iranian-Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three British nationals.

Ambassador Moradi also says, "Let's not forget that most of the victims of this painful incident are Iranian citizens, so the Iranian government is more entitled and insistent than other countries to clarify the incident."

The following is the text of the interview: ■ Can you update us about Tehran-Kyiv negotiations over the Ukrainian plane crash?

A: First of all, I would like to express my deep regret and deep sorrow over the occurrence of this painful tragedy and offer my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

I truly express my solidarity with these families and I assure them that in the months following this incident, all the efforts of me and my colleagues in the Iranian embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other relevant organizations in the Islamic Republic have been focused on clarifying the various dimensions of this incident as soon as possible based on a transparent and fair investigation.

Let's not forget that most of the victims of this painful incident are Iranian citizens, so the Iranian government is more entitled and insistent than other countries to clarify the incident. In fact, negotiations with the Ukrainian side are continuing in this framework.

So far, two rounds of talks have been held between the officials of the two countries in Kyiv and Tehran. The first round of talks was held in Kyiv under conditions of coronavirus measures and air travel restrictions. During the two days of intensive negotiations, various technical, legal and judicial aspects of the case were discussed. It is worth noting that achieving results in negotiation over aviation accident cases essentially requires a long and difficult process due to its technical and legal complexities and sometimes the different provisions and principles contained in international conventions. Accordingly, negotiations between Iran and Ukraine may also require more time.

The second round of talks was held in October in Tehran, and according to the discussions in the specialized working groups, the negotiation process was described by the participants of the two countries as positive and constructive, like the first round of talks.

Despite some untrue statements by some Western media and political circles, the Iranian side's transparency and readiness for a final settlement of the case were acknowledged by the foreign minister and other Ukrainian officials. We hope that in the third round of talks, which is scheduled to be held in Kyiv in December, we can take another big step towards finalizing the case.

■ How will Iran pay compensation for the downing of the Ukrainian passenger plane? Why do some states like Canada prefer to make propaganda against Iran instead of direct negotiation?

A: Compensation for aviation incidents and its amount is essentially based on the rules and provisions of international conventions to which States are party. In this case, too, the Islamic Republic has always declared its readiness to pay compensation for the downed Ukrainian plane and the victims.

The compensation will be paid to the



Canada's propaganda on Ukraine plane crash hampering probe: Iranian ambassador

Ukrainian side after an agreement based on the provisions of the conventions in which Iran is a member.

Regarding the second part of the question, unfortunately, despite the official and transparent stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the progress achieved in the two rounds of negotiations with the Ukrainian side, some countries such as Canada seek political exploitation of the incident and turn it into a tool for pursuing their hostile policies against Iran. Obviously, such an approach not only does not help to resolve the issue but can disrupt the natural process of investigation and hamper Iran's efforts to exercise the rights of the victims' families.

■ What are the latest findings surrounding the reading of the flight recorders and the black boxes of the plane?

A: Re-reading the black boxes of the crashed plane is a technical issue and part of the overall process of investigating the incident. However, there was a delay in reading the black boxes due to the spread of COVID-19 disease. In addition, the Ukrainian government insisted in the early months of the investigation that black boxes should be sent to Kyiv, while Ukrainian officials later admitted that they don't have the technical equipment to read the black boxes.

Finally, the black boxes of the Ukrainian plane were decoded in France under the supervision of an Iranian team, while other countries that were related to this regrettable incident dispatched delegations to Paris as observers.

The results of the decoding of the black boxes will be included in the final report of the Civil Aviation Organization which is about to be published.

■ How do you evaluate the level of political and economic relations between Iran and Ukraine?

A: Over the past three decades the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ukraine have always been friendly and have been based on mutual interests and respect. Both countries have extensive cooperation in the political, economic, and cultural fields, and several memorandums of understanding that determine the direction of relations between the two countries have been concluded in order to improve relations.

In the political field, there is no fundamental difference between the two countries, and political officials at the level of foreign ministers and their deputies have met on various occasions over the past year. In an important event, the second round of

Over the past three decades the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ukraine have always been friendly and have been based on mutual interests and respect. Both countries have extensive cooperation in the political, economic, and cultural fields, and several memorandums of understanding that determine the direction of relations between the two countries have been concluded in order to improve relations.

political consultations between the deputy foreign ministers of the two countries during the recent visit of the Ukrainian delegation to Tehran was held between Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Abbas Araghchi and Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Mr. Yevgeny Yenin in which both sides discussed cooperation on a wide range issue at bilateral and international level.

Economically, the two countries have vast capacities, and due to the complementarity of the economies of Iran and Ukraine (Ukraine's need for energy and Iran's need for some agricultural products), a good collaboration between Tehran and Kyiv is expected.

Although, the sanctions imposed by the U.S. administration on Iran and the outbreak of the Coronavirus have hampered trade between the two countries, the trade volume between Iran and Ukraine is in an acceptable state. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the volume of trade between the two countries in the first six months of 2020 is about \$ 250 million, although Ukraine's share in exports is bigger than Iran because most trade between the two countries is agricultural items and livestock feeds that Iran needs, while the Iranian side is currently unable to export oil to Ukraine. We hope that with the lifting of sanctions, Iran resumes the export of oil and its derivative products to Ukraine in order to establish a trade balance between the two countries.

Regarding culture and public diplomacy, a wide range of cooperation is underway, including Persian language teaching, as well as scientific and educational cooperation. Iranian film and culture weeks were held in Ukraine last year, and our country's presence in cultural exhibitions organized in this country was impressive. In addition, about 2,000 Iranian students are studying at Ukrainian universities.

■ How do you assess visits by tourists from Iran to Ukraine and from Ukraine to Iran before the Coronavirus outbreak, and how did the pandemic affect this field?

A: Iran and Ukraine are two important tourist destinations in the world due to their cultural and historical tourist attractions as well as the beautiful and diverse nature of the two countries.

However, the level of tourist visits between the two countries are not satisfactory due to several reasons, the most important is the lack of sufficient knowledge among people of the two countries. Of course, the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has made every effort to introduce the cultural, historical, and natural attractions of Iran, as well as establishing relations with Ukrainian tourist agencies and tour guides. But some mental barriers, as well as the sanctions imposed by the U.S., have hampered these efforts. In addition, Ukraine has traditionally not been a destination for Iranian tourists, and they have always preferred to go to Turkey and European and sometimes Asian countries.

Perhaps Ukraine is still viewed as part of the Soviet Union, and that is because of some stereotypes.

This is also the case with Ukrainian tourists; they are often preferring to go to beaches and take sunbath, although those Ukrainian tourists who visited Iran have repeatedly praised the natural beauty and cultural and historical monuments and, of course, the hospitality of the Iranians.

We hope to see an increase in tourist exchange between the two countries by end of the COVID-19 and re-establishing direct flights between Tehran and Kyiv, which will strengthen the cultural ties between the two countries and in the economic interests of both.

Major Iraqi parliamentary bloc wants full withdrawal of U.S. troops

A powerful political coalition in Iraq's parliament says Washington must withdraw all its troops from the Arab country instead of partial drawdown its forces.

Karim Alaiwi, a legislator from the Fatah (Conquest) alliance and a member of the Security and Defense Committee in the Iraqi legislature, told Arabic-language Baghdad Today news website on Thursday that his coalition and all other national factions seek complete pullout of all foreign forces, not just Americans, from the Iraqi soil.

Alaiwi described the Pentagon's decision to reduce the number of U.S. forces in Iraq as "unacceptable," emphasizing that the Iraqi parliament's resolution concerning withdrawal of U.S. troops from the entire Iraqi territories, including the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, is unambiguous and irreversible.

"Calls for the full withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq will continue and will even step up... Any cut in troop levels will not make us abandon our demands as they have been ratified by the parliament and enjoy both political and popular support," the Iraqi lawmaker said.

U.S. senators seek to halt Trump's \$23bn UAE arms sale

Three United States senators said they would introduce legislation seeking to halt the Trump administration's effort to sell more than \$23bn of drones and other weapons systems to the United Arab Emirates, a showdown with the president two months before he is due to leave office.

Democratic Senators Bob Menendez and Chris Murphy and Republican Senator Rand Paul announced they would introduce four separate resolutions of disapproval of President Donald Trump's plan to sell billions of dollars' worth of Reaper drones and other munitions, F-35 fighter aircraft and air-to-air missiles to the UAE.

The lawmakers said the Trump administration, seeking to rush the sale of the sophisticated weaponry, circumvented the normal congressional review process, al Jazeera reported.

They said the U.S. State and Defense Departments also refused to respond to inquiries about how the administration would deal with national security risks associated with the proposed sales.

Murphy was also concerned with the UAE's "behavior" in the region, according to a joint statement he and Menendez released on Wednesday.

"The Emirates are an important security partner, but their recent behavior indicates that these weapons may be used in violation of U.S. and international law. The UAE has violated past arms sales agreements, resulting in U.S. arms ending up in the arms of dangerous militia groups, and they have failed to comply with international law in Libya and Yemen," Murphy said in the statement.

Azerbaijan enters Nagorno-Karabakh district after peace deal

Azerbaijan's army says it has entered the district of Aghdam, the first of three to be handed back by Armenia as part of a Russian-brokered peace deal to end the fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

"Units of the Azerbaijan Army entered the Aghdam region on November 20," Azerbaijan's defence ministry said of the district, which had been controlled by Armenian separatists for nearly 30 years.

Syria, Arab League condemn Pompeo's visit to occupied West Bank, Golan Heights

The Arab League and the government of Syria have categorically condemned US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to the occupied territories of Palestine in West Bank and the occupied portion of Syria's Golan Heights, describing it as a clear violation of international law.

The assertion by the Arab League came on Thursday, after Pompeo became the first U.S. secretary of state to visit the Israeli occupied Golan Heights after an unprecedented stop in the occupied West Bank, Press TV reported.

Reacting to Pompeo's visit, which has also stirred strong opposition and wrath of various Palestinian factions, the Arab League issued a statement saying his trip to the occupied West Bank and the Golan Heights is against the norms of international law.

Meanwhile, Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi said Pompeo's visit is aimed at setting another illegal precedent.

Resistance News

Hamas condemns Bahraini foreign minister's visit to occupied territories

Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has censured a Bahraini government delegation led by Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani over paying an official visit to the occupied territories, more than two months after the Persian Gulf kingdom normalized relations with Israel.

"The Bahraini foreign minister's visit to the occupied lands and the friendly talks he had with criminal Israeli leaders are deplorable and condemned in strongest terms. This is an unacceptable act at [both] Arab and moral levels," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qasem said in a statement released on Thursday.

He added, "Bahrain's request to exchange ambassadors during its foreign minister's visit reflects the Bahraini regime's insistence on deepening the national mistake that it made by signing the normalization agreement with the Israeli Occupation."

Qasem then lambasted the Manama regime's intent to exchange ambassador with the Tel Aviv regime as contrary to Arab principles and an act of antagonism against the national interests of Bahraini people, warning that such a measure would further escalate tensions in the region.

The senior Hamas official highlighted that Zayani's visit to the occupied lands concurrent with an uptick in Israel's settlement construction activities in Jerusalem al-Quds has made the Persian Gulf nation a partner in the crimes and aggression being committed against Palestinian people, their rights and land.

The U.S. is on the brink of a civil war

The president of the U.S. is just a puppet of the deep-state

➡ Large parts of poor rural people have put their hope on him, they are mainly 'white' forgotten people, to save the country from as they call it the 'globalization', which took place under the Obama Administration and eliminated many jobs.

The U.S. has a lot of experience conducting color-revolutions and coups abroad. I would say in 90% of the civil unrest and coups conducted for instance in West Asia (Syria, Libya) they we're behind it. How to deal with it in the U.S. itself, we actually see a similar coup is going on, conducted by the deep-state upon their own population? They will use their armed forced most likely, mobilizing and declare for a lot of cities' the state of emergency or 'martial law', as we saw happening already this summer in Portland. The Democrats politicians tried already a coup inside the White House, the Democrats and the deep-state, started already with the so-called , Russia-gate, expanding it to perhaps election fraud, by two programs developed by the CIA; the Hammer and Scorehead program, to rig the election, developed at the beginning of the so-called 'War on Terror'.

President Trump for now refuses the outcome of the election. A smart move from him was the appointment of Amy Coney Barret as the new Supreme Court judge. He saw the fraud coming and this judge will most likely be against the so-called 'deep-state' coup. As we all know Trump has a reputation to be unpredictable, so the outcome is unclear. Although the latest signs are the clean-up in the Pentagon, a massive clean-up is taking place, to eliminate parts of the 'deep-state', as he promised he will do when he is President, unfortunately he started too late, but I guess his hands we're tied with the Russia-gate going on and the threat of impeachment. As it's well known, the President of the U.S. (also in Europe) is just a puppet of the deep-state, meaning the Pentagon, CIA, NSA and specifically in the US the Zionist lobby called AIPAC.

Russia and China didn't congratulate Joe Biden and Kamel Harris and stated they wanted to wait until the final



results are there. According to the Western MSM Joe Biden won, since last week even more so called him the definite winner claiming he would receive 306 Electoral College Votes, more than expected. He won the State of Georgia, as the first democrat since a long time, according to CNN, which the FOX viewers don't trust. So here is part of the polarized U.S. society shown.

Europe prefers the Biden camp, so they can easily implement Agenda 2021 and make reforms to the Climate accord, which was eliminated by Trump. Stating it would destroy the economy of the U.S. If Biden really takes up his Presidency in 2021, which I don't see it happen as yet, Europe will be delighted. They can push for their LGBT agenda, the implementation of AI and most of all to go ahead with lockdowns and their vaccination plan for COVID-19. It's really sad that COVID-19 is now used for a political agenda in the U.S. and EU. Imagine a virus being part of elections, also in Europe it will be the same. Instead of improving or renewing the broken health care system.

It will be a very turbulent time, in the U.S. The sad part of it all, that actually nothing will change in the geopolitical

strategy. Biden already announced, if he will be the 46th President of the U.S., his new team; Hillary Clinton as the new UN representative (she has a long record of waging war against Libya and Syria), Susan Rice who has bad record in Afghanistan and wanted to overthrow President Assad, Michele Flournoy will become the first female, in the U.S. as Defense Secretary, which is in line with the EU (deep-state) we're all the EU Ministers of Defense are female and in line with Agenda's 2021 LGBT agenda point. This unknown Michele Flournoy stated in the New York Post: "warfare may come in a lot of different flavors in the future." In her previous postings in the Pentagon, she took a hardline stance against both Russia and China, encouraged military intervention in Libya and Syria, and sustained military operations in Afghanistan.

Also, rumors have it that the widow of Senator John McCain, the one who sponsored DAESH (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq, is on the advisory board, if Biden will become the new President of the U.S. The preference of warmonger Henry Kissinger is Joe Biden and I don't see any change in the policy of the geopolitical strategy, it might become even worse. It's the same 'old' warmonger bunch as under Obama, who destroyed Libya, Syria and conducted a coup in Ukraine.

Concluding thoughts: President Trump had to go, but why? He might have had the intention of not participating in the ongoing wars in West Asia which killed millions of people. This is in sharp contrast to the Pentagon (part of the deep state) wanted, but as it proved, this is a very difficult task, maybe a mission impossible in the U.S. The deep-state is until now too powerful and will do everything and anything to stay in power and most of all implement Agenda 2021 or as it's called it The Great Reset.

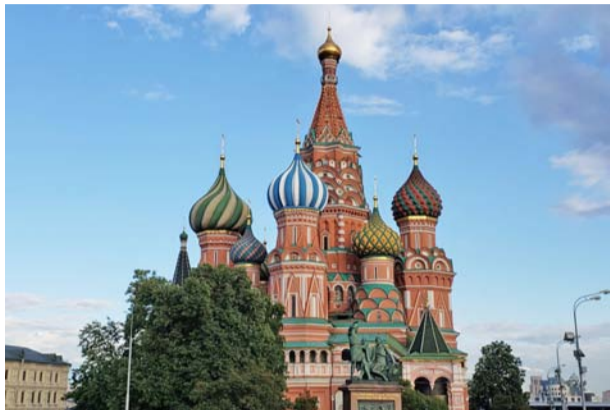
Sonja van den Ende is an independent journalist from the Netherlands. Her expertise includes international affairs by special focus on Syria, West Asia and Russia. She is the former International Secretary at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA - Vienna).

Russia to offer e-visas to Iranian tourists as of early 2021

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Russian Ambassador to Iran **d e s k** Levan Dzhangarian has said Iran his country will be offering electronic visas to travelers from Iran as of February 2021.

He made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran with Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan, IRNA reported on Thursday.

“We welcome the proposal of the minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts for the development of tourism between the two countries,” the envoy said.



Iranians are well acquainted with Russia. In 2018, the (FIFA) World Cup was held in this country, with a large number of tourists and Iranian football fans in attendance.... Many of whom also visited different cities in Russia, Dzhangarian noted.

For his part, Mounesan said that the Iranian people are interested in Russia and traveling there, so a large number of Iranian tourists who travel to Europe can also travel to Russia. “We are interested in increasing the number of Iranian tourists to Russia,” Mounesan said.

The single-entry visa valid for 60 days from the date of issuance will allow visitors to enter the country through 29 border crossings and stay in Russia for up to 16 days. Visitors will have the opportunity to apply for a visa on a special website or via a mobile application.

Russia hopes to finalize work on a bilateral visa-free regime for certain tourist groups with Iran in the near future, but says the time for its implementation depends on the situation of coronavirus pandemic in the two countries.

“We hope this work will be finished soon and the agreement will come into force,” Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in October.

“The decision for implementing the agreement would depend on the epidemic situation in Russia and Iran and on coronavirus lockdown measures in the two countries.”

The agreement on visa-free group tourist trips was signed on March 28, 2017, during Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s visit to Moscow.

Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association Ibrahim Pourfaraj said last year that a majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. “The fact is that Iran’s political and economic relations with Russia are considered as good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination,” he explained.

Overnight stay, camping banned in Lut desert

TOURISM **TEHRAN** —Overnight stay and camping in **d e s k** Shahdad, a major part of the UNESCO-registered Lut desert, and its giant dunes (locally called kaluts) have been banned until further notice.

Situated in southeastern Kerman province, it is home to shifting sands, salt plains, meteorite fields, and rocky terrain, which offers visitors breathtaking vistas and unparalleled serenity of the intact nature and wilderness.

It has long been a destination for adventurers, nature lovers, off-roaders, and trekkers.

The presence of tourists has led to an increase in the amount of garbage in the area as some tourists leave waste assuming that it will be absorbed by nature, while this process takes three to four months, the director of the UNESCO-tagged site, Moein Afzali, said on Thursday.



While leaving garbage is distorting the view of the desert, it also has dire consequences that appear over time, the official added.

However, eco-lodge units and desert camps have been provided for tourists who are interested in spending nights in the area, he explained.

According to the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, tourist tours will be prevented from entering the region until December 6.

The Lut Desert, widely referred to as Dasht-e Lut (“Emp-tiness Plain”), is a large salt desert encircled by the provinces of Kerman and Sistan-Baluchestan, and South Khorasan. It is the world’s 27th-largest desert and was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List on July 17, 2016.

Seven years of satellite temperature data analyzed by NASA show that the Lut Desert is the hottest spot on Earth. Based on the research, it was hottest during 5 of the 7 years and had the highest temperature overall: 70.7°C in 2005.

The desert is also considered as one of the top areas in the world for finding meteorites, thanks to its unique parameters. In recent years, significant finds have been made, with the efforts of national and international teams of researchers.

Khan-e Tabatabaei: another superb mansion of amazing harmony, architecture

→ 1 A large, rectangular pool oriented northwest to southeast takes the center of the courtyard. And a smaller rectangular one oriented perpendicular to the larger central pool marks the southeastern end of this assemblage.

The best time to visit the mansion may be the mid-afternoon when sunlight and stained glass combine to soak some rooms in brilliant color.

Many travelers opt to pass Kashan on their journeys between Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd, because this delightful oasis city on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir, is one of Iran’s most alluring destinations. Kashan not only boasts a cluster of architectural wonders, an atmospheric covered bazaar, and a UNESCO-recognized garden, but it also offers some of central Iran’s best traditional hotels.

Under travelers’ eyes

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the historical mansion have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

“Worth spending time here”

From the outside, it is just a house and I was not so much interested in it



before entering the house, but inside, yes it is worth spending time here with

guide explanation. Especially around the time of sunset is beautiful and recom-

Yazd’s historical texture being restored to original grandeur

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Ancient mudbrick ram- **d e s k** parts and towers, which were once parts of defensive fortifications around the city of Yazd, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage, are being restored to their original glory.

The city walls of Yazd, its gates, ditches, and connected and detached towers, which are one of the finest expressions of a vital tradition of military architecture in central Iran, have been initially demarcated based on the written and unwritten sources and documents, provincial tourism chief said on Thursday.

After the demarcation project, the restoration project has been commenced on the fortification, ramparts, and towers, which are one of the characteristic features of Yazd, ILNA quoted Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi as saying.

The restoration project on the city walls has begun and four restoration workshops are working on the north, south, east, and west fronts, the official added.

He also noted that the towers that are identified in the photos of the historical texture, taken in 1956, which have been changed or removed over time, will be rebuilt.

The project aims at keeping the original shape of the historical texture while making it a unique tourist complex, which would attract history buffs and tourists to the region, he mentioned.

A junction of both inter-city and regional trade routes,

Yazd has predictably been a fortified settlement since its inception in the Sassanid period (224-651 CE). However, the larger military strategic importance of its geographical location within the desert region led to its successive building and expansion as one of Iran’s most famed city fortifications.

Built largely of mud brick and mud straw mixture reinforced with timber, the Yazd walls demonstrate a visual continuity in color, scale, and form with the built fabric of the town. The Yazd city walls form a large part of the earliest known descriptions of the city, dating from the tenth century which describes a well-built, fortified city with iron gates.

More impressive and richer in architectonic qualities than the similar mud brick city walls of Bam (in southeast Iran), Yazd’s walls were built before the active use of gunpowder in warfare. The influx of war technologies introduced by invading armies gave birth to circular, larger, and more closely spaced barbican towers that allowed defenders to target the invader’s vulnerable flank.

Protected crenellations with arrow slits provided defensive positions while series of sluices allowed invaders to be discouraged by boiling oil or burning pitch. The walls were double layered with a high protective external curtain supported by a lower inner wall.



With its winding lanes, a forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, being referred to as a ‘don’t miss’ destination by almost all travel associates in the region. The oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains.

Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

Tehran historical schools to receive better maintenance and care

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Tehran **d e s k** historical schools will receive better maintenance and care based on a trilateral memorandum of understanding signed by the ministries of tourism and education and the Municipality of Tehran.

The agreement was inked on Wednesday evening by Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan, Education Minister Mohsen Haji Mirzaee, and Tehran’s mayor Pirouz Hanachi in a bid to revive “eternal” schools across the Iranian capital, ILNA reported on Thursday.

“Historical monuments are part of our national identity..... Having a [rich] historical background and precious [cultural] heritage, our country is home to countless historical monuments,” Mounesan said on the sidelines of the signing ceremony.

“In the meantime, the Education Min-



istry also has schools that are considered as valuable historical monuments and in addition to being tangible heritage, they also include intangible heritage due to some reasons,” he added.

The agreement could pave the way to launch “schools museums” that along with other cultural heritage museums and sites

could help boom in traveling across the country, Mounesan noted.

The signatories met at Alborz High School, a college-preparatory unit located in the heart of Tehran. The school, which is an exemplar historical college in the country, is named after the Alborz mountain range, north of Tehran.

The school was founded as an elementary school in 1873 by a group of American missionaries led by James Bassett.

In 1932, the school received a permanent charter from the Board of Regents of the State University of New York.

In 1940 and during World War II, Alborz was removed from American management and placed under the auspices of the Iranian Ministry of Education. The school’s name was changed from “College” back to “Alborz”, and it was reinstated as a high school.

Kermanshah launches historical objects data bank

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A data bank has been estab- **d e s k** lished on historical objects discovered across the western province of Kermanshah.

Over 7,600 objects, belonging to different historical eras from the time of Neanderthals to the present day, have been registered on the data bank so far, Omid Qaderi, the provincial tourism chief, announced on Thursday.

Some of the findings were discovered through various excavations in the province’s historical sites and some were confiscated from the smugglers and antique dealers, the official added.

Many of the recovered objects are kept in suitable and standard conditions, however, they will be put on display for the public if the establishment of the archeological museum of the province completes sooner, the official added.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites including Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan, both on



Ancient clay figurines, dagger recovered from smugglers

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** —A total of 32 **d e s k** historical objects have been confiscated from two smugglers in the village of Esfandagheh, near Jiroft, an ancient city in the southeastern province of Kerman.

The recovered objects include some clay animal and human figurines, metal daggers, and clay utensils, belonging to different his-

torical eras, Seyyed Ali Hosseini, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage said on Thursday, ILNA reported.

The relics have been handed over to the cultural heritage experts for further studies, the official noted.

The discovery was made based on an anonymous report to the authorities over illegally keeping ancient relics in antique

dealers’ homes, he added.

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

mended. (JunoJules from Braunschweig, Germany)

“Opulent!”

The architecture is stunning. This is a fine example of how the Persian aristocracy lived. The ability to wander freely around the premises is a nice option. (DL2Some from Detroit Lakes, Minnesota)

“Harmony

If you have to make a choice: go to Tabatabaei house. It is perfect harmony. It was of the father in law of the other house in Kashan, Burujerdi house, which is more decorated, but in my opinion too much. (kathleenghequiere from Ghent, Belgium)

“Impressive mansion/house with lots of interesting details”

One of the most important houses or rather mansions in Kashan is The Tabatabaei house. Owned by one of Kashan wealthy carpet merchants, it is around 240 years old and has some amazing and fascinating details. The architecture is incredible! Much like all the famous houses... (chiquidv from Dubai, United Arab Emirates)



Iranian teacher spends \$290,000 inheritance on educating deprived students

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Hossein d e s k Asadi, a teacher in Khuzestan province, has spent 12 billion rials (nearly \$290,000) that he inherited from his father to educate students in deprived areas.

"From my father's inheritance, I was about to buy a car, and in a conversation with one of the school principals, I decided to talk to a girl who was depressed due to being dropped out of school," Asadi said.

In a conversation with this girl, I realized that she was depressed due to not having a mobile phone and falling behind in education, so I bought her a tablet as a gift to attend school, he added.

"After this decision, I provided 153 tablets for financially struggling students and prevent them from being out of school, and I plan to provide another 200 tablets by the next week," he noted.

Education in COVID-19 era

All educational centers in Iran were closed in late February due to the coronavirus pandemic, but for students to keep in touch with their studies, the Ministry of



Education launched a homegrown mobile application on April 9, called SHAD, providing students with distance learning programs. This year, education was followed in

three forms of in-person, virtual, and television-based, meanwhile, Health Minister Saeed Namaki warned that the third wave of the pandemic has just flared up in the country, as the new cases of coronavirus in Iran hit an all-time high. So, the officials decided to increase the restrictions and stick to e-learning schools.

In early-October, a smart school network plan was officially inaugurated by connecting over 76,000 schools nationwide.

To achieve communication justice to reduce the educational gap between urban and rural students, the first phase of the smart school network plan was launched.

According to this plan, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is obliged, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, to provide access (hardware-software and content) to textbooks, educational content, tests, and academic counseling, educational computer games, aptitude assessment, technical and social skills free of charge to all students in cities with less than 20,000 people and in villages and suburbs.

Drug, livestock smuggling depots discovered

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Police forces have seized large quantities of smuggled narcotics and livestock in the southern provinces of Hormozgan and Sistan-Baluchestan.

Border guards at the Qeshm naval base in Hormozgan province discovered the location of a 1,135 cattle smuggling depot.

Cattle were kept for illegal export to the Persian Gulf countries.

According to experts, the value of the smuggled cattle discovered is estimated at 30 billion rials (nearly \$714,000).

Also, in another operation, 758 kilograms of opium were found in a house in Khash city of Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Smugglers fined \$570m

Until November 16, smugglers of fuel and livestock have been fined 24 trillion rials (about \$570 million) since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21), representing a 47 percent increase compared to the same period last [Iranian calendar] year.

Out of a total of about 42,000 smuggling cases, about 28,000 were related to export smuggling, of which 20,000 are related to the smuggling of fuel and petroleum products, mostly to Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to a lesser extent to Turkey and Iraq.

A number of these cases are related to livestock trafficking. Most of the cattle are smuggled to Iraq, and then to the Persian Gulf countries.

Every year, \$20-25 billion are smuggled in and out of the country, which, if stopped, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, Hassan Norouzi, member of the Parliament said.

In the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017- March 2018), \$12 billion was smuggled into Iran and \$900 million out of the country, according to the Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Exchange.

Iran, which has a 900-kilometer border with Afghanistan, has been used as the main conduit for smuggling Afghan drugs to narcotics kingpins in Europe.

Despite high economic and human costs, Iran has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past decades.

Earlier in June, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan has been implemented with the priority of customs, tobacco, and transit goods nationwide.

Iran fighting against narcotics

Iran seized some 1,000 tons of narcotics in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), putting the country in the first place in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against narcotics said in July.

UNODC has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in the drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.



Iran's drug control efforts led to the seizure of 266 tons of different types of drugs during the period of April-June 2020, a 20 percent increase compared to the same period in 2019.

The country has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab, and Central Asian countries.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking, Momeni announced.

Drug use is a complex health and social problem worldwide, with half a million people dying each year as a result of drug abuse, he lamented, adding, drug use has entered a critical condition, and the international community is determined to tackle the global drug problem.

Red Cross: 'No vaccine for climate change'

"The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how vulnerable the world is to a truly global catastrophe. But another, bigger, catastrophe has been building for many decades, and humanity is still lagging far behind in efforts to address it."

So begins Come Heat or High Water, the 2020 World Disasters Report published Tuesday by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

While "Covid-19 has demonstrated that humanity has the capacity to recognize and respond to a global crisis," the authors wrote, "climate change is an even more significant challenge to humanity... one which literally threatens our long-term survival."

Indeed, "the impacts of global warming are already killing people and devastating lives and livelihoods every year," including in 2020, the report noted. "Climate change is not waiting for Covid-19 to be brought under control."

The analysis showed that more than 100 climate change-related disasters occurred in just the first six months of the pandemic, affecting over 50 million people.

"Many people are being directly affected by the pandemic and climate-driven disasters all at once," the report said, drawing attention to what researchers called "compounding shocks."

"And the world's poorest and most at-risk people are being hit first and hardest," which is consistent with "trends in vulner-

ability and exposure" that have led scholars to describe climate as a "risk multiplier."

While there is hope that one or more vaccines will soon provide protection against the coronavirus, IFRC Secretary-General Jagan Chapagain told reporters that "unfortunately, there is no vaccine for climate change."

To the contrary, the report stressed that climate-driven disasters "will only get worse without immediate and determined action."

Governments "may well be 'busy' with the pandemic" right now, the Red Cross acknowledged, but the climate crisis is getting worse—not taking a break—meaning "there's still never been a more urgent time to... adapt to its realities."

"We must work to limit the deaths and damage that climate-driven disasters are already" causing, the report noted, while also "taking action to reverse climate change."

The good news, the authors wrote, is that "the massive stimulus packages that are being developed around the world in response to Covid-19 are an opportunity to build back better."

Even though the climate crisis is much more dangerous to human life on Earth than the pandemic, the \$10 trillion spent on the global response to the economic effects of the coronavirus crisis is far more than the amount of money the Red Cross said is necessary to "adapt to current and imminent climate-driven disaster risks."

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

DOE not convinced to transfer water from Caspian Sea

Studies carried out so far has not yet convinced the Department of Environment (DOE) to transfer water from the Caspian Sea to central Iran, Parvin Farshchi, deputy director of the DOE for marine affairs has said.

Over the past few years Iran has faced recurrent drought spells and low precipitation and the value of water has become more tangible, Khabaronline quoted Farshchi as saying on Saturday.

She further explained that water transfer from the Caspian Sea to central Iran has been a matter of interest for some years now and in the [Iranian calendar year of] 1389 (March 2010-March 2011) various research and studies on the issue were conducted.

سازمان محیط زیست؛ برای انتقال آب خزر مجاب نشده ایم

پروین فرشچی معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: مطالعاتی که ما را به انتقال آب خزر به فلات مرکزی مجاب کند، هنوز تکمیل نشده است.

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرآنلاین پروین فرشچی در خصوص وضعیت آبی کشور گفت: طی این سال‌ها با خشک‌سالی و کمبود بارش روبه‌رو بودیم، بنابراین ارزش‌گذاری آب ملموس‌تر مطرح‌شده است.

معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست درباره مسائل مطرح‌شده در خصوص انتقال آب خزر به فلات مرکزی گفت: این موضوع از سال‌ها پیش مطرح بوده و در سال ۱۳۸۹ نیز مطالعات گوناگونی در این حوزه صورت گرفته است.

Reimagining a better future for every child

1 → Despite the general education law that all children are expected to be able to complete their education by the end of junior high school, there are still about 500,000 illiterate children in the country.

Child nutrition requires calls for more attention

Elsewhere in her remarks, Kazemipour pointed out the importance of child nutrition and lamented "On the other hand, there is a lack of attention to the health test of height, weight, nutrition of children aging one to five years old, which needs to be done once a year."



However, a young, healthy and growing population requires more attention to children, she concluded.

Fertility drops to lowest rate in 8 years

According to the data recently published by the Statistics Center, the fertility rate in Iran has been declining over the past eight years, the lowest of which was related to the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019- March 2020) with the birth rate of 1.2.

The fertility rate of the country has experienced ups and downs over the past eight years; during the first half of the 1390s (2010s), the rate slightly raises from 1.75 to 2.07. However, it drops to a record low of 1.8 over the last [Iranian calendar] year.

According to the data released by the National Organization for Civil Registration, the number of births registered during the [Iranian calendar] year 1390 (March 2011-March 2012) was equal to 1,382,118, which increased to 1,528,053 births in the [Iranian calendar] year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017).

However, the number of births in the whole country faced a downtrend over the past three years, as registered births decreased to 1,196,135 over the past [Iranian calendar] year; a difference of roughly over 120,000 to 16,000 per year.

Moreover, the age pattern of fertility shows a decrease in total fertility at all ages, including the age groups of 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 years in the last year; indicating fertility downward among young people, which in turn has played a significant role in reducing the total rate.

Population decline comes up with consequences, including the reduction of the working population (aged 15 to 64) and the aging population in the coming decades.

Several socio-economic factors led to fertility rate decrease and reproductive behavior in the country, including financial issues, urbanization, education, first marriage age, as well as increased access to family planning services along with increased time gap between the firstborn and marriage.

Mohammad Jalal Abbasi, a demographic expert and head of the Population Association, said that usually when society is facing economic shocks and psychological crises, as in the current situation of a global pandemic, marriages and childbearing are even more affected due to fears of a vague future.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 62)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

در خیابانِ کارگر، خیابانِ اِنقلاب و میدانِ اِنقلاب،

فُروشگاه‌های زیادی هست و آخَند گاهی بُرای

خَرید به این فروشگاه‌ها می‌رود.

خیابانِ کارگر چند فُروشگاهِ لباسِ دارد. احمد

از این فُروشگاه‌ها لباسِ می‌خَرَد اَمّا بُرایِ خَریدِ

کتاب باید به خیابانِ اِنقلاب بَرَوَد. احمد خَریدِ

کردن و فارسی صُحبتِ کردن با فُروشندِه‌ها را

دوست دارد.

احمد دیروز کلاسِ نَداشت، به میدانِ اِنقلاب

رفت تا یک ساعتِ بَخَرَد. او از آنجا ساعتِ

خَرید و بَعَد به کِتابخانِه رَفت.

■ عَدَد - صد ها - کتاب کار

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Photo



■ Mina Moqbelzadeh is displaying a collection of her photos of the women of the Lor nomads in an exhibition currently underway at the Atashzad Gallery. The exhibit titled "The Path of the Sun" aims to provide a new insight into the attitudes of the Lor women. It will run until November 25 at the gallery located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

Painting



■ An exhibition of paintings by Neda Azami is currently underway at Vista Gallery. The exhibit named "In Pursuit of Life" will run until November 30 at the gallery that can be found at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Monireh Kolehduzan, Fatemeh Bateni, Sanaz Zarif, Shima Nurbakhsh, Narges Aqai, Hayedeh Saeidi and several other artists is underway at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Contemporary Man" will run until November 25 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



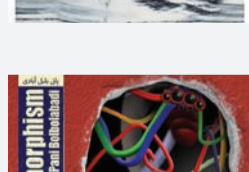
■ Saye Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mamak Hejazi. The exhibit named "Pandora's Box" will continue until December 2 at the gallery that can be found at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.



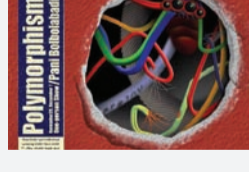
■ Paintings by Abolfazl Haruni are on display in an exhibition at Inja Gallery. The exhibit titled "A Room Facing the Hall" will run until December 2 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



■ Etemad Gallery 1 hosts an exhibition of paintings by Leila Qandchi. Etemad Gallery 2 is also showcasing an exhibition of sculptures by Sepideh Nuri.



The exhibitions will be running until November 24 at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.



■ Soo Gallery 2 is showcasing a collection of paintings by Pani Bolbolabadi in an exhibition "Polymorphism".

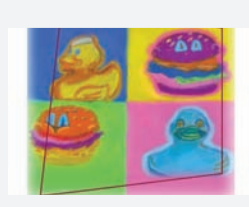
Soo Gallery 1 also is displaying paintings by Jannat Khajeh Abdollah. The exhibits will run until December 7 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off Somayyeh St.

Tapestry



■ Zahra Rasolzadeh is showcasing her latest tapestries in an exhibition at Zarna Gallery. The exhibit named "Rotating Yellow" will continue until December 5 at 10 Esko Alley near Daneshgah St. and Enqelab Ave.

Multimedia



■ Artworks in various media by Niknaz Moeini, Puria Sahneh, Fatemeh Hassani and Hannaneh Jalu are on view in an exhibition at Sheidai Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Production of Artificial Hamburger" will continue until December 15 at the gallery located at 149 Bahar Shiraz Square near Haft-e Tir Square.

Mahak celebrates World Children's Day with online painting exhibition

A R T **TEHRAN** — An online exhibition of paintings created at the Mahak Charity Society, a Tehran-based major medical center for children with cancer, opened on Friday to celebrate World Children's Day.

Every year on World Children's Day, Mahak children used to wait for theater troupes, musicians and celebrities to celebrate the day with a variety of programs to help ease the pain of cancer for a few hours, a Mahak official, Behnaz Asangari, has said.

"However, this year, due to a spike in the coronavirus in the country, the organizers decided to hold a virtual exhibition and asked the children of Mahak in addition to children from several other hospitals to participate in the exhibit with their paintings, now available on the Instagram page of the charity society," she added.

In addition, a music video featuring a selection of the paintings will be screened



Paintings by children are on view in a charity exhibition at the Mahak Charity Society in Tehran in 2016 to raise funds for children suffering from cancer. (Zeinab Asadi)

for the children at Mahak, while it will be uploaded by the Mahak psychologists for children in other cities, she noted.

World Children's Day was first established in 1954 as Universal Children's Day, and is celebrated on November 20 each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide and improving children's welfare.

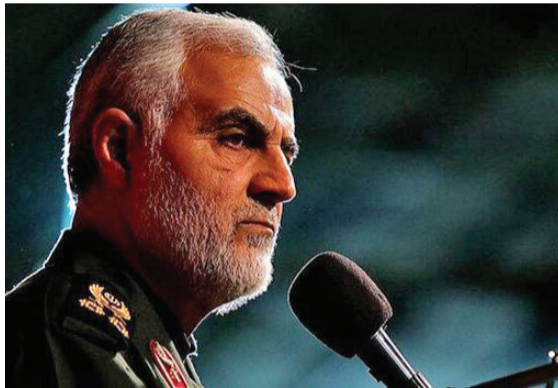
Iranian artists have always had active participation on different occasions to provide an opportunity for children at Mahak to experience a time of happiness to help them forget their difficult days.

In early July, a number of artists celebrated the Day of Literature for Children and Young Adults by telling stories to children at the charity center.

The narratives of some stories by the artists were also uploaded on the Instagram page of the center.

Hassan Majuni, Ezzatollah Alvandi, Azadeh Moayedifard, Bahar Katuzi and Eleka Hedayat were among the artists.

IRIB to launch radio network to remember Commander Qassem Soleimani's martyrdom anniversary



Commander Qassem Soleimani in an undated photo.

➔ Resistance in the discourse of the Islamic Revolution, explaining the achievement of resistance and introducing the prominent characters of resistance are among other topics to be reviewed in the different programs arranged for the channel.

The channel will have pogroms around the clock and will help introduce the life and character of martyr Soleimani. Explaining resistance and the school of martyr Soleimani in Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan and other parts of the Muslim world are the main mission of the channel.

Soleimani, the chief of IRGC Quds Force, was assassinated during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

After his martyrdom, Soleimani has become the subject of several films, theatrical productions and festival programs.

Recently, young filmmaker Behnam Bahadori announced that he has made a short documentary named "Green

Zone" about the good conduct of Commander Qassem Soleimani toward children.

The Children's Department of the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization is the producer of the film.

The 38th Fajr Film Festival announced it would honor films on resistance and jihad with an award named after Soleimani.

The award went to "Abadan 11, 60" directed by Mehrdad Khoshbakht about the people's fight against Iraqi forces in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan during the early months of the Iran-Iraq war.

In addition, the 16th Resistance International Film Festival, which will be held during December, plans to review films on Commander Qassem Soleimani's role in awakening people of the region and the world in a special section named "Prominent Resistance Martyr Section".

Iran ceramic art biennial hosts Cypriot envoy Petros Nacouzis

A R T **TEHRAN** — Cypriot Ambassador Petros T. Nacouzis on Thursday paid a visit to the 11th National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art currently underway at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center.

He also held a meeting with Hirbod Hemmat-Azad, the director of the biennial, and Ebadreza Eslami, the director of the center, discussing ways to expand relations with the major Iranian art center and art exhibition.

Relations between Iran and Cyprus date back to over thousand years, Nacouzis said, and expressed his hope that art relations between the two countries would be restored to its previous zenith.

Nacouzis praised Iran's Ceramic Artists Association and Niavaran Cultural Center for organizing the exhibition as the country



Cypriot Ambassador Petros T. Nacouzis (2nd L) and a number of the organizers visit the 11th National Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Ceramic Art at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center on November 19, 2020.

is facing many problems due to international sanctions against the country and the

coronavirus pandemic.

"This exhibit represents how much Iranian ceramic art has been developed in its technical and artistic aspects," Hemmat-Azad said.

"The biennial also shows that we can organize such an exhibition despite the limits caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and sanctions, while many developed countries cannot organize their art events under these conditions even by their lowest standards," he added.

"Under these difficult financial conditions, the Iranian ceramists have created over 90 artworks for this biennial, and officials have supported the exhibition despite their monetary problems," he noted.

"Despite a decline in all activities, this exhibit also taught us that we can be more flexible and dynamic to continue our path toward development," Hemmat-Azad stated.

Iranian translator Kayhan Bahmani working on Colin McGinn's "Shakespeare's Philosophy"

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iranian translator Kayhan Bahmani who has rendered numerous books from Western literature into Persian is currently working on British philosopher Colin McGinn's book "Shakespeare's Philosophy: Discovering the Meaning Behind the Plays".

"This book has been authored by a philosopher based on Shakespeare's most famous works," Bahmani told the Persian service of Honaronline on Thursday.

"I needed to carry out much research to translate the book and I'm still working on this book," he added.

Shakespeare's plays are usually studied by literary scholars and historians, and the books about him from those perspectives are legion. It is most unusual for a trained philosopher to give us his insight, as Colin McGinn does here, into six of Shakespeare's greatest plays — "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Hamlet", "Othello", "Macbeth", "King Lear" and "The Tempest".

In his brilliant commentary, McGinn explores Shakespeare's philosophy of life and illustrates how he was influenced, for example, by the essays of Montaigne that were translated into English while Shakespeare was writing. In addition to chapters on the great plays, there are also essays on



Iranian translator Kayhan Bahmani in an undated photo.

Shakespeare and gender and his plays from the aspects of psychology, ethics and tragedy.

As McGinn says about Shakespeare, "There is not a sentimental bone in his body. He has the curiosity of a scientist, the judgment of a philosopher and the soul of a poet."

McGinn relates the ideas in the plays to the later

philosophers such as David Hume and the modern commentaries of critics such as Harold Bloom. The book is an exhilarating reading experience, especially at a time when a new audience has opened up for the greatest writer in English.

Bahmani's translation of American author Anne Tyler's 2016 novel "Vinegar Girl" came into Iranian bookstores in summer. It is the third book of Random House's "Hogarth Shakespeare" project, in which contemporary novelists retell stories from Shakespeare's plays.

Tyler's novels "Digging to America", "Back When We Were Grownups" and "Morgan's Passing" have also been translated by Bahmani.

"Publishers no longer welcome new books and fewer books are published, so I lack motivation to do translation," he lamented.

He is also the translator of French writer Jean Echenoz's "Piano", American writers Elmore Leonard's "Three-Ten to Yuma", Swedish writer Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg's "The Little Old Lady Who Broke All the Rules" and "The Little Old Lady Who Struck Lucky Again" and several other works.

"With My Roots" in London displays sculptures by Jamshid Moradian

A R T **TEHRAN** — A selection of four artworks by Iranian sculptor Jamshid Moradian has been displayed in the third edition of Capital Art London's exhibition "With My Roots".

Capital Art London is currently playing host to the third edition of the biggest Iranian group exhibition, which has gone online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two sculptures from Moradian's bronze collection and two other works from his wooden works have been selected for the exhibit, he has said.

The main purpose of this exhibition is to introduce emerging talented artists as well

as established Iranian artists living all over the world to the international art market.

The exhibit opened on November 16 and will be running until December 16.

Moradian said that he believes some of the busts of great Iranian personalities that are set up across Tehran should be created by more talented sculptors.

"Sometimes those who agree to make the busts are not highly skilled, and the outcome seems to be an insult to the personality rather than in his/her admiration," Moradian said.

"We have some good young sculptors who can make very good busts, and we

need an organization that can supervise the process of making and installing the sculptures," he said.

He noted that the artworks that are created to be set up in public places across the cities need to be the best kind so that they can cause people to be more interested in art.

The Asia House in London is the main organizer of the exhibition "With My Roots", the second edition of which was organized in June and July 2018.

A selection of 50 paintings, photographs and sculptures by 30 Iranian Artists were exhibited in the second edition.



Two sculptures by Jamshid Moradian.