



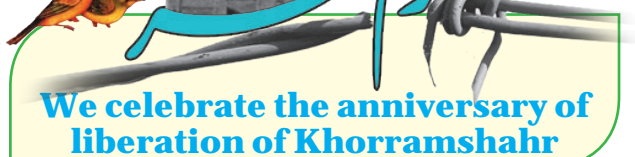
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A decade after legendary Nasser Hejazi's death *Page 3*



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We celebrate the anniversary of liberation of Khorramshahr

Science at the service of resistance



© Tehran Times/ Photo Illustration by Bahman Vakhshour

Half of endemic turtle species in Iran endangered

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
Iran is home to 10 endemic species of turtles, five of which are sea turtles, and all five are endangered due to human activities, oil pollution, and coastal degradation and development.

These creatures date back to the time of the dinosaurs, over 200 million years ago. A total of 360 have been identified worldwide, from the oceans to the deserts, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, of which 187 are endangered and 127 are critically endangered. Many of these species are predicted to become extinct within the next century.

Turtles, like many species of animals, are valuable to the environment and ecosystem, but they face a variety of dangers and threats, including climate change, habitat destruction, and pollution, as well as illegal fishing and trade.

Therefore, to raise awareness among humans to help turtles survive and thrive in their natural habitat, every year World Turtle Day is celebrated.

May 23 is designated as World Turtle Day since 2000 by American Tortoise Rescue, to bring attention to, and increase knowledge of and respect for, turtles and tortoises, and encourage human action to help them survive and thrive.

World Turtle Day is celebrated around the globe in a variety of ways, from dressing up as turtles or wearing green summer dresses, to saving turtles caught on highways, to research activities. Turtle Day lesson plans and craft projects encourage teaching about turtles in classrooms.

Endangered turtles of Iran

In general, there are 10 species of turtles in Iran, five species of which are terrestrial turtles (non-marine turtles), and the other five species are considered sea turtles.

European pond turtle, Caspian turtle, and Euphrates softshell turtle are the three species of pond turtles; while two species of spur-thighed tortoise and Afghan tortoise are terrestrial.

The Euphrates softshell turtle with the scientific name of *Refetus euphraticus* is the only soft-shell turtle in Iran, which is critically endangered facing extinction.

The predominant species of turtles in the Persian Gulf is the hawksbill sea turtle that lays its eggs on its shores, and the Oman Sea is hosting the green sea turtle species.

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Iran backs Palestine because it is independent, says Lebanese analyst

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

TEHRAN - A senior Lebanese political analyst says that Iran adheres to the Palestinian cause while many Arab countries have neglected Palestine in order to satisfy the colonialists and the Zionist regime and their American master.

Amin Hoteit says Iran has adopted such a policy toward Palestine because it is an independent and sovereign state.

"There is a big difference between a sovereign, independent ruler who safeguards the interests of his nation and a subordinate ruler who guards the interests of foreigners," Hoteit tells the Tehran Times.

"Iran adheres to Palestinian cause while many Arabs neglect Palestine in order to satisfy the colonialists and the Zionist regime, and their American master," the Lebanese analyst notes.

After 11 days of Israeli bombing, Gaza remains strong. The Israeli regime was forced to agree to a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Resistance forces in Gaza forced Israeli settlers to seek shelters by firing hundreds of missiles at different parts of occupied territories.

Following is the text of the interview:

What is the status of Palestine in the Arab and Islamic world?

Palestine is part of the Arab and Islamic lands, and within this framework, we say that the Islamic world should be coherent and united in the face of Israel as God says in Quran: "Indeed this, your religion, is one religion, one and I am your Lord, so worship Me." (Al-Anbya - Verse: 92)

On the one hand, according to Islamic logic, the attack on Palestine means an attack on the Islamic Ummah.

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Yemeni forces shoot down Saudi reconnaissance drone in Jawf skies

Yemeni army forces have shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the Saudi-led military coalition over Yemen's northern province of al-Jawf.

Spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree said air defense forces targeted the Chinese-made CH-4 combat drone with a surface-to-air missile which has not been unveiled yet.

The aircraft was on a reconnaissance mission over al-Maraziq area in the Khabb wa ash Sha'af district of the province early Sunday morning, he said.

It would not be a "picnic" for anyone to enter the Yemeni airspace because the country's armed forces protect it, Saree said.

The CH-4 drone has a 3,500- to 5,000-kilometer range and a 30- to 40-hour endurance. It is capable of carrying six missiles and a payload of up to 250 to 345 kilograms.

The unmanned aerial vehicle can fire air-to-ground missiles from an altitude of 5,000

meters, enabling it to stay outside of effective range of most anti-aircraft systems.

The development came only a day after the media bureau of Yemen's popular Ansarullah movement released video footage of the wreckage of a Chinese-made Chengdu Wing Loong II drone belonging to the Saudi military.

Yemeni air defense forces and their allies shot down the spy drone over Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region of Najran, which lies close to the border with Yemen with a surface-to-air missile on May 20.

'We can strike targets you can't imagine ever'

A senior member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council on Saturday threatened to intensify attacks against Saudi Arabia and its allies in case they continue their aggression and siege against Yemen.

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Tehran, Beijing ink joint statement to protect Asian cultural heritage

TEHRAN - Iran and China on Saturday signed a joint statement which is expected to pave the way for further protection in the arena of Asian cultural heritage.

The statement was signed in an online conference by Iranian deputy tourism minister Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, and Chinese director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration Li Qun, Mehr reported.

Based on the declaration which is in line

with the Asian Initiative for Cultural Heritage Conservation, the two nations will join hands in projects of archaeology, and conservation of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, Tehran and Beijing seek to reinforce collaboration to safeguard the UNESCO World Heritage sites and to fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural relics.

Speaking at the event, Talebian said that the relationship between Iran and China has been

stable due to their common historical and cultural background, and both countries have supported each other in maintaining national dignity and securing their development paths.

The plan to protect the cultural heritage of Asia could increase the confidence and unity of Asian countries in introducing and protecting their valuable cultural heritage, he added.

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Palestinian cause is again alive and kicking: ex-Lebanese diplomat

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - Noting that "Deal of the Century" was buried in the Sheikh Jarrah district, a former Lebanese ambassador to Chile, Poland, and Canada says that the Palestinian cause is again alive and kicking.

"Former U.S. President Donald Trump tried to kill and bury the Palestinian cause with his so-called 'Deal of the Century' which, in fact, died on the 3rd of November when Trump lost the elections and was buried on the 10th of May in the Sheikh Jarrah district. Now the Palestinian cause is again alive and kicking," Massoud Maaloul tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview: What are the causes and roots of escalation in Palestine?

The roots of the escalation go back to the year 1948 when the Jews, who came to Palestine from different parts of the world, evicted the Palestinians from their homes and established the state of Israel. The causes of the recent escalation and the current events are the decision of the Israeli settlers to evict Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem, and the desecration of the holy Al Aqsa mosque during the holy month of Ramadan by Israeli soldiers, and shooting rubber bullets on the civilians praying inside the mosque and spraying them with tear gas. This is what initiated the current cycle of violence in Jerusalem, which later spread to Gaza and other cities of occupied Palestine.

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© Mehr/ Maryam Kamyab

Tehranis celebrate Palestinians' victory over Israel

TEHRAN - Hundreds of citizens in the capital Tehran poured onto the streets on Sunday celebrating the historic victory of the Gazans over the occupying Israeli regime. The gathering was held in Palestine Square. People showed V signs and waved Palestinian flags.

ELECTION WIRE

Guardian Council: Tuesday will be final day to examine presidential hopefuls

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council said on Sunday that it will continue to examine the presidential candidates' records on Sunday and Monday and the Tuesday meeting will be the conclusive one.

Talking with the national TV, the council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said the candidates are still presenting new documents.

The spokesman said that experts are doing their best to review records with precision.

He noted that the results of the Tuesday meeting will be given to the Ministry of Interior.

The presidential elections will be held on June 18. Candidates rejected by the council are given a few days to protest.

Candidates may officially begin campaigns on May 28, a day after the Guardian Council's legal deadline to release the names of qualified candidates.

Election hype begins as rumors emerge about high-profile candidates

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — According to Fars News Agency, two of the high-profile presidential candidates will probably be found incompetent, as heated debates surfaced in the Guardian Council over their records.

The report did not give names, but pointed to certain clues about the candidates.

Fars claimed that one of the candidates will not be confirmed because one of his children is currently studying in the United States, as the other candidate is suffering from a kind of unidentified disease.

The Guardian Council has repeatedly stated that it will review the records with careful precision and reasonable speed regardless of outside pressure.

MP: I have presented documents against Jahangiri Nasrollah Pejmanfar, a senior MP, said on Sunday that he has presented documents against presidential candidate Es'haq Jahangiri to the Guardian Council.

Pejmanfar, the head of the Article 90 Committee of the Parliament, said Jahangiri, the currently first vice president, has had records of financial corruption and has been sentenced to a one-year dismissal from government duties and posts.

Jahangiri is a high-profile candidate, representing the pro-reform Servants of Construction Party.

He had recently appointed Hossein Mar'ashi, a senior member of the party, as his campaign manager; Fatemeh Pahlavani as his spokesperson and secretary of the policymaking council; and Mohammad Rahbari as his senior assistant.

The final names of the candidates will be announced on Tuesday, May 25, Guardian Council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said on Sunday.

He also said that there won't be time to review the records again, hence, protests will not be heard.

The presidential election will be held on June 18. Many opinion polls show that Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi enjoys lead over other candidates.

Austrian FM says still major issues remain unresolved to revive JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg has said important issues regarding a possible revival of the 2015 nuclear deal — JCPOA — still remain unresolved, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Speaking with Der Standard, Schallenberg said the time to restore the nuclear deal is passing but "certain important issues are still open and unresolved."

He added it has been for a long time that Austria has been a good host for negotiations on Iran's nuclear program.

The chief Austrian diplomat said in his view the two major nuclear partners, Iran and the United States, are working hard to restore the deal even though still there is no direct talks between the two countries.

MP: Provisions of Vienna nuclear talks should be approved by Parliament

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The head of the Article 90 Committee of the Parliament said on Sunday that that the Iranian negotiating team should note that all the things that are agreed in the Vienna nuclear talks are valuable only if they are approved by the parliament.



"The negotiating team should note that all the issues raised in the Vienna talks are valid if they are approved by the Majlis (Parliament). If the Majlis does not approve the provisions of the talks, the agreement will not be formal," Nasrollah Pejmanfar remarked.

Nuclear talks on possible revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal, are scheduled to start in Vienna on Tuesday.

Pejmanfar said the negotiating team must take into account the parliamentary law titled Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and protect the interests of the Iranian people.

According to the parliamentary ratification, from June 1 voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol and those beyond the Safeguards Agreement should be ceased.

Observations by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should be limited to the Safeguards Agreement, the parliamentarian said.

He stressed that the IAEA must formally announce the issues through the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.

U.S. employing piecrust policy

Policies are like piecrust, they are made to be broken

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — As Iran and P4+1 are busy negotiating to possibly revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the United States administration keeps running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

Anthony Blinken said on Sunday that the U.S. has not seen "signs of seriousness" in Iran, seeking to cast doubt on Iran's readiness to return to its obligations.

This comes at a time as 6 delegates are busy negotiating and drafting an agreement, along with making lists of dos and don'ts. It seems that it is high time for Joe Biden to make the single most decisive political decision of his life: To make a political move and return to the JCPOA, or take the high road and follow in the idiotic footsteps of his predecessor, Donald Trump.

Blinken's remarks came as a shock since Mikhail Ulyanov, head of the Russian delegate and Russia's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna, described the Vienna talks as "unique".

"The goal is to restore a nearly ruined deal piece by piece. Was there a similar exercise in the history of international relations? I cannot recollect anything like that. Can you?" he stated.

Ulyanov is not the only negotiator describing the talks as constructive. Earlier, Enrique Mora, European Union's political director, described the JCPOA as "the key to stability in the region," saying that there will definitely be an agreement, although he cannot predict when.

The EU official noted that a common understanding has shaped on three issues.



The first one is what still needed for U.S. return to the JCPOA, the second being lifting of related sanctions and the third being resumption of nuclear commitments by Iran.

Iran's chief negotiator, Seyyed Abbas Araqchi, said on Tuesday that significant progress has been made. Yet, he said, the sides still disagree over key unresolved issues.

He had said on May 6 that all sides showed signs of seriousness. "What can be inferred from the first session is the seriousness of all sides in reaching a solution."

He added that the seriousness is apparent in all delegations, and each side somehow expressed it.

As Biden is pressured by the progressive Democrats to return to the nuclear deal, one day his administration calls the talks productive but the next day his top foreign policy official says that the other party is not serious in returning to its JCPOA obligations.

The policy of running the hare and hunting the hound has long been extinct. It seems that Biden should distance himself from playing old tricks on Iran. Being Obama's aide in securing the 2015 nuclear deal, he should know Iran better by now.

Analysts say that the Obama-Kerry team is now led by Robert Malley. Had this been true, the talks wouldn't have entered its

fourth round.

In the letter addressed to Biden on May 10, 53 congressional Democrats strongly supported an initiative in the Biden administration to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which former President Donald Trump quit.

"Lifting Trump's bad-faith sanctions - which he explicitly imposed on Iran in order to make a return to the JCPOA next-to-impossible - should not be treated as a concession to Iran, but rather as an effort to restore U.S. credibility and enhance American security," they wrote, according to The Hill.

The Democrats argued that Trump's withdrawal "made America less safe," saying, "America's credibility has been severely damaged and its national security damaged."

"The Obama administration did not only prove that diplomacy with Iran works, but it also proved that no other policy tool advances American security more effectively than diplomacy," they wrote to Biden. "We urge you to continue on this proven path of success."

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison (D) and Democratic Ohio congressional candidate Nina Turner were among the most notable signatories.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran has time and again stressed that the U.S. cannot be trusted. However, it seems that the Iranian delegation is trusting the Biden administration, which is following the famous idiom, "Policies are like piecrust, they are made to be broken."

Iran, IAEA deal to be extended 'conditionally': source

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — An informed source at the Supreme National Security Council has said that the deal between Iran and United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be "conditionally" extended for a month, according to the Noor News Agency.

The three-month monitoring deal between Tehran and the UN nuclear watchdog expired on Saturday.

The IRNA news agency also quoted an unnamed official as saying, "If extended for a month and if during this period major powers ... accept Iran's legal demands, then the data will be handed over to the Agency. Otherwise the images will be deleted forever."

The possible extension is intended to give the Vienna talks a chance to possibly revive the 2015 nuclear deal,

officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Delegate have said talks on revitalizing the JCPOA are progressing. However, they have said key issues remain unresolved.

The delegates will possibly reconvene in Vienna on Tuesday.

Iranian Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Sunday that three-month monitoring deal between Tehran and the United Nations nuclear watchdog expired on Saturday.

IAEA chief Rafael Grossi is in talks with Iran on extending the monitoring arrangement which could have an impact on negotiations in Vienna, the IAEA said.

"From May 22 and with the end of the three-month agreement, the agency will have no access to data collected

by cameras inside the nuclear facilities agreed under the agreement," Qalibaf said.

Iran and global powers have held several rounds of negotiations since April in Vienna, working on steps that Tehran and Washington must take, on sanctions and nuclear activities, to return to full compliance with the 2015 nuclear pact.

Iran began gradually reducing terms of the 2015 pact one year after former President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the deal in May 2018 and re-imposed sanctions.

In response to sanctions, the Iranian parliament passed a law last year to prevent short-notice inspections by the IAEA of Iran's nuclear facilities.

Hatami: Iran among top missile powers in the world

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Speaking at a ceremony exhibiting achievements of the Ministry of Defense on Sunday, Defense Minister Brigadier-General Amir Hatami said Iran is undoubtedly among the top countries in the world in terms of missile power.

The top military official noted that the Islamic Republic is in an unprecedented position today largely due to its defense industry.

"A combination of defensive capabilities and popular support has offered Iran an ensuring defensive power and the foes admit they don't have the upper hand anymore," he added.

"We are even better than the world's top powers"

Referring to the military achievements of his ministry in the field of ground combat, General Hatami stated, "Today, we have gained various achievements in different fields, which are not limited to ground combat, and in the field of missiles, we are undoubtedly one of the



world powers, and in the field of unmanned armed vehicle, we are even better than the world's top powers."

"The main focus of our activity is to gain access to strategic weapons in all areas, and we have achieved the main goals in the field of ground combat. In the field of missiles, we have a real capability that the armed forces can carry out their mission," he explained.

The latest exhibition on achievements by the Ministry of Defense in the field of ground combat has been held by the Defense Indus-

tries Organization. Advanced equipment in the fields of oil, gas, mining, chemicals and bio-defense items are also on display.

The exhibition is held on the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr.

The anniversary of liberation of Khorramshahr from the Iraqi army falls on May 24.

"Iran stands firm against any aggression"

Speaking on the sidelines of the exhibition, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the Iranian parliament speaker, said that Iran stands firm against any aggression and seeks sustainable peace with neighbors and Muslim Ummah.

Emphasizing that power generation is a chain, he added, "Today, I consider this part of the power chain, which is the basis of work, a source of honor, security and peace in the country, which has been achieved through the silent efforts of the dear brothers of the Ministry of Defense."

"People need to believe that our strategic depth is their heart"

The top parliamentarian noted that big developments occurred in the country only after the establishment trusted the youth to do big projects and gave them opportunities for trial and error.

"The basis of the strength of the Islamic system is not its missile industry and power, but the heart of each person. People need to believe that our strategic depth is their heart. It is this belief that causes our transformation in various fields," Ghalibaf added.

Pointing to the historic victory of Gazans over the occupying Israeli regime, he said that in the 60s, the Arab countries could not stand against the Zionist regime for more than 5 days.

"Today, with the unity of Muslims under the shadow of the Quran, despite the normalization of relations between some reactionary leaders of the region and the Zionist regime, Gaza was able to bravely resist the enemy for 10 days" and defeat the enemy which "is armed to the teeth" he said, calling it "a divine tradition."

Intelligence Ministry demolishes three terrorist teams

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — According to the Ministry of Intelligence, three terrorist groups have been disbanded in Sistan-Baluchestan and West Azerbaijan provinces and the perpetrators of the March 21 terrorist bombing in Saravan have been arrested.

The ministry said members of the team in Sistan-Baluchestan are affiliated to the Jaish al-Adl terrorist group, who had been receiving military training in a foreign country and committed the crime under the leadership of the group.

Two pistols were found from the evil leader of the terrorist team, along with

some tools and materials for making bombs, according to the ministry.

It added the leader of the terrorist group has a history of drug trafficking and murder.

Jaish al-Adl (Soldiers of Justice) is a group that has history of conducting terrorist attacks in southeast Iran.

The ministry added the armed team that had entered West Azerbaijan to extort and carry out terrorist acts was monitored and after an armed conflict in the border area of Urmia, two of them were killed and one escaped. It added the team had entered Iran from the Iraqi region.

Military chief: Policy is to boost defensive, offensive and deterrence strategy

→ 1 The general also said this year the anniversary of liberation of Khorramshahr has coincided with the Palestinian resistance forces' victory over the child-killing Zionist regime in a new Intifada.

While the flag of Palestine has been raised across the occupied territories and Gaza, the occupiers of al-Quds have run for shelters humiliatingly as the Zionist



regime's nest, like the spider web, has become shakier than ever, he stated.

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Science at the service of resistance

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Very little is known about the persons who were martyred during the last Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip. Undoubtedly, many of them were innocent children and women who were killed in revenge for the Israeli army's failure in targeting the leaders of the Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza.

As one Israeli pilot revealed, these victims were targeted in residential towers during the aggression as "a way to give vent to the army's frustration, after its failure to stop the firing of rockets from the Strip."

However, Israel also targeted some influential figures in Gaza, who were associated with the resistance against Israel. Professor Jamal al-Zebda and his son Usama were among these figures. Jamal is definitely one of the unsung heroes of the Palestinian resistance against Israel. He was a professor of engineering sciences and mechanics at the Islamic University of Gaza and graduated with a Ph.D. degree from Virginia Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science nearly 35 years ago.

Professor Jamal received his university education in Virginia, USA, obtained a doctorate in civil aviation and studied the engine of the F-16 fighter plane, then worked at NASA space agency, before returning to Gaza to champion the Palestinian cause, according to Al Jazeera.

He refused to stay in the U.S. and work there as a university professor despite the fact that his family obtained U.S. citizenship and he had an opportunity to lead a life of luxury and serenity. However, he left the U.S. and began a long journey into Gaza that culminated in his martyrdom.

Al-Zebda worked in secret under the eyes of a resistance commander called Muhammad Deif to develop its military



capabilities, heading a group of local engineers and experts, working day and night to turn the scarce resources in the Gaza Strip into advanced tools facing the occupation army.

Al-Zebda graduated a large generation of engineers from the Islamic University and secretly recruited hundreds of them to work in the secret program of the resistance to develop its military tools, especially with regard to missiles and drones, according to the Lebanese Al-Akhbar newspaper.

The newspaper also said that Israel viewed al-Zebda as someone similar to Mohsen Fakhriyadeh in the eyes of Iran.

This made him a prime target for Israel since at least 2012 when al-Zebda was targeted by Israel but survived. According to activists, al-Zebda has remained in

hiding since 2012, and Israeli intelligence pursued him between 2007 and 2010, and Israeli warplanes tried to assassinate him by bombing his apartment in the 2014 war.

Al-Zebda's wife said his progenies will continue the path of the professor. In an interview with Al Jazeera, she said the occupation did not understand that even if Jamal al-Zebda was killed; there exists a thousand of Jamal al-Zebda in our land and that he has instilled in the souls of his children and grandchildren adherence to the Palestinian cause and defending it very dearly.

The wife vowed that she will raise her grandchildren on the path of their grandfather and will not deviate from the path of pride and dignity until they liberate their entire land from the usurper occupier.

Usama's wife also echoed the same thing. "I will raise my children according to the path of their father and grandfather, and the occupier will not be satisfied on our land, and the martyrdom of my husband and his father is an honor for all of us, and we pledge them to complete their path," she said.

Al-Zebda one an example of how attractive the Palestinian cause is for millions of Muslims, especially Arabs, who would sacrifice worldly life in the cause of freedom and dignity.

The episode also revealed how important is the need to use science in the defense of the oppressed. Thanks to al-Zebda and his devoted colleagues, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip now can inflict a painful cost on a regime that continues to disregard international law and regulations by targeting civilians living in residential towers.

The martyrdom of al-Zebda also showed how strong is the support for Palestine in Arab public opinion. Al-Zebda was not the first scientist who dedicated his life to the Palestinian cause. Mohammad Zouari was a Tunisian engineer, who help the Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza develop drones. He was shot dead in 2016 in a drive-by shooting operation generally attributed to Mossad.

Israel may assassinate scientists and commanders but it will never succeed in killing the strong will among Arab peoples to resist occupation. Israel strived to project a different image of itself after a number of Arab states normalized diplomatic relations with it. But the 12-day war against brought Israel back to square one, where it is widely seen — at least among Muslims — as a rogue, occupying regime, which cold-bloodedly kills innocent civilians and tramples on Muslim sanctities almost on a daily basis.

Parliament speaker says IAEA access to nuclear facilities should be cut off

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Sunday that the three-month deal between Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog has expired and that the government should restrict the watchdog's access to Iran's nuclear facilities.

Speaking at a Majlis open session on Sunday, the speaker said the International Atomic Energy Agency has no right to have access to the data of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran's cameras.

Qalibaf was responding to the remarks by Ali Reza Salimi, a member of the Majlis presiding board.

Salimi said, "The International Atomic Energy Agency had three months to fulfill its obligations, but this did not happen and their legal opportunity expired yesterday."

Salimi also said that the Majlis should make sure that a nuclear law passed by the Majlis would be implemented. The lawmaker also asked Qalibaf to instruct the AEOI to delete the data stored by its cameras.

Responding to Salimi, Qalibaf said, "We are determined that the strategic action act (the parliamentary nuclear law) to lift sanctions and protect the rights of the Iranian people be implemented at specific times and in accordance with the legislation, and the Leader has repeatedly emphasized this issue."

He added, "The Agency's three-month deadline was until May 22, and according to this, the International Atomic Energy Agency does not have the right to access the images and information of the Atomic Energy Organization, and this was discussed and decided yesterday."

Iran and the IAEA reached a temporary deal allowing the Agency to continue its monitoring of Iran's nuclear facilities.

The deal was reached during a two-day visit by IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi to Iran. During the visit, Grossi met with Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

The AEOI issued a joint statement outlining the content of the understanding moments after Grossi concluded his visit to Iran.

"The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency recalled and reaffirmed the spirit of cooperation and enhanced mutual trust that led to the Joint Statement in Tehran on 26 August 2020, and the importance of continuing that cooperation and trust," the statement said. "The AEOI informed the IAEA that in order to comply with the act passed by the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran called 'Strategic Action to Cease Actions and Protect the Interest of Iranian Nation' Iran will stop the implementation of the voluntary measures as envisaged in the JCPOA, as of 23 February 2021."

The statement added, "In view of the above and in order for the Agency to continue its verification and monitoring



activities, the AEOI and the IAEA agreed: 1. That Iran continues to implement fully and without limitation its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA as before. 2. To a temporary bilateral technical understanding, compatible with the Law, whereby the IAEA will continue with its necessary verification and monitoring activities for up to 3 months (as per technical annex). 3. To keep the technical understanding under regular review to ensure it continues to achieve its purposes."

The February deal was mainly designed to give nuclear talks more time to see if there is a possibility to reach a deal on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal before a parliamentary nuclear law goes into effect.

The nuclear law stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20% and suspending the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran's deal with the IAEA came a few days before the nuclear law came into force.

Under the February deal, Iran and the IAEA agreed that the Agency would not have access to the data of the cameras it placed in the Iranian nuclear facilities and Iran will store the data for three months. If the West failed to reach a deal with Iran within this period Iran will permanently delete the data.

The February deal expired on Friday, but no announcements were made by Iran and the IAEA on the fate of the deal.

Two weeks ago, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, hinted at the possibility of extending the deal without giving specific details.

He told Japanese broadcaster NHK that Iran hopes enough progress will be made so that there will be no need for an extension. But he said that if needed, Iran will consider an extension at a proper time.

A day later, Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the

Iranian Foreign Ministry, announced that extending Iran's cooperation deal with the International Atomic Energy Agency is one of the country's options.

Khatibzadeh elaborated on Araghchi's comments, underlining that what Araghchi said was that the parliamentary nuclear law was binding.

The spokesman said Iran is not in a hurry to reach a conclusion in the Vienna talks but at the same time it seeks to prevent them from becoming draining.

"We do not want any date to prevent Tehran's executive instructions from being strictly implemented for the negotiating team," he pointed out. "In this interview, Dr. Araghchi pointed to only one of the choices for the date of May 21. If the talks are on the right track, with the coordination of both parties and Tehran's approval, this date can be extended."

Khatibzadeh said the decision regarding the extension of the February deal will not be made by the Iranian negotiating team. Instead, he said, it will be made in Tehran.

"The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the technical talks in Vienna is quite clear, the negotiating team acts within the framework of the high policies of the establishment and the executive instructions of Tehran, and sends reports to the relevant authorities on a daily basis," he continued.

Araghchi has just returned to Iran after concluding the fourth round of the Vienna talks, which are aimed at reviving the Iran nuclear deal. The last meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission was held on Wednesday. After the meeting, Araghchi said good progress was made during the talks but they needed to return to capitals in order to make some final decisions.

"After two weeks of negotiations, we will have a meeting to conclude, and then the delegations will return to the capitals for consultations," Araghchi told Iran's state media.

He added, "There are a few key issues that need further review and decision-making in the capitals, and we hope that they will take place in the next few days and that we will be able to conclude on these issues in the next round of talks."

According to Araghchi, intensive talks and meetings were held at all levels. He said that Iran and its negotiating partners had bilateral and multilateral talks at expert and political levels. "During these discussions, we tried to reach a conclusion on the issues at stake, either to resolve the differences or to decrease them, and the result is that we are in a position where we can have a general conclusion," he pointed out.

He continued, "There are some key issues that need to be resolved and there is agreement on the rest; the texts have been well written and so now is the time to go back to the capitals and have the final consultations and then continue the negotiations."

Iran repudiates press reports on detention of Armenian soldiers

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian embassy in Yerevan has responded to press reports claiming that dozens of Armenian soldiers have been detained in Iran.

The embassy has said the rumors claiming that 160 Armenian soldiers are in Iran and the Iranian side has set preconditions for their repatriation are false and groundless, according to Public Radio of Armenia.

The statement came in response to a number of Armenian media outlets' reports claiming the soldiers had crossed to the Iranian side during the 44-day war, which broke out last year on September 27 and lasted until November 10. The war resulted in Azerbaijan liberating large swathes of the territories that

were under Armenian control.

During the war, Iran refused to take sides and maintained a neutral position. It also voiced readiness to help the warring sides to settle their differences through dialogue and presented a peace initiative in that regard.

In addition, Iran made it clear that it supports the territorial integrity of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. In mid-May, a senior Iranian lawmaker reiterated that position and warned against any change in the borders on the two countries.

The lawmaker, Mojtaba Zolnouri, who serves as the head of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said Tehran has made it clear that it

will not accept any change in international borders in the region.

"The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is very clear, unequivocal, and decisive. We do not accept any change in the borders of the region. The territorial integrity of the countries in the region must be preserved. At the same time, we do not accept the deployment of any supra-regional forces near our borders," Zolnouri told Russian state news, Sputnik.

"Therefore, if part of the territory of Armenia is to be taken and our border conditions change, that is, to have a new neighbor, it is not acceptable for us. The existing borders must be completely protected and the shared border of the Islamic Republic of Iran with



Armenia must be maintained," he continued.

The comments came after Armenia claimed that the Azerbaijani forces have advanced into its sovereign territory in Syunik province.

S P O R T S

A decade after legendary Nasser Hejazi's death

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — 10 years ago today, Iran and Esteghlal legendary goalkeeper Nasser Hejazi left us. Iran's football has not forgotten him as a person who made the nation proud in his footballing life.

The custodian lost his battle with lung cancer on May 23, 2011 in Tehran at the age of 61.

Hejazi was a popular footballer in Iran and even Persepolis' fans, as the archrivals opponents, loved him so much.

For many enthusiasts, earliest memories of football are inspired by him. Hejazi will forever be etched into the heart of the Iran football.

He lived like a hero as a player but was not treated like a hero in his coaching career. There were some rumors that some players conspired against him in the match against Saipa in Iran league to get rid of him.

In May 1999, Esteghlal went to dressing room in the first half with a score of 3-1 but lost 4-3 eventually and Hejazi was sacked after the match.

He accused some players of conspiracy in an interview with the media.

Hejazi was goalkeeper of Iran national football team in the 1960s and 1970s and won the AFC Asian Cup on two occasions in 1972 and 1976, and Asian Games title in 1974.

Hejazi competed in the 1972 and 1976 Olympic Games as well as 1978 FIFA World Cup.

He led Esteghlal to title in Iran league in 1998 and also advanced to the final match of 1999 AFC Asian Championship, where the Blues lost to Japanese team Jubilo Iwata 2-1 in Tehran.

Last week, late Hejazi was named as the best Iranian goalkeeper of the XXth century (1901-2000) by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS).

He received an offer from Manchester United after the 1978 FIFA World Cup, and trained with them for a month, appearing in a reserve match against Stoke City.

Today is Hejazi's 10th death anniversary.

The legend will be remembered forever.

Three Iran volleyball members chosen as members in FIVB Commissions and Councils

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) President Mohammad Reza Davarzani and two other officials, Maryam Hessabi and Amir Tolouekian, have been selected as FIVB Members in Finance Commission, Marketing & Communication Commission and SEC/Volleyball Council respectively.

The composition of the FIVB Commissions and Councils for the 2021-2024 Olympic cycle as well as the new Volleyball Empowerment Commission has been approved during the FIVB Board of Administration Meeting via video conference on May 18.

Davarzani has been selected as the FIVB Finance Commission Member.

IRIVF International Affairs Director Hessabi has become a Member in FIVB Marketing & Communication Commission.

Tolouekian, IRIVF technical and media advisor, took seat in the FIVB SEC/Volleyball Council.

VAR not to be implemented next season: official

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) will not be implemented next season in Iran Professional League (IPL), Khodadad Afsharian, head of Iran football federation's Referees Committee said.

The IPL's referees have come under fire for some of their calls in the recent games, and it shows that the use of VAR technology is a necessary.

The football officials had already said the technology would be implemented in 2020/21 season but Afsharian says that it will use in 2022/23 season.

"Regardless of the cost, the infrastructure needs to be there in our stadiums. We have problem to implement the technology," Afsharian said.

"Unfortunately, the situation is very unfavorable and I have never had such an experience in the league. Our referees are under pressure from the players and coaches and VAR can be helpful but as I've already said, the technology could be used in 2022/23 season due to lack of infrastructure," he added.

Iran names squad for Asian Women's Volleyball C'ship

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's women's volleyball team, Fariba Sadeghi, has named her 22-player squad for the 2021 Asian Women's Volleyball Championship.

The players will participate in the training camp which will start in Tehran on Thursday to prepare for the Asian Women's Volleyball Championship.

The competition will be held in the Philippines from Aug. 29 to Sept. 5.

The tournament serves as part of Asian qualification for the 2022 FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship, with the top two nations including winners and runners-up advancing to the qualifying tournaments.

Squad:

Hanieh Mohtashamipour, Aytak Salamat, Asma Saeidi, Mahta Yayhapour, Fatemeh Enayat, Maedeh Eskandari, Fatemeh Khalili, Haleh Motaghian, Elaheh Hallaj, Mohadese Moshtaghi, Zahra Rezaei, Reyhaneh Davarpanah, Zahra Moghani, Tahmineh Dargazni, Shakil Sadri, Zahra Bakhshi, Bitia Alaei, Setayesh Jebelli, Maryam Habibi, Sara Nazari, Negin Shirtiari, and Zahra Karimi

Para taekwondo athlete Shahab earns spot in Paralympics

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian para taekwondo athlete Rayehe Shahab earned her spot at the 2020 Paralympic Games.

In the women's K44 -58kg, the Iranian Para athlete was awarded a berth after her rivals didn't participate in the qualification.

Another Iranian Para athlete Fatemeh Dodangeh failed to book a place in the Games in the Women's K44 -49kg.

The Paralympic Games will be held from Aug. 24 to Sept. 5.

Inflation rate up 2%: SCI

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on April 20, which marks the end of the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht, stood at 41 percent, rising two percent from the figure for the twelve-month period ended on the last day of the first month.

SCI has put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 46.9 percent in the mentioned month; it means that the families have paid an average of 46.9 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services compared to the same month of its previous year.



The point-to-point inflation rate was 2.6 percent less than the figure for the previous month.

At the same time, the point-to-point inflation rate for urban households was reported to be 46.1 percent, which is 2.7 percent less than the figure for the previous month.

Back in April, SCI had put the inflation rate at 36.7 percent in the urban areas of Tehran province in the last month of the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20). The center put the figure at 35.8 percent in the rural regions of the province.

The SCI announced that the inflation rate has risen 0.6 percent in the country's urban areas in the last month of the past year.

The center has announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20, which marks the end of the last month of the past Iranian calendar year, stood at 36.4 percent, rising 2.2 percent from the figure for the twelve-month period ended on the last day of the eleventh month of that year.

170 idle industrial units revived in Tehran province in a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — A provincial official announced that 170 idle industrial units were revived in Tehran province in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Yadollah Sadeqi, the head of Tehran province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, said that last year, 170 stagnant industrial units returned to the production circuit following the efforts of the taskforces to facilitate production condition and remove related barriers.

He said that 220 meetings of the taskforce for facilitating the production condition and removing related barriers were held last year, which addressed the problems of 1,200 industrial units.

He also said that due to the difficult economic conditions created by the sanctions and the spread of the coronavirus, some production units, especially small industries, have been damaged, and promised that with the serious determination of officials and executive bodies, these problems will be solved.

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.

NIDC digs 17 oil, gas wells in 2 months

→ 1 NIDC managed to carry out 10,182 meters of horizontal and directional drilling in 43 oil and gas wells across the country during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to the Head of NIDC's Special Operations Department Ali Daqaeyqi.

Some 654 meters of core extraction drilling was also conducted in the mentioned period which was a huge achievement for assessing the condition of the country's oil and gas reserves.

Back in February, NIDC Managing Director Abdollah Mousavi had announced

that his company dug and completed the digging operation of 117 oil and gas wells during the first nine months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021).

Mousavi said the drilled wells consisted of 27 development wells, one appraisal well, 85 workover wells, and four exploratory wells.

After the U.S. reimposition of sanctions against Iran, indigenizing the know-how for the manufacturing of the parts and equipment applied in different industrial sectors is one of the major strategies that the Islamic Republic has been strongly



following up to reach self-reliance and nullify the sanctions.

Oil, gas, and petrochemical industries have outstanding performances in this due, with indigenizing the knowledge for manufacturing many parts and equipment that were previously imported.

Among different sectors of the mentioned

industries, drilling could be mentioned as a prominent example in this regard.

National Iranian Drilling Company managed to indigenize the knowledge for manufacturing 6,000 drilling equipment in collaboration with domestic manufacturers and engineers in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Indigenization of equipment saves Iranian gas industry \$19m a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The indigenization of the knowledge for the production of equipment and materials needed in the gas industry is saving Iran \$19 million every year, an official with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) announced.

"Currently, more than 90 percent of adsorbents, more than 95 percent of catalysts and over 90 percent of solvents and chemicals needed in the gas industry have been localized," Head of NIGC's Production Coordination and Supervision Directorate Masoud Zardovian said.

Speaking in a seminar on coordinating supply and demand in gas industry on Saturday, Zardovian said: "We are now looking to improve the quality of products, and to facilitate access to them while making prices more competitive."

He pointed to the sustained and safe supply of clean gas for the consumers as the major ax of his company's activities and said: "All the major policies of the company are defined and determined according to the mentioned goal."

Going hand in hand with the oil industry, the Iranian gas sector has been enjoying drastic technological advances in recent years, and numerous knowledge-based companies,



Head of NIGC Production Coordination and Supervision Directorate Masoud Zardovian

research centers, and institutes have become active to help the industry reach its goals of self-sufficiency.

Kerman Chamber of Commerce hosts online seminar on trade with Russia

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Kerman Chamber of Commerce hosted an online seminar on reviewing Russia's market with a focus on establishing trade offices in the mentioned country, the portal of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) reported.

Held in Kerman Province in southeast of Iran, the event was attended by the former Iranian Commercial attaché in Russia, the Secretary of Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's Russian Desk Farhad Parand and officials from the Kerman Chamber of Commerce.

Private sector representatives active in various fields like exporting dates, agricultural products, medical plants and herbs, pistachio, construction materials and petrochemicals also attended



the seminar.

As reported, opportunities and challenges facing Iranian businessmen in the Russian market were among the major subjects explored in the mentioned meeting.

In this meeting, Parand presented a report on the characteristics of the Russian market, opportunities and challenges of

export to this country, and ways of entering the Russian market and registering a company.

It was decided in the meeting that after the removal of coronavirus-related travel restrictions a trade delegation from Kerman province will travel to Russia to explore trade opportunities and to hold B2B meetings with Russian counterparts.

Last week, Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali and Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation Anton Kobayakov met and stressed the need for expansion of economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

Kobayakov who is the deputy chairman of St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF 2021)'s organizing committee, met with Jalali to discuss the presence

of Iranian economic representatives in the mentioned event which is scheduled to be held during June 2-5.

In that meeting, Jalai announced that an Iranian delegation will be attending the SPIEF 2021.

He further stressed the need for holding the 16th meeting of the Iran-Russia Economic Committee and called for removing the restriction imposed on the trade between the two sides due to the coronavirus pandemic as a prerequisite for further expansion of trade ties.

Kobayakov for his part welcomed the presence of the Iranian delegation at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum and stressed the need to implement the two countries' joint economic programs during the year.

Commodities worth \$554m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 861,793 tons of commodities worth \$554 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and Public Relations Department, the exchange traded on its mineral and industrial trading floor, 518,793 tons of commodities worth more than \$350 million.

On this floor the IME sold 399,269 tons of steel, 1,120 tons of copper, 680 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 24 tons of precious metals concentrate, 106,000 tons of iron ore pellets and concentrate, 480 tons of zinc, 100 tons of lead, 10,000 tons of sponge iron (DRI) and 4 kg of gold bars.

The next trading floor was the oil and petrochemicals with 338,363 tons of commodities sold on its both domestic and export pits, valued at more than \$200 million. Commodities traded on this floor included 83,500



tons of vacuum bottom, 88,868 tons of bitumen, 80,255 tons of polymeric products, 38,437 tons of chemicals, 43,000 tons of lube cut, 3,691 tons of base oil, 60 tons

of argon and 200 tons of sulfur.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 4,423 tons of commodities traded on it.

The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) rose 108 percent compared to the preceding year.

During the past year, about 3.5 quadrillion rials (about \$83.5 billion) worth of commodities were traded at the mentioned market.

In the past year, several new records were achieved in terms of the volume and value of transactions in the mentioned market's various floors including the industrial, petroleum, and petrochemical floors.

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

TEDPIX loses 20,400 points on Sunday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 20,421 points to 1.107 million on Sunday.

As reported, over 3.897 billion securities worth 30.093 trillion rials (about \$716.5 million) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market's index dropped 388,201 points, and the second market's index fell 38,793 points.

TEDPIX lost 29,000 points, or 2.5 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.154 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Social Security Investment Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran Khodro Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, and Saipa Company were the most widely followed indices.

Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi, the chairman of the Iranian parliament's economic committee has said recently that the stock market is going to follow a positive trend in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

"[This year] the profits of major industries and influential companies in the capital market have been assessed positively, which is why the market will follow a positive trend this year," Pour-Ebrahimi told IRIB.

The official said that part of the current negative trend in the market is due to psychological factors and the fact that people have lost their trust in the capital market.

"In the first half of the previous year, the government failed to manage and monitor the capital market and did not do its job properly, which is why the capital market [index] witnessed such a severe decline," he said.

The government must act in such a way

that the people's trust is restored and the capital market is taken out of the current psychological atmosphere, he stressed.

Meanwhile, the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has said that the central bank welcomes the prosperity of the capital market.

"Stability of all markets along each other is of utmost importance for the central bank, therefore the bank supports the stability of the capital market," Abdolnasser Hemmati said in a meeting with the representatives of the capital market.

He emphasized that the approach of the Central Bank is to support the capital market, stating: "One of my personal economic beliefs is that our problem in economics is the underdevelopment of financial markets and capital market in particular."

According to Hemmati, inflation expectations affect the bank interest rates and consequently the market, therefore it is hoped



that lower inflation expectations will lead to lower inflation and lower interest rates.

"All markets are highly sensitive to change and inflation expectations, and this is not limited to the capital market," Hemmati said.

The Iranian capital market has been going through some turbulence over the past few months and in this regard, the government and related entities have been taking serious measures for stabilizing the market.

Palestinian cause is again alive and kicking: ex-Lebanese diplomat

→ **1** Why isn't there any considerable opposition by a Western power to Israeli settlement projects in occupied territories?

As everybody knows, the United States strongly supports Israel and avoids criticizing it irrespective of what Israel does to the Palestinians. Former U.S. President Donald Trump tried to kill and bury the Palestinian cause with his so-called "Deal of the Century" which, in fact, died on the 3rd of November when Trump lost the elections and was buried on the 10th of May in the Sheikh Jarrah district. Now the Palestinian cause is again alive and kicking!

Israel's airstrikes on Palestinian civilians in Gaza have forced West Asia onto Joe Biden's agenda amid new questions about how his emphasis on human rights applies to Palestinians.

It has also laid bare the extent to which the Israeli right has been empowered in occupied East Jerusalem during Donald Trump's presidency. Unrest there sparked wider battles and drew the Biden administration more deeply into the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict even after this latest seismic eruption abates.

President Joe Biden talked a lot about human rights in China and in Russia, but it seems that the issue of human rights dies at the doorsteps of Israel.

How does Western media cover



development going on in Palestine?

Western media, in general, is biased toward Israel, especially in the U.S. However, we are starting to see and hear from Jewish Americans, who are usually supporters of Israel, clear criticism of Netanyahu for letting the police enter the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and allowing the settlers to try to evict Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem. Also, in the U.S. Congress, some voices are

starting to criticize Israel and support the Palestinians. Senator Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish and was running for President of the U.S., has been a strong voice for human rights in Palestine, and he is introducing a resolution to stop the U.S. Administration from sending \$735 million in the form of precision weapons to Israel. This is a very important development. These developments, as well as the speeches and statements made

by members of Congress like Rashida Tlaib (of Palestinian origin), Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and some others in support of the Palestinian people, are widely reported in the U.S. media.

What is the difference between the narrative people in West Asia adopted with that of Western people in regard to Palestine?

The narrative adopted in the Middle East (West Asia) is not a unified one. Some countries show more support to the Palestinians than others. However, it is known that the media in the West is more pro-Israel and they report the narrative that they read or hear from the Israeli authorities. But there are, of course, some media who report the events truthfully, though they are not the majority.

What are the main crimes committed by Israel in Lebanon?

Lebanon's recent history is filled with events of Israeli aggressions, including the 1978 invasion of Southern Lebanon, followed in 1982 by another invasion by Israeli troops, which reached the capital Beirut. We should not forget the war of July-August 2006 in which Israel destroyed a substantial part of the Lebanese infrastructure, including the airport and the port of Beirut. These are the major aggressions, but there were also many other attacks on Lebanon's sovereignty by Israeli warplanes.

Iran backs Palestine because it is independent, says Lebanese analyst

→ **1** On the other hand, Palestine contains the most important sanctities of Muslims, including Jerusalem, which hosts Muslim's first Qiblah and the Al-Aqsa Mosque; and there are other religious symbols related to Islam and Christianity.

Third, the Palestinian people are part of the Arab people and the Islamic Ummah, and attacking that part means attacking the whole. For all of this, Palestine, in its three dimensions - the land, the people, and the holy sites - has a fundamental position for the Arab and Islamic world.

Why does Iran, after the Islamic Revolution, has kept insisting on liberating the Palestinian lands?

What distinguishes Iran from other Arab countries is that first it is an independent, sovereign state whose rule stems from the will of the people and was established on the basis of an Islamic revolution that seeks to achieve the nations' rights and resist the usurpers.

Therefore, Iran is working for the sake of Islam, the people and the Islamic Ummah. This feature does not exist in most Arab regimes, wherein the ruler is appointed by foreigners.

In Arab states, a ruler comes and goes by an external decision and policies and governments are determined by powers outside the countries. Therefore, at a time when we find that Iran is a country in which the rule emanates from the people and takes care of the interests of the people and nations, most of Arab rulers are guardians of the interests of foreign powers.

There is a big difference between a sovereign, independent ruler who safeguards his nation's interests and a subordinate ruler who guards the interests of foreigners. For this reason, Iran adheres to the Palestinian cause while many Arabs neglect Palestine in order to satisfy the colonialists and the Zionist regime and their American master.

How do you see the stances of Arab states to-



wards the Palestinian issue? How do you assess normalization of ties with Israel?

Unfortunately, some Arabs are heading towards overt surrender to the Israeli enemy.

Under the slogan of normalization of ties with Israel and the forged Abraham Accords, these regimes accepted to be slaves of Israel and servants of American interests, providing it with resources and reassurance. This approach should be stopped.

We call on Arab people to move against this approach adopted by their governments. They need to retreat from this treacherous behavior.

Normalization of ties with Israel, in our opinion, is a betrayal of the Ummah and a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. It violates their rights and legitimacy.

That is why we find that today there are sides and groups in the Arab and Islamic world that condemn normalization of ties with the Zionist regime and call for an end to it and a return to the idea of Palestine from the river to the sea.

Is it possible to bet on the American-European role in resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

The Palestinian tragedy is a result and product of European-American conspiracy.

The Europeans continue to insult Palestine and the Palestinian people since they adopted the Sykes-Picot Agreement Agreement by Britain and France, which was followed in the Balfour Declaration.

Then, they decided to partition Palestine in the United Nations, which was ruled by Europeans and Westerners.

They are insulting the Arab world and the Islamic Ummah by aggression against Palestine.

Whoever harmed Palestine cannot heal its wounds, and therefore we are not betting on a real European stance or on a just and fair American position in order to restore rights to their owners.

The only bet is on the peoples, on the will of the Muslim nations, and on the governments that line up in support of the resistance axis, which constitutes a milestone in the modern era.

Resistance forces have succeeded to withstand colonial domination in the region and now are drawing a scheme of liberating Palestine in the people's minds.

How could Israel preoccupy Islamic countries with internal disputes and divert attention from the Zionist threats?

Israel is afraid of the unity of the Arab-Islamic world because if the Arabs and the Muslims get united, what Imam Khomeini said about the Zionist regime's demise will be realized.

To divide the Islamic world and preventing Muslim unity, Israel is working to undermine the Arab-Islamic frontier. Unfortunately, it finds those who listen to it and engage in its projects.

The comprehensive war that targeted Syria, and the great strife that has been called the Arab Spring, are not but a case of conspiracy plotted by the Zionists and Europeans to disperse and divide Muslims so that they do not unite to liberate Palestine.

Yemeni forces shoot down Saudi reconnaissance drone in Jawf skies

→ **1** "Sanctions do not frighten [Yemeni] fighters. If your siege and aggression persist, we may target sites deep inside some member states of the coalition of aggression, which cannot ever expect," Mohammed Ali al-Houthi wrote in a post published on his Twitter page.

He made the remarks in response to

the U.S. Treasury Department "Thursday decision to impose sanctions on Ansarullah" two military officials involved in a push to liberate Yemen's strategic and energy-rich Ma'rib region.

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 the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah.

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 Saudi-led military aggression has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions of people. The Saudi war has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases across the country.

Russia begins mass production of autonomous war robots

Russia says its military will soon be equipped with autonomous war robots capable of acting independently on the battlefield, as the country has launched mass production of the weapons.

Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said on Saturday that high-tech military vehicles, which use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to operate, are now in production for the Russian military.

"These are not just some experimental prototypes but robots that can really be shown in sci-fi movies since they can fight on their own," Shoigu said. "A major effort" has been made to develop "the weapons of the future," he added.

Russia has already unveiled a variety of autonomous and semi-autonomous machines, including the Uran-9, which is a multipurpose robotic weapons system.

The weapon looks like a small tank equipped with a 30mm gun, several flamethrowers, and four guided anti-tank missiles.

Designed for reconnaissance and fire support, it can assist soldiers on a battlefield to minimize potential casualties.

Russian engineers are currently working on autonomous systems based on the T-72 and T-14 Armata tanks capable of carrying heavy weapons.



Russia is also about to equip its maritime arsenal with an underwater drone, known as Poseidon.

The Poseidon appears to be a huge robotic nuclear-capable mini-submarine with a miniature nuclear reactor that is capable of carrying nuclear warheads. It is programmed to slowly approach enemy territory deep underwater at low speed.

If detected, it can greatly boost its speed and outrun its pursuers before going back into stealth mode.

The Russian military made public its first tests of the

underwater drone in 2019.

The US said earlier that it feared the giant nuclear-tipped Poseidon could be able to unleash a "radioactive tsunami" on American shores.

With almost an unlimited range, the Poseidon would be able to speed toward targets on America's coastline, exploding a 2-megaton warhead next to them.

The defense minister said that Russia also plans to develop laser weaponry, something he said appeared to be "fiction some 20 years ago." But "now, this is reality," for Russia, Shoigu noted.

The Russian army already does have a laser weapon in its arsenal, according to Shoigu, who said it still has great potential for further improvement.

President Vladimir Putin unveiled the weapon, a highly secret laser cannon known as Peresvet, back in 2018.

The laser weapon is said to be capable of shooting down both enemy aircraft and incoming missiles.

Earlier this month, Putin warned that crossing "red lines" in Russia's security would bring a powerful "asymmetric" response.

The president reminded the West of his country's modernized nuclear arsenal.

15 people shot, three of them fatally in Minneapolis

Three people were killed and 12 more wounded in separate shootings in Minneapolis, Minnesota, early on Saturday, authorities say.

According to police spokesperson John Elder, in one incident, two men in a crowd, who got into an argument near the Monarch nightclub in north Minneapolis, pulled out guns and began shooting.

Ten people were shot, including five men and five women, police said, adding two of the men died.

"Order fully restored to the scene and surrounding areas," the statement said, adding that seven injured people were treated in hospitals and their injuries were not serious.

Elder said later on the day that authorities arrested a 23-year-old Bloomington man and booked him on probable cause murder charges in the Monarch shooting.

Meanwhile, in separate incidents earlier on Saturday, five people were shot, one of them fatally, the Star Tribune reported.

The latest deaths brought the city's homicide total to 31 for this year.

"Last night again brought tragic news," Minneapolis's mayor, Jacob Frey, said in a statement on Saturday. "Again, our collective conscience is shocked."

Steve Cramer, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council, said in a statement that "this insanity will continue" unless "our entire community rises up — family members, elected officials, business, community and faith members, prosecutors, judges, all of us."

Gun-related violence in mid-sized and large American cities has risen dramatically during the pandemic, and, according to criminologists, coronavirus-related socioeconomic loss in many communities is the major cause.

A study by the Council on Criminal Justice also showed a 30% increase in homicides overall in a sample of 34 U.S. cities in 2020 as well as an 8% rise in gun assaults.

Four more U.S. logistics convoys targeted by roadside bombs in Iraq

Four logistics convoys belonging to the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq have been targeted in separate roadside bomb attacks in the country's south and center, according to local media sources.

On Sunday, Iraq's Sabereen News said that one of the attacks took place on Samawah-Baghdad road in the southern province of Muthanna, and the other in Diwaniyah Province.

The third blast took place on a road in the city of Hillah in Iraq's central province of Babil.

Meanwhile, another logistics convoy was struck by an explosive device in the city of Nasiriyah in the Dhi Qar province, southern Iraq.

The blasts reportedly did not cause any casualties and no group or individual has so far claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Over the past few months, similar explosions have targeted U.S. occupation forces in Iraq amid rising anti-U.S. sentiment there and increasing calls from Iraqi resistance groups for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Arab country as per a parliamentary resolution last year.

Iraqi lawmakers approved a bill on January 5, 2020, which requires the Baghdad government to end the presence of all foreign military forces in the country.

The decision came two days after top Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were assassinated near Baghdad airport in a U.S. drone strike authorized by former president Donald Trump.

An estimated 2,500 American troops are currently stationed in Iraq.

Resistance News

Islamic Jihad hails Iran's support for Palestine in battle against Israel

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** — In a letter to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad hails Iran's support for the resistance front in its 12-day war against the Israeli regime, extending his congratulations to the Leader on the great victory.

In his letter, Ziyad al-Nakhalah said that he has the honor to congratulate the Leader on behalf of himself and the Islamic Jihad forces as well as its armed wing Quds Brigades on the victory of the Palestinian people and their brave resistance against the Zionist enemy.

He added that Ayatollah Khamenei's "constant, continued and open support" for Palestine in all fields has "played the most important and leading role" in "Operation Sword of al-Quds" and its subsequent achievements.

Nakhalah said the Palestinian people and resistance defeated the enemies and revealed the image of the Israeli regime which is "weaker than a spider web."

The Palestinian resistance official also thanked the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) for standing by the Islamic Jihad forces for long and for sincerely providing them with any capability, know-how and assistance leading to such a big victory.

He especially commemorated the late commander of the Quds Force Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was martyred near Baghdad airport, Iraq, on January 3, 2020 in a drone strike directly ordered by former U.S. president Donald Trump.

Israel launched a bloody bombing campaign on Gaza on May 10 after harassment of Palestinians in Jerusalem al-Quds and attempts to steal their lands in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of the city.

The occupying regime announced a unilateral ceasefire on Friday, which was accepted by the Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza with Egyptian mediation.

According to Gaza's Health Ministry, 248 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli offensive, including 66 children and 39 women, and at least 1,910 were injured.

During the fighting, Gaza-based resistance factions fired rockets into the occupied territories in response to the Israeli bloodshed.

In a message on Friday, Ayatollah Khamenei extended his congratulations to the Palestinian people over the historic victory of the resistance front against the Zionist regime.

Tehran, Beijing ink joint statement to protect Asian cultural heritage

➔1 It could eventually lead to the prosperity and development of the tourism industry in Asian countries, he concluded. For his part, Qun said that the statement emphasizes cultural transmission and supports Asia's cultural heritage as the cradle of human civilization. Cultural elements are valuable treasures of the Asian people, which establish their identity, he added.



He also noted that the joint statement is the first bilateral document signed by the cultural heritage authorities of the two countries in the past decade, marking that the two countries' cultural heritage cooperation has entered a new stage of development. Iran is the third country that has signed a joint statement with China on the Asian Initiative for Cultural Heritage Conservation. Earlier this month, China co-released such statements with Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2019, the Iranian government waived the visa requirement for Chinese nationals willing to visit the country. The decision was made to attract more foreign tourists to the country; however, it is a unilateral measure, i.e. Iranian tourists visiting China still need visas.

Museum of rural intangible heritage opens in Kermanshah

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — On Saturday, a museum dedicated to rural intangible heritage was opened to the public in Zardui village of Kermanshah province.

The museum, which is the first of its kind in the province, aims at displaying and introducing intangible cultural elements, which are a part of the identity of the people of the region while providing an opportunity to attract more tourists, the provincial tourism chief Jabbar Gohari said

Intangible elements of culture, such as song, music, cooking, handicrafts, and festivals, have their own charm and are currently of great interest to foreign tourists, the official explained.



While preserving and protecting intangible heritage by establishing such museums is one of the priorities of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, private sector investors are also welcome to collaborate, he added.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, of which Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan are both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Iranian police arrest gang of illegal excavators

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iranian police have recently busted a gang of illegal diggers in Bostan-Abad, north-western East Azarbaijan province, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage has announced.

Four unauthorized excavators were detained in this regard and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, Kazem Dadashi said, CHTN reported on Sunday.

Some digging tools were seized from the gang, who were traced following reports by local people and cultural heritage supporters, the official added.



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

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

Experts busy demarcating great defensive wall as a prerequisite for UNESCO status

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A team of **d e s k** archaeologists, topographers, and cultural heritage experts are completing a project to define legal boundaries for the ruins of the Great Wall of Gorgan, which was once one of the longest brick barriers of the ancient world.

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

"Currently, a panel of experts is analyzing related documents and images taken from the defense wall of Gorgan in order to determine its boundaries as a prerequisite for the [possible] inscription of the wall on the UNESCO World Heritage list," IRNA quoted provincial tourism chief Ahmad Tajari as saying on Sunday.

Deputy cultural heritage minister Mohammad-Hassan Talebian has said the process of registering the wall on the UNESCO list would be pursued when the mapping project gets complete.

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

Archaeological excavations have so far identified ditches, brick kilns, earthen dams, water canals, 38 forts, and watch-



towers attached to the wall, and more than 25 castles in the southern margin of the wall as well as several ancient sites from prehistoric, historic, and Islamic eras.

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

Justification of outstanding universal value

According to UNESCO, the Gorgan plain with its defensive monuments of

the Sassanid era (5th-7th centuries) constitutes the greatest cluster of military monuments known from anywhere within the Sassanid Empire, contemporary to a large-scale urban foundation, provides a microcosm of one of the ancient world's largest states. Thus, due to its interaction with civilizations and cultures and its strategic location, carries important contents from the past.

Experts say the Great Wall of Gorgan is the longest fort-lined ancient barrier between Central Europe and China, it is longer than Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall put together. It is also

more than three times the length of the longest late Roman defensive wall. The Great Wall of Gorgan posed exceptional engineering challenges. There was no stone or timber in the steppe; it is just made of bricks. The system of it is remarkable in terms of its physical scale and its technical sophistication. The Great Wall of Gorgan is an incredible and sophisticated defensive construction located in north-eastern Iran; it has around 30 military forts, an aqueduct, and water channels that go along the route. It is commonly known as "the Red Snake" because of the construction materials used, red-colored bricks.

Moreover, the route of the Gorgan Wall and the associated canal had to follow a natural gradient, evidence for remarkable skills in hydraulic engineering by its creators. The Gorgan Wall and its associated ancient military monuments provide a unique testimony to the engineering skills and military organization of the Sassanian Empire. They help to explain its geographic extent, from Mesopotamia to the west of the Indian Subcontinent, and how effective border defense contributed to the Empire's prosperity in the interior and its longevity.

Evidence suggests this decisive period of history saw the demise of the Western Roman Empire and the eventual emergence of the Caliphate, expanding at the expense of the Sassanid and Eastern Roman Empires. The Sassanid military barriers and fortifications in the Gorgan Plain provide evidence of how effective defense, or the lack of it, could contribute to the security and prosperity of empires.

Authorities seek to breathe new life into ancient Shiraz

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Authorities of Iran's Fars **d e s k** province seeks to formulate a plan for the revival of the historical core of Shiraz, which has long been synonymous with, poetry, nightingales, culture, and education.

"The historical texture of Shiraz, which is on the verge of oblivion due to erosion, has the potential to be revived and preserved with the lowest cost and best practices," Fars governor-general said on Sunday.

Once noble families lived in these neighborhoods of the capital of Fars province, but they moved out for various reasons, which caused damage to the historical texture and provided fertile ground for social harms, Enayatollah Rahimi said, CHTN reported.

He stated such a project could make that portion of the city more intriguing to domestic and international tourists as well as history buffs.

It also could pave the way for families to move back to their former neighborhoods, resulting in more jobs and economic prosperity for the area, he explained.

The official also noted that the historical texture of Shiraz is an ideal place for arts and culture activities, and each corner could be devoted to a particular art field, such as calligraphy, painting, local costume, or food.

However, the historical texture requires some vital rehabilitation works in the near future, he mentioned.

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, Shiraz has become synonymous with education, nightingales, poetry, and crafts skills passed down from generation to generation. It was one of the most important cities in the medieval Islamic world and was the Iranian capital during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital.

Eram Garden, Afif-Abad Garden, Tomb of Hafez, Tomb of Sa'di, Jameh Mosque of Atigh, and Persepolis are among the historical, cultural, and ancient sites of Shiraz that are of interest to domestic and foreign tourists.

The UNESCO-registered Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars Province.



The ancient city is also home to some magnificent historical gardens such as Bagh-e Narenjestan and Eram Garden, which are top tourism destinations both for domestic and international sightseers.

UNESCO describes the Persian Garden as an idea that combines natural elements with manmade components to materialize the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.

Annual rosewater festival held in Saruq

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — On Friday, a **d e s k** rosewater distillation festival kicked off in the ancient town of Saruq, which lies in the heart of the Iranian plateau.

At this time each year, tens of such events take the center stage in oasis cities, towns, and villages of central Iran where participants enjoy the spirit of full-bloom flower farms.

The festivals are usually running through mid-June notably in Kashan, Qamsar, Barzak, and Niasar; however, in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, many tra-



ditional workshops are closed or practice their distillation without the presence of any visitors.

Golab or rosewater is obtained from a particular kind of Rose, known as Mo-hammadi roses in Iran. Harvesting flowers seems to be the most important part of the process. They should be picked from dawn through morning very carefully. The petals are put into massive copper pots and boiled, and then the extracted water is kept in special bottles. The longest the distillation is, the better will be the quality

of the rosewater.

Golab is used nationwide in diverse traditional dishes to flavor them or consumed as a religious perfume as well. The holy month of Ramadan, which started yesterday, is one of the bestselling months of the product.

The distillation of flowers and herbs has a deep history in Iran. Many believe traditionally-distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories probably due to shorter time intervals between the harvest and distillation practices.

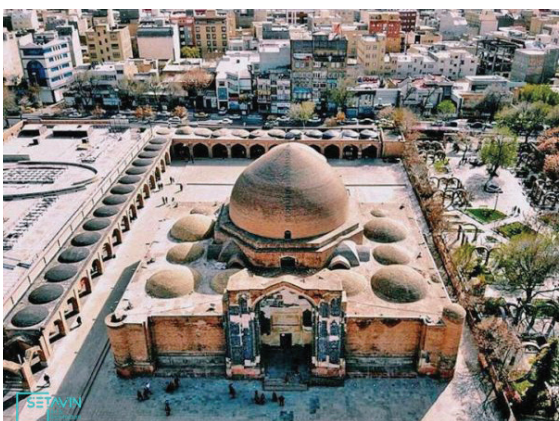
Blue Mosque of Tabriz: a forgotten masterpiece of Iranian architecture

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Completed in the mid-**d e s k** 15th century, the Blue Mosque of Tabriz (better known as Masjed-e Kabud) was among the most glorious buildings of the time. Once built, artists took a further 25 years to cover every surface with the blue majolica tiles and intricate calligraphy for which it's nicknamed.

The Blue Mosque was once part of a complex known as the 'Muzaffariya' which included a tomb, cistern, library and khanqah. The function of the remaining building, itself in a state of ruin, has not been definitively identified. It survived one of history's worst-ever earthquakes in 1727, but partly collapsed in a later quake in 1773.

A relatively forgotten masterpiece of Iranian architecture, the mosque is named after, and celebrated for, its unrivalled tile decoration of which there is still evidence upon the ruined walls of the building. Both interior and exterior surfaces were once covered in a variety of tile revetment; remains of tile mosaic, underglaze-painted and overglaze-painted tiles and luster tiles attest to the richness of the decorative scheme. Patterns are rendered in subtle colors with extensive use of cobalt blue as a ground for inscriptions and arabesque designs in gold and white. The dome was a deep blue, stenciled with gold patterns.

According to Archnet, its plan, which is unique in Iran, is comprised of a central square chamber covered by a dome and framed on three sides by a continuous



arcade of nine domed bays. A domed sanctuary project from the fourth, the qibla side. An entrance portal with semi-dome, on axis with the qibla, accesses the arcade, which forms a five-bay vestibule parallel with the façade. The plan bears comparison to the covered Ottoman mosques of Bursa, and Byzantine church architecture.

A stone foundation supports a structure of fired bricks, which is completely covered with tiles and decorated brick panels. Alabaster was used for the mausoleum's dado and three prayer niches, and probably also for the door to the mausoleum, of which a

fragment has been preserved, and the windows in the gallery. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a French traveler, observed that the alabaster slabs created a warm red light inside the building.

The gallery supports nine cupolas, three on each side, and each arm ends in a vault above a prayer niche. The central dome (22-meter high) rests on eight arches. The description of the two pulpits by Tavernier indicates that the imam led the prayer from this central room.

In the corner pillars of these eight arches are four upper galleries. On the south side, the central dome chamber abuts the mausoleum. Its wooden door was usually closed so that the mausoleum was invisible from the prayer room, though it could be accessed through two disguised openings flanking the door. Four arched bays support the tall dome chamber and a crypt is below the prayer niche.

On the exterior walls of the Blue Mosque are many interesting under-glaze tiles, which are adorned with a black line and painted in white on a dark blue ground. Most of these are square blue-and-white tiles with floral or geometric ornaments.

Extensive rebuilding took place between 1950 and 1966. The dome over the central chamber dates from this period, as do the undecorated interior walls. Details from the mausoleum's interior, such as alabaster pieces from the wall panels and the main prayer niche, reveal that the mausoleum was never completely finished.

Drug trafficking fight requires ‘common understanding, global action’

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Iranian deputy anti-narcotics police chief Naghi Mahmoudi has stressed that the drug trafficking fight requires a common understanding and action by all members of the international community, and no country alone can address the challenges in this area.

He made the remarks in a video conference on the production and trafficking of methamphetamine in Afghanistan and its market in the world held by the Interpol police on Sunday, IRNA reported.

Stressed the importance of improving the level of regional and international cooperation, he said that conducting joint operations, simultaneously and based on the rapid exchange of information is of great importance.

Despite the conditions caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of harsh sanctions against the country, fortunately, with the efforts of anti-narcotics police in 2020, drug detection increased by 41 percent.

Battle against narcotics continues despite sanctions, pandemic

Iran has carried on a battle against narcotics 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.

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

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.

Half of endemic turtle species in Iran endangered

→ 1 Also, in recent years, there have been reports of olive ridley sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle, and even leatherback sea turtle on the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

All five species of sea turtles are also endangered due to human activities, oil pollution, and the destruction and development of beaches or spawning grounds. Other factors that threaten sea turtles can be excessive haunting or illegal trade.

National plan for protecting sea turtles

Therefore, the protection of these species in order to prevent their extinction is a fundamental issue to be considered in our country.

Sea turtles are reptiles that have limited habitats on the southern coast of Iran for spawning, so these habitats should be protected not to disturb the turtles while laying. Also,



considering the place and time of spawning, people and tourists should also receive the necessary information to be cautious at the time of spawning and do not move their eggs.

Davood Mirshekar, head of the marine ecosystem protection office at the Department of Environment, in March announced the development of a "national action plan for the protection of sea turtles", noting that sea turtles are an endangered species in our country. Measures to protect this endangered species are now on the agenda.

Cleaning the spawning grounds, census, and biometrics of turtles that go to the shores for spawning are among the measures taken every year to protect the species on the southern coast of the country, according to Mirshekar. Installation of warning signs on beaches prone to spawning and management of light sources - when the hatchlings go to sea - is another measure taken to protect turtles.

UNICEF, interior ministry renew partnership on child-friendly cities

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Interior have renewed a partnership agreement to develop and implement the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) national program.

Covering Isfahan as the first CFCI candidate city, the plan will be piloted in 12 cities including Bandar Abbas, Ahvaz, Gorgan, Hamedan, Kerman, Mashhad, Rasht, Semnan, Shiraz, Tabriz, Tehran, and Yazd.

Mapping, developing, and conducting child-centered emergency preparedness

and response protocols at the national and provincial level, and supporting the emergency response to COVID-19 are among the programs.

The new joint cooperation, which will continue until December 2022, was signed by Mandeep O'Brien, UNICEF Iran Representative, and Rahim Saki, Deputy Minister, Head of Center for Public Relations and International Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, on May 11.

A Child-Friendly City is a city or a local community where the voices, needs, priorities, and rights of children are an

integral part of public policies, programs, and decisions.

The vision for the global CFCI program is that "every child and the young person enjoys their childhood and youth and reaches their full potential through the equal realization of their rights within their cities and communities".

With the support of the local and national governments, NGOs, the private sector, media, and universities, and in collaboration with UNICEF, this initiative covers more than 30 million children in 3000 cities and local communities in over 40 countries.



Some 70,000 rare disease patients vaccinated against coronavirus

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Some 70,000 patients of rare diseases have received the COVID-19 vaccine so far, Mehdi Shadnough, head of the transplant management and treatment center of the Ministry of Health, has said.

According to the National Vaccination Document, it was planned to vaccinate rare diseases patients after the elderly, but we requested to give them priority to have a share of the total vaccination.

Rare diseases include peritoneal dialysis, hemophilia, thalassemia, Multiple sclerosis (MS), Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), Epidermolysis bullosa (EB), Cystic fibrosis (CF), Mucopolysaccharidosis type I (MPS I), autism, organ transplantation, and tissue therapy, patients with primary immunodeficiency disease (PID).

Patients with rare diseases often face a long journey from diagnosis to treatment. There are 540,000 patients in the country, 70,000 of whom received the vaccine, he noted.

All the patients suffering from such diseases will be identified and called by the medical universities based on

registration systems to receive the vaccine, he added.

National document on rare diseases

Patients with rare diseases launched and signed a petition calling for drawing up a national document on rare diseases on the occasion of Rare Disease Day, February 28, 2019.

The National Document on Rare Diseases, recently prepared in collaboration with the Rare Diseases Foundation and the University of Tehran, was drafted by prominent domestic and foreign experts.

The main vision of this document is to prevent the birth of infants with rare diseases and to solve the medical and therapeutic problems of rare patients in the country.

Rare diseases prevalence

According to the statistics published in 2019, the number of rare diseases identified in Iran has reached 332 types of diseases and about 4,750 people are covered by the Rare Diseases Foundation of Iran.

Out of a thousand population, 2 people get a rare disease, while the prevalence can be curbed by changing people's

culture, screening, identifying, preventing the births, and raising awareness.

According to WHO, rare diseases are often serious, chronic, and life-threatening. The European Union (EU) definition of a rare disease is one that affects fewer than 5 in 10,000 people. At present, more than 6000 rare diseases are known; around 80 percent of them are genetic disorders and half of them occur during childhood.

Grouped together, rare diseases affect 6–8 percent (or about 30 million people) out of the 508 million population of EU countries. This roughly equals the estimated prevalence of diabetes in the World Health Organization European Region, which in 2013 was 6.8 percent of 658.7 million adults in the 20 to 79-year age group.

Rare diseases are associated with a high psychological burden for the patient but they can also have a major impact on a patient's family. In addition to the health burden on patients, few of these diseases have an effective drug treatment available.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

11m ha of plains require aquifer, watershed management

Some 11 million hectares of the country's plains need watershed and aquifer management plans, so they must be prepared in this regard, director of watershed management at Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization has said.

Over the past 10 years, the country experienced 11 millimeters of rainfall decline while evaporation rate increased by 54 millimeters, ISNA quoted Khoshroo Shahbazi as saying on Thursday.

یازده میلیون هکتار از دشت‌های کشور نیازمند آبخیزداری است

معاون آبخیزداری، مراتع و بیابان سازمان جنگلها و مراتع و آبخیزداری، گفت: یازده میلیون هکتار از دشت‌های کشور نیازمند اجرای طرح‌های آبخیزداری و آبخیزداری است.

به گزارش ایسنا، خسرو شهبازی گفت: طی ۱۰ سال گذشته به طور متوسط در کشور ۱۱ میلیمتر کاهش بارندگی و ۵۴ میلیمتر افزایش تبخیر و تعرق را شاهد بودیم.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. May 22

New cases	8631
New deaths	216
Total cases	2,832,518
Total deaths	78,597
New hospitalized patients	1170
Total recovered patients	2,333,789
Diagnostic tests conducted	18,932,896
Doses of vaccine injected	2,991,859

Iranian bird fauna

(Part 3)

The flood plains of the Dez, Kärün, and Kärün rivers in Khūzestān, the complex of fresh, brackish, and saline lakes at the inland delta of the Helmand river in Sīstān, on the Afghan border, and the network of fresh and saline lakes in central Fārs, particularly Lake Bakhtagān, Lake Tašk, Lake Mahārū, Lake Pārīšān, and the Dašt-e Arjan marshes all provide habitat for many hundreds of thousands of wintering waterfowl.

In addition to a wide range of ducks, geese, and shorebirds, these wetlands are particularly important for wintering white pelican (Fārs and Sīstān), sacred ibis Threskiornis aethiopicus (Khūzestān), white stork (Khūzestān and Fārs), greater flamingo (Fārs), and common crane Grus grus (all three areas).

In years of good rainfall, wetlands in all three regions can be of great importance for breeding waterfowl, particularly herons, egrets, spoon-bill, glossy ibis, red-wattled lapwing Vanellus indicus, white-tailed plover Vanellus leucurus, and collared pratincole Glareola pratincola.



Coastal habitats of the Persian Gulf and Makrān coast. The tidal mud-flats, mangrove swamps, sandy beaches, rocky shores, and sea-cliffs of Iran's south coast support a variety of breeding and wintering waterfowl and sea-birds.

Breeding species include crab plover Dromas ardeola, great stone plover Esacus recurvirostris (only in the east), several species of herons and egrets such as Indian pond heron Ardeola grayii, western reef heron Egretta garialis and goliath heron Ardea goliath (in mangroves), and several species of terns Sterna sp.

Wintering species include Dalmatian pelican, cormorant, spoonbill, osprey Pandion haliaetus, white-tailed eagle Haliaeetus albicilla, many shorebirds notably oyster-catcher Haematopus ostralegus, bar-tailed godwit Limosa lapponica, curlew Numenius arquata and plovers of the genus Charadrius, and a variety of skuas Stercorarius sp., gulls Larus sp., and terns Sterna sp.

Offshore islands. The many small and uninhabited islands in the Persian Gulf and straits of Hormoz provide ideal breeding grounds for large colonies of sea-birds.

The main species are great crested tern Sterna bergii, lesser crested tern S. bengalensis, white-checked tern S. repressa, and bridled tern S. anaethetus, but small colonies of red-billed tropic-bird Phaethon aethereus, socotra cormorant Phalacrocorax nigrogularis, and saunders' little tern Sterna saundersi have been found, and the Persian shearwater Puffinus lherminieri persicus probably breeds.

Of the 491 species which are known to have occurred in Iran at least 324 breed regularly. 103 are almost if not entirely sedentary, remaining on or near their breeding grounds through-out the year.

A few undertake short altitudinal migrations, moving down from the highest mountain ranges during periods of hard weather. 123 species can be classed as "partial migrants." In some cases the individuals breeding in Iran are largely sedentary, but numbers are swelled in autumn with the arrival of individuals from breeding grounds to the north of Iran.

In other cases, individuals breeding in north or central Iran tend to be migratory, while many or all of the individuals breeding in the south are sedentary. In a third group of species, mainly those breeding in the highlands of north and west Iran, there is some movement of individuals, particularly young birds, out of the breeding grounds into the central desert basin and southern lowlands in the autumn.

98 species are breed-ing summer visitors, with the great bulk of the Iranian breeding population migrating in autumn either south-west to winter in the Arabian peninsula and Africa or south-east to winter in the Indian subcontinent. Among a few species there seems to be a "migratory divide," with birds breeding in western Iran migrating southwest in autumn and those breeding in eastern Iran migrating southeast, e.g., swallow Hirundo rustica and sand martin Riparia riparia. In many species, a small number of individuals occasionally overwinter in the extreme southwest or southeast of Iran.



Without water, everything withers

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Born - 44197737

Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79

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



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Knowledge and wisdom are really the privilege of a faithful Muslim. If you have lost them, get them back even though you may have to get them from the apostates.

Imam Ali (AS)

Lexical structure of Hafez’s ghazals

In describing the lexical structure of Hafez’s ghazals, we must consider three main problems. First, the quantitative valuation may vary, depending on the edition of the ghazals used or of the manuscript(s) chosen for the scrutiny.

Second, the data resulting from lexical processing are strongly conditioned by the lexicological choices in singling out tokens, types and lemmas.



Tomb of Hafez, Shiraz, Iran.
(Meh/ Amin Berenjkar

By “lemma” we mean the lexical item corresponding to the headword found in Dehkoda’s Loghat-nama; by “token” we mean any occurrence of a form of a lemma; by “type” we mean any different form a lemma may take according to inflectional or phonological variants.

Third, at present there is no general description of the classical Persian poetic language, and no statistical studies enabling us to analyze deviations in the language of Hafez’s ghazals with reference to average data.

Despite these limitations, it is nevertheless necessary to base textual criticism on complete and reliable lexico-statistical inventories of Hafez’s ghazals. In this perspective, a simple list of types or lemmas — even if complete with the relative frequencies — is not enough. A computerized processing of the texts, which will guarantee a greater richness of information, coherence in lexicological choices, and precision of data, thus becomes indispensable. The only such work is Meneghini Correale, based on the 1983 Khanlari edition of the ghazals; the following data were extracted and processed on the basis of that study, and obviously reflect the scientific criteria assumed therein.

The general data pertaining to the lexicon of Hafez’s ghazals are as follows: N (number of tokens) = 77,779; V (number of types) = 7,215, of which 3,605 are hapax legomena (single occurrences); VI (number of lemmas) = 4,787, of which 2,037 are hapax legomena. As there are 486 ghazals, with a total of 4,092 lines, we can extrapolate the following average quantities: 8.42 lines per ghazal; 160 tokens per ghazal; 19 tokens per line; 14.84 different types per ghazal; 1.76 different types per line; 9.85 different lemmas per ghazal; 1.17 different lemmas per line.

The lexicon distribution presents a structure which, on the basis of parameters tested on other linguistic systems, can be considered as regular. The total amount of frequencies of the first 100 lemmas covers 64.39 percent of the lexicon, that of the first 997 covers 89.79 percent, that of the first 2046 covers 95.5 percent.

As for lexicon concentration, Hafez’s ghazals show values that are typical of lyric poetry: in other words, the occurrences of the first 50 most frequent lemmas account for more than 55 percent of the total number of occurrences (N).

With respect to lexicon subdivision in full words (such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and empty words (such as articles, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions), we have found that 67 percent of the vocabulary is composed of full words, 33 percent of empty words; occurrences with nominal or adjectival function cover over 46 percent of the vocabulary of Hafez’s ghazals.

Another important feature is the number of compound words: Hafez’s ghazals present 1,440 different compound words (types) which account for 4 percent of the occurrences (N) and 41 percent of the total number of types (V).

As to the relationship between the quantity of types and lemmas, the high average frequency of types with reference to the extension of the lexicon (10.6) points to a tendency to introduce new words usually through employing the same lemmas.

This feature is confirmed at the consolidation level (9.3 different types per 100 tokens). Both these data are affected by the great number of types occurring just once (hapax legomena).

This characteristic is further confirmed by the regular and constant introduction of new types: each ghazal presents an average of 14 new types, as has been shown by Zipoli (1990).

However, we must keep in mind that the choice of poetic lexicon was strongly influenced by predetermined events (rhyme, radif, figures of speech, etc.), which condition the structure of the poems (the lexical elements of the radif may, for example, account for up to 15 percent of the lexicon of a single ghazal).

The poetic constraints and the strict coherence of a poetry with set themes are therefore particularly important in the lexical universe of Hafez’s ghazals.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

Iranian Academy of Arts to organize biennial of digital art of Islamic world

→1 In its constitution, the academy has been assigned the task of monitoring the condition of arts in all forms in the country and abroad, and digital art is a pretty new universal phenomenon and its impacts can be extensively observed and assessed,” he added.

He noted that arts in the modern world have widely been influenced by digital technology and added that the technology has been initiated to improve the quality of artworks.

“Therefore, we should monitor the developments across the world, in particular in the Islamic world, and also probe the panorama of using digital art in the countries,” Laleh asserted.

Due to the fact that the IAA is a study center, he said that the biennial will focus on educational subjects, however, a collection of software and examples of digital artworks will also be showcased.

“It seems that countries from the Islamic world such as Turkey and Malaysia have made great advances in this field and we hope that our academics can use their experience during the biennial,” he added.

The IAA was established in 1998 “to safeguard national Islamic art and cultural heritage.”

President Hassan Rouhani selected Bahman Namvar-Motlaq, a comparative literature graduate of Blaise Pascal University in France, to helm the IAA as a new director of the academy on March 9.

He is also the dean of the Farshchian University of Iranian-Islamic Arts established by the Islamic Azad University in 2018.

He has recently appointed actor Ali Nasirian to the IAA Drama and Dramatic Literature Department, and filmmaker Majid Majidi as the director of the IAA Cinema Department.



Islamic calligraphy on a piece of digital artwork by Mazher Ali.

Iran takes first step to register 30 Azar as stories’ day on national calendar



Sara Kasir (R), an experienced storyteller from Lebanon, gives a performance for Iranian children at the 22nd International Storytelling Festival in Tehran on December 18, 2019. (IIDCYA/ Mahmud Rahimi)

TEHRAN — Iran has taken the first step to register the 30th of Azar on its

national calendar as a day of stories and storytelling as the General Culture Council of Iran approved a proposal for this issue.

The final decision on the proposal will be made at the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Saturday in a press release.

The 30th of Azar on the Iranian calendar is the last day of autumn, the evening of which is celebrated by Iranians as the ancient tradition of Yalda Night. Storytelling by parents and grandparents is a key element of the celebration.

“This proposal has been made to observe Yalda Night and officially highlight the cultural heritage and tradition of storytelling during the night,” the IIDCYA said in a press release last December after putting forward the proposal to the council.

In a letter to the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, Fazel Nazari, the then director of the IIDCYA, wrote, “This ancient tradition is a like a stronghold to protect the past and honors of Islamic Iran and a genre

of art for the promotion and preservation of our cultural achievements.”

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

The IIDCYA is the organizer of the International Storytelling Festival, whose 23rd edition was held in autumn 2020 online due to the pandemic.

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

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

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

Fajr festival unveils Eastern Vista lineup

TEHRAN — Twelve films from Asian cinema will be competing in the 38th Fajr International Film Festival as the organizers announced the lineup for Eastern Vista on Sunday.

“200 Meters” by Palestinian director Ameen Nayfeh is a highlight of the lineup.

Upon learning his son has had an accident, a desperate Palestinian construction worker at wit’s end attempts to smuggle himself past the separation wall between Israel and the West Bank to see him.

“Along the Sea” by Japanese director Akio Fujimoto will also be screened.

The film follows three Vietnamese women in their early 20s, Phuong, An, and Nhu. They moved to Japan to work as technical trainees.

As they decide to escape their work place, where their passports have been confiscated, they are now illegal migrants in the country.

Chinese director Cao Jinling will be competing in this section with “Anima”.

The story of the film is set in on a cold winter day in the town of Muirdauga. During a family hunting trip, young Linzi falls into a bear cave. His older brother Tutu is forced to kill the bear, which is considered a taboo in the Lonki tribe, only to spend the rest of his life as a cursed outcast.

Turkish director Erdem Tepegöz’s drama “In the Shadows” has also been selected to be screened in this category.

In a dystopia of undefined place and time, dominated by primitive technology, a group of people is being controlled by

an omnipresent surveillance system. When one of them contracts a mysterious disease, out of fear to lose his job he tries to contact the officials. Doubts arise about the structure he is working in. By questioning the system, he gets to know the depths of this structure which is much darker than he thought.

The lineup also includes “Dogs Did Not Sleep Last Night” by Afghan filmmaker Ramin Rasuli.

The film, which has shot in Iran, tells the story of a remote Afghan village seized by the Taliban, and the exploits occurring after a village girl takes a U.S. airborne soldier, who has survived a helicopter crash, into their village.

The Eastern Vista competition also features



A poster for “200 Meters” by Palestinian director Ameen Nayfeh.

movies from Iran, South Korea, Lebanon, Oman and Kirgizia.

The Iranian movies of the lineup are “Magic Genie” directed by Habib Ahmadzadeh, “Asteroid” by Mehdi Hosseinivand and “Staging” by Alireza Samadi.

The festival is scheduled to take place in Tehran from May 26 to June 2.

Kerman Intl. Children’s Painting Festival announces winners

TEHRAN — The first edition of the Kerman International Children’s Painting Festival has announced winners in various categories.

The southern Iranian city of Kerman, which has been selected as a child-friendly city in a UNICEF pilot plan, organized the children’s painting competition to acknowledge the choice.

In the section dedicated to children between 5 and 8, the gold medals went to Parmis Khajui, Taha Safa and Maysa Vafa, all from Iran.

Fatemeh Esmaeilzadegan, Hadis Hajhashemi and Asal Shah-Hosseini, all from Iran, won the silver medals in this category.

Arvin Fuladvand and Anita Rafat from Iran and Yup Pin Alexandra Lau from Hong Kong garnered the bronze medals.

The gold medal winners in the 9-11 age group are Hope Khmara from Belarus and Ilia Shahi and Aram Teimuri from Iran.

The silver medals went to Yun-Chieh Fan from Taiwan, Isabel Chan from China and Fatemeh Abiri from Iran, while the bronze medals were given to Radvin Kordzanganeh from Iran, Semyon Guretsky from Belarus and Kittu Makai from Serbia.

Sofia Mikhina from Russia, Elena Omidgollu and Fatemeh Khashei from Iran won the gold medals for children between 12 and 15.

Artem Proshin from Russia, and Paria Nabizadeh and Yeganeh Qadaki from Iran received silver medals, and bronze



Painting by six-year-old Iranian girl Parmis Khajui won the gold medal at the Kerman International Children’s Painting Festival.

medals in this section were presented to Maedeh Bidaki, Mahya Abui and Zahra Panahi from Iran.

Children with disabilities in three age categories were also honored.

Angelo Chan from Hong Kong won the gold medal in the section for children between 5 and 8. The silver medal was given to Mirra Tataush from Ukraine, while Kristina Gusarova



Front cover of a Persian translation of Lulu Taylor’s novel “Her Frozen Heart”.

TEHRAN — The bestselling author Lulu Taylor has returned to Iranian bookstores with a Persian translation of her 2017 novel “Her Frozen Heart”.

Salees, a major publishing house in Tehran, is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Maryam Meftahi.

A Persian translation of Taylor’s “The Snow Rose” by Meftahi has previously been published by Salees.

Lulu Taylor returns to Iranian bookstores with

“Her Frozen Heart”

In “Her Frozen Heart”, Caitlyn thinks her marriage to Patrick is a success. For one thing, he is one of the few people not to fall head over heels for her beautiful friend, Sara. Life is lived on his terms, but they are happy. Aren’t they?

When a devastating accident turns her existence upside down, Caitlyn is forced to reassess everything she thought about her marriage, what she truly knows about Patrick, and his real feelings for her best friend. In the refuge of an old manor

house, she begins to discover the truth.

In 1947, the worst winter in decades hits England, cutting off entirely the inhabitants of Kings Harcourt Manor. For Tommy Carter, widowed at the start of the war, it is particularly hard: the burden of the family falls on her. She has the solace of her children, and the interesting presence of her brother’s friend, Fred. But there is also Barbara, a mysterious figure from her past who appears to want a piece of Tommy’s future as well.