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Rouhani calls on Muslim countries to defend Palestine

TEHRAN – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has urged Muslim countries to support the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli aggression.

In a phone conversation with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on Thursday, the Iranian president underlined the need for unity and cooperation among Islamic countries in defending the Palestinian people.

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Development projects worth \$1.47b inaugurated in free trade, special economic zones

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday inaugurated numerous projects valued at 62 trillion rials (about \$1.47 billion) in the free trade and special economic zones of five different provinces across the country in an online event.

Put into operation following the series of inaugurations started in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), the said projects were based in the free trade and special economic zones of East Azarbaijan, Khuzestan, Alborz, Hormozgan, and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces.

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"That Day" chronicles Gen. Soleimani's meeting with "The 23" crew

TEHRAN – The Owj Arts and Media Organization has recently produced a documentary named "That Day" that gives images of Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani's meeting with the crew of the 2018 war drama "The 23".

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The way the UN is structured it cannot be a force for defending Palestine: American analyst

BY AMIR MOHAMMAD ESMAEILI
Myles Hoenig, an American political analyst, believes that the situation in Palestine is "desperate", as the U.S. is using its veto power in the UN to prevent any kind of resolution in favor of the Palestinian people.

"The way the UN is structured, it cannot be a force for defending Palestine. With the U.S. having such enormous veto power, even resolutions calling for an end to hostilities are not permitted. With Trump in office, even with the U.S.'s veto power, many of the other major powers might have had less reluctant to step in, but with Biden, it's back to 'normal' with Palestine being the ultimate loser," tells Myles Hoenig, who was a 2016 Green Party candidate who sought election to the U.S. House to represent the 7th Congressional District of Maryland.

The text of the interview is as follows:
How do you characterize the current situation in Palestine?

The situation in Palestine is desperate but no less than any other time of such troubles. A difference now is that there is much stronger support for Palestine, especially in the U.S. for those who don't rely on mainstream media, and also especially among American Jews (not the AIPAC crowd, though). Even though social media has been strong for quite a few years, there seem to be more outlets that are available to show the live-action, on-the-ground atrocities being committed by Israel.

Also, some leading institutions are showing a desire to be less obsequious to the diktats of Israel. The Guardian of England recently published its shame over its support and facilitation of the Balfour Declaration. Members of the U.S. Congress are openly challenging the Israeli occupation and putting financial demands on Israel. We have been seeing a sea change for a few years now. Perhaps this latest round of atrocities will be just too much for more and more mainstream individuals, not just the media.

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Britain's historic responsibility in the ethnic cleansing of Palestine

BY BATOUL SBEITY

Imperialist and Zionist aspirations meet
By 1913, the British Empire was the largest to have ever existed, covering 25% of the world's land surface, including India, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan and most of the South and East African continent.

The Zionist movement emerged during the beginning of the 19th century and espoused the formation of a nation-state for the Jewish community. The Zionists were hunters for sources of power in the world that could actualize their vision of a Jewish homeland, and wherever the imperialists place the Zionists, they will follow.

If we look back to the founding protocol of the Zionists, there was a discussion over the creation of this Jewish homeland in British East Africa, as suggested by the founding father of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, in 1903.

Britain recognized that in order to sustain

and increase its colonial control, it needed to create a military base that serves as an extension of its foreign policy in the strategic location of the Middle East (West Asia).

The Suez Canal, entering the Red Sea that is located between Egypt and Palestine, was a critical location the British wanted control over. Exports from across the globe would pass through this canal, and many nations would fight for control and access to this region, including Britain.

The nature of the strategic location, the history of the land, and the planting of a foreign entity at the heart of the much sought-after Arabian lands that could secure the Empire's expansionist agenda, made the land of Palestine an ideal location for Britain to set up its military base in the Middle East (West Asia).

The Balfour Declaration

Continued on page 5

Hamas fires missiles at Israeli air base, two Iron Dome stations, chemical factory

The Palestinian Islamic Resistance movement Hamas says it has targeted the Israeli regime's Iron Dome stations and an Israeli air base which is used by Israeli warplanes to bombard civilian targets in the besieged Gaza Strip.

"We fired a volley of Sejil missiles at the Hatzerim air base from which the occupation warplanes flew to bomb civilians in Gaza," the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, said in a statement on Thursday night, according to Palestinian media.

The group said it also attacked a chemical factory in Nahal Oz kibbutz in the Negev desert with Shihab suicide drones.

The announcement followed an earlier statement by Hamas that it had launched a number of "suicide drones" carrying explosive payloads into southern Israel from the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military claimed downing two such drones.

A rocket from Gaza early on Friday hit a build-

ing in the city of Ashkelon, with no immediate report of casualties, Al Jarmaq news reported.

Rocket sirens were heard in Ashdod, Sderot and the Sha'ar Hanegev region after a night of intense fighting.

Hamas said it has launched at least 250 rockets into Israeli-occupied territories in the last few hours in response to the Israeli regime's relentless aerial bombardment of Gaza that has so far killed at least 119 Palestinians, including 31 children and 19 women, and injured 800 others.

On Thursday evening, Hamas said it targeted two of Israel's so-called Iron Dome stations, located east of Khan Yunis and eastern Gaza, with a number of rocket-propelled grenades.

Hebrew media reported later that the Iron Domes' batteries were hit by several rocket-propelled grenades, Roya News reported.

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1,401 birth certificates issued for children of Iranian mothers, foreign fathers

TEHRAN – Birth certificates have so far been issued to 1,401 children born to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers, Seifollah Aboutorabi, the National Organization for Civil Registration spokesman, said on Thursday.

Under a new nationality law, which was amended in 2019, nearly 75,000 children at risk of becoming statelessness are eligible for Iranian citizenship which allows children under 18 years to apply for identity documents.

The first group obtained their Iranian nationality and Iranian identity booklet (shenasnameh) in November 2020.

According to official figures, 28,000 children below the age of 18 years have filed applications to receive birth certificates and a nationality.

According to the law, children of Iranian women and non-Iranian men who were born before or after the law can be Iranian citizens in case the Iranian mother requested if they have no security problem

before the age of 18. These children, after reaching the age of 18, can apply for Iranian citizenship if not requested by the mother, then will be granted Iranian citizenship in case of no security problem.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also has welcomed the law as a step toward reducing statelessness around the world. UNICEF also welcomed the implementation of the Iranian nationality law.

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Eid al-Fitr prayers in Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Palestinian Information Center reported that more than 100,000 Palestinians performed Eid al-Fitr prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque despite recent Israeli attacks.

Turkish rulers have no way out but to turn towards Asia: Turkish attorney

BY MOHAMMAD ALI SAKI

TEHRAN - A Turkish lawyer calls for forming a regional bloc to confront the United States, claiming "it is not impossible to expect a normalization of Turkish-American relations."

"It is necessary not only for Turkey but also for all the powers in the region, to understand and analyze this situation, and act as a unified bloc against the United States in the regional crises," Onur Sinan Guzeltan tells the Tehran Times.

Many political observers expect Turkey-U.S. relations to deteriorate under the Biden presidency and Ankara is approaching Russia and China more than in the past.

"The politic, security, and economic needs of Turkey force Ankara to deepen ties with its neighbors in West Asia, particularly with Russia and Iran," Sinan notes.

Despite the power shift in the White House, it seems that the efforts to restore the relations between the United States and Turkey will remain fruitless.

The efforts to restore the relations with the United States would be hopeless on their own, despite political differences between the Trump and Biden administrations.

Turkish politicians talk about an important shift towards Asian powers, including Russia, China and Iran, rather than the Western allies.

"As the developments of the last century show us, it is clear imperialism is not negotiable," the Turkish attorney adds.

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ELECTION WIRE

Ahmadinejad registers to run for president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, **d e s k** who was president from 2005 to 2013 for two consecutive terms, registered to run for the post of president on Wednesday.

Ahmadinejad showed up at the Ministry of Interior on Wednesday at 10 in the morning. He said that an insistence by the people persuaded him to register as a candidate.

Ahmadinejad came to the ministry while his fans were cheering him outside the Interior Ministry building.

He allocated his 15-minute press conference from a prepared statement, saying that he urges his fans not to roam the streets in case the Guardian Council disqualify him as candidate.

The presidential elections will be held on June 18.

Former ministers register as presidential candidates

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Former Agriculture Minister **d e s k** Sadeqh Khalilian; former Petroleum Minister Rostam Ghasemi; and former Sports Minister Mohammad Abbasi on Wednesday registered as presidential hopefuls.

Khalilian showed up at the Interior Ministry in the early hours. He was minister of agriculture in Ahmadinejad's administration.

Rostam Ghasemi, who served as oil chief in Ahmadinejad's second administration, also served as director of the Khatam-al Anbiya Construction Headquarters. While registering as candidate, he said he is looking to bring welfare for the people as his first priority.

Mohammad Abbasi also said the executive system of the Islamic Republic is not a place for "trial and error."

Former MPs register to run for president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— Ali Motahari and Mahmoud **d e s k** Sadeghi, former members of the Iranian parliament, registered on Thursday for the June 18 presidential elections.

Ali Motahari, son of martyr and prolific writer Ayatollah Morteza Motahari, highlighted high voter turnout as a "political message" to the world.

He stressed that a high turnout would have a definite impact on the economic situation of the people and would speed up sanctions removal and revival of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Mahmoud Sadeghi, MP in the previous parliament, said he was registering as a reformist candidate.

Former IRGC commander nominates as presidential candidate

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— General Alireza Afshar, former **d e s k** Islamic Revolution Guards Corp (IRGC) commander and deputy minister of interior in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's administration, also registered on Friday to run for the post of president.

In his 15-minute press conference, Afshar stated that he has various plans to run the country, some of which he has been involved in various executive stages.

He said that his government is "with the people and for the people."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the former deputy interior minister said, "We do not have the power to influence the international community, but we are capable of the power of public diplomacy, and the world is looking to hear the voice of Iran. But today this public diplomacy in our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is limited to its spokesmanship."

Fereydoun Abbassi registers to contest presidential post

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Fereydoun Abbassi, the former **d e s k** head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the current chairman of the Parliament Energy Committee, on Friday registered to contest the June 18 presidential elections.

Calling his administration, "government of the elites," Abbassi said Iran has turned into a regional powerhouse in ideological and military aspects, yet it has not been able to establish a modern contemporary Islamic civilization in economic and cultural aspects.

On his strategy if he is elected president, he said, "The new government must be able to change the economic situation, which is possible by relying on domestic capabilities, active diplomacy, pursuing the theory of resistance and combining the theory of dialogue and the field."

The former nuclear chief also said that his government is entitled to implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

"The JCPOA is not approved in the Islamic Republic. The implementation of the deal has been authorized by the Majlis (parliament), the Supreme National Security Council and the leadership, and since all of these are legal institutions, we are all required to implement the JCPOA with the 28 conditions contained in the ratifications," he said.

IRGC destroys terrorist group

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards **d e s k** Corps (IRGC) of Iran has destroyed a terrorist team that had martyred two Basij members in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

The IRGC Ground Force's Quds Base reported on Friday that two members of the terrorist group were killed and armaments were confiscated during the operation.

The Quds Base also reported on May 4 that its forces ambushed members of a terrorist squad in Sistan-Baluchestan, killing two and arresting another.

Investigating disasters caused by Yemen War and Role of Intl. Law on Armed Conflicts

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The fourth **d e s k** pre-session of international conference on international law and armed conflict in the region, entitled "Yemen War and Role of International Law on Armed Conflicts", was held virtually at Qom University.

Yemen witnessing the worst human catastrophe in today's world

At the fourth pre-session of international conference on international law and armed conflict in the region, a faculty member of MOFID University, Mohammad Habibi Majandeh, pointed to the issue of military intervention of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen with a focus on "criticism of doctrine of intervention with invitation" and stated, "What we are witnessing today in Yemen, as the United Nations has described it, is the worst human disaster in the contemporary world of today."

He continued, "This tragedy has left the small country of Yemen with a population of about 28 million, which was considered as the poorest Arab country in the region before the Saudi-led coalition military aggression, in a very critical situation in a way that about 150,000 people in Yemen have lost their lives and consequently, hundreds of thousands of Yemeni people have been injured and/or disabled.

Mohammad Habibi Majandeh, who is a jurist, raised the question whether such military intervention is justifiable from perspective of international law, saying, "I believe that this military intervention is not justified from perspective of international law. Although justifications have been raised for it, these justifications do not have the ability to stand up in the face of these challenges. The Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen, which has resulted in nothing but destruction, cannot be justified under international law in the contemporary world."

"That legitimate collective defense requires a foreign military attack which is completely rejected here. What is raised as indirect military aggression, i.e. Iran's claim of support for the Houthis (Ansarullah Movement in Yemen), firstly because level of support does not reach the threshold that Houthis' measures can be attributed to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and secondly the



Islamic Republic of Iran is not explicitly mentioned in the documents and correspondence as intervening countries in a way that the Islamic Republic of Iran itself has categorically denied any interference in Yemen's war, so, this claim is also rejected."

He said, "The most important reason for recognizing Mansour Hadi's government seems to be the resolution issued by the UN Security Council (UNSC) after the Saudi-led coalition attack, in which it (UNSC) referred to the legitimacy of Hadi's government."

He concluded that since many countries including Russia, China, Iran, Iraq and Oman opposed the military attack on Yemen and called it contrary to international law, therefore, it cannot be said that there was an international consensus to recognize Mansur Hadi as president.

International law cannot be indifferent to the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen

Emphasizing that international law cannot be indifferent to this humanitarian catastrophe, Majandeh said, "Any basis for justifying military intervention in Yemen, that has led to such consequences and damages, must be measured and evaluated with other areas of international law, the most important of which is the right to self-determination."

In the end, he reiterated that a foreign interventionist cannot intervene to suppress a nation and create a human catastrophe. Therefore, the theory of intervention with invitation on the issue of Yemen should be considered and revised.

The issue of Yemen is a great human tragedy

Dr. Pourya Asgari, a faculty member of Allameh Tabatabaei University, was the next speaker who raised the issue of challenges of observing humanitarian rights in the Yemen and stated, "The scourging and destructive war in Yemen started in 2015 and the reason is not clear; but this war has been a humanitarian catastrophe. Dragging Yemeni people to famine and killing of civilians are the outcome of waging war on Yemen and today, these tragedies have aggravated the daily life of Yemeni people with the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19, in this war-torn Arab country."

He noted that today, after 5 years of the destructive war, Yemen has become a breeding ground for expansion of terrorism, and al-Qaeda on the one hand and ISIL on the other hand," he said.

In the Yemen crisis, the principle of segregation, proportion and caution is not observed

Another challenge in the issue of Yemen

is the focus of coalition forces on air strikes. Statistics show that from 2015 up to the present time, 60,000 airstrikes have been carried out by Saudi coalition forces. That is to say, dozens of airstrikes a day have been launched in Yemen, each of which dropped a significant amount of bombs on the Yemeni people.

"What we see in the scene is that the principle of segregation, proportion and caution is not observed, and this is the main challenge and perhaps the most important humanitarian challenge in the issue of the Yemeni war," Asgari emphasized.

"Under international law, arms sales by the United States, Britain and France must be stopped, but we do not see it," he added.

"In a situation where civilians are victims and have no choice, it is natural to expect the international community to come to their aid," he said, adding that in such situations, the humanitarian corridor must reach the people caught in the fire of conflict.

"Therefore, we see that the Yemeni people are left alone with the pains of war, famine, hunger and spread of COVID-19, without finding a way to get rid of them," he lamented.

Rights of occupation must be considered in the current situation in Yemen

Following this virtual meeting, Professor Marco Sassoli, a faculty member of the University of Geneva, also stated, "It is incorrect to distinguish between international and non-international conflicts in the field of human rights. Although civilian places such as hospitals and refugee camps should not be attacked, many Yemenis have practically lost their lives in attacking civilian places."

A civilian center may be accidentally hit, but it is questionable that civilian places in Yemen are directly targeted.

Professor Sassoli pointed to attacks on hospitals to weaken fighters, destroying infrastructure, bombing schools, causing blockades, famines, torture and assaults in detention centers, saying if Saudi Arabia and the UAE were recognized as occupiers, occupation rights need to be considered in the current situation in Yemen.



(To See the full text scan this code)

Grand Ayatollahs issue statements strongly condemning terrorist attack at Kabul school

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Now that Kabul is mourning **d e s k** its innocent young girls a number of Iranian grand ayatollahs have issued separate statements expressing their disgust over the May 9 horrific terrorist activity in western Kabul.

The terrorist attack took place as a car bomb was detonated in the neighborhood of Dasht-e Barchi, and two more bombs exploded when students rushed out in panic.

It led to the death of 68 girls and the injury of 165 others. Some families are desperately searching for missing children.

Ayatollah Safi Golpaygani says "tragedy of Kabul terror act is a great blow to Islam"

In a message, Ayatollah Safi Golpaygani said if Islamic states would have broken their silence in the face of the enemies of Islam, now some persons whose savagery has superseded "wild animals" would not have dared to commit such horrific crime and tarnish the compassionate face of dear Islam in the views of the people in the world.

The grand ayatollah said such a vicious act dealt a great blow to the reputation of Islam which was committed by the "enemies of humanity".

He added, "The sorrowful incident of martyring and injuring a large number of innocent children and innocent persons in Afghanistan by a number of persons who have no feeling of humanity caused serious pains in the world of Islam."

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi wants Islamic world bodies to strongly deal with perpetrators of the tragedy

Grand Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi said the terrorist attack in Afghanistan by takfiri groups and the purposeful murder in Afghanistan, especially the recent one that led to the injury and death of a large number of innocent students in the holy month of Ramadan "caused great pain and sorrow".

Ayatollah Shirazi asked Afghan national and religious figures and also the Islamic world bodies to severely deal

with these elements who are trying cause division among Muslims and tarnish the "gentle face of Islam".

Ayatollah Shobeiri Zanjani says perpetrators "have no link to Islam and humanity"

Also, Grand Ayatollah Shobeiri Zanjani issued a message strongly condemning the terrorist attack in Afghanistan.

"The sorrowful report of the martyrdom and injury of tens of Shia schoolgirls a number of other innocent person in the Kabul Sayed Al-Shuhada school in the holy month of Ramadan caused pain and great sorrow.

Noting that such savage behavior has no link to the gentle nature of Islam and humanity, the Ayatollah said, "This is not the first time that the innocent people of Afghanistan and the region are becoming the victim of savage, un-Islamic, and anti-human acts under the name of Islam."

Ayatollah Nouri Hamedani says Perpetrators of terrorist act must not go unpunished

Ayatollah Nouri Hamedani also said the tragic killing of a number of school girls and innocent persons in Afghanistan "caused sorrow and pain".

The ayatollah went on to say that undoubtedly organizations that work under the name of human rights, as well as the heads of despotic Islamic states and their regional allies, will continue their "deadly silence" in the face of this crime, but it is necessary that the Islamic ummah and any free-willed human being in whatever part of the world condemn this crime and help bring the elements and supporters of "this painful tragedy" to punishment.

Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani says Afghan government must not allow crime against schoolgirls go unpunished

Also, Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani said it is necessary that the Afghan government would not allow the crime against the schoolgirls go unanswered.

"The criminal and terrorist act in the city of Kabul in which a large number of schoolgirls from the Sayed Al-Shuhada school were martyred or injured... caused pain and

less Palestinian people by the racist Zionist regime.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while strongly condemning the recent criminal acts of the occupying regime in al-Quds against the oppressed people of Palestine, calls on governments and international organizations to fulfill their duty to end the occupation and continuous crimes and aggressions of the Zionists.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while declaring solidarity with the lofty cause of Palestine, emphasizes that holding a referendum with the participation of all the main inhabitants of Palestine, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, with the aim of exercising the right to self-determination and determining the type of political system is the only solution to the Palestinian crisis. Undoubtedly, until that day, the only way

to prevent this widespread oppression and killing, torture and daily humiliation of Palestinians by foreign Zionists with human values, is all-out resistance.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, in spite of all the conspiracies and humiliating plots and compromises of the imperialist system with the crimes of the Zionist regime, considers Palestine a part and the first priority of the Islamic world and calls on all Muslim and free governments and nations to put aside their differences as a single nation and defend the rights of dear Palestine against the occupiers of al-Quds (Jerusalem) and do not deviate from the Palestinian cause until the complete liberation of holy Quds and the formation of an independent Palestinian state, and rush to the aid of the brave and patient Palestinian people with all their power.



7 decades, the United States and some world powers have fully supported this evil regime and turned a blind eye to the endless crimes of this terrorist regime.

While the occupying regime in al-Quds (Jerusalem) is currently reaching the height its illegitimacy, unfortunately we are witnessing this new round of desecration of the religious and holy places of al-Quds (Jerusalem) and the killing of the home-

Iran strongly condemns Israeli crimes against Palestinians on Nakba Day

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — On the anniversary of Nakba Day (also **d e s k** known as the Palestinian Catastrophe), the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement condemning Israel's brutal crimes against the defenseless people of Palestine.

The ministry urged international authorities to take action against the continuing brutality of the Israeli regime Palestinians.

The statement, released by the ministry, reads as follows:

73 years ago, on May 14, 1948, the Palestinian people were deprived of their ancestral land and home through international conspiracies, and instead a terrorist regime and foreign people were created.

Since then, the Zionists have turned occupied Palestine into a base of terrorism against the Palestinian people and the Muslim nations of the region. During these

SPORTS

Alekno invites 17 players to Iran for 2021 VNL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Vladimir Alekno has invited 17 players to Iran national volleyball team for the 2021 FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL) in Rimini, Italy.

The final schedule for the 2021 VNL has been confirmed ahead of the third edition of the competition which begins on May 25 at Italy's Adriatic resort of Rimini with the participation of 16 women's and 16 men's teams.

Iran national volleyball team will start the 2021 FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL) with a match against Japan on May 28.

The 2021 VNL is the first international gathering of this magnitude since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic caused the cancellation of events in 2020.

The tournament will be held within a secure 'bubble' with all hygiene protocols in place to ensure the health and well-being of all athletes, officials and staff throughout the competition.

Players Setter

1. Saied Marouf
2. Mohammad Taher Wadi

Opposites

3. Amir Ghafour
4. Saber Kazemi

Outside Hitters

5. Bardia Saadat
6. Milad Ebadipour
7. Pourya Fayazi
8. Meysam Salehi
9. Amirhossein Esfandiar
10. Mohammadjavad Manavinejad

Middle Blockers

11. Mohammad Mousavi
12. Masoud Gholami
13. Ali Shafiei
14. Aliasghar Mojarad
15. Reza Abedini

Liberos

16. Mohammadreza Hazratpour
17. Arman Salehi



Civil war breaks out in Israel

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** — In the latest **d e s k** blow to the Israeli myth of co-existence with Palestinians, a mob of extremist Jews attacked, and in some cases, lynched defenseless Palestinians living inside Israel, a move that prompted some Israeli leaders to warn of a civil war.

As the Israeli army continues to pound residential areas in Gaza with air raids and artillery shells, far-right Israeli extremists step up their brutal campaign of lynching Palestinian Arabs who hold Israeli citizenship, thereby shattering oft-repeated Israeli propaganda that Israel is a democracy where all minorities enjoy human rights.

Over the past few days, with the outbreak of the ongoing flare-up between Gaza and Israel, several Palestinians were killed or severely injured by far-right Israel gangs who called for slaughtering Palestinians. One of the most heart-breaking cases of harassment against Palestinians happened near Tel Aviv when a group of Jewish zealots attacked a man they believed to be an Arab.

Footage of the incident was aired on television Wednesday night. The shocking images show a man being forcibly removed from his car and beaten by a crowd of dozens until he lost consciousness, AFP reported, adding that the attack, broadcast by public broadcaster Kan, took place on the seafront promenade of Bat Yam, south of Israel's commercial capital Tel Aviv.

"The victim of the lynching is seriously injured but stable," Tel Aviv's Ichilov hospital said in a statement, without revealing his identity.

In addition, Israeli terrorists smashed shops owned by Palestinians in the Green



Line zone, a demarcation line separating Palestinian territories occupied in 1948 and those occupied in 1967.

The Associated Press reported that a group of black-clad Israelis smashed the windows of an Arab-owned ice cream shop in Bat Yam and ultranationalists could be seen chanting, "Death to Arabs!" on live television.

This hatred against an ethnic group that is supposed to be part of the Israeli people resulted in the killing by Jewish extremists of an Arab man in Lod, a city with both Jewish and Arab residents about 15 miles south of Tel Aviv. During a funeral for this man, angry protestors clashed with security forces. The deceased man

died after Jewish extremists pelted his car with stones, prompting the so-called Israeli Arabs to hit back.

Yair Revivo, the mayor of Lod, described what happened in Lod as "civil war," calling for the Israeli army to suppress Arabs. "An intifada [uprising] erupted in Lod, you have to bring in the army," he said. The drama also involved the use of emergency powers by Israel over an Arab community for the first time since 1966.

The Lod outburst of anger revealed deeper grievances among the Arab community, which have long been buried deep under the Israeli propaganda about co-existence, according to Arab activists in Lod.

Ghassan Munayyer, a Lod-based activist, said the veneer of coexistence conceals deeper disparities, including in housing and infrastructure, comparing its Arab neighborhoods to "refugee camps," according to the Associated Press.

"The Jews love saying there's coexistence. They go out to eat in an Arab restaurant and they call it coexistence," he said. "But they don't see Arabs as equal human beings who have rights that they have to respect."

The outbreak of communal clashes inside Israel caused Israeli President Reuven Rivlin to warn of civil war after the decades-long, pent-up frustrations among Israeli Arabs broke out in the way of clashes with security forces.

Rivlin, who failed to denounce his regime's excessive use of violence against Palestinians, described the rioting in several Israeli cities as "senseless civil war."

Israeli politicians have sought to put an end to this war by assuaging concerns over domestic extremism. But the war is unlikely to end anytime soon so long as Israel cold-bloodedly kills defenseless children and women in Gaza and desecrates places of sanctity for Muslims in Jerusalem (al-Quds) especially the al-Aqsa Mosque, which stands as the first Qiblah (direction of prayer) and the third-holiest site in Islam.

As Israel continues to cry foul at the rockets coming from the beleaguered Gaza, it's worth noting that the latest round of violence began after Israel moved to evict Palestinian families from their ancestral homes in Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, something that left the Palestinians with no option but to hit back.

Rouhani calls on Muslim countries to defend Palestine

→1 "It is necessary for Islamic countries to cooperate with each other to defend the Palestinian people and the freedom of the country and confront the Zionist regime's aggression and hostile and racist actions, which we have witnessed in recent days during the holy month of Ramadan," Rouhani said, according to a statement issued by the Iranian presidency.

Calling Palestine as a part of the Islamic world, Rouhani added, "The attacks and aggressions of the Zionist regime against the Palestinian people and Gaza must be stopped immediately and we must not allow these oppressed people to be oppressed anymore."

Stating that the synergy of Islamic countries with Palestine is a key goal, the president said, "The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should play a more active role in the recent developments in Palestine, because the organization was created primarily for addressing the Palestinian crisis and Al-Aqsa Mosque."

The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, also congratulated Eid al-Fitr to the government and people of Iran, and appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran's position on the recent developments and conflicts in Palestine and said, "In condemning and pursuing the quick cessation of the attacks on Palestinians, Qatar has the same views as Iran and calls for the effective role of the OIC in this regard."

Palestinians all across Palestine, including inside the lands occupied in 1948, have been under brutal attacks from Israel's security forces and army as well as extremist Jews. Over the past few days, as the Israeli army showered residential areas in the Gaza Strip with rockets and missiles, a mob of Israeli far-right extremists staged anti-Palestinian marches in which they chanted racist slogans such as "death to Arabs." The Israeli extremists also attacked Palestinians living in the lands occupied in 1948. In one case, these extremists attacked a man near Tel Aviv they believed to be an Arab.

Footage of the incident was aired on television Wednesday night. The shocking images show a man being forcibly removed from his car and beaten by a crowd of dozens until he lost consciousness, AFP reported, adding that the attack, broadcast by public broadcaster Kan, took place on the seafront promenade of Bat Yam, south of Israel's commercial capital Tel Aviv.

"The victim of the lynching is seriously injured but stable," Tel Aviv's Ichilov hospital said in a statement, without revealing his identity.

Iran condemned Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian and praised their resistance against the armed-to-the-teeth Israeli regime.

"The heroic response of resistance groups against the Zionist regime showed that the claims of invincibility of the Iron Dome were false lies," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said during a meeting with the Damascus-based leader of the resistance front, according to Press TV.

He lauded the bravery of the Palestinian nation in



the face of the recent spike in Israel's acts of aggression, saying the recent atrocities show that "normalization with the Zionist regime is against the Palestinian people and against the Muslim world."

He pledged Iran's unwavering support for the Palestinian nation.

"We stand with the Palestinian people and we are proud to pay the price for this stand, as Syria pays for standing by the resistance of the Palestinian people," Zarif noted.

During his stay in Damascus, the chief Iranian diplomat also spoke by phone with Ziyad al-Nakhlah, the secretary-general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Beirut.

In the Wednesday phone call, Zarif underlined Iran's continued support for the people and resistance of Palestine, according to an Iranian Foreign Ministry statement.

He described the Palestinian people's patience and resistance as a source of pride, and expressed Iran's preparedness to support the Palestinian people and resistance.

Al-Nakhlah, in turn, appreciated the constant support of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Following the Israeli escalation of violence against the Palestinians, Zarif did massive diplomatic efforts to deter Israeli aggression. He spoke with Palestinian leaders as well as some of his counterparts in the region.

Last week on Monday night, Zarif spoke with Hamas Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh, who briefed the Iranian foreign minister on the latest situation in the occupied territories and the usurping Zionist regime's attacks against Palestinians as well as the Palestinian people who are resisting with all their power.

During the phone call, Haniyeh also asked Foreign Minister Zarif for Iran's support for the Palestinian people's resistance.

The Iranian foreign minister, in turn, reaffirmed Iran's solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine, and condemned the usurping and brutish Zionist regime's measures against the fasting people of Palestine as well as its attack against Al-Aqsa Mosque and martyring and wounding defenseless worshippers.

Zarif reiterated Iran's all-out support for the legitimate

rights of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause.

He also briefed Haniyeh on his consultations with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on supporting the Palestinian people's resistance at the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

A few hours earlier, Zarif had spoken with his Turkish counterpart about the latest status of the Holy Quds and the developments in the occupied territories.

In this phone call, the two foreign ministers also agreed that, should the UN Security Council fail to make an effective decision against the usurping Zionist regime's aggression in its today's meeting, Iran and Turkey would pursue the issue within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly and the extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Zarif and Cavusoglu also stressed the need for close consultations between Tehran and Ankara in this regard.

On Tuesday, a group of more than 200 Iranian lawmakers called on Palestinians to continue their resistance against Israel, saying that resistance is the only way to confront the Israeli regime.

"Resistance is the only way to confront the criminal regime of Israel and the resistance groups will defend the Palestinian cause with maximum preparedness and power until the full liberation of historic Palestine from the River to the Sea," the lawmakers said in a statement, according to Press TV.

The statement said that the Israeli regime is grappling with an "internal political impasse and a fragile security situation" thanks to the awakening of the Muslim nations, the patience and resistance of the Palestinian people, and the preparedness of the resistance forces. It added, "The continuation of crimes by the Zionist enemy will certainly mean the continuation of the resistance's fight against this regime throughout the occupied Palestinian territory."

It emphasized that the resistance front, led by the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), will liberate Palestine from the claws of the evil Israeli regime.

The statement drew attention to the Israeli regime's attacks on the al-Aqsa Mosque, its human rights violations in the occupied territories, and the massacre in the Gaza Strip in the last days of the holy month of Ramadan and on the International Quds Day, saying the Tel Aviv regime's acts of aggression are another stain of shame in the record of the so-called advocates of human rights and international organizations, particularly the United Nations.

It slammed the silence and inaction on the part of the UN and its Security Council on the Israeli regime's crimes against the Palestinian people.

"Europe, as a so-called advocate of human rights, has turned a blind eye to this blatant crime. The United States is also an accomplice in the crimes that are taking place in the occupied territories," it added.

Bloomberg: IAEA inspects Iran nuclear facilities three times a month

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN**— According **d e s k** to Bloomberg, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has conducted three snap inspections of Iranian

nuclear facilities a month, marking a record. Last year, the global nuclear watchdog conducted three surprise inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities every month.

According to the report published by Bloomberg on Friday, one-fifth of the IAEA's 161 surprise inspections worldwide in 2020 were from Iran's nuclear facilities.

The report said the number of inspections by the IAEA inspectors in Iran in 2020 is almost close to the record of visits in 2018.

Rouhani congratulates Muslim leaders on Eid al-Fitr

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan **d e s k** Rouhani has sent a congratulatory message to the leaders of Islamic countries congratulating them on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr.

"Eid al-Fitr is a celebration of returning to one's nature and a season of joy for the fasting people and righteous servants who have purified their souls in the clear stream of Ramadan, and are proud of being servants to God through purification of the soul," Rouhani said in the message, according to a statement issued

by the Iranian presidency.

The Iranian President added, "I am confident that with joint will and efforts of the leaders of Islamic countries, the bonds of friendship and brotherhood among Muslims around the world will be strengthened more than ever and we will see the growth and promotion of Islamic culture around the world."

Rouhani also expressed hope that the coronavirus pandemic will be brought under control all around the world.

Iran celebrated Eid al-Fitr on Wednesday amid strict observation of Covid-19 health protocols.

Rouhani also received a congratulatory message from the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, on Eid al-Fitr.

"In these days, which are blessed for all Muslims on our planet, I pray to God for continuous health and prosperity and further success for Your Excellency, and peace, stability, progress and prosperity for the brotherly people of Iran," Rahmon stated.

Iran wheelchair basketball team drawn in Group of Death: Tokyo 2020

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran have been drawn in Group **d e s k** of Death in the men's wheelchair basketball tournament at Tokyo 2020.

The Persians are pitted against reigning world champions Great Britain, 2016 Paralympic champions US, world bronze medalists Australia, Germany and Algeria in Group B.

Group A consists of hosts Japan, Rio 2016 silver medalists Spain, Paralympic bronze medalists Turkey, Canada, South Korea and Colombia.

The top four in each group will qualify for the quarter-finals. Wheelchair basketball events at Tokyo 2020, postponed to this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, will be held from August 26 to September 6.

Musashino Forest Sports Plaza is set to stage the group matches, while Ariake Arena is set to host the finals.

Tehran derby held in memory of Kabul and Gazza's martyrs

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams was held in **d e s k** memory of martyrs of Kabul and Gazza.

Some 119 people including 28 children have been killed in Gaza Strip with Israeli air strikes over the past years.

Last week, a total of 85 people were also killed in the Afghan capital Kabul and more than 200 injured.

The explosions took place as the girl students were leaving the secondary school.

Tehran derby was held Friday evening between the Iranian most popular football teams Persepolis and Esteghlal in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Mes Sungun reclaim Iran futsal league

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Mes Sungun won the title of the **d e s k** 2020/21 Iranian Futsal Super League for the fourth consecutive year on Thursday.

Mes defeated Crop Alvand 7-1 to win the title on the final day of the competition.

The Iranian Futsal Super League is a professional futsal league competition for clubs located at the highest level of the Iranian futsal league system founded in 2003.

The Super League is the top tier of an extensive pyramid-like structure, above the 1st Division, the 2nd Division and the lower local leagues.

Polish team AZS Olsztyn complete signing of Iran's Salehi

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Polish volleyball team AZS Olsztyn **d e s k** completed the signing of Iran international outside hitter Meysam Salehi.

The 23-year-old player currently trains with Iran national team ahead of the 2021 Volleyball Nations League.

Salehi featured Shahrdari Urmia last season, where he helped his team win the silver medal in the Iran Volleyball Super League.

Another Iranian player Mohammad Mousavi had already played for AZS Olsztyn.

AZS Olsztyn, officially known as Indykpol AZS Olsztyn, are a Polish professional men's volleyball team based in Olsztyn which currently play in PlusLiga.

The club were founded in 1950 as a university team (AZS), located near the University of Warmia and Mazury campus.

NPC’s plan for diversifying petchem products underway

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Managing director of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said the company is seriously pursuing a plan for diversifying the product basket of the country’s petrochemical industry by implementing new projects in the downstream sector.

“The face (the outlook) of the petrochemical industry is changing with the implementation of downstream petrochemical projects and the diversification of the product portfolio,” Shana quoted Behzad Mohammadi as saying during a visit to petrochemical projects in Mahshar, south western Khuzestan province.

Stressing the significance of the downstream industries in the development of the petrochemical sector, the official said one of the NPC’s long-term goals, in the path toward sustainable and smart development of the industry, is the implementation of downstream projects based on the country’s basic feedstocks.

He also emphasized that implementing petrochemical projects with the aim of completing the industry’s value chain is currently the most important goal of the NPC and all the company’s current programs are set to fulfill this goal.



“The petrochemical industry is in dire need of diversification of its final products, so the National Petrochemical Company is looking to develop the industry’s production chain to create a resilient industry so that the country would not need to import expensive products,” he stated.

The official underlined the increase in the country’s propylene production as one of the NPC major goals for sustainable and smart development of the petrochemical industry in the long run and said: “An important goal in planning new petrochemical projects is to meet the industry’s annual need for three million tons of propylene.”

Back in December 2020, Mohammadi had announced launching a four-step plan for developing the country’s petrochemical industry, in which the basket of petrochemical products would be noticeably diversified through 30 strategic projects.

Mohammadi said that the mentioned 30 projects were defined based on the oil and gas feedstock and base products as well as investigating the status of domestic and international markets.

The official noted that 90 types of petrochemical products are currently produced in the country, among them 18 types are polymers categorized in 333 grades.

35 idle production units revived in Ardebil province in a year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, 35 idle production units were revived in Ardebil province, in the northwest of Iran, during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Mohammad Ahli, the managing director of the province’s Industrial Parks Organization, highlighted the efforts made by the provincial officials to revive the mentioned units which has created jobs for over 400 persons.

He further said, “Various support programs for private sector investors are carried out in the industrial parks, through which we try to increase the inflow of investments to the province.”

Ahli stated that by facilitating the investment conditions, the ground for the presence of investors in the province has been provided, adding that with the volume of investments made in the industrial parks and the infrastructure provided in them, these areas are the best possible place for the presence of investors.

As announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, 1,500 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the past year.



According to Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were also established across the country during the mentioned year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry’s plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of “Production: support and the elimination of obstacles” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official said: “In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country’s industrial and mining units.”

Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: “The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors.”

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

According to the official, there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran’s industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

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.

Development projects worth \$1.47b inaugurated in free trade, special economic zones

ECONOMY d e s k Some 38 large industrial, construction, infrastructure and agricultural projects with a total investment of 19.278 trillion rials were among the projects that were put into operation in Aras Free Zone in East Azarbaijan.

Four major development projects worth four trillion rials (about \$95.2 million) were also inaugurated in Alborz to create job opportunities for over 125 people.

As for Khuzestan province, eight industrial projects with 14.427 trillion rials (about \$343 million) of investment by domestic firms plus €1.6 million of foreign investment were

among the inaugurated projects in Arvand Free Zone.

Four major industrial and development projects were also put into operation in Sistan-Baluchestan’s Chabahar free trade zone to create direct jobs for 675 people.

Several projects were also inaugurated in Qeshm free trade zone.

Over the past few years and specially since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, Iranian government has been taking serious measures for promoting domestic production and pushing the country’s economy towards self-sufficiency while cutting reliance on oil.



In this regard, last year, which was named the year of Surge in Production by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei, the government started a program in which every week several projects would be inaugurated across the country to show that the country’s economy is still dynamic and moving forward.

The program has been continued in the

current year which is named the year of “Production: Support and Elimination of Obstacles” despite the pandemic and the restrictions created by the U.S. sanctions.

Since the beginning of the current years, every week several industrial, development, infrastructure, production and agricultural projects have gone operational in various provinces.

Iran to invest \$5.3b in Afghanistan’s transport, infrastructure projects

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran has reached a primary agreement with Afghanistan to invest \$5.3 billion in the country’s transportation and infrastructure projects, an official with the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry announced.

“Negotiations are currently underway for Iran to invest \$5.3 billion in Afghanistan’s transportation and infrastructure projects and the export of technical-engineering services to the country,” ILNA reported on Friday, quoting Hossein Mir-Shafi’ as saying.

According to Mir-Shafi’ the two sides are discussing the details of the mentioned projects to determine the Iranian contractors that are going to implement them.

Completion of the Herat to Mazar-e-Sharif Railway Project with a total investment of \$2.2 billion is one of the projects that is planned to be conducted by Iranian companies.

“This route can provide a rail link between Iran and



Central Asia and China. The length of this railway is 656 kilometers and it has been officially announced that this railway will be implemented and put into operation by the Iranian private sector,” Mir-Shafi’ explained.

He further noted that positive talks have been also held

in the field of road construction and Afghanistan’s Ministry of Public Works has introduced their priority transit and transportation projects to the Iranian side.

Following this, the [Iranian] Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has held preliminary talks with the Association of Exporters of Engineering Services and announced the areas for mutual cooperation with the Afghan counterpart; Iran is going to invest at least \$3.1 billion in Afghanistan’s road construction projects.”

The official further noted that another agreement is also being prepared in the field of housing construction, based on which Iranian private sector is going to establish new towns and skyscrapers in major cities.

“The draft of this agreement is currently prepared and is being pursued through diplomatic authorities. It is estimated that 5,000 - 10,000 housing units will be built by Iranian investors with the participation of Afghan companies,” he said.

Tehraners must save 1,540MW of electricity in summer to prevent blackouts

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Tehran Electricity Distribution Company said Iran’s Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) has allocated 7,253 megawatts (MW) of electricity for Tehran province during summer, so considering the current consumption level Tehrani households must save 1,540 MW in summer to prevent blackouts.

According to Hassan Sabouri, over seven million electricity subscribers are connected to the Tehran Electricity network, comprising 20 percent of the country’s total power consumers.

The official noted that 9,000 government entities are also based in the capital Tehran, accounting for 17 percent of the city’s total electricity consumption.

Sabouri said electricity consumption in

Tehran in recent weeks has increased by 18.5 percent compared to the previous year’s same period, adding that each degree of temperature rise would boost the city’s electricity consumption by 100 MW.

According to Sabouri, a group of 2,500 supervisors has been tasked to monitor the electricity consumption in government entities during the peak consumption period in order to report any misuse back to the governor to be pursued.

He further stated that the Energy Ministry paid 300 billion rials (about \$7.14 million) to the capital city’s industrial units as reward for their electricity consumption management during the summer’s peak consumption period.

This year too, the ministry has allocated the same amount for those industrial units whose consumption is within the range that

Tavanir has determined, he added.

Although every year nearly 3,000 MW is added to the country’s power generation capacity, the reduction in the rainfalls and the decline in the water storage behind the dams has reduced the electricity generation offsetting the added capacity, he regretted.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new strategies in recent years to manage the consumption and lessen the electricity losses in the national grid.

In late July 2020, Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said that his ministry was considering new incentive packages for low-con-

suming households and industrial electricity subscribers.

He also said that two programs were prepared for high-consuming subscribers so that by implementing these plans, these subscribers would also join the low-consumer group.

The official described the first program as a training course to teach consumption management methods with the help of knowledge-based companies and start-ups, and said: “Start-up companies will be formed in this field and will help us optimize the consumption of high-consuming subscribers by providing simple solutions.”

The second plan was to install solar panels on the roofs of high-consuming subscribers’ houses so that such subscribers would meet their electricity needs by installing these PV stations.

Loading, unloading of goods at Bushehr ports doubled in a month on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Bushehr province, in the southwest of Iran, doubled in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), as compared to the same month of the previous year, a provincial official announced.

Siavash Arjomandzadeh, the director-general of Bushehr’s Ports and Maritime Department, announced that 401,000 tons of goods have been loaded and unloaded at the ports of province in the first month of the present year.

The official said that the mentioned commodities were loaded and unloaded from 28 vessels.

He also announced that over 246,000 tons of goods were exported from the ports of Bushehr in the first month of this year, indicating 179 percent growth compared to the first month of the past year.

Loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Iran have risen six percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the head of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced.

Mohammad Rastad also announced that the entrance of ocean vessels to the ports of country has increased eight percent in the previous year, PMO published on its website.

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. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitate loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

Based on the latest statistics, over 80 percent of cargo transportation in the world is conducted through sea, which highlights the significance of maritime transportation.



The figure is 90 percent in Iran and it is why the development of ports and maritime activities is attached high importance in the country.

Iran’s maritime transport is important because of the country’s good access to the open waters in the south and also Caspian Sea in the north that allows international trade between Iran and Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

It should also be noted that Iran’s geostrategic position in the north of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, which is of great importance in international energy trade, doubles the possibility of the country benefiting from maritime transport.

Iran has the 22nd largest shipping fleet in the world.

According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Iran has 246 registered vessels with a carrying capacity of more than 18 million tons.

International organizations such as UNCTAD estimate that one of Iran’s most important tools for combatting the U.S. sanctions is its large shipping fleet.

In this regard, and considering the strategic importance of

maritime transport in Iran and the world and its undeniable effect on the country’s economic situation, double attention to the modernization of maritime transport fleet, attention to new technologies in the field of shipping, shipbuilding, construction of new docks with up-to-date equipment along with the creation of infrastructure for the carrying of goods from deck to shore can help the country in realizing the slogan of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), which is “Production: Support, Elimination of Obstacles”.

To materialize this motto, Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has announced its full support and prepared necessary plans and programs, including some plans to take all the necessary measures for supporting the companies active in various maritime sectors during the current year.

PMO head has recently stated that in line with the current year’s motto which is “Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles”, PMO has put it on the agenda to provide necessary supports for producers in order to facilitate the process of import and export of goods in the country’s ports.

According to the official, one of the important tasks of the Ports and Maritime Organization is to support production centers and industrial units that are active in the area under the supervision of the organization.

Domestic producers that export their products through the country’s commercial ports will also be subject to the mentioned supportive mechanisms and will definitely be supported to be able to export their products at the lowest possible costs, Rastad stressed.

He further noted that significant measures have been taken to supply the equipment required by the Ports and Maritime Organization from domestic manufacturers in order to support domestic production.

PMO will pursue its programs in this regard more seriously during the current year, he added.

TSE experiences a slight weekly growth of its main index

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 11,000 points, or one percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.183 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices

of Barekat Pharmaceutical Group (BPG), Social Security Investment Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran Khodro Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, and Bank Mellat were the most widely followed indices.

A capital market analyst says that TEDPIX is going to improve over the next 1.5 months

in comparison to the first 1.5 months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Rouzbah Shariati believes reaching a possible agreement on the nuclear deal, the stability of the national currency, as well as the less attractive situation of the parallel markets are the important factors that would contribute to the improvement

of the capital market.

Unprecedented fluctuations in the Iranian stock market over the past few months have led shareholders, experts, and scholars to call for the government to increase its support for the market, some shareholders want the government to guarantee the return of their stocks, some believe providing infrastructure is the best way to help this market.

Turkish rulers have no way out but to turn towards Asia: Turkish attorney

“No matter which administration swears in office in Turkey or in the United States, there is no way to maintain the same strategic partnership relations between Turkey and the United States that were in the past.”

➔ 1 Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see Biden's decision in recognizing the Armenian massacre?

Although the statements from President Joe Biden regarding the recognition of the so-called Armenian Genocide seem to be given in the name of human rights and historical facts, it was actually a political statement.

The U.S. administration has gained another front against Turkey with this statement in history alongside other fronts in political, economic, and military fronts.

The aim behind Biden's statements is to smear the Republic of Turkey and the foundations of the Kemalist Revolution with the genocide rhetoric.

Biden's statements have neither any legal nor any historical significance.

Genocide is a legal concept and, as it can be seen from the Perincek vs. Switzerland decision of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), it is not possible to define the mutual atrocities between the Turks and the Armenians in the year 1915, as a “Genocide” in the legal sense.

And when we also inspect from a historical point of view, it will be seen that what happened between the Armenians and the Turks that were provoked by the imperialist forces of that time period against the Ottoman Empire was a state of war.

In short, the statements of President Biden are just a part of the American policies against Turkey, which are containment, encirclement, deterioration and forced to surrender. There is no difference between the American embargo against Iran and the so-called genocide statements from Biden, which are both tools of American aggression policies towards West Asia.

Do you predict U.S.-Turkey relations to deteriorate during the Biden presidency?

The Turkish-American relations are now in an irreversible era of collapse.

No matter which administration swears in office in Turkey or in the United States, there is no way to maintain the same strategic partnership relations between Turkey and the United States that were in the past.

Under the collapse of the Turkish-American relations lies the reason for the global regression of the United States. And as a result of this collapse in relations, Turkey has turned back to West Asian and Asian countries.

We cannot turn back time, so it is not impossible to expect a normalization of Turkish-American relations.

Today, it is not possible to expect the AKP government or any other successor government in Turkey, to turn back to the Atlantic axis.

Turkey's political, security and economic



It can also be expected that Turkey would take more concrete steps away from the Atlantic alliance in the coming period, especially leaving the NATO alliance.

needs forces Ankara to deepen ties with its neighbors in West Asia, particularly with Russia and Iran.

The efforts to restore the relations with the United States would be hopeless on its own, despite political differences between the Trump and Biden administrations.

It is necessary not only for Turkey but also for all the powers in the region to understand and to analyze this situation and act as a unified bloc against the United States in the regional crises.

As the developments of the last century show us, it is clear imperialism is not negotiable. There is no point in hitting the same wall again.

Is Turkey going to consolidate its ties with Russia and China to confront the U.S.?

In the face of these economic, political, military and cultural pressures from the United States, rulers of Turkey have no way out but to turn towards Asia.

The polarization of the world does not leave any room for the rulers of Turkey to maintain their “balance of power” policies between the Atlantic and the Asian powers.

Clashes between the United States and Russia/China are deepening each day.

It can also be expected that Turkey would take more concrete steps away from the Atlantic alliance in the coming period, especially leaving the NATO alliance.

This situation is more of a result of the

necessities created by the global clashes rather than the subjective political choices of the Erdogan government.

Turkey is developing its relations with Russia and moving it to different areas, such as the S-400 air defense systems. On the other hand, our relations with our neighbor Iran are progressing in a very positive direction.

The Astana format, which was established to solve crises in Syria, had successful outcomes and the situation in the region is slowly easing down.

China is also strengthening its ties with West Asia, with caution but with very decisive steps.

The five-point West Asian initiative announced by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs is noteworthy and is the first signs of the Beijing leadership taking an active involvement with the region's issues.

As West Asian and Asian countries, we must develop a holistic approach to our problems. We can only move forward by uniting and not by fighting.

There is no reason why a model similar to the European Union should not be implemented in West Asia. Turkey and Iran can act as the catalyst for such a model. We have a wide field of action from the Caucasus to North Africa and all the way to Pakistan. If we try to see this geography through the perspective of cooperation, instead of a perspective of conflict, we can change the course of history.

And in a broader perspective, the common interests of West Asia, Russia and China can be considered together.

What is your comment on the joint meeting between Israel, Cyprus, the Emirates and Greece? Do you consider it a threat to Turkey?

There is an anti-Turkish front in the Eastern Mediterranean.

On the frontlines of this alliance, the European Union is involved through the governments of Southern Cyprus and Greece, Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

And the great power behind the project is the United States.

Although they also wanted to take Egypt to this front, such efforts will be thwarted by Turkey's recent diplomatic efforts.

This front against Turkey is also the same front against Iran, Russia, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.

If Russia and Iran take a stance in favor of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis it will benefit Turkey and themselves.

It is not only Turkey that is tried to be contained around the Eastern Mediterranean, but also West Asia and even the whole Asian continent.

The Eastern Mediterranean does not only consist of the Eastern Mediterranean. When you examine this clash carefully; you will see that the Atlantic is trying to block the routes of Asia that open to the world.

The regional powers must analyze the situation correctly.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) struggles against the European/American imperialism; the Palestinian struggle against the Zionist Israel is also common struggle.

What are the repercussions of the pandemic on Turkey's economy?

The government in Turkey is trying to shift away from the Atlantic politically, but the social classes and the ideological foundations on which the government is founded upon prevent it from giving the same struggle in the area of the economy.

The economic breakdown caused by the pandemic has further weakened Turkey's already fragile economic situation.

Turkey has two options at hand; it will either maintain the West-centered economic order based on capital flow –in which case there is no way to continue the political fight against the West–, or it will seek a new manufacturing-oriented economic model with revolutionary steps.

The process moves quickly. A period is coming that makes definite choices are expected not only from Turkey but also from all the region's countries.

We are in a time period where those who have their own national economic model and who deepen their cooperation with their neighbors will eventually win.

Hamas fires missiles at Israeli air base, two Iron Dome stations, chemical factory

➔ 1 Abu Ubaida, a spokesman for the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, had previously said that “there are no red lines when it comes to responding to the Zionist enemy.”

He also said that the resistance group had begun using a new missile that can reach anywhere in Israel.

“Rockets were launched toward Ramon Airport with the Ayyash missile with a range of 250 kilometers (155 miles),” Abu Ubaida said on Thursday.

A number of foreign airlines have already canceled flights to Israel due to the unrest in the occupied territories.

Israel continues air strikes on Gaza

On Friday, Israel continued its campaign of death and destruction against Gaza, mounting more air strikes against Palestinians in the besieged enclave, as confrontations entered their fifth consecutive day.

According to Press TV, in a statement after midnight, the Israeli military said that its air and ground forces were attacking Gaza, without giving further details. Israel, however, later retracted the claim, saying it was not a ground invasion.

Palestinians in Gaza also said they had seen no sign of Israeli ground forces inside the enclave but reported heavy artillery fire and dozens of air strikes.

On Friday morning, the Israeli military said some 160 aircraft flying simultaneously conducted a massive attack on what it claimed was a network of tunnels dug by Hamas under Gaza, marking the largest Israeli onslaught since the outbreak of the fighting.

Yemeni forces' drone hits Saudi Arabia's Abha International Airport

The spokesman for Yemen's Armed Forces says the Yemeni forces and allied Popular Committees fighters have launched a new drone attack targeting Abha International Airport in Saudi Arabia's southwestern province of Asir.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree said in a post on Twitter on Monday that the Yemeni drone has hit the designated target at the Saudi airport with high precision.

“The Air Force launched an offensive operation against an important military target at Abha International Airport with Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) bomber drone, achieving an accurate hit, by the grace of God,” he said.

He noted that the attack came in line with the country's “legitimate response” to the aggression's escalation and an all-out siege on the Yemeni people.

The airport has been a frequent target of Yemeni drones over the past months.

Saudi Arabia, backed by the U.S. and other regional allies, launched a devastating war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's government back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah movement.

Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees have, however, gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives.

India 'on war footing' as coronavirus infections pass 24 mln

Prime Minister Narendra Modi sounded the alarm over the rapid spread of the coronavirus through India's vast countryside on Friday, as the official tally of infections crossed 24 million, and 4,000 people died for the third straight day.

With the addition of fresh infections, the cumulative Covid-19 caseload in India has reached 2,40,46,809.

Nine states and UT -- Kerala, Odisha, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Assam, and Manipur -- are continuing to show an increasing trend in daily coronavirus cases, the ministry said on Thursday.

On the other hand, nine states -- Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Goa, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Jammu, and Kashmir, and Ladakh -- have shown a decline in daily new cases in the past one week.

The fatalities across the country also decreased in the last 24 hours, with 4,000 more people succumbing to the disease. The cumulative death toll now stands at 2,62,317.

In addition to this, 3,44,776 people were discharged in the same duration, taking the total number of recoveries to 20,079,599. The recovery rate in India stands at 83.2%.

As a result, there are 37,04,893 active cases in the country currently. The active tally reduced by a few thousand too as it stood at 37,10,525 on Thursday.

Resistance News

Abu Obaida: No red lines when defending our people

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Abu Obaida, the spokesman of the Al-Qassam Brigades the armed wing of Hamas, confirmed on Thursday that there are no red lines nor sacred rules of engagement while defending the Palestinian people.

He stressed that the decision to bomb Tel Aviv, Dimona, Jerusalem, Ashkelon is “easier for us than drinking water.”

He pointed out that his armed wing has directed missile strikes to Israel that no Arab country had dared do since the Palestinian Nakba.

“What distinguishes this battle is the solidarity of our people in all arenas and their clashes with the occupation to different degrees, according to field estimates”, Abu Obaida added.

The Al-Qassam's spokesman called on the Palestinian people in the West Bank to confront the Israeli occupation.

Directing his speech to Israel, he said, “The whole world has seen your shame as you direct your anger towards civilians, children, women and civilian facilities.”

He stressed that the Palestinian people in Gaza pay the price on behalf of the entire nation.

Britain's historic responsibility in the ethnic cleansing of Palestine

➔ 1 One may be surprised to hear that Balfour espoused anti-Semitic sentiment, calling Jews' alien creatures' and 'hostile people,' since those in power sought to activate anti-Semitic slogans in order to justify the containment of settler Jews within Palestine. For this reason, the only Jewish member in the cabinet, Edwin Montagu, was strongly opposed to Zionism, which he called “a mischievous political creed.” The weaponization of anti-Semitism was later to be used as a tool to blackmail those opposed to the colonial state of Israel as 'anti-Semites.'

Empire Lies

Britain also recognized that in order to have increased colonial power in the Middle East (West Asia), the Ottoman Empire needed to be overthrown and dissolved. A secret treaty was signed in 1916 between Britain, France, Russia and Italy, called the Sykes-Picot Agreement, based on the divide and conquer strategy. The agreement promised Britain control of Palestine, Jordan and southern Iraq, and promised France control of northern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and south-eastern Turkey.

Two other promises were made; Britain promised the Zionist movement that if the Ottoman Empire was defeated, the land of Palestine would be converted into a Jewish nation-state. Britain also promised the Arabs the same thing;

if they defeated the Ottoman Empire, the land of Palestine would be promised to them. Britain betrayed the Arabs, and when the Governor of Hijaz (Sharif of Mecca) realized this, he withdrew all allyship from Britain. Britain consequently gave legitimacy to the family of Saud and established the Saudi monarchy.

British colonialism of Palestine

The British mandate over Palestine was effective from 1923, and Winston Churchill reassured Palestinian leaders that they should not suffer the consequences of Zionism. Nevertheless, the influx of Jewish immigrants only continued to increase, and the Jewish communities began to form settlements, institutions and their own leagues until the Jewish population in Palestine increased to 33% by 1947 (from 6% in 1917).

The Palestinians could see through Churchill's lies and revolt against the British. From the 1920s until today, the Palestinians have been continually protesting and resisting the colonization of their lands.

In 1948, Britain withdrew from Palestine, handing over control to the UN. Under the unjust UN partition plan, 55% of the land was given to 'Israel,' and 45% was to remain for Palestine, although Palestinians made up around 70% of the total population.

What will be the domestic and regional consequences of this conflict?

Domestically, in the U.S., people are horrified as to what's going on. The concept of proportionality is front and center and eventually, even the so-called liberal press will have to address this issue. However, they're still likely to talk about violence on both sides without accepting that it rocks vs. F15s.

Internationally, Israel has successfully brought in Arab dictatorships to its side in the fight. The last thing they would want is to see an oppressed people, regardless of whether they are Muslim or not, and many are Christian, to be able to rise up successfully against oppression and corruption, as is the rule in these countries.

In your view, why did Netanyahu start this conflict by inciting Palestinians?

When presidents are facing difficult times at home, whether it be personal or political, changing the subject always works, even if it's for a short time. Tuesday began the continuation of Netanyahu's corruption trial and he's also in the middle of fighting for his political life, which would prevent prison if so convicted. Israel does have a real history of jailing its highest leaders, unlike its financial backer, the US. Also, much like in the U.S., war or the imaginary existential threat to its survival is always a winning issue for an embattled president or Prime Minister.

There's also the case that the ethnic cleansing of Sheikh Jarrah is close to being finalized and public opinion, and even the courts, are taking note and turning against him.

The way the UN is structured it cannot be a force for defending Palestine: American analyst

➔ 1 **How long do you think this conflict will take to settle down?**

The siege of Gaza in 2008 lasted nearly three weeks. But that occurred between American presidencies. President-elect Obama remained silent on the siege, even though he was quite vocal on the massacre in Mumbai at the same time. This clearly showed where his administration was headed on the issue, being much the same as previous administrations.

It's hard to say what's happening now how long it will last. Much will be based on how much support Palestine receives worldwide. Already in the UN, the U.S. is preventing any kind of resolution and the State Department refuses to accept that Palestine, an occupied people, has a right to self-defense, as is permitted in international law.

A pessimist would look at Yemen and see a horrendous war going on, with the support of the U.S., with no abatement. Perhaps the situation would have greater exposure, as the media does not ignore the situation, even if it does take the side of Israel.

Why are international organizations, specifically the UN, silent? What about Arab regimes?

The way the UN is structured, it cannot be a force for defending Palestine. With the U.S. having such enormous veto power, even resolutions calling for an end to hostilities are not permitted. With Trump in office, even with the U.S.'s veto power, many of the other major powers might have had less reluctance to step in, but with Biden, it's back to 'normal' with Palestine being the ultimate loser.

No harm to Bushehr historical sites by quake

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A moderet 4.4 magnitude earthquake that struck the city of Bandar Ganaveh in southwestern Bushehr province on Thursday caused no damage to historical sites across the province.

Based on field visits by experts of the province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, no damage to historical relics and monuments has been reported so far, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.



However, due to a continuous flow of aftershocks, experts are on standby to inspect the possible harms to historical sites of the province, Nasrollah Ebrahimi announced on Friday.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr is one of Iran’s most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Obsolete crafts to be revived using the old-hand expertise: official

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – The tourism and cultural heritage directorate of Zanjan is aimed at reviving handicrafts that are no longer produced across the west-central Iranian province.

“Revival and introduction of such arts, which are becoming obsolete, seem to be very necessary so that the scheme is on the agenda for the province’s directorate of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts,” the deputy provincial tourism chief, Elnaz Khodaiard, said on Friday.

“For the first phase, the three handicraft fields of Jajim-e Panbei (a kind of traditional flooring made from cotton), Pardeh Bafi (weaving curtains), and Mina-ye Malileh (enameling by the means of filigree metalwork) will be revived using the capacity of elderly masters,” she explained.



“Through training and documenting, it is possible to pass on the know-how of these original and deep-rooted fields to the interested young generations so that they are not at least forgotten.”

Handicraft products worth more than \$1.3 million were exported from Zanjan province in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19), according to data provided by the provincial tourism department.

The value of Iran’s handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021). The country’s handicrafts exports, however, slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

Iranian police seize relics from smugglers

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Some 20 historical objects have recently been confiscated from three smugglers in Kuhdasht, western Lorestan province, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage said on Friday, CHTN reported.

Including a decorative box, statue base, tray, and a few coins, the relics which had been embedded inside a car, were discovered during a routine inspection, Mohammadreza Moradian announced.

The official, however, did not refer to the exact age of the relics. The culprits were detained and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, he noted.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Friday mosque of Damghan undergoes restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A new restoration work has been commenced on the centuries-old Friday mosque of Damghan, which stands tall in the north-central Iranian city.

A restoration project has been commenced on the cob walls, roof deck, and downspouts of the Jameh Mosque of Damghan that is situated in Semnan province, provincial tourism chief Mehdi Qasemi said on Wednesday.

“A budget of 1.5 billion rials (some \$35,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) have been allocated to the project to preserve the glory and exquisiteness of this historical monument.”

“The Jameh Mosque of Damghan has a shabestan (an underground space that can be usually found in Iran’s traditional mosques, houses, and schools), a basement, and a minaret, which date from different historical periods,” the official explained.

The Friday mosque of Damghan is located in the northeast corner of the city. According to Archnet, while its original construction date is estimated to be the eleventh century or earlier, it was replaced by a newer structure in the Qajar period under Mirza Moham-madkhan Sepahsalar. A Seljuk minaret, still extant and original, remains on the site; it



was built ca. 1058.

The mosque is oriented north-south and is centered on a large rectangular courtyard measuring twenty-eight by thirty-six meters. It is entered from a wide corridor that opens onto the northern corner of the courtyard.

The southwestern (qibla) side of the courtyard is occupied by three large iwans. The larger, central iwan, flanked by two smaller iwans on either side, is seven meters wide and sixteen meters wide. Two vaulted prayer halls enclose the courtyard.

Ruined Sassanid city restoration works begin

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Work to restore Belad Shapur has begun at several locations across the ruined Sassanid city, which is situated in Dehdasht, southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province.

In the first phase, a caravanserai and two religious monuments have undergone restoration, the provincial tourism chief Majid Safai announced on Wednesday.

Under the scheme, parts of a historical bazaar, ancient passageways as well as two houses will be rehabilitated for the second phase, which will also include the installation of six light towers for better protection of the historical site, the official explained.

Despite all the destruction that took place in this historical city in different eras, with an area of more than 45 hectares, it is currently considered as one of the largest historical structures in the country in terms of size and number of historical buildings. Inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1985, the ancient city of Belad Shapur is one of the top tourist sites of the province.

The city was built at the time of Shapur I, also known as Shapur the Great, (reigned 241 CE–272), the second king

of the Sassanid Dynasty. Under his leadership, the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys.

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 Sassanian art, top examples of which can be traced at Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rostam in southern Iran. In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”-- to its World Heritage list.



Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

Some \$2m paid to support tourism businesses in South Khorasan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The Iranian government has paid some 85 billion rials (over \$2 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the eastern province of South Khorasan.

The loans have been paid to travel agencies, tourist complexes, and tour leaders as well as handicrafts units across the province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The credits are expected to secure 256 job opportunities, Hassan Ramezani announced on Friday.

Located in eastern Iran, South Khorasan province is home to many historical and natural attractions such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Forg Citadel, and Polond Desert.

It is an explorer’s delight – lots to discover yet barely another visitor to be found, even at the most important sights. The region intersperses arid mountains and semi-deserts and is famed for saffron and barberries. But there’s also a wealth of old mud villages that seem to have been left almost complete as though to tempt archaeologists (relatively accessible Old Esfandeh and Old Deyhuk are amongst our favorites).

Castle lovers will swoon over Birjand’s



fortress – which might be slightly over-restored but make a great site for a traditional restaurant – and the mountain-top fortifications at Qa’en, especially magical at sunset; Forg is one of the most picture-perfect castle-citadels in Iran. Boshrooyeh’s Qaleh Dokhtar is smaller and more ruinous but clings dramatically to a spike of the lonely desert crag, with some unique, still-functioning traditional waterwheels nearby.

Government’s care and support packages

In October 2020, the deputy tourism chief, Vali Teymouri, announced that a new support package was approved to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Depending on the type and activity of the

businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (\$3,800 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to nine billion rials (\$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate, he said.

The loans would be allocated to tourist guides, travel agencies, tourism transport companies, tourism educational institutions, eco-lodges and traditional accommodations, hotels, apartment hotels, motels, and guest-houses as well as traditional accommodation centers, tourism complexes, and recreational centers, the official explained.

Teymouri in September 2020 pointed to the 1.3 million tourism workers in the country, who are facing several issues due to the coronavirus crisis and said “This number, in addition to their households, includes a significant population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be considered in ministry’s decisions.”

Last August, Teymouri announced that the tourism ministry had approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million) to support corona-affected tourism businesses, covering as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector.

Tourism industry in critical situation
Tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan

in October 2020 warned that Iran’s cultural heritage and tourism would be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue.

Last August, the tourism minister said that the tourism sector of the Islamic Republic had suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

He also noted that the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. “Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning.”

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the Iranian calendar year 1398(started March 21, 2019).

Authorities to restore, reorganize Seymareh open-air museum

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Tourism directorate of the western Ilam province is slated to restore and reorganize the open-air museum site of Seymareh, which dates from the Sassanid-era (224 CE–651).

A budget of 800 million rials (about \$19,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, provincial tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh said on Thursday.

The project involves improving the tourist routes of the ancient city, using local and traditional materials, the official added.

The ancient city of Seymareh has become the province’s first outdoor museum, as it is one of the province’s most important historical sites with several historical monuments inside, he explained.

Earlier this month, the official announced that architectural sites and agricultural lands inside the ancient city, which were damaged by seasonal rains, were repaired and restored.

A budget of two billion rials (about \$48,000) was allocated to the project, the official added.

Seymareh ancient city, with an area of 200 hectares, is located near Darreh Shahr city. It dates back to the Sassanid-era and is believed to be built on remnants of the Elamite capital, Madaktu.



The first archeologist to visit Seymareh was Sir Henry Rawlinson. He began an expedition to the site in 1836. He was looking for the remaining of Seymareh and considered it to have belonged to the Sassanid dynasty. Jaques de Morgan also visited this historical land in 1891 and introduced it as the same ancient city of Madaktu. Then it was Aurel Stein who attempted to explore it in 1936, according to Visit Iran, the official travel guide of Iran.

The archeological findings show that the city included

about 5,000 houses with some modern aspects like a water distribution system through clay pipes and underground sewers. The city was destroyed and deserted after a huge earthquake around 950 BC.

The remnants of the city were inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1931.

Darreh Shahr was once the summer capital of Elamites, a pre-Iranian civilization dated from 2700 to 539 BC. The city also enjoyed centuries of prosperity during the Sassanid era.

Darreh Shahr and its surrounding regions boast vestiges of Sassanid constructions such as arches, ceilings, alleys, and passages that follow a specific order of urban development criteria of the time.

Home to almost half of Iran’s UNESCO sites, western Iran is a land of hospitable people, wild extremes, and wilder history, and it may be an independent traveler’s adventure playground. The region also witnessed the rise and fall of many great empires once bordering Mesopotamia, Ottoman Turkey, and Czarist Russia.

From the fecund Caspian coast to the stark, mountainous northern borders, and the crumbling desert ruins of the southern plains, the region hosts everything from paddy fields to blizzards to Persian gardens.

Iran, Russia discuss fight against drug trafficking

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The Iranian anti-narcotics police chief Majid Karimi, and the representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Iran, Alexey Vladimirovich Kozhukhov, discussed ways of cooperation to fight against drug trafficking.

In a meeting held on Wednesday in Tehran, the two officials emphasized the need to strengthen police cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking in the region and internationally, IRNA reported.

Karimi expressed readiness to expand joint cooperation between the two countries in various fields, including the exchange of information on the main networks of drug trafficking and experiences related to police equipment, educational cooperation, detection of drug trafficking, training of detection dogs, and the pursuit of anti-narcotics cases between the two countries.

Kozhukhov, for his part, said the Russian anti-narcotics police force is fully prepared to increase the level of bilateral cooperation with Iran in the field of countering the transit and trafficking of narcotics at the international level.



Last year (March 2020 – March 2021), amid the pandemic, Iran has participated in more than 20 regional and international events online, in cooperation with the UNODC office in Tehran, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against

narcotics, said on Tuesday.

The counter-narcotics agencies and police forces succeeded in detecting about 1,150 tons of various types of narcotics, which is a new and unprecedented record in the fight against drugs showing a growth of about 41

percent compared to 2019, he stated.

This success has been achieved with the martyrdom of 10 law enforcement and counter-narcotics forces in the global front against drug transit, he further noted.

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.

1,401 birth certificates issued for children of Iranian mothers, foreign fathers

→ **1** Although Iran is not a party to the UN Conventions on Statelessness, the Government of Iran is taking steps towards the prevention and reduction of statelessness in the country.

While the law does not give mothers and fathers equal rights to confer nationality to their children, it represents significant progress.

Statelessness: a global issue

Around the world, stateless people can face a lifetime of exclusion and discrimination and are often denied access to education, health care, and job opportunities – making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Worldwide, statelessness affects millions of people, leaving them without the basic rights and official recognition that most of us take for granted. Some 3.9 million stateless people appear in the reporting of 78 countries, but UNHCR believes the true total to be significantly higher.

“No child chooses to be stateless,” said Ivo Freijsen, UNHCR Representative in Iran last year. “Without identity and official documents, stateless people are often excluded from society. The Government of Iran is leading by example through its new law. It is a hugely positive move for these children and their families.”



Over 43 tons of narcotics seized in two weeks

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – More than 43 tons of narcotics have been confiscated from smugglers across the country over the past two weeks, Naser Aslani, an official with the anti-narcotics police, has said.

In this regard, 939 vehicles and 30 weapons were confiscated as well, he added.

“During the same period last year, 56 tons of narcotics were discovered, which shows a decrease of about 23 percent. Of the figure, some 34 tons were related to opium, which accounts for 81 percent of the total discoveries,” he explained.

Meanwhile, a total of 12,992 culprits have been arrested in connection with the crimes, especially during plans implemented for drug trafficking fight, he noted, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Of these, 8,862 were arrested on charges of drug trafficking, and 3,970 were drug addicts and 160 were foreign nationals, he further stated, five provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, Kerman, Hormozgan, Bushehr, and South



Khorasan had the highest share of discoveries accounting for 48 percent.

Most recently, the police have disbanded two large smuggling gangs in the eastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, discovering around 1.1 tons of narcotics.

Battle against narcotics continues despite sanctions, pandemic

Iran has carried on a battle against narcot-

ics in spite of being highly affected by cruel sanctions and COVID-19 pandemic, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against narcotics, said on April 13.

Last year (March 2020 – March 2021), amid the pandemic, Iran has participated in more than 20 regional and international events online, in cooperation with the UNODC office in Tehran, he highlighted, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The counter-narcotics agencies and police forces succeeded in detecting about 1,150 tons of various types of narcotics by strengthening the mechanisms for monitoring and exchanging information between the responsible organizations.

This volume of discoveries is a new and unprecedented record in the fight against drugs, which shows a growth of about 41 percent compared to 2019; some 90 percent of the substances found were opium, 26 percent heroin, and 48 percent morphine.

This success has been achieved with the martyrdom of 10 law enforcement and

counter-narcotics forces in the global front against drug transit.

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Record growth in renewable power in 2020 set to become ‘new normal’, says IEA

The record surge in global renewable power seen in 2020 is set to become the “new normal” in coming years, a new analysis suggests.

Last year, renewable sources of electricity such as wind and solar grew at their fastest annual rate in two decades – “defying” the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the global economy.

A new analysis from the International Energy Agency (IEA) suggests that this level of growth is set to continue

in 2021 and 2022.

In its latest update, the IEA reports that the world added 280 gigawatts (GW) of new renewable power capacity in 2020 – and is set to add a further 270GW in 2021 and around 280GW in 2022.

This means that global growth in renewable power from 2020 to 2021 is set to be 50 per cent higher than in the period 2017 to 2019, said Heymi Bahar, lead author of the renewables report and a senior analyst at the IEA.

“2020 will be remembered in multiple ways because of Covid, but for renewables I think it will be remembered as a step change for growth,” he told The Independent.

“This is really the main takeaway – that the ‘new normal’ after 2020 will be for much faster growth.”

This “step change” is visible on the chart below, which shows the net amount of renewable power capacity added each year from 2011 to 2020, with projections for 2021 and 2022.

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → چ

Relief foundation creates over 1.5m jobs for the deprived

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has generated over 1.5m job opportunities for those financially struggling since the past 7 years, Hojatollah Abdolmaleki, the Foundation's deputy director has announced.

Job generation for the underprivileged is among the most important and tough responsibilities of the Foundation, he stated, YJC reported on Monday.

Since Iranian calendar year of 1390 (March 2011– March 2012) to 1396 (March 2017- March 2018), the Foundation has earmarked 100 trillion rials (nearly \$2.4 billion) to open up over 1.4 million job opportunities in order to facilitate income generation for the deprived, he explained.

He went on to add that last year (March 2018-March 2019), a total of 148,000 jobs were created by the Foundation's budget of 23 trillion rials (around \$547 million).

ایجاد بیش از یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار شغل برای محرومان در کشور

عبدالملکی گفت: کمیته امداد امام (ره) از سال ۹۰ تاکنون بیش از یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار شغل برای محرومان کشور ایجاد کرده است.

به گزارش خبرنگار باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، حجت الله عبدالملکی معاون کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره) اظهار کرد: ایجاد اشتغال امری سخت است، تولید اشتغال برای محرومان سخت‌ترین اقدام برای کمیته امداد است که در حال انجام است.

وی افزود: از سال ۹۰، یک‌میلیون و ۴۰۰ هزار شغل با تسهیلات ۱۰ هزار میلیاردی برای محرومان ایجاد شده است، در سال گذشته نیز برای ۱۴۸ هزار نفر ۲ هزار و ۳۰۰ میلیارد تومان تسهیلات توسط کمیته امداد شغل ایجاد شده است.

CORRECTION

Due to an error, the headline for the top story on Wednesday's issue was printed mistakenly. The correct headline reads: “Iranian COVID-19 vaccine enters large-scale production phase.” The mistake is regretted.

Marriage rate increased by 5% despite pandemic

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The marriage rate in Iran has increased by 5 percent over the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), despite the coronavirus pandemic, Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, has said.

Despite the pandemic that was expected to lead the marriage rate to a downward trend, the reduction of marriage costs has caused the rate to grow by 5 percent last year, while, divorces have decreased by 4 percent, she explained, ISNA reported on Friday.



Marriage threefold of divorce

Based on the latest statistics, some 307,349 marriages and 99,679 divorces were registered in the country during the first seven months of the past [Iranian calendar] year.

In December 2020, Seifollah Abutorabi, the National Organization for Civil Registration spokesman said that during the first 9 months of the past [Iranian calendar] year, some 853,084 births were registered across the country, as well as 397,501 deaths during the same period.

Population growth policies

Official statistics of the country and the forecast of demographic experts indicate that if the trend of decreasing fertility rate, increasing single-child families, and decreasing marriage rate continues for the next 30 years, old age will prevail in the country and one in three people will be over 60-years-old, which will be the beginning of a crisis.

Some 14 policies to support childbearing and the family were announced by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in [the Iranian calendar year] 1393 (March 2014-March 2015) when he stressed that social, cultural, and economic development should be done in accordance with these general policies to support families.

The policies address the need to increase the population and the various dimensions of it, including childbearing, facilitating marriage and strengthening the family, reproductive health, promoting the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle, empowering young people, honoring the elderly, and the environment, which can lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of the population if it is timely and continuous implemented.

Kimia Mohammadzadeh, a member of the working group for women and family at the independent association of the University of Tehran, told Mehr news agency that thus, instead of considering family support and youth marriage, policy-makers adopt policies that lead to delays in marriage and family formation.

Childbearing, which should be a public issue, became an inefficient policy due to lack of follow-up, she said.

Most recently, the Majlis (Iranian parliament) has developed a support plan to encourage families to increase childbearing.

The plan stipulates health insurance for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutrition support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.



Without water, everything withers

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 182)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

زبان فارسی یکی از زبان‌های مهم ایرانی است که مردم کشورهای ایران، افغانستان، تاجیکستان و در بعضی کشورهای دیگر به آن صحبت می‌کنند. فارسی، زبان دوم جهان اسلام است.

همچنین ادبیات فارسی دارای ارزش و اهمیت زیادی است و، به این دلیل، بسیاری از دانشجویان در کشورهای مختلف به آموزش زبان و ادبیات فارسی علاقه‌مندند.

در مراکز فرهنگی ایران، دوره‌های تحصیلی تا درجه‌ی دکتری، و کلاس‌های کوتاه‌مدت در رشته‌ی زبان و ادبیات فارسی تشکیل می‌شود. علاقه‌مندان به ادامه‌ی تحصیل در این رشته یا شرکت در کلاس‌های کوتاه‌مدت می‌توانند با سفارت جمهوری اسلامی ایران در کشور خود تماس بگیرند.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When you get ill do not get nervous about it and try as much as possible to be hopeful.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Painting

■ Naqshe Jahan Gallery is organizing an exhibition hanging a selection of paintings that have previously been showcased. Paintings by Yervand Nahapetian, Nahapet Nahapetian, Manuchehr Seram, Safura Asaadian and Faramarz Mokhtarpur have been selected for the exhibit, which will run until May 21 at the gallery located at 9 Ayatollah Mahmudi St. in the Niavaran neighborhood.



■ Paintings by Meisam Samarrokh are currently on view in an exhibition at Negah Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Color Flowed Fields" will run until June 2 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.



■ Paintings by a group of artists, including Samaneh Mosayer, Shiva Heidari, Maryam Ruzgard, Hossein Mohammadinia, Melika Bagheri and Nastaran Musavizadeh, are currently on display in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery. The exhibition entitled "Growth" will run until May 19 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Parva Karkhaneh is currently underway at Negar Gallery. Raika Khorshidian is the curator of the exhibition entitled "Iranian Jazz" that will be running until May 25 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, East Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.



■ Farzaneh Rahmadian is hanging her latest collection of paintings in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery. The exhibit runs until May 24 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

Painting/drawing



■ Inja Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Samila Amir-Ebrahimi. The exhibit entitled "Suspension" will run until June 11 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

Sculpture



■ An exhibition of sculptures by Saeid Shahlapur is currently underway at Iranshahr Gallery. The exhibit will run until June 9 at the gallery located at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.



■ Sets of installation art by Mojtaba Amini are currently on view in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Overture" will continue until May 20 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.

Multimedia



■ A collection of artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Sanaz Nohqasr, Mona Miri, Atieh Qaderi, Fatemeh Sadeqi and Zohreh Hossein, is on view in an exhibition at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit will run until May 18 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



■ Paintings by Morteza Khosravi, Ahmad Jafari, Mahta Moeini, Shadi Moallem and Yasaman Khaleqi are on display in an exhibition at Sheidai Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Rereader" will continue until June 13 at the gallery located at 149 Bahar Shiraz Square near Hafte Tir Square.

“That Day” chronicles Gen. Soleimani’s meeting with “The 23” crew

➔ Mikail Dayyani is the director of the 30-minute documentary produced by Mehrdad Moazzami, the Iranian institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema, announced on Thursday.

“That Day” is scheduled to be released through platforms providing video on demand (VOD) service and IRIB channels’ broadcast.

In October 2018, General Soleimani attended the launch of the epic movie “The 23”, also known as “23 Individuals”, about 23 young Iranian volunteers who were captives during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war on location in Tehran.

The movie was directed by Mehdi Jafari based on “Those 23 Individuals”, the memoirs of Ahmad Yusefzadeh, one of the 23 volunteers who were held captive for a long period of time in Iraq.

Soleimani held a meeting with the young actors who played the roles of



A poster for the Owj documentary “That Day” about General Qassem Soleimani’s meeting with the crew of the 2018 war drama “The 23”.

the volunteers.

Director Jafari and producer Mojtaba Faravardesh also briefed the general on the project at that time.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei wrote a commendation for “Those 23 Individuals”.

“I highly praise this gifted writer and those 23 individuals, and the Hand of Power and Wisdom which has created all this beauty through His miraculous fingers,” the Leader wrote about the book, which was published by Sureh-Mehr Publications in 2014.

The book tells of the early months of the volunteers’ captivity and the events they confronted, and later their visit with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Iraq tried to manipulate the volunteers in its propaganda against Iran at that time. However, all their attempts failed miserably by magic tricks from the volunteers.

Saeidi vocalist brothers dedicate music video “Your Pure Way” to health workers



Cover of Saeidi brothers' music video “Your Pure Way”.

A R T TEHRAN — Vocalist brothers Ali and Mohammad Saeidi have dedicated their new music video entitled “Your Pure Way” to health workers in appreciation of their essential service

during the pandemic.

The twin brothers released the music video on Wednesday to celebrate Iran’s national Twins’ Day and International Nurses Day, they said in a press release.

The video has been dedicated to Dr. Mohammad Golshan and medical staff. As a retired respiratory specialist, Golshan died of COVID-19 last winter, treating patients with the disease at Khorshid Hospital in Isfahan.

Siamak Behbahani is the composer of the piece with lyrics by Amir-Hossein Bakhtiari.

The Saeidi brothers are scheduled to work on “Persian Nightingales” for world-renowned Iranian composer Ali Rahbari’s upcoming album “My Mother Persia”, parts of which are scheduled to be recorded with the Khmelnytsky State Philharmonic Orchestra in Ukraine.

The brothers gave a live online concert organized by the Freiburg-Isfahan Friendship Society on March 22.

Since January, they have also launched an initiative

to enrich the daily lives of those people who have little patience or spare time by recording short music videos.

They have said that their plan is a matter of necessity in modern life.

They stated that most people in the modern world lead hectic lives and no longer have the patience to listen to preludes in songs or longer musical pieces.

Thus, they choose one or two verses which are intended to be the point of each music video. The songs are performed in various gushes, the totality of melodies of the Persian traditional music system.

They have recently released “There Is No Help” from a poem by Emad Khorsani, which was recorded at Barsian Mosque, a Seljuk era (1037–1194) monument located in the village of Barsian near the central Iranian city of Isfahan, the hometown of the Saeidi brothers.

Iranian architecture is indirectly observed in this video.

The brothers have collaborated with numerous prominent musicians, including maestro Farhad Fakhreddini, the founder of Iran’s National Orchestra.

“Helene” coming to Fajr Intl. Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — Finnish filmmaker Antti J. Jokinen’s 2020 romance historical drama “Helene” will be competing in the 38th Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran.

The film describes the life of Finland’s most acclaimed painter Helene Schjerfbeck in the years between 1915 and 1923.

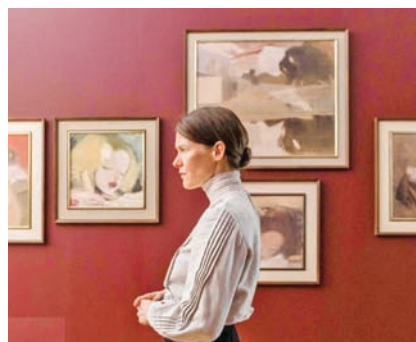
In 1915, Schjerfbeck is a forgotten artist living in the countryside with her elderly mother. Years have passed since her last exhibition, and Helene has continued to

paint only for her own passion. Everything changes when an art dealer discovers Helene and her 159 amazing paintings and wants to organize a large solo exhibition. However, the most important moment in Helene’s life is brought on by her encounter with amateur painter Einar Reuter, who is a passionate admirer of Helene’s art. He becomes Helene’s confidante and the unfulfilled love of her life.

The Fajr International Film Festival, which is scheduled to take place in Tehran

from May 26 to June 2, has not announced the lineup for the official competition as yet.

However, the organizers previously announced that Oscar-winning Hungarian director Istvan Szabo’s latest movie “Final Report”, Italian director Claudio Noce’s drama “Padrenostro”, Ukrainian-Armenian filmmaker Roman Balayan’s 2020 movie “We Are Here We Are Close” and Polish director Piotr Domalewski’s drama “I Never Cry” have been selected to compete in the event.



Laura Birn stars as the Finnish painter Helene Schjerfbeck in “Helene”.

International Earth Film Festival announces doc competition lineup

A R T TEHRAN — The International Earth Film Festival, a new Iranian film event that plans to promote environmental issues and sustainable development, announced the lineup for the documentary competition on Thursday.

Nineteen feature and 17 short documentary films will be screened during the first edition of the festival, which will run online in Tehran from May 15 to 21 due to the pandemic.

A highlight of the feature-length documentary films is “All Mama’s Babies” by Rezvan Sarmad.

The documentary covers a story about Sarmad’s family. The filmmaker’s parents decide to transform their house into a 9-floor apartment building to help support their children. His mother has planted many fruit trees in the garden, taking great care of them. She realizes that the garden will be destroyed to make way for the new building, and wants to save the trees, which she sees as “her babies.”

The documentary had its world premiere at the Montreal World Film Festival in Canada in 2018.

“Children of the Night” directed by Moseh Sakha is also among the feature-length documentaries.

The film is about a child soldier, craving heroin, with a Kalashnikovs in hand who has been involved in more than fifty ISIS wars and conflicts. Balanche is among the first child soldiers to tell his stories and



A poster for the 1st edition of the International Earth Film Festival.

observations of one of the most terrifying wars in the world in full detail, along with his four other companions in the documentary.

At the age of twelve, he fled home after an insurgent attack, taking shelter in his country, in Pakistan’s

religious schools, and at the age of thirteen was recruited by local liaisons. Terrible violence and the ability to engage in unpredictable behavior in war have prepared them to create dangerous events in the days following the war.

The festival will also screen “Talan”, director Mohammad-Sadeq Dehqani film about underground waters.

Among the short documentaries is “In the Realm of the Spider-tailed Viper”, by Fathollah Amiri about the spider-tailed viper that lives in the western Iranian province of Ilam.

Sakha will also compete in the short documentary category with “Tehran, a City without Birds”. It is about the birds that migrate from the metropolis of Tehran. The destruction of gardens around Tehran, air pollution and the propagation of electromagnetic waves have had a direct impact on the migration of different species of birds from the city of Tehran. Among them are people who are concerned about the migration of birds and try to spread a sense of responsibility among citizens through various social, cultural and artistic activities.

The International Earth Film Festival has been established by the Green Civilization NGO, Ordibehesht Oudlajan Art and Cultural Complex and Hashur, a platform providing video on demand (VOD) service.

Irish novelist Adrian McKinty’s “The Chain” appears in Persian



Cover of the Persian translation of Irish novelist Adrian McKinty’s book “The Chain” by Simin Mahbub.

C U L T U R E TEHRAN — Another d e s k Persian translation of Irish novelist Adrian McKinty’s book “The

Chain” by Simin Mahbub has been published in Tehran

Chatrang is the publisher of this book. Earlier in 2020, the Nafir publishing house published a Persian translation of the novel by Zahra Cheflaki.

It’s something parents do every morning: Rachel Klein drops her daughter at the bus stop and heads off for her day. But a cellphone call from an unknown number changes everything: it’s a woman on the line, informing her that she has Kylie bound and gagged in her back seat, and the only way Rachel will see her again is to follow her instructions exactly: pay a ransom, and find

another child to abduct. This is no ordinary kidnapping: the caller is a mother herself, whose son has been taken, and if Rachel doesn’t do as she’s told, the boy will die.

“You are not the first. And you will certainly not be the last.” Rachel is now part of “The Chain”, an unending and ingenious scheme that turns victims into criminals — and is making someone else very rich in the process. The rules are simple, the moral challenges impossible: find the money fast, find your victim, and then commit a horrible act you’d have thought yourself incapable of just twenty-four hours ago.

But what the masterminds behind “The

Chain” know are that parents will do anything for their children. It turns out that kidnapping is only the beginning.

McKinty was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and grew up in Victoria Council Estate, Carrickfergus, County Antrim. He read law at the University of Warwick and politics and philosophy at the University of Oxford.

He moved to the United States in the early 1990s, living first in Harlem, New York and from 2001 on in Denver, Colorado, where he taught high school English and began writing fiction. He lives in Melbourne, Australia with his wife and two children.