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'We love human rights when we can kick China, Iran', says MEP

TEHRAN – A member of the European Parliament has railed against European countries for their hypocrisy when dealing with human rights issues, saying the EU loves human rights when it comes to China and Iran, but it can't debate Saudi, UAE war crimes in Yemen.

"EU gives prizes to opposition in #Belarus because it borders #Russia - we love #Human-Rights when we can kick #China + #Iran," Mick Wallace said via Twitter on Saturday.

"But [we] can't get debate in Parliament on #Yemen because we're complicit

in #Saudi #UAE Genocide that's killed hundreds of thousands, and millions starving," Wallace added.

It came after the European Parliament issued a resolution to strongly condemn the "arbitrary detention, sentencing and, recently, return to prison of woman human rights defender, lawyer and 2012 Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh in Iran."

The MEPs urged Iranian authorities to "immediately and unconditionally release her and allow her to receive the healthcare she requires."

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Foreign investment in industrial, mining, trade sectors up 71% in 8 months

TEHRAN – The volume of foreign investment attracted in Iran's industrial, mining and trade sectors during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 20) increased 71.2 percent compared to the same period in the previous year.

According to the latest data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, the total volume of foreign investment

attracted for projects during the mentioned eight months stood at \$1.022 billion, compared to \$597 million in the previous year's first eight months, IRIB reported.

The Industry Ministry approved 75 foreign investment project cases in the said period, 36.4 percent more than the last year's 55 cases.

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Martial law could be the last resort for Trump to stay in the White House

TEHRAN – U.S. President Donald Trump, who is struggling to remain in office for four more years after he lost the presidential election in November, has reportedly held an explosive meeting at the White House to discuss how to overturn the election results.

During the meeting, Trump heard a piece of advice that could prove to be

the last resort for him to remain in the White House for another term: declaring martial law.

The meeting, first reported by The New York Times, was held on Friday with lawyer Sidney Powell and her client, former national security adviser Michael Flynn in attendance.

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You never lose, you either win or learn

BY MASOUD HOSSEIN

Persepolis football team could have written their name into the history books as the first Iranian team to win AFC Champions League but they fell short against Ulsan Hyundai in the final match on Saturday.

Persepolis should be better prepared if they are ever faced with another challenge like they have faced in Doha's Al Janoub Stadium.

They were not completely ready to win the title since their players lost their concentrations and gave away two penalties.

Persepolis have reached the ACL final two times in three years and any team cannot be lucky to reach this level year after year. Persepolis reached the final in 2018 with a limited number of players due to their player signing suspension. And they advanced to the final in 2020 while they could not use their four key players.

Shortly after the match, Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi said that it would be unprofessional if this result becomes an obstacle in their way. It shows that they will keep going as they have won Iran domestic accolades over the past four years.

Iran football has always had talented players but any Iranian club has won a title for almost two decades. It shows that there is something wrong and it needs to be amended.

The Persepolis coach said that Iran football suffers from lack of adequate infrastructure. Yes, he is absolutely right since most of Iranian teams have no dedicated stadiums.

Iran football is heading by an acting president for one year and it's been a weird year for the Asian country. For instance, the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system has not been used in Iran league and it's abnormal for a country who has a club in the AFC Champions League final match.

Persepolis failed to end their title drought in Asian showpiece but the team have learned a lot in the competition. The Iranian football league is called Professional League but indeed the league is not professional due to lack of infrastructure.

Iran's football needs to learn from their losses and, definitely, it has potential to stand up once again as Persepolis did it by advancing to the final two times in three years.

Nelson Mandela once said: "I never lose. I either win or learn."

Commemoration of 70 years of Indonesia-Iran diplomatic relations

BY H.E. RONNY PRASETYO YULIANTORO

The year 2020 marks the 70 years of Indonesia-Iran diplomatic relations. The two countries have been developing cooperation in many areas including those in progress even to date. Both countries are now making the best out of these potentials /opportunities while adjusting to the most updated global situation most notably the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The relations began in July 1950 when the then Indonesian envoy was received by the highest Iranian authority to commence diplomatic duties in Tehran. This occasion then was followed by various cooperation agreements between the two countries, including mutual working visits by both sides, until this date.

Indonesia and Iran have always had good political relations as a strong foundation for cooperation in other sectors. The good political

relations developed at bilateral, regional and international level, marked outstandingly by the visit of President Hassan Rouhani to Jakarta in 2015 followed by President Joko Widodo's visit to Tehran in the following year. These mutual Heads of State visits led to concretizing a number of cooperation in line with both countries' common interests.

Indonesia puts the national welfare through economic/trade activities and hence the diplomacy is prioritized mainly on trade and economy. Bearing that in mind, there are potentials/opportunities open for trade/economic ties for both countries and it should be addressed so that trade volume will improve. To further improve the above-mentioned condition while adjusting to the pandemic, cooperation in health sectors have become among the main priorities.

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Iran, Turkey, and Russia should act jointly against the Washington tyranny: Turkish historian

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – A Turkish historian and political scientist wants Iran, Turkey, and Russia to form an alliance to confront U.S. unilateral policies in West Asia.

Noting that "the interests of Turkey and Iran, and even of Russia, are common against U.S. sanctions," Mehmet Perincek tells the Tehran Times that "our countries must act jointly against this tyranny (unilateral arbitrary practices) of Washington."

On December 14, the United States imposed sanctions on the Republic of Turkey's Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) pursuant to Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for knowingly engaging in a significant transaction with Rosobornexport, Russia's main arms export entity, by procuring the S-400 surface-to-air

missile system.

The sanctions include a ban on all U.S. export licenses and authorizations to SSB and an asset freeze and visa restrictions on Dr. Ismail Demir, SSB's president, and other SSB officers.

While some Western analysts say U.S. sanctions on Turkey for its purchase of Russia's S-400 missile defense system threaten NATO as a longstanding alliance, other experts say it will consolidate ties between regional powers in West Asia.

In this context, Perincek says there is a successful example of regional collaboration.

"The Astana process was a very successful example in this regard. It can also be applied to every regional problem, not just on Syria," the Turkish political expert notes.

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ICRC praises Iran's effort against coronavirus

TEHRAN – Daniel Munoz-Rojas, deputy representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Tehran, said he was impressed by the domestically manufacturing of oxygen concentrators for COVID-19 patients in Iran.

"This capacity does not exist in other countries in the region. Given that we are still in crisis, Iran should use this capacity to meet its domestic needs, but perhaps in the future it can help countries like Syria and Yemen," he highlighted.

He made the remarks on Sunday at a ceremony for providing 400 portable oxygen concentrators manufactured with the financial assistance of the ICRC.

ICRC allocated a total of 60 billion rials (around \$1.4 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to help produce this equipment.

"This is the second phase of the ICRC assistance to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Rojas said, expressing pleasure that the third phase of financial aid and other personal protection

equipment is also on the way.

Earlier in November, the International Committee of the Red Cross has provided 250,000 Swiss francs to the IRCS for buying oxygen concentrators for patients with COVID-19.

In April, the International Committee of the Red Cross donated 500,000 Swiss francs to the Iranian Red Crescent Society to provide personal protective equipment for special patients as well as food items for the vulnerable.

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Asian football suffers from 'tactical poverty', expert says

BY FARROKH HESABI

TEHRAN – Persepolis missed the opportunity to claim the 2020 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League as they lost to South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai at the final match of the competitions.

Iranian football expert, Jalal Cheraghpour believes that regardless of the result of the final match of the AFC Champions League (ACL), the game had some important facts to be considered.

"The most considerable point, in my opinion, in the match between Persepolis and Ulsan Hyundai was the awful tactical performance of the Asian football's final match at a prestigious club competition. I want to call it a 'tactical poverty' or 'tactical inefficiency'. The reason that I consider such titles for this match is that although the teams scored three goals in total (2-1) but none of them were as a result of tactical performance," said Cheraghpour.

"All the goals were the outcome of the individual mistakes from the other team's players. In fact, there was no special pattern in the tactical approach of the two teams and no successful execution of the tactics, especially in the offensive phase. Persepolis scored when the Ulsan Hyundai defender lost his balance and allowed Mehdi Abdi to steal the ball and fired home from inside the box. The Korean side's goals came by the careless actions of the Persepolis players; a clumsy challenge by Ahmad Norollahi and then Mehdi Shiri's awkward handball in the area. The pace of the game was so slow. The game was not as lively and exciting as it was expected to be and was boring," he added.

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National Nurses Day celebrated

On the occasion of National Nurses Day, special ceremonies were held throughout the country on Sunday. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, Iranian nurses have been playing a key role in fighting the disease.

According to health officials, some 65 percent of 200,000 nurses in the country were at the forefront of the coronavirus fight.

Over the last 10 months, about 50,000 nurses have been infected with COVID-19, more than 80 of whom lost their lives.

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U.S. leadership under Trump rates lowest in Iceland, Iran, and Germany

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Global ratings of U.S. leadership have gotten worse during the last year of Donald Trump's presidency, with very negative results in Iran and some other countries.

According to a recent Gallup poll, the U.S. leadership approval was the lowest in Iceland (5%), Iran (6%) and Germany (6%).

Amid the chaos of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. continued to disengage from the world stage, including pulling out of the World Health Organization over the summer.



Around the same time, Trump's U.S. pledged to withdraw troops from Germany.

He also withdrew the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 and implemented a "maximum pressure" policy against Tehran, which has practically blocked Iranian people's access to a decent healthcare, while the country is fighting off the coronavirus.

Ilhan Omar terms Trump's Iran policy 'spectacular failure'

POLITICAL TEHRAN – U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar has called President Donald Trump's Iran policy a "spectacular failure" which did not bring Iran to the negotiating table, and instead has resulted in an expansion of Iran's nuclear program.

"As a strategy, it has been a spectacular failure. It has done nothing to bring Iran to the negotiating table," the Democratic lawmaker from Minnesota said in an interview with Responsible Statecraft published on Friday.

She said Trump's Iran policy has put the United States on the brink of war, in particular due to the assassination of an Iranian scientist.

"We must do everything in our power to bring Iran back to the table and strike a deal," she said about the prospects of the Biden administration, adding, "That would not only mean relief for the Iranian people, but also preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that would threaten the United States and the whole world."



Omar voiced satisfaction that U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif have shown a willingness to engage over the nuclear issue.

Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, together with the European Union reached a nuclear pact in 2015, under which Iran agreed to put certain restrictions on its nuclear program in exchange for termination of sanctions.

However, despite Iran's strict compliance with the deal – officially referred to as the JCPOA – Trump withdrew the U.S. from the deal and imposed harsh economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic to force it to negotiate a new deal.

Iran signed the JCPOA to prove to the world that it does not seek nuclear weapons.

Trump claimed the JCPOA stopped short of curtailing Iran's aspirations to develop nuclear weapons.

The Islamic Republic, however, has repeatedly said that it has never sought and will never seek to build nuclear weapons. The decision, Tehran says, is based on a fatwa (religious decree) issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The fatwa bans the production, possession and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In addition to the JCPOA, Iran has also signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – whose aim is to prevent the spread of nuclear arms and weapons technology – in July 1968 and ratified it in February 1970.

Maximum pressure is killing innocent people, says Omar

Elsewhere in her interview, Omar urged a reassessment of America's priorities in West Asia and explained that the United States' presence in the region has been "counterproductive."

She also said Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran is killing innocent Iranians by blocking their access to medicine and basic needs.

"As a moral matter, it is quite literally killing innocent people. The Iranian people – particular poor women and children – are suffering. During the pandemic, they have faced a staggering shortage of medicine and don't have their basic needs met," Omar said.

Omar has been outspoken and consistent in her calls for lifting of sanctions on Iran.

In remarks in March, as the coronavirus was spreading rapidly throughout Iran for the first time, she called on the U.S. government to lift sanctions against Iran, citing the Iranian healthcare system's struggles to deal with the rapid spread of the deadly disease.

"We need to suspend these sanctions before more lives are lost," the progressive lawmaker wrote in a tweet.

"This makes no sense. Sanctions are economic warfare," Omar tweeted in January. "They have already caused medical shortages and countless deaths in Iran."

"You cannot claim to want de-escalation and then announce new sanctions with no clear goal. This is not a measured response!"

'We love human rights when we can kick China, Iran', says MEP

Mick Wallace says European Parliament cannot debate 'Saudi-UEA genocide' in Yemen because Europe is a complicit

1 → In addition, the resolution condemned "the recent executions in Iran of France-based journalist Ruhollah Zam, editor of the Amad News Telegram channel, and wrestler Navid Afkari, while urging Iran to immediately halt the imminent execution of Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali."

Zam, the operator behind the Amad News website and Telegram channel, was executed on December 12, days after the Supreme Court upheld his death sentence.

It also called on EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and all EU countries to urgently intervene to try to halt plans to execute Djalali.

The resolution demanded targeted EU measures against Iranian officials involved in the recent executions of Ruhollah Zam and Navid Afkari, and other cases.

In a Saturday statement, members of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee called the resolution "ridiculous," saying the Iranian Parliament is the same body that remained silent against the "cowardly assassinations



of innocent Iranian scientists."

The committee also tasked Iran's Foreign Ministry with presenting to the Parliament a list of European officials who have been

involved in the imposition of Iran sanctions, especially the medical ones, as well as those European officials who have supported terrorist groups and judges who have issued

sentences against innocent Iranian nationals.

Head of the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights also reacted on Friday to the anti-Iran resolution by the European Parliament, saying those who have prevented innocent children from accessing medicine are not even justified to talk about "animal rights".

Bagheri-Kani said the European countries are now involved in killing dozens of sick Iranian children due to their targeted efforts to prevent Iranian children from accessing medicine.

"Therefore, they are not in a position to lecture about human rights," Bagheri-Kani added, according to ISNA.

Bagheri-Kani said it is a modern deception when "you block the patients from getting access to medicine, while shedding crocodile tears because a sentence has been carried out for a criminal."

"By taking a nation's health and livelihood hostage with the goal of imposing their illegitimate demands, the Europeans have set a new record in modern savagery," he added.

INSTEX proved ineffective in the past two years: Iran's UN envoy

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said that INSTEX, a mechanism aimed at facilitating legitimate trade with Iran, has proved ineffective over the past two years.

Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks on Saturday in reaction to the UN secretary-general's 10th report on the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the Iran nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The system must prove its efficiency after two years," he said of INSTEX, according to Press TV.

INSTEX (the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) has been designed by the European Union to facilitate legitimate trade with Tehran. It was introduced on January 31, 2019, by France, Germany, and Britain, the three European countries party to the nuclear deal.

INSTEX was supposed to be a financial channel and a special mechanism for transferring money in spite of

U.S. sanctions on Iran. Its objective was to facilitate Iran's transactions with European companies. Iran says the mechanism has failed to meet its goal.

After Europe failed to protect Iran's interests under the JCPOA, Iran began to reduce its nuclear commitments on May 8, 2019 – exactly a year after President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal and imposed harsh sanctions on Iran.

Takht-Ravanchi said Iran's reduction of its nuclear commitments was a result of the other parties' violation of the deal and was within Iran's rights under the JCPOA.

The ambassador's remarks came after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on all UN member states to engage in trade with Iran, highlighting the need for preserving the JCPOA.

In comments on Friday, Guterres stressed "the importance of initiatives in support of trade and economic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially during the current economic and health challenges posed by the

coronavirus disease (COVID 19) pandemic."

The UN chief underscored the "important contribution of other member states to preserving the Plan and continue to encourage them to work effectively with the participants in the Plan towards creating the conditions necessary for their economic operators to engage in trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with resolution 2231 (2015)."

Guterres said the UN Security Council endorsed the pact at the time and called upon all member states, regional organizations and international organizations to support its implementation.

For the past five years, the JCPOA has been largely viewed by the international community as a testament to the efficacy of multilateralism, diplomacy and dialogue and success in nuclear non-proliferation, he said.

"I have consistently believed that the Plan is the best way to ensure a comprehensive, long-term and proper solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, as well as to contribute to regional and international peace and security," he added.

Spokesman derides outgoing Pompeo's obsession with Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry has reacted to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's obsession with Iran, saying the U.S. regime is responsible for coups and wars against regional countries.

"The outgoing Mr. #WeLiedCheatedStole is obsessing with Iran again," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh wrote in a tweet on Saturday.

Khatibzadeh was making a reference to Pompeo, who said during his lecture at Texas A&M University in April 2019 that when he was the CIA director, "we lied, we cheated, we stole. It was like we had entire training courses...it reminds you of the glory of the American experiment."

The spokesman further said, "Reality: US regimes have long plotted coups & waged wars against Iranians and their neighbors. Countless have been killed. And most vulnerable Americans abused as cannon fodder."

"This is his regime's true nature," he added.



The remarks came after Pompeo claimed in a Friday tweet that the United States has always sought peace with the people of Iran.

Pompeo is notoriously famous for saying "we lied, we cheated, we stole" when he was CIA director.

Pompeo wrote, "For 41-years the despotic Islamic Republic of Iran and its ruling clerics have oppressed the Iranian people while seeking conflict and promising violence against the West. This is the regime's true nature."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has also occasionally referred to Pompeo as "Mr. We lied, We cheated, We stole".

Back in September, Zarif advised U.S. President Donald Trump to change tack before his secretary of state turns his administration into a global laughing stock.

"The world says NO Security Council sanctions were restored," the foreign minister wrote in a tweet on September 20. "But Mr. 'We lied, We cheated, We stole' threatens to punish a world that refuses to live in his

parallel universe."

Under the Trump administration, the United States imposed the "harshes ever sanctions" against Iran in order to force Iran to negotiate a new nuclear agreement, after Trump withdrew the U.S. from an already working nuclear deal that was signed in 2015 under his predecessor Barack Obama.

The Trump administration has also escalated tensions with Tehran by imposing sanctions on Iran's top officials, including Zarif, and top state bodies, including the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the office of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" policy against the Islamic Republic, which was championed by Pompeo, reached its peak with the assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander, Qassem Soleimani, in January 3 of this year – a move that prompted Iran to attack the United States Ain al-Assad airbase in western Iraq, where the assassination had taken place.

Commemoration of 70 years of Indonesia-Iran diplomatic relations

1 → The presidents of both countries conducted a telephone conversation in April 2020 for a further collaboration including the handling of COVID-19 pandemic, which then was followed up by meetings by relevant/technical authorities. Indonesia is always ready to develop cooperation in battling COVID-19 with any party, including Iran.

Indonesia and Iran are now still working on further promotion of trade, investment and other related sectors. Both countries are now identifying a number of economic potentials including trade tariffs, investment, other prospects and mutual product knowledge promotions to identify and harmonize the potentials in respective markets. Despite the challenges, a number of Iranian commodities are still in high demand, including steel, dates, pistachio and others.

The Omnibus Law on Job Creation was passed in November 2020. The law is aimed at simplifying more than 70 overlapping regulations, aimed at relaxing Indonesia's complex web of business, labor, and environmental laws in an attempt to attract foreign investment, create jobs and boost the economy. We believe that consistent implementation that follow would turn Indonesia into a more competitive and prosperous society. Thus the law opens the opportunity to create a better trade and investment environment for foreign investors.

During 2015-2018, Indonesia-Iran trade exchanges grew 2.6 times. The value of total trade jumped from USD 237 million in 2015 to USD 715 million in 2018, but it decreased in 2019-2020. To address those challenges, both Governments are working on solutions for financial settlement issues, barriers reduction and communications improvement in the banking sectors including the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) negotiation. At technical

level, both countries from the relevant stakeholders, have been in contact and talks to best promote the bilateral trade-economic relations. In private/business sectors, Chambers of Commerce of both countries are continuously developing and finding ways on how to concretely reach profitable deals.

In 2018, the Ministries of Health from both countries inked cooperation agreement in health sector, focusing on health services such as pharmaceutical/medical products/equipment and related Research and Development. The Indonesian Minister of Health also paid a visit to Iran in September 2019 to concretely follow up the matters.

Under the COVID-19 pandemic, health cooperation between both countries developed in particular in fight against the pandemic. President Joko Widodo and President Hassan Rouhani in a telephone conversation on 27 April 2020 talked about the COVID-

19 pandemic and the two countries' plans to fight the highly contagious disease, sharing each country's experiences and plans for cooperation. President Jokowi confirmed the need for solidarity among nations during the COVID-19 pandemic since COVID-19 knows no borders, ethnicities and religions. The Iranian and Indonesian health ministers had held virtual meetings for the said goals.

People-to-people contact is key to mutual promotion in developing better mutual understanding. Indonesia and Iran maintained good and flourishing cooperation in youth, cultural, educational, sports and tourism sectors. Culturally, both countries share quite abundantly and concretize as such among others through familiarization program to introduce Indonesian tourism object/wonders. Indonesia is inviting (anticipation for post COVID-19 era) to enjoy our nature wonders. Worth mentioning, Iran is

the biggest origin of foreign tourists from West Asia to visit Indonesia (more than 10,000 visitors in 2018 alone). Indonesia is more than willing to share knowledge on tourism business with Iran.

The global COVID-19 pandemic nowadays does not hinder our efforts in this enterprise. While the tourism sector is impacted quite badly due to the pandemic, Indonesia still sees and expects further improvement in the coming years. On women empowerment and child protection, as current as October-November 2020, both sides respectively conducted Joint Virtual Workshop on Women Empowerment through ICT and Child Protection in Cyberspace and sharing best practices on the implementation of Child Friendly City in Indonesia.

To conclude and in the context of commemoration of 70 years of Indonesia-Iran diplomatic relations and with the world still under the COVID-19 pandemic, it is worth the efforts to: concretely promote and implement the bilateral health cooperation which include health technology; to exert further for the conduct of the next bilateral economic/trade joint commission meeting as well as meeting of the committee of bilateral consultation with the focus on trade/economic cooperation and economic recovery in the post COVID-19 era; finalization of Preferential Trade Agreement negotiation. It is also timely to utilize the 70th commemoration momentum to find alternative ways, while still under situation marked by economic sanctions and COVID-19 pandemic, in order to reach the target of our bilateral trade, promotion of both inbound and outbound investment and tourism cooperation.

* Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Indonesia to the Islamic Republic of Iran

Ayatollah Khamenei hails nurses as 'angels of mercy'

POLITICAL TEHRAN – In a live televised speech on Sunday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei showered the nurses with praise, saying they did a "great job" in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Leader delivered the speech on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of Lady Zeinab al-Kubra (pbuh), which coincides with National Nurses Day in Iran.

"During the coronavirus [pandemic] and under very difficult and much more stressful circumstances, our dear nurses did a great job and they showed scenes and activities that are truly amazing," the Leader said, calling the nurses "angels of mercy".

He offered condolences to the families of nurses that lost their loved ones due to coronavirus, adding that the job of nurses became ever more difficult and stressful during the pandemic due to the likelihood of contracting the deadly virus.



"The struggle of nurses during this period made them dearer and more honorable in the eyes of the people than ever before," the Leader noted.

Ayatollah Khamenei also addressed the implementation of a law that, if implemented, would benefit the nurses. The law sets tariffs on nursing services and has already been ratified but is yet to be implemented.

The Leader underlined the need for government officials to determine the employment status of nearly 30,000 nurses, saying that "employing nurses is one of the necessary and good things that must be pursued seriously."

The Islamic Republic pays special attention to the nursing job. The fact that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, as the highest ranking figure in the Islamic Republic system, spoke about the important health services of the nurses shows the precious status of the job in the country.

Martial law could be the last resort for Trump to stay in the White House

1→ Flynn had suggested earlier this week that Trump could invoke martial law as part of his efforts to overturn the election that he lost to President-elect Joe Biden -- an idea that arose again during the meeting in the Oval Office, according to CNN. It wasn't clear whether Trump endorsed the idea, but others in the room forcefully pushed back and shot it down.

"There is no way in the world we are going to be able to move forward as a nation," Flynn told Newsmax. "He could immediately, on his order, seize every single one of these machines, on his order."

The former national security advisor added, "He could order the, within the swing states, if he wanted to, he could take military capabilities, and he could place those in states and basically rerun an election in each of those states. I mean, it's not unprecedented. These people are out there talking about martial law like it's something that we've never done. Martial law has been instituted 64 times."

Flynn repeated this advice in the Friday meeting.

Trump, however, rejected the martial law report as fake news.

"Martial law = Fake News. Just more knowingly bad reporting!" the U.S. president said in a tweet.

Since the election, and even before the election, Trump has kept saying that the election would be rigged and thus he will not concede defeat. He kept saying that he had won the election even after his rival Joe Biden won the election.

The Trump campaign has tried many ways to overturn the election results. First of all, the campaign sought to stop counting what they called "illegal votes." And then it demanded a recount of votes in swing states where Trump lost to Biden by a narrow margin. After they initially failed to change the election result, they resorted to the Supreme Court, which, in turn, disappointed Trump and his supporters.

In early December, the state of Texas filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court in a bid to invalidate results in Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. 18 state attorneys general and 106 Republican members of Congress supported



the lawsuit. This lawsuit was part of lawsuits questioning the results of the election. None of them succeeded in handing the presidency to Trump.

The lawsuit of Texas was ultimately rejected by the Supreme Court, a move that disappointed Trump.

"The Supreme Court really let us down. No Wisdom, No Courage!" Trump tweeted on December 12. Nearly a week later, he once again railed against the Supreme Court. He tweeted, "I am very disappointed in the United States Supreme Court, and so is our great country!"

After the Supreme Court ruling on the Texas lawsuit, some of Trump allies, most notably Flynn started to float the idea of imposing martial law, which could be the last resort to extend Trump's stay at the White House, because he exhausted almost all other legal and political options to overturn the election results.

Martial law is designed to maintain order in times of crisis. It is imposed when civil rule fails. Martial law is the replacement of civil rule with temporary military authority. While its imposition is rare, martial law has been imposed several times in the history of the United States. The president and Congress both can declare martial law. The governor of a state also can impose martial law if it is included in that state's constitution. Martial law has been declared at least 68 times in the history of the United States, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

But there is no precise definition of martial law and it's not clear what condition its imposition creates. However, it's believed that the imposition of martial law would result in the suspension of certain civil liberties such as the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, freedom of association, and freedom of movement.

Trump has campaigned on maintaining law and order following the mass protests that swept over the U.S. after the killing of George Floyd. And this has caused concerns among some pundits that Trump may resort to martial law under the pretext of maintaining law and order in a bid to overturn the election results.

However, invoking martial law requires the failure of civil institutions. But this is yet to happen as civil institutions are still working and Trump would find it difficult to justify declaring martial law.

"A really important limitation in the event that there is martial law is that it's highly unlikely to be tolerated in a situation where our civilian institutions are working," Bill Banks, a Syracuse professor with an expertise in constitutional and national security law, told Military Times in October. "Martial law requires a complete meltdown. It requires the inability of our civilian institutions to manage government. It's hard to imagine that."

But some former Trump allies say that Trump has not read the U.S. constitution and that he may move forward with what his advisor told him at the Friday meeting.

"This is appalling. There is no other way to describe it. It's unbelievable. Almost certainly, completely without precedent. But I think it's important to understand this is just another day at the Oval Office.... I don't think he's ever read the constitution. If he has, he clearly doesn't understand it and he did understand it, at one point he's forgotten it," former Trump national security advisor John Bolton told CNN.

Trump hit back at Bolton, calling him "one of the dumbest people in Washington."

All European states should be dissolved: senior MP

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Mojtaba Zolnouri, the head of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said if the violators of the rights of the Iranian people are to be punished, all European governments must be dissolved because they have committed the biggest violation of the rights of the Iranian people.

"According to the intrusive and meddling statement of the European Union in response to the execution of their spies, if the violators of the rights of the Iranian people were to be punished, all European

governments should be dissolved because they violated the Iranian people's rights most," the senior lawmaker said in a tweet, adding that the Europeans committed violations ranging from implementing various sanctions to supporting terrorist criminals.

Zolnouri was responding to the recent resolution adopted by the European Parliament on Thursday calling on "all EU member states to jointly issue public statements and undertake diplomatic initiatives to monitor unfair trials and visit prisons" where Iranian convicts holding European citizenship are



serving time. The European resolution also demanded "targeted EU measures against Iranian officials who have committed serious human

rights violations."

Iran has strongly condemned the European resolutions, saying they are not entitled to lecture about human rights.

Head of the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights Ali Bagheri-Kani said in remarks on Friday that the European countries are now involved in killing dozens of sick Iranian children due to their targeted efforts to prevent Iranian children from accessing medicine.

"Therefore, they are not in a position to lecture about human rights," Bagheri-Kani added, according to ISNA.

Iran ready for extensive co-op with Austria: ambassador

POLITICAL TEHRAN — There is no obstacle to expand bilateral relations as the two countries share numerous potential opportunities in various fields, Iran's Ambassador to Austria Abbas Bagherpour-Ardekani said on Saturday.

In an interview with the Austrian magazine Society, Bagherpour-Ardekani pointed to the history of Iran-Austria relations, saying that 162 years have passed since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the signing of the first friendship agreement by them, the state news agency IRNA reported.

According to the ambassador, some 15 years after the signing of the friendship agreement, the Austrian embassy opened in Tehran with Iran's mission opening in Vienna later.

Underlining that Iran-Austria relations date back to five centuries ago, the diplomat said, "Bilateral relations expanded in the nineteenth century, especially in the cultural, social and scientific fields."

He added Iran was one of the first countries to recognize the establishment of the Republic of Austria in 1920.

Elsewhere in his interview, the envoy said Iran is a country with rich natural resources and educated people and that for years Iran was Austria's second largest trading partner outside Europe, and Austria was considered one of Iran's five largest trading partners.

According to IRNA, Ambassador Bagherpour-Ardekani went on to say that there are many opportunities for investment in Iran. He cited investment in spheres of energy, railways, banking and insurance, tourism, research and technology, and development of southern ports as well as the routes connecting



southern waters to Central Asia as examples.

Iran has started developing ports connecting the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman to Central Asia and other countries.

The ambassador stated, "Iran has also made significant progress in new scientific fields such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, biomedicine, aerospace, etc. We are ready for extensive cooperation with Austria in these areas and we have created many channels and structures to achieve this."

The diplomat added, "Some 40,000 Iranians live in Austria, including more than 2,000 physicians and a large number of engineers, university professors, researchers and businessmen, and so on. We are really proud of them. Top Austrian officials have repeatedly acknowledged their positive role in Austrian society."

Austria played a crucial role in facilitating the

nuclear negotiations between Iran and major world powers that culminated in the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). It has recently expressed readiness to once again facilitate such negotiations.

Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg has called on all parties to the 2015 nuclear deal to return to their commitments under the deal, expressing readiness to facilitate any new round of talks with the parties to the deal.

In a recent interview with IRNA, the Austrian foreign minister said it is difficult to predict whether U.S. president-elect Joe Biden would make good on his promise to rejoin the 2015 nuclear deal.

"It is difficult to make predictions. But there are indications that all sides seem to be willing to engage in a process again. This is encouraging. Austria will certainly do its part by facilitating any talks if the sides so wish," Schallenberg noted.

He also called on all parties to the nuclear agreement to uphold their obligations under the JCPOA.

"All sides need to keep up their commitments under the JCPOA. We welcome the cooperation of Iran with the IAEA under the JCPOA. But we are concerned by violations of the agreement. This regards nuclear research, the accumulation of low enriched uranium, and the installation of centrifuges. These developments need to be reversed. We worry that a less for less approach will only lead to a negative spiral that no one wants," the Austrian foreign minister said.

SPORTS

Asian football suffers from 'tactical poverty', expert says

1→ The former coach of some of the Iranian teams also slammed the level of the refereeing of the game. Abdulrahman Al Jassim used the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) three times in the game. In two cases, he awarded penalties to Ulsan Hyundai and in another one, he denied announcing a penalty in favor of Persepolis.

"I don't understand why the referee should leave everything to the VAR. some of the incidents in the game including the penalties were clear to decide but he just checked the VAR and failed to recognize them at the time of happening. It shows that the referee was not at a high level of preparation for such a game. In the crowded scenes he was not able to decide well," He concluded.

Bashar Resan bids farewell to Persepolis

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Iraqi midfielder Bashar Resan bade an emotional farewell to Persepolis football club.

When Resan arrived in Tehran in the summer of 2017, he can scarcely have imagined he would contest two AFC Champions League finals with Persepolis in three years.



"First of all, I would like to thank the Persepolis fans and all Iranians for supporting me in the previous three years. I liked to leave Persepolis with a gold medal in the AFC Champions League but we failed to win and that's football. You either win or lose," Resan said.

"I wanted to leave Persepolis after the AFC Champions League semis but I stayed to help the team in the final since Persepolis had to play in the final match without four key players. Maybe I'll return to the team one day," the Iraqi player said.

Resan has been reportedly reached an agreement to join Qatar SC.

Iran football president to be elected Feb. 28

S P O R T S TEHRAN – The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) will hold its presidential elections on Feb. 28.

The elections had been postponed due to FIFA's objections over the FFIRI statutes.

FFIRI was involved in a long process with the world governing body over alleged government interference.

FIFA demanded changes to the FFIRI statutes more than a year ago and rejected amended documents submitted on several occasions. Finally, it was in the last month that FIFA approved the football federation's statutes.

The federation is heading by acting president Heydar Baharvand at the moment.

Four Persepolis players nominated for ACL Player of the Week

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Four Persepolis players Hamed Lak, Milad Sarlak, Mehdi Abdi, Bashar Resan have been nominated for the AFC Champions League Player of the Week after the conclusion of the Continental tournament on Saturday.

Persepolis lost to Ulsan Hyundai from South Korea 2-1 in Doha's Al Janoub Stadium.

Using data provided by Stats Perform, the official data provider for the AFC, the-afc.com present the eight candidates in the running for the accolade to be determined by Asia's football fans in the poll.

The Persepolis players will vie with Ulsan players Junior Negrao, Dave Bulthuis, Lee Chung-yong and Kim Kee-hee to be named the Player of the Week.

Iran coach Khosrowyar unhappy with Persepolis' defeat

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Former Iranian women's international coach Katayoun Khosrowyar is unhappy with Persepolis' defeat in the 2020 AFC Champions League.

Persepolis failed to win ACL title for the first time after losing to South Korean team Ulsan Hyundai 2-1 in Doha's Al-Janoub Stadium.

"My heart always breaks when I see the injustice towards Iranian football (soccer) teams. I've experienced this way too many times as a player and coach. We have to fight 10 times harder for everything," Khosrowyar published on her twitter account.

"Saturday was a bad day for Iran soccer. Persepolis lost in the final because they gave away two penalties and women's national team is out of the FIFA ranking. We were doing so well but losing to ourselves. Time to go back and get to business," she added.

Persepolis returns to Iran

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Persepolis football delegation returned to Tehran, Iran Sunday noon.

The Iranian team lost to Ulsan Hyundai of South Korea on Saturday 2-1 in the final match of the 2020 AFC Champions League.

They could be the first Iranian team to win AFC Champions League. No fan allowed at the Imam Khomeini International Airport to welcome Persepolis due to the coronavirus restrictions.

Persepolis fell short to win ACL title for the second time in three years. In 2018, they lost to Kashima Antlers of Japan 2-0 on aggregate.

Foreign investment in industrial, mining, trade sectors up 71% in 8 months

→ 1 Back in October, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand announced that over \$3.8 billion of foreign investment was attracted in the country during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21).

Dejpasand also said that Finance and Economic Ministry has outlined a plan for facilitating and expediting the attraction of Iranian expatriates' investment, based on which some incentives and guarantees will be allocated to those investors.

Over 703,000 tons of commodities traded at mercantile exchange in a week

ECONOMY TEHRAN— During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 703,534 tons of various types of commodities worth nearly \$349 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and Public Relations Department, the exchange also traded 361,117 tons of commodities on its mineral and industrial trading floor valued at more than \$201 million. On this floor, the IME sold 347,862 tons of steel, 9,180 tons of aluminum, 3,440 tons of copper, 120 tons of molybdenum sulfur, 15 tons of precious metals concentrate and 500 tons of zinc.



The IME next trading floor was the oil and petrochemical with 368,613 tons of commodities sold on its both domestic and export rings totaling \$151 million. Commodities sold on this floor were 76,500 tons of vacuum bottom, 132,297 tons of bitumen, 64,199 tons of polymeric products, 38,217 tons of chemicals, 54,500 tons of lube cut, 150 tons of insulation, 2,469 tons of base oil, 50 tons of argon and 1,300 tons of sulfur.

It's worth noting that the agricultural trading floor of the exchanges saw trade of 22 tons of saffron for exportation. The last trading floor was the IME's side market with 700 tons of metal scraps sold on it.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

In late April, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production" is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

Auto part manufacturing sector needs 15,000 tons of steel to boost production

ECONOMY TEHRAN— Head of Iranian Association of Auto Parts Manufacturers Mohammadreza Najafi-Manesh said the country's auto part manufacturers require 15,000 tons of steel annually to increase production and meet the needs of the mentioned industry.

As reported by IRNA, in a letter addressing the Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini, Najafi-Manesh underlined some of the major problems and challenges that the country's auto part manufacturers are currently facing and called for the ministry's support in resolving these problems.



According to Najafi-Manesh, the government allocated 10,000 tons of steel for the auto part manufacturers in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), and given the rise in the country's car production in the current year, now the allocation of at least 15,000 tons of steel would ensure the increase in production of parts and prevent failure in achieving the goals announced by the automotive industry.

The official stressed the liquidity problem as the most important hurdle in the way of boosting production in this sector and said: "Considering the dramatic rise in the price of raw materials, the manufacturers need the government to remove barriers in the way of their easy access to raw materials."

Domestic parts manufacturers are playing a key role in creating a boom in the country's manufacturing and employment sectors, in addition to playing their leading role as the auto industry's intermediates.

Following the country's macro-policies for supporting domestic production in various areas, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has been setting up a number of expert desks for supporting domestic production in the auto parts industry.

In May 2019, former Industry Minister Reza Rahmani issued a directive on "strengthening domestic manufacturing of imported auto parts".

Since then several incentive packages have been offered to auto part manufacturers to encourage domestic production in this sector.

In January, the Iranian Association of Auto Parts Manufacturers announced that the country has achieved 80 percent self-sufficiency in the manufacturing of auto parts.

1st phase of Jask oil terminal to go operational by March 2021

ECONOMY TEHRAN— The operator of Jask oil terminal project in southern Iran said the first phase of the country's second major oil terminal will be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), Shana reported.

Due to the significance of the Goreh-Jask oil transfer project, which is going to bring Iranian crude oil from Goreh in Bushehr to Jask at the mouth of the Indian Ocean for exports, the Jask oil terminal project is being pursued seriously to be prepared for the time that the pipeline project is completed.

According to Vahid Maleki, the first phase of the project includes one metering station, two 36-inch pipelines each with a length of six kilometers, various coastal facilities, as well as a single point mooring (SPM).

Maleki noted that the first cargo of the mentioned 36-inch pipes which have been coated will be loaded to be shipped for Jask in the coming days.

The pipe-laying operations for both six-kilo-



meter pipelines of the terminal will be completed in the Iranian calendar month of Bahman (ends on February 21, 2021), the official said.

As the country's second major oil terminal, Jask terminal is under construction by Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) on 60 hectares of land and with nearly €260 million of investment.

Goreh-Jask oil transfer project is going to provide Iran with an alternative route for the country's crude oil exports that are currently carried out through the Strait of Hormuz.

The pipeline for the mentioned project has currently reached nearly 80 percent of physical progress and is nearing completion based on the schedule, so the oil terminal at Jask is also expected to be completed and ready for operation at the same time.

At the first phase, this project will have a capacity to transfer over 300,000 barrels of crude oil per day from Goreh to Jask oil terminal, the transfer capacity of the pipeline, however, can be increased up to 30 million barrels per day in the second phase of the project.

IME to issue standard salaf bonds to support housing sector

ECONOMY TEHRAN— Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) plans to presell housing units through standard salaf bonds in near future, the IME deputy for economic studies announced.

"We will soon see the issuance of standard housing salaf bonds in the capital market to help financing in the housing sector and construction of new housing units in the country," Javad Fallah said.

Standard parallel salaf is an Islamic contract similar to futures, with the difference being that the contract's total price is paid in advance.

According to the official, IME is following two major approaches for implementing the mentioned plan, one is offering bonds related to the already existing housing units like assets owned by the government and state banks and the other is preselling the units that are going to be constructed in the future.

Outlining the procedure, the official said the total



value of a housing unit or a construction project will be securitized and converted into marketable bonds which

will be offered through salaf contracts.

The official further explained that each salaf bond would be backed by one square meter of a housing unit, which means each bond would be offered at the price of one square meter of a particular housing unit at the time of offer.

Fallah underlined the implementation of this method as a way to develop reliable investment in the housing sector and added: "In this way, micro-capitals will lead to the increase of construction and supply of housing units and will consequently curb the rampant rise in housing prices."

Back in July, the High Council of Securities and Exchange announced the approval of a decision for establishing a specialized exchange for real estate trade in the country.

It will be the fifth exchange operating in the country after Tehran Stock Exchange, the junior equity market Iran Fara Bourse, Iran Energy Exchange, and the IME.

120 idle, semi-active mines to be revived in West Azarbaijan in a quarter

ECONOMY TEHRAN— According to a provincial official, 120 idle and semi-active mines are planned to be revived in West Azarbaijan Province, in the northwest of Iran, in the last quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (December 21, 2020-March 20, 2021).

Gholamreza Babaei, the head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, put the proved mineral reserves of West Azarbaijan at over 1.214 billion tons, and said that more than 17 million tons of minerals are annually extracted from the mines of province.

In mid-October, the previous head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) had announced that 157 idle small-scale mines had been revived throughout the country



since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Saying that the mentioned mines had been reactivated as part of a comprehensive program for reviving idle small mines across the country, Khodadad Gharibpour

also announced that 200 mines were planned to be put back into operation by the end of the year.

As reported, under the framework of the mentioned program, 672 idle mines have been identified and prioritized in the current Iranian calendar year, and diagnostic procedures have been performed on 194 mines to determine the reasons for the halt in their production.

According to Gharibpour, since the beginning of the program in March 2019 up to date 303 mines had been revived.

The mentioned program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO's missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several provinces.

The head of IMIDRO has mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of

"Resistance Economy", saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

Reviving the small mines not only is a major step toward materializing "Surge in Production", which is the motto of the current Iranian calendar year, it also plays a significant role in job creation throughout the country, Gharibpour said back in June.

As reported, reviving the small mines has created 300 job opportunities in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

Following this program, so far various small-scale mines including chromite, manganese, hematite, and dolomite, iron ore, copper, and construction stone mines have been surveyed by monitoring and diagnosing the problems of the mines and providing solutions for resolving their issues.

TEDPIX drops 5,800 points on Sunday

ECONOMY TEHRAN— TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 5,870 points to 1.439 million on Sunday.

Over 9.74 billion securities worth 113.521 trillion rials (about \$2.702 billion) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market's index fell 7,321 points, and the second market's index lost 1,194 points.

The index stood at 1.413 million points at the end of the previous week.

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Group, Social Security Investment Company, Saipa Company, Tejarat Bank, Esfahan Oil Refining Company, and National Iranian Copper Industry Company were the most widely followed



indices.

TEDPIX, which had been experiencing a surprisingly rising trend since the last days of the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), hit the record high of two million points on August 2, but then it began to drop, coming down to 1.2 million points.

After a period of correction, the index has been recently climbing.

Earlier this month, Ahmad Eshtiaqi, a market analyst, told IRNA that the index will continue its upward trend until the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021) and is expected to reach 1.8 million points by the end of the year.

India-Iran-Uzbekistan pursue Central Asian connectivity

India, Iran, and Uzbekistan have held their first trilateral meeting for possible joint use of Chabahar port. The meeting was chaired jointly by India's Secretary of Shipping Sanjeev Ranjan, Uzbekistan's Deputy Minister of Transport Davron Dehkanov, and Iran's Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamejad. Using Chabahar port for trade and transit purposes as well as strengthened regional connectivity were the key agenda items at the meeting. India's keenness to explore this option comes from its desire to extend connectivity into Eurasia. Double landlocked Uzbekistan has also been interested in using the port for transit facilities into the Indian Ocean and as a means to expand its trade and transit options. That Uzbekistan has already developed rail connectivity into Afghanistan as a means to link with Iranian railway lines reflects Tashkent's seriousness. Other Central Asian states like Kazakhstan have also been interested in exploring such options, a recent article published by The Diplomat read.

Given the geostrategic location of Central

Asia, the region is also witnessing a fair share of great power competition. While the region is viewed as Russia's immediate backyard and Moscow has traditionally maintained a dominant role in relations with Central Asia, China has steadily strengthened its footprint. India has also been pursuing both geopolitical and economic ties with the region.

Chabahar has the potential to shift some of the regional dynamics in India's favor. First, it could prove to be a gateway to Central Asia and Eurasia, which can, most importantly, avoid Pakistan.

India has long historic connections to Central Asia, but its relations with the region waned for a number of reasons, most importantly the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the creation of Pakistan, which blocked Indian access to the region. Since coming to office, Modi has made fresh efforts to re-establish linkages with the region, calling Central Asia a part of the country's extended neighborhood.

But lack of physical connectivity has

proven to be a major hurdle in building trade and economic ties. Modi became the first Indian leader to travel to all five Central Asian republics - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan - in 2015.

Regional connectivity and infrastructure projects have also been high on Uzbekistan's agenda. Seeing Chabahar port as a connectivity solution for Uzbekistan is not new either. In fact, in June 2018, following an earlier meeting between Modi and Mirziyoyev on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, then-Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said the two leaders were keen to use Chabahar port as an additional connectivity route.

Both Modi and Mirziyoyev agreed to pursue connectivity projects via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). INSTC is a multi-modal infrastructure initiative spanning around 7,200 km. It encompasses a network of ship, rail and road routes for transporting freight



between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Azerbaijan, and Europe, with the goal of creating transport linkages among major cities including Astrakhan, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Moscow, and Mumbai. Feasibility studies undertaken so far has shown significant reduction of transportation costs, to the tune of \$2,500 per 15 tons of cargo. India's push with the trilateral arrangement for Uzbekistan to use Chabahar port is important in the context of expanding bilateral, trilateral, as well as broader regional cooperation.

Iran, Turkey, and Russia should act jointly against the Washington tyranny: Turkish historian

➔ The following is the text of the interview:

■ How do you assess the new American sanctions' impact on Turkey and the region? What about Iran's condemnation of the sanctions?

A: U.S. sanctions on Turkey are not due to its strength but to its weakness. All U.S. plans in the region ended in failure. Azerbaijan's victory over Armenia, who's behind were Soros and the globalists disrupted the plans of the United States in the South Caucasus. The Astana process, formed by Turkey, Iran, and Russia, ended Washington's project in Syria. The partners of the United States, the separatist, and Salafi fundamentalist terror, has been dealt a blow. The Greater Middle East (West Asia) Project has no longer chance of realization. The Atlantic front is also losing in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. That's why they are in a panic.

The United States is imposing these sanctions to reverse this going. But it's useless. Because even Western experts now agree that the economy has shifted from the Atlantic to Eurasia. The Atlantic age is closed in every sense. The United States has no chance of changing the course of history.

The interests of Turkey and Iran, and even of Russia, are common against U.S. sanctions. Our countries must act jointly against this tyranny (unilateral arbitrary practices) of Washington. In this regard, Tehran's statements on this issue are very important and very valuable for Turkey. Our Iranian friends should also know that Turkey will not succumb to the embargoes against Iran.

■ Why is West Asia witnessing unprecedented chaos? Is there any strategic solution to unite the region?

A: The United States and Israel are the only sources of chaos in the Middle East (West Asia). Of course, they also have cooperative governments in the region, such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These forces are trying to take over the countries of the region by using separatist and Salafist fundamentalist terror.

Then the solution is clear: **the countries of the region must unite against the United States and Israel, as well as their partners in the region.** The Astana process is a very successful example in this regard. It can also be applied to every regional problem, not just on Syria, including the Karabakh conflict. In this regard, the proposal of the 6th platform (Russia, Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia) for the South Caucasus, which was recently



made by the presidents of Turkey and Azerbaijan, Tayyip Erdogan and Ilham Aliyev, is very important.

This is the formula that will put an end to chaos: to prevent the intervention of the imperialist Western states in the region and to develop the initiative of the regional countries.

At this point, important tasks also come up in the Islamic world. Leaving aside sectarian and national divisions, Islamic countries must unite like a fist against the threat posed to them. Attempts to create conflict over nationality and sects must be prevented.

■ Given the history of Iran and Turkey and their conflicts in the Ottoman-Safavid era, do you think these two countries can form an alliance in the region?

A: Let me underline this first: **Turkey and Iran are obliged to each other, have to form an alliance with each other. Otherwise, they will not be able to resist U.S. pressure as they should. So, this alliance is not an option, it is a necessity for these two countries. The territorial integrity of the two countries, economic development, peace, and prosperity of the region depends on this.**

In history, Turkish-Iranian wars, conflicts, or rivalries have not helped either country. On the contrary, the two countries have suffered from it. The only winner has been the expansionist/imperialist powers of the West. Even the regional plans of the West have continuously relied on the Turkish-Iranian conflict. The conflicts between the two countries or the tensions provoked from the outside, have on one hand prevented the possible alliance between Turkey and Iran, which would have certainly avoided a foreign power's interference to the region; and on the other hand, it granted the West the opportunity to achieve their desired plans

in the region because the two countries fell weak due to fighting against each other and collecting their attention towards each other.

The leaders of the two countries and the public must see this fact and immediately remove any obstacles in front of this alliance.

In addition, maybe we should remind the fact that since the Treaty of Kasri Shirin (Zuhab), signed in 1639, there have been no border problems between Turkey and Iran. This is a very long time; it points to the robustness of the Turkish-Iranian friendship.

■ Do you think that Biden's presidency will be like Trump's or better for the region?

A: Despite the election rhetoric of Biden's team, the goals of his administration with regard to Iran coincide with the strategic goals of the Trump and Israel administrations. Biden will pursue the same goals as Trump (which is why he left the nuclear deal) – to surrender Iran's foreign policy positions and limit its missile weapons. Only methods will be partially different.

Israeli hawks and lobbyists in Biden's administration, and Biden himself, are ready for new sanctions against Iran and the continuation of the policy of targeted assassinations.

On this subject, we have published an article, entitled "Joe Biden's Iran policy: a continuation of Trump's goals, methods and ideology" (<https://unitedworldint.com/14798-joe-bidens-iran-policy-a-continuation-of-trumps-goals-methods-and-ideology/>) on the United World International website. I suggest Tehran Times readers to review it.

On the other hand, Biden states that he will be more active in the Middle East than Trump. In other words, they will further increase their support for Kurdish separatists and organizations such as ISIS. Biden will further fuel the chaos in the region.

Our countries should be vigilant on this

issue and we must seek the solution in the alliance between us.

■ How do you see the relationship of Arab Persian Gulf states (Saudi-UAE regimes) with Turkey? Can Ankara rely on the relationship with them while they hailed the 2016 coup in Turkey?

A: These countries are hostile towards Turkey. Turkey, of course, wants to establish good relations with all of them. But for that, they must abandon their hostile approach first. The UAE's support for the July 15 American coup attempt is known. Moreover, in the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya, it also took part in the completely anti-Turkish, U.S.-Israeli front. Together in the region, they are conducting military exercises against Turkey on the basis of Atlantic interests.

The process of normalization with Israel is part of that. The target of this normalization is Turkey and Iran.

But the UAE and Saudi Arabia are making a big mistake by playing a role in the plans of the United States and Israel. The consequences for them will be negative. The U.S. and Israel are losing in the region. Let them not share their defeat. Turkey, Iran, and Russia are far more ideal partners for them.

Iran and Turkey must also develop special tactics to free the (Persian) Gulf countries from the embrace of the United States. After all, everyone will benefit from friendly relations.

■ Do you think that Turkey was successful in applying the policy of "zero difference" with neighbors?

A: Ahmet Davutoglu's Neo-Ottoman politics went bankrupt. In any case, this policy was not Turkey's own national policy, it was a U.S.-project. The United States sought to spread its own influence through Neo-Ottomanism. The civil war in Syria is a result of both the Arab Spring and this policy of Neo-Ottomanism. Neo-Ottomanism was a strategy that would not lead to the expansion of Turkey, but rather to its division.

But Turkey abandoned this policy. Ahmet Davutoglu and Abdullah Gul were suspended. Turkey has no expansionist goals. Turkey can ensure its territorial integrity only in cooperation with Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Russia and eliminate the threat from the United States. Ankara is aware of this and is acting accordingly.

Today Turkey and the United States are on hostile fronts. Even Washington wants to overthrow the government. Ankara is already out of U.S. control. The goal of Tehran and Ankara is not to expand, but to protect what exists and to cooperate for it.

How the West hollowed out the Tunisian revolution

17 December was the tenth anniversary of the Tunisian uprising which toppled the authoritarian regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and marked the start of the so-called "Arab Spring". During the past decade, this date has been a favorite occasion for many Western journalists and academics to weigh in on the state of Tunisian revolutionary activity.

After a brief celebration of the Tunisian uprising as historical and exceptional in the immediate aftermath of Ben Ali's downfall, a tendency emerged to frame the Tunisian democracy-building process as chaotic, disillusioning, and hopeless.

A cursory look at headlines demonstrates that this year the Western media has not disappointed. "He ruined us": 10 years on, Tunisians curse man who sparked the Arab Spring" – one article in the Guardian claims; "After Arab Spring, a decade of upheaval and lost hopes" – another one in The Associated Press concludes.

This lack of nuance with which the Tunisian revolution has been viewed in the West has followed a well-trodden, infamously prejudiced, Orientalist trajectory.

First, there is the Western obsession with the reductionist foundation myth of the Arab Spring: the self-immolation of a marginalized man, Mohamed Bouazizi, which triggered a wave of anger and toppled Arab dictatorships like "dominoes". Special attention is paid to details like his occupation, "fruit seller", his precarious financial situation, and a slap on the face he allegedly received from a female municipal worker and which supposedly led to his decision to set himself on fire.

The mise en scène of this random event constructed in the Western media has conceptualized the outbreak of the Arab uprisings not as a logical reaction to despotism and natural drive for freedom and democracy, but as a product of perceived Arab irrationality and impulsiveness.

Behind the false myth of an Arab man unable to stomach public confrontation with an empowered woman lies a long series of protests and acts of civil disobedience in Tunisia and across the region.

For example, just three years before Ben Ali was toppled, mass protests broke out in Redeyef, a phosphate-mining town in Tunisia's southwest, against the corrupt practices of the state-owned Compagnie des Phosphates de Gafsa (CPG). Workers launched organized sit-ins and were joined by local youth, trade unionists and ordinary citizens. The demonstrations continued for months and were brutally suppressed by the security apparatus. In the following months until December 2010, there were also a number of self-immolations and publicized suicides.

What happened to Bouazizi was tragic and for many Tunisians, he is a heroic figure. However, his self-immolation turned into the "spark" of the "Arab Spring" not because of its unique circumstances but because it coincided with the end of a long "Arab Winter" of discontent.

Second, Western media and scholarship have reduced the Tunisian revolution to a story of success or failure.

Early on, the West insisted on labelling Tunisia as a "success story", setting the Tunisian revolution apart from the other uprisings in the Arab world. But this emphasis on Tunisian exceptionalism has done little to further the demands and goals of the Tunisian revolution and has done much to validate the tired trope that Arabs are not ready for democracy.

This insistence on comparing and contrasting the Tunisian revolution with that of Egypt, Algeria or any other country in the region demonstrates the inability of the West to overcome its enduring Orientalist assumptions. It refuses to recognize the self-evident fact that the historical, social, cultural, and economic differences between Arab countries have resulted in different revolutionary experiences.

As social and political unrest returned to the streets of Tunisia, some Western observers flipped their discourse dramatically, announcing an "Arab Winter" and the death of revolutionary aspirations. While Western academia still holds on to the trite argument that Arab nationalism and political Islamism caused the "collapse" of Arab revolutions, the Western media, on the other hand, has developed a peculiar obsession with stories of disillusionment and hopelessness among the Tunisians and their ambivalence towards the events of 2011.

Almost all news reports on the 10th anniversary of the Tunisian revolution rehearse the same take: the Tunisian people are now dissatisfied with their revolution and consider it a "curse".

What these news reports often have in common is the little attention they pay to the opinions of local experts and analysts. Such nuanced and informed perspectives about the political and social reality in Tunisia are either blatantly dismissed or buried among the many negative testimonies of disgruntled Tunisians.

It is important, of course, to give the opportunity to those disenchanted with the current outcomes of the Tunisian revolution to voice their concerns. However, promoting only such testimonies at the expense of nuanced analyses reinforces the distorted idea that the Tunisian democracy is failing and all Tunisians are now cynical and hopeless.

This tendency to reduce the Tunisian revolution to either a success or a failure hollows it out and ignores how Tunisians have understood and experienced it. It disregards and in this always undermines the long process of change in the economic, social, and political sectors that any democracy-building experiment entails.

Contrary to what the Western discourse maintains, Tunisians have learned lessons from the successes and failures of the 2011 uprising which have matured into a deeper appreciation of their revolutionary experience and a better awareness of the need for a permanent revolution.

For many Tunisians, the revolutionary forces that launched the 2011 uprising have permanently and profoundly transformed their collective political agency. The legacy of their revolution is the deep and renewed



faith in their ability to rise against injustice and resist exploitation. Despite some disenchantment due to the worsening economic conditions, Tunisians still believe in the power of protests, strikes, and – to a lesser extent – voting to change their reality. Temporary apathy does not necessarily translate to total hopelessness.

Rather than seeing the revolution as an exceptional and singular event, many Tunisians have grown aware that to radically change their reality means they will have to permanently stay in trouble.

Two recent events which have been largely underreported in the Western media serve as examples of the everyday manifestation of Tunisia's permanent revolution.

In October, a youth-led citizens movement dubbed "hasebhom" (hold them accountable) backed by human rights activists and organizations, such as the Tunisian Association for the Defense of Individual Liberties, successfully rallied against a draft law known as "Repression of attacks against the armed forces" bill. It contains provisions which exempt police officers and security forces from criminal liability when lethal force is used. The movement managed to force the parliament to postpone consideration of the draft law.

Then in mid-December, for the first time in Tunisia's recent history, the Supreme Judicial Council suspended a top magistrate, Taieb Rached, the first president of the Court of Cassation, the highest-ranking judge in the judiciary, was removed from his job and his immunity lifted so he could be investigated for alleged financial corruption and terrorism. This decision would likely boost public trust in the judiciary and the positive role it can play in the Tunisian revolution.

The Western media and academia may have hollowed out the Tunisian revolution with their reductionist discourses but for Tunisians, the revolutionary experience continues. Defying the vocabulary of exceptionalism, the many economic challenges and the counterrevolutionary setbacks, the Tunisians are carrying on with their revolutionary struggle for change.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Israelis demand Netanyahu's resignation in massive protest rallies

Thousands of Israeli demonstrators have poured into the streets of occupied territories for the 26th week in a row to protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption, demanding his resignation.

In the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds, thousands of demonstrators are protesting in Paris Square, the central site of the demonstrations, adjacent to the prime minister's official residence on Balfour Street, having marched there from the Chords Bridge.

Protesters are demanding Netanyahu resign amid his criminal trial in three corruption cases and mismanagement of the COVID-19 crisis.

Dozens are also protesting outside the Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer, where Netanyahu became the first in Israel to receive the vaccine against coronavirus earlier Saturday night.

Meanwhile, several pro-Netanyahu demonstrators are also attending another rally, holding up signs that read "Traitorous Leftists" and "Enemy Leftists."

Smaller rallies also took place at highway overpasses and junctions around the occupied territories, as well as outside the Rosh Ha'ayin home of Benny Gantz, Netanyahu's coalition partner and his minister of military affairs.

Some clashes have been reported between the protesters and the Israeli police.

Earlier this month, an 82-year-old protester was "accidentally" killed by a car during protest rallies against Netanyahu.

Weekly protests against Netanyahu and his cabinet have been held at intersections around the occupied territories for months. Protesters demand their resignation over his corruption trials and his failure to combat novel coronavirus.

Netanyahu, who is on trial for bribery, fraud and breach of trust, insists that authorities are "distorting justice" to force him out of office.

According to Press TV, in September, in a move that critics said was an attempt to distract attention from his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, Netanyahu called for an "independent inquiry" into the investigations who brought corruption charges against him.

Netanyahu, whose corruption trial began in May and is set to resume in January, was sworn in for a fifth term this summer after striking a unity deal with his principal election rival, former military chief Benny Gantz.

Nine dead as Kabul car bombing targets Afghan lawmaker

A car bombing in Kabul targeting an Afghan lawmaker killed at least nine people, officials said.

Lawmaker Khan Mohammad Wardak survived the blast but is among 20 injured including women and children, Afghan Interior Minister Massoud Andarabi said.

It is unclear whether the explosive was planted in a car parked on the lawmaker's route or if a vehicle with the bomb was being driven by a bomber, Andarabi added.

No one has claimed responsibility for the blast. According to Reuters, Afghanistan has seen a sharp rise in violence, particularly bombings, in recent weeks as the Afghan government and Taliban hold talks to find an end to the country's almost 20-year-long war.

Separate bombings were also reported on Sunday in the provinces of Logar, Nangarhar, Helmand and Badakhshan, in which a number of civilians and security forces members were killed and injured.

Taiwan sends ships, aircraft as Chinese carrier passes island

Taiwan's navy and air force were deployed on Sunday as a Chinese aircraft carrier group led by the country's newest carrier, the Shandong, sailed through the sensitive Taiwan Strait, the day after a U.S. warship transited the same waterway.

While it is not the first time China's carriers have passed close to Taiwan, it comes at a time of heightened tension between Taipei and Beijing, which claims the democratically-ruled island as its territory.

Taiwan has complained of repeated Chinese military activity, including China's regular flying of air force aircraft near the island. China says such drills are aimed at protecting the country's sovereignty.

Resistance News

UN affirms steadfast stand regarding illegality of Israeli settlements

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — The United Nations affirmed its steadfast position regarding the illegality of Israeli settlements in the Occupied West Bank.

This came in a press conference held by the spokesman for the Secretary-General, Stéphane Dujarric, through a televised interview with journalists at the permanent headquarters of the international organization in New York.

The Israeli Ministry of Settlement Affairs seeks to exploit the remaining term of the current US President Donald Trump to legitimize 70 settlement outposts, the first phase of which includes 46 outposts.

Currently, 138 settlement outposts are spread in the West Bank especially in the "C" area of the West Bank, specifically south of Nablus, in the north, and around Ramallah and Jerusalem, center, Bethlehem and al-Khalil, in the south.

Dujarric told reporters, "Our position regarding the legitimacy of settlements, as we said before a long time ago, and again we say that our position has not changed and it is a firm and very clear position."

"We have expressed our concern about annexation, that is the annexation of more Palestinian lands to Israeli sovereignty, and we have repeatedly announced our position on the legal status of these settlements", he added.

On 09/11/2020, the Israeli Peace Now movement said that settlement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has doubled over the past four years, in conjunction with the term of US President Trump.

In defiance of international legitimacy resolutions, the United States announced on November 19, 2019, that it no longer classifies Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories as illegal.

The Israeli occupation forces establish about 503 settlement outposts, 474 of which are in the West Bank, and 29 in Jerusalem. These settlements constitute more than 46% of the total area of the West Bank, in which approximately 700,000 settlers reside, who carry out almost daily attacks in the Occupied Palestinian territories.

1.5 million lose work in Iran as COVID hits tourism market

TOURISM TEHRAN – The coronavirus epidemic has ruined more than 1.5 million jobs in Iran's travel sector, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Saturday.

"Over 1.5 million jobs have been lost in the tourism sector of Iran due to the COVID-19 disease.... Many of the tourism-insiders are now unemployed or they are staying at home," Mounesan said.



Ali-Asghar Mounesan

The country's travel sector has suffered a loss of 140 trillion rials (some \$3.3 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic till the end of Shahriyar (Sep. 21), the official added.

Mounesan publicized in November that mass, unplanned travels are not approved. "The outbreak of the coronavirus has caused damage to the tourism industry in Iran and [other parts of] the world in such a way that according to statistics, 50 million people are directly and indirectly exposed to unemployment due to the virus spread in the global scene.... yet, mass or unplanned and irresponsible travels are not approved to take place during the coronavirus era."

Smart and responsible traveling should replace "do not travel" recommendations, the minister stressed, adding: "In our country, Corona has caused problems in the tourism industry and the worrying point is the continuation of this trend."

"We are well aware of what the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control proclaims [the health protocols], hence as a proposal, we have formulated some smart, responsible travel packages by the implementation of which we could have secure travels."

He has repeatedly announced that his ministry is in full coordination with the Ministry of Health for strictly implementing health protocols in travel destinations, hospitably centers, and museums, amongst others, underlining that "people's health is our priority."

Tourism [industry of Iran] was growing before the corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, near the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent, the minister explained.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bath-houses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Rooted in ancient Persian civilization, the nation that has survived numerous alien invasions and natural disasters over its rich history while maintaining its appeal to local and foreign tourists.

Italian university hosting exhibit on Iranian history

HERITAGE TEHRAN – An archaeological exhibition, featuring slices of Iranian history, has recently opened at the Sapienza University of Rome in the Italian capital.

It turns the spotlight on the discoveries and relics yielded during joint archaeological seasons conducted by Iranian experts and their Italian fellows over the past couple of decades, Mehr reported on Saturday.



A view of Taq-e Bostan; a significant archaeological site in Kermanshah, western Iran

Co-organized by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, the exhibit also gives a clear focus to the archeological surveys held in Kermanshah, western Iran.

In a recent interview with the Tehran Times, Italian ambassador Giuseppe Perrone said that his embassy is highly responsible for depicting the richness of so deep and so complete cultural ties, which have long been developed between the two nations.

"I think because our cultural ties are so deep and so complete in every area, we do have a responsibility to showcase this richness and to tell people the story of this important connection that has always existed between Italy and Iran in different areas, so we look forward to our future projects which are going to be quite amazing as well."

Kermanshah assumes high historical importance as it is a gateway to the Iranian plateau and a crossroads of important routes leading to the Mesopotamian plain. It has extraordinary archaeological richness and an equally wide linguistic and cultural variety.

Switzerland returns smuggled antiquities to Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN – A total of 49 works of ancient art that had been looted and smuggled out of Iran some four decades ago have recently been returned home with the aid of Swiss officials.

"A collection of glazed bricks, which are attributed to Qalaichi [archaeological site] in Bukan, dating back to the 7th or 8th centuries BC, have been returned home from Switzerland," Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Sunday.

"49 pieces of glazed bricks, which were smuggled out of Iran on the advent of the Islamic Revolution, were recuperated with a great deal of efforts made by the cultural heritage ministry, and the ministry of foreign affairs," Mounesan explained.

The official noted that the cultural heritage ministry was informed in [the Iranian year] 1391 that an Iranian family, residing in Switzerland, was inclined to sell 49 pieces of glazed bricks....

"The cultural heritage ministry in close collaboration with the ministry of foreign affairs, filed a lawsuit... as it presented relevant documents and evidence to the competent



international authorities. And ultimately, the historical objects were returned to the country after years of follow-up."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mounesan congratulated Iranian people over the

"blessed" event.

"I congratulate this blessed event to the dear and heritage-loving nation of Iran... Undoubtedly, under appropriate circumstances, an exhibition of these works will

be held at the National Museum of Iran."

Situated about nine air km north-west of Bukan in West Azarbaijan province, Qalaichi (or Ghalay-chi) is an ancient settlement so far yielded a large number of glazed objects. Some of which are monochrome and the others show complex compositions. The glazed objects from the regular excavations were curated in Urmia Museum and Tehran National Museum.

The artifacts are connected to the Mannai civilization, which was once flourished in northwestern Iran in the 1st millennium BC. Mannai, also spelled Manna, was an ancient country surrounded by three major powers of the time namely Assyria, Urartu, and Media.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Mannaeans are first recorded in the annals of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (reigned 858–824 BC) and are last mentioned in Urartu by Rusa II (reigned 685–645 BC) and in Assyria by Esarhaddon (reigned 680–669 BC). With the intrusion of the Scythians and the rise of the Medes in the 7th century, the Mannaeans lost their identity and were subsumed under the term Medes.

12 unmissable destinations in Tehran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — Tehran is such a bustling metropolis that some travelers love to hate as many avoiding a stay there altogether en route to Iran's more popular tourist destinations.

Others believe there are enough cultural sites, gorgeous galleries, museums, recreational places, and sociable locals to give it a beautiful side too.

Here is a selection of top destinations you can visit while in the Iranian capital:

Treasury of National Jewels

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

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

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

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

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

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

National Museum of Iran

The National Museum of Iran is the main archaeological museum of Iran (formerly Iran Bastan Museum) and the brainchild of André Godard, the French archaeologist and architect who was its first director.

The vaulted brick entrance was designed to recall the famous Sassanid audience hall at Ctesiphon, Iraq. After its completion in 1936, the pre-Islamic collection of artifacts was displayed on the ground floor, with Islamic art exhibited on the first, but today the Islamic collection is housed in a building to the right of the entrance.

In the 1936 building, the first cabinets displayed ceramics dating from the 4th millennium BC, but visitors are always attracted by the superb unglazed zoomorphic vessels from the 1000 BC Marlik settlement on the Caspian.

Remember to look out for the polished reliefs, capitals, and statues of the Achaemenid period (6th–4th century BC); this gleaming, rich brown color is how the real Persepolis stone quality should look, not today's grey, pitted surface.

Reza Abbasi Museum

The exhibits, starting from around 2000BC, are without exception quite exquisite – especially the gold work – and a few people seem to visit, you might have it entirely to yourself.

Named after one of the great artists of the Safavid period, Reza Abbasi Museum embraces several permanent exhibition halls that showcase various eras of Iranian history with objects belonging to the pre-Islamic era, paintings and calligraphy works amongst them.

Reza Abbasi Museum embraces several permanent exhibition halls that showcase various eras of Iranian history with objects belonging to the pre-Islamic era, paintings and calligraphy works amongst them.

Golestan Palace

The lavish Golestan Palace was completed by the Qajar dynasty that rose to power in the late 1700s, this fabulous walled complex is centered on a landscaped garden with tranquil pools. The palace buildings are among the oldest in modern Tehran.

The UNESCO-listed palace complex is one of the oldest in the Iranian capital, originally built during the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) in the historic walled city.

Following extensions and additions, it received its most characteristic features in the 19th century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family (1789–1925). At present, the Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates.

UNESCO has it that the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

Tabiat Bridge

It's easy to see why this multilevel, sculptural pedestrian bridge, designed by Iranian architect Leila Araghian, has won awards and been a huge hit with locals.

The 270m long walkway connecting Park-e Taleghani and Park-e Abo-Atash over the busy Modarres Highway is a fun space to relax and, in good weather, it provides superb views of the north Tehran skyline against the Alborz mountain range.



There's a decent food court at one end and a restaurant at the other, as well as plenty of places to sit and socialize, making it a highly popular place to hang out in the evenings.

Sa'dabad Complex

Sprawled on about 110 hectares of a mountainside parkland, the Sa'dabad complex was once a royal summer residence during the Qajar era (1789–1925) and its subsequent Pahlavi epoch (1925–1979).

If you do not have time to visit all the museums, do find time for the Mellat Palace ('White Palace') with a pair of giant bronze boots – all that remains of a huge statue of Reza Shah (d1941) – standing by the side of the steps.

The Green Palace is so-called because it is faced with a distinctive special greenish-yellow marble, which reminded one visitor of 1950s Fablon plastic coverings. Reza Shah ordered this construction in 1925 and certainly, his small office has a more personal ambience than the Mellat. Elsewhere the excess of mirror-work, blue brocade silk curtains with silver metal thread fringes, tassels in the bedrooms, and the crimson silk dining rooms speak more of the excesses of his son, Mohammadreza.

Milad Tower

Dominating the skyline of Tehran's western suburbs, Milad Tower is 435m high, including 120m of antenna, making it, in 2017, the world's sixth-tallest free-standing tower.

Bearing a striking resemblance to Menara Kuala Lumpur, its octagonal concrete shaft tapers up to a pod with 12 floors, including both enclosed and open observation decks, a gallery, a cafe, and a revolving restaurant.

Whether you should visit or not depends largely on the weather; on a rare clear day the views are worth it, but otherwise probably not. You need a taxi to get here.

The Grand Bazaar

Situated in the heart of Tehran, the Grand Bazaar boasts various mazes, corridors, lanes, intersections, entrances, and passageways with hundreds of shops offering different types of goods and services.

While most of its covered structures and marketplaces are associated with the 19th century onwards, the history of trade in the bazaar is rooted much deeper in time.

Some visitors to the bazaar refer to it as "a city within a city" because it also includes several mosques, guesthouses, banks, and once-thriving caravansaries.

Most mazes and lanes are particularly allocated to commodities such as carpets, metalwork, spices, toys, clothing, jewelry, woodturning, and kitchen appliances.

One can also encounter with grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, tobacconists, tailors, flag sellers, broadcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers, among others.

Glassware and Ceramic Museum of Iran

Housed within an elegant Qajar-era edifice in downtown Tehran, the Glassware and Ceramic Museum of Iran also known as Abgineh Museum offers its visitors a wide range of glasswork, brickwork, plasterwork, mirror work as well as inlaid artworks.

The premises which have been turned into the museum roughly date back to a century ago. It was originally constructed upon the orders of the 20th-century politician Ahmad Qavam better known as Qavam-ol-Saltaneh for his lodging.

Situated a short walk northward of the National Museum of Iran on Si-e Tir St., the museum puts on display nationwide relics that date from the 2nd millennium BC to the modern-day. The two-story octagonal structure itself retains a lot of charm as seamlessly blends genuine Iranian architecture with the 19th-century European motifs.

Sacred Defense Museum

Sacred Defense Museum on a landscaped site of 21 hectares in north-central Tehran is a gigantic war memorial with its collections concentrated heavily on the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq war.

A total of seven halls lead through the history of the sacred defense in forensic detail. The Hall of Butterflies greets visitors on arrival, the place is dedicated to martyrs and victims of the war filled with personal belongings found on the various battlefields.

Outside, a patchwork of domestically-manufactured armaments such as rockets, tanks, and artillery pieces are on show. The complex has vast garden areas, water features, and children's play areas as well.

Sacred Defense Museum is equipped with a state-of-the-art visual system including projections and video walls, while audio recordings relevant to each period contributes to its charm.

Re-creation of the liberation of the city of Khorramshahr by the means of virtual exhibits and video projections is amongst the main features of the museum where stands a replica of the Khorramshahr mosque adorned with creamy and turquoise patterned tiles.

A strategic port city in western Iran, Khorramshahr fell into Iraqi hands on October 26, 1980. It was recaptured by Iranian forces on May 24, 1982.

Tochal Ski Resort

Iran has long been an international destination for avid powder chasers during winter, while - in total contrast - its arid and semi-arid climate reaches sweltering levels in summer.

Maybe not the first that comes to mind, snow-capped mountains above Tehran are home to some of the world's best ski resorts where powder hounds can enjoy famous Iranian hospitality. Amongst uppermost are Dizin, Tochal, Shemshak and Darbandsar, all situated within some 100 kilometers of the capital city and up to international standards.

The smallest of the four resorts, Tochal can be reached via a four-mile journey by cable car that leaves from the northern suburbs of Tehran. At 3963m, Tochal ski resort is the fifth-highest resort in the world, ensuring a long season from December to at least April and sometimes June.

Tochal is good for convenience and price, but the better terrain may be found at the other resorts. When it comes to comfortable accommodation, both Dizin and Shemshak have large hotels that will almost always have space. There are also several privately-owned cottages around that can be rented out. Prices for these vary on the quality of the cottage. Nightlife can be limited in resorts as most Iranians prefer to socialize at home in the evening.

Miniature Garden Museum

For ones who are always short of time but fascinated with rich Iranian cultural heritage, the Miniature Garden Museum is the right place for you to roam through.

Spanning 2.9 hectares in area, the park is home to replicas of the most important historical landmarks and landscapes including giant models of some UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Miniature maquettes of other UNESCO-registered sites will be constructed in the future, according to the Tehran Municipality website.

There are some eighty species of floras and plants that are endemic in the country, and a permanent photo gallery showing a variety of real shots of the World Heritage sites.

One of the key characteristics of the ensemble is that its replica models have entirely been designed and constructed by domestic sculptors and artists, according to executives.

The replicas are at one twenty-fifth of their original size. One of the complex's highlights is probably the 17th-century Naghsh-e Jahan (Imam) Square that itself is composed of the Royal Mosque, the Ali Qapu Palace, the Mosque of Sheikh Lotfollah, the magnificent Portico of Qaysariyyeh, and a 15th-century Timurid palace all linked by a series of two-storied arcades.

Christmas celebrations going virtual in Iran

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – In the light of the global pandemic, Christmas is celebrated virtually, unlike usual gatherings, among Iranian Christians to prevent the COVID-19 transmission chain.

COVID-19 prevented the New Year to be celebrated in the same way as in previous years, and only priests in churches will perform the prayers, which will be broadcasted on social media for Christian compatriots.

“Even gatherings like in previous years, which were organized to meet and visit personalities and clerics in the church, will not be held this year to prevent the spread of the disease,” Stanley Simmons head of the Assyrian Association of Urmia said.

The celebrations of the birth of Jesus Christ (PBUH) and the New Year start from December 25 until January 7.

The Assyrians celebrate December 24 as the birth anniversary of Jesus (PBUH), while the Armenians celebrate it on January 5.

Pandemic changes big celebrations

Every year, the streets and shops in special parts of the cities across the country, including the Julfa neighborhood of Isfahan, were decorated with the beginning of the New Year and Christmas celebrations, and the decorated pine trees appeared in the



streets, concurrent with ancient Iranian ceremony of Yalda night.

Nationally called “Shab-e Yalda” or “Shab-e-Chelleh”, it literally means the night of the forty. This refers to the first forty days of winter that are often the coldest and toughest to bear, falling on December 20 this year.

But this year, due to the pandemic, people lost the opportunity to celebrate the big occasions as always in gatherings, from Noruz to different festivals or religious ceremonies which all held avoiding gatherings.

The outbreak reached its peak concurrent with the Iranian New Year celebration (March 21), which has made Noruz different from

years and even centuries ago.

However, in Sizzdah Bedar, people were also asked to stay at home and resist picnicking outdoor to break the chain of coronavirus transmission, and they were successful in curbing the disease.

Sizzdah Bedar, also known as Nature Day, is an Iranian festival held annually on the thirteenth day of Farvardin, the first month of the Iranian calendar (falling on April 1 this year), during which Iranians reconcile with nature by spending time in resorts, gardens, and natural areas. It marks the end of the Noruz holidays in Iran.

So that people were also asked to stay at home and resist picnicking outdoor to break the chain of coronavirus transmission.

It can now be said that Iranian families who have been involved with coronavirus infection have come to the conclusion that they will not get rid of the disease except by observing healthcare methods and social distance.

Meanwhile, Armenian Christians, along with other Iranian compatriots, emphasized that this year no decorations or ceremonies will be held on the occasion of the New Year 2021 to curb the disease.

It is necessary for all people to join hands in the fight against coronavirus so that the virus is sooner eradicated.

Iranian experts appointed members of WMO

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Two faculty members of the National Atmospheric Science and Meteorological Research Center (ASMERC) became members of the expert teams of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Mehdi Rahnama, Chairman and Faculty Member of the AS-MERC, has been appointed as a member of the WMO expert team for cataloging hazardous events (ET-CHE), IRIB reported on Sunday.



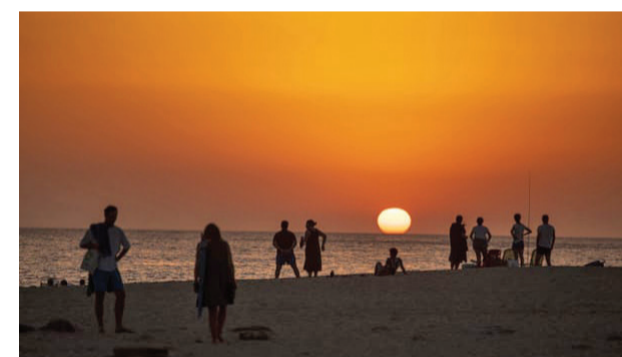
The purpose of this team is to participate in the development and implementation of the WMO high-risk incident catalog, which is done through the development of operational plans for water, climate, and environmental hazards.

Saviz Sehatkashani was also appointed as the main member of the capacity development and communication team of the climate services committee.

In the new WMO structure, the climate services committee (SC_CLT) consists of five expert teams that chair the WMO Climate Commission.

Will the Mediterranean become too hot for tourists?

Increased heat in Mediterranean countries is making the traditional summer beach holiday season in late July and August untenable for many northern Europeans. Tropical nights, where the temperature does not drop below 20C, are increasing and a recognized danger to health. The changing climate does have a plus side: beach and inland resorts that used to be too cold for comfort in spring and autumn are now a pleasant temperature.



Researchers in Spain concerned about the developing damage to their vital tourist industry are proposing that the peak season for holidays should be moved from August to June and September to accommodate the new reality of the climate. Later this century it will need to be shifted again.

For many older people these changes are already a reality. British, Scandinavian and German pensioners are finding off-season spring and autumn temperatures in Greece, Spain and Italy far more comfortable, the Guardian reported.

But for families tied to school terms, a large proportion of the current peak holiday crowd, it is a different matter. School holidays have been aligned with when the weather was supposed to be at its best wherever you lived in Europe, but this no longer applies. Unless schools change their traditional holidays the heat could mean Mediterranean countries are starved of summer visitors.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 87)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| where qw | کجا | accepted; passed | قبول |
| which qw | کدام [کدوم] | Kazakhstan | قزاقستان |
| which one qw | کدام یک [کدوم یکی] | division | قسمت |
| to do | کردن - کن | lovely, nice | قشنگ |
| butter | کره | pen | قلم |
| Korea | کره | coffee | قهوه |
| person | کس (جمع: کسان) | adverb | قید |
| country | کشور | price | قیمت |
| class | کلاس | | ک |
| classroom | کلاس درس | job, work | کار |
| | کلمات: جمع کلیه | usage | کاربرد |
| word | کلمه (جمع: کلمات, کلیهها) | student card | کارت دانشجویی |
| question word | کلمه‌ی سؤالی | to work | کار کردن |
| little | کم | labourer | کارگر |
| where's | کوتاهاری | employee | کارمند |
| short | کوتاه / [کوتاه] | Japanese male student | کازومینه |
| small | کوچک [کوچیک] | paper | کاغذ |
| alley | کوچه | enough | کافی |
| who qw | کی [کی] | complete, perfect | کامل |
| who; that; which | که ۲ حرف ربط | to complete | کامل کردن |
| | کی به که ۱ | book | کتاب |
| when qw | کی | library | کتابخانه [کتابخانه] |
| bag | کیف | bookshop | کتابفروشی |
| Korean family name | کیم | workbook | کتاب کار |



Without earth no birth!

'Heroes of wetland protection' to be introduced, honored



ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN – On the occasion of World Wetlands Day, rangers who are making efforts toward protecting wetlands across the country will be praised.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on February

2, which marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

In order to identify, collect and classify successful experiences related to the optimal protection of wetland ecosystems and to encourage and promote wetland culture in the country, the rangers and those who took steps to well protect the wetlands will be honored, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Also, in order to appreciate the tireless efforts of environmentalists who are protecting wetlands, a program of selection and appreciation of rangers will be held concurrent with World Wetlands Day.

Wetland Hero Award will be presented in three categories of research, executive activities, and public participation.

Valuable wetlands

Wetlands play a major role in protecting the land against floods and the impacts of storms. They provide food and diverse habitats which support genetic, species, and ecosystem biodiversity. Wetlands play a key role in the life cycles of many

species and in annual migration patterns.

Unfortunately, wetlands are being degraded and lost due to pollution, overexploitation, climate change, and human population growth. In recognition of these challenges, the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty, was adopted.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, also known as the Convention on Wetlands, is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified, of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.

Of Iran's 25 Ramsar sites about one-third are under pressure or in critical condition.

Chief of the Department of Environment, Issa Kalantari, has said in order to restore wetlands in the country a budget of 600 trillion rials (nearly \$14 billion) is required.

ICRC praises Iran's effort against coronavirus

1 → “The ICRC is a valuable partner of the Red Crescent Society of Iran and we have a strong and broad partnership in various fields,” said Mansoureh Bagheri, IRCS deputy for international affairs and humanitarian law, expressing appreciation for their support in the fight against COVID-19.

In response to the outbreak, the two organizations expanded their collaborations in the distribution of personal protective equipment, hand sanitizers, and educational brochures on COVID-19 disease for migrants on the border provinces of the country.

Earlier in May, Barbara Rizzoli, head of the ICRC delegation in Tehran, said the actions taken by the Iranian Red Crescent Society to battle the COVID-19 outbreak were very significant in various fields, including prevention and treatment.

Iran's achievements in fight against COVID-19

With the outbreak of coronavirus, Iran surged its production to meet the country's need for self-protective equipment along with medical and pharmaceutical items to fight against the virus.

Iran is one of the top five manufacturers of coronavirus antigen-based rapid detection kits in the world; as homegrown antibody rapid test, which can detect coronavirus in 15 to 20 minutes, was unveiled in Tehran on November 17.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, told the Tehran Times in September that some of the knowledge-based companies reached a production capacity of more than 200-300 thousand diagnostic kits per day, which surpassed the country's need for diagnostic kits, and there is a great export potential.

Pointing out that multiplying the production of COVID-19 equipment led to significant measures that led to foreign currency saving for the country, he said “it also helped us cope with problems and not to run out of equipment because no matter how much money we gave, no country had the equipment to sell.”

He also announced that two types of diagnostic kits are now mass-produced by knowledge-based companies, first one is the RT-PCR tests, 8 million of which are being produced per month; while the other is serology-based tests that a total of 400,000 are being manufactured monthly and is expected to reach up to 2 million.

At present, 40 advanced ventilators are manufactured daily in the medical equipment sector, he explained.

Knowledge-based companies can produce any medicine effective in countering corona-

virus or approved by the scientific committee within a week to 10 days, he noted.

Mehdi Kashmiri, director for technology and planning at the science ministry, said in July that about 450 knowledge-based companies were active in the country for manufacturing protective equipment and treatment products to fight the coronavirus.

Production of more than one million face masks per day, production of more than 1.5 liters of disinfectants per day, diagnostic kits, non-contact thermometers, protective clothing, ventilator are among the produces manufactured by these companies, he added.

Iranian-made innovative products in the field of diagnosis, screening, and fighting coronavirus were also unveiled to combat the disease, namely, ozone generator, nanotechnology face shields, disinfection gate, and molecular COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Lake Urmia water level keeps rising

The level of water at Lake Urmia is on the rise, as increased by a 1.7 billion cubic meters compared to the previous year, according to the studies conducted by the Lake Urmia restoration program committee.

The lake is expected to reach its ecological level (1,274 meters) within 10 years by completing the restoration plans which started four years ago.

Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia restoration program's office in West Azarbaijan province, said the lake's level has reached 1,271 meters, adding the figure has increased by 68 centimeters compared to last year, according to the latest survey.

He said that the lake surface area has reached 2,828 square kilometers, adding that the figure is increased by 689 square kilometers compared to the same period last year.

روند صعودی تراز دریاچه ارومیه

تراز دریاچه ارومیه روند صعودی به خود گرفته است به طوری که حجم آب دریاچه در مقایسه با سال گذشته یک میلیارد و ۷۰۰ میلیون مترمکعب افزایش یافته است.

دریاچه ارومیه از اواسط دهه ۱۳۸۰ شروع به خشک شدن کرد و بنا بر آمار بین‌المللی تا سال ۲۰۱۵ میلادی حدود ۸۰ درصد از مساحت آن خشک شد.

این دریاچه در قالب طرح‌های احیا قرار است ظرف مدت ۱۰ سال از ۱۳۹۴ به تراز اکولوژیک خود (یک‌هزار و ۲۷۴ متر) برسد.

به گزارش ایرنا، فرهاد سرخوش رییس دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه در آذربایجان غربی با اشاره به ثبت تراز یک‌هزار و ۲۷۱ متر و ۳۰ سانتی‌متری طبق آخرین پایش برای دریاچه ارومیه اظهار داشت ارتفاع دریاچه نسبت به سال گذشته ۶۸ سانتی‌متر بیشتر شده است. وی با بیان اینکه مساحت دریاچه به ۲ هزار و ۸۲۸ کیلومترمربع رسیده، بیان کرد این رقم نسبت به زمان مشابه سال گذشته ۶۸۹ کیلومترمربع افزایش نشان می‌دهد.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603

Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

In the morning, charity is due on every joint bone of the body of every one of you. Every utterance of Allah's glorification (i.e. saying Subhan Allah) is an act of charity, and two rakath prayers which one performs in the forenoon is equal to all this (in reward).

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Cinéma Vérité pays tribute to scholar Akbar Alemi

TEHRAN — The 14th edition of Cinéma Vérité, Iran's major international festival for documentary films, commemorated film scholar Akbar Alemi with a lifetime achievement award on Monday. Alemi died of COVID-19 in October. He was 75. Alemi was the dean of the Animation Department at Tehran's Tarbiat Modares University. He was one of the pioneers of documentary making in the country and a proponent of modern methods in the documentary genre.



Film expert Akbar Alemi in an undated photo. (ISNA/Mona Hubefekr)

He helped revive academic cinema during the years that it was about to fade away in the country with his TV programs "Other Side of the Coin", "Seventh Art" and "Beyond Cinema" during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

He has written and translated many books and was active as a jury member of several Iranian and international film and animation festivals.

Several friends and documentarians talked about Alemi at the ceremony.

Photographer and filmmaker Seifollah Samadian in his brief words about Alemi said that he always was completely ready to attend to the TV programs.

"There are many precious people in different art and cultural arenas in the country, but Alemi was one of whom many fields in art were proud, and many believed that part of the other activities are known through the name and appearance of Alemi," Samadian said.

"I got to know that Alemi was the one who lived every moment of his 75 years of life in its real meaning during his research works, his teachings and even in his silence. Whatever I have learned from him I teach the young filmmakers and photographers. The first thing I tell them is that they must first get to know themselves, and believe that no one can take their place, and that they cannot take the place of others," Samadian said.

"He avoided any jealousy in his works, he was serious in everything and participated actively in whatever he did," he added.

Veteran graphic designer Ebrahim Haqiqi was the next to talk about Alemi, calling it a bitter occasion to talk about friends after their death.

"It was a bad year; we lost our dear ones one after the other. All those who knew the cinema of Iran knew that Alemi was one of the unique ones," Haqiqi said.

He always was a modest person though he had a vast knowledge while trying to say that knowledge is learnable," Haqiqi said.

"Our pain in losing Alemi is that we can't replace such a great man. But we must know that he, like any great artist, will never die," he concluded.

The award was presented to his family at the end of the ceremony.

The organizers have so far honored several documentarians including Farshad Fadaian, Mahvash Sheikholeslami and Khosrow Sinai.

Due to the pandemic, this year's Cinéma Vérité is being held entirely online, and the programs are available on Filimo, TVA and Hashure, the Iranian platforms providing video on demand (VOD) service for films.

Every day, several films are being introduced during the event, while a number of top Iranian and international documentarians and critics are holding online workshops and panel discussions.

The Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) is the main organizer of the event.

The festival will be running totally online until December 22.

IIDCYA proposes registering 30 Azar as story day on Iranian calendar

TEHRAN — The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Sunday that it has proposed to the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution to mark the 30th of Azar on the Iranian calendar as a day of stories and storytelling. The 30th of Azar on the Iranian calendar is the last day of autumn, the evening of which is celebrated by Iranians as the ancient tradition of Yalda Night. Storytelling by parents and grandparents is a key element of the celebration.

IIDCYA Managing Director Fazel Nazari has submitted the proposal in a letter sent to the secretary of the council, Saiedreza Ameli. "This proposal has been made to observe Yalda Night and officially highlight the cultural heritage and tradition of storytelling during the night," the IIDCYA said in a press release.

The council has approved the proposal, which is being investigated at the General Culture Council of Iran for a final decision.

In the letter to the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, Nazari said, "This ancient tradition is a like a stronghold to protect the past and honors of the Islamic



A storyteller gives a performance for the Iranian children at the 22nd International Storytelling Festival in Tehran on December 18, 2019. (IIDCYA/Mahmud Rahimi)

Iran and a genre of art for the promotion and preservation of our cultural achievements."

He also pointed to the importance of storytelling in the Quran and Islamic culture, and

described the tradition as an instrument to protect the public culture against nonnative patterns, which are encouraged through the cultural invasion by "the enemies."

"Marking a certain day on the official calendar of the country as storytelling day can enrich Yalda Night and enhance the rituals of the night and promote family life and native lifestyle and stories," he noted.

He also expressed his hope that the General Culture Council of Iran would also approve the day, and Iranians would be able to celebrate the day intensely on the last day of autumn in the Iranian calendar year 1400.

Yalda Night, which falls on December 20 this year, is considered the longest night of the year when the ancient Iranians celebrated the birth of Mithra, the goddess of light. It is also known as Chelleh Night, which alludes to the first 40 days of winter, considered to be the harshest of the season.

People on this night are usually served with fresh fruits and a mixture of dry fruits, seeds and nuts in floral bowls.

Following a hot dinner, many people often recite poetry, narrate stories, chant, play musical instruments or just chat cozily until midnight or so.

Iranian artist to dedicate portraits of resistance martyrs to Hassan Nasrallah

TEHRAN — Iranian artist Mohammad Asadi Jozani has said that his portraits of ten resistance martyrs will be presented to Hezbollah's Secretary-General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon.

The portraits have been drawn in a single watercolor depicting Quds Forces chief Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani in the center.

A bust of Soleimani will also be given to Nasrallah along with the painting.

Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Asadi Jozani who was in the war fronts during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war was keen on paintings. He used to do paintings of the martyrs, and was known as the painter of the portraits of the martyrs during the war.

He later continued his studies and is a graduate of art. He next joined the Quds Force and while continuing his painting, he displayed his works in different countries such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq and Bosnia Herzegovina.

When he heard the news of the martyrdom of the Commander, he created a portrait of Soleimani.

"When I heard the news of his martyrdom, I immediately went to the Art Bureau and created his portrait.

I think in creating the portrait of a national figure like Martyr Soleimani who is also known in the world, we need to reflect his attitudes and character as well," he added.

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

In February, only one month after his martyrdom, the courtyard of Tehran's City Theater Complex hosted some open-air performances named "The Soldier" on the military life of the commander.

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.

In addition, the 16th Resistance International Film Festival, which will be held during December, will review



Mohammad Asadi Jozani is working on his watercolor depicting the portraits of ten resistance martyrs.

films on Commander Qassem Soleimani's role in awakening people in the region and around the world in a special section named "Prominent Resistance Martyr Section".

The Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality will also be releasing "The Soldier", a symphonic poem composed in memory of the Commander on his first martyrdom anniversary.

Arman Mehrian is the composer of the symphony, which is in its post-production stage.

Photo exhibit to explore erosion of ancient Iranian bas-reliefs

TEHRAN — An exhibition of photos depicting the erosion of a selection of ancient Iranian bas-reliefs will open on Monday at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

The three-day exhibition has been organized under the auspices of the ministry's Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics as part of their programs for National Research Week.

A total of 31 photos were taken by Nasser Mizbani as part of a study project entitled "Monitoring and Pathology of the Erosion of Iran's Rock Reliefs and Developing a Comprehensive Plan for Preservation and Restoration".



A poster for the exhibition of photographer Nasser Mizbani.

The project was implemented by Hamid Fadaei, an expert of the Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics few years ago.

The collection has been accumulated to be showcased for history scholars, archaeologists, students of related fields and Iran history enthusiasts, the ministry said in a press release.

Mizbani, 57, is an experimental photographer whose works mostly are centered on photography of cultural heritage sites during his career spanning over three decades.

In a statement for his showcase he wrote, "Stone inscriptions and rock reliefs as part of rock art have been the outcome of early human experiences in recording the events.

"This art is older than other art created over history. Creation of rock reliefs in Iran enjoys a longer history, and with a background of several thousand years shapes part of our written heritage.

"Some of these bas-reliefs have been a source of inspiration for the invention of writing, language, history, art and culture; therefore they are the key instrument of deciphering prehistoric periods.

"Due to the fact that a major portion of our written heritage, such as books and manuscripts, has been demolished during invasions by our neighboring nations over history, the large number of rock reliefs has played a key role in the preservation of culture and civilization in the country."

Mahmudi brothers' "Drowning in Holy Water" to stream online

TEHRAN — Tehran-based Afghan brothers Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi's acclaimed Iranian drama film "Drowning in Holy Water" will stream online on Filimo and Namava, the Iranian platforms providing video on demand.

Also known as "To Die in the Pure Water", the film is a co-production between Iran and Afghanistan.

Starring Ali Shadman, Neda Jebraeli, Matin Heidarnia and Sadaf Asgari, the film is about Rona and Hamed, two young Afghans who are in love with each other. Searching for a better life, they have decided to immigrate to Europe but they have to make a big decision to make it happen, a decision that relates to their religion and beliefs.

The film is due to hit silver screens after the pandemic. "A Few Cubic Meters of Love" was the Mahmudi brothers' first film, which was selected for screening in the official competition section of the Fajr Film Festival in 2014.

Their drama "Drowning in Holy Water" also competed in the official competition of the 38th edition of the Fajr



A scene from "Drowning in Holy Water" by Mahmudi brothers.

Festival in January 2020.

The film together with "The Slaughterhouse" by Ab-

bas Amini won the Kim Jiseok Award at the 25th Busan International Film Festival in October.

Mahmudi's "Rona, Azim's Mother" won the Ecumenical Film Prize at the 68th International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg in November 2019.

The film also received the Cultural Diversity Award under the Patronage of UNESCO at the 13th Asia Pacific Screen Awards in Brisbane, Australia also in November 2019.

The brothers are currently making a drama series on coronavirus, which will be released by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

The series has been titled "Empathizer" the story of the series is set in a hospital, narrating three parallel stories: one is about a nurse, one is about the son of a businessman, and one is about a young team of researchers.

The series will be reflecting the current conditions of society during the difficult days of coronavirus.

The 15-episode series will be aired during winter.

"Hell Flower" blooms at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Turkish author Alper Caniguz's "Hell Flower" ("Cehennem Cicegi") has recently been published by Negah Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Chakameh Rezvani.

Together with Alper Public, the unique hero of the book, readers embark on a new journey full of black humor in an atmosphere of all kinds of violence, in pursuit of broken lives, ash loves and many more.

As the hero struggles to uncover the truth behind the death of a child and an old love story this time, questioning the concept of

justice and befitting a detective, he asks, "What is the point of solving a murder if it does not further the understanding of humanity?"

"Hell Flower" is a magical adventure in which laughter and tears are intertwined by Alper Caniguz, who has gained a privileged place in literature with his first novels.

With gripping language, Caniguz tells a story in which a 5-year-old child stumbles upon him, a philosopher and a bouncy boy who comes and goes everywhere with the advantage of his age. The atmosphere of the neighborhood itself gains character in the narrative, which is extraordinarily

original. This very ambitious book skillfully blends the elements of crime, fantasy and humorous literature.

"I was born in Istanbul in 1969. I spent my childhood in various neighborhoods of Acibadem by telling my friends the stories I made up. In my remaining time, I was participating in neighborhood wars. I think the false and malignant nature of this is the result," Caniguz has written about himself.

"I entered Darussafaka in 1980. There I stopped telling my stories and started writing because too much talking might make you think you are weak. I was disappointed when I realized that the character named Franz Kafka

could fit it up as well as I did. But I recovered quickly," the author added.

"After all, I was younger and he was dead. My Psychology education at Bogazici University taught me that we are not much cleverer than Japanese quails. Anyway, when I was thirty, I was able to finish a novel that I had started: 'Sweet Dreams', psycho-absurd romantic comedy," he said.

"Nowadays I am working on my new novel with my daughter, Ada. Jules Verne, Michel Zevaco, Dostoevsky, Calvino, Nabokov and Fowles are great fabricators who have influenced me at different times in my life," he mentions.