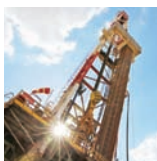




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Marouf most-followed volleyball player on Instagram *Page 3*



NIDC allocates over \$123m to renovate, upgrade drilling rigs *Page 4*



Rolling babies in roses: an ancient ritual bringing blessings to families *Page 6*



© Getty Images

Afghanistan is burning while Biden thinks of Fourth of July

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Not a difficult group for Iran: expert

BY FARROKH HESABI
Football expert Asghar Maziar says that Iran football team have been put in a really good group in the 2022 World Cup qualification Round 3.

Iran are drawn alongside Korea Republic, the UAE, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon in Group A of the final phase of Asian zone qualifying. Group B consists of Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, China, Vietnam and Oman.

The AFC's Technical Study Group member believes that Iran can qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

"In my opinion, South Korea are very strong in our group, while in Group B there are teams such as Japan, Australia, and Saudi Arabia. So, we can say that Iran have been drawn in the better group," the current coach of Saipa football team told Tehran Times.

"Of course, teams such as Iraq and the UAE also finished their groups as the third team and can make problems for both Iran and Korea. Given the number of teams who can qualify for the World Cup, it's undoubtedly an easier path for the Iranian national team to secure first or second place in the group. However, it is still fraught with danger, and the pressure will be on for the nation to reach their third consecutive World Cup," he added.

He also talked about the Iranian football federation's decision to keep Dragan Skocic as the head coach of the Iran national team.

"My personal opinion was that we could have brought a better coach in terms of the experiences and coaching career to replace Skocic for the next round of the World Cup qualifiers.

"Even though Iran got good results in the second round, the national team's style of play and the tactical performance were not at a satisfying level. It seemed that Skocic couldn't affect the team in terms of tactical issues, and the players achieved these results with their individual abilities and talents," Maziar said.

"Skocic is a good coach, but for the World Cup, we need a more well-known and more experienced manager. However, now, we all will support Skocic and our national team to secure victories over rivals," Maziar concluded.

Iran will start the 2022 World Cup qualification Round 3 with a match against Syria on Sept. 2.

Ancient 'pigeon towers' to turn into traditional restaurant

TEHRAN –Chahar Borj pigeon towers in Falavarjan county, the central province of Isfahan, are planned to turn into a traditional restaurant in the near future, Falavarjan's tourism chief has announced.

With an area of 2,700 square meters, Chahar Borj, meaning four towers, consists of four pigeon towers, which have been completely restored over the past few years.

A budget of three billion rials (\$71,400 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the fourth and final stage of the restoration project of the towers, Hafez Karimian said on Saturday.

The project involved lightening the rooftops, repairing the damaged parts, organizing pigeons' nests, and strengthening the walls using cob material, the official added.

Chahar Borj pigeon towers include two large and small towers. The large tower with a height

of 18 meters and an area of nearly 1,000 square meters, is the largest pigeon tower in Isfahan province in terms of area.

The complex was inscribed on the national heritage list in 2005.

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

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

Continued on page 6

Clean your own house first before preaching to others

The growing tally of unmarked graves for natives slaps a huge question mark over Canada's alleged democratic values.

The government has long prided itself on the international arena over its diversity and acceptance of people of different backgrounds and races. In November 2015, Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, named the most diverse cabinet since 1867. That's the year Canada was founded as a country in Northern America.

Does Trudeau's 'diverse' cabinet represent the diversity of the people of the land?

This has to be studied carefully.

The same year Trudeau swore in the most diverse cabinet, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission published a report revealing 'dark' and 'troubling' policies detailing how Canadian governments and churches pursued a genocidal program against the native people of the land. The investigation took seven years to complete,

hearing from thousands of witnesses. The Native children were snatched from their parents, locked up in boarding schools, beaten for speaking their language, physically assaulted, raped, starved to death, beaten to death, buried and violated in other forms. These schools were state-funded and run by the Catholic Church. The 'cultural genocide' was all aimed at indoctrinating them into what the one Canadian Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, labeled as 'the habits and modes of thought of white men'.

At least 150,000 native children had attended these boarding schools between 1867 and 1996. They have been complaining about the torture that they had endured for decades and raising awareness wherever they could. However, the authorities did not pay the attention that you would expect from a community complaining about such atrocities.

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Iraq vows to pay debts to Iran for imported energy

TEHRAN — The Iraqi prime minister, while emphasizing Iraq's commitments to pay its debts for the import of electricity and gas from Iran, stated that Iran has not failed to export electricity and gas to Iraq.

"Tehran has not neglected to export electricity and gas to Iraq," Mustafa Al-Kadhimi made the remarks in an emergency meeting with governors in which members of the Electricity Crisis Resolution Committee were also present, Al-Manar

and Baghdad Al-Youm (Baghdad Today).

Strangely, 61 power grids have exploded in Iraq, resulting into 18 deaths. Al-Kadhimi says targeting power grids is not normal.

"We have seen power outages in recent days," he said.

He added, "Who is targeting the power grid? Why is it being targeted? As soon as the investigation is completed, we will answer the questions: Why are the saboteurs targeting the electricity

transmission network? Is this sabotage operation against the energy transmission network politically motivated or an act of terrorism?"

The prime minister said he has inherited the current situation.

"The government is paying the price for wrong policies and patchwork and waste of public funds during the last 17 years in all fields, especially in the field of energy," he added.

Continued on page 2



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Mashhad hosts intl. Shia scholars

TEHRAN – An international conference on Shia school of thought was held in the holy city of Mashhad on Sunday.

The conference was also held virtually in 45 cities around the world. An exhibition was held on the sidelines of the conference. Scholars from Tanzania, India, Pakistan, Qatar, Azerbaijan, and Turkey attended the conference.

NATO has no answer for Russia's now deployed hypersonic missiles: analyst

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – A geopolitical analyst says that NATO has no answer for Russia's hypersonic missiles which can nullify NATO air capability.

"The problem is that NATO has no answer for Russia's now deployed hypersonic missiles which, for all intents and purposes, nullifies NATO air capability in not only Eastern Europe but also in the whole of the Mediterranean," Tom Luongo tells the Tehran Times.

Noting that "in the near term, they (Europeans) wanted Nordstream 2 completed and some guarantees from Putin that gas would also still flow through Ukraine," Luongo argues that hawks within NATO and U.S. neoconservatives try to destabilize Russia's neighbors.

"The hawks within NATO and U.S. neoconservatives, like Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and personally in charge of U.S. policy in Eastern Europe still believe they can destabilize Russia's neighbors like Belarus, Armenia and Georgia to keep Russia distracted and get Putin to back down in the Middle East (West Asia)."

Following is the text of the interview:
How do you see U.S.-Russia ties under the Biden presidency?

I wouldn't have expected much change from Biden to Trump since I saw much of Trump's policies towards Russia driven by policy inertia coming from within the U.S. diplomatic and military bureaucracy. Until there is a generational shift in personnel in those institutions, we shouldn't expect much in terms of a shift in policy.

Continued on page 5

Iraq vows to pay debts to Iran for imported energy

➔ 1 The prime minister said speaking to the public and transparency is a historical and moral responsibility.

"We must speak to the people openly, especially after successive governments have not spoken to the people out of fear of public outrage. The fact is that everyone, including governments and politicians, has this accountability," he remarked.

Iran has not neglected exporting electricity

"What is the reason for not connecting power lines with neighboring countries as well as the world over the last 17 years?" he asked.

Al-Kadhimi said that Iraq is only connected to the electricity grid of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which does not fail to transfer electricity to Iraq based on its ability, and is also committed to the Iraqi people.



"There is also a case of electricity import debts from Tehran and the U.S. sanctions. We are serious about this issue and the payment of all Iraqi debts to Iran for the import of gas and electricity in the past years, and we will make progress in this regard," the prime minister highlighted.

Iran continues to export gas to Iraq

"In the gas case, the Iraqi gas network is connected to Iran, and despite the difficulties in receiving their demands due to sanctions, they have not stopped and continue to export gas to Iraq. We need more time to find resources," he said.

He added that Iraq is looking to replace gas from other countries.

Problem solving is time-consuming

Al-Kadhimi added, "Why the Iraqi government should be deprived of satisfying the pressing needs of its own people? From a year ago until today, we have made decisions to connect the Iraqi electricity system to all neighboring countries. This requires time and patience to complete so that we can meet the challenges."

The prime minister added that under natural circumstances, the electricity grid is supposed to be connected to the neighboring countries, but Iraq puts forward the question of who decided to isolate Iraq and prevent the connection of the power lines with other countries?

Why not work on solar or nuclear energy?

On the issue of a possible cooperation with France to develop Iraq's nuclear energy, Al-Kadhimi said, "Policy-makers in every country formulate a strategy based on their future capabilities and plans, so why in the last 17 years have we built dozens of gas-fired power plants to generate electricity while we do not have the capacity to supply gas or a plan to produce gas or diversify gas import sources if needed? Who is responsible for such a big mistake? Why did we fail to focus on solar or even nuclear energy?"

"A few months ago, I talked to the French officials regarding a nuclear power project in Iraq," he added.

The top Iraqi official said that the world community, including France, have a good grasp but there are obstacles that Iraq must thrive to overcome.

"Over the last year, my administration has done everything it should have done," he added.

We need 2 to 3 years

"Iraq has a long delay in gas production and we need to start producing gas immediately, and we did that, but we need 2 to 3 years to start gas production and cover most of the needs of our power plants," Al-Kadhimi said.

He reiterated, "All the necessary measures to solve the electricity problem in Iraq will take several years. If we had invested in solar energy or gas production or non-gas power plants, we would not have electricity problems now and instead of importing, we would export gas. Had we invested in connecting the electricity network to our whole neighboring countries, now we could have overcome the emergency crises, especially in the summer."

Iran closes consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Due to the recent unrest in Afghanistan the three countries of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan have closed their consulates I Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh province.

Reports say the diplomats have returned to Kabul, awaiting further instructions. Seemingly, it has been a long time since visas were issued in these consulates.

The war between the Taliban and government forces is intensifying.



Iran has said that it will stand by the people and government of Afghanistan.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on June 29, "We always emphasize that genuine Afghan-Afghan dialogue is the only lasting solution to the Afghan problem."

He went on to say that Iran attaches great importance to Afghanistan's territorial integrity and national unity and seeks respect for the rights of minorities and guarding the achievements made by the Afghan people over the past two decades.

Rabiei also said that the Taliban is part of Afghanistan and should be part of solution for the protracted conflict in the country.

"What is important for us is the formation of an inclusive government with the involvement of all Afghan groups and the achievement of a peaceful and lasting solution in this country," he noted.

Afghanistan is burning while Biden thinks of Fourth of July

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — After 20

years U.S. troops are leaving Afghanistan without even achieving any success. This marks a historic defeat for the U.S. and its coalition.

Americans entered Afghanistan to implement a three-stage plan. To overthrow the Taliban, rebuild the central institutions, shift to the classical doctrine of counterinsurgency. After two decades none of the goals were realized.

Obama decided in 2009 to temporarily increase the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. More forces were deployed to implement a strategy to protect the population from attacks by the Taliban and to support insurgents' efforts to reintegrate into Afghan society. The strategy was also accompanied by a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. Starting in 2011, security responsibilities were to be gradually transferred to the Afghan army and police. The new method largely failed to achieve its goals. Insurgent attacks and civilian casualties remained high, and Afghan military and police forces that performed security functions seem to be unprepared to contain the Taliban. By the time the U.S.-NATO combat mission officially ended in December 2014, 13 years had passed since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

According to Reuters, more than 3,500 international troops were killed in Afghanistan. Reuters also quoted a Western diplomat in Kabul as saying Washington and its NATO allies "have lost the Afghan war."

The United States has always been the largest foreign power in Afghanistan and has suffered the most. By the spring of 2010, more than 1,000 American soldiers, around 300 British, and around 150 Canadian soldiers had died in Afghanistan. Both Britain and Canada stationed their troops in southern Afghanistan, where the fighting was most intense. More than 20 other countries also lost soldiers during the war, although many countries (such as Germany and Italy) chose to deploy their troops in the north and the west, where there were less militant insurgency. With fighting delayed and casualties escalated; the war lost popularity in many Western countries, prompting internal political pressure to demand that the military stay out of harm's way or withdraw altogether. Now the main question is what was the result of 20 years of staying in Afghanistan. Was 20 years of invasion for nothing?

The Americans are now exiting Afghanistan without even taking responsibility for



what they are leaving behind. When asked about Afghanistan on July 2, Joe Biden said he will not comment on "dangerous" issues, and he needs to focus on his Fourth of July plans. Dodging a question about the worsening situation in Afghanistan is pure irresponsibility.

The U.S. troops entered Afghanistan to oust Taliban which had hosted al-Qaeda, according to the objectives they drew for themselves. Now, after twenty years, not only have they not been able to topple Taliban, but also negotiated with them. They negotiated with the Taliban to find an exit route. They accepted Taliban's demands to leave Afghanistan. In other words, they bowed to the Taliban pressure. That's cold, even for Biden.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. special representative under the Trump and Biden administrations for reconstructing Afghanistan, has said, "There is progress in securing an agreement with countries such as Turkey to secure the airport. We are still there, so that has to be in place before we are completely out of there militarily, which will be in September, based on what the president has announced.

Two, we're also working with the Afghans to make sure they have the contracting services that they need to maintain their air force. And we are committed to achieving that, too, before September. So, we're dealing with those two issues.

And, more, we're reorganizing our counter-terrorism posture to have the access and the presence needed to monitor the situation in Afghanistan and to be able to strike terrorist

targets, should that be necessary."

When you dig deep, you see that Khalilzad's remarks are entirely contrary to the objectives the Bush administration drew for itself. Let's not forget that Khalilzad was George W. Bush's senior advisor on Afghanistan and Washington's ambassador to Kabul.

The change of policy comes in a complicated time. People of the U.S. want their troops out of other countries. Focus groups and public baths say that. But the United States does not seem to care about the public opinion. The U.S. is withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan to shift its focus from counterinsurgency and conflicts in the region to competing with powerful near-peer rivals, such as China.

"It's about, 'let's start pivoting to Asia,' for real this time," said Andrew Watkins, a senior Afghanistan analyst at International Crisis Group, a nonprofit think tank based in Brussels.

After nearly 20 years, the United States military has left Afghanistan's Bagram airbase, the epicenter of its war to remove the Taliban and hunt down the al-Qaeda perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks, two U.S. officials have said.

The airbase was fully handed over to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, the officials said on Friday on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release the information to the media, The Associated Press reported.

Reportedly the Taliban have attacked the air base.

Afghan authorities on Sunday claimed to have thwarted a Taliban attack on the air base. According to Bagram district Governor

Sheren Rofi, a group of 20 Taliban insurgents attacked the local police checkpoint near the airbase, with one policeman and one insurgent killed in the exchange of fire.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack from the Taliban.

It seems that the negotiations between Taliban and the Afghan government are not going well. Abdullah Abdullah, the top Afghan official who leads the High Council for National Reconciliation, told CNN in an exclusive interview on July 1, that talks between the two parties had made "very little progress" and were happening at a "very slow pace".

The Taliban has accused the Afghan government of not engaging with the intra-Afghan peace negotiations in Doha. "Our intention was to make some progress, but the opposite side was not interested in the peace talks," Taliban political office spokesman Mohammad Naem claimed in a video statement on the intra-Afghan negotiations, which was released on June 30 and obtained by CNN.

CNN analysts estimate that the Taliban might gain control of the country in 6 to 12 months.

However, contrary to the United States, Iran has been trying hard to broker peace between the two warring parties.

"We assure the government and people of Afghanistan that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always stood by them and will continue to do so, and we call on all ethnic groups and political forces in Afghanistan to unite and reject any foreign interference, and commit to peaceful solutions to settle their disputes," Ali Rabiei, the Iranian government spokesman, said on June 29.

In line with continuation of Tehran's efforts to help broker peace in neighboring Afghanistan, Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian Fard held talks with Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar on June 28.

Expressing his approval over holding a tripartite meeting among Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, Atmar stressed that such a meeting will be useful in strengthening regional consensus in the efforts to stabilize Afghanistan.

Iran has doubled down on its diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in neighboring Afghanistan as the conflict there has intensified between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Iran has been loudly saying that it favors an inclusive government with the involvement of all ethnic and religious groups

It is high time for Biden and associates to take responsibility for their irresponsible actions.

Iran urges UN to legally pursue case of abducted diplomats

POLITICAL

TEHRAN — On the 39th anniversary of the kidnapping of Iranian diplomats in Lebanon by armed groups aligned with the Zionist regime, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement urging the United Nations to pursue legal actions on the matter.

The statement reads as follows:

"On July 4, 1982, the car of four Iranian diplomats - Seyed Mohsen Mousavi, Haj Ahmad Motusalian, Taqi Rastegar Moghadam and Kazem Akhavan - which was under the protection of diplomatic police, was stopped contrary to the rules and international conventions by armed mercenaries under the command of the Zionist regime in the Barabara region of Lebanon, and our dear diplomats were abducted.

Now on the 39th anniversary of this crime, which took place at the hands of terrorist agents affiliated with the Zionist regime, the families of these loved ones, enduring a lot of grief, are still hoping for the freedom and the return of their loved ones.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly stated that there is evidence that the Iranian diplomats were handed over to the occupying forces after being illegally detained

and subsequently transferred to Israeli prisons.

Since the occurrence of this terrorist incident, the Islamic Republic of Iran, considering its human, legal and political dimensions, has taken extensive measures and put the pursuit of this issue on the agenda of international and regional institutions.

Due to the occupation of Lebanon by the Zionist regime in 1982, the political and legal responsibility of the kidnapping of diplomats and this terrorist act rests with the Zionist regime and its terrorist supporters, and unfortunately the Zionist regime's lack of accountability has slowed down the process of discovering the facts and dimensions of this incident.

In honor of the memory of these loved ones, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes that pursuing their fate as one of its priorities in the agenda of diplomatic relations with international and regional aspects, and once again with regard to the report of the former Secretary General and the letter from the then-Prime Minister of Lebanon to him in 2008, urges the current Secretary-General and other international and human rights organizations and institutions, including the Red Cross, to pay more serious

attention to this human rights issue, which is related to international conventions and accepted by the international community. The ministry calls on these institutions to pay attention to the rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the families and children of these loved ones.

In this regard, while thanking the friendly and brotherly country of Lebanon, which has had good cooperation in the process of following up this incident, it also calls on the Lebanese authorities regarding the proposals submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran to form a cooperation committee and joint efforts to coordinate and consolidate the available data and clarify the hidden dimensions of this incident, make serious decisions and consider the necessary recommendations for progress in this case as soon as possible, so that we can witness joint and effective measures in this issue."

The case of the abducted diplomats has long been debated by the Iranian officials in international floors, such as the United Nations, and the United Nations Security Council. Iran has time and again emphasized that the diplomats are alive, based on received intelligence.

West using MKO to advance interests, analyst says

POLITICAL

TEHRAN — A political commentator says certain

Western countries continue to nurture and use terrorist groups such as the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MKO/MEK) to advance their destructive agendas against independent countries.

Canadian writer and activist Mark Taliano told Press TV on Sunday that the West plays the terrorist card in pursuit of its own interests, stressing that Washington and its allies continue to resuscitate and fortify terrorist proxies.

The West's support for the notorious MKO group is consistent with its support for international terrorism, Taliano said.

"The West and its allies train, support, arm, command and control these terrorist assets. They play them as cards, and deploy them beneath shrouds of secrecy and disinformation," he noted.

The MKO has carried out numerous terrorist attacks against Iranian civilians and government officials since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. Out of the nearly 17,000 Iranians killed in terrorist attacks over the past four decades, about 12,000 have fallen victim to the group's acts of terror.

During former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's war on Iran between 1980 and 1988,

MKO members were armed by Iraq and fought alongside Ba'ath forces against the Islamic Republic.

After the war, the U.S. and the European Union removed the MKO from their lists of terrorist organizations in order to use them as proxies against Iran. The terrorists enjoy freedom of activity in the U.S. and Europe, and even hold meetings with top American and European officials.

Faced with the growing anger among many Iraqis who had suffered at the hands of Saddam's forces and MKO henchmen, the terrorists were relocated by the U.S. from their Camp Ashraf in Iraq's Diyala Province in 2016 and sent to Albania, from where they continue their anti-Iran activities.

Taliano said the West, in its policy against sovereign nations, commits crimes against humanity and uses terrorists as an appendage.

The West's operations against sovereign countries are multi-faceted, and include massive propaganda through media cartels and



John Bolton, the former U.S. national security advisor (second from left), participating at a gathering of the MKO in Paris.

various assets on the ground, he said.

Olvi Jazexhi, an Albanian historian, believes that terrorist groups like Jabhat al-Nusra, Daesh and MEK are mercenaries of Israel and the U.S. to undermine the Muslim world.

"Jabhat al-Nusra, Daesh and MEK are front organizations of Israeli and American imperialism against the Muslim world," Jazexhi

“West deploying terrorists beneath shrouds of secrecy and disinformation,” Canadian commentator says

tells the Tehran Times.

"Even though Israel officially has not shown any direct relation with MEK, unofficially, it as well as the Evangelical U.S. administration of President Trump used MEK and its experience in terrorism and false flag attacks as a tool for attacking and blackmailing Iran," the Albanian historian notes.

“West intends to balkanize Syria”

Taliano pointed to the presence of the so-called civil defense group White Helmets in Syria, emphasizing that its members are essentially the assets of al-Qaeda and Daesh terrorist groups in order to depict savage imperial barbarism as "humanitarian".

He said the West is currently supporting al-Qaeda and its affiliates in Syria's militant-held northwestern province of Idlib.

The Canadian pundit referred to the so-called Caesar Act as well as other U.S. and EU sanctions as collective punishment of Syrians living in government-controlled areas.

"Military actions involving active warfare, terrorist attacks, occupation, illegal bombardment of Syrians, coupled with economic warfare and myriad strategies of deception, all serve West's purpose to destroy and balkanize Syria," Taliano said.

Iran has done all its duties on Ukrainian plane crash: deputy FM

→1 What are the latest developments in the Ukrainian plane crash's case and what steps have been taken so far?

We have worked in two aspects. One was the tasks we had to do. As I said, in orderly manner to report the accident, which is very important, by the national aviation, and it was done. We worked around the clock to get the report announced as soon as possible, and the accident investigation team also made its own report. After that, in the judiciary, the judicial organization of the armed forces, started its investigations because the suspects and defendants were military personnel. And immediately the operator of this anti-aircraft system and the rest who may have been involved in this were arrested. Many were punished within the Iranian armed forces. We have an international obligation to pay damages, which was our other duty. That is, in the Warsaw Pact, we have an obligation that for every casualty, you have to pay about twenty thousand dollars, because I do not say exactly because it is calculated with Special Drawing Rights (SDR). But the government take measures beyond this agreement and allocated 150,000 dollars for each deceased person. This money is available now, and some families have received this compensation, and some may come soon, and this is ongoing. And there is a readiness to pay that money. This money is given to all passengers. Foreign nationals can receive their compensation amount through their consulates in Iran and through inheritance monopolies, via their lawyer or through a representative or embassy.

Have foreign nationals taken action to receive the compensation?

No action has been taken by foreign nationals so far, but two countries are scheduled to come and we are waiting for them to submit their legal documents and receive their compensation.

Another issue is negotiating with other countries that may have lost their citizens or Ukraine as the country that owns the aircraft. We negotiated three times with Ukraine. Two rounds in Kyiv and one round in Tehran.

You mentioned the recent Ukrainian talks. What exactly did Ukraine want from Iran?

We have tried very hard to provide countries with data based on the law if they have a request. For one very obvious reason: We did not hide anything to deprive others of some information.

Therefore, if they wanted information, we provided it to the Ukrainians in accordance with the law, but the Ukrainians still want information that is neither known in principle nor can be provided in accordance with the law.

For example, they want information



from our defense system that this information cannot be provided because it is related to the security of our country and is a part of military secrets and no country can provide this information to anyone.

At the same time, the information they ask of us, which we cannot provide, is an exception, because they ask for information that according to international law and the relevant convention, the judicial proceedings are within the jurisdiction of the country in whose territory the accident took place.

Do the Ukrainians demand that the Iranian defendants be tried in the Ukrainian courts?

No. They want information that they themselves can file a separate case about this incident. Of course, from a legal point of view, Ukraine can file a case regarding the fate of its citizens and what happened to them.

Who were some of the highest-ranking Iranian officials who were reprimanded or appeared in court, and what was their specific rank?

According to Iranian law, case information cannot be disclosed before a trial. We do not have a court case and we are not involved in it, but as soon as the court starts hearing, the lawyers of these families will be present. The families of the victims of the accident may be present and it will become clear at that time.

Regarding Canada and a recent report by a Canadian government agency, the Canadian foreign minister issued a statement saying that Canada had not found any evidence that the crash was intentional, but blamed Iran for the incident. What is your assessment of this report?

This report is of no value under international law, meaning it is an incomplete report because under the Chicago

Convention, the Annex 13, country where the accident took place must prepare a report stating what happened and not another country.

I am sometimes very disappointed that some countries think that only they understand the law. Only they can report honestly. Only they can compile a technical report accurately. And when things happen, we see that they are very weak.

It was the work of Canadians to bury hundreds of children alive in Canadian schools. As a result, you cannot claim that you are the only one who understands the law and that you are the only one who is very civilized and understands the issues.

Did Canada request cooperation with Iran in preparing this report, and if so, did Iran cooperate or did Canada itself prepare the report unilaterally?

Canada has taken action in the form of Ukraine's consultant, and the Canadian technical team has participated and made recommendations. The Iranian accident investigation team also accepted almost 70% of the recommendations in the official Canadian report, which was in the form of a national aviation organization.

You mentioned mass graves in Canada. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh referred to the issue and somehow linked it to the case of the Ukrainian plane, saying that Canada is not in a position while such incidents occur inside its country, either on human rights issues or on the issue of the Ukrainian case to blame Iran. What is your opinion?

Canada and any other country can speak to Iran in its own way with mutual respect, and Iran has no weakness or fear of answering or asking questions.

What makes us have this attitude to-

wards Canada is that Canada always tries to have a negative attitude towards Iran, whether politically or in international organizations or even doing illegal things.

This means that we are not actually negotiating with Canada. We have no demand from Canada. Canada completely illegally does not accept the state immunity of our country and has confiscated our government property, not just our diplomatic property, and Canada is indebted for this, and sooner or later it must return to Iran this amount or the buildings it has confiscated or sold.

This issue will not be forgotten and this is part of Canada's debt to the Iranian nation and the Iranian nation's money must be repaid. So, this is our problem. Canada or any other country in this international system, if it has any questions or criticisms, they should be raised within the specific international framework that exists.

One of the issues that is constantly raised in the case of the Ukrainian plane and somehow blames Iran, and even mentioned in the Canadian government report, is when the Tehran region was on military alert, why the civilian plane was not stopped to fly by the Iranian side? This has even been raised in the negotiations. What has been Iran's response?

As far as I know, closing the sky is not a commitment. Only precautionary measures have been raised to be taken. You do not see anywhere that if a country is involved in a conflict somewhere, it must close its skies. This does not happen.

This is not a commitment that must be fulfilled. Secondly, our conflict zone with the United States, that is, the region and base of Ain al-Assad that we targeted, was seven to eight hundred kilometers away from Tehran.

There is another matter. Part of the risk assessment is the responsibility of the airliner. It is not just a government duty on its sky flights are ongoing, but an airline whose owner must have a risk assessment.

If it sees a conflict somewhere and something might happen to its plane, it should check and not fly. For example, British Airways was flying over Iraq and did not enter Iran's sky and returned and announced that the risk of flying in Iran's sky was high.

In your opinion, when will the case of the Ukrainian plane be closed, either in the judicial process inside Iran or in talks with other countries?

In our opinion, this case is closed when we have done our duty, when the trial took place and the compensation was paid, within a reasonable period of time, those who want can go to the Ministry of Transport and get their compensation.

(See the full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Iran's Marouf most-followed volleyball player on Instagram

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian international setter d e s k Saeid Marouf is the most-followed volleyball player in the world.

Marouf has 1.9 million followers on Instagram.



Filipino volleyball player Alyssa Caymo Valdez sits second in the list with 1.3 million followers. Brazilian setter Bruno Mossa de Rezende has 1.1 million followers.

Iranian middle blocker Seyed Mohammad Mousavi also has 1.1 million followers and sits in the sixth place in the list. Marouf, captain of Iran national volleyball team, has played a key role in Iran's success over the past years.

Weightlifter Jahanfekrian wants to show how strong Iranian women are

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** - Female weightlifter Parisa d e s k Jahanfekrian hopes her presence at the 2020 Olympic Games can pave the way for other Iranian women to show how strong they are.

Jahanfekrian was awarded the quota place after Samoan Iuniarra Sipai withdrew from the 87kg weight class.

The lifter has recently undergone a hand surgery but he is determined to get prepared for the Games.

"I am proud of representing Iran at the Olympics. I cannot find words to express how happy I am since the best weightlifters of the world will participate in the competition," Jahanfekrian said.

"Prior to the 2021 Asian Weightlifting Championships in April, I suffered a hand injury and missed the event in Uzbekistan. But I was informed I can take part at the Olympic Games. Nobody thought this would happen and I am very happy for this historical event for me and the Iranian women," she added.

"I will do my best to get prepared for the Games. Maybe I could not get the result I am looking for but it can be a beginning of a way for the Iranian women to show that they are capable of participating at the Olympic Games," Jahanfekrian stated.

Basketball friendly: Spain beat Iran

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran lost to Spain basketball d e s k team as part of preparation for the Olympic Games in Tokyo on Saturday.

In the match held at the La Fonteta in Valencia, the Spanish team defeated Iran 88-61.

Mehran Shahintab's team will also play Spain on Monday in Madrid.

Alberto Abalde was leading the way for Spain with 13 points.

For Iran, Benham Yakhchali scored 12 in addition to Aaron Geramipour's 11 and Mohammad Jamshidi's ten points.

Iran had lost to Japan twice and defeated them one time last week in three friendly matches held in Japan.

Iran are drawn with the U.S., France and the to-be-determined winner of the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Canada in Group A of Olympic Games.

Iran runners-up at World Deaf Junior Greco Roman C'ships

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran became runners-up at the 4th World Deaf Junior Greco Roman Wrestling Championships.

The Iranian wrestlers won a gold, a silver and two bronze medals in the competition, held in Istanbul, Turkey, Tasnim news agency reported.

Amir Mohammad Gholinia won a gold in the 87kg. Mojtaba Malekabadi took a silver in the 63kg.

Ali Vatan Parast and Mostafa Yahyaei won two bronze medals in the 55kg and 60kg, respectively.

Russia won the title and Turkey finished in third place.

Shahriar Moghanlou may join Russian league

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian footballer Shahri- d e s k ar Moghanlou will likely join the Russian football league as his countryman Sardar Azmoun is leaving for Europe, according to an Uzbek website.

The Iranian forward Sardar Azmoun, who won the Russian Premier League this year for third years in a row with Zenit Saint Petersburg now has many offers in European football and there are reports that he might go to Italy or Portugal.

Meanwhile, Zenit Saint Petersburg is reported to be looking for a forward to replace Azmoun in preparation for the next season, MNA reported.

Now, some media are speculating that Persepolis striker Shahriar Moghanlou can be a replacement for Azmoun in the Russian league next season.

According to an Uzbek website called "Championat Asia", another Iranian striker will replace "Sardar Azmoun" if he leaves Zenit St. Petersburg. The Uzbek website said that Persepolis forward Moghanlou will most likely join the giant Russian team to replace Azmoun.

U.S. seeks disintegration of Iran, Syria and Iraq: IRGC general

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian general d e s k has said that the United States seeks to disintegrate a number of countries in the region but the Iranian Leader's directions have prevented it from achieving its goal.

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh warned that the U.S. is pursuing plans to break up Syria, Iraq and Iran.

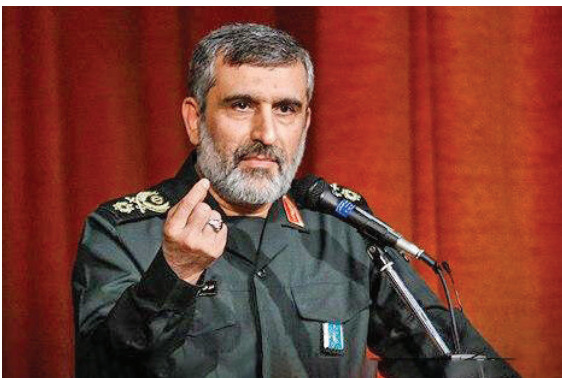
U.S. troops are present in Syria and Iraq and face growing calls from local resistance groups to leave these countries.

Addressing a ceremony in Qom on Friday night, the General said, "Enemies are trying every day to take control of the region and gain access to the resources of the countries. Today, the Americans are based in Syria and seek to disintegrate Iraq, Syria and Iran. But they have not succeeded thanks to the Leader (Ayatollah Khamenei)'s guidance, and the important thing is the vigilance and insight of the people of the region and Iran."

He added that the regional nations and the IRGC will not allow the Americans to implement their plots, stressing that martyrdom of General Qasem Soleimani will not be forgotten and it has further awakened the nations, according to Fars News.

Earlier this week, Deputy IRGC Commander for Political Affairs Brigadier General Yadollah Javani called on the U.S. to leave the region immediately.

"The IRGC advises the United States to leave the region right now," Brigadier General Javani said last Monday.



He reiterated that the enemy's threats are not new and are repetitions of the previous threats, and said that the enemy knows that the IRGC is ready for any confrontation. Iran has long called for the expulsion of U.S. troops from the region and doubled down on this policy after the assassination of General Soleimani earlier last year.

In May, Speaker of the Iranian parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf noted that the presence of foreign military troops in the region would only cause insecurity in the region, not peace.

Ever since General Soleimani was assassinated on January 3, 2020, in Baghdad along with his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy chief of Iraq' Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Iranian officials have

placed the goal of expelling the U.S. from the region high on their foreign policy agenda and they still insist that the U.S. must leave the region.

Nearly a week after the U.S. targeted the top Iranian general, Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said the real revenge for the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani will be the expulsion of the United States troops from the region.

The real revenge for the United States' criminal and illegal actions, at the top of which is the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, will be their expulsion from the region," he said during a meeting with then-Syrian Prime Minister Imad Khamis in Tehran.

Jahangiri said that interferences by certain Western countries, especially the U.S., have caused instability and insecurity in the West Asia region.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei also underlined the need to expel the U.S. forces from the region in the aftermath of Soleimani's assassination.

"Of course, revenge will be taken on those who ordered it and the murderers," said the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in a meeting with a group of officials who were responsible for commemorating the first anniversary of the assassination of the general.

The Leader said Iran has slapped the U.S. in the face by launching a missile strike on the U.S. airbase of Ain al-Assad in western Iraq earlier this year.

But the tougher slap, the Leader pointed out, would be expelling the U.S. troops from the West Asia region.

Iran supports intra-Afghan talks: senior MP

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** — A senior d e s k Iranian lawmaker has voiced support for the intra-Afghan peace talks, saying Tehran would stand by the Afghan people.

Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Vahid Jalalzadeh said Iran continues to defend the interests of the Afghan people.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the Leader (Ayatollah Khamenei) said, has defended the interests of the Afghan people

and will always stand by them on the path to lasting peace and stability," the Iranian lawmaker said.

Jalalzadeh made the remarks at a meeting with visiting Afghan MP Amir Gul Shaheen.

He further emphasized the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to support the peace process and intra-Afghan negotiations without foreign intervention.

At the end of the meeting, the head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said that the presence of foreign

troops in the region had spread insecurity.

The Afghan lawmaker, for his part, thanked the Leader for his support and the support of the Islamic Republic to the government and people of Afghanistan, saying, "We will never forget the assistance of the Islamic Republic of Iran in difficult days."

Referring to the developments in Afghanistan, Shaheen pointed out that Afghanistan belongs to all Afghan groups and parties, and resorting to violence by any group would harm the Afghan people. "We expect the Islamic Republic of Iran,



as an influential country in the region, to assist the legitimate government and people of Afghanistan in establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan," he noted.

Over 1m tons of commodities traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — More than one million tons of commodities worth \$412 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the volume of trades at the exchange witnessed 13 percent growth in the past week.

The exchange sold on its metal and minerals trading platform 665,862 tons of commodities valued at more than \$233 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 203,700 tons of steel, 9,985 tons of copper, 10,940 tons of aluminum, 27 tons of precious metals concentrate, 250 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 550 tons of zinc, 389,560 tons of cement, 5 kg of gold bars, 11,000 tons of sponge iron and 40,000 tons of iron ore.



Furthermore, the IME saw trade of 345,056 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$180 million on its oil and petrochemical trading floor.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 92,150 tons of vacuum bottom, 91,530 tons of bitumen, 94,801 tons of polymeric products, 36,934 tons of chemicals, 27,000 tons of lube cut, 3,577 tons of base oil, 110 tons of argon, 120 tons of sulfur and 205 tons of insulation.

It's worth noting that the exchange also played host to trading 906 tons of various types of commodities on its side market.

As previously reported, the value of trade at Iran Mercantile Exchange rose eight percent during the past Iranian calendar month (May 22-June 21).

More than 3.623 million tons of commodities worth over \$1.88 billion was traded at the exchange in the past month, indicating also 22 percent growth in terms of weight as compared to its preceding month.

The IME sold on its metal and mineral trading floor 1.816 million tons of commodities worth almost \$1.076 billion.

Commodities traded on this floor included 979,170 tons of various types of steel, 550, 280 tons of cement, 26,060 tons of copper, 690 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 129 tons of precious metals concentrate, 31,245 tons of aluminum, 165,000 tons of iron ore, 33,705 tons of zinc, 400 tons of metallurgical coke, 60,000 tons of sponge iron, 250 tons of lead and 13 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the exchange played host to trading of 1.74 million tons of commodities on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at more than \$795 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 492,393 tons of various grades of bitumen, 319,550 tons of polymeric products, 159,480 tons of chemicals, 19,834 tons of oil, 540,400 tons of vacuum bottom, 42,630 tons of sulfur, 450 tons of argon, 550 tons of insulation and 157,000 tons of lube cut.

There were also 6,316 tons of commodities traded on the IME's side market.

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 drops 2,300 points on Sunday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 2,319 points to 1.243 million on Sunday.

Over 5.889 billion securities worth 50.405 trillion rials (about \$1.2 billion) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.



The first market's index fell 1,504 points, and the second market's index dropped 5,349 points.

TEDPIX rose 43,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.256 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has launched three single window systems for facilitating the processes and procedures related to the stock market activities.

The unveiling ceremony of the mentioned systems, held on Tuesday, was attended by Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand and the SEO Head Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi.

According to Dehnavi, these systems are going to offer various services to the companies and people active in the market.

NIDC allocates over \$123m to renovate, upgrade drilling rigs

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) has allocated 5.2 trillion rials (about \$123.8 million) for the renovation and upgrading of its drilling rigs and equipment in the company's operational, technical, specialized, and logistical departments.

According to the NIDC's Director of Renovation and Upgrading Shahram Shamipour, the renovation and upgrading operations are aimed at improving the performance of these rigs which are active in the country's oil and gas field development projects, Shana reported.

Shamipour noted that the equipment going through renovation operations include fluid pumps, draw-works machinery, charting tools, pumps for cementing and acidizing trucks, tow trucks, cranes, piping machines, generators, hydrogen sulfide gas treatment systems, acid-coated storage tanks, and cement transport bunkers.

In this due, the company is going to sign deals with domestic companies for the renovation of more than 220 pieces of equipment related to drilling rigs, technical services, transportation, special services, tools in circulation, and safety, health, and environment,



according to Shamipour.

The official noted that of the allocated figure, so far, 1.3 trillion rials (about \$30.95 million) has been spent which has led to the signing of eight deals with domestic companies.

Considering the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s new strategies for strengthening the presence of domestic companies in the development of the country's oil fields, NIDC, as a major subsidiary of the company, has been

178m Kwh of electricity generated from renewable sources in a month

→ 1 by the end of the second month of the current calendar year (May 21) over 5,180 wind and solar units with a total capacity of 69,820 kilowatts have been put into operation by consumers all around the country.

The capacity of Iran's renewable power plants currently exceeds 920 megawatts (MW) among which solar power plants with the generation of 429.79 MW in the said month had the biggest share of electricity production.

Wind power plants with 308.74 MW of electricity production stood in second place.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for about seven percent of the country's total energy generation, versus natural gas's 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next four years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

According to Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), the number of small-scale solar power plants across the country which are used by households or small industries is increasing noticeably as Iranian households and small industries are embracing the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

Iran is also planning on expanding its presence in the region's renewable energy market.

According to Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a significant role in developing the region's market for such energies.

"Relying on the high potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, etc., the Energy Ministry has planned good measures in order to implement new policies for creating positive changes in the development



of the country's renewable energy sector," Ardakanian has said.

Back in December 2020, SATBA Head Mohammad Satakin said the capacity of the country's renewable power plants was going to reach 1,000 MW (one gigawatt) by the end of the current government's incumbency (August 2021).

No worries over supply of basic, strategic goods: Rouhani

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday that enough basic and strategic goods have been produced and imported into the country and there are no worries over the supply of such commodities, Mehr News Agency reported.

"Basic and essential goods have been sufficiently produced and imported, and by solving supply and clearance problems, such goods must be made available to consumers and the people more quickly," Rouhani said at the 238th meeting of the government's economic coordination headquarters.

At the mentioned meeting, a report was



presented on the supply of basic and essential goods and the measures taken for the acceleration of the clearance of such goods from the country's customs, and after reviewing

the report, necessary decisions were made in this regard.

As reported, it was decided that a committee consisting of Finance and Economic Affairs, and Agriculture ministries as well as the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), should take necessary measures to purchase, supply, and expedite the clearance of basic goods under the supervision of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

Iran imported 5.3 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$6.5 billion in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21) to register a 26.5-percent rise compared to the last year's same

two months.

The country had imported over 22 million tons of basic commodities worth over \$11 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Rouhollah Latifi, in the mentioned period a total of 34.4 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$38.5 billion were imported into the country.

The shares of the basic goods from the country's total imports in the said period were 64 percent and 28.5 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Projects worth over \$3b underway in industrial parks, zones

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has said 428 development projects worth 129 trillion rials (about \$3 billion) are currently underway in the country's industrial parks and zones.

"Currently, 3,212 production units based in industrial parks and zones are installing machinery and have a physical progress of more than 60 percent," Ali Rasoulilian told IRNA on Saturday.

According to the official, 11,635 units are also constructing siloes, which account for 27 percent of the total projects in industrial parks and zones.

Based on the latest statistics, 48,605 production units have been put into operation in industrial parks and zones so far, Rasoulilian said.

The official noted that over 980,000 people are currently working in the mentioned production units.

He further stated that 633 new production units have started operation in the country's industrial parks and zones since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar



year (March 21), which have created job opportunities for 16,744 people.

"This year, we plan to create 100,000 jobs in industrial parks and zones, which will be realized through inaugurating

new units, reviving idle units, and increasing the capacity of existing units," Rasoulilian said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official noted that the ISIPO is also planning to establish new large-scale industrial parks in collaboration with the private sector in the current Iranian calendar year.

According to the latest statistics, currently, 1,011 industrial parks, industrial zones, and special economic zones are established in the country, of which 828 are active.

Over the past few years, promoting the country's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and industrial parks has been put atop agenda by the government and especially the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, since SMEs account for nearly 50 percent of Iran's total industrial sector and more than 20 percent of the country's non-oil exports are done by such units.

As the main body in dealing with the promotion of SMEs in the country, ISIPO has been implementing several programs for realizing the mentioned goals and to pave the way for the development of the mentioned sector.

Export from Kerman province increases 92% in a quarter on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Iran's southeastern Kerman province rose 92 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), from the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Mohammadreza Qader, the director-general of Kerman's custom department, said that 102,301 tons of commodities worth \$212.237 million was exported from the province in the first quarter of this year, showing also 131 percent growth in terms of weight.

The official named China, Germany, Iraq, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Italy and Russia as the major export destinations of the products and pistachios, pistachio kernels, copper products, copper ingots, petroleum products and ferromolybdenum as the main exported items.

Qaderi further said that commodities worth \$103.73 million were imported to the province

in the first quarter of this year, and mentioned auto parts and components, industrial and electrical appliances as the major imported products, while China, Britain, the U.S., Japan, South Korea, India, Malaysia, Germany, Spain and Italy were the main sources of import.

As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil exports reached \$10.7 billion in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year, up 69 percent compared to the last year's same period.

According to Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, Iran exported 30 million tons of non-oil commodities in the mentioned three months, registering a 38-percent rise compared to the figure for the last year's Q1.

Meanwhile, some 8.4 million tons of goods valued at \$10.2 billion were also imported into the country in the said period to register a 34-percent rise in terms of value compared to the last year's same quarter.

In total, the Islamic Republic traded 38.4 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$20.9 billion with its trade partners in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year, up 25 percent and 50 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, Mir-Ashrafi said.

According to the official, the country's trade balance was \$476 million positive in the mentioned time span.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$3.1 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$2.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$1.3 billion, Turkey with \$595 million, and Afghanistan with \$570 million.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports during these two months were the UAE with \$3.2 billion, China with \$2.2 billion, Turkey with \$1 billion, Germany with \$414 million, and Switzerland with \$384 million worth of imports.

The official also noted that over 2,742



million tons of goods were transited through Iran in the said period, registering a 121-percent rise compared to the same period in the previous year.

The value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Mir-Ashrafi, Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, while that of import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

NATO has no answer for Russia’s now deployed hypersonic missiles: analyst

➔ **1** The Biden Administration is an extension of the Obama administration and it was under Obama that U.S.-Russian relations began to sour badly after Putin stopped the EU/NATO takeover of Ukraine.

That said, it’s clear that the recent summit between Putin and Biden changed the nature of the relationship because there is no solution to Ukraine that doesn’t involve a kinetic war NATO can’t win and Europe doesn’t want to spill out into a wider conflict.

So, now it looks to me that Europe wants better relations with Russia and Biden was there to negotiate a face-saving exit from Ukraine while pivoting its resources to focus more attention on China. U.S.-Russian relations won’t become anything close to good, but they won’t get any worse from here.

Russia says it chases British destroyer out of Crimea waters with warning shots. What are the implications of this development?

There are a lot of implications from this incident. The first is that it is clear there are forces within both the U.S. and British military-foreign policy establishment who are upset with any kind of rapprochement between Europe and Russia. For that matter there are a lot of EU members who are not happy about this either.

So, on the one hand NATO’s bluff was called over starting a hot war in Ukraine and on the other Biden is forming the so-called Bucharest 9 to act as the tip of the European spear to keep pressure on Russia from taking complete control over the Black Sea. Old habits die hard and the oligarchs. I like to call The Davos Crowd still want to maintain pressure on Russia without actually getting into a shooting war. But Putin is fully aware of this and, if his recent statements are any indication, he is, at best, amused by these impotent shows of force from fading powers like the UK.

Moreover, the UK is being hung out as the inconsolable child while Europe begins distancing themselves from such behavior to improve their image on the world stage. The biggest implication here is that the U.S. under Biden and the EU are united in making the British look like the aggressors.

Do you think the EU can approach Russia under U.S. pressure?

They already are. In my mind it was Davos and the EU who put the call into



Biden to sue for a tenuous peace with Russia. Biden called for the summit. It was strong influence by Davos that stage-managed the U.S. election to overthrow Trump and install Biden. So, watch what happens between Russia and the EU from that perspective and you can clearly see Biden doing whatever it is that Europe wants.

And in the near term, they wanted Nordstream 2 completed and some guarantees from Putin that gas would also still flow through Ukraine. The hawks within NATO and U.S. neoconservatives, like Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and personally in charge of U.S. policy in Eastern Europe still believe they can destabilize Russia’s neighbors like Belarus, Armenia and Georgia to keep Russia distracted and get Putin to back down in the Middle East (West Asia), but so far they have failed at every turn, other than getting Nikol Pashinyan miraculously re-elected in Armenia.

That situation will not, however, last long either.

How does Russia see NATO and its presence near itself? What are the main benefits of NATO for its members and the rest of the world?

NATO is Russia’s biggest threat. NATO has made this abundantly clear. Whether they do this simply to secure their annual budget or because of some deep-seated

animus towards Russia is open to debate. I think it’s a toxic combination of both, to be honest.

The problem is that NATO has no answer for Russia’s now deployed hypersonic missiles which, for all intents and purposes, nullifies NATO air capability in not only Eastern Europe but also in the whole of the Mediterranean. Now that Russia has deployed Kinzhal-capable SU-31k’s to Syria.

The main function of NATO at this point is to be the military arm of the European Union and the transnational globalists (The Davos Crowd) that control it. Under Biden there is no real foreign policy difference between them. What Davos wants from Biden Davos gets. And what they want is cheap energy for Europe from wherever they can get it and to make energy expensive for everyone else. This is in a vain attempt to now make Europe competitive on the world stage, which currently, it is not.

Nominally, they do this in the name of Climate Change but really it is all about economic and political control by super-seeding national governments.

Do you think Russia has been successful to form a coalition against the U.S.? For instance, with China and Iran.

In a word, yes. Putin has been very successful in securing Russia’s future domestically while also blowing open the

foreign policy lies of both Europe and the U.S. It has been the policy goal of the U.S. going back to the Nixon administration (if not earlier) to destroy Russian independence and bring its vast natural resource wealth under the control of Western financial entities.

Putin has very successfully and skillfully managed to thwart nearly every attack on Russia and place it in the position it is in now. Today Russia is the primary diplomatic power in the Middle East (West Asia). It controls the marginal barrel of oil production, in essence dictating terms to OPEC+ while also stitching together central Asia with oil and gas pipelines and power generation stations, nuclear or otherwise, to change the complexion of the entire Asian continent for the next century.

In doing so he has finally broken the West’s obsession with the philosophy of 19th-century British thinker Halford Mackinder who believed that the Heartland – central Asia – was the key to controlling the world economy. If the British could not control it then no one could.

Mackinder’s ideas became the Brzezinski Doctrine of the 1970s and ’80s and the Wolfowitz Doctrine of the turn of the century. It’s this thinking that put the British in Afghanistan in the 19th century and the U.S. there in the 21st.

The key to this was keeping Russia weak, divided and constantly warring against itself and its neighbors. Putin has systematically secured Russia’s borders, rebuilt its military and diplomatic presence and balanced the country’s books to the point where it is nearly immune to the ebbs and flows of global capital created by Western central banks.

Its partnerships with Iran and China are designed, in my opinion, to have a rising tide lift all boats while at the same time keeping both Europe and the U.S., despite their hostility from imploding completely in case anyone else, possibly China, gets any ideas about replacing the U.S.-European conglomeration with their own.

That’s also why I think Putin took the meeting with Biden, to begin the process of de-escalating dangerous situations which could easily lead to a global conflict that kills tens of millions.

Let’s hope that everyone involved in the folly that was the buildup to war in Ukraine now properly understands this point.

Clean your own house first before preaching to others

➔ **1** What did the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report suggest?

- * 94 different recommendations aimed at reconciliation of a ‘broken country’
- * Action and no apologies.
- * Social, cultural, political and economic changes ‘that benefit aboriginal peoples’

So, what has Trudeau’s government done to reconcile? Experts say only nine of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report’s 94 calls to action have been fully implemented.

According to survivors and political parties in parliament; the government has apologized but not much more.

In fact, since 2013, the government has spent millions of dollars in court fees fighting against compensation for survivors of the St. Anne’s Residential School in Ottawa.

What makes this particular case more disturbing, is that this money (In November 2020, an alarming CBC report said it had reached \$3.2 million) was spent on court fees to hide documents and heavily censor more than 12,000 released documents. As one former pupil, Evelyn Korkmaz said:

‘I’m so disgusted with the Canadian government... spending \$3.2 million to hide documents... what are in these documents that they are trying to hide?’

At the time, the New Democratic Party said releasing the documents would ‘blow apart’ Trudeau’s reconciliation agenda.

It remains unclear if the government knew all along about the location of the graves.

However, today the government is still fighting indigenous people in multiple legal battles. Something that had been strongly denounced.

What is the situation like for the indigenous people in Canada today?

According to multiple prominent human rights groups, systemic and longstanding discrimination against the natives continues across Canada. For example, despite being a rich country, water supplies to indigenous regions are contaminated; resulting in deadly diseases. Anywhere else in Canada, if you turn

on the tap, you are protected by safe drinking water.

Violence against indigenous women and children is wide-scale.

Lack of religious freedom, such as a 2019 Quebec provincial law that bans individuals from different faiths (natives/non-native civil servants) from wearing religious symbols at work.

- * The indigenous people also suffer from
- * Poorer health
- * Lower education levels
- * Inadequate housing, crowded living conditions
- * Lower-income levels
- * Higher unemployment rates
- * Higher incarceration levels
- * Higher suicide rates

How can Canada restore the Human Rights of the native people of the land?

For a start, if only 9 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report’s 94 recommendations have been implemented in full; that leaves some 84 concrete measures for the government to prove it is serious about human rights. Why hasn’t the government implemented the other 84 recommendations, would that not at least be a goodwill gesture, considering the mass crimes committed.

What are the latest developments on the residential school’s discoveries?

The tally of children buried near churches is rising. At the time of writing some 1,150 human remains have been found nearby at least three former residential schools in a matter of weeks. It’s the native groups themselves that are leading the way in the discoveries using ground-penetrating radar systems. The graves are unmarked and many say this is just the tip of the iceberg. More than 130 similar compulsory boarding schools had been jointly operated by the churches and the government. There is mounting anger across Canada over the gruesome findings. Statues of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth second have been toppled. Other symbols of these institutions have also been vandalized. The annual Canada Day celebrations, that mark a confederation were muted as the world watches on in horror. Over the past couple of days,

churches have been set ablaze.

Why did the discovery of children’s remains make Canada finally believe that it committed Genocide?

These are indeed disturbing facts. Critics would argue that what one preaches and lectures to others doesn’t necessarily mean that one is upholding those standards. If Canada doesn’t care about the indigenous people of its own land, the world will find it difficult to believe it cares about people in other countries. Take Yemen as an example, which the United Nations says is facing the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. Children are starving to death over there. Partially because of Saudi Arabia’s almost daily airstrikes and partially because of Saudi Arabia’s all-out land, air and sea blockade on its southern neighbor. Yet, Canada is one of the few remaining Western countries that has rejected pleas by the international community to end arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Canada is killing children outside its borders as well. Profit from arms sale over civilian lives.

So, what now?

There have been calls for the Church, which ran these institutions, and the colonizing government, that funded them to open a joint investigation into the matter. That is of course, as many have pointed out, ludicrous. How can the two perpetrators (who are now absurdly blaming each other) probe an atrocity they committed. What if Canada, in its attempts since 1867 to become a White-only society, also buried any black people residing in the land at the time.

This is not ancient history either, the last school closed in 1996. An international investigative committee must take the lead. It must visit the sites; it must question all those involved who are still alive. It must speak to the families of the victims. In an ideal world, the case must be taken to the international criminal court, but as we know, with the exception of Serbia, that institution is reserved for African nations. No amount of government compensation will bring back the dead children nor take away the scars of the survivors. A visit by the Pope to Canada to apologize? Sounds good on paper but again, for many of the victims, they have had enough words of apologies. They are demanding accountability; at the end of the day this was genocide.

Russian diplomat noted.

“Throughout the entire period of the crisis, especially after our military contingent was dispatched to Syria at the request of the legitimate government, we have been encouraging, even through our contacts on the ground, direct relations between Kurdish representatives and Damascus so that they could begin talks on how to live together in their country,” Lavrov said.

coherent positions.

“We are ready to encourage contacts and consultations but the sides need to have coherent positions,” he said on Friday, while warning that the Americans were pushing a considerable part of the Syrian Kurds towards separatism.

“I hope very much that those Kurds, who are interested in normalizing relations with Damascus, understand the provocative nature and see a big danger here,” the top

Dozens killed in Philippines military plane crash

At least 31 people have died and 50 survivors have been taken to hospital after a military plane transporting troops crashed in the southern Philippines, officials said.

At least 92 people, most of them army personnel, were on board the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft when it crashed as it tried to land on Jolo Island in Sulu province around midday on Sunday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in a statement.

According to the military, the three pilots who were onboard the aircraft survived the crash but were seriously injured.

Earlier, General Cirilito Sobejana told reporters that at least 40 people have been rescued from the burning wreckage of the C-130. “Responders are at the site now. We are praying we can save more lives,” Sobejana said. “It’s very unfortunate. The plane missed the runway, and it was trying to regain power but failed and crashed.”

Israeli cargo ship attacked by ‘unknown weapon’ in Indian Ocean

A fire has broken out on an Israeli-owned cargo ship after it was struck by an “unidentified weapon” in the northern Indian Ocean, a report says.

The Israeli vessel was on route to the coast of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) when it was attacked, Lebanon’s al-Mayadeen television network reported on Saturday, citing reliable but unnamed sources.

They further told al-Mayadeen that the commercial vessel “was anchored in the [Saudi] port of Jeddah before moving toward the coasts of the UAE”, stressing that “no one has yet claimed responsibility for this attack so far.”

While the vessel is reported to be Israeli-owned, the regime’s sources say the ship’s crew is not from Israel.

The ship was identified as Tyndall, a Liberian-flagged cargo ship which is under partial Israeli ownership.

Separately, Israel’s N12 Television News, citing unnamed sources within the regime’s ministry of military affairs, reported that the crew was not hurt and the vessel was not badly damaged. Israeli media say the vessel was possibly hit by a missile, claiming that Iran was behind the incident.

Back in February, an Israeli-owned ship was hit by an explosion in the sea of Oman. In April, another Israeli ship came under attack off the coast of the UAE.

Hamas: Evacuation of Israeli settler outpost shows power of resistance

The Gaza-based Hamas movement has welcomed the departure of settlers from an illegal outpost south of the West Bank city of Nablus, saying it reflects the ability of the Palestinian resistance to impose the will of the nation on Israel.

Speaking on Saturday, Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem said the Palestinians “scored a new and important achievement” by “forcing” the settlers to leave the Evyatar outpost.

“The evacuation of the outpost at Jabal Sabih confirms once again the ability of the resistance to impose the will of our people and push the occupation to retreat,” he added, urging the Palestinians to continue their fight “until the end of any Zionist presence” in the area and to prevent the settlers from returning.

The pure blood of the Palestinian people shed in the region is a guarantee for their complete victory against Israel, Qassem said.

He further called for a resurgence of the Palestinian resistance to settlement construction activities in the West Bank.

On Friday afternoon, Evyatar settlers left the outpost some two months after they first arrived there. It is located on a land that has historically been part of the Palestinian villages of Beita, Kablan and Yatma.

The evacuation came in accordance with a compromise struck recently with the Tel Aviv regime.

Under the deal, which was approved by prime minister Naftali Bennett and minister of military affairs Benny Gantz, the settlers are required to leave the outpost, but their houses will remain in place as the regime re-examines the status of the occupied land.

The deal also stipulates that an army post should be established at the hilltop site.

The area near the outpost has witnessed repeated clashes in recent weeks between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators.

As the evacuation of Evyatar was underway, dozens of Palestinian protesters sustained injuries after inhaling smoke and tear gas.

According to Press TV, Beita deputy mayor Musa Hamayel said a total of five Palestinians had been killed and many others wounded during protests against the outpost.

“Today, the residents of Beita feel victorious. But this is just the beginning, and not the end of our activities,” he said.

Resistance News

Euro-Med: 91% of Gaza children traumatized due to Israeli attack

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**—he Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor reported that 91% of children in the Gaza Strip suffer psychological trauma following the latest Israeli aggression on the Strip.

The report stated that 9 out of 10 children in the Gaza Strip suffer some form of conflict-related trauma about a month after the end of the Israeli military attack on Gaza.

The Euro-Med Monitor said that during the aggression, Israel carried out disproportionate attacks against densely-populated residential neighborhoods, with a majority population of children and women up to 75%.

It pointed out that 66 children were killed during the Israeli attack on Gaza and at least 470 children were injured, including injuries that will mark permanent or long-term disabilities.

“241 children lost one or both parents as a result of the bombing, almost 5,400 children lost their homes and 42,000 children had their homes partially damaged”, the report underlined.

Furthermore, 72,000 children were displaced to UNRWA schools or relatives’ homes during the Israeli attack while more than 4,000 children currently remain displaced, according to the Euro-Med Monitor.

Israel launched an aggression on Gaza which lasted for 11 days, between 10 to 21 May, 2021. The attack resulted in the death and injury of thousands of Palestinians.

Syrian Kurds say ready to talk with Damascus government

The so-called Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, commonly known as Rojava, has said it is open to negotiations with the Syrian government which is in the final stages of purging foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants.

The foreign relations department of Rojava, in a statement issued on Saturday, responded positively to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov’s request for negotiations with the Damascus government,

Kurdish Hawar news agency reported.

“The Syrian crisis can only be resolved through dialogue and a Syrian-Syrian understanding,” the statement read, adding that Syrian Kurds will make every effort to achieve such a goal, including talks with Damascus.

The report came a day after Lavrov said Moscow is ready to facilitate dialogue between Damascus and the Syrian Kurds provided that both sides stick to

coherent positions.

“We are ready to encourage contacts and consultations but the sides need to have coherent positions,” he said on Friday, while warning that the Americans were pushing a considerable part of the Syrian Kurds towards separatism.

“I hope very much that those Kurds, who are interested in normalizing relations with Damascus, understand the provocative nature and see a big danger here,” the top

Restoration of historical Hosseinieh in Yazd begins

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A project has started for the restoration of a Hosseinieh – a place where Shia Muslims come together to observe religious ceremonies – in the historical texture of the city of Yazd, central Iran.

The project involves strengthening the Fahadan Hosseinieh using cob materials, and repairing walls and the structure’s façade, Yazd tourism chief Mohammadreza Falahati said on Friday.

There are two stories to the monument, with the exception of the western side which consists of three stories. On the northern and southern sides are seven halls with dome-shaped arches, and on the western side there are two minarets, the official added.



Fahadan Hosseinieh (or Hussainiya) was inscribed on the national heritage list in 1999.

With grief-stricken hearts, millions of the faithful across Iran along with their fellow Shia Muslims worldwide hold massive mourning ceremonies in the lunar month of Muharram to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), third Shia Imam and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Yazd Muharram’s rituals are well-known countrywide and have been held for centuries in a fixed style, which hundreds of men, all clad in black, congregate in Hosseiniehs to beat on their chests according to the rhythm of a sung eulogy. During recent years the ceremonies have been broadcast live on different IRIB channels and have been welcomed by people in other provinces.

Yazd, the cradle of Zoroastrianism, is now one of the unavoidable points of Islamic Iran. Home to thousands of small and big mosques and Hosseiniehs, Yazd has earned the title “Iran’s and world’s Hosseinieh”.

With an area of 945 hectares, the historical texture of Yazd is the only urban texture in the country, whose original mud-brick body is preserved and social life is going on inside it.

In July 2017, the historical texture of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

With its winding lanes, a forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to as a ‘don’t miss’ destination by almost all travel associates in the region.

Yazd Jameh Mosque, Dowlatabad Garden, the Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e Yazd, Towers of Silence, and adjacent desert landscape are among its tourist sites.

Ancient ‘pigeon towers’ to turn into traditional restaurant

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



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

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

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

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

Rolling babies in roses: an ancient ritual bringing blessings to families

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – One of the sweetest and most exhilarating rituals being practiced in the north-central province of Semnan is Gol Ghaltan (literally meaning rolling in flowers), which is believed to be a symbol of bringing blessings to the family of a newborn.

The custom goes back to an old Iranian myth called ‘The Smiling Flower’, in which pure and holy humans promised the birth of a child.

People in this region believe that rolling babies among the roses gives them joy and refreshment while keeping them untainted and free from diseases. The freshness of the petals saves the baby’s skin, allowing them to stay happy.

Babies are rolled in the petals of very sweet-smelling kinds of flowers, best known as Mohammadi roses, in the first spring of their lives, mostly in the city of Amirieh, Damghan county, where it may be found among the cutest of rituals.

In spring, when the pink roses bloom in the area, when gardeners, people, and tourists are getting ready for the rosewater



distillation festival, commonly known as “Golab-giri”, female members of the families, mainly the baby’s mother, grandmothers, and aunts perform the Gol Ghaltan ceremony.

Days before the ceremony, the women go to the rose gardens early in the morning and pick and collect the flowers while

reciting poems and verses of the Quran. The petals are then separated and poured into a light, white cloth.

On the day of the ceremony, one of the grandmothers takes the baby to the bath. Baby’s hands are sometimes painted with henna in some regions. As the baby is dried, he/she is placed among the flowers on the cloth, and petals are poured on the babies, wishing them health and long life.

Women thereafter take four sides of the sheet and roll the baby among the petals while reciting religious songs and waving the sheet back and forth, believing the soul will be cleansed and the child will be kept healthy and fresh.

Guests place their gifts near the cloth after the baby was placed on the floor. As the ceremony concludes, sweets and tea are served.

When the ceremony is over, mothers dry the petals by placing them in shade to keep them for the future, placing the dried petals in their future prayer rugs.

The ritual was inscribed on the national intangible cultural heritage list in 2010.

Saint Mary Church in Shiraz undergoes restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Centuries-old Armenian Church of Saint Mary in Shiraz, the southern province of Fars, has undergone some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

A budget of 1.4 billion rials (\$34,500 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, which aims to keep the historical monument from being destroyed, CHTN quoted Jamshid Moeini as saying on Sunday.

The project involves strengthening the rooftop as well as replacing the worn-out materials and repairing the roof gutters, the official added.

The restoration project is scheduled to come to an end by the end of the summer, he noted.

Located in the historical neighborhood of Sang-e Siah (Black Stone), the church was built in 1662. Built in 1816, the two-story building next to the church was added to this Armenian religious complex.

One of the most distinguishing aspects of this church’s architecture is its non-ornamental quadrangle exterior, in which there is no indication that an actual church existed, however, its dome-shaped interior can be seen from inside the hall.

The paintings of the ceiling are drawn with a unique angle that induces visitors to think they are standing under a dome, even though the ceiling is flat.

The prayer hall of the church is one of Shiraz’s oldest

and finest buildings from the 17th century, built by both Christian and Muslim architects.

Plasterwork in the church can be considered a masterpiece of its time.

Armenians of Shiraz claim that the church has been damaged twice in the past century by earthquakes, which were restored most closely to its original state.

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 the UNESCO-registered 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.



Shiraz 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 in order to materialize the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.

The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

Persian handicrafts: Mirrorwork

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Mirrorwork is the art of creating regular shapes using small or large pieces of mirror mosaics, and is used as a decorative element in interior spaces.

A mirrorwork does not only enhance the decorations of architecture but does also illuminate the space by multiplying the light reflections.

Due to the discovery of many glass artifacts dating back to the Parthian and Sassanid dynasties, it has been argued that glasswork has been practiced for a long time.

Symbols of purity, fortune, truth and light, mirrors, and water have long been associated with Iranian culture.

Mirrorwork gained popularity in the 19th



century. Germany made mirror vases for Iran, which were thereafter shipped to that country. Vases could be cut into mosaics in any form desired by the Iranians and

used accordingly.

Mirrorwork was typically built with one-piece mirror panels at the beginning, for instance, the Chehel Sotoun (literally Forty Columns) Palace in Isfahan.

In the past, it used to be possible to see the reflection of people passing through an entrance due to the large mirror placed over one of the entrances. Gradually, however, the pieces became smaller.

By the end of the 19th century, mirrors were formed into small triangles, diamonds, or hexagons. Iranian architects also used convex glasses that were turned into mirrors.

While the architects of the Qajar dynasty followed the trends common to the Safavid dynasty, a new style of architecture emerged.

New cultural elements in southwest Iran added to national list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A total of 11 cultural elements, which are passed down from generation to generation in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, have recently been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Saturday announced the inscriptions in an official document it submitted to the governor-general of the southwestern province, CHTN reported.

The talent of making local foods such as Kangari Ash, Changal, and Dango as well as the skill of making two traditional flatbreads of Sholsholi and Bolboli were among the items added to the prestigious list.

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



Oghabkooh: A spectacular attraction in Yazd



ago, however, an igneous rock mass in the northern hillside of Shirkooh extremely influenced the form of Oghabkooh and the wind blow over time, especially from the Badasaman mountain, in the north, played a crucial role in formation of the eagle shape of this mountain.

Being included in the index of Iran National Heritages from 1396 SH, Oghabkooh is placed in the neighborhood of Farashah village that is called Eslamieh. Eslmaieh village is placed on the northern hillside of Shirkooh, close to Oghabkooh, ten kilometers to Taft and thirty kilometers to Yazd city. People of this tourism village are mostly occupied with agriculture, gardening and livestock.

Although Oghabkooh is 2018 meters higher than sea level, the height of its main rock is about 140 meters. This beautiful rock was originated from the heart of the earth made of lime and garnet stone.

Rainfall and water penetration into the lime structure of the mountain have led to formation of some holes that have become the refuge of some wildlife species. On the other hand, the existence of lime prevents

growth of plants on the mountain.

The northwest hillside of Oghabkooh has a gentle slope. The height of the mountain in heart of the plain and desert made it a proper place for holding some rituals and formation of some historical symbols such as Temple of Moobedan-e Firooz and watchtower of Chil-e Eslamieh in the surrounding areas.

Tamehr spring located thirteen kilometers east of Oghabkooh and Elamieh cave in a distance of thirty kilometers are other neighboring attractions. Also Dargahan and Loso waterfalls, Tarzjan snow house, Sanij, Nir, Bidakhoid, Sakhoid and Zardin countryside, gardens, palm fields, Badamestan cave, Eslamieh fort, Kaht door, watermill of Eslamieh, Pir-e Chak Chak and the 1500-year-old plane of Qadamgah mosque are other attractions.

Knowledge-based firms develop 772 nano-products

→ 1 A total of 294 companies have developed these products, of which 234 have been active in product development and 60 in device development.

The field of “civil engineering and construction” with 20 percent had the largest share among nano products and devices, followed by “medicine, health” and “industrial services and supplies” each with 13 percent share.

Commercialized nanoproducts

Ali Asghar Najimi, the director of the industry group of the Nanotechnology Development Council announced on June 25 that currently, 750 approved nano products are sold in the market; by the end of this year, about 250 more products will be added to the commercialized nano products.

There are two main programs for the commercialization of nano products; The first one is the “Technology Supply” program, which supports start-ups and technologists to develop new products; and the second program is related to the demand, which is accompanied by helping to meet the needs of industries and challenges of the country by using nanotechnology.

Last year (March 2020- March 2021),



some 60 projects in nanotechnology were successful, which saved about \$30 million in foreign currency, he highlighted.

Pointing out that so far about 80 large industrial companies have used nano products, he added that by 2025, more

than 200 large industrial companies will use nanotechnology to improve efficiency and productivity.

Iran among five pioneers of nanotechnology

Iran has been introduced as the 4th

leading country in the world in the field of nanotechnology, publishing 11,546 scientific articles in 2020.

The country held a 6 percent share of the world's total nanotechnology articles, according to StatNano's monthly evaluation accomplished in WoS databases.

Iran ranked 43rd among the 100 most vibrant clusters of science and technology (S&T) worldwide for the third consecutive year, according to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020 report.

The country experienced a three-level improvement compared to 2019.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, has said that Iran is playing the leading role in the region in the fields of fintech, ICT, stem cell, aerospace, and is unrivaled in artificial intelligence.

Iranian nanotechnology companies have increased sales by 100 percent over the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020), and it is predicted that their revenue will reach up to 80 trillion rials (nearly \$1.9 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), Sattari announced.

Damavand volcano activities: The hazards and opportunities

By Prof Mehdi Zare

On the first day of summer 2021, an amateur video went viral on social media showing steam coming out of the summit of Damavand volcano (5671m height, 80km NE of Tehran).

The narration in that video had expressed concern about the possibility and signs of the activation of Damavand volcano. At the end of that short video, it is stated that “we hope that Damavand volcano will not be activated because it will have dire consequences.”

Of course, a series of organizational and expert comments were published, some of which basically denied that the Damavand volcanic system was active! But it was not clear what is the concept of the activity of a volcanic system like Damavand, volcanic eruptions and related processes directly and indirectly.

The volcanic material eventually decomposes to form the most fertile soils on earth, and cultivation in these soils has produced abundant food and nurtured civilizations. Civilization has developed in Mazandaran province on the Caspian Sea shorelines and its fertile plains under the direct and indirect influence of Damavand volcano.

Internal heat from young volcanic systems is the major producer of geothermal energy. Damavand is the most important geothermal energy potential of Iran. Most of the world's mined metal minerals - such as copper, gold, silver, lead and zinc - are found in magmas found deep in ancient volcanoes such as Damavand.

Damavand stratovolcano is located 70 km south of the Caspian Sea. Over the last 600,000 years, a young cone has been created next to its old cone; the remains of an old cone seen as a semicircular wall, or part of a super cup north of the new cone in the direction of Gazanak Valley.

Old Damavand protrudes in Gazanak (or Gazaneh) valley from Haraz Road to the Takht Freydyoun climbing camp and under Yakhar Glacier east of Damavand peak. The sulfur rich volcanic rocks in yellow, orange and red colors can be seen in Vana next to Haraz Road. These rocks and the resulting soil are full of sulfides that emit the smell of sulfur due to weathering and also produce natural sulfuric acid.

The outer igneous rocks at the summit are protruding with radial lava flows. Lava spraying in the events of the great explosion of about 280,000 years



ago created the older, northern cone. The youngest eruption about 7,300 years ago created new lava flows, especially in the newer cone (south of the Gazanak Valley). Hot springs in Larijan, Baijan, Ab-e-Ask and Gazanak are important symbols of modern activity in Damavand cone and volcanic system.

In the north of Bayjan, which is higher than 4000 meters in terms of elevation, I have studied the landslides next to Kahrout village, representative for the large blocks and debris slides that have been moved from about 1 km higher. The major earthquakes of 28 March 1830 AD in Damavand, with an estimated magnitude of 7.0, and 11 April 1935 in Kesout, east-central Alborz with a magnitude of 6.8, and 2 July 1957 in Sangchal, south of Amol with a magnitude of 7.0 have been the triggering cause for some of the major landslides along Damavand Volcano flanks.

Along Haraz valley and around Damavand peak, major landslide of Lasem (located between Polour and Ab-e-Ask) due to the eruption of Damavand peak 7,300 years ago and lava flow blocked Haraz valley and created Large Lasem lake. Today the Lasem lake sediments might be visited around Lasem road.

There are large sulfurous stone blocks at the top of Damavand. The diameter of the summit crater is 150m in which there is usually small frozen lake with 40 meters wide.

The last eruption was set at 7,300 years ago, but some evidences suggest magmatic activity between 2,000 and 3,000 years ago. The volcanoes having at

least one eruption in last 10,000 years are considered “active”. Therefore, Damavand volcano is also active. Additional studies on the physical and chemical properties of hot springs, changes in the depth and volume of magma, and geophysical studies such as magnetometric studies are needed to determine how lava moves, and in particular how the earth's surface rises. Therefore, there is a possibility of re-explosion and re-eruption.

Of course, new evidence of an imminent eruption has not yet been recorded. Evidence of activities in Damavand system since 2008 and seismic monitoring and other evidence of Damavand surface dynamics show that lava in the Damavand magmatic chamber may have moved to depths of less than 3000 meters.

One of the most obvious signs of permanent activity in the Damavand system is the presence of the hot springs of Bayjan and Strabakuh (Star-Abad-Kuh) in the Haraz Valley.

A magnitude 5.1 earthquake in Damavand, 5 km north of Damavand, on the Mosha fault at midnight on May 8, 2020, local time, caused widespread panic among residents of Tehran, parts of Mazandaran and Semnan. The epicenter was reported just 10 kilometers south of Damavand peak, with a depth of 14 kilometers.

The study of earthquakes of the last decade has shown that the highest seismicity is recorded on the eastern part of Mosha fault at a depth of 6 to 15 km and has an interesting adaptation to the magmatic chamber of Damavand volcano. Therefore, the interaction on the eastern part of the Mosha fault is related to the activities inside the Damavand magmatic chamber.

On the southern, eastern and western flanks of Damavand Volcano, especially in the east of the summit, the pumice minerals have spread up to 20 km. Explosive eruptions determine the shape of Damavand slopes, and villages on volcanic flanks are built on lava flows. In the event of any future eruption of Damavand, the volcanic ashes will spread on the slopes of the peak to Tehran in the southwest of the peak, and to Baladeh in the Noor Valley and in the center of Central Alborz in the northwest. Some of the recent studies, of course, show that in a large eruption, volcanic material will spread further east of the peak and could spread to the eastern Alborz mountains, and dust and volcanic ash may arrive as far north as Damghan in the east of Semnan Province.

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → E

Rainfall increases Lake Urmia level

Recent rainfall has increased the level of Lake Urmia to 1,271 meters, a step closer to its ecological level of 1,274 meters.

The lake is expected to reach its ecological level within 10 years by completing the restoration plans which started four years ago. Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province, said that the Lake's level is now 58 cm higher than it was last year.

According to the latest monitoring, the lake's water volume is estimated at more than 3.6 billion cubic meters.

He added that the lake surface area has reached 2,883 square kilometers, adding that the figure is increased by 538 square kilometers compared to the same period last year.

Although the ecological level of the lake is defined as 1,274 meters, the lake will also have favorable conditions at 1,272 meters and more than 90 percent of sand and dust storm hotspots will be eliminated.

افزایش سطح تراز دریاچه ارومیه بر اثر بارش

بارش های اخیر تراز فعلی دریاچه ارومیه را به یک هزار و ۲۷۱ متر و ۳۸ سانتی متر رسانده است که در حال رسیدن به تراز اکولوژیک یک هزار و ۲۷۴ متر است.

به گزارش ایرنا، فرهاد سرخوش رییس دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه گفت سطح دریاچه ارومیه اکنون ۵۸ سانتی متر بیشتر از زمان مشابه سال گذشته است. طبق آخرین پایش صورت گرفته حجم آب این دریاچه بیش از سه میلیارد و ۶۷۰ میلیون مترمکعب برآورد شده است.

وی با بیان اینکه وسعت دریاچه ارومیه در حال حاضر به بیش از ۲ هزار و ۸۸۳ کیلومتر مربع رسیده، اضافه کرد: وسعت این دریاچه نیز نسبت به سال گذشته ۵۳۸ کیلومتر مربع افزایش دارد. هرچند تراز یک هزار و ۲۷۴ متر به عنوان ارتفاع اکولوژیک دریاچه ارومیه اعلام شده ولی این دریاچه در تراز یک هزار و ۲۷۲ متر هم شرایط مطلوب خواهد داشت و بیش از ۹۵ درصد کانون های ریزگرد آن رفع خواهد شد.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. July 3

New cases	13,781
New deaths	165
Total cases	3,254,818
Total deaths	84,792
New hospitalized patients	1,295
Patients in critical condition	3,229
Total recovered patients	2,926,266
Diagnostic tests conducted	23,967,488
Doses of vaccine injected	6,451,945

Road crash mortality increases by 31%

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Traffic-related accidents have claimed the lives of 2,596 Iranians during the first two months of this year (March 21- May 21), which shows an increase of 31 percent compared to the same period last year, according to the Legal Medicine Organization.

In the aforementioned period, the highest casualty rates were related to provinces of Fars, Sistan-Baluchestan, Tehran, respectively, and the lowest to Ilam, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, and North Khorasan.

Some 46,798 people were injured in traffic accidents and referred to forensic medicine centers, which increased by 30.2 percent compared to the same period last year.

Of the total casualties of the accidents, 34,386 were men and 12,412 were women.



One person dies in a road accident every half hour in Iran, taking the annual death toll to 17,000, the Legal Medicine Organization announced on July 1.

According to Majlis [Iranian parliament] Research Center, the costs of road crashes amount to 8 percent of Iran's gross domestic product.

Car crashes responsible for 1.3m deaths annually

According to the World Health Organization, every year the lives of approximately 1.3 million people are cut short as a result of a road traffic crash. Between 20 and 50 million more people suffer non-fatal injuries, with many incurring a disability as a result of their injury.

Road traffic injuries cause considerable economic losses to individuals, their families, and to nations as a whole. Road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product.

More than half of all road traffic deaths are among vulnerable road users including, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

Some 93% of the world's fatalities on the roads occur in low- and middle-income countries, even though these countries have approximately 60 percent of the world's vehicles.

Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29 years.

COVID-19 screening for 424,000 passengers at borders

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 424,395 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the country's official borders since March 10, Mehdi Valipour, head of Relief and Rescue Organization affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), has stated.

During the aforesaid period, IRCS forces have screened 424,395 passengers, 39,348 of whom with symptoms underwent PCR and 55,114 rapid tests, he said, YJC reported on Sunday.

He went on to lament that some 116 individuals, who tested positive, have so far been temporarily quarantined, under a plan to rapidly identify suspected cases of coronavirus and prevent the spread of new UK strain.



Some 471 members of the IRCS cooperate for carrying out the plan in 16 provinces across the country, Valipour concluded.

With the cooperation of ministries of health and transport, a plan is being implemented with the goal of rapidly identifying and testing incoming passengers and keeping them in quarantine facilities, if necessary.

Thirty border checkpoints have been selected, including 18 land borders, nine air borders, and three sea borders, all incoming passengers will be tested and referred to the quarantine facilities in case of necessity.

Around 8,000 individuals enter the country via borders on a daily basis.

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■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
info@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
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Zip Code: 1599814713



Be generous but not extravagant, be frugal but not miserly.

Imam Ali (AS)

Art, architecture during Qajar period

Part 4

Parts only of two of Nasser ad-Din Shah's palaces, Eshratbad and Saltanatabad constructed in the 1880s, have survived. Their plan shows that the symmetry of Fath-Ali Shah's buildings had been abandoned and that certain European influences were introduced.

Eshratbad's main surviving structure is the multistoried turret of Nasser ad-Din Shah's own apartments comparable to the Sham ul-Emareh of the Golestan palace.

Grouped around a lake were seventeen single-storied chalets (only six survive today), which served as the andarun apartments. This same asymmetry is also seen at Saltanatabad, where the two surviving units are a three-storied rectangular building and a pavilion with a polygonal turret.

Winter and summer residences were also adopted by private citizens sufficiently wealthy to afford them. Enough town houses survive to enable the principles of their architecture to be deduced. They were approached by a discreet entrance that could be centered as in the Narenjestan at Shiraz built about 1875 or could be situated at one side as in the Hosseinie-ye Amini of Qazvin built between 1873 and 1878.

Entrances led via vestibules or corridors into open rectangular or square courts with central pools and water channels and rooms constructed in the walls.

Each house had two courts, the biruni and andaruni. The biruni was usually the most lavish in scale and decoration, with rooms grouped according to function.

There was always a columned talar along one side leading into a reception area flanked by smaller rooms on each side and opening out of one another. Blocks of rooms on the other sides of the court included both living and kitchen quarters.

Such houses also had basements reached from the court by short flights of steps. The summer house, set within a garden concealed from the outside by a brick wall, could therefore present a more inviting external appearance; the Bagh-e Eram built at Shiraz about 1875 is a good example of this.

As in Fath-Ali Shah's Qasr-e Qajar, it is enclosed in a large terraced garden intersected by water channels, which leads up to the two-storied house with a columned talar and a roof faced by three semicircular pediments.

The remaining examples of non-religious architecture may be grouped together as public buildings mainly concentrated in urban commercial quarters. Long intersecting domed streets lined with shops on either side were built as new bazaars or were added as extensions to existing ones; for example the 18th-century Bazar-e Vakil of Shiraz was extended on the north by the Bazar-e Now and crossed on the south by the Bazar-e Moshir.

Bazaar areas were also furnished with hammams, or public baths, whose appearance was usually advertised by a doorway decorated in colorful tilework (for example, the hammam of Semnan built in the 1880s has panels of tiles depicting soldiers on each side of the doorway).

Hammam construction varied in detail but was essentially based on a vaulted central chamber containing a pool leading into a series of secondary rooms.

The last examples of non-religious architecture are the gates that pierced the brick walls encircling Persian cities. Few of the distinctive, gaudily tiled Qajar gates have survived; the best-known examples are the north gate at Semnan built in 1884, the Darb-e Kushk and the Darvaze-ye Qazvin in Tehran, and the Darvaze-ye Bagh-e Mellî of Tehran built in 1922.

The first three are constructed with three entries surrounded by semicircular pediments and separated by minaret-like engaged columns. The Tehran gate of 1922 retains the triple entry but has abandoned the semicircular pediment in favor of a horizontal lintel.

Architectural decoration

Tilework

Both religious and secular architecture owed much of its impact to decoration. One of the most frequently employed techniques was polychrome ceramic tilework, mainly produced in Tehran, Shiraz, and Isfahan.

Three basic techniques were used: mosaic with geometrical designs worked in square or rectangular pieces of turquoise, white, yellow, and black tile; overglaze-painted cuerda seca with increasingly elaborate patterns painted in a vivid palette of pink, purple, yellow, shades of blue, green, and orange in a meticulous enameled style; and underglaze painting, with a more subtle arrangement of colors modified by the use of black for shading and outlining, used only from about 1880 onward.

Tilework was used to emphasize structure. This is particularly noticeable in religious architecture, where bands and panels of tilework decorated the entrance and ayvans of mosques and madrasas. In Fath-Ali Shah's buildings mosaic and cuerda seca techniques are blended harmoniously; mosaic panels in fine geometric patterns were used to outline verticals, adorn the facets of moqarnas, and also to surface domes.

Cuerda seca tiles in graceful compositions, including rose and iris motifs and arabesque foliage, were used to cover arch spandrels and surfaces where bands and panels of clear pattern would be seen to best effect.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Doc “Wot Bassey” delves into customs of Kazakhs in Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Mahsa Taheri has directed a documentary entitled “Wot Bassey” (“Patriarch”) that spotlights the customs of the people of Kazakh origin living in the northeastern Iranian province of Golestan.

The film has been produced at the Owj Arts and Media Organization, a major institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema.

The documentary premiered at a theater in Gorgan, the capital of Golestan Province, as Kazakh consul Idjan Idashev and a large number of Kazakhs in the city attended the screening.

He said that Kazakhstan gained independence from the Soviet Union about 30 years ago and has close relations with Iran.

“It is an amazing movie that intends to tell us not to forget our national traditions and customs,” the consul stated after watching the film.

“Wot Bassey” will surely be warmly welcomed in Kazakhstan as people in the film speak in the Kazakh language, with



Gorgan-based Kazakh people attend a screening of the documentary “Wot Bassey” about their customs in Iran in the northeastern Iranian city of Gorgan on July 3, 2021.

which, I imagine, the Kazakh people readily communicate,” he added.

He said that the Kazakh people and Iranians coexist peacefully in Golestan Province and noted that his country is seeking closer relations with Iran.

An Owj official, Nasser Naderi, also attended the screening of the documentary and expressed his thanks to those who helped produce the film.

“We feel proud of making documentaries to introduce subcultures in various Iranian provinces,” he added.

“Wot Bassey” is full of love and beauty. It features affection and the Kazakh youth who are planning to marry in the near future, and I hope they observe their national traditions,” he noted.

The Owj Arts and Media Organization has produced many acclaimed movies over the past five years.

Seven productions from the organization, the animated adventure film “Dolphin Boy” by Mohammad Kheirandish and the spy movie “The Government Expediency” by Hossein Darabi, were screened at the 39th Fajr Film Festival.

Tehran Intl. Short Film Festival joins Oscar qualifying fests

to the Oscars late last week. Meanwhile, there are few festivals in Asia having this honor, for example, Egypt in North Africa and Japan, South Korea, Singapore and India are the sole countries having Oscar qualifying festivals,” said IYCS director Sadeq Musavi who is also the director of the festival.

“At present, there are over 10,000 festivals being organized across the world, most of them are unreliable. Meanwhile, the Tehran short festival has a good status in the world, although the festival is not decidedly familiar, it can be considered as the most important short film festival in West Asia,” he added.

He said that the Tehran short festival is the only event offering free admission and added, “Free registration will be set aside after the restrictions on international payments are lifted, and, like other festivals, we will collect a registration fee from participants and the festival will be able to cover

all its expenses.”

He said that there are only 127 short film festivals in the world whose awards can qualify a film for the Oscars.

The Farabi Cinema Foundation, which selects Iran's submission to the Oscars every year, has congratulated the organizers of the Tehran International Short Film Festival on earning this credit.

In addition, Mohammad-Mehdi Asgarpur, the director of the Fajr International Film Festival, has also sent a letter of congratulations to the organizers of the Tehran short film festival.

Iranian international festivals have been recognized by international film organizations over the past few months.

The Fajr International Film Festival was accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) as a new film event in its competitive feature film festivals.

Movies from Iran to compete in Durban festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian movies “The Rain Falls Where It Will” and “Daily Massacre in Tehran” will be competing in the Durban International Film Festival, which will take place in the South African city from July 22 to August 1.

Directed by Majid Barzegar, “The Rain Falls Where It Will” will be screened in the feature film competition.

In this film, Sara works as an experienced and respected nurse in one of the busiest hospitals in Tehran, where she quietly takes away the lives of her patients who have lost all hope in recovery. All seems to go well for her, until she is asked to take care of a private patient in his villa by the sea.

“Daily Massacre in Tehran” directed by Hessam Hamidi has been selected for the short film competition.

This film is about Fuad, a 12-year-old boy who has come to the capital city from one of the surrounding cities to support his mother's living expenses in addition to those associated with her illness.

He is willing and ready to take on any paying job and engage in any business, including slaughtering roosters, sifting through garbage and carrying loads. He encounters problems and difficulties when engaging in each job. “Daily Massacre in Tehran” portrays pieces and layers from the life and problems of a young, small town boy in the capital city.

The Durban International Film Festival is one of five festivals presented by the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of Kwazulu-Natal. The other festivals are the Time of the Writer festival, the JOMBA! Dance festival, the Poetry Africa, and Artfluence Human

Rights festivals.

The Centre for Creative Arts, located in the School of the Arts at the University, is a multi-disciplinary hub that values the power and agency vested in the arts to contribute to social change.

Aligned to the university's academic agenda, the festivals also play a vital role in knowledge generation through teaching, learning and research. The festivals are also the university's interface with its diverse public.

The Durban festival fulfills a facilitative function as a promoter of the film industry, creating networking and cultural exchange platforms.

It was initiated as a safe space for intellectual and creative dialogue to start conversations that spark innovation and question the world we live in and the lenses



“The Rain Falls Where It Will” directed by Majid Barzegar.

through which history is portrayed during a time of conflict and extreme racial tensions. It continues to do so, tackling contemporary challenges through various initiatives and industry engagements.

New Persian translation of “From the Earth to the Moon” comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A new Persian translation of Jules Verne's “From the Earth to the Moon” has been published in Tehran.

Ofoq is the publisher of the book rendered into Persian by Samin Nabipur, who has translated many books by renowned Western writers, including Elizabeth Gaskell's 1854 novel “North and South” and Gavriel Savit's debut novel “Anna and the Swallow Man”.

Verne's 1865 tale of a trip to the moon is (as you'd expect from him) great fun, even if bits of it now seem, in retrospect, a little strange.

It tells the story of the Baltimore Gun Club, a post-American Civil War society of weapons enthusiasts, and their attempts to build an enormous Columbiad space gun and launch three people—the Gun Club's president, his Philadelphia armor-making rival, and a French poet—in a projectile with the goal of a Moon landing.

Five years later, Verne wrote a sequel called “Around the Moon”.

The story is also notable in that Verne attempted to do some rough calculations as to the requirements for the cannon and in that, considering the comparative lack of empirical data on the subject at the time, some of his figures are remarkably accurate.

However, his scenario turned out to be impractical for safe manned space travel since a much longer barrel would have been required to reach escape velocity while limiting acceleration to survivable limits for the passengers.

The character of Michel Ardan, the French member of the party in the novel, was inspired by the real-life photographer Felix Nadar.

Another Persian translation of the novel by Mohammad Nejabati was published by Qoqnus in Tehran in 2020.

“Religious Language” published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Tehran-based Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities – SAMT has published English scholar Michael Scott's book “Religious Language” in Persian.

Hamed Qadiri is the translator of the book, which was originally published by Palgrave MacMillan in 2013.

Scott addresses a range of central questions about the meaning of religious language and discourse: Should we treat religious discourse at face value or are there fundamental differences between religious discourse and other areas of descriptive discourse? Is “God” a name and how does it refer? Are religious utterances metaphorical? Do religious

utterances express feelings, intentions or stances as well as or instead of beliefs?

The book draws on current research in the philosophy of language as well as work in theology and Continental Philosophy to develop a novel theory of religious language.

New work and original insights are also presented on the historical development of research in the field. This is the first original, wide-ranging account of the meaning of religious language in over two decades.

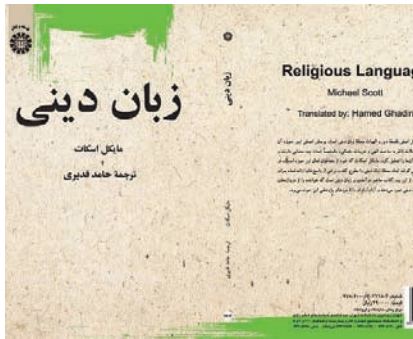
This study reviews some of the principal themes in contemporary work on religious language. Unlike other recent surveys, the most pressing issues about religious language are addressed from the perspective of the philosophy of language; different positions

taken on these issues by philosophers of religion and theologians are considered.

Topics that are covered include the subject matter of religious discourse, reductionism and subjectivism, expressivism, the nature of religious metaphor, religious fictionalism and truth in religious discourse.

The study also looks at the relationship between questions about religious language and cognate areas of philosophy of religion such as epistemology and metaphysics, and potential future directions of research.

Scott is a senior lecturer in philosophy at the University of Manchester, UK. In addition to writing numerous papers in the field, he has edited “Reading Philosophy of Religion” with



Cover of the Persian translation of Michael Scott's book “Religious Language”.

Graham Oppy and “Realism and Religion” with Andrew Moore.

He is co-editor of the philosophy of religion journal Ars Disputandi.