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Iran masters technology to produce titanium metal

TEHRAN - Iran joins the group of nations able to produce titanium metal as for the first time a contract was inked for production of titanium iron bars with a large company that produces orthopedic implants.

The contract was signed through the efforts of experts from the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

The first samples of titanium ingots produced with high standard had passed

all quality stages.

Th AEOI said this is another golden page in a series of successes by Iranian scientists majoring in nuclear industry.

Because of its strength, light weight and corrosion resistance, the metal is highly prized in aircraft manufacturing, with further applications in military, aerospace, marine industries, medial industry, including dental implants.

Iraq settles part of Iran energy dues

TEHRAN – The Deputy Head of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said on Friday that the Arab country has started repaying its energy debts to Iran and part of the dues has been settled.

“This achievement is the result of diplomacy and pursuit of the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the energy minister and the head of the Judiciary,” Hamid Hosseini told IRNA.

According to Hosseini, a part of the

mentioned resources will be used to import basic goods into the country.

In this regard, a corn cargo was recently imported into the country through Iraq which was paid for by the mentioned funds, Hosseini said. Iraq owes Iran over \$6 billion for electricity and gas imports from the Islamic Republic, of which \$3 billion is claimed to be blocked and inaccessible in the Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI).

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Charity foundation opens 100 eco-schools, 350 mosques



© Mehr / Marvam Kamyab

TEHRAN – Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated to Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, inaugurated 100 nature-friendly schools, 350 mosques, and cultural centers across the country on Saturday.

Eco-schools, also known as green schools, bring a range of benefits, including waste management, waste reduction, biodiversity, energy, water, transport, health, global sustainability, healthy nutrition, citizenship, and climate change. Countries considering their own socioeconomic and cultural characteristics must be able to

adapt these criteria into their own particular circumstances. The materials used in these schools are nature-friendly, and each is built in four days and costs about 40 percent lower than the regular schools.

Safety against earthquakes of up to magnitude 8, insulation against cold, heat, and humidity, compatible with environmental conditions, minimum construction time, portability, and high quality are among the features of these schools, according to IRNA.

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Unique trees of Iran: important plant genetic resources

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI

Trees are one of the most important plant genetic resources, in addition to the indescribable beauty they give to natural landscapes. Iran is also rich with different species of trees, but the oldest of which are cypress and sycamore.

The oldest and most famous trees in Iran are aging a thousand or over. Of course, there are no reliable sources about the ancient trees of Iran. About 2,000 old trees have so far been identified in Iran, 1,000 of which are 300-3,000 years old.

Older trees can contribute to historiography and ecology studies of the region because as you know the number of tree rings indicate its age; the width of each circle indicates what its correspondent year had been concerning prolonged shortages in the water supply, [whether atmospheric, surface water or ground water].

Thick and thin circles respectively imply a wet or a drought year. As a result, the periods of drought and abundance can be studied from a historical point of view.

4000-year-old cypress in Abarkouh

A 4000-year-old cypress is situated next to a wall in southern parts of Abarkouh, some 140 kilometers west of the ancient city of Yazd and it is 1500 meters above sea level. Scientists have estimated that the tree dates back to 4000 years ago which is known as the oldest living being in the country.

It is 25 meters high. Abarkouh Cypress is a symbol of life and elegance in the region, and one of the most exotic wonders of the world. After thousands of years, it is still green and healthy.

In Abarkouh the cypress is called Zoroastrian cypress as well. It has been said in historical myth that the tree was planted by the Iranian prophet Zoroaster thus adding to the importance, beauty, and holiness of the tree.

In antiquities such as the period of the Achaemenid empire carvings of cypress symbolize the tree.

Venetian merchant and explorer Marco Polo described the tree as one of the most stunning cypress trees he had ever seen in Iran.

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Lion and rhino fossils discovered in Neanderthal cave western Iran

TEHRAN – Fossils of a rhino and a lion as well as remnants of Neanderthal tools have been discovered in Wezmeh cave, western Iran.

Fereidoun Biglari, a senior Iranian archaeologist who doubles as the cultural deputy of the National Museum of Iran, explained the discoveries during the 18th Annual Symposium on the Iranian Archaeology, according to the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism (RICHT).

Biglari also shed a new light on the history of excavations in the cave, which was carried out under the supervision of Kamyar Abdi in 2001, and discussed the importance of animal and human remains found in this cave, which had been studied by Marjan Mashkour and her colleagues as well.

According to Mashkour, an archaeozoologist with Paris' National Museum of Natural History and co-director of this research, in

addition to the remains of predators such as bears, spotted hyenas, wolves, foxes, as well as herbivores such as aurochs, wild horses, and red deer, the remains of two extinct species, the lion and the rhino, have been found.

These two species lived in the nearby Islamabad plain during the Late Pleistocene, from 70,000 years ago until when they were extinct in the late Ice Age. She added these finds have provided new information about the biodiversity of the central-western Zagros Mountains in the late Ice Age.

Biglari further referred to the objectives of field research conducted in the cave and its vicinity in the fall of 2019, which included excavation in the rear of the cave, and archaeological survey around the cave within a radius of several kilometers.

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U.S. protests: Trump supporters clash with ANTIFA in Manhattan

Supporters of former U.S. President Donald Trump marched down Fifth Avenue in Manhattan on Friday as they carried enormous banners that read 'Trump 2024'.

The event was billed as a 'Trump Save America Flag Unfurling' and featured all sort of Trump signage including one banner that depicted House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as a demon.

Towards the end of the event, the Trump marchers clashed with some angry New Yorkers and which the Right Side Broadcasting Network claimed was a group of 'Antifa' and Black Lives Matter activists, leading to the arrest of six people.

Trump publicly teased at the Conservative Political Action Conference last Sunday the idea that he is thinking of making another bid for the presidency in 2024.

The former president reeled off a list of his accomplishments during his term in the White House while repeating his false claim that he

won the 2020 election adding, 'Who knows? I may even decide to beat them a third time.'

Trump is said to be telling allies that he is strongly considering another run in 2024.

He said to be discussing alternative running mates to former Vice President Mike Pence as he takes stock of who he believes stood with him at the end of his term and who didn't, according to Bloomberg.

Trump and Pence appeared to fall out toward the end of their term after the vice president refused to get behind the president's plan to overturn the 2020 election result.

Trump lashed out at Pence on social media for not trying to block the certification of the election results in Congress on January 6, an act that Pence had no constitutional authority to do.

The pro-Trump mob that then stormed the Capitol chanted that they wanted to execute Pence and came within seconds of him and his family. A total of five people died in the riot.

Persian tradition played central role in Islamic mysticism: Duke professor

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - A professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University says that the Persian tradition played a pivotal role in development of mysticism (Erfan) in the Muslim world.

“The Persian tradition as being a central one for understanding Mysticism in the ‘Mashreq’ (the Eastern half of the Muslim majority world, more or less from Balkans to Bengal),” Omid Safi tells the Tehran Times.

Philosophically speaking, mysticism (erfan - gnosis) belongs to the category of cognition, but not cognition in the ordinary sense. Not a common, day-to-day consciousness of the external world, but knowledge of a world beyond the superficial appearances. Not knowledge based on belief or reason, but one founded on direct, intuitive, instinctive perceptions.

In other words, an inspired form of insight or an esoteric and personal knowledge flowing

from within. Religion or philosophy probably used this intuitive method of cognition more than common sense.

The professor from Duke University also says, “One can mention how the Mughal Empire was Persian speaking in its court, how Persian was so common in the Ottoman court, how Samarqand and Bukhara and Herat were major Persian metropolises.”

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There is rising tendency to view immigrants as threat, scholar says

BY M.A. SAKI

TEHRAN – A reader in international relations and human rights at Regent's University London says there is an escalating tendency in Europe to deny rights of immigrants.

“There is a rising tendency to deny this right to members of minority groups,” Neven Andjelic tells the Tehran Times.

“Immigration is seen as a threat to their identity, and they discriminate against immigrants. Even when born in these countries, Muslims are often perceived as immigrants, and this is where discrimination come,” Andjelic, also a visiting professor at the University of Bologna, adds.

Over the past few years, unprecedented numbers of Muslim immigrants have left their countries to come to Europe, fleeing the carnage in West Asia and North Africa. They join previous waves of Muslim immigrants, many of whom who are not integrating well.

However, Andjelic believes that “the majority of the population, however, do not support this kind of discrimination.”

Following is the text of the interview:

Since you have a close experience of the Balkan wars, how do you describe the Srebrenica massacre?

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice stated a genocide in Srebrenica in 1995. Leading academic experts refer to the massacre as genocide.

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Funeral procession held for martyr pilot Birjand Bik-Mohammadi

A funeral procession was held on Saturday for Birjand Bik-Mohammadi, a pilot who was martyred in May 1988 during Iraq's war against Iran. The procession, attended by Air Force Commander Aziz Nasirzadeh, a number of other military commanders, and his family, was held at Shahid Lashgari Airbase in Tehran. The remains of Bik-Mohammadi, who was on the unforgettable list of the martyred pilots, were uncovered recently in Iraq.

International Crisis Group: Avoid race between “sanctions and centrifuges”

By Azin Sahabi

TEHRAN — Since Joe Biden has arrived at the White House, his pledge to rejoin the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has been quite controversial. Many analysts from various think tanks have focused on the issue from different perspectives.

Among the American think tanks which host prominent scholars, publishes reports, and opinions, it is worth mentioning to cite analysis given by the International Crisis Group (ICG), also known as the Crisis Group.



In one of its latest papers, ICG has argued that Trump's sanctions are still in place and Tehran and Washington, both reluctant to make the first move, are just go around in circles.

In the current situation, the think tank argues that the EU should appear active to break this stalemate. The think tank believes in “quiet, direct negotiations” as the best solution to break the diplomatic impasse. ICG, which perceives the EU as the most effective mediator between the two capitals, points out that by encouraging both sides to make initial good-will gestures, the bloc can pave the way for direct multilateral talks.

In an analysis released on 4 March, ICG warns that the more Iran and the U.S. postpone the nuclear negotiations, the more the JCOPA will be at grave risk of collapse.

The authors underline that after sitting at the table as the initial critical move, all sides can focus on striking an interim agreement to prevent the standoff from worsening more. The next step, as ICG suggests, can be developing an agreement to bring Tehran and Washington back into compliance with the initial 2015 deal in a synchronized manner.

As expected, the think tank accuses Iran of seeking nuclear weapons and describes Tehran's remedial nuclear actions in response to Trump's economic siege as a “violation” of the deal.

Whereas, Tehran's recent steps are in accordance to paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which provides one side an opportunity to suspend compliance to the deal, in a condition of the other party's noncommitment. In this context, the institute claims: “As a result, the ‘breakout time’ that Iran would need to produce a bomb's worth of fissile material has dropped from a year to around three months.”

While Biden has repeatedly expressed his inclination to revive the JCPOA, his apparent “goodwill” to salvage the JCPOA has been overshadowed by a series of public feuds. For instance, in his first sit-down interview since ascending to the presidency, Biden stressed that unless Tehran stops enriching uranium, the Oval Office would not offer any sanctions relief.

In other words, notwithstanding his rhetoric denouncing the previous president's policy towards the Iran nuclear deal, Biden's practice is indicative of a blame game based on double standards.

Actually, Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 deal in 2018 accompanied by a renewed architecture of sanctions was the original sin of the status quo. Surprisingly, Biden has adopted an approach which is fundamentally similar to the one his predecessor followed.

In this context, ICG argues that given the unrealistic conditions both capitals have set for the other side to embark on the diplomatic process, Iran and the U.S. are overplaying their hands just to intensify the current impasse. Thus, the think tank describes the fundamental dynamics between Tehran and Washington as “only marginally different from those before 20 January.”

ICG blames the E3 (France, the UK, and Germany) that instead of encouraging Iran and the U.S. to live up to their commitment under the 2015 deal, are just “frittering away the political capital they accumulated through their strong support for the deal during the Trump presidency.”

To teach the ropes of how to step out the current political standoff, the think tank suggests: “An immediate step out of the stalemate could be an agreement on an initial exchange of gestures that could break the deadlock.”

ICG highlights that “either quiet U.S.-Iran discussions or third-party mediation” is required for brokering such an agreement and sheds light on the EU as the coordinator for the implementation of the JCPOA. The Brussels-based think tank believes that convening an informal meeting between American and Iranian sides is an initial step forward that can serve as a milestone in Tehran-Washington relations under Biden in terms of the JCPOA. In order to make such a session plausible, the EU can indirectly orchestrate initial steps, the think tank adds.

ICG describes Iran's legal and formally declared nuclear activities as “breaches” of the JCPOA and proposes some recommendation “to prevent further worsening of the situation.” In this regard, the think tank emphasizes that “once at the table, the parties should negotiate an interim arrangement followed by a timetable for simultaneously reversing Iran's nuclear breaches and U.S. sanctions.”

According to the analysis, the initial steps might include “the U.S. facilitating Iran's access to some of its frozen assets for humanitarian imports in return for Iran halting one of the proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities it is now pursuing.”

ICG mentions that Iran's presidential election campaign will start in mid-April and writes: “While it is possible to roll back Iran's nuclear program amid the country's presidential campaign.”

It argues should the critics of restoring the nuclear deal in Iran win a majority vote by the time a new Iranian president comes to the office, negotiations will be more difficult. ICG warns that in such a condition “the kind of brinkmanship that could jeopardize what remains of the nuclear deal and further inflame regional tensions” would be more likely to come up.

Therefore, the International Crisis Group emphasizes that “time is of the essence” so the parties should “build significant momentum” to avoid the race between “sanctions and centrifuges.”

Iranian politician: General Soleimani made Iraq safe for Pope visit

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker for international affairs, says Pope Francis would not have been able to visit Iraq safely if it had not been for the sacrifices of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and his companions in the fight against ISIS, according to Press TV.

The Pope's safe visit to Baghdad would never have happened “had it not been for the significant self-sacrifices of [Iraqi commander] Abu Mahdi Muhandis, Lieutenant General Soleimani and those who were martyred in the fight against terrorism and Daesh in Iraq and the broader region,” he wrote in a tweet on Friday.

General Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and Muhandis, the deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were assassinated early last year in a U.S. drone strike ordered by former American president Donald Trump.

The two commanders enjoyed enormous



popularity not just in Iran and Iraq but in the entire West Asia and beyond for the major role they played in the successful battles that ultimately put an end to the territorial rule of ISIS, the world's most

notorious terror group.

Amir-Abdollahian further denounced Washington's interventionist policies in Iraq and West Asia, which he blamed as the root cause of instability there.

“America's meddling and the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq and [elsewhere] in the region continue to be a source of instability,” he remarked.

Over three years into the fall of the ISIS in Iraq and more than a year after the brutal American murder, Pope Francis on Friday arrived at Baghdad airport, as the first head of the Roman Catholic Church to visit the West Asian country.

He told reporters on his plane that he felt duty-bound to make the “emblematic” trip because the country “has been martyred for so many years.”

In a speech after being welcomed by Iraqi President Barham Salih, the pontiff called for an end to violence and extremism.

“May the clash of arms be silenced...may there be an end to acts of violence and extremism,” he said.

He also criticized foreign meddling that have destabilized Iraq and the region and hit ordinary people the hardest.

Pope Francis also met top Shia Muslim cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, in Najaf.

Irish foreign minister set to meet Iranian president to discuss JCPOA

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Simon Coveney, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, is travelling to Tehran on Saturday to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani for discussions on the stalled nuclear deal between Iran and the EU and the countries of the UN Security Council, according to the Irish Times.

The minister will discuss the Iran nuclear deal as part of Ireland's role on the UN Security Council, the Irish Times wrote.

The visit, which is related to Ireland's Security Council role, comes amid signs that the Iran nuclear deal (known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA), which stalled after it was repudiated by former U.S. president Donald Trump, could be revived under the Biden administration.

The trip comes days after the government announced that it will reopen Ireland's embassy in Tehran and will see Coveney discuss wider Middle East (West Asia) issues with Rouhani and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

But officials said the main focus would be on the stalled

nuclear deal. Concluded in 2015 between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council – the U.S., UK, China, Russia and France – plus Germany and the EU, the deal saw Iran agree to inspections to verify its nuclear program was purely for peaceful purposes in return for a removal of sanctions against the country.

The deal impeded in recent years after the U.S. walked away and reinstated sanctions.

However, Biden has indicated his desire to restart the deal and in recent days there have been indications that informal talks could begin next month.

One of Ireland's roles on the Security Council is as “facilitator” for the resolution, which approved the nuclear deal in 2015, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

In a statement issued on Friday night, Coveney noted, “Ireland is a strong supporter of the JCPOA. In our role as facilitator, Ireland is keen to maintain a close dialogue with all actors, and encourage all parties to return to full compliance with the agreement.”

“The visit will also be a valuable opportunity to discuss



the JCPOA, along with other key issues in the Middle East (West Asia), many of which feature on the agenda of the Security Council,” he added.

“This visit also comes at an important moment in our bilateral relationship, following the decision of the Government this week to designate a Chargé d'Affaires to Tehran, and to work towards the re-establishment of an Irish Embassy in Tehran by 2023,” he remarked.

Tehran dismisses Arab League's allegations regarding Iranian islands

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Saeed Khatibzadeh, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, on Friday rejected as groundless the accusations that four Arab League states have raised against the Iranian-owned islands in the Persian Gulf.

“It is regrettable that some Arab countries are seeking to divert people's attention from their wicked and destructive moves by arousing fictitious animosity instead of taking care of the key issues that the Arab world is facing, including attempts to pave the way for the Israeli regime's presence in the region, disregard for the



cause of Palestine, perpetuation of the cruel war against Arab people of Yemen and creation of the worst humanitarian

disaster in the contemporary era, and years-long support for terrorism and terror groups,” Khatibzadeh said in a statement, according to Tasnim.

“Countries whose destructive aggression over the past six years has not only destroyed basic infrastructure in Yemen, but also caused hunger, disease, displacement and poverty among millions of people, and who have the blood of innocent people on their hands, are trying to evade responsibility for these crimes by leveling baseless charges,” he added.

“The rehash of futile claims about the three Iranian islands has had, and will have no bearing on the existing historical,

geographical and historical realities, and these islands are an integral part of the Iranian territory,” Khatibzadeh underlined.

He then emphasized Iran's policy of good neighborliness and mutual respect for neighboring countries as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of others, according to the Foreign Ministry's website.

The spokesman expressed hope the Arab League and some regional countries would change their approach to dialogue and regional cooperation instead of issuing hollow and provocative statements which only result in the perpetuation of the current destructive trend.

Ulyanov describes U.S. readiness to rejoin JCPOA as a pragmatic move

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations, including the IAEA, in Vienna, has said the United States' willingness to return to the original Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, known as the Iran nuclear deal), is a pragmatic and right approach, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported on Friday.

“Americans have shown a very responsible approach in this regard. They are ready at this stage to discuss the return to what it was. It is rational, pragmatic and correct,” Ulyanov noted.

Ulyanov also said “the ambitions” of Iran and the U.S. are alarming.

“In this situation, we see that either Tehran or Washington starts saying that the other side must make the first step. It is a road to nowhere. The only way to make progress is to synchronize practical steps so that nobody could assume they have lost face,” he remarked.

The diplomat pointed out that the synchronization and a certain roadmap with step-by-step instructions were the only way to success.

The current parties to the Iran nuclear deal and the United States are quite likely to hold an informal meeting, but certain issues should be clarified, Ulyanov stressed.

“It is obvious that they should start as soon as possible,” he said when asked when talks on a U.S. return to the Iran nuclear deal would begin.

“Perhaps, an informal meeting of the current parties to the deal and the United States is needed to start talks. In principle, it is quite likely, but some details need to be clarified, as the issue is very sensitive, especially for Iran,” Ulyanov noted.

According to the Russian diplomat, it has become possible to focus on the diplomatic track. He estimated chances for negotiation as very high.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



This indicates Iran's recognition of religious rights of Sunni Muslims.

Did you know that in the Islamic Republic of Iran, just like Shiah seminary students and scholars, tens of thousands of Sunni seminary students and scholars along with their families receive support from the Seminary Service Center?



Futile rhetoric

POLITICAL
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TEHRAN — Israeli officials have ramped up their belligerent rhetoric against Iran in a concerted effort to obstruct any détente between Iran and the West.

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz has recently issued threats against Iran in what appeared to be a message to both Tehran and Washington that Israeli concerns about the 2015 nuclear deal — formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — should be taken into account in any future nuclear talks, otherwise Israel would “independently” make reckless moves.

“If the world stops them before, it’s very much good. But if not, we must stand independently and we must defend ourselves by ourselves,” Gantz told Fox News.

He also echoed threats issued by top Israeli general Aviv Kochavi that Israeli armed forces could attack targets inside Iran. The Israeli military is updating plans to strike Iranian nuclear sites and is prepared to act independently, Gantz said, claiming that Israel has identified numerous targets inside Iran that would hurt its ability to develop a nuclear bomb.

Following Biden’s win in the United States presidential election, Kochavi, chief of staff of Israel’s armed forces, exactly issued the same threat against Iran while warning Biden against rejoining the JCPOA. In a rare comment on American foreign policy, Kochavi warned Biden against rejoining the nuclear deal and even threatened Iran with military action.

“With the changing of the administration in the United States, the Iranians have said they want to return to the previous agreement. I want to state my position, the position that I give to all my colleagues when I meet them around the world: Returning to the 2015 nuclear agreement or even to an agreement that is similar but with a few improvements is a bad thing, and it is not the right thing to



do,” Kochavi said.

The Israeli general went so far as to say that he ordered Israel’s army to prepare offensive options against Iran.

“I have instructed the IDF to prepare several operational plans in addition to existing ones, which we will develop throughout the coming year. The power to initiate them lies with the political echelon. However, the offensive options need to be prepared, ready, and on the table,” Kochavi said in remarks delivered at the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies 14th Annual International Conference.

Gantz reiterated these threats and even threatened to strike civilian areas in southern Lebanon in the future confrontation with Hezbollah.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also issued similar threats, accusing Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons and threatening to attack Iran.

These threats are nothing new. These days, the Israelis see Iran’s footprint in everything including in an oil spill off Israel’s coast. Last

week, Environmental Protection Minister Gila Gamliel accused Iran of orchestrating an environmental attack on Israel by dumping oil off Israel’s coast, a strange accusation that even the Israelis denounced as being harmful to Israeli interests.

“As last month’s oil spill continues to do damage to Israel’s territorial waters and beaches, Environmental Protection Minister Gila Gamliel is doing damage to herself, to the prime minister and to Israel’s efforts to contain Iran, with her ongoing accusations that Tehran deliberately engineered the incident,” The Times of Israel wrote on Friday.

In addition, some Israeli politicians even questioned Gantz and Netanyahu’s threats against Iran as an election ploy aimed at rallying Israelis’ vote behind them.

On Friday, Israel’s former defense minister Avigdor Liberman said in a tweet that “the belligerent remarks of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense against Iran are nothing more than a struggle to gain more votes.”

However, these remarks elicited a strong response from Iran, which has long said that

it would firmly respond to any Israeli aggression against it.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly warns against any adventurism by Israeli regime and reserves its inherent right to self-defense to decisively respond to any threat or wrongful act perpetrated by this regime,” Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, told the UN nuclear watchdog’s board of governors on Friday.

Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi also warned against aggression.

In a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Friday, Takht Ravanchi warned of consequences of any possible miscalculated measure by Israel over an explosion that damaged an Israeli ship in the Sea of Oman last week, according to Press TV.

The letter came a week after an Israeli-owned cargo ship said it had been crippled by a suspected blast while it was in the Sea of Oman, claiming that it suffered holes in both sides of its hull.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hastily accused Iran of attacking the ship. Iran categorically rejected the charge.

“The incident has all the characteristics of a complicated false flag operation carried out by actors in order to pursue their malign policies and to advance their illegitimate objectives,” wrote Takht-Ravanchi in his letter to the UN.

Israel is worried and furious because it failed to achieve its goal of pitting the U.S. against Iran. Tel Aviv is now repeating the same old trick of “appease me or I will...” vis a vis Iran. Under Obama, Israel threatened to attack Iran in a bid to prevent Washington from signing a deal with Iran. Now it’s doing the same. But this time Israel will fail too. Because it sets unreasonable conditions for the United State which itself knows better than others that they are not feasible.

Israel must be held accountable for assassinating Iranian nuclear scientist: ambassador

Gharibabadi says Fakhrizadeh assassination will not go unanswered

POLITICAL
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TEHRAN — There is evidence suggesting that Israel was behind the assassination of top Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and that Israel should be held accountable for the crime, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, has said.

Addressing the virtual meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Friday, Gharibabadi said while Iran remains firmly committed to pursuing a peaceful nuclear program, another Iranian nuclear scientist was assassinated.

“While the Islamic Republic of Iran is strongly committed to pursuing a peaceful nuclear program, another Iranian nuclear scientist was assassinated. There are clear evidences showing that the Israeli regime is behind the heinous assassination of Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, and should be held accountable for such an inhumane crime,” Gharibabadi said, adding, “Considering the dire implications of such horrific act and dangerous provocations on international peace and security and that terrorism as a serious challenge to the international community requires collective responses, we call upon Member States and the Agency to uphold their obligations under international law in fighting terrorism and condemn such inhumane act in the strongest terms. It also should be reminded that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not leave such criminal acts unanswered.”

The ambassador pointed to the Israeli belligerent rhetoric against Iran, denouncing the Israeli bellicosity as a violation of the UN Charter.

“The Israeli regime has recently not only intensified its provocative and warmongering statements against the Islamic Republic of Iran, but also been actively planning to act upon its belligerent threats. During the past 35 days, three Israeli regime’s officials have threatened to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities. Iran’s positions over such threats have been well recorded in the history of the Agency and the United Nations. These threats are in gross violation of Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations which necessitates an appropriate response from the international community,” Gharibabadi stated.

He noted, “Furthermore, the practice of international organizations has shown that attack or threat of attack is a clear violation of International Law. In its resolutions, the UNGA clearly stated that such military attack ‘constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations’. On the other hand, the IAEA in several decisions and resolutions approved by the General Conference stated that any armed attack on and threat against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, constitutes a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and the Statute of the Agency. The General Conference also emphasized that all armed attacks against nuclear installations devoted to peaceful purposes should be explicitly prohibited.”

Gharibabadi pointed to a resolution dating back to 1990 that stipulates that attacking a safeguarded nuclear facility would invite intervention by the UN Security Council.

“The General Conference in its resolution 533 of 21 September 1990 recognized that ‘An armed attack on a safe-



guarded nuclear facility, in operation or under construction, would create a situation in which the United Nations Security Council would have to act immediately in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter”, the ambassador continued.

He stated, “In view of the past and present Israeli terrorist behavior, these statements and threats constitute matters of extreme gravity that require urgent and resolute response on the part of the Agency. At the very least, the Agency should react to these threats, by unequivocally condemning them and demanding that the said regime abandon its policy of flouting international law and the UN Charter. The Islamic Republic of Iran looks forward to effective preventive measures being taken by the Agency and its peace-seeking Member States against such ruthless remarks. The responsibility for any failure in this respect will lie solely with the Agency and others who indirectly render their support by closing their eyes on these remarks.”

Warning against any Israeli attack, Gharibabadi said Iran would decisively respond to such an attack.

“At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly warns against any adventurism by Israeli regime and reserves its inherent right to self-defense to decisively respond to any threat or wrongful act perpetrated by this regime,” the ambassador asserted.

Gharibabadi also addressed the situation around the 2015 nuclear deal - formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) —, warning that the nuclear deal is now at a critical juncture.

“We are now at a critical juncture in relations with the JCPOA. During the past five years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has proven to be a responsible player by preserving the JCPOA despite all difficulties due to the U.S. withdrawal from the deal. In such circumstances the EU/E3, apart from issuing numerous political statements in support of the deal, failed to comply with their commitments under the JCPOA and remained inactive,” Gharibabadi pointed out.

According to Gharibabadi, the nuclear steps that Iran has taken since the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA were remedial and aimed to restore balance to the JCPOA.

“To bring back the lost balance to the deal, Iran has taken

a series of remedial measures, but has always stressed the reversibility of all its measures when all participants return to full implementation of their commitments therein.”

He explained in detail the logic behind the Iranian parliament passing a nuclear law obligating the government of Hassan Rouhani to stop all verification and monitoring activities beyond Iran’s Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA.

“Given the circumstances, on 2nd December 2020, after about two and a half years of U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and lack of practical actions by the E3/EU in meeting their commitments, Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran passed a law entitled ‘Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect Iranian Nation’s Interests’, Gharibabadi said, adding, “Article 6 of this law requires the Government, in case of the continuation of non-compliance of the participants of the deal with their commitments regarding the total normalization of the banking relations and removal of all barriers on the export of oil and oil derivatives and return of revenues in two months after the entry into force of the law, to stop the implementation of all verification and monitoring activities beyond Iran’s Safeguards Agreement concluded with the IAEA (CSA), including the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol (AP).”

He pointed to the recent deal Iran struck with IAEA chief Rafael Grossi, which ensures the necessary cooperation between Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog for a period of three months.

Gharibabadi said the deal stipulates that for up to 3 months, Iran will maintain the records of the stored data by monitoring equipment and information about some activities as specified in the Annex of the deal. “Review by the Agency of this data will take place once and if Iran decides, after ceasing all sanctions, to resume its implementation of the relevant nuclear-related commitments, otherwise all collected data will be erased at the end of the third month,” the ambassador said.

He described the deal as a goodwill gesture from Iran that will boost the opportunity envisioned in the nuclear law.

“Two-month opportunity envisioned in the Parliament’s law was augmented by this good-will based mutual understanding for up to three more months. Iran, once again, has opened a new window of opportunity, and now the burden of proof is on others to seize it by practically implementing their commitments,” Gharibabadi pointed out.

According to the ambassador, the Biden administration has not yet taken practical steps to change the previous administration’s policy against Iran despite the fact that this policy has failed.

“While the previous U.S. Administration failed in pursuing maximum pressure policy, the new U.S. administration has yet to take practical measures to alter the path. As our Supreme Leader declared, we will look at the other participants’ deeds not words, and after corroboration of their actions we will also act accordingly and proportionally,” Gharibabadi noted.

He added, “If the sanctions are all removed at once, we are ready to come back to full implementation at once. It was not Iran who left the negotiating table of the Joint Commission and it is upon those who want to rejoin around the table to take proper practical steps to earn it.”

He also warned about any politically motivated move in the current situation given the ongoing cooperation between Iran and the IAEA, underlining that such a move would negatively affect the current atmosphere.

“In view of the ongoing and constructive cooperation between Iran and the Agency, any politically motivated move and abusing the Agency for political bargaining chip and misleading it is absolutely destructive,” Gharibabadi remarked.

S P O R T S

IPL: Sepahan thrash Aluminum, Persepolis held by Sanat Naft

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Sepahan battered Aluminum 6-1 in Matchday 17 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Saturday.

In the match held in Arak, Mohammad Mohebbi opened the scoring for the visiting team after 15 minutes and Sajad Shahbazzadeh made it 2-0 in the 27th minute. Mehdi Hosseini pulled a goal back before the halftime. Aluminum were reduced to 10 men in the 48th minute after Mohammad Iranpourian received his second yellow card. Mohammadreza Khlatabari scored Sepahan’s third goal in the 49th minute and Shahbazzadeh was on target on hour mark. Danial Esmailifar also scored two late goals for the Isfahan based football team.

Mehdi Hosseini scored the only goal of Aluminum.



In Abadan, IPL leaders Persepolis were heled to a goalless draw against Sanat Naft.

Shahr Khodro beat Paykan 2-0 in Mashhad thanks to goals from Mehrdad Bayrami and Ahmad Aljabouri.

Saipa played out a goalless draw against Naft Masjed Soleyman and Gol Gohar Sirjan and Mes Rafsanjan shared the spoils in a 0-0 draw.

Tractor also defeated Nassaji courtesy of goals from Mohammad Abbaszadeh and Meysam Teymouri. Mahmoud Ghaed Rahmati also was on target for the visiting team.

Zob Ahan defeated rock-bottom Machine Sazi 2- in Isfahan. Mojtaba Haghdoust and Farshad Mohammadi Mehr scored for the hosts.

And Esteghlal beat Foolad 1-0 in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium. Arsalan Motahari scored the only goal of the match from the penalty spot in the 82nd minute.

Persepolis remain top of the table ahead of Sepahan due to superior goal difference.

Allahyar voted UPL Best player of the week & month

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — The Ukrainian Premier League, after interviewing the experts who are members of the voting council, identified the brightest football player in the 16th round of the Favbet League.

As a result of the voting, Zorya striker Allahyar won ahead of Vladislav Kulach (Vorskla), Mykola Kukharevych (Rukh), and teammate Nikola Vasyly!

The Iranian forward has claimed two goals and two assists in the current season.

Allahyar’s crucial assist against league leaders Shakhtar Donetsk also drew high praise due to his commanding run into the opponent’s half.

In addition, the UPL summed up the voting results for the title of the best player for the month of February.

According to the results of the voting, the forward of Luhansk won 36% of the votes. The second place went to Dynamo Viktor Tsygankov (16%), and the third – to Andriy Totovytsky from “Desna” (15%).

A difficult task ahead of Esteghlal

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team will continue the rest of the Iran Professional league (IPL) season with Farhad Majidi but the team will have a difficult task to end their eight-year title drought.

Majidi returned to the club after six months with the aim of winning the title but Esteghlal will have to compete with heavyweights Persepolis and Sepahan to seize the title.

Esteghlal suffer the structural problems and first need to reform them to earn achievement.

The Blues are facing technical problems in terms of players and playing system, as well as financial difficulties.

Esteghlal have to focus on upcoming season since the short-term plans will never work. The team deserve more credit because of their millions of fans.

The Iranian team need more time to back on the way but the continuous changes have distracted their concentration over the past years. They have to set up a four-year plan to return to their heydays.

First, Majidi must find the new players for the new season in all lines. Esteghlal should also lift the financial problems.

Esteghlal, as one of the most popular Iranian teams, can hit the road in the upcoming years if they change their previous ways. But it doesn’t seem the team can win the title in the current season.

The team finished third in the halfway season of Iran Professional League under coaching of Mahmoud Fekri. Esteghlal will have to participate at AFC Champions League and Hazfi Cup as well.

Iran judo chief Miresmaeili hospitalized after heart attack

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Head of Iran judo federation Arash Miresmaeili has been hospitalized after suffering a heart attack on Saturday.

Miresmaeili was rushed to the hospital following the heart attack.

He has been under pressure over the past years due to Iran’s matter at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

CAS, on Monday, lifted the indefinite suspension imposed on the Iran Judo Federation for pressuring one of their fighters not to face an Israeli athlete.

“During the past 35 days, three Israeli regime’s officials have threatened to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities. Iran’s positions over such threats have been well recorded in the history of the Agency and the United Nations. These threats are in gross violation of Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations which necessitates an appropriate response from the international community.”

TEDPIX loses 8,000 points on Saturday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 8,172 points to 1.169 million on Saturday (first day of Iranian calendar week). Over 3.058 billion securities worth 34.295 trillion rials (about \$816.5 million) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.

The first market's index fell 7,405 points, and the second market's index dropped 11,611 points. TEDPIX dropped 2.3 percent during the past Iranian calendar week. The index closed at 1.177 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week). During the past week, the indices of Social Security Investment Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Bou Ali Sina Petrochemical Company (BSPC), and Amin Investment Bank were the most widely followed indices. TEDPIX had also dropped 2.7 percent in the week ended on February 24. Market analyst Amir-Ali Amir-Baqeri has recently told IRNA that Iranian stock market is moving in the right direction and will reach stability in the near future. "Market authorities are currently using asymmetric fluctuations to improve the market situation, but we must move in a direction where there is no volatility in the market," Amir-Baqeri said.

Projects worth over \$170m to be inaugurated in FTZs in 2 weeks

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The deputy secretary-general of Iranian Free Zones High Council for economic affairs said that President Hassan Rouhani will inaugurate 50 projects worth 7.15 trillion rials (about \$170.23 million) in the country's seven major free trade zones (FTZs) by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20). Ahmad Jamali said that these projects are some major plans to be inaugurated by the president, while some small units will be also inaugurated by the local officials in the FTZs and special economic zones. President Hassan Rouhani has inaugurated 61 projects worth 92 trillion rials (about \$2.19 billion) in some of the free trade zones and special economic zones of the country through video conference in mid-January. The projects were put into operation in the production, industry, trade, and infrastructure sectors of the zones in Hormozgan, Gilan, Bushehr, Qom, East Azarbaijan, and Markazi provinces, creating jobs for 3,200 persons. Implementation of development projects in these areas shows the serious efforts and determination of the government to prosper the business environment within the framework of the policies of the resistance economy and achieve the goals of the surge in production this year, as well as increase export capacity, foreign currency earnings and employment.



The data released by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs show that 89.843 trillion rials (about \$2.139 billion) of domestic investment has been made in Iran's special economic zones during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), which has been 173 percent more than the figure of its preceding year. The development of free trade zones and special economic zones through production, exports and investment is one of the goals of creating these zones in the country. To achieve this target, different measures were taken in the past year, such as attracting innovative and technological units to these areas, and introducing investment opportunities and advantages in these zones. The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports. The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the Persian Gulf islands of Kish and Qeshm. Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

Considering the important role that the free trade zones play in promoting the country's export and employment, Iran is seriously pursuing the development of its existing zones and establishment of new zones as well. Back in September 2020, Jamali had announced that about 600 development projects worth over 550 trillion rials (about \$13.095 billion) will be implemented in the country's free trade zones and special economic zones by the end of the current government's incumbency (August 2021).

The official also said that the mentioned projects will create jobs for 102,000 people, ILNA reported. The previous secretary of Free Zones High Council said at the times that over 40 percent of Iran's exports is done through the country's free trade zones and special economic zones. Morteza Bank believes that the figure would have been higher if there had not been the banking limitations due to the sanctions. The current government has defined special programs for the development of these zones and commodities worth \$169 billion have been exported from these areas in the past seven years. The mentioned programs have also led to the attraction of domestic and foreign investment to the free and special zones. Bank has previously announced that the value of exports from Iran's free trade zones and special economic zones stood at \$17 billion during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19). He said that commodities worth \$5 billion produced in these zones have been sent to different areas in the country during the previous year. Bank put the value of products imported to the free trade zones and special economic zones at \$5 billion in the past year. Emphasizing that the value of imports to these zones is very low compared to the worth of exports from them, the official said, "We are planning to reach the same level of exports in the current year as well."

Iraq settles part of Iran energy dues

1 → In December 2020, Iran reduced its gas exports to the neighboring country by over 45 million cubic meters a day (mcm/d), threatening to further reduce the current five mcm/d of gas supply to three mcm/d. Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian visited Iraq in late December 2020 to meet with senior officials from the country and discuss the country's energy debts to Iran. Upon returning to Tehran, Ardakanian said that Iraq was going to open a euro bank account to pave the way for

settling all the country's gas and electricity dues to Iran. "Based on an agreement which is going to be implemented in the coming days, Iraq is going to open a euro savings bank account in which the country's debts to National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and the Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) will be saved," Ardakanian said at the time. "Iraq's recent and past debts to our country will be transferred and saved in this account after being exchanged



to euro," the minister said.

This way, transferring the money or using it for purchasing basic goods and medicine will be less problematic considering the U.S. sanctions, he emphasized. According to the official, the savings in this account can also be used for pay-

ing Iranian contractors and companies' dues in the mentioned country. Ardakanian announced the formation of a committee for working on the issue and said: "As the Iranian head of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, I will monitor the process on a daily basis until we achieve desirable results."

Developing CNG industry to save Iran \$14b

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Managing director of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) has said that developing the country's Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) industry could potentially save Iran \$14b. According to Alireza Sadeqabadi, increasing the country's gasoline production capacity by 20 million liters requires at least \$15 billion of investment, while boosting the country's CNG output by the equivalent of the same amount would only need \$1 billion, that means it could save the country \$14 billion. The development of the CNG industry in Iran began many years ago concurrently with the development of the national gas network and currently there is more than 40 million cubic meters of daily CNG distribution capacity in Iran, according to Sadeqabadi. A large part of this capacity however is not being used, and this has led the government to try to benefit from this capacity by increasing the number of dual-fuel vehicles. According to the NIORDC head, each cubic meter of CNG consumption would save the consumer 30 cents in comparison to one liter of gasoline.



Iranian Oil Ministry also considers CNG as the national fuel; therefore, the ministry has it on the agenda to increase the share of this fuel in the country's energy basket. Considering the advantages of CNG consumption, back in December 2019, NIORDC and Iran's state-owned Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) signed a memorandum

of understanding (MOU) to add new dual-fuel vehicles to the country's public transportation fleet. The mentioned MOU was signed under a program that aimed to add 1.46 million dual-fuel vehicles to the public transportation fleet. Increasing the number of the country's dual-fuel cars would mean reduction in gasoline consumption; this gasoline could be exported and the earned revenues could be used for further developing such CNG-promoting programs. Following the previously implemented programs, over the past few years, the government has started a new scheme for turning the automobiles registered in online transportation apps (like Snap and Tapsi in Iran) into dual-fuel cars. Sadeqabadi noted that based on this program the government is going to pay for 75 percent of the conversion costs through bank loans offered to the car owners. Iran's CNG consumption currently stands at about 25 million cubic meters. There are currently 2,495 CNG stations across Iran that supply 22 percent of the country's fuel basket.

Exclusive exhibition of Iranian products to be held in Sulaymaniyah in late May

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — An exclusive exhibition of Iranian products is planned to be held in Sulaymaniyah of Iraqi Kurdistan in late May. Iran had also held an exclusive exhibition of Iranian products in Sulaymaniyah in late January 2020. Having over 500 kilometers of shared borders, Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan can use this capacity to expand their trade relations, Iran's Commercial Attaché in Iraq Naser Behzad said on the sidelines of the exhibit.



He described Sulaymaniyah as the gateway to Iraqi Kurdistan and said: "Due to

the stability and security of this region, it is possible to transport goods from this center to other neighboring provinces such as Erbil, Halabja, Diyala and Kirkuk and even other areas of Iraq." "Having two official border crossings of Bashmaq and Parvizkhan and the great interest in Iranian goods in the region would be a reliable capacity for developing the two countries' trade relations," he stated. Pointing out the fact that currently half of the goods available in the Sulay-

maniyah market are Iranian products, the official said: "Food products, carpet, plastic products, machinery, building materials, agricultural and technical services especially in the fields of transportation, construction and urban development are important priorities for contribution of Iranian companies in this market." More than 150 Iranian companies participated in the exclusive exhibition of Iranian products in Sulaymaniyah to showcase their latest products and services in this market.

Water, electricity projects worth over \$92m inaugurated in central Iran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian inaugurated four major water and electricity projects valued at 3.9 trillion rials (about \$92.8 million) in Yazd province, central Iran, on Tuesday. Inaugurated in the 44th week of the Energy Ministry's A-B-Iran program, the projects include a power supply projects, a water supply projects, and a dam. As reported by IRNA, First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri also attended the opening ceremony of the mentioned projects. A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), during which the minister made several trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion). Since the beginning of the second phase of the scheme in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20, 2020), every week several energy projects have gone



operational across the country. According to the energy minister, in the second phase of the program 250 projects were going to be

inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20). Last week, Ardakanian had also inaugurated several new systems for improving services in the water and electricity sectors. The mentioned systems were put into operation in various areas including resource consumption improvement, asset utilization, human resource management, financial resources management, and reforming work processes in order to create transparency and to facilitate and accelerate affairs while eliminating possible bottlenecks. A smart system for improving the Energy Ministry's support and emergency centers called Homa, as well as a new customer services system called Chavoush were also among the launched systems. A mechanized network monitoring system called Sanam was also put into operation; this system is aimed at monitoring the electricity networks of various provinces in order to reduce electricity losses and improve the efficiency of the country's power network.

Iran, Pakistan confer on establishing joint border market

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran and Pakistan have held an online meeting to discuss issues related to developing border trade and reached an agreement to establish the two countries' first joint border market, an official with the Iranian Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced. "A virtual meeting was held to discuss a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the establishment of joint border markets between Iran and Pakistan, and agreements were reached in this regard," IRNA quoted Reza Seyed Aqazadeh as saying. According to the official, following the preparation of the draft for the mentioned MOU in December 2020, additional negotiations were made for finalizing the memorandum in the online meeting which was held at the level of

deputy ministers. Referring to the 950-kilometer border between Iran and Pakistan, as well as the two countries' interest in developing trade, Seyed Aqazadeh noted: "Border markets have so far been created unilaterally by Iran or Pakistan, and a joint market will be established between the two countries for the first time." The development of the joint border markets is expected to improve the business activities of border residents, he added. "Based on the agreements reached, the two sides have appointed technical teams to determine the location and size of the joint markets and to prepare a list of the items that would be traded in the markets," the official explained. He stated that joint markets will be set up in Kuhak and Pishin (Saravan) in

the near future, and specified: "Pakistan has proposed six points on the border to create joint markets, and the Iranian side is interested in setting up joint markets as much as possible in place of existing approved markets." Currently, border markets of Saravan-Jaleq, Saravan-Kuhak, Sarbaz-Pishin and Chabahar-Rimdan in Sistan-Baluchestan province are active on the border with Pakistan, and the Mirjaveh market has been merged with Mirjaveh customs, according to Seyed Aqazadeh. Earlier in December 2020, Pakistan's Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood had said his country was seeking to enhance ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially in economic areas. Considering Pakistan's relatively large consumer market, expansion of trade



with the country and boosting exports to its market has become one of Iran's priorities in recent years. Iran's exports to Pakistan in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) stood at \$1.18 billion, but in the meantime, financial and banking problems have still created obstacles in the way of trade relations with this country.

There is rising tendency to view immigrants as threat, scholar says

1 → It was genocide because, in addition to the mass-murder of around 8,000 men, a process of organized removal of women and children from the territory was put in place, thus completely removing the whole group's presence. The organized process of the change of ethnic pattern in the specific territory is at the core of the definition of genocide. I see a multi-level problem with the whole debate. The original interpretation of genocide was to distinguish crimes committed by Nazis from those of the Allies. The Nazis aimed to destroy and remove entire ethnic, religious and racial groups from large territories of central and eastern Europe in an organized and industrious way. The crimes committed by the Allies did not have this aim. Still, they also committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, like the bombing of Dresden. There are, however, deniers of the crime of genocide and the Holocaust to this day. The same goes for Srebrenica.

How do you assess the reaction of the world, especially European states, toward the massacre? Why did the globe prefer to remain a spectator?

The signs were there, but the world was not ready. A bipolar international system has just finished with the end of the Cold War. The new system was yet to be established to replace it. Was it going to be a unipolar system with the USA acting as a global policeman or a multipolar world? The EU peaked with the popularity of European integrations in 1993. Washington DC potentially saw rivals in Europe, not in China or Russia, that was in disarray at the time.

Therefore, they were happy to let Europe deal with this and prove that diversity of national interests and a lack of military capacity without Americans will ultimately prove Europe to be incapable of interventionism without the leadership or at least support of the USA.

There was also a lack of experts to provide competent information and knowledge about Yugoslavia and the successor states. They largely relied on Rebecca West and similar dated authors to reconfirm ideas that often lack historical accuracy and explain everything in term of ethnic hatred. Let me remind you that NATO's first combat mission since its establishment was in the skies above Bosnia in 1994. Even for them, it was an unknown area of interventionism. The UN reconfirmed the slowness of the international organization and especially when it comes to peacekeeping. It was peace-making that was needed, but they were and still are not capable of doing it. I do not think the fact that Muslims were major victims, played a significant role in the decision to delay the intervention. After



all, the Rwanda genocide took place with no Muslims involved at a similar time, and the UN just observed the crime like in Bosnia.

Generally, what are the root causes of the massacres in the world?

Samuel Huntington offered his thesis of «Clash of Civilizations» in the early 1990s. We might find some examples to confirm the idea. Actions of the regimes in China and Myanmar against minorities, conflict in Ukraine, even wars in the Balkans, Trump building wall on the Mexican border, conflicts in western Africa could all be used to reconfirm this idea. While I do not dismiss Huntington's thoughts, this might be just one of the contributing factors to the causes of violence.

Inequality, in my view, is the primary cause. With the increased inequality in societies, they become polarised, impoverished masses have little to lose, and conflict is often inevitable. Thus social restructuring is taking place that is caused by increased economic inequality. Great historical upheavals usually have a consequence of equalizing processes in society. This is how social peace is being bought and the stabilizing period for the new regime. Check inequality levels in Iran in the early 1980s and now. Prolonged periods without major violent interruptions produce increased inequalities. The Western world never lived for a more extended period in peace since the Second World War. Therefore, inequalities have risen, especially since the end of the Cold War. The impoverished masses are not only dissatisfied, but they face a struggle for survival. Venezuela is a perfect example. Society is deeply divided. The government relies on the poor mass-

es' support and military to retain power. The better-educated classes who enjoyed privileges in the past and benefitted from exploiting natural resources are rebelling. The underprivileged initially took over after they had little to lose. The formerly privileged class is now on the brink, and they are trying to produce a change. Let's look at both root causes, identity and inequality.

How do you see the position of Muslims in today's Europe? What changes have occurred?

The changes reflect the rising number of Muslims in Europe and their more prominent presence in urban areas, i.e., women wearing hijabs and other garments traditionally associated with Islamic culture. This tells us of quantitative and qualitative changes. One might argue the process of emancipation is taking place. Women were perceived in traditional societies to belong to the home and not participate in public life or even walk the streets. Thus, one might develop an argument that double emancipation is taking place; as women and as Muslims, many women proudly expose their heritage, identity and belonging. Of course, the societies where they live have to be based on the rule of law, equality, human rights, and individual freedoms to provide the conditions for emancipation. Here we can find regional differences across the continent. Scandinavian countries and what are generally perceived as Western Europe are open societies where individuals feel free to express their religious or political views. However, even within these societies, there is a rising tendency to deny this right to members of minority groups. Immigration is seen as a threat to their identity, and they

discriminate against immigrants. Even when born in these countries, Muslims are often perceived as immigrants, and this is where discrimination comes. The majority of the population, however, do not support this kind of discrimination. There are other European countries with no or minimal historical experience with Muslims like most central and eastern Europe. Politicians spread paranoid messages and receive support from the public, thus making their societies unfriendly towards immigrants of different culture and religion. This further increase pressure on Western societies because immigrants, many of them Muslims, aim to move to the West and not only for economic reasons. One should not be dismissive of terrorist attacks by extremists claiming to act in defence of Islam. It is easy for societies to generalize following the terrorist acts and even subconsciously join the forces that discriminate against «others». Security issues, thus, often bring liberal people towards supporting political parties that are not liberal and are openly discriminatory.

Some in Europe believe that the presence of Muslims will undermine their identity. To what extent have these ideas negatively affected the lives of the Muslim minority in various European countries?

Is there a European identity, or is it a combination of diverse identities? If the answer is the latter, then Muslims should become, if they are not already, part of this diversified identity. «United in Diversity» is a motto of European integrations. European nations' fundamental values are mainly rooted in secularism, albeit secularism has developed on Western churches' ideological foundations. Separation of state and church might not be formal in all the countries, but it is very much present in practice. The UK is a perfect example. While some bishops have a seat in the Parliament «ex officio», their role is almost invisible in British political life. Some Muslim newcomers to such societies are shocked by the lack of religious presence in public life. Although the dominant religion is not theirs, they often come from communities where the religious way of life is the only way. Therefore, they voluntarily segregate in their contemporary societies, refuse to integrate, or the majority refuse to integrate with newcomers who are different and do not share some of their values. It is not pleasant for either group to live in such a divided society. Of course, it is different from talking about this from London, where a popularly elected mayor is Muslim, son of immigrants. Could we imagine such a result in Budapest or Warsaw?

Persian tradition played central role in Islamic mysticism: Duke professor

1 → Following is the text of interview with Safi:

Given the dominance of Sunni-Shia narratives, how do you assess the position of mysticism in the contemporary Muslim world in light of the emergence of Wahhabism and Salafism?

The mysticist dimension of Islam was

never relegated to either the Sunni or Shia traditions, but one that pervaded both. So many of the most influential Sunni thinkers, like Ibn 'Arabi, Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, al-Ghazali, etc., were either mystically oriented or deeply shaped by the mysticist tradition. Within the Shia tradition, much of what we know as «Erfan» is really metaphysical.

I think that the subtlety, humanity, aesthetic beauty, nuance, service, and appreciation for multiple vantage points that are all common features of the Sufi tradition would offer an important antidote to flat, rigid puritanical versions of Islam that are too common today.

Do you think that mysticism can build a bridge between different Islamic sects and even between religions?

To a large extent, yes. The plurality of perspectives and the reminder that it is only God alone who is «al-haqq» (the Truth) would go a long way towards doing so. But the work of the mysticism in healing and reconciliation would need to go hand in hand with other political and economic reconciliation and not replace them.

How important is Iranian civilization when we talk about mysticism and its history?

I prefer to use the term Persian and Persianate traditions because historically, so many of the cultures were Persian was the language of high culture, poetry, refinement, and the mysticism tradition were outside of the modern-day Iranian nation-state.

One can mention how the Mughal Empire was Persian speaking in its court, how Persian was so common in the Ottoman court, how Samarqand and Bukhara and Herat were major Persian metropolises, and how even in Bosnia, there were academies devoted to the proper recitation and commentary on Mawlana Rumi's Masnavi.

In all those ways and more, I see the



Persian tradition as being a central one for understanding mysticism in the «Mashreq» (the Eastern half of the Muslim majority world, more or less from Balkans to Bengal).

What is the function of religion in modern time? How can religions help protect environment and promote social issues?

Religion has, to a large extent, been subsumed into nationalist discourses. In many places (Israel, Saudi Arabia, etc.), the rulers have adopted religious discourse to legitimize themselves, but what happens to the truth-telling ability of religious individuals and movements in such a context? If religious traditions are seen as a means of drawing closer and closer to God, living in harmony with the whole of humanity and with nature, then yes, there is much that religious traditions have to offer us today.

What is your comment on sectarian conflicts in West Asia? What are the roots of these confrontations?

A great many sectarian conflicts in the Middle East (West Asia) go back to the era of colonialism and the subsequent anti-colonial revolutions that became cloaked in nationalism. While no human community has a spotless record of living in perfect peace and harmony, some of the conflicts we see today are not «ancient and eternal» conflicts, but ones that can be definitely traced to the violence of European colonialism.

“While no human community has a spotless record of living in perfect peace and harmony, some of the conflicts we see today are not “ancient and eternal” conflicts, but ones that can be definitely traced to the violence of European colonialism.”

Export Tobacco and Tobacco Scraps Sales Offer



Iran Tobacco Company

In line with the implementation of the article 10 of the general «economic resistance» policies and with the aim of total, purposeful support for the exportation of products, proper planning for national production suited to export requirements, entering new markets, diversifying the economic bonds with regional and world countries and continuous development of Iran's share in target markets, Iranian Tobacco Company is determined to sell its tobacco and tobacco scraps in the form of issuing pro forma invoices according to the requested tonnages. Purchasers can sent their written letter specifying tobacco amount, type, grade and production year to export@tobacco.ir or fax us at 021 55066322. In addition, the list of the tobacco and tobacco scraps can be checked at www.irtobacco.com/portal/saderat/Tobacco.pdf or through the QR code printed below. It should be noted that the sent letters will be prioritized to be considered bases on the tonnage and the time of receiving the letter and the prices will be negotiated in a face to face meeting.

For more information or coordination 021 55078504, ext.122 can be contacted.



Public relations and International Affairs-Iran Tobacco Company

Biden asks King Salman to replace bin Salman with Muhammad bin Nayef

A former Israeli minister revealed details of an American plan for President Joe Biden's administration to replace Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with Prince Muhammad bin Nayef.

The Minister of Justice and former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yossi Beilin, suggested that the U.S. President requested the implementation of this step from the King of Saudi Arabia, Salman bin Abdulaziz, Prime Time Zone reported.

The Israeli minister indicated that Bin Salman involved his country in a terrible war in Yemen. And he did other strange actions. His involvement in the brutal murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018 culminated in.

He noted that «America was marked by anger, and the world denounced, but the former US President Trump granted the young leader protection, and the young leader became completely dependent on Trump's whims. He feared that US President Joe Biden, who is most sensitive to the issue of human rights, would lead him to the end of his political life.

Pakistani PM wins vote of confidence amidst opposition protest, boycott

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan won a vote of confidence from parliament on Saturday in a session marked by an opposition boycott of the vote and clashes between government supporters and opposition leaders outside the parliament building.

Khan was able to secure 178 votes, against the 172 required to win confidence, the speaker of the house announced, Reuters reported.

Khan, who became prime minister following the 2018 general elections, volunteered to seek parliament's confidence after the government's finance minister lost a high-profile Senate seat election earlier in the week.

Opposition parties boycotted the session, saying the Senate seat defeat was enough to show that Khan no longer enjoyed the confidence of the house, and the vote of confidence was unnecessary.

Yemeni forces launch drone attack against Saudi Arabia's King Khalid Air Base

Yemen's military says it has launched yet another successful drone attack against King Khalid Air Base in the southwest of Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the Riyadh regime's ongoing military aggression and blockade against the war-torn impoverished country.

Spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree said late Friday that army troops and allied fighters from Popular Committees carried out an attack on important targets at the air base with two domestically-developed Samad-3 (Invincible-3) combat drones.

He added that the designated targets had been successfully hit during the overnight operation against King Khalid Air Base, which is located near Khamis Mushait, some 884 kilometers south of the Saudi capital Riyadh, Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported.

According to Press TV, the attack came just hours after five Yemeni Qasef-2K drones successfully hit the air base, the report further said, adding that earlier on Friday, three Yemeni drones, of the Samad-3 and Qasef-2k types, also pounded the same air base and Saudi Arabia's Abha International Airport in Asir.

On Thursday, Yemen's military also successfully hit designated targets at the Saudi Aramco oil facility in Jeddah with a domestically-developed Quds-2-type cruise missile.

Pope Francis meets powerful Shia cleric in Iraq

Pope Francis hold a symbolic meeting with one of the most powerful figures in Shia Islam on the second day of his landmark trip to Iraq.

The Pope's encounter with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the spiritual leader of millions of Shia Muslims, is taking place in the holy city of Najaf.

It is the Pope's first international trip since the start of the pandemic - and the first-ever papal visit to Iraq.

Covid-19 and security fears have made this the pontiff's riskiest trip yet.

The 84-year-old leader of the Catholic church earlier told reporters that he felt «duty-bound» to make the «emblematic» journey, which will see him visit several sites over four days in Iraq.

Resistance News

OCHA: Israel displaced 98 Palestinians in two weeks

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 35 Palestinian structures, mostly homes, during two weeks in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Jerusalem.

In its biweekly report on Israeli violations on Friday, OCHA explained that the demolition measures were carried out during the period February 16 to March 1, 2021 at the pretext that the owners had no Israeli-issued building permits.

The demolitions displaced 98 people, including 53 children, and affected about 60 people, according to its report.

The report also explained that 17 Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank.

«Among the Palestinians, a 16-year-old boy was shot by Israeli forces with live ammunition, reportedly while walking near the Barrier in Saffa village (Ramallah). Seven others were wounded in protests against the establishment of a settlement outpost on Beit Dajan land (Nablus) and against settlement expansion in Kafr Qaddum (Qalqiliya).»

«Two Palestinians were injured in clashes that erupted during two search-and-arrest operations in Ad Duheisha refugee camp (Bethlehem) and Abu Shukheidim village (Ramallah).»

«Three Palestinians, including an elderly man and a child, were physically assaulted by Israeli forces in Huwwara (Nablus) and An Nuwei'ma (Jericho).»

Rouhani opens miniature theme park near capital Tehran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday inaugurated a miniature theme park via a video conference. Named 'Little Iran', the park is situated near the capital Tehran, in Alborz province.

The theme park exhibits a variety of [small] replicas of the country's scenic areas and tourist attractions such as the ancient village of Abyaneh, UNESCO-registered Bam Citadel, magnificent 9,000-year-old archaeological hill of Tepe Ozbaki, centuries-old windmills (locally called Asbads), and Qazvin's 19th-century bazaar of Sa'd-al Saltaneh, the provincial tourism chief explained.



The cultural connections, traditions, black tents of the Iranian tribes living throughout Iran have been demonstrated and simulated in the park by prominent architects and cultural heritage experts, Fereydoon Mohammadi said.

Furthermore, the park features an exemplar collection of various ethnic groups living in different parts of the country, the official added.

A budget of four trillion rials (\$95 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the preparation of the park, which has been carried out in collaboration with Karaj Municipality for three years, he explained.

Alborz province is surrounded by Mazandaran, Tehran, Markazi, and Qazvin provinces. Its name is driven by the Alborz Mountains. A significant part of the mountains is located in the north part of the province.

Historical resources and documents as well as archeological studies indicate that Alborz has a rich culture dating back to prehistoric times.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It also hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (550 – 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistoric sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa and Chogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province, and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

Lion and rhino fossils discovered in Neanderthal cave western Iran

➔ Excavations revealed a sedimentary sequence that was not disturbed by looters, and the remains of rodents and small vertebrates were found, he said. He stressed that a more detailed analysis of these remains could provide important information about the environmental conditions around the cave in the Late Pleistocene.



He added that one of the most important achievements of this research is the discovery of stone tools made by Neanderthals, which shows that this cave was not just a den used by carnivores such as hyenas, lions, wolves, and leopards.

These finds will help us to understand how Neanderthals used this narrow, deep, and dark cave and the possibility that the Neanderthal child tooth found in the cave years ago, could be remains of a Middle Paleolithic burial in the cave.

He also added that Neolithic potteries were found for the first time in the cave, indicating that nomadic herders who used the pastures of Qaziwand Mountain to graze their herds may have used the cave as a temporary shelter or even animal pen.

In conclusion, Biglari referred to the results of archaeological surveys, during which several caves and shelters and a stone tool workshop were identified in the vicinity of Wezmeh Cave. He expressed the hope that with the completion of laboratory analysis, the results of these new studies will be presented in academic journals.

Wezmeh is well-known for the discovery of a large number of animal fossils, a Neanderthal premolar tooth, as well as human bones, pottery, and stone tools of early herders of the Chalcolithic period. The Neanderthal tooth shows that this early human inhabited the area around the cave between about 70,000 and 40,000 years ago.

Iranian president declares travel ban for 'red', 'orange' zones to combat new COVID-19 variant

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday declared new travel bans for cities situated in the "red" and "orange" zones to combat the new COVID-19 variant.

Rouhani called on people to avoid traveling during the Iranian New Year holidays to help contain the spread of coronavirus. He said it would be forbidden to make trips to cities marked as "red" and "orange" in terms of the prevalence of COVID-19.

"We request people to avoid traveling during Noruz holidays for the sake of their own health... It will be forbidden to travel to red and orange towns and cities," he said. "No one should make any plans to travel to these cities," he stressed.

The president said the tolerance of the country's health system "has a limit," urging the public to cooperate when it comes to observing health protocols.

Late in February, the tourism minister, Ali-Asghar Mounesan, said despite all the obstacles and issues and the outbreak of the coronavirus, the country's tourism sector is still alive and dynamic.

Noruz ceremonies and trips, if practiced under health protocols, could be beneficial



for the revival of the tourism industry and handicrafts, which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic in many provinces, the minister explained.

His deputy for tourism, Vali Teymouri, in February announced that the tourism

ministry has gained official permission for organizing limited intercity travels during the Iran New Year vacations from the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

Well-planned travels during the Noruz holidays, which will start on March 20, would

be possible in close coordination with the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, Teymouri said.

"In order to create social vitality during the holidays, the ministry has set some rules for possible Noruz trips to control and monitor them carefully," he said.

"The trips will be possible only within the framework of planned tours through licensed travel agencies and under the supervision of the tourism ministry."

For people, who travel individually and outside of the tours, a reservation for an authorized accommodation center will be necessary, the official added. He also emphasized that all travelers and tourists need to follow strict health protocols during their trips and stays.

With less than a month to go till the start of the Iranian New Year, which has long been associated with millions of domestic travels, the ministry wants to find a way to partially revive the already-slumped travels in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, he noted.

Iranians traditionally make hundreds of thousands of domestic trips during the New Year holidays, when most businesses and workplaces are closed, as are schools.

Photo exhibit features ancient Iranian windmills

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A photo exhibition, featuring arrays of ancient Iranian windmills, is currently underway at Khorasan Great Museum, which is located in the holy city of Mashhad, northeast of the country.

A total of 50 photos selected from the works of 48 photographers have been put on show at the eight-day exhibition, which will be running through March 10. The photos depict windmills scarred across Nashtifan of Khaf county in Khorasan Razavi province.

The Islamic Republic seeks to inscribe a chain of its ancient vertical-axis on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The windmills, which are locally known as "Asbads" can be found in Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, and Khorasan Razavi provinces, southeast, south, and northeast of the country, respectively.

Asbad used to be a smart technique to grind grains. It also bears testimony to the human being's adaption with nature by transforming environmental obstacles into opportunities.

"Asbad is a smart technique to grind grains, a technique which goes back to ancient times when the people living in the eastern parts of Iran, in an attempt to adapt themselves

with nature and transform environmental obstacles into opportunities, managed to invent it," according to UNESCO website.

Currently, avid visitors and researchers can examine the subtle yet simple mechanism in person as several windmills have been restored and brought back to life to testify how ancient Iranians harnessed the wind to make a living.

Made of natural clay, straw, and wood, each of the windmills of Nashtifan is comprised of eight chambers, with each chamber housing six blades. As the area's strong, steady wind enters the chambers it turns the blades, which then turn grindstones. The structures reach up to about 65 feet in height.

The region is so well known for its wind that the name Nashtifan is derived from words that mean "storm's sting." With the ample winds, the devices can readily glean enough power from the wind to turn a stone. If they were hooked up to a generator they would produce only a small amount of electricity, possibly not even enough for a lightbulb. Today's power-harvesting turbines have more efficient designs that take advantage of lift to attain higher speeds, and therefore



produce much more power.

"The earliest known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and windmills in Seistan [Sistan], Iran, in 915 CE," the Encyclopedia Britannica says. In 2002 the windmills were recognized as a national heritage site by Iran.

Mudbrick caravanserai one step closer to become national heritage

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The ruined Khosroshah Caravanserai (1501–1736) roadside inn located near Tabriz, northwestern Iran, will soon be assessed to possibly be added to the national cultural heritage list in order to receive more care and protection.

The caravanserai is believed to be one of the 999 caravanserais, which were built across the country by the order of the renowned Safavid monarch; Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588 – 1629).

The historical structure has been documented and a dossier for which has been prepared to be submitted to the tourism ministry with the aim of better preservation and maintenance, Tabriz's tourism chief, Ramin Asbaqim, announced on Saturday. Some other cultural elements of the re-



gion are also planned to be added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list in near future, the official added.

Soaked in history and culture for millennia, Tabriz, which is the capital of East Azarbaijan, embraces several historical

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

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

Pigeon tower in central Iran undergoes urgent restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A three-story pigeon tower, where droppings were once collected as fertilizer centuries ago, has undergone some rehabilitation works in Tondaran village of Isfahan province.

A budget of 300 million rials (about \$7,100 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, which aims at strengthening the historical structure as well as preventing its destruction, Hossein Mazaheri, a local tourism official, has announced on Saturday.

With an area of 150 square meters, the 200-year-old monument has been inscribed on the national cultural heritage list, he added.

Isfahan is famed for having a rich heritage of pigeon towers, where the droppings could be collected and used as fertilizer. There are still many ruined or well-preserved "luxury" accommodation buildings across the province, which are specially designed and constructed for pigeons and can hold as many as 14,000 pigeons.

It is not clear when such pigeon houses were built first but according to the comments by ancient travelers, at least they have been existed since some 800 years ago. For the first time, "Ibn Battuta" the famous Moroccan traveler men-



tioned pigeon houses.

The environs of Isfahan are dotted with bizarre but very picturesque pigeon towers. In contrast to a European dovecot, which often housed pigeons to be used as meat, in Iran, the pigeons were never eaten. Here pigeon towers were used as guano factories to produce fertilizers for the melons that have always been the pride

of the region. The guano was also used in the manufacture of gunpowder.

Pigeon towers are of considerable size, often 10.5-12 m high, of sturdy construction and fine proportions. The pigeon houses are usually built of mud-brick. Unbelievably varied, often decorated by ornate cupolas and muqarnas friezes, they are so charming that it is well worth going even great distances to see them.

Although there are never two identical pigeon towers, all conform to a single plan. Each tower consists of an outer drum, buttressed internally to prevent collapse and to support the inner drum that rises perhaps a third as high as the main structure.

Pigeons can get to their nets through some passages which are such narrow that it is impossible to other birds such as eagles or falcons to enter. At the bottoms, there are some smooth parts of stucco works. These parts can avoid snakes to ascend. In some cases, they put a bowl of milk at the center with limes around it. As snakes like milk, they try to get it but will be stuck in the lime.

Nowadays, due to the wide usage of chemical fertilizers, such pigeon towers just convey memories of the past as significant but strange buildings.

Iran seeking UNESCO tag for exquisite mountain lake

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran is preparing a comprehensive dossier for Lake Gahar to be submitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in near future, ISNA reported Saturday.

Encircled by snowcapped mountains, exquisite alpine lake is a bustling tourist resort in western Iran that attracts many sightseers and environment buffs every year.

The property is nestled under the

southern wall of Oshtorankuh range in a protected nature reserve. It is made up of two smaller lakes that are situated within 100 meters of each other named the Upper Gahar and the Lower Gahar in Lorestan province.

There is no motorway to the lake and the best-recommended way to get there is to climb. Beginning at the ranger hut and car park at Haft Cheshmeh, 23km from Dorud, the walk-in skirts of the mountain

flanks and takes four hours.

Even if one doesn't hike, great views justify the car journey as far as Darb-e-Astaneh, a mud-house village 18km from Dorud.

The lake is among the best sample of lakes that has been appeared due to the landslide. It is fed from rills and springs flowing from adjoining highlands. The climate is generally sub-humid continental with winter precipitation, a lot of which falls as snow.



Unique trees of Iran: important plant genetic resources

1 → Harzevil cypress tree

Harzevil old tree is 30 meters long, with a trunk diameter of 4 meters, estimated to be more than 1,000 years old. It is vertically branched at the base, forming a massive canopy - which easily hid a band of musicians as they surprised a 19th century Shah with their tunes after he stopped for a pause during a journey.

This tree has a special value and popularity for the people of that area, the value of this cypress is so great that Naser Khoustro Ghobadiani mentioned it in his travelogue.

Cypress in Iran is used with frequent symbolic references with popularity second to none. In poetry and literature, the beloved one's poise, lithe body, and motion are likened to a cypress. Elsewhere, the tree stands as the symbol of uprightness, resistance, and freedom.

Ancient juniper

The oldest juniper tree, aging between 2,700 to 3,000 years old, stands in Shirvan city in North Khorasan province, which has a long and sturdy trunk that is divided into three trunks.



Juniper is a very valuable and long-lasting species that grows in mountainous and high areas and has a special place in the legends and myths of Iranian people.

It has long been a symbol of immortality in Iranian culture and it can be seen in historical Iranian miniatures.

Evergreen skyscraper in forest

Sarv Kalani is the name of an old tree that is located in Kalani village, 28 km east of Kazerun in Fars province. The height of the cypress tree is about 55 meters, which looks like a skyscraper in the middle of the forest.

The cypress is estimated to age 500 to 1000 years.

Sycamore, God's greatness

The sycamore tree of Tuyserkan city in Hamedan province is over 2000 years old and is located in the courtyard of a mosque and a neighborhood called Bagh-var. Its height is 25 meters with a width of 15 meters.

In the past, the people of Tuyserkan respected this tree, considering it as a sign of God's greatness. So that, the maintenance of this tree is very important for the people of this region.

Charity foundation opens 100 eco-schools, 350 mosques

1 → Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam was founded in 1989. In the Iranian calendar year, 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat Charity Foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.

Socio-economic empowerment of communities by encouraging entrepreneurship prioritizing breadwin-

ner women, developing infrastructures such as water supply and power grids, building roads, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health for all, granting non-repayable loans and insurance especially in less developed areas and regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

World wastes nearly a billion tons of food a year, finds UN report

If global food waste were a country it would be the third biggest polluter after the US and China, according to campaigners, who are urging governments around the world to do more to tackle the problem after a UN-backed report found nearly a billion tons of food is being thrown away each year.

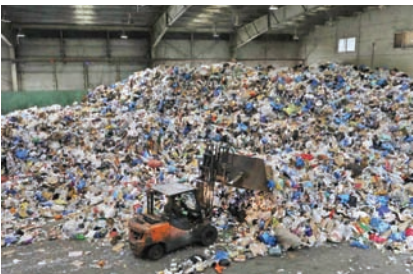
Around a fifth (17 per cent) of all the food produced worldwide was thrown away in 2019, amounting to an estimated 931 million tons.

That weight roughly equals that 23 million fully-loaded 40-ton trucks, enough bumper-to-bumper to circle the Earth seven times.

Researchers said the combined impact of producing just the food that is thrown away, from the fertilisers to the diesel powering the tractors, accounted for around 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Those figures, included in the Food Waste Index Report 2021 produced by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and charity Wrap, come amid global efforts to halve food waste by 2030.

"A person going shopping today is likely to throw away around a fifth of the items in their trolley," said Marcus Gover, CEO of Wrap, which this week launched the UK's first ever Food Waste Action Week, aimed at highlighting the impact of wasted food.



"That can be tackled by simple things like making a list or just looking in the fridge before going shopping."

Around 70 per cent of all the food wasted is linked to households, with 16 per cent coming from manufacturing, 11 per cent from restaurants, pubs and hotels, and just 3 per cent from supermarkets.

On an individual level, that amounts to 120kg of food thrown away by every person on the planet each year.

"It's not about blaming people for it," Mr Gover told The Independent. "It's about helping people to know what they can do about it."

"Producing food is one of the most impactful things we do in terms of the environment. Agriculture accounts for 70 per cent of the world's freshwater use and is linked to 30 per cent of the total greenhouse gas emissions and 80 per cent of global biodiversity loss."

Mr Gover said throwing away edible food had a "massive" impact on the

environment.

"If we're wasting food then we're throwing away all of the energy that went into making it, all of the carbon that has been produced," he said. "And all of that diversity loss was for nothing."

"We're talking about 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. That is a big number, so big, in fact, that if food waste were a country, it would have the biggest greenhouse gas emissions in the world after the US and China. Around six times more than global aviation emissions. So it just has a massive impact on climate change."

The report - the most comprehensive food waste data collection, analysis and modelling to date - looks at food waste from retail outlets, restaurants and homes, counting both food and inedible parts like bones and shells.

General thinking until now had been that more developed countries were to blame for the most food waste among individual households. But researchers found in nearly every country food waste was substantial, regardless of income level.

Mr Gover said the UK was "leading the world" on the issue, having reduced food waste by 27 per cent since 2007.

"Nowhere else in the world has done anything like that," he said. "The UK is half way on its journey to halving edible food waste by 2030."

"But we need more action to tackle

food waste in the home around the world. We need funding for that so I am calling on governments, on businesses, on international organisations, to invest in tackling food waste in the home."

"If they do that, they will be helping us reach net zero. Without reducing food waste we won't reach it."

Some 690 million people were affected by hunger in 2019, a number that is expected to rise sharply with the Covid pandemic, and three billion people are unable to afford a healthy diet.

Campaigners say reducing the amount of food that is thrown away would not only reduce the environmental impact but go some way to addressing food poverty.

Inger Andersen, executive director of UNEP, said: "Reducing food waste would cut greenhouse gas emissions, slow the destruction of nature through land conversion and pollution, enhance the availability of food and thus reduce hunger and save money at a time of global recession."

"If we want to get serious about tackling climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, businesses, governments and citizens around the world have to do their part to reduce food waste."

The UN Food Systems Summit this year will provide an opportunity to launch bold new actions to tackle food waste globally."

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ع

Non-repayable loans for e-bikes must increase: Tehran City Council chairman

While an important strategy to contain Tehran's air pollution is using clean energies, non-repayable loans to incentivize the owners to replace their motorcycles with electric ones is not sufficient and must increase, Mohsen Hashemi, Tehran City Council chairman, has said.

The scheme on encouraging the citizens to replace carbureted motorcycles with electric ones has started over a few years ago, however, the process has been evolving slowly, he said, adding, we hope to increase the use of electric motorbikes by allocating the necessary funds along with supporting the manufacturers next year (March 2019-March 2020). The handouts supporting the residents to purchase the motorbikes has been about 25 million rials (nearly \$600), which is not adequate anymore given the current economic condition, he stated, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

تاکید رئیس شورای شهر تهران بر افزایش وام بلاعوض خرید موتورسیکلت‌های برقی

محسن هاشمی رئیس شورای شهر تهران با اشاره به اینکه یکی از راه‌های کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران استفاده از انرژی‌های پاک است، گفت: رقمی که به عنوان وام بلاعوض خرید موتورسیکلت برقی برای تشویق دارندگان موتورسیکلت پرداخت شده است، پاسخگوی این شرایط نیست و این رقم باید افزایش یابد.

وی تصریح کرد: جایگزینی کردن موتورسیکلت‌های برقی به جای موتورسیکلت‌های کاربراتوری از چند سال پیش آغاز شده است اما این کار با کندی پیش رفته است و امیدواریم در سال آینده با تخصیص اعتبارات لازم و حمایت از تولیدکنندگان، میزان استفاده از موتورسیکلت‌های برقی افزایش یابد. به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری تسنیم هاشمی با اشاره به میزان تسهیلاتی که تا به امروز به‌عنوان وام بلاعوض برای خرید موتورسیکلت برقی در نظر گرفته شده است، یادآور شد: با توجه به افزایش قیمت خرید موتورسیکلت برقی، رقم ۲ میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار تومان رقم قابل قبولی به‌عنوان وام بلاعوض نیست و باید این رقم افزایش یابد.

Fake negative tests of Iraqis spreading mutant COVID-19 in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Fake negative COVID-19 test certificates of Iraqi passengers is the major cause of UK variant spread in Iran, Masoud Mardani, member of the scientific committee of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has said.

Many Iraqi passengers circumvented travel checks with a fake test certificate, and caused the mutated virus to widely spread in Khuzestan province, which unfortunately turned into a crisis, he said, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Khuzestan is in a dangerous situation with 11 high-risk "red" cities and 8 medium-risk "orange" cities.

More than 300 Iraqi nationals cross Chazzebah and Shalamchah borders on a daily basis, he said, adding that the issue has contributed to a rise in the number of coronavirus cases.

So that Iran has closed five crossing points with Iraq to prevent the spread of the UK variant of coronavirus.

On February 13, President Hassan Rouhani emphasized the necessity for people to follow health protocols, as a new wave of coronavirus may hit the country within the next two months.

He called on the people to observe the hygiene principles, insisting that anyone who enters the country should undergo the COVID-19 test. "We should all join hands to prevent the fourth wave of the outbreak," he asserted.

Alireza Reisi, a spokesman for the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, said a week earlier that the new coronavirus strain claimed 20 lives in Iran.

New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 8,212 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,681,682. She added that 1,435,357 patients have so far recovered, but 3,784 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 82 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 60,594, she added.

So far, 11,212,921 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Lari noted that currently, 11 cities are at high-risk "red" zones, 32 cities in medium-risk "orange" zones, 251 cities in low-risk "yellow" zones.

Global emissions cuts must be '10 times higher' for world to meet climate goals

Global emissions cuts pre-Covid were just one tenth of the level needed to meet the world's climate goals, a new analysis finds.

The research assesses the efforts that countries have taken to slash their emissions since the 2015 Paris Agreement, the global deal aimed at keeping global temperatures below 2C above pre-industrial levels.

It finds that, from 2016 to 2019, 64 countries reduced their emissions, while 150 countries continued to increase their rates of greenhouse gas pollution.

But even among the 64 countries that slashed their emissions, the scale of action was just a small fraction of what is required to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, according to the results.

Prof Corinne Le Quéré, a climate scientist at the University of East Anglia and lead author of the study, told The Independent: "If you only look at the countries where emissions decreased, you find the reductions are 10 times smaller than the cuts that we need to see in the next decade and beyond to tackle climate change."

The research finds that, from 2016 to 2019, these 64 countries reduced their emissions by around 0.16bn tonnes of CO2 per year, on average, when compared to levels in 2011 to 2015.

But for the highest chance of meeting the Paris goals, global emissions need to fall by around 1-2bn tonnes of CO2 per year throughout the 2020s and beyond, the scientists said.

The results come from the Global Carbon Project, a group of climate scientists who have been tracking global emissions for two decades, and are published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

The group of scientists also studied the impact of the Covid pandemic on global emissions.

The findings show that global CO2 emissions from fossil fuels fell by around 2.6bn tonnes from 2019 to 2020 - an unprecedented annual decline driven largely by lockdowns put in place to stop the spread of the virus.

This drop will cause global fossil fuel emissions to fall by almost 7 per cent from 2019 to 2020, according to results.

The decline in global emissions during lockdowns in 2020 mostly stemmed from there being fewer cars on the road, and, to a lesser extent, from slowdowns in industries such as manufacturing and metal production, the researchers said.

However, the dip in emissions in 2020 is unlikely to persist as the world emerges from the pandemic, they warned.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 140)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

مینو بیمار شده بود. گلویش درد می‌کرد* و نتوانست به کلاس برود. بعد از ظهر به بیمارستان میلاد رفت.
بیمارستان میلاد یکی از جدیدترین بیمارستان‌های تهران است که در جنوب بزرگراه همت قرار دارد. پارک جدید و زیبای گفتگو و برج میلاد، یا بلندترین برج ایران، که چهارصد و سی و پنج متر ارتفاع دارد، نزدیک این بیمارستان واقعند.
موقعی که مینو به اتاق منشی رسید، چند نفر نشسته بودند. کمی بعد، خانم منشی مینو را صدا کرد و او وارد اتاق دکتر شد. دکتر حالتش را پرسید و او را معاینه کرد.
او تب داشت اما بیماریش شدید نبود.
دکتر نسخه‌ای برای مینو نوشت و گفت باید غذای گرم بخورد و استراحت کند تا زود خوب شود.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is reward for kindness to every living thing.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Tombak virtuoso Pezhham Akhavass to join international musicians on U.S. tour

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian tombak virtuoso Pezhham Akhavass, who is also skilful in other percussion instruments, will join two international masters of percussion on a U.S. tour beginning in April.

Akhavass together with the master of Indian Tabla, Ustad Zakir Hussain, and Uzbek doyra virtuoso Abbos Kosimov will be giving live streaming concerts in several U.S. states running from April 8 to 18.

The three musicians combine the music cultures of India, Iran and Uzbekistan through their performances. Each musician performs one piece and together they will perform several other compositions.



This image features tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain performing alongside percussionists Abbos Kosimov (R) and Pezhham Akhavass at the Bing Concert Hall in Stanford in November 2020.

Born in 1980, Akhavass earned a bachelor's degree in music from Sureh University in Tehran in 2005, a second bachelor's degree in world music from the San Francisco State University in 2016, and a master's in music history in 2019.

From 2001 to 2007, he performed professionally with the renowned vocalist Shahram Nazeri during several international festivals and concerts across the world.

He has performed in Iran, Europe, United States, Australia and in numerous festivals, including the Festival del Popolo in Italy, Theatre de la Ville and Theatre du Soleil in Paris, Fes Festival in Morocco and Sodran Theatre in Sweden.

In 2009, he performed in Konya, Turkey, as part of the Mystic Music Festival. He later became a music director of the San Francisco World Music Festival for Iran.

Amid the pandemic in November 2020, Akhavass was invited to join and record with Ustad Zakir Hussain and Abbos Kosimov at the Bing Concert Hall as part of the Stanford Live Stream Project.

He has performed with some of the masters in Persian music, including Hossein Alizadeh, Ali-Akbar Moradi, Saeid Farajpuri, Hossein Omumi and Masud Shoari.

“The Recess” star Mojan Kordi receives nomination at Living Skies festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Mojan Kordi, the star of the short drama “The Recess” directed by Navid Nikkhah-Azad, has been nominated for the best performance award at the 33rd Living Skies Student Film Festival in Canada.

She received the nomination for the portrayal of Sahar, a rebel who decides to run away from school, disguise herself and go to a football game.



Mojan Kordi acts in a scene from the short drama “The Recess” directed by Navid Nikkhah-Azad.

The short film festival is organized every year in Regina, Saskatchewan, showcasing student work from all over the world.

Other nominees in the best performance category are Breeann DeHaven for her role in “Fine” by Lynette Piper from the University of Regina, Rosa Iranzo for her role in “Pleasure of Killing Bugs” by Leonardo Martinelli from Brazil, and Fan Ding Lun for his role in “Father’s Phone” by Yi Chia Fu from Taiwan.

The animated movie “Thinker” by Iranian director Mahdieh Raisi was also screened at the festival, however, it failed to receive a nomination.

John Graham, a multidisciplinary artist based in Saskatoon, Canada, Chinese-Canadian documentary director Weiye Su and Janet Perlman, a Montréal-based independent animation director, are the members of the jury.

17 Iranian books picked for Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava 2021

A R T **TEHRAN** — Seventeen books by Iranian illustrators have been selected for the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), which will be held in the capital of Slovakia from October 15, 2021 to January 9, 2022.

A jury composed of Fashid Mesqali, Sahar Tarhandeh, Alireza Golduzian, Kamal Tabatabai and Ali Buzari has picked the Iranian entries to the exhibition, the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Saturday.

A highlight of the collection is “You Are an Explorer” (also translated as “We Are Explorers”) by Ghazal Fathollahi.

The book written by Shahrzad Shahrjerd has also been published by La Maleta, a publisher in the autonomous community of Asturias in northwest Spain.

The book shows fraternity, imagination, collaboration and self-improvement against the pain of war. This book, through the love between two brothers and their imagination, leads us to reflect on the hardships suffered by some people as a result of conflicts in their countries of origin that force them to leave their homes in search of something better.

“Lili, Where Are You?” written and illustrated by Taravat Jalali is another major book of the collection. The book aims to help children cope with loss and loneliness, as well as strengthen



A combination photo shows the front covers of some books by Iranian illustrators selected for the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava.

their skills of observation and problem-solving.

The book tells the story of Papa, who has made a doll; one that is different from all his previous creations. The doll, however, suddenly goes missing. Papa looks everywhere for her; from the barbershop and the shoemaker’s store to the flower shop and the ice cream shop.

There is no trace of the doll. Until...

Mohammad-Hossein Matak’s acclaimed book “Machucheh and Crow” has also been selected.

In 2020, he was selected as one of the 12 winners of the Illustrators of the Future Contest in the U.S. city of Los Angeles for his illustrations for the book written by Afsaneh Shaban-nejad.

Ukrainian envoy invites Iranian troupe to perform “Holodomor” in Kiev

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Serhii Burdyljak, Ukraine’s ambassador to Iran, has invited Iran’s Seganeh Troupe to perform their play “Holodomor” in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev.

Burdyljak and a number of his colleagues were at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater on Friday to watch a performance of the play, which recapitulates the Holodomor, a famine planned by Joseph Stalin in Soviet Ukraine from 1932 to 1933 that killed millions of Ukrainians.

Raha Hajizeinal is the director of the play written by Ali Safari.

Burdyljak said that he would like to host the troupe in his country and help stage the play in capital Kiev if the Coronavirus restrictions permit, a public relations team of the Seganeh Troupe announced in a press release on Saturday.

He added that he wants the troupe to gain more information about the Holodomor, especially the writer and director, and to have the opportunity to visit the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide in Kiev where they can gain more information and give a much stronger performance in Kiev.

The ambassador also said that he will write a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to provide the facilities for the troupe to visit Ukraine for their performances.

Writer Safari said that writing about Holodomor is

very complicated and sensitive, and that he spent two years collecting information on writing the play.

Safari also said that the visit to Ukraine will help them to feel the events more strongly, and added, “We have also been through the war and are well aware of the bitter consequences of the war. I am sure after the visit to Ukraine, we can give a better and much stronger performance.”

Director Hajizeinal also said that the troupe is composed of young actors who have collaborated in the project will all their passion.

This play is the final part of a trilogy, which has been produced by Safari and Hajizeinal about World War II. “Women’s Auschwitz” and “Berlin 10:10” were other parts of the set, which were performed in 2019 and 2020.

The word Holodomor literally translated from Ukrainian means “killing by starvation”. The term Holodomor emphasizes the famine’s man-made and intentional aspects such as rejection of outside aid, confiscation of all household foodstuffs and restriction of population movement.

As part of the wider Soviet famine of 1932–33, which affected the major grain-producing areas of the country, millions of inhabitants of Ukraine, the majority of whom were ethnic Ukrainians, died of starvation in a peacetime catastrophe unprecedented in history of Ukraine.

Since 2006, the Holodomor has been recognized by Ukraine and 15 other countries as a genocide of the Ukrainian people carried out by the Soviet government.



Ukrainian Ambassador Serhii Burdyljak and his colleagues pose for a photo with the Seganeh Troupe after the performance of “Holodomor” at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater on March 5, 2021.

Some scholars believe that the famine was planned by Joseph Stalin to eliminate a Ukrainian independence movement.

A cast composed of Sarina Azad-Milani, Farshad Ayyubi, Mohammad Pasandideh, Tima Taqizadeh, Farzaneh Seiri, Ahu Shafiei, Milad Salehvand, Mehdi Abbasi, Nikka Qasemi, Atefeh Musavi and Alireza Valipour perform the play, which will remain on stage until March 12.

Iran displays latest offerings at New Delhi World Book Fair

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Iran Book and Literature House is taking part in the New Delhi World Book Fair, which opened Saturday.

Iran is attending the event, which is organized virtually for the first time due to the pandemic, with 70 different award-winning titles, including winners of Iran’s Book of the Year Awards, and winners of Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards and a selection of books at the first virtual edition of the Tehran Book Fair.

A Persian translation of Angelos Koutsourakis’ “The Cinema of Theo Angelopoulos” by Vahid Ruzbehani is one of the books, which won the award for best book on dramatic art issues at the 38th Iran’s Book of the Year Awards.

“Myth of Rasta” by Farshad Fereshteh-Hekmat was selected in the best play section. Lucy Soutter’s “Why Art Photography?” translated into Persian



A view of the New Delhi World Book Fair in 2020. (Express/Prerna Mittra)

by Mohsen Bairamnejad and Ben Long’s “Complete Digital Photography” translated into Persian by Dariush Esmaeili shared the award for best book on photography.

In the Visual Arts section, “Kubanech Pottery” by Firuz Mahjur and Erwin Panofsky’s “Perspective as Symbolic Form” translated into Persian by Mohammad

Sepahi won the award.

In the Literature category, “Mid-Day Incantations” by Mansur Alimoradi was selected as best novel, and the award for best Literary Criticism went to “History of the Body in Literature” by Seyyed Mehdi Zargani and colleagues.

The award for best Translation was shared by Maria Nikolajeva’s “Aesthetic Approaches to Children’s Literature: An Introduction” translated into Persian by Mehdi Hejvani and Fatemeh Zamani, and “An Introduction to Contemporary American Poetry” by Kamran Ahmadvogli and Bahdor Baqeri.

“Epic of Musayyebnameh” written by Mohammad-Baqai Vars Bukhari and Abu Taher Tarsusi, and translated and corrected by Milad Jafarpur won the award for best old text.

In the Physical Education section, the award was given to the Persian translation

of Claude Bouchard’s “Claude Bouchard’s “Molecular and Cellular Regulation of Adaptation to Exercise” translated into Persian by Abbas-Ali Gaini, Javad Tolueazar and Mohammad Hemmatinafar.

Winners of the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards were Fazlollah Saberi’s book “Frequency 1160” and Tayyebeh Pazuki’s “Gem of Patience” which shared the award in the documentation category.

The Iran Book and Literature House has also introduced the best books of children and young adults as well as the top children book writers, in addition to books on Iranian studies.

A number of online meetings have also been organized on the side section.

The 29th New Delhi World Book Fair will be running until March 9. The fair has been organized by the National Book Trust in association with the International Trade Organization of India.

“The Tempest” to hit Tehran theater with modern look

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Mostafa Kushki plans to stage William Shakespeare’s “The Tempest” with a modern view on the tragicomedy in Tehran.

“We have been working on the play over the past year and a half as Baqer Soroush is working to rewrite and prepare the play and we are rehearsing to reach the ideal performing concept,” Kushki told the Persian service of Honaronline on Saturday.

He said that “The Tempest” is a challenging play for his troupe and added, “Some plays are really plain and you can deal with it however you want, for example, Hamlet’s arrangements are clear for everybody, but ‘The Tempest’ is not so.”

He noted that his personal preference is to stage challenging plays and said that therefore, he often focuses on the plays, which have seldom been staged.

“The plays we consider, at a minimum, have had very few performances in the country and we like this challenge,” said Kushki whose troupe has previously performed Shakespeare’s plays “Coriolanus” and “A



Members of director Mostafa Kushki’s troupe perform “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at the Tehran Independent Theater on August 5, 2019. (IRNA/Meisam Alaqemandan)

Midsummer Night’s Dream”.

After the first scene, which takes place on a ship at

sea during a tempest, the rest of the story of the play is set on a remote island, where the sorcerer Prospero, a complex and contradictory character, lives with his daughter Miranda, and his two servants, Caliban, a savage monster figure, and Ariel, an airy spirit.

The play contains music and songs that evoke the spirit of enchantment on the island. It explores many themes, including magic, betrayal, revenge and family.

The COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 forced Kushki to shut down his Tehran Independent Theater company. However, his troupe has continued its activities.

“We have worked for a long time, but we had a permanent place for just five years. We have temporarily lost the place, however, we have never stopped our productions,” he said.

“On our projects, we always use young, promising actors along with professionals. We try to introduce them to the serious area of acting; this has been high on the agenda,” he noted.

The exact place and date for the performance will be announced later.