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Derek Chauvin trial an important test for America: Hamline University professor

BY REZA MOSHFEGH
A professor from Hamline University says that the trial of Derek Chauvin is a big test for America to hold police responsible.

"The Derek Chauvin trial that begins in Minnesota is an important test of the ability to hold police responsible for the use of force against persons of color," David Schultz tells the Tehran Times.

According to NPR, an appeals court has ordered a Minnesota judge to consider charging Derek Chauvin, former Minneapolis police officer, with third-degree murder in the death of George Floyd last May.

Hennepin County District Judge Peter Cahill had dismissed that charge in October, siding with Chauvin's defense team who argued the officer didn't put anyone other than the victim at risk. But a three-judge panel of the Minnesota Court of Appeals said Cahill failed to follow precedent.

Discrimination against people of color in America is not a novel problem. Its roots date back to slavery.

"America has faced significant structural racism since the founding of the nation. It was a country born with slavery, specifically slaves from Africa," Schultz remarks.

America still faces a problem of the color line; in cities across the country and in rural areas of the Old South, the black underclass's situation is bad and getting worse.

While the U.S. has abolished slavery and adopted many civil rights laws, much work still needs to be done.

The American professor says, "There are significant racial disparities in terms of economics, income, health care, criminal justice, and use of force by police officers against people of color."

The suffocation of George Floyd highlighted rampant racism in the United States.

Professor Schultz says Donald Trump brought racial rhetoric to the surface during his presidency.

"The racial division in the U.S. has always existed, but there is no question that it has increased in the last few years, especially under Donald Trump. His rhetoric inflamed racial tensions," Schultz argues.

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2,400 CBR centers inaugurated nationwide

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated 2,400 community-based rehabilitation (CBR) centers across the country through a video conference on Monday.

The CBR centers, called Mosbat-e Zendegi (literally meaning life plus), are small welfare organizations that provide about 22 services to clients, including responding to clients, assessing local needs, identifying volunteers and donors, educating the disabled, training life skills, etc.

Of these, 208 centers have been set up in 16 cities of Tehran province, Amin Shahrokhi, head of Tehran welfare organization said, IRNA reported.

The lack of infrastructure and urban adaptation had created problems for the disabled to move around the city and refer to the welfare organization so that these centers will support their surrounding neighborhoods, he explained.

By setting up these centers, persons with disabilities can receive the services at their place of residence, as the staff will go to the clients' house and assess their condition, he added.

Over 1.3m persons with disabilities live in Iran

Pirouz Hanachi, the mayor of Tehran, said in December 2019 that over 1.3 million people suffering from disabilities live in the country and the figure rises by 50,000 every year.

Majlis [the Iranian parliament] approved both general outlines and details of a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities in January 2018. Development of disability-friendly cities, free transportation, health insurance, free education, job creation, housing loans, and fewer working hours are some of the articles of the law.

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Protesters gather in Minneapolis on eve of George Floyd murder trial

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets of Minneapolis on Sunday, as tension builds on the eve of ex-cop Derek Chauvin's trial in the death of George Floyd.

The marchers displayed a white coffin draped with flowers and called for racial justice and a halt to police brutality, one day before jury selection is to begin in the volatile case, NY Post reported.

"We have to remember that a man lost his life, a family lost a brother, a family lost a father, they lost a son, they lost an uncle," Mohamed Ibrahim, deputy director of CAIR-MN, told the Star Tribune.

The march remained peaceful and included the music of Bob Marley, Prince, and Sam Cooke. It followed a prayer by clergy members with Pray for MN, an interfaith group formed after Floyd's May 25 death that now has 150 member churches.

"Maybe we should take time to reflect on how frequently it happens," demonstrator Ilyas Wehelie told the Tribune.

Protesters then gathered outside the Hennepin County Government Center, site of the upcoming trial that is due to begin with jury selection on Monday morning, WCCO said in a report.

Chauvin, 44, is charged with second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in Floyd's death. Viral video of the incident shows the ex-cop with his knee on Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes while he pleads for air.

The incident sparked worldwide protests condemning police brutality.

Minneapolis officials have beefed up security for the trial, bringing in National Guard troops, and state, county, and city police, and reinforcing the courthouse and police precincts with barricades, security fencing, and barbed wire.

UNESCO celebrates 1,750th anniversary of Iran university

TEHRAN – UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay has expressed delight over the 1,750th anniversary of the University of Gundi-Shapur, which has long been a major forum for science.

"Since its creation, this university, the intellectual capital of the Sassanid Empire, has been a major center for producing knowledge, a truly universal forum for science. It is this idea that we celebrate today," Azoulay said in a written message, addressing the 3rd international congress

on Gundi-Shapur, which opens today in Tehran.

The history of science in Gundi Shapur, which its origin dates far back in time, and its impact on the world are among the topics which are to be discussed in the two-day congress, according to organizers.

"This fundamental principle echoes the motto inscribed at the entrance of the University of Gundi-Shapur in Iran, 1,750 years ago: Science and knowledge, virtue and wisdom, are more important than force and sword," Azoulay said.

"Indeed, the university has played a crucial role in Iran's historical excellence in science. In ancient times, Persia was a center for scientific achievement and a conduit of knowledge – from China and India in the East, to Greece and Rome in the West."

Moreover, the general director of the UN body reminded that the Islamic Republic is one key partner of UNESCO in knowledge and science.

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Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival honors winners

TEHRAN— Iran's 18th Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival was brought to an end on Sunday honoring the winners in an award-winning ceremony held at the Vahdat Hall in Tehran.

Speaking at the ceremony, the director of Iran's Dramatic Arts Center, Qader Ashena, said that they are happy that they could hold the festival online, adding that the shows were warmly received by the viewers on different platforms.

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Every religion is political: professor

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - Noting that claim of being apolitical is a political statement, a University of Michigan professor of Islamic studies says that "every religion is political".

Talking to the Tehran Times, Alexander Knysh says, "Every religion is political, even when its followers claim it is not."

"The claim of being apolitical is itself a political statement and political stance," Knysh adds.

In recent years the Islamic world has witnessed bloody conflicts under the pretext of religion while the real reason for these conflicts lies in geopolitical struggles between regional actors.

"The current geopolitical situation is conducive to conflict because of the geopolitical players' inequality," the professor of Islamic studies emphasizes.

Following is the text of the interview:
What are the origins of mysticism in Islam? And in which countries or regions was it more influential?

Mysticism emerged as an ascetic (world-renouncing) way of life and system of mystical thought and practice during the first two Islamic centuries (8th and 9th centuries CE). The exact time and place in which mysticism made its first appearance are impossible to determine. It seems that there have been several centers in which the first Muslim ascetics-mystics were active, especially the Levant (Greater Syria), Iraq (Basra and Kufa, and later on Baghdad), Khorasan, and Central Asia. Egypt was another such center, but we do not have much evidence textual about the activities of local ascetic-mystical communities until the early ninth century (third century of the Hijra calendar).

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Blinken proposes to include Iran among others in Afghan peace talks

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Secretary of State Antony Blinken is proposing a series of steps to restart Afghanistan's stalled peace process between the government and Taliban, according to a letter from Blinken to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani published Sunday by Afghanistan's TOLONews, Politico reported.

The letter calls for bringing the two sides together for a UN-facilitated conference with foreign ministers and envoys from Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and the United States "to discuss a unified approach to supporting peace in Afghanistan."

Politico reminded the Biden administration is determined to bring peace to Afghanistan and wrote, "Blinken also calls for holding talks between the Afghan government and Taliban in a senior-level meeting in Turkey in the coming weeks to hammer out a revised proposal for a 90-day reduction in violence. The secretary of state has also called on special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad to share with both the Afghan government and Taliban written proposals to help accelerate discussions."

Blinken also made clear in the letter that the Biden administration continues to consider a "full withdrawal" of the roughly 2,500 U.S. forces in the country by the May 1 deadline negotiated by the Trump administration.

The State Department declined to comment on the reports concerning the efforts of U.S. towards peace in the region.

"We have not made any decisions about our force posture in Afghanistan after May 1," the State Department announced in a statement. "All options remain on the table."

Politico acknowledged that Afghanistan presents one of the new administration's most difficult foreign policy decisions and stressed, "The U.S. public is weary of a war nearly 20 years old, but pulling out now could be seen as giving the Taliban too much leverage and casting a shadow over the sacrifices made by U.S. and coalition troops and Afghan civilians."

Blinken urged Ghani to quickly embrace the proposal and underscored his concern that the security situation in the country could quickly deteriorate as the weather warms in Afghanistan.

"Even with the continuation of financial assistance from the United States to your forces after an American military withdrawal, I am concerned that the security situation will worsen and the Taliban could make rapid territorial gains," Blinken wrote in the letter.

Iran to unveil hovercraft in next calendar year

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's first homegrown hovercraft will come into operation within the next year, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi announced on Monday, says according to Tasnim news agency.



Addressing a meeting of Navy commanders, Khanzadi noted the first hovercraft made in Iran will join the Navy's fleet in the next Iranian year, which will begin on March 21, Tasnim reported.

Pointing to the Navy's self-sufficiency in the maintenance and repair of military vessels and sub-surface watercraft, the commander stressed, "The Navy has brought glory to the Armed Forces by unveiling Makran forward base ship and the Zereh (Armor) missile-launching frigate."

All units of the Iranian Navy are currently equipped with

homegrown missiles, he reader admiral said, unveiling plans to furnish the military ships with missiles with vertical launch system.

On Monday, the Navy and IRGC naval force signed a memorandum of understanding in areas of education, intelligence and research. It took place as Rear Admiral Khanzadi and IRGC Navy Commander Alireza Tangsiri held a meeting to for closer coordination.

During the meeting, Khanzadi said the prevalent security condition in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman is due to continued and powerful presence of the navies from the two military branches in strategic waters.

Zarif: JCPOA opponents' purpose is to securitize Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister, says opponents of the 2015 nuclear deal — JCPOA — are seeking to make Iran a security issue. "The problems of the foreign opponents of the JCPOA are not nuclear issue; their purpose is to securitize Iran," Zarif said in an interview with the Persian language newspaper Mardomsalari published on Monday.

The chief diplomat also said the opponents of the JCPOA in Iran who were thinking that the JCPOA favored the United States had predicted that Donald Trump will not abandon the agreement.

Zarif also strongly refuted his possible candidacy in the June presidential elections, saying he is adamant in his view.

He also said all the claims about the projected 25-year partnership agreement between Iran and China are not true.

The foreign minister also warned that the recent U.S. airstrikes against Syria can spread insecurity to all regional states.

"I feel Biden admin has not yet reached a conclusion on foreign policy"

"It seems that Mr. Biden still continues to pursue the maximum pressures policy through sanctions and regional mistakes despite officially acknowledging the failure of Mr. Trump's policy of maximum pressure. Their move against Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty was highly dangerous and will yield no results but spreading insecurity in the region," Fars quoted Zarif as telling Mardomsalari.

"I feel that Mr. Biden's administration has not yet reached a conclusion on foreign policy," he noted, saying that he is also pressured by different groups, including the extremists in the U.S., Israel, and certain regional countries.

On a question that Americans says the Iranian parliamentary ratification is an ultimatum and they don't give in ultimatum, Zarif said, "We believe that these remarks are not true, because it was an issue between the government and Majlis [Parliament] and that Majlis has set a date for the government and its addressee is not the foreign side"

"I think that they have not yet been able to make a decision because of the pressures and that they are not yet convinced that the maximum pressure is a failed policy. Of course, they have stated this, but they have not yet become convinced practically."

The veteran diplomat made a philosophical statement saying, "A good result cannot be expected from a wrong policy."

Ex-U.S. intelligence officer advises Biden to rejoin JCPOA with no preconditions

‘Biden has boxed himself into a corner on Iran’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran will not accept the Biden administration's unrealistic and unreasonable demands for the U.S. to rejoin the nuclear agreement, former U.S Marine Corps intelligence officer Scott Ritter wrote in Russia Today on March 5.

"So the president is going to have to show some pragmatism and flexibility to move things forward," said Ritter who served as a UN weapons inspector from 1991-1998.

The U.S. Senate confirmation hearings for President Joe Biden's nominee for the position of deputy secretary of state, Wendy Sherman, suggested interesting insights into the quandary facing the Biden administration in fulfilling a campaign pledge to rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he wrote.

He acknowledged Sherman faces an uphill fight given her prior role in negotiating the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement and noted, "Many senior Democrats, including Senator Bob Menendez, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Services Committee overseeing her hearing, are vehemently opposed to the deal."

Ritter emphasized Menendez's arguments against the Iran nuclear deal, initially articulated during a floor speech in May 2015, have not changed over time and wrote, "He does not trust Iran to comply with the deal, and is fearful of any movement toward rejoining the agreement that would keep Congress out of the loop."

"He also believes that there can be no agreement on Iran's nuclear program that does not consider its ballistic missile capabilities and so-called 'malign' activities in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, among others," the former American intelligence officer noted.

He reminded that Menendez's position is not far removed from that of Joe Biden and stressed, "While the public perception is that candidate Joe Biden made a straightforward campaign pledge to rejoin the Iran nuclear agreement if elected, the reality is somewhat different. In a September 2020 op-ed penned for CNN, Biden outlined a course of action that reflects the thinking of his administration when it comes to Iran's nuclear program.



'I will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy,' Biden noted then. 'If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern'."

"Prior to 2014, the Obama administration had insisted on Iran's total abandonment of nuclear enrichment as a precondition for the lifting of sanctions. Ultimately, Iran refused to yield, while actually expanding the size and capabilities of its indigenous enrichment capability," Ritter wrote.

He argued Biden boxed itself into a corner where the only path out was an unwinnable war that would devastate West Asia and reminded, "The Obama administration capitulated on its demands of zero enrichment, agreeing to permit Iran to engage in limited enrichment activity which would be subjected to restrictions that would ease and eventually expire over time. This was the JCPOA, which Sherman helped negotiate."

He criticized the Biden administration for making a similar "red line"-based argument when it comes to rejoining the agreement and underlined, "Either Iran agrees to preconditions regarding the JCPOA's de facto renegotiation — which would include greater restrictions on its nuclear program spread

out over a longer period, limits on its ballistic missile program, and restraint when it comes to support for its regional allies — or no deal."

Ritter admitted the outcome of this approach is obvious- no deal will be reached- and emphasized, "A Biden administration offer to join Iran, together with the other parties to the JCPOA, in direct talks was rejected by Iran. Far from a blanket rejection, however, the Iranian decision was because the U.S. would not provide assurances that the talks would be limited to the JCPOA. Iran has made it clear that it is ready to engage in discussions concerning the unconditional return to the JCPOA by the U.S., inclusive of the lifting of all sanctions. However, Iran feared that the Biden administration and its European allies would use any formal meeting as a vehicle for redefining the conditions for the U.S. rejoining the JCPOA, thereby providing legitimacy to these conditions. The Biden administration offer was a trap, one which was identified beforehand by Iran and disarmed."

Pointing to anti Iran efforts of Western powers in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors, he wrote, "The U.S., together with the UK, France and Germany, had put forward a resolution to the IAEA Board of Governors which was very critical of Iran. The proposed resolution would have echoed the concerns expressed by the

IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi in a statement made to the Board of Governors. Grossi highlighted his concerns over Iran's decision to stop its implementation of the provisions of the Additional Protocol and Modified code 3.1 of the subsidiary arrangements to the Safeguards Agreement, conditions it had voluntarily agreed to comply with as part of the JCPOA."

"Tehran feared a repeat of a precedent set by the U.S. in 2005-2006, where it was able to transform technical concerns over Iranian compliance into a political issue that eventually saw the Iran nuclear file transferred away from the IAEA Board of Governors to the UN Security Council," he added.

He asserted Iran's major demands as part of the JCPOA was to have its file transferred out of the Security Council and back to the IAEA Board of Governors and wrote, "Facing the repeat of history, Iran let it be known that if the IAEA Board of Governors were to take up this U.S.-backed resolution, it would cease all cooperation with the IAEA on JCPOA-related activity, in effect killing the agreement. Yielding to this reality, the UK, France, and Germany withdrew their support for the U.S. resolution."

Ritter hopeful that the IAEA and Iran have an agreement in place to keep the infrastructure that serves as the framework for inspection-based compliance verification of the JCPOA intact and underlined, "Iran has committed to instantly returning to full compliance with its obligations under the JCPOA once all sanctions are lifted. The quickest way for this to happen would be the unconditional return of the U.S. to the JCPOA. The IAEA-Iranian agreement, however, comes with a three-month deadline, after which Iran will permanently scrap the frozen inspection framework. Iran has made it clear that it will not yield on its demands."

Ultimately, he concluded, "The Biden administration is left with two choices — stand its ground and see the JCPOA collapse and the probability of conflict with Iran increase, or issue an executive order that has the U.S. rejoining the JCPOA without preconditions. These are the 'facts on the ground,' and no amount of 'nostalgia' can change them."

It's a wonder Iran has not ditched the JCPOA...

By Martin Love

Old man Joe Biden is showing a lack of fresh thinking more than anyone suspected he would, given his campaign promises, and this so soon in his own bizarre presidency. Some of his best promises have turned to dust.

The promised \$15 per hour minimum wage has been put on hold and Biden has not come out swinging for it as it seemed he might have last fall before his election although many Democrats in Congress have. (Given inflation in recent years, the true fair number for adjusted hourly wages is actually \$24 an hour in the U.S.)

Even worse is the pass he gave to Muhammad bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince, whom the CIA with obvious evidence charged with ordering the assassination of Saudi journalist and Washington Post writer Jamal Khashoggi.

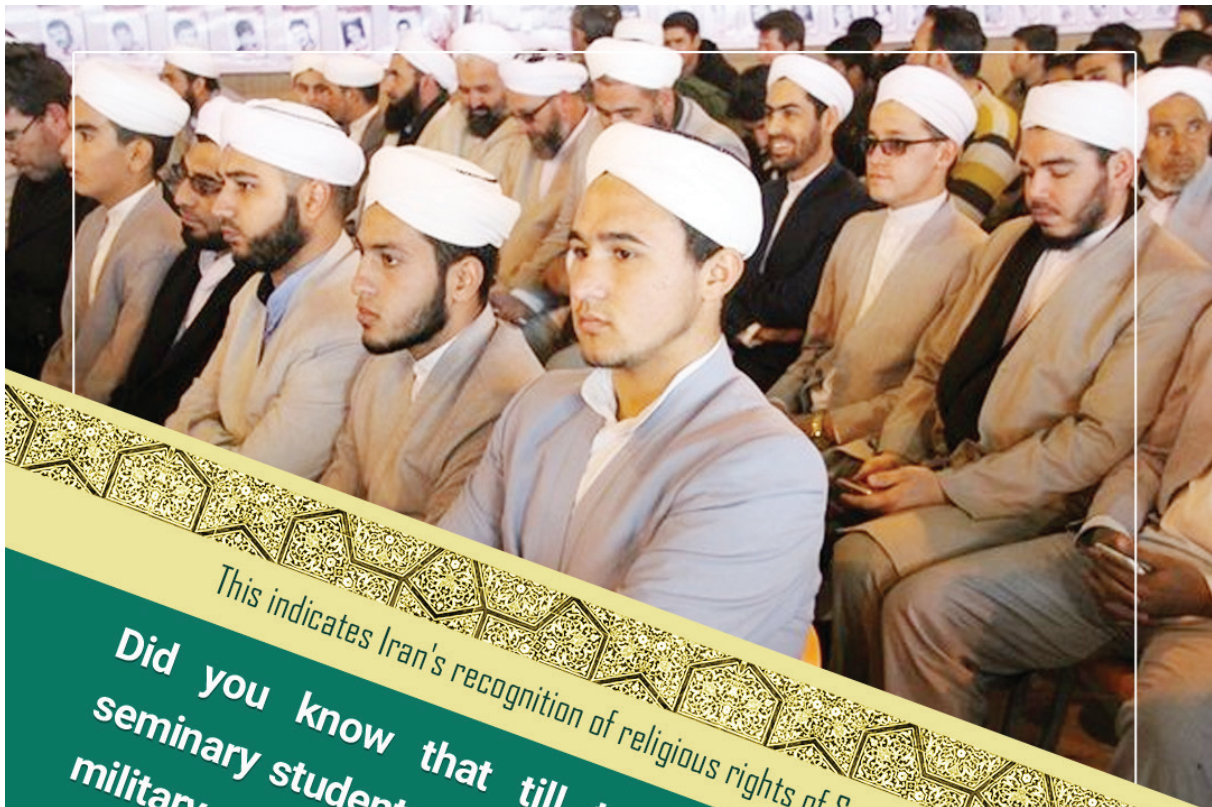
This matter is especially interesting to this writer because the biggest unofficial apologist for the Saudi's medieval kingdom happens to be a former student in 1972 in Beirut at the fancy private school called International College, one 'Ali Shihabi.

Shihabi was around 12 years old in 1972, the son of a Norwegian mother and Saudi father. He did not look Arab. He was a blonde back then and widely traveled and rich. He even sported an expensive Rolex watch on his diminutive wrist and he wore Western garb. He was a fair student, too, at 12 in an English class but also somewhat full of himself. Later, he went to Princeton and Harvard Business School. And later still after time as a banker, he started something (now defunct) called the "Arabia Foundation", an alleged "think" tank but really just an operation apologizing for and defending the Saudi state. At any rate he became and remains a slick, unofficial and well-known pundit and "ambassador" of sorts speaking out knowingly for the Saudis in Washington. No doubt this is lucrative.

On the Khashoggi murder he has been vehemently defending MBS. Right after the event in 2018 he claimed, aw shucks, everyone makes a mistake from time to time. Later, he is saying:

"The U.S. government went in and destroyed Iraq" and then he asks rhetorically who was held responsible for that? Shihabi has also just warned that if real pressure is brought to bear on the Saudis and especially MBS by the Biden Administration that Riyadh's displeasure with the U.S. would push the Saudis under MBS to look beyond the U.S. for support. Slick Shihabi also pointed out that China is already Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner. It's hard to imagine this is not a threat to the U.S.

Another notable Biden failure so far is his lack of formerly promised immediate movement on the revival of the JCPOA. So far the Biden gang and Iran have been stuck in a standoff, each declaring that the other should make concessions first. Of course, it stands to moral reason that the U.S. act first and drop the sanctions first since it was the U.S. that destroyed the carefully crafted nuclear deal, and not Iran. Of course, the Republicans are as usual saying that Biden must take a harder line and not lift sanctions until Iran agrees to broad concessions on its missile arsenal (Iran's sole serious defense against attack!) and regional military policies. Also, there are some Democrats in Congress who have aligned with Republicans on the Iranian issue.



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

Did you know that till today hundreds of Sunni seminary students and scholars have completed their military service in the form of educational, preaching and cultural activities in Sunni religious centers?



SPORTS

Iran come third at Sofia Taekwondo Open

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran finished in the third place at the eighth edition of the Sofia Taekwondo Open.

The Iranian taekwondo practitioners claimed two gold medals in the event and came third with 230 points.

Hossein Lotfi at -54kg and Amirmohammad Bakhshi at -80kg categories won two gold medals.

Iran has sent six taekwondo practitioners to Bulgaria. Iran taekwondo national team will also hold a 10-day training camp in Sofia after the Open.

Jordan won the tournament's champions with 530 points, grabbing three gold, three silver and one bronze medals.

Team GB came second with 450 points, taking three gold medals, one silver and two bronze.

This event brought more than 100 athletes from 12 countries together in Sofia.

Iran to send 13 karatekas to Karate 1-Premier League Istanbul

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** –Iran will send 13 male and female karate practitioners to the 2021 Karate 1-Premier League Istanbul.

The city of Istanbul in Turkey will become Karate's capital from March 12 to 14 as the first international event after the pandemic outbreak will take place there. Expectations are running high among the whole Karate family since the wait is finally over. The last international competition took place in Salzburg, Austria) from Feb. 28 to March 01, 2020.

Nearly 600 karatekas from 72 countries are registered to participate in the event. Seven Grand Winners including local star Serap Ozcelik Arapoglu and World title-holders Sandra Sanchez of Spain and Irina Zaretska of Azerbaijan and no less than nine World champions such as Jonathan Horne of Germany and Bahman Asgari Ghoncheh of Iran have confirmed their presence in Istanbul.

Iran will send seven male and six female karatekas to the prestigious event.

Amir Mehdizadeh, Aliasghar Asiabari, Bahman Asgari Ghoncheh, Zabihollah Poorshab, Sajad Ganjzadeh, Saleh Abazari and Abolfazl Shahrjerdi will represent Iran's men's team.

And Rozita Alipour, Sara Bahmanyar, Shima Alesaaadi, Fatemeh Sadeghi, Negin Bagheri and Mahsa Afsaneh are members of Iran's female team. The tournament is scheduled to start on Friday, March 12. The finals are slated for Sunday, March 14.

Istanbul is hosting the Karate 1-Premier League for the seventh time. The last time that the Turkish city welcomed Karate's biggest event was in 2018.

Iran topped the medal table with three golds followed by Japan and Turkey both with two gold medals.

Saket Elhami named Nassaji coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** –Saket Elhami was named as new head coach of Nassaji football team on Monday.

The 50-year-old coach replaced Majid Jalali at the Ghaemshahr based football team.

Jalali replaced Vahid Fazeli in January but the team just bagged one point in six matches.

Former Tractor coach Elhami, who had been nominated to lead Esteghlal and Aluminum, will resume his job after six months.

He was banned from all football activities by the Disciplinary Committee of the Iranian Football Federation for three months after pushing the officials in Hazfi Cup final between Tractor and Esteghlal.

Elhami has a difficult task ahead since Nassaji are 15th in Iran Professional League and he must keep battling to avoid relegation.

Ghanbarzadeh named acting secretary general of Iran football federation

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Mansour Ghanbarzadeh was named as acting secretary general of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) on Monday.

At the Board of Directors meeting held in the federation's headquarters, he was named as FFIRI acting secretary general. On Sunday, Mehdi Mohammadnabi stepped down as his role after one year.

Ghanbarzadeh has previously worked as chairman of Naft Tehran club.

Last week, Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem was elected as president of Iran football federation for a four-year term.

Iran volleyball league final to be held on Friday and Sunday

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** –The final match between Foolad Sirjan and Shahrdari Urmia at the Iran Volleyball Super League will be held on Friday and Sunday.

Shahrdari earned a hard-fought 3-2 (23-25, 26-24, 25-17, 23-25, 15-10) win over Labanati Haraz at the Iran Volleyball Federation Hall in Tehran on Sunday.

Foolad also defeated Sepahan in straight sets (27-25, 25-15, 25-21) to advance to the final.

The Iranian Super League (ISL) is a professional volleyball league in Iran at the top of the Iranian volleyball league system. It was founded in 1975 as the Pasargard Cup, but after the Iranian Revolution it was renamed to the first Division.

In 1997 the league system was revamped and the Iranian Super League was established. Paykan Tehran have won the most titles in the new Super League with 12 titles.

A blessing in disguise

U.S. provides Saudi Arabia with opportunity for a face-saving exit from Yemen quagmire

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** – The Biden administration has ramped up diplomatic pressure on the Saudis to convince them into bringing an end to the Yemen war.

The Saudis have grudgingly accepted to go along with the American initiative on Yemen but this initiative could redound to their advantage.

In his early days as president, Joe Biden sent a clear message to Saudi Arabia that the days of Washington giving unwavering support for Saudi military operations in Yemen are over.

“This war has to end. And to underscore our commitment, we’re ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arm sales,” President Biden said in a recent speech at the State Department while underling the U.S. commitment to ensuring Saudi Arabia's security and territorial integrity.

The Biden administration also removed Yemen's Ansarullah movement from the U.S. government's list of foreign terrorist organizations. Further highlighting the change in its Yemen policy, the U.S. also named veteran U.S. diplomat Timothy Lenderking as the U.S. special envoy for Yemen in a bid to step up American diplomacy “to end the war in Yemen, a war which has created humanitarian and strategic catastrophe,” according to a Reuters report.

The new U.S. approach to the Yemen war came after the new U.S. administration came to terms with the fact that Saudi Arabia can never win this war and that there is an urgent need to end the war in a face-saving way.

The Saudis, however, don't seem to have reached that conclusion yet. They still insist on excluding the Ansarallah movement and returning the obsolete, self-proclaimed government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, who resigned in 2015 and ultimately fled Yemen in an effort to invite foreign intervention.

Saudi Arabia and its allies invaded Yemen in March 2015. The invasion was supposed to quickly oust the new Sanaa government and return Hadi to his former position. But the invasion turned into a years-long war



that continues today.

The Saudi war on Yemen was waged to achieve one major goal: eliminate the Ansarallah and the Sanaa-based government it helped establish.

In an attempt to justify its aggression on Yemen, Saudi Arabia claimed that Ansarallah is backed by Iran and that the war on Yemen was primarily focused on eliminating foreign influence in the Arab country. To this end, the Saudis and their allies besieged Yemen and prevented free coming and going to Yemen. Despite the blockade on Yemen, the Saudis failed to defeat the Sanaa government. In fact, this government now seems to be even stronger than ever given its recent attacks on several strategic targets deep inside Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday, Saudi Arabia announced that its strategic oil facilities at Ras Tanura port were targeted by drones, according to the Saudi energy ministry.

An official spokesman at the ministry told Saudi Press Agency on Sunday that one of the petroleum tank farms at the Ras Tanura Port in the Eastern Region, one of the largest oil shipping ports in the world,

was attacked this morning by a drone. The official claimed that the drone was coming from the direction of the sea.

The official added that another deliberate attempt was also made this evening to attack Saudi Aramco's facilities. The spokesman said Shrapnel from a ballistic missile fell near Saudi Aramco's area in the city of Dhahran. The spokesman said that both attacks did not result in any injury or loss of life or property.

Brigadier General Turki Al-Malki, spokesman for Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defense, confirmed the attack on the oil facilities at Ras Tanura port.

In a statement carried by the Saudi state news agency, he said the attack targeted “one of the Petroleum Tank Farms in Ras Tanura Port in the Eastern Province using a bomb-laden UAV that came from the sea.” He also confirmed the second attack on Aramco facilities in Dhahran.

“The attacking bomb-laden UAV that came via the sea was intercepted and destroyed prior to reaching its target. The ballistic missile that was launched to target Aramco facilities in Dhahran was intercepted and destroyed as well. The interception resulted in scattered

debris that fell in close proximity to civilians and civilian objects,” the Saudi defense official claimed.

The Yemeni forces claimed responsibility for the attacks on Aramco facilities in Eastern Saudi Arabia. They said the attack, codenamed 6th Operation of Balanced Deterrence, came in response to Saudi continued aggression and siege against Yemen.

The recent attack was the latest sign that Saudi Arabia has not only failed to defeat the Yemeni forces but it also failed to protect itself from Yemen's retaliatory strikes.

Instead of coming to their senses and ending the war on Yemen, the Saudis continue to level accusations on Iran. Al-Maliki claimed on Monday that the missile and drones used by the Yemeni forces to target Saudi Arabia's oil port and facilities were supplied by Iran, a claim that Iran has repeatedly rejected.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said on Monday that finding a political solution is the only way out of the Yemen crisis.

Commenting on the Yemeni attacks on the Aramco facilities, Khatibzadeh said, “The reason for what is happening in Yemen today is the aggression that has been going on for six years and the blatant injustice that millions of Yemenis are being subjected to, and what we are witnessing is the indiscriminate bombing operations that take place in separate areas of Yemen.”

Saudi Arabia now can quit the Yemen quagmire by seizing on the American pressure to end its military operations in Yemen and leave Yemeni factions to pursue a political solution on their own. The Saudis have failed to find a way out of the Yemen crisis so far. Now that the U.S. is pushing for an end to the Yemen war, the Saudis can seize on this momentum and put an end to an unwinnable war.

This will redound to their advantage because if they continue the war, they will likely lose the war and their credibility at once. The Saudis have grumbled about the American efforts in this regard, but for Saudi Arabia, these efforts may prove a blessing in disguise.

Biden pursues Trump's policy against Iran: Foreign Ministry

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** – The new U.S. administration of Joe Biden pursues the same policy that the Trump administration pursued against Iran, Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

Speaking at a weekly press conference, Khatibzadeh said, “For several years, the United States has been driving in the wrong direction on the highway, thinking that others who are on the right path are going wrong. The sooner the United States realizes the right direction of the highway, the better for the international community and multilateralism.”

The spokesman said the U.S. should change its path, fully implement its commitments, and lift sanctions, which he described as “crime.”

“The United States must know that the people of Iran will never forget the current U.S. crimes,” Khatibzadeh said, adding, “Up until today, the Biden administration has pursued exactly the path of the Trump administration.”

He also suggested that Iran will not meet with the U.S. so long as the Biden administration continues to implement the Trump administration's pressure campaign against Iran.

“If a meeting were to take place, it would certainly have happened with Trump's better funambulism,” Khatibzadeh noted, calling on the Biden administration to change tack, effectively implement its commitment and then talk about being a member of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

He also said there were no contacts between Tehran and Washington about the nuclear deal.

“We have not had and don't have any direct or indirect contact with the United States on the JCPOA or non-JCPOA issues,” the spokesman said.

But he said that Iran is holding “very sensitive” talks with the JCPOA parties.

“What is going on in this area about the JCPOA is very sensitive. We have very close talks with the remaining parties in the JCPOA, but we did not have talks with the United States,” Khatibzadeh pointed out.

He was responding to what Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif meant by his latest tweet that Iran is preparing a “concrete plan of action” on the nuclear deal.

“Iranian polity is vibrant & officials express diverse opinions. But those opinions should NOT be confused with state policy. As Iran's FM & chief nuclear negotiator, I will shortly present our constructive concrete plan of action—through proper diplomatic channels,” Zarif said in a tweet on Friday.

According to Khatibzadeh, some deliberations about the JCPOA are going on in Iran and will be completed soon.

“Inside Iran, some points are being reviewed and completed. Zarif's tweet was in the same direction. Let the media allow this sensitive issue to move forward in its context, and the media will be informed when the outcome is reached,” Khatibzadeh remarked.

Earlier on Sunday, Zarif and his Irish counterpart Simon Coveney discussed issues of mutual interest in bilateral, regional and international affairs as well as the 2015 nuclear deal.

The two sides emphasized the necessity of continuing political consultations as well as economic exchanges, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The top Irish diplomat underlined that as arranged, Ireland's embassy will gradually reopen in Tehran.

The two top diplomats also exchanged views on the JCPOA. The Iranian foreign minister reiterated Tehran's principled



policy on the need for the removal of illegal U.S. sanctions fully and effectively as a step that would, in turn, see Iran reverse the measures it has adopted to scale down its obligations under the JCPOA.

Coveney, for his part, said Ireland stands ready to facilitate the process as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and a facilitator of the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and as a member of the European Union.

Among other topics discussed was ways of helping ease regional tensions where the two sides discussed developments in the Persian Gulf, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, occupied Palestine, Afghanistan and the Caucasus.

The Irish foreign minister also met with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. During the meeting, Rouhani announced Iran's readiness to cooperate with international institutions to resolve regional crises, and stressed, “The best way to resolve problems with European partners at various bilateral, regional and international levels is negotiation based on mutual respect and the avoidance of any threat or pressure.”

Referring to the failure of illegal sanctions and the maximum pressure of the United States against the Iranian people and the admittance of the new administration on this issue, Rouhani said, “The activation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as a multilateral international agreement, is subject to the lifting of sanctions by the United States and the full observance of commitments by all members,” according to a statement issued by the Iranian presidency.

Criticizing the inaction of Europe towards their commitments under the JCPOA, the president added, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to the deal and its preservation, and is the only party that has paid for it, but this cannot continue this way, and full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 by all members is essential for maintaining and reviving the JCPOA.”

Referring to Iran's move to suspend the implementation of the Additional Protocol based on the resolution of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament), Rouhani

“If a meeting were to take place (with the U.S.), it would certainly have happened with Trump's better funambulism,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Khatibzadeh notes.

stressed, “Despite the suspension of the implementation of the Additional Protocol, Iran is still determined to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.”

The President continued, “Iran is ready to take immediate compensatory measures in accordance with the provisions of the JCPOA and fulfill its obligations after the lifting of illegal U.S. sanctions and their abandonment of the policy of intimidation and pressure.”

Rouhani also called for the development and deepening of Tehran-Dublin relations in all fields, especially economic and trade relations, and stressed the use of all existing capacities in this field, stating, “The two countries have a lot of untapped capacities in all dimensions that we should attempt to tap.”

During the same meeting, the foreign minister of Ireland referred to his country's role as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the next two years and the role of facilitating the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, saying, “Trump's withdrawal from the deal was a historic mistake and the new U.S. administration is determined to return to the deal.”

Underlining that Dublin values the JCPOA as an international agreement for peace, Foreign Minister Coveney added, “We will do our best to maintain the JCPOA and we are ready to play any role that can help improve the situation and resume talks between all JCPOA members.”

Referring to the changes in the U.S. administration and the desire of the country's statesmen to return to the JCPOA, the Irish foreign minister said, “With the new conditions, there is a good opportunity for negotiation and dialogue, which should be used to require all members to implement the deal.”

Prior to securing a seat on the UN Security Council in early January, Ireland had said it will work to preserve the JCPOA, vowing to do everything in its power to preserve the nuclear deal.

Ireland became a UN Security Council member from January 1 alongside Norway. Two weeks before Ireland took its seat on the Security Council, Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ireland's permanent representative to the UN, told the Oireachtas foreign affairs committee that Ireland will work to preserve the Iran nuclear deal.

“One key area we will watch very carefully will be Iran, and the future of the JCPOA nuclear deal, in the context of possible U.S. re-engagement,” Nason said, adding that 2021 is “likely to be a critical year and a difficult year for the Iran nuclear deal,” given Iran's next presidential election.

“The window for both sides to re-engage is narrowing,” she continued.

Nason vowed that Ireland will work at the UN body to ensure the survival of the JCPOA.

“As an EU country, Ireland will, of course, do everything it can at the Security Council to preserve the JCPOA agreement,” she pointed out, noting that Ireland sees the JCPOA as a major diplomatic achievement and the best way to constrain Iran's nuclear program and to help bring peace to the region.

Nason stated, “Our long history of support for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation allows us to play an impartial but principled role in the Council's role on this issue.”

The European signatories to the JCPOA have called for a meeting between Iran and the U.S. within the framework of the P5+1. But has Iran said the U.S. must lift sanctions before any such meeting can take place.

TEDPIX climbs 24,000 points on Monday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 24,344 points to 1.199 million on Monday.

Over 7.888 billion securities worth 110.827 trillion rials (about \$2.638 billion) were traded at the TSE on Monday.

The first market's index rose 20,763 points, and the second market's index gained 39,063 points.

After several days of decline, growth finally returned to TSE, Iran's major stock exchange, as TEDPIX gained 5,861 points to 1.175 million on Sunday.

The index had dropped 2.3 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

Exports from Iranian ports up 7% in 11 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami said that exports from the ports of country have risen seven percent during the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Meanwhile, as announced last month by the head of the country's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), the capacity of Iranian ports is expected to increase to 280 million tons by the end of the current government's incumbency (early August).

Mohammad Rastad put the current loading and unloading capacity of the country's ports at 250 million tons.

"We have signed 300 contracts with the private sector for conducting development projects including the construction of structures, equipment, and even infrastructure in ports," Rastad said.

According to the official the private sector has currently invested over 160 trillion rials (about \$3.8 billion) in the country's ports.

Mentioning the restrictions created by the U.S. sanctions in the country's ports and maritime activities, the official said: "In all areas which were affected by the U.S. sanctions we tried to rely on domestic capacities and managed to keep the ports active and the country's imports and exports afloat."

The capacity, infrastructure, and equipment of the ports have made it possible for them to be able to load and unload goods in accordance with international standards, he stressed.

"For all kinds of goods and all types of vessels, including light to heavy goods and also super-sized commodities and vessels, there are berths and special terminals in the country that can provide the necessary services," Rastad added.

The official put the total length of the Iranian port wharves at 39 kilometers, saying that this has made it possible for different types of ships and vessels to be able to dock and load or unload their cargoes.



"Today, we have no problems regarding the loading and unloading of basic goods, bulk goods, and containers in the country's ports, and the commodity owners are not obliged to pay demurrage charges (damages for delayed unloading and loading) to ships because of port operations, and this shows how standard the Iranian ports are," the PMO head added.

Over the past eight years, the capacity of Iranian ports has increased by more than 80 million tons, which means on average every year 10 million tons have been added to the capacity of the country's southern and northern ports.

Highlighting the good performance of the country's ports in the current year, Iran's First Vice President Es'hag Jahangiri has said that 122 million tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded at the ports during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021).

Making the remarks when visiting a port in the southwest of the country last month, Jahangiri said that during the last three years and in the most severe and unprecedented sanctions against the country, the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has been able to perform very well in unloading and loading goods, and this is commendable.

PMO head has recently said that the country's trade gateways were not closed even a moment despite the sanctions and pandemic, adding that loading and unloading of goods, especially the essential goods, are continuously conducted at the ports.

As announced by Rastad, loading and unloading of commodities are being conducted continuously at the ports of Iran while the health requirements are completely met.

Rastad has reiterated that all port operations are done observing healthcare protocols and the principles set by the Coronavirus Containment Headquarters.

In a statement in mid-October last year, PMO declared that loading and unloading of commodities are underway continuously at the country's ports.

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

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

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

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

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

As reported, loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Iran have risen six percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

Majlis wraps up reviewing next year's budget bill

1 → after making the necessary amendments, the government resubmitted the bill to the parliament, and Majlis approved the amendments of the national budget bill in mid-February.

After approving the general outlines, the budget review committee has been holding several sessions for reviewing the details of the bill.

The first session of the budget review committee was held on February 20 in which the parliament determined the share of the National Development Fund (NDF) from the country's oil and gas export revenues in the newly amended budget bill.

Majlis continued to review the details of the national budget bill for the year 1400, in an open session on February 28. This session

was mainly focused on the expense aspects of the national budget bill.

The proposed bill for the next fiscal year, first submitted to Majlis in early December 2020, amounted to about 24.357 quadrillion rials (about \$579.928 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), with a 20-percent rise from the current year's approved budget.

The bill estimated the government's budget at 9.298 quadrillion rials (about \$221.38 billion), with an increase of 47 percent from the figure of the current year. It envisaged 3.175 quadrillion rials (about \$75.595 billion) of incomes, while 6.37 quadrillion rials (about \$151.666 billion) of expenses.

Revenues from exporting oil, gas, and gas condensate were estimated at 1.99 quadrillion rials (about \$47.3 billion), up 323 percent



from 454.9 trillion rials (about \$10.83 billion), approved in the current year's budget.

The bill was mainly criticized for being unrealistic about the oil revenues and the government expenses.

In the reformed bill, the government proposed to reduce its expenses by 400 trillion rials (about \$9.5 billion) to prevent the need for increasing tax incomes.

It also reduced the NDF resources and increased the ceiling of the incomes from

publishing treasury bonds by 530 trillion rials (about \$12.6 billion).

"The most important factor in the amendment was the discussion of the subsidized foreign currency and the amount of oil revenues; the oil revenues in the amended bill were not changed, and the subsidized foreign currency would still be allocated for essential goods like medicine and crops" Mojgan Khanlou, spokeswoman of the Parliament Budget Committee said.

Execution of Siahmakan oilfield development project started

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) and engineering, procurement and drilling (EPD) project for development of Iran's Siahmakan oilfield in Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad province has been started, Shana reported on Monday.

According to National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC)'s Office of Public Relations, the development project for this field includes drilling four development wells, construction of a segregation complex, the booster cluster and oil pressure booster with a capacity of 10,000 barrels per day, as well as a 12-inch underground gas pipeline and 8-inch oil pipeline.

This project was awarded to Pasargad Energy Development Company (PEDC) under the framework of a program for maintaining and enhancing oil production in 28 reserves in southern Iran.

The agreement for the field's development was signed between NISOC as the main employer and PEDC as contractor on May 12th, 2020. The field development program is underway in the form of an integrated EPD / EPC package.



NISOC which contributes to nearly 80 percent of Iran's crude oil output has defined 28 such project packages to be implemented in the fields it operates in southern Iran.

Back in January 2020, managing director of Iran's Pet-

ropars Group, which is the Monitoring and Controlling (MC) body in the 28-reserve program, said all the projects defined in this program will be handled by domestic firms.

"The project which includes more than a hundred sub-projects, including drilling of about 280 new wells and repairing hundreds of wells, could boost domestic trade and employment," Hamidreza Masoudi said.

Also in May 2019, NISOC's former Managing Director Bijan Alipour had announced that with the new reserves developed in the region, the company's oil production capacity would increase by 340,000 barrels over the next two years.

"About 70 percent of the program is implemented in Khuzestan province [southwestern Iran] and 30 percent in other neighboring provinces in the vicinity of the National Iranian South Oil Company's territory," he said.

In the preparation and implementation of this program, promoting domestic production through the use of the domestic workforce, domestic technology, and Iran-made equipment has been a priority for NISOC.

NIGC head praises gas industry's performance during winter

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Managing Director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hasan Montazer Torbati said that his company has done a good job in sustainable supply and transmission of natural gas during the cold season.

Speaking in the NIGC's last winter meeting, Montazer Torbati expressed gratitude for the hard work done by all employees in the field of supply, refining, transmission and distribution of natural gas, especially the management and dispatching staff of the company, saying that passing through the cold season without any disruption in the gas supply was the result of the team effort by all NIGC employees.

"Producing, refining, transmitting and daily distribution of more than one billion cubic meters of natural gas in domestic, industrial, commercial, export and other sectors is a very difficult, sensitive, and hard work and all employees and managers at the NIGC are working around the clock to provide stable natural gas to the people of the country," the official said.

According to Torbati, the achievements of the NIGC in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20) are also the result of proper planning, and benefiting from the experiences of managers as well as proper cooperation in all sectors.

NIGC and all its subsidiaries have been working hard in the past few months to



ensure the sustained supply of gas during the cold season.

Having the biggest network in the region, Iran is one of the leading countries in terms of gas accessibility, and in this

regard, making sure that this access stays uninterrupted during the pick consumption periods is a top priority for NIGC.

To this end, every year NIGC makes the necessary preparations in production, transmission, and distribution sectors for the winter from months before; that is in addition to conducting a comprehensive annual overhaul, the company implements various programs to further develop the network and improve its services.

Holding weekly meetings between the NIGC head and the managers of the company's subsidiaries over the winter has been one of the programs implemented to ensure secure and sustainable supply of gas during the cold season.

Heads of chambers of commerce gather to discuss private sector issues

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Heads of Iran's chambers of commerce gathered on Monday to discuss major economic issues related to the country's private sector, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

The meeting of the heads of chambers' council was attended by ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, ICCIMA Deputy Head Hossein Salahvarzi and heads of the provincial chambers.

Recent earthquake in Sisakht region and its impacts on the activities of the private sector, new regulations regarding the payment of bank checks, smartening of the country's health insurance system and elimination of physical health insurance cards were among the issues discussed in this meeting.

Speaking in the meeting, Shafeie referred to the recent measures taken by the ICCIMA Research Center and said: "A study is to be conducted on the Iranian economy and the country's private sector performance over the past century.



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (C) meets with heads of the country's chambers of commerce in Tehran on Monday.

This study is being done in order to examine the performance of the ICCIMA, and the obstacles, challenges and successes of the private sector in this hundred-year period."

48 idle production units revived in Ardebil province

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian industry, mining and trade minister announced that 48 idle production units have been revived in Ardebil province, in northwest of the country, since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020).

Alireza Razm Hosseini made the remarks after inaugurating a weaving plant in one of the industrial parks of the province.

The latest report released by the ministry indicates that 1,170 idle industrial units have been revived in the country since the beginning of the current year, crating 19,400 job opportunities.

Based on the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry data, the ministry was initially planning to revive 1,500 idle units in the current year, but then it revised its programs to revive 2,000 units.

Iran's industrial parks play a significant role in making the country independent



through boosting production, which is a major strategy of Iran to combat the U.S. sanctions.

In fact, strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

In this due, the current Iranian calen-

dar year (began on March 20) has been named the year of "Surge in Production", and all governmental bodies, as well as the private sector, are moving in line with the materialization of this motto.

Last month, Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Saeed Zarandi said that the output of 86 major production units across the country has more than doubled in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020-January 19, 2021) compared to the same period in the previous year.

According to Zarandi, the production data pertaining to 319 major units in the country during the mentioned 10 months has shown that the output of 148 units has increased by 20-50 percent, the production by 40 units has risen by 50-70 percent, while 45 units have registered a production growth of 70-100 percent.

"The production by 86 major units

has more than doubled in this period," Zarandi told ISNA.

The official underlined that the units under review are among the country's top producers in the industry and mining sector which are active in a variety of areas including automobiles, home appliances, mineral products, health products, and so on.

He further noted that the Industry Ministry monitors the production of 40 major industrial and mining commodity items on a monthly basis and in this regard over 1000 production units go through the monitoring process.

Stating that the mentioned 1000 units account for more than 60 percent of the value-added production of the industry and mining sector, Zarandi said: "Therefore, the statistics of these 1000 units can be considered a representative of more than 60 percent of the country's industrial sector."

Every religion is political: professor

➔ It is safe to say that the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet contain statements that could be interpreted as encouraging renunciation of this world in favor of the world to come, frugal life and self-abnegation, love of God, and seeking intimacy with Him through canonical and supererogatory (additional; optional) acts of piety and worship. Initially, mysticism followers were active and relatively numerous in the geographical areas I have just mentioned. Later on, it spread widely across the entire Muslim world to become, in the words of the American historian of Islam, Marshall Hodgson (1922-1968), the mainstay of social order in Muslim communities worldwide. I can add that mysticist idea and practices also profoundly impacted Muslim culture, especially poetry, figural/representation arts, and architecture. Their communities and shrines can still be found in the overwhelming majority of Muslim countries, except for those in which their governments officially banned Sufism. In terms of numbers, the majority of Sufis today live in Pakistan, India, Indonesia, and Africa, including Egypt. It is common knowledge that mysticism ideas and images have had a lasting influence on Persian-speaking societies of Iran, Central Asia and India, before and after the modern age that started in the eighteenth century and continues today, although some sociologists prefer to describe our current condition as “post-modern.”

What are the differences and commonalities between Shia and Sunni when it comes to Sufism and mysticism?

Mysticism and Shia have many commonalities, especially as far as mysticist philosophical ideas and refined spirituality are concerned. However, there was also opposition to Sufism, especially its popular forms (dervishism), on the part of many influential Shia theologians and jurists. They rejected Sufi claims to the spiritual authority and guidance (walaya) of the masses that, in Shia Islam, are seen as the exclusive prerogative of the descendants of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatima. In Sunni Sufism, any pious individual and miracle-worker can claim such authority. The Shia opponents of Sufism found such claims groundless and even intolerable. Thus, Sunni Sufism and Shia mysticism



Wahhabism is a special Arabian version of Salafism that developed within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

are divided by the overall doctrinal disagreement between Islam's respective understandings. At the same time, mysticist metaphysical and philosophical ideas have made their way into Shia communities' intellectual and spiritual lives. To dissociate them from Sunni Sufism, they are usually referred to as hikmat/hikmet and attributed to Imam Ali and his descendants. In this way, the philosophical and spiritual aspects of mysticism have eventually become fully integrated into Islam's Shia vision. One can, of course, argue that these ideas were originally voiced by Imam Ali and his descendants, especially the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, but I do not want to dwell on this controversial issue here because it belongs to the sphere of theology, which is not my field of expertise.

What is the role of Wahhabism (in Saudi Arabia) and Salafism in other Arab countries in confronting other Islamic sects and narratives?

There are many speculations around the notions of Salafism and Wahhabism. Sometimes they are used as synonyms; other times, they are separated and treated as distinct movements within Islam. I would

say that Wahhabism is a special Arabian version of Salafism that developed within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, in common parlance, Salafism is a catchall term applied, often indiscriminately, too many different trends within Salafi Islam. Even within the Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia, we can find mutually incompatible interpretations of Salafism, such as the Sururiyya (politically active Salafis, who are critical of the ruling regime/family) and the Madkhaliyya (politically inactive, quietist Salafis, who endorse everything the ruling regime/family does). There are other branches of the Salafiyya, including militant jihadists and peaceful conservative preachers of what they call the “pure” Islam of the Prophet and his companions. Lumping them under the same conceptual umbrella is problematic because it obscures the movement's internal diversity in question. Yet, opposition to and even outright condemnation of Sufism and its followers is something that the overwhelming majority of the Salafists all over the world have in common. In Saudi Arabia, Sufism is officially declared to be a heretical innovation (bid'a) and banned from the public

sphere. It does exist, but clandestinely. In many other countries, however, ruling elites seek to empower Sufi communities to counterbalance the influence enjoyed by various Salafi groups, especially among those who are discontent with the political and economic status quo. In general, the rulers are eager to manipulate the differences between Sufis and their opponents in accordance with the famous principle “divide and rule.” While their potential opponents are fighting, they have no time to address the ruling establishment's injustices, corruption, and failures. We find this situation in many Muslim countries as well as countries in which Muslims are a minority.

Some observers say Islam is political in its nature. What is your comment?

All I can say is that every religion is political, even when its followers claim it is not (for example, the ill-fated Gulen movement in Turkey or the Madkhaliyya movement within Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia). The claim of being apolitical is itself a political statement and political stance.

How could some extremists like ISIS exploit and misuse Islamic education and ideas to exercise violence? What are the geopolitical grounds and causes?

Any Muslim movement may claim to be acting or speaking in the name of Islam. This is part of the age-old Islamic world's polyphony and lack of a recognized centralized authority that determines what correct doctrine and practice are and what is not. This feature, that is, the Islamic doctrinal field's decentralized nature, has set it apart from a more hierarchical structure such as the Roman papacy. Yes, we can declare ISIS to be heretics and deviants to our heart's content, but they and their followers will respond in kind, claiming, for instance, that we are neglecting the pillar of Islam. They can also justify their violence by the violence inflicted on the West's Muslim world (as Osama Bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri did). They would also claim to be restorers of the dignity of the Muslims and Islam in the face of Western ideological, political, economic and cultural domination. We can claim that they are dead wrong, but they will tell us the same thing. And, yes, the current geopolitical situation is conducive to conflict because of the inequality of the geopolitical players. Some nations are rich and powerful, whereas others are poor, marginal, and powerless. Some are masters and others are their willing or unwilling clients. This realization is painful for the latter. Inequality breeds conflict and violence among advantaged and disadvantaged countries and the rich and poor classes in the same country/nation.

Chauvin trial an important test for America: Hamline University professor



➔ The Chauvin trial could be a start to talk about some problematic challenges in the American society, like police use of force against people of color.

According to American media, police violence is a leading cause of death for young men in the United States.

Over the life course, about 1 in every 1,000 black men can expect to be killed by police. Risk of being killed by the police peaks between the ages of 20 to 35 for men and women and all racial and ethnic groups. Black women and men and American Indian and Alaska Native women and men are significantly more likely than white women and men to be killed by police. Latino men are also more likely to be killed by police than white men.

Schultz concludes that “the laws regarding police use of force have often insulated police officers from liability in terms of when they shoot suspects, including persons of color.”

No doubt the problem is going to deepen more and more as President Joe Biden has inherited multiple political and societal challenges.

Saudi Arabia confirms Yemeni drone, missile attacks on oil facilities

Saudi Arabia has confirmed that a Yemeni drone attack targeted a petroleum tank farm at Ras Tanura port and a ballistic missile targeted Saudi Aramco's facilities in the city of Dhahran.

In a statement on Sunday, a spokesman for the Saudi Energy Ministry acknowledged that a drone coming from the sea hit one of the petroleum tank farms at the Ras Tanura Port – one of the largest oil shipping ports in the world, in the morning.

The spokesman also said a “ballistic missile's shrapnel” fell near Saudi Aramco's residential area in the city of Dhahran after it was intercepted.

None of the attacks resulted in any injury or loss of life or property, the spokesman added.

According to Press TV, Saudi Defense Ministry spokesman Brigadier General Turki al-Malki claimed in a statement later on Sunday that both attacks were intercepted before reaching their targets.

“The attacking bomb-laden UAV that came via the sea was intercepted and destroyed prior to reaching its target. The ballistic missile that was launched to target Aramco facilities in Dhahran was intercepted and destroyed as well,” al-Malki said, state news agency SPA reported.

The oil market reacted to the news as details of the retaliatory attack trickled in.

Brent crude futures surged above \$70 a barrel on Monday for the first time in more than a year. While Brent jumped 2.65% to trade at \$71.20, U.S. crude futures also rose 2.56% to \$67.78.

Meghan accuses UK royals of racism over son's skin color

Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex and the wife of Britain's Prince Harry said there were concerns about how dark her son Archie's skin would be before his birth and that such worries explained why he was not given the title of prince.

Markle, whose mother is Black and father is white, said she was naive before she married into the British royal family in 2018, but that she ended up having suicidal thoughts and considering self-harm after asking for help but getting none.

“They didn't want him to be a prince or princess, not knowing what the gender would be, which would be different from protocol, and that he wasn't going to receive security,” Markle said in an interview with talk show host Oprah Winfrey that aired on broadcaster CBS late on Sunday in the United States, where she and Harry now live.

“In those months when I was pregnant, all around this same time, so we have in tandem the conversation of, ‘you won't be given security, not gonna be given a title’ and also concerns and conversations about how dark his skin might be when he's born.”

She declined to say who had aired such concerns. Asked if she was silent or had been silenced, she replied: “The latter.”

The highly anticipated interview comes amid an acrimonious dispute between Markle and Harry on one side and the British monarchy on the other.

The couple, who married in 2018, have stepped down from their royal duties and are now living in California.

U.S. says decision unclear on May 1 ‘force posture’ in Afghanistan

The United States says it has made no decision about its military commitment in Afghanistan over a May 1 deadline for pulling out its remaining 2,500 troops from the country.



The Department of State's comments to the Reuters news agency came after reports emerged that U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken had made an urgent push for peace efforts in a letter to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani published on Sunday by TOLONews, an Afghan news outlet.

The letter, confirmed by senior Afghan officials, was sent to Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of the peace council, and was discussed with Afghan leaders by U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad during his visit to Kabul last week, the officials said.

“The letter was handed over to President Ghani and myself two days before the visit of Khalilzad,” Abdullah told a gathering in Kabul on Monday.

A U.S. state department spokeswoman said on Sunday Washington has “not made any decisions about our force posture in Afghanistan after May 1”.

“All options remain on the table,” she said.

Resistance News

Protest sit-in in Yatta to reject land confiscation

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN—** Dozens of Palestinians on Monday morning organized a protest sit-in in Masafer Yatta, south of al-Khalil, to reject the Israeli occupation authority's confiscation of lands in this area and the construction of Jewish settlements.

Many members from the families of Buhais, Adais, and Abu Zahra staged the sit-in in the lands of al-Ain Al-Baida and Khilah Al-Adra, east of Yatta, protesting the IOA confiscation of large swaths of lands.

The citizens prevented settlers' bulldozers from leveling the confiscated lands but big numbers of Israeli occupation forces arrived and quelled the citizens and provided protection for the settlers and their vehicles.

On Sunday, Jewish settlers leveled thousands of dunums of citizens' lands in Masafer Yatta.

Purchasing (Kala) Dept., IRIB

UNESCO celebrates 1,750th anniversary of Iran university

➔1 “Today, in keeping with this heritage, Iran is one of UNESCO’s key partners in knowledge and science. The country hosts 8 Category II Centres and 11 UNESCO Chairs in the science field. It is also home to 13 Biosphere Reserves – one of the highest numbers among Member States.”

This great tradition of promoting peace and prosperity through science, knowledge, and culture is central to UNESCO’s role. It is also more precious than ever, as the international community faces new challenges: climate change, biodiversity collapse, technological disruptions, widening inequalities, she added.

Azoulay noted that all such challenges call for the contributions of researchers, academics, inventors – the universal republic of knowledge “that we are celebrating today”.



“These challenges have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Humanity must make choices, and in doing so, overcome its differences by defining which values we want to guide us, and what kind of world we want to live in.”

“At UNESCO, we have long believed in the potential of science, provided that it evolves within an ethical and humanistic framework. As we face a new period of uncertainty, it is more necessary than ever to recall this idea of cooperation and solidarity,” the UNESCO chief added.

In conclusion, she voiced UNESCO’s reediness to expand support for the promotion of science and technology, saying: “UNESCO stands ready to support the Islamic Republic of Iran in its efforts to promote science and technology, to create knowledge, and to share it. In this way, we will not only support scientific progress, but also the progress of all mankind.”

Last August, a documentation project commenced at the ancient university to prevent possible damage from agricultural activities.

Gundi Shapur, also spelled as Jundi Shapur, which is located in Modern Dezful, southern Iran, was one of the world’s birth-places of knowledge and wisdom, which is a source of national pride and enthusiasm for Iranians.

The city was the intellectual center of the Sassanid Empire (224–651) and the home of the Academy of Jundi Shapur University, which offered education and training in medicine, philosophy, theology, and science.

The university was home to a teaching hospital, and also comprised a library and a center of higher learning. It has been identified with extensive ruins south of Shahabad, a village 14 km south-east of Dezful, to the road for Shush, in the present-day province of Khuzestan.

The town fell into decline after the Muslim conquest of Persia (633–654), the city surrendering in 638, however, it continued to remain an important center in the Muslim period. Yaqub Layth Saffari, the founder of the Saffarid dynasty, made Jundi Shapur his residence three years before his sudden death. His tomb became one of the most prominent sites in the city.

Statue of Sassanid monarch Khosrow Parviz made national heritage

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A life-size statue of Khosrow Parviz, who is widely considered as the last great Sasanian king of Iran, has been added to the national cultural heritage list of the country.

Under Khosrow II, byname Khosrow Parviz (“Khosrow the Victorious”), ruling from 590 to 628, the Sassanid empire achieved its greatest expansion. Defeated at last in a war with the Byzantines, he was deposed in a palace revolution and executed.

Khosrow was a serious patron of the arts: silver-working and carpet weaving reached their peak during his reign. Sources tell of the enormous “Spring of Khosrow,” a carpet whose design was a garden. A splendid silver dish in the Bibliotheque Nationale is thought to depict him in the traditional Sasanian royal hunt.



Most authorities attribute to Khosrow II the grottos at Taq-e Bostan (Kermanshah), taking them as evidence of a renaissance of rock sculpture in his reign.

The Sassanid era (224 CE–651) is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance.

Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan that are amongst highlights of the ensemble.

Crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

Rock-carved sculptures and bas-reliefs on abrupt limestone cliffs are widely deemed as characteristics and striking relics of the Sasanian art, top examples of which can be traced at Bis-hapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rujab in southern Iran.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sasanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region” -- to its World Heritage list.

Fossil found in Iran cave part of ‘missing link’ in human migration: archaeologist

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A human fossil found in Kaldar cave, western Iran, is part of a “missing link” in Homo sapiens’ migrating, Iranian archaeologist Behrouz Bazgir has said.

“Given the handful of Homo sapiens human fossils so far revealed across the world, the discovery of human fossils not only in the Kaldar cave but anywhere in the world could reveal a large part of the missing link in the migration of intelligent humans,” CHTN quoted Bazgir as saying on Monday.

The discovery was made during the third archaeological season conducted in Kaldar cave seeking to achieve the historiography of the Middle Paleolithic strata, and to obtain human fossils, the archaeologist explained.

He made the remarks during the 18th Annual Symposium on the Iranian Archaeology, jointly organized by the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research (ICAR), Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism (RICHT), and National Museum of Iran.

Nearly one decade of archaeological surveys at Kaldar cave has concluded that parts of this western Iranian shelter date more than 63,000 years.

Kaldar is a key archaeological site that provides evidence of the Middle to Upper



Paleolithic transition in Iran. The cave is situated in the northern Khorramabad valley of Lorestan province and at an elevation of 1,290?m above sea level. It measures 16?meters long, 17?meters wide, and seven?meters high.

In 2019, in one of the significant archaeological finds of Iranian history, the cave

yielded fresh evidence for its Paleolithic residents; including traditions of making [stone] tools related to the Middle Paleolithic and Upper Paleolithic eras. In the same year, archaeologists excavated stone tools and a fragment of a fossilized skull, attributed to Homo sapiens. The cave has also yielded weapon fragments crafted by Neanderthals.

Sydney exhibit to showcase rarely-seen Persian arts

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A collection of rarely-seen Persian arts and crafts will go on show at Australia’s Powerhouse Museum, which is the major branch of the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences in Sydney.

Titled “Iransamin” (“Land of the Persians”), the exhibit will be opening to the public on March 19. And according to the organizers, the event is the first survey exhibition of Persian arts and crafts acquired by the Powerhouse Museum since its founding in 1880.

It explores the stories behind rarely seen artifacts from the middle of the 19th century to now, shedding light on the diverse social and cultural history of Persia – today’s Iran – and its people.

The exhibition examines how objects inspired by traditional arts and crafts were used in Persian society, focusing on seven themes: joy and happiness; purification and cleansing; spirituality and devotion; poetry and calligraphy; rituals and performance; patronage and craftsmanship; nature and design.

Furthermore, Iransamin encompasses a diversity of materials and techniques, including hand-woven crafts, carpets and rugs; arms and armor; glass, ceramics and tiles;

textiles, embroidery, and foundry.

Iransamin examines how the influence of Persia, situated between two major trade routes – the Silk Road and the Indian Ocean – spread out into the world.

Special attention is paid to the influence of Persian culture on non-Iranian craftsmen and artists such as Australian painter and textile designer Florence Broadhurst. This includes original Broadhurst wallpaper prints titled Persian Phoenix (Simorgh), Persian Birds, and Persian Pomegranates and Flowers.

The opening of Iransamin coincides with the Persian new year Noruz. Programs will include the celebrations of Noruz, Haftsin, a table traditionally set for the Persian new year on 20 March, and Sizdebehdar, the Persian national day for the celebration and admiration of Mother Nature, which will be held in the Powerhouse Museum on 3 April 2021, according to the museum.

After the turmoil and strife of the eighteenth century in Persia, the rise to power of the Qajar dynasty (1789 to 1925) signaled a new peace and unity for the country. The Qajar shahs relied heavily on the visual arts to confirm and solidify their new position. One aspect of their public im-



age tied them to the long history of Persia and its ancient dynasties, but another component of their identity was as modernizers and reformers.

This involved both changes to the government and the acceptance of new technologies such as the railroad and the telegraph. In the arts, this meant support of the new techniques of lithography and photography, as well as innovative applications of existing forms in Iran such as portraiture and oil painting.

Iran to allocate some \$240,000 for Great Wall of Gorgan restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Iran will set aside ten billion rials (some \$240,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) for the restoration of the Great Wall of Gorgan, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Sunday.

Situated in the city of Gorgan, the capital of northern Golestan province, the defensive wall is about 200 km in length and it was built to prevent the invasion of the northern tribes. It is said to be the longest architectural work of ancient Iran, which was built in 90 years.

“We will allocate one billion tomans (ten billion rials) of credit for the restoration of the Great Wall of Gorgan, so that with this credit, the measures for the restoration of this wall, along with aerial imaging and mapping, will be carried out as preliminaries for [the possible] UNESCO registration,” Mounesan said.

The minister made the remarks in a meeting with provincial officials and cultural figures during his visit to the lush green province.

Last December, Mounesan’s deputy for cultural heritage, Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, said: “Gaining a UNESCO tag for the Great Wall of Gorgan -- one of the longest



brick barriers of the ancient world -- is not hard as it is comparable to the Great Wall of China in terms of age, function, and size.”

Although there are some issues and obstacles, further efforts to preserve and restore the millennia-old wall could be an acceptable justification for UNESCO to add this structure to the World Heritage list, Talebian explained.

To get to that point, complete and accurate mapping of the remnants of the wall is needed, for which a budget of 20 billion rials (\$476,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated so far, the official added.

He also noted that if the mapping project comes to an end by the end of the current Iranian year 1399 (March 20, 2021), the inscription of the wall on the World Heritage

list would be discussed and possibly approved by the end of the next summer.

Also known as Red Wall, which in some ancient texts is referred to as the Red Snake, this wall is the longest brick ancient barrier between Central Europe and China, longer than Hadrian’s Wall and the Antonine Wall put together and the third-largest wall in the world after the walls of China and Germany.

Most parts of the gigantic monument are still hidden underneath the surface through some segments that have so far been unearthed and even restored to former glory. Archaeological excavations have so far identified ditches, brick kilns, earthen dams, water canals, 38 forts, and watchtowers attached to the wall, and more than 25 castles in the southern margin of the wall as well as several ancient sites from prehistoric, historic, and Islamic eras.

The gigantic barrier is also more than three times the length of the longest late Roman defensive wall built from scratch, the Anastasian Wall west of Constantinople. The combined area of the forts on the Gorgan Wall exceeds that of those on Hadrian’s Wall about threefold.

According to UNESCO, the Gorgan Wall

is remarkable not only in terms of its physical scale but even more so in terms of its technical sophistication. To enable construction works, canals had to be dug along the course of the defensive barrier, to provide the water needed for brick production. These canals received their water from supplier canals, which bridged the Gorgan River via qanats. One of these, the Sadd-e Garkaz, survives to 700 m in length and 20 m in height but was originally almost one kilometer long.

The Gorgan Wall and its associated ancient military monuments provide a unique testimony to the engineering skills and military organization of the Sassanian Empire. They help to explain its geographic extent, from Mesopotamia to the west of the Indian Subcontinent, and how effective border defense contributed to the Empire’s prosperity in the interior and its longevity. These monuments are, in terms of their scale, historical importance, and sophistication, of global significance.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst its most famous.

Prehistoric Iranian toys or votive carts?

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – These pictured prehistoric animal figurines mounted on little carriages are part of a valuable deposit that is on display at the Louvre Museum in Paris. The relics were unearthed in Susa, southwestern Iran, in the early 20th.

The mobile objects that might be either toys or votive carts are a subset of a larger collection that was assembled under the Shurukid dynasty in the late second millennium BC.

The collection was unearthed by French mining engineer and archaeologist Jean-Jacques de Morgan (1857 – 1924) at Susa, southwest Iran, near the temple of Inshushinak.

According to the Louvre, Susian children in the Middle-Elamite court may have played with them, pulling the little carts along with a piece of string.

“Scholars have also pointed to the religious connotation of human or animal figurines on wheels, suggesting they were purely votive offerings. Of course, a toy could become an offering, dedicated to a divinity or buried alongside a deceased person.”

The UNESCO-registered bears exceptional testimony to the Elamite, Persian, and Parthian civilizations and cultural traditions. The modern Iranian town of Shush is located at the site of ancient Susa. It was one of the city-states of ancient Elam (2700 – 539 BC), which later became a winter capital of the Persian Achaemenid kings, who ruled Iran from c. 550 to 330 BC.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Susa has been

continuously inhabited since 4,200 BC placing it among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Besides, there are traces at Susa of a village inhabited around 7,000 BC and painted pottery dating from ca. 5,000 BC at the site.

The archaeological site includes the ruins of the Achaemenid palace complex of Darius I, the Great, and is located on a fifteen-meter high artificial raised 100-hectare terrace. It has suffered greatly in the past seventy years.

Susa became part of the Persian Empire under Cyrus II, the Great in 538 or 539 BC. During the balance of the Achaemenian period (to 330 BC), Susa functioned as one of the rotating capitals (a winter capital) of the Achaemenian Kings.

It is said that Alexander of Macedonia captured Susa in 330 BC and plundered the city, seizing some 40,000 talents of gold and silver from the treasury.

According to UNESCO, “the excavated architectural monuments include administrative, residential, and palatial structures” and the site contains several layers of urban settlement dating from the 5th millennium BC through the 13th century CE.

The finest pottery was found in the lowest strata and belonged to two different civilizations, both Neolithic, according to Britannica. During the Sasanian age, the city had a large Christian community. It was sacked by the Sasanian king Shapur II, who transferred the population to Iwan-e Karkheh, but Susa was sufficiently recovered in the early



seventh century to fight against the Arabs, who nevertheless captured the city which remained important until the thirteenth century CE.

Different archaeological seasons in Susa have yielded ample relics including pottery, arms, ornamental objects, metalwork, bronze articles, as well as clay tablets. Susa is also a gateway to several worthy destinations such as the UNESCO-tagged zigurat of Tchogha Zanbil, the ruins of Achaemenid Apadana Castle, Shush Castle (Akropol), Prophet Daniel Shrine, Museum of Susa, the archaeological mount of Haft Tapeh.

UN appreciates Iran’s ‘leading role’ in fight against AIDS

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has praised Iran’s leading role in the fight against the virus.

UNAIDS executive director Winnie Byanyima, in a letter to Esmail Baghaei-Hamaneh, permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, appreciated Iran for its efforts in eradication of HIV and welcomed a visit to the country.

Highlighting that Iran’s model for fighting HIV is “harm reduction”, she lauded the country for pioneering the unique model of AIDS management and expressed appreciation for Iran’s support, as a member of the UNAIDS Program Coordinating Board (PCB), in the global fight against AIDS.

She further thanked the active and constructive role of the Islamic Republic in preparing the strategic documents of the Joint United Nations Program on AIDS.

Earlier, Morten Ussing, Director of Governance and Multilateral Affairs said that “in terms of harm reduction, Iran is one of the best countries in West Asia, but also in the world; Iran’s intervention in the prisons proved to be the best, therefore, it should be presented as a strategic plan worldwide.



Over 59,000 people diagnosed with HIV

According to the data released in 2019 by the UNAIDS, some 59,000 people are diagnosed with HIV in Iran.

Parvin Afsar Kazerouni head of the AIDS and sexual disease control department at the Ministry of Health, said in December 2019 that

since the beginning of the epidemic, a total of 40,735 cases of HIV have been registered in the country, 60.1 percent of which were infected with drug injection equipment and 22.2 percent due to high-risk sexual behavior.

Men held a share of 82 percent and women 18 percent among people infected with HIV, she lamented, adding, 50 percent of

the patients age 20-35.

Referring to the newly diagnosed cases of HIV in the first six months of this year, she said that about a thousand people have been diagnosed during this period, 31 percent of whom were women and 69 percent were men.

HIV prevalence in the world

The human immunodeficiency viruses are two species of Lentivirus that cause HIV infection and over time acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is a condition in humans in which progressive failure of the immune system allows life-threatening opportunistic infections and cancers to thrive.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, 75 million people have been infected with the HIV virus and about 32 million people have died of HIV.

Globally, 37.9 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2018. An estimated 0.8% [0.6-0.9%] of adults aged 15–49 years worldwide are living with HIV, although the burden of the epidemic continues to vary considerably between countries and regions.

The WHO African region remains most severely affected, with nearly 1 in every 25 adults (3.9%) living with HIV and accounting for more than two-thirds of the people living with HIV worldwide.



2,400 CBR centers inaugurated nationwide

➔ Since the approval of the law, education for students with disabilities has been provided in Azad universities, subsidies for patients with spinal cord injury as well as disability care centers have been increased, in addition to residential units to families having members with disabilities.

Asghar Shirzadi, chairman of the board of the Iranian association of the disabled, said on Saturday that it still seems that the related organizations are not very willing to implement the law.

Disability prevalence worldwide

About 15 percent of the world’s population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4 percent experience significant difficulties in functioning.

The global disability prevalence is higher than previous WHO estimates, which date from the 1970s and suggested a figure of around 10 percent. This global estimate for disability is on the rise due to population aging and the rapid spread of chronic diseases, as well as improvements in the methodologies used to measure disability.

Iran committed to intl. counter-narcotics goals

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Despite the difficult conditions caused by the global pandemic, Iran managed to discover 1,200 tons of narcotics in 2020, an increase of 41 percent compared to 2019, showing Iran’s adherence to international obligations, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against narcotics, said.

“The world has been fighting against drugs for more than a century, but unfortunately, we are witnessing an increase in the production, trafficking, and consumption of drugs, so that over the past 10 years, drug use has doubled,” he added.

Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, production of narcotics is increasing, while over the last two decades, with the presence of the occupiers in this country, production and cultivation

have been 50-folded, he lamented.

Anti-narcotics police have also seized illegally acquired assets of drug traffickers worth 120 trillion rials (nearly \$2.8 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) over the past 10 months, he added.

He went on to note that unfortunately, nine persons were martyred and tens were wounded or disabled in the fight against drug trafficking over the current [Iranian calendar] year, IRNA reported on Monday.

Iran is highly committed to international obligations in the fight against narcotics, unlike other parts of the world, as some 11 related organizations are endeavoring to counter the issue, he highlighted.

Iran’s anti-narcotics measures

Iran seized some 1,000 tons of narcotics in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended

March 20, 2020), putting the country in first place in the world, Momeni said in July 2020.

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

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran’s efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

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

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



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

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

Huge floating solar farm at sea in bid to tackle climate crisis

A growing push in Singapore to reduce the city-state’s greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change has seen a sea of glimmering solar panels built off the country’s northern coast.

Reaching into the Johor Strait, which lies between the city-state and Malaysia, construction of the solar farm has seen 13,000 solar panels laid out at sea, according to a report from AFP.

With the ability to produce up to five megawatts of electricity, the solar panels can provide enough energy to power at least residential 1,400 flats year-round.

Shawn Tan, vice-president of engineering at Sunseap Group, the Singaporean firm tasked with carrying out the project, told

AFP that the sea had presented a solution for a country with limited space on dry land for producing renewable energy.

“The sea is a new frontier for solar to be installed,” Mr Tan said.

“After exhausting the rooftops and the available land, which is very scarce, the next big potential is actually our water area,” said Jen Tan, senior vice-president and head of solar in southeast Asia at Sembcorp Industries, a business working on another solar project for Singapore.

The new effort comes as Singapore seeks to address its record as one of Asia’s biggest per-capita carbon di-

oxide emitters.

With limited space, along with a lack of options for hydro-electricity and wind power, Singapore has faced logistical challenges in the push towards renewable energy.

Environmental advocacy groups have long accused the country of failing to do enough to address climate change, even as rising sea levels have become a growing threat to Singapore’s future.

Climate Action Tracker (CAT) said in its analysis that while Singapore has strengthened its efforts to combat climate change, its 2020 and 2030 targets have been “weak”.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

E-motorbikes come to curb air pollution in metropolises

The first phase of electric motorcycles development project will be implemented aiming at reducing air pollution in Tehran and other metropolises, IRNA news agency reported.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Tuesday that electric motorcycles will be promoted in big cities in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade. Through the first phase of the project, electric motorcycles will replace the regular ones used by the Ministry of Energy and state-run companies, he explained.

Ardakanian went on to say that, in addition to electric motorcycles being manufactured and marketed from now on, existing motorcycles will also change to use electricity sources.

آغاز طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوا

مرحله نخست طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران و دیگر کلانشهرها آغاز می شود. به گزارش ایرنا، رضا اردکانیان وزیر نیرو روز سه شنبه گفت برقی کردن موتورسیکلت ها با همکاری وزارت صنعت، معدن و تجارت انجام خواهد شد.

وی افزود: هدف این طرح در گام نخست، برقی کردن موتورسیکلت های مورد استفاده وزارت نیرو و شرکت های دولتی است.

اردکانیان اضافه کرد بر این اساس علاوه بر اینکه از این پس موتورسیکلت برقی تولید و وارد بازار می شود، موتورسیکلت های موجود نیز برای مالکان آنها برقی می شوند.

Extinction threatens third of freshwater fish species, report finds

Nearly a third of all freshwater fish species are threatened by extinction, according to a new report released by 16 conservation groups on Tuesday.

“The World’s Forgotten Fishes” says that 80 freshwater species — which make up more than half of all the world’s species — have already been declared extinct, with 16 disappearing in 2020 alone.



Migratory populations have declined by more than three-quarters since the 1970s, while populations of larger species, weighing more than 60 pounds, have fallen by an even more “catastrophic” 94 percent, it said.

While freshwater fish are important for the healthy functioning of the world’s rivers, lakes and wetlands, millions of people around the world also depend on them for food security and their livelihoods, including in vulnerable and indigenous communities. Their rapid decline could therefore put societies and economies across the globe in peril, the report said.

Conservation groups behind the report, including World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Global Wildlife Conservation, point to a combination of pressures on global freshwater fish populations, including habitat degradation, damming and draining of rivers and wetlands, pollution, introduction of invasive species, wildlife crime and the ever-increasing threat of climate change.

Of more than 10,000 species whose conservation status has been assessed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, 30 percent are considered at risk of extinction, the report said.

The study calls freshwater fish “undervalued,” with the WWF’s Stuart Orr saying freshwater fish are often forgotten in global debates about climate, biodiversity and global development.

“I think this report is 16 organizations coming together to highlight on the one hand the incredible diversity of freshwater fish species, but on the other hand remind people that these species are in decline and linked to a lot of food security, jobs and cultural services,” Orr told NBC News on the phone from Gland, Switzerland.

“As we look to adapt to climate change and we start to think about all the discussions that governments are going to have on biodiversity, it’s really a time for us to shine a light back on freshwater,” he added.

The report calls for an emergency recovery plan to reverse decades of decline by protecting and restoring natural river flows, water quality and critical habitats while undoing the harm caused by overfishing.

Orr said a United Nations biodiversity conference taking place in China later this year will be a chance for governments to talk about the crisis and, for the first time, pay just as much attention to protecting and restoring freshwater life support systems as the world’s forests and oceans.

LET’S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 142)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

The past perfect is used to describe a past event that preceded another past event:

موقعی که آمدم پدرم رفته بود..My father had gone when I came.

پدرم رفته بود previous past event

آمدم past event

The past event may be implicit (having been mentioned previously, or mentioned in relation with other events):

تو بیمار شده بودی (موقعی که می‌خواستیم به مسافرت برویم)

همه رفته بودند (وقتی که شما رسیدید)

● تمرین ۲. مصدر اول را به گذشته ی ساره و مصدر دوم را به گذشته ی دور تبدیل کنید:

۱. موقعی که منمهمان‌ها (بیدار شدن - رفتن)

۲. موقعی که اومن کاملاً (آمدن - خوب شدن)

۳. موقعی که تواو نامه را (تلفن زدن - نوشتن)

۴. موقعی که اوما (رفتن - ناهار خوردن)

۵. موقعی که شمابچه (رسیدن - خوابیدن)

۶. موقعی که او در رامن (باز کردن - نشستن)

● تمرین ۳. مصدرها را به منفی گذشته ی دور تبدیل کنید:

۱. هوا هنوز کاملاً (گرم شدن)

۲. مهسا هنوز از مدرسه (آمدن)

۳. مهیار پیراهن سفیدش را (پوشیدن)

۴. من تا آن موقع با کسی (صحبت کردن)

۵. او هنوز مدرسه ی جدید را (دیدن)

۶. هیچ‌کس ما را (شناختن)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Loving humanity is second only to having faith
in Allah as one of the best deeds in Islam.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Intl. sports film festival to honor veterans

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The organizers of the 12th Tehran International FICTS Festival will honor former head coach of Iran national football team Heshmat Mohajerani, radio anchor Masud Oskui and actor Jamshid Hashempur with lifetime achievement awards at the closing ceremony on Thursday.



This combination photo features images of Jamshid Hashempur (Up Left), Masud Oskui (Down Left), Ali Ansarian (UP Right) and Heshmat Mohajerani.

The organizers will also pay tribute to actor and former footballer Ali Ansarian who died of COVID-19 last month.

The Iranian honorees of the Milano International FICTS Festival, which is dedicated to sports movies, will also be honored at the closing ceremony that will take place at the Enghelab Sports Complex.

The Federation Internationale Cinema Television Sportifs (FICTS) is the organizer of the sports film festival, which is a part of the World FICTS Challenge that runs in 16 countries around the world.

The Iranian edition of the festival is held in collaboration with Iran's National Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Iran's Ministry of Sports and Youth, IRIB, Cinema Organization of Iran and Qeshm Free Zone Organization.

A lineup of features, short films, animations and documentaries with central themes of Olympic, Paralympic, sports and struggle with drug addiction as well as local and regional games were competing in this edition of the festival with 700 films from 54 countries.

Tehran Japan Cultural Month goes online

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Japan Cultural Month 2021 opened online on February 28 to showcase a number musical performances and art exhibitions for the Iranian audience.

In a platform designed by the Embassy of Japan in Tehran, Japanese artists have been invited to teach origami, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Monday.

A number of Japanese chefs and Iranian martial arts experts will organized workshops, and several documentaries produced at NHK, Japan Broadcasting Corporation, are scheduled to be screened.

The organizers are slated to hold a mini-short film competition on the theme of "What things make me as a Japanese in Tehran feel at home?"

The organizers have also asked the Iranian audience to take part in a poll to help improve the next Japanese festivals in Iran.

In order to promote mutual understanding between Iranian and Japanese people, the two countries organize mutual cultural events every year.

The Japanese capital of Tokyo in Minato City on August 2020 hosted the 3rd Iranian Film Festival, which opened by screening "Villa Dwellers", Monir Qeidi's debut feature film on the Iran-Iraq 1980-1988 war.

The festival was organized by the Iranian Culture Center and Farabi Cinema Foundation in collaboration with the Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan and UNIJAPAN, a non-profit organization that organizes the Tokyo International Film Festival and promotes Japanese films abroad.

In December 2017 and January 2018, the Iranian cities of Tehran and Kashan played host to the Japanese Cultural Month, which opened with a duet by Ichitaro, the renowned Japanese taiko-drummer, and shinobue virtuoso Koji Kishida at Tehran's Arasbaran Cultural Center.

Performing Japanese folk music concerts and the Japanese tea ceremony and holding origami workshops were some of the programs arranged for the festival.

Paintings by a number of Japanese artists, photos of tourist attractions of the country and a collection cultural products were also showcased in an exhibition during the festival, which was organized by the Japan Foundation.

Iranian children honored at Ie-no-Hikari World Children's Picture Contest

➔1 Mahan Parsa is the sole Iranian honoree of the 28th edition of the contest organized in 2020, winning a silver prize.

The children are members of the various branches of Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), which submitted works by over 500 members to the contest.

Ie-no-Hikari is a monthly Japanese family magazine published in Tokyo, Japan. It is one of the oldest and best-selling magazines in the country. The magazine is part of and published by Ie-no-Hikari Association, founded as part of the Central Industrial Union.

The association works hard to foster the cultures of rural villages by publishing books such as the Ie-no-Hikari magazine and by

implementing various cultural activities, the organizers of the contest said.

As a part of its diversified activities, the association has held the World Children's Picture Contest since 1993 with the hope of creating friendships and mutual understanding between children all over the world and enabling them to become better adults.

Iran IIDCYA members are frequent participants of the World Children's Picture Contest every year.

Setareh Shahveisi received a gold prize at the 26th edition of the contest for her painting that shows some women on a sunflower farm.

Helia Karimi, Artin Soleimani, Hasti Rudbarani, Ilia Cheraghi and Fatemeh Moammar were awarded bronze prizes.



An untitled painting by the 7-year-old Iranian girl, Tara Jafari, won a gold prize at 27th World Children's Picture Contest in Tokyo, Japan.

Sadi Foundation honors Japanese artist Hisako Tsunoda with lifetime achievement award



Hisako Tsunoda (R) receives an honorary diploma of Sadi Foundation from Iran's cultural attaché in Japan Hossein Divsalar.

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Sadi Foundation, a Tehran-based organization that promotes the Persian language abroad, honored Japanese artist Hisako Tsunoda with a lifetime achievement award during a ceremony held at Iran's Cultural Office in Japan.

Hisako Tsunoda received an honorary diploma of the

foundation presented to her by Iran's cultural attaché in Japan Hossein Divsalar, the office announced in a press release published on Monday.

Speaking at the ceremony, Divsalar said, "Iranologists and masters of Persian literature and language in Japan as well as Iranian experts of Japanese language and literature have had great roles in introducing the history and culture of the two nations."

He added that Ms. Tsunoda has been active in the field of Persian language and literature for about 30 years while she is also active in Persian calligraphy.

For her part, Ms. Tsunoda expressed thanks to the Iranian cultural attaché in supporting her activities and expressed hope she can help promote Persian art and culture to the interested Japanese people.

The Japanese artist is currently teaching Persian calligraphy to interested Japanese applicants in online courses.

Her selection of calligraphy went on view in the Raqs-e Qalam International Exhibition of the Silk Road Calligraphy held in Iran in January.

Calligraphy works by 203 artists from 30 countries were showcased at the First Raqs-e Qalam International Exhibition and Conference of the Silk Road Calligraphy in a virtual exhibition, which officially opened in the north-

Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival honors winners

➔1 The award-giving ceremony began with honoring the winners in the photo section. The winners honored in this section were Maryam Qahremanizadeh for her photo collections of the puppet shows "Love Puppet Opera" and "A Small Theater from the End of the World".

Seyyed Zia Safavian was honored for photo collection "Hug Me before Slippers Come" and "Song of the Sun and the Moon".

Mehdi Ashena was also honored for his photo collection of the puppet shows "Exuvia" and "It Doesn't Take Me".

The winners of the translation section were Majid Kianian for translation of the article "Transforming Body, Emerging

Utterance: Technique Acquisition at a Puppet Theater" by Haruka Okui.

Parto Purqarai was honored for translation of "The Puppet as a Paradigm of the Contemporary Living Body" by Noemie Lorentz, and Amin Mohammadi for "Puppet as a Pedagogical Tool: A Literature Review" by Tarja Krogera and Anne-Maria Nupponen.

In the compilation section, Mohammad Ohadi took first place for the article "The Way of Dancing Soul: A Phenomenological Review on Doll's Restlessness in Contemporary Man".

The second award was shared by Negin Kashfi for the article "Fashion shows as Puppet Shows, with a Glance

at Viktor & Rolf Fashion Shows" and Mir Mohammadreza Heidari and Salma Mohseni for "A Review of the Historical Course of the Wood Horse Game in Iran and its Mythical Roots as One of the Types of Puppets in Iran".

The third award was given to Faezeh Shahhosseini for the article "Avatars of Plasticity of Imagination".

The winners of the playwriting section were Milad Hosseini for writing the play "Haftvad Fortress", Reza Garshasb for "Matati" and Baqer Soroush for "Dash Akol".

The veteran artists of Puppet Theater, Iraj Mohammadi and Mohammad-Hassan Abuyi Mehrizi, were also honored with lifetime achievement awards.

The festival opened with a tribute to puppet show director Golzar Mohammadi, who was the secretary of the 18th edition of the festival.

The 42-year-old puppeteer died in March 2020 after months of suffering from cancer.

A lineup of 57 Iranian puppet shows were selected to be performed during the festival running from February 28 to March 7 available at Tiwall, Namayeshnet and Hashure, the Iranian platforms providing video on demand (VOD) service for films.

However, "Babysitter Curtain" from Brazil and "Somewhere Else" from Slovenia were also staged online at the festival on the last two days.

McDonagh's black comedy "Behanding in Spokane" goes on stage in Tehran

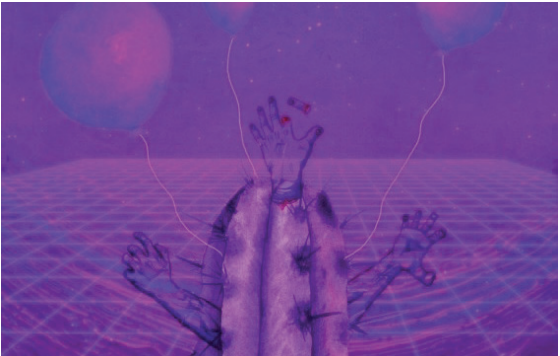
A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's the 2010 black comedy "A Behanding in Spokane" is on stage at Tehran's Divare Chaharom.

Rojin Karimlu is the director of the play starring Ali-Asghar Sarai, Mohammad Hemmati, Elaheh Lari and Ali Tabibi.

Set in Spokane, Washington, this is McDonagh's first play that takes place in the United States. Toby has a hand that he'd like to sell Carmichael for the right price. Marilyn wishes that Toby had never stolen that hand from the museum.

Mervyn thinks Marilyn is pretty hot. He works reception, though he wouldn't call himself a receptionist. Life and death are up for grabs, and fate is governed by imbeciles and madmen.

"A Behanding in Spokane" turns over American daily existence, exposing the obsessions, prejudices, madness, horrors and, above all, absurdities that crawl beneath it.



A poster Martin McDonagh's black comedy "A Behanding in Spokane" at Tehran's Divare Chaharom.

"Humankind: A Hopeful History" by Rutger Bregman appears in Persian

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** — A new Persian translation of "Humankind: A Hopeful History" by Rutger Bregman has recently been published by Logos Publications.

The book has been translated into Persian by Sohrab Khalili Shurini.

If there is one belief that has united the left and the right, psychologists and philosophers, ancient thinkers and modern ones, it is the tacit assumption that humans are bad. It's a notion that drives newspaper headlines and guides the laws that shape our lives. From Machiavelli to Hobbes, Freud to Pinker, the roots of this belief have sunk deep into Western thought. Human beings, we're taught, are by nature selfish and governed primarily by self-interest.

But what if it isn't true? International bestseller Rutger Bregman provides new perspective on the past 200,000 years of human history, setting out to prove that we are hardwired for kindness, geared toward cooperation rather than competition, and more inclined to trust rather than distrust one another. In fact this instinct has a firm evolutionary basis going back to the beginning of Homo Sapiens.

From the real-life Lord of the Flies to the solidarity in the aftermath of the Blitz, the hidden flaws in the Stanford prison experiment to the true story of twin brothers on opposite sides who helped Mandela end apartheid, Bregman shows us that believing in human generosity and collaboration isn't merely optimistic,

it's realistic.

Moreover, it has huge implications for how society functions. When we think the worst of people, it brings out the worst in our politics and economics. But if we believe in the reality of humanity's kindness and altruism, it will form the foundation for achieving true change in society, a case that Bregman makes convincingly with his signature wit, refreshing frankness, and memorable storytelling.

Rutger Bregman, a historian and writer at The Correspondent, is one of Europe's most prominent young thinkers. His last book, "Utopia for Realists", which was translated into thirty-two languages, is a New York Times bestseller. He lives in Holland.



Front cover of the Persian translation of "Humankind: A Hopeful History" by Rutger Bregman.