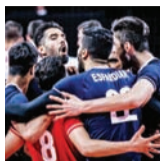




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Iran insists talks is only solution to Afghan crisis

TEHRAN — Tehran is insistent on its position the crisis in neighboring Afghanistan must be resolved through negotiations, a senior Iranian diplomat said on Thursday. Rasoul Mousavi, the director of the Western Asia Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, made the remarks in a meeting with Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of the High Commissioner for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan (HCNR). At the meeting in Kabul, the Iranian diplomat emphasized that Tehran is in favor of a negotiated solution to the crisis

in Afghanistan. Iran supports efforts to resolve the crisis through dialogue, Mousavi added. He also noted that the Iranian people and government are in favor of ending the long war in Afghanistan, according to IRNA. Abdullah expressed his appreciation for Iran's support of the Afghan peace process and highlighted the importance of cooperation among the countries of the region to ensure peace and stability in his country.

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Transport, urban development projects worth over \$5.1b inaugurated

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday inaugurated several major transportation and urban development projects worth 214.23 trillion rials (over \$5.1 billion) across the country through video conferencing, IRNA reported. The mentioned projects, including 37 transport projects and numerous sport-venue projects, were inaugurated

in the 81st series of inauguration ceremonies since the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20). Some 321 kilometers (km) of highways and main roads, eight road transport development projects, 16 port projects, as well as two multi-purpose sports halls, and 262 other sports venue projects were among the inaugurated projects.

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Pastu Covac neutralizes new COVID-19 strains

TEHRAN — Preliminary results of studies show that the Pastu Covac coronavirus vaccine, developed by the Pasteur Institute of Iran, fights very well against new variants of South Africa and India, and in other words, neutralizes them, Alireza Biglari, head of the Pasteur Institute, has said. The studies also showed that the vaccine performed very well against the South African mutation, which is most preva-

lent in Cuba, and the New York variant, which combines several strains, including Indian, he stated. He continued that one of the people's concerns about the prevalence of African and Indian strains was whether they neutralize the effect of vaccines, while the study, showing the effectiveness of the Iran-Cuba joint vaccine, also alleviated public concern.

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Tehran derby not an interesting game, football expert says

BY FARROKH HESABI
Tehran derby between Esteghlal and Persepolis might not have been the most interesting game for the football fans in terms of the quality of the game, according to Iranian football expert Mehdi Pashazadeh. Esteghlal football team defeated Persepolis 4-3 in a penalty shootout in Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals. Two teams shared the spoils in a 0-0 draw after 120 minutes at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran. When Esteghlal goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini had pushed aside the final attempt by the Persepolis' young striker Mehdi Abdi, it was over. His save set off a wild celebration for the Blues.

Pashazadeh, former Esteghlal and Iran national team defender, talked about the match in an interview with Tehran Times. "It was not a high-quality game. Both teams played very cautiously in a timid showing," he said. "Persepolis didn't want to lose as Yahya Golmohammadi desired to continue the unbeaten run that his side had shown in the league. Therefore, their priority was not to concede a goal.

"On the other hand, Esteghlal were determined to prove that they are deserved to win a trophy, given all the management problems they have been struggling with. The Hazfi cup is the shortest path to win a trophy and automatically qualifying for the AFC Champions League. So, they needed such a win, although nothing is over, and they still have a difficult path ahead to win the Hazfi Cup," he added.

Former Bayer Leverkusen player believes that the Iranian players are so emotional: "This is a weakness. Our players and even coaches are so emotional, and in the big games, they perform mostly based on their emotions rather than the tactical instructions. It is contrary to what we see in European football, or generally in professional football, and that's why the big matches over there are really exciting and full of drama. But here we see a lackluster performance in a match that is known as the biggest game in Iranian football."

He considered Hosseini as the best player of the match.

"He managed to keep a clean sheet which was the number one priority. However, he and Persepolis goalkeeper, Hamed Lak, had nothing special to do during the game in terms of saves and performance. But in the penalty shootouts, Hosseini did a great job," Pashazadeh said.

Centuries-old bathhouse designated as national heritage

TEHRAN - Hammam-e Haj Lotf-Ali, a Qajar-era (1789-1925) public bathhouse in northeast Iran, has recently been added to the national heritage list. Located in the city of Feizabad, Khorasan Razavi province, the bathhouse was constructed next to a caravanserai upon the orders of Haj Lotf-Ali, who was an elite of the city, to bring comfort to the natives and travelers, deputy provincial tourism chief Marjan Akbari has said. A restoration project is currently underway on the historical structure, which has been endowed by its builder; ISNA quoted Akbari as saying on Thursday. The project, which is being carried out by Feizabad Municipality aims at repairing and renovating the bathhouse and repurposing it to a cultural center, the official added. The public bathhouse was in use until 2013, she noted.

Over the years, the 230 square meters public bathhouse has undergone many changes. There is a staircase that leads to the footpath and an area of about 45 square meters with a cruciform plan as the entrance space. Additionally, there is a rest area and a prayer room, and the main area is covered with a dome and a multiplicative arch. Bathhouses or 'hammams' are of great significance in popular Iranian culture. They were not only places for bathing and cleaning up. They also had a social concept for people who gathered at these places weekly. It was a place where people talked with each other about their daily life and shared humor and news. There are still bathhouses in Iranian cities but they do not have their social function anymore since most people have bathrooms in their homes due to the modern lifestyle.

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First nation group calls on Canadian government to release residential school records

An indigenous group has called on the Canadian government and the Catholic Church to release the attendance records of a boarding school to help identify unmarked graves. In May, the First Nation announced the initial discovery of 215 unmarked graves of children near the Kamloops Indian Residential School after using ground-penetrating radar equipment to search two acres of land. This is believed to be the largest government-funded, Christian-run school. Now, in a report presenting new scientific evidence, an indigenous group says more than 160 acres near the school still needs to be searched where more graves are expected to be discovered. A First Nation Chief has appealed to the government and the Catholic Church to release the records of those who attended the school to speed up the search and identity of the children. Since spring this year, the findings of some 1,100

graves, widely believed to hold the remains of indigenous children, have stunned Canadians. However, the exact figure is difficult to ascertain as new research suggests "all residential school landscapes are likely to contain burials of missing children". Canada's first prime minister authorized the creation of a residential school system, established by Christian churches and the government, with the intention of assimilating indigenous people in Canada. Residential schools were compulsory for children aged 7 to 15. Some 150,000 First Nations had been forcibly taken from their homes, with parents surrendering them under the threat of prosecution. The last school closed in 1996. According to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, children died from causes like disease and neglect amid physical and sexual abuse. The report describes the policy behind the system as "cultural genocide".

Iranian heavy crude oil price rises 7.4% in June: OPEC

TEHRAN - Iranian heavy oil price increased \$4.96 in June to register a 7.4-percent rise compared to the previous month, according to OPEC's latest monthly report published on Thursday. Iranian heavy crude oil price followed its upward trend since the beginning of the current year to reach \$71.68 per barrel in the mentioned month, compared to May's \$66.72 per barrel. According to the report, the country's average heavy crude price was \$63.63 from the beginning of

2021 up to the report's publishing day, in comparison to \$37.68 in the previous year's same period. The report put Iranian crude output for March at 2.47 million barrels per day (bpd) indicating a 33,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the previous month. Based on OPEC data, the country's average crude output in the second quarter of 2021 stood at 2.443 million bpd indicating a near 229,000-bpd rise compared to the average figure for the year's first quarter.

OPEC basket prices also rose \$4.98 or 7.4 percent to reach \$71.89 a barrel in June from the same month in 2020. In addition to the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the global oil industry which resulted in the drastic fall in oil prices, the Iranian oil industry has also been under pressure from the U.S. efforts to isolate the country by re-imposing sanctions.

Continued on page 4

Regional powers are engaged in diplomacy with Taliban: academic

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
TEHRAN — Calling for a multilateral Astana-like initiative, an associate professor from the University of South-Eastern Norway, says the regional powers prefer diplomacy with the Taliban. "The regional powers are already engaged in diplomacy with the Taliban and I expect a multilateral Astana-like initiative to emerge," Glenn Diesen tells the Tehran Times.

The Taliban are advancing at lightning speed across Afghanistan as U.S. troops withdraw. They now control about half of the country and are fighting for control of the other 50 percent. They may have even been slowing their advance on purpose. Some political groups in Afghanistan are apprehensive about the Taliban's rise, urging military action to counter the insurgent group. However, it seems that neighboring countries try not to be engaged in the Afghanistan conflict, preferring to find a diplomatic solution to the country's crisis. Diesen says, "After the U.S. and NATO defeat in Afghanistan, there will be a vacuum and instability that should be addressed by the neighboring countries."

The academic predicts "Eurasian solutions will be pursued for the conflict with the involvement of countries such as Russia, China, Iran and others. Following is the text of the interview: **How do you assess Russia-U.S. disputes under Putin-Biden presidencies? Is there a strategic rivalry or an economic competition?** Russia-U.S. disputes under Putin-Biden presidencies are defined primarily by strategic rivalry.

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© ISNA / Agihl Naeimezhad

Bodies of 43 martyrs are received

At a ceremony held on Thursday in the Shalamchek border point, the bodies of 43 Iranian soldiers whose bodies had been discovered recently inside the Iraqi territory were received. They had been martyred during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1987 during the Valfajr, Kheibar and Badr operations. Also, during the ceremony, four Iraqi soldiers whose bodies had been exhumed in Iran's territory were handed over to the Iraqi side.

Zarif: U.S. best to put house in order

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — In a tweet posted on Friday afternoon, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif slammed the United States over baseless accusations.

“US-affiliated gunmen hatch plots on US soil to assassinate leaders in Venezuela & Haiti while US government busily covers up its criminal ties by accusing others of a patently ridiculous, childishly conceived kidnapping operation.



Put your house in order before throwing bricks at others,” Zarif tweeted.

According to The Guardian, a group of two dozen mercenaries, including two U.S.-Haitian citizens and several Colombians, several of whom were former soldiers, stormed Moise’s villa, pretending to be a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) raid, overpowering staff, and security.

During the raid, Moise was shot up to 12 times and his house was ransacked. In the hours that followed, a number of the alleged attackers were either killed in shootouts or captured, some at Haiti’s Taiwanese embassy where they had sought refuge.

In a similar plot in May 2020, Venezuelan state media broadcast an apparent confession from former U.S. service member Airan Berry, who detailed an alleged plot to oust Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and bring him to the U.S.

On Monday, Maduro said that two U.S. citizens were arrested with a group of “mercenaries” who had planned to overthrow his government. The two men were identified as former U.S. Special Forces soldiers Luke Denman and Airan Berry.

Iran, Turkey have good relations, says Iranian ambassador

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The Iranian ambassador to Ankara, Mohammad Farazmand, has met with Baghdad Amrayev, the secretary-general of the Turkish Council, ISNA reported on Friday.

During the meeting, which was held at the headquarters of the council in Istanbul, the Iranian ambassador expressed Iran’s views on the future of relations with the Turkish Council and the type of cooperation with it.



Expressing satisfaction with the acquaintance with the secretary-general of the Turkish Council, Farazmand stated that Iran has special and good relations with all members of the Turkish Council.

Referring to Iran’s relationship with the Turkish world for several thousand years, he described the type and dimensions of relations with member countries and provided the relevant information to the secretary-general of the Turkish Council.

Iran’s possible cooperation and membership as an observer member of the council were also discussed.

Russia says U.S. has ‘overestimated’ influence of maximum pressure

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The U.S. government has “overestimated the influence of policy of maximum pressure on Iran,” the Russian ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency has said.

The comments by Ambassador Mikhail Ulyanov come as the nuclear deal talks in Vienna have not been resumed despite the passage of more than two weeks.

“The course of the #ViennaTalks proves once again that US overestimated the influence of maximum pressure on #Iran,” Ulyanov tweeted on Thursday.

Ulyanov, who represents Russia in the Vienna talks, added, “Pressure continues but Iran isn’t in the rush although it knows that the sooner the talks are completed the sooner sanctions are lifted.”

The Russian diplomat also noted that the sanctions are not the only factor being taken into consideration by Iran.

So far, six rounds of negotiations have been held in the Austrian capital to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The talks are now in limbo despite the fact that all participants agree that significant progress has been made since the talks started in April to restore the JCPOA.

Disagreements have persisted over a number of issues, including how to sequence the U.S. sanctions removal, with Tehran arguing that since Washington was the party that violated the terms of the agreement, it should take the first step back into compliance with the deal by removing its unilateral sanctions.

In another tweet later on Thursday, Ulyanov pointed to the latest reports on the possible continuation of the talks under the next Iranian administration and urged Iran not to let the talks get protracted for a long time.

“According to the latest reports #Iran will be ready to resume the #ViennaTalks on the JCPOA only after August 5. The question is when exactly,” the Russian envoy said.

If the break in the talks lasts too long, he continued, the negotiators “can lose the momentum and the process would take much longer time than expected.”

According to the Diplomatic, a senior U.S. official has claimed that Iran has informed the European coordinator for the nuclear talks that it will not be ready to resume the Vienna negotiations until Ebrahim Raisi is inaugurated as president in early August.

U.S. senator: JCPOA is our only viable option

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — A day after some Senate leaders emerged from a classified briefing with Secretary of State Tony Blinken offering a pessimistic outlook on the chances of re-entering the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) said that that the deal remains the U.S.’s only viable option for dealing with Iran.

Murphy, who did not attend Wednesday’s meeting and said he was not familiar with what was said, has been one of the most prominent voices in the Senate in favor of quick reentry into the 2015 deal, including urging the President Joe Biden to roll back sanctions imposed by the Trump administration in exchange for Iranian compliance with the deal.

“I don’t accept the premise that we can’t find a way back into this deal. It will require hard choices by the United States, difficult choices by the Iranians, but I don’t see a path forward without being inside this deal,” Murphy told Jewish Insider.

“I still believe that our only course of action is to get back into the deal,” he reiterated.

Barring an agreement, the Iranians will continue to “ratchet up their provocation of their allies and their destabilizing activity, and they will speed towards a nuclear weapon,” Murphy suggested, a situation he described as “a disaster.”

Iran has been insisting that its nuclear program is quite peaceful and its remedial



measures are merely a response to the U.S. abrogation of the deal and introduction of sweeping sanctions against Iran in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that confirms the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran’s move to roll back restrictions on its nuclear program are in accordance to paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which has “provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.”

Iran started to gradually remove ban on its

nuclear activities one year after former U.S. president quit the multilateral deal, waiting for the European signatories to the deal to compensate for the U.S. sanctions.

Negotiations to revive the JCPOA began in April and made significant progress. However, Iran is seeking a guarantee that the United States would not withdraw from the deal again. So far the U.S. has refused to make such a commitment.

Leaders of Israel’s new government told a visiting bipartisan congressional delegation they oppose President Biden and the

Iran insists talks is only solution to Afghan crisis

➔ War is not the solution, emphasized the senior Afghan peace negotiator, adding that neither side can benefit from the ongoing conflict in the country.

He also said that the Afghan government has always called for a peaceful settlement of differences and has kept its promises, but will not allow anyone to impose their will on Kabul.

The security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated in recent months as the Taliban has occupied many areas in the country.

The Kabul government launched a “national mobilization” in response, arming local volunteers and resurrecting militias to fight the Taliban.

Iranian officials insist that the Afghan crisis must be resolved through politics and negotiations, and that the peace process must include all Afghan groups without any foreign interference.

In its relentless efforts to broker peace between the Afghan government and the Taliban, Iran hosted high-ranking Afghan delegates comprising of the Taliban and government representatives in Tehran on July 8 and 9.

Addressing the opening of the intra-Afghan talks, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif pointed to the U.S. failure in Afghanistan after 20 years of invasion and said it is essential that Afghans take “tough decisions” for

the future of their nation.

“Today the people and political leaders of Afghanistan must take tough decisions for the future of their country,” Zarif told the delegates.

Zarif warned that continuation of conflicts between the government and the Taliban will have “unfavorable” consequences for Afghanistan, noting that a return to the intra-Afghan negotiations is the “best solution”.

Zarif also said Iran is firm to wholeheartedly help Afghanistan politically and economically after the establishment of peace in the country.

The high-ranking political delegation representing the Afghan government was headed by Yunus Qanouni and the Taliban team by Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai.

Stanikzai is the head of the Taliban’s political office in Doha. Writing on his Twitter page, Foreign Minister Zarif said Iran is happy to host talks between the representatives from the Afghan government and the Taliban, calling them Iran’s “brethren”.

“Honored to be host of cordial & substantive dialog between senior Afghan reps. As foreign forces leave Afghanistan, no impediment remains for Afghans of all political stripes to chart a peaceful & prosperous future for the next generation. Iran stands with our Afghan brethren,” Zarif tweeted.



However, the situation on the ground does seem promising. The Taliban claimed recently that their fighters had retaken 85% of the country - a figure disputed by the government and impossible to verify independently.

Other estimates say the Taliban controls somewhere between a third and half of Afghanistan’s 400 districts. On Thursday, Afghan forces said they had recaptured a key border crossing with Pakistan that had been taken by the Taliban. The insurgents denied having lost control of the post.

Intelligence chief reiterates Iran’s support for Iraq

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi has reaffirmed Tehran’s full support for Iraq on all fronts, particularly issues related to security and stability in the country.

The Iranian intelligence chief, who was in Iraq on an official visit, made the remarks in a meeting with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbasi on Wednesday, Press TV reported.

Alavi expressed his condolences over a deadly fire incident that tore through a coronavirus hospital in southern Iraq early this week.

Late on Monday, a fast-spreading blaze hit the new isolation ward at the Imam Hussein Teaching Hospital in the Iraqi city of Nasiriya. The fire continued until early Tuesday, marking the second such tragedy in the Arab country in less than three months.

So far, 124 people have been confirmed dead, according to the Iraqi Civil Defense Center. Iraqi officials also said that more than 100 people were injured in the blaze.

Halbasi, for his part, said it is imperative to help Iraq

promote security and stability in his war-ravaged country.

He added that a stable Iraq would have positive impacts on the entire region’s stability.

During the meeting, Alavi and Halbasi discussed possible ways to strengthen cooperation.

Separately, Alavi sat down with Iraq’s National Security Adviser Qassem al-Araji on Thursday for talks on the latest security and political developments in the Arab country.

They stressed the importance of broadening bilateral cooperation to advance the interests of the two friendly nations.

In an earlier meeting with Iraqi President Barham Salih, the intelligence minister underlined “the importance of strong relations between the two countries and their peoples.”

He also relayed Ayatollah Khamenei’s supportive stance in favor of “reinforcement of the bilateral cooperation and coordination towards confronting terrorism, extremism, and establishment of peace in the region.”

Countering world drug problem requires collective, shared responsibility: Iran



ing drug trafficking despite losing thousands of its security forces in clashes with drug traffickers as well as the heavy costs of the fight against narcotics.

Last month, Tehran announced that narcotics seizure at Iranian border crossings and airport gateways had increased by 523% in the quarter to May 21 against the same quarter in 2020.

Iran’s embassy in Austria, in marking the

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, which falls on June 26, strongly criticized Western countries, as the main destination of narcotics seized by Iran, for their little support for the costly fight.

“Iran is at the forefront of the fight against illicit drug trafficking, which mainly enters Europe, while Iran receives little support for this costly fight,” the Iranian mission said in a tweet.

During a speech on the occasion, Gharibabadi said Western countries are not serious enough in confronting drug trafficking despite being the main destinations for the narcotics passing through Iran.

Back in March, the Iranian envoy said the unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran by Western countries, especially the United States, are hampering the Islamic Republic’s fight against drug trafficking.

The imposition of unilateral sanctions, according to Gharibabadi, has proved an obstacle to Iran’s fight against narcotics and

United States re-entering the Iran nuclear deal, according to participant Rep. Nicole Malliotakis.

The Staten Island Republican congresswoman said new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Defense Ministry officials said repeatedly in meetings in Jerusalem that they are “very opposed to the United States re-entering the Iran deal” — at least without substantial changes, the New York Post reported on July 13.

New Prime Minister Naftali Bennett’s position mirrors that of his predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, a fierce opponent of the Iran accord.

A bipartisan delegation of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, headed by Chairman Greg Meeks (D-NY), participated in the five-day West Asia trip last week that included visits to Israel, the West Bank and Qatar.

A group of Republicans in the House of Representatives is demanding the Biden administration have Congress review and assess any new nuclear deal with Iran, citing a 2015 law.

Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas and other Republicans on the House Foreign Affairs Committee wrote Blinken in mid-June, al-Monitor reported.

“We are writing to remind you of the Administration’s statutory obligations to provide Congress with an opportunity to review and assess any nuclear agreement that you reach with Iran,” they wrote in the letter.

(Source: Press TV)

Washington intensifies intimidatory propaganda to cover up lack of options on JCPOA

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — With Vienna nuclear talks between Iran and world powers hitting a deadlock, diplomatic circles in Washington and Europe are once again being prodded to reflect on the options the U.S. has on the table to deal with Iran.

Western diplomats have said Washington does not have many options on Iran if the nuclear talks fail to deliver a result in the coming weeks but, in a thinly-veiled threat, they threatened Iran with more suffering.

A senior U.S. official told Reuters Thursday that the alternatives for the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), would be worse for Iran. "I think all the alternatives are worse for us. I think they are worse for Iran. And frankly, I think, at the end of the day, Iran will suffer – I don't know if they suffer more than we will – but they will be in a bad situation," the U.S. diplomat said on condition of anonymity.

"Which is why we have argued now for some time that the best option is a strict return to compliance with the (deal). That's our analysis," the U.S. official said.

Washington would do all it could to revive the deal, the official said, but added, "we have to be prepared to live with the alternatives."

This warning came after all U.S. threats failed to work with Iran. Following the sixth round of the Vienna talks, several American and European diplomats warned Iran against refusing to make tough decisions on the JCPOA. In other words, they called on Iran to make more concessions to get the JCPOA revived in the seventh round. They even went so far as to brandish a withdrawal from the talks, which they now ask Iran to resume.

"We wouldn't be going back to Vienna if



we thought that it's not possible to reach a deal. I don't think that this window is going to be open forever. At some point, we'll have to conclude that this is not succeeding. But we're not there yet," U.S. envoy to the Vienna talks Rob Malley told NPR after the sixth round.

U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken reiterated Malley's threat by implying that the ball is in Iran's court.

"There will come a point, yes, where it will be very hard to return back to the standards set by the JCPOA," the top U.S. diplomat said at a briefing in Paris after meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le Drian. He also called on Iran to make "difficult" decisions to advance talks that could revive the JCPOA.

Le Drian reiterated the same call. "It's

been six weeks since the negotiations started again. Some progress was achieved, and we will now be entering the most difficult times. It will require some strong and courageous decisions on behalf of the new Iranian authorities, but now is the time," he said.

Iran responded by saying that if there is a party to make tough decisions it is the U.S. and its European allies, not Iran. Because Iran had already made a series of tough decisions to protect the nuclear deal after former U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from it.

In complete disregard to American and European intimidatory propaganda, Iran moved to expand its peaceful nuclear program by starting the production of enriched uranium metal. Instead of addressing Iran's concerns, the U.S. and its European allies

started to signal threats and intimidation that the talks might collapse and that Iran would suffer more as if they have many more options than negotiating with Iran.

This is while even the Americans themselves acknowledge that they have no other option but to revive the original deal. Senator Chris Murphy told Jewish Insider that the 2015 nuclear deal remains the U.S.'s only viable option for dealing with Iran.

"I don't accept the premise that we can't find a way back into this deal. It will require hard choices by the United States, difficult choices by the Iranians, but I don't see a path forward without being inside this deal," Murphy said. "I still believe that our only course of action is to get back into the deal."

Ever since Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018, the U.S. did everything in its power to extract more concessions from Iran. That included imposing harsh economic sanctions on Iran with aim of bringing the country's economy to collapse. Iran suffered but did not collapse and continued to stand tall.

Some former western diplomats who had been privy to U.S.-European deliberations on Iran now admit that Iran is unlikely to give in on its rights. A case in point is Gerard Araud, France's former ambassador to the U.S. He told Reuters that Iran has shown its resilience in the face of the so-called "maximum pressure" campaign, a policy that the Trump administration initiated against Iran after walking out of the JCPOA, and that even economic pressure can not be an alternative for the JCPOA.

"I don't see an alternative to the JCPOA other than 'maximum pressure' but this regime has shown its resilience and I don't see it caving to it," the former French diplomat said.

China urges U.S. to lift 'illegal' sanctions on Iran

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian has praised the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, calling on the United States to show "sincerity" and completely lift its "illegal" sanctions on Iran.

Speaking at a regular press conference on Thursday, the Chinese spokesperson reflected on the Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), calling it a result of more than a decade of painstaking negotiations.

"July 14 marks the sixth anniversary of the JCPOA on the Iranian nuclear issue. The JCPOA, the result of 13 years of painstaking negotiations, is an important outcome of multilateral diplomacy endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231," Lijian said, adding, "It is a classic example of resolving disputes through dialogue and consultation, and a key pillar for upholding the international non-proliferation regime and promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. Joint efforts to safeguard and implement the JCPOA serve the common interests of the international community."

He then articulated China's position on what Iran and the U.S. should do to revive the tattered deal. "China always believes that the full and effective implementation of the deal is the only effective way to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue. China welcomes the fact that the U.S. seeks to return to the JCPOA. In the meantime, the U.S. side needs to show sincerity by taking concrete actions to regain the trust of the international community. Negotiations on resuming the compliance of the deal have entered the final stage," the spokesperson said, noting, "All parties have shown their political will to reach an agreement, but there are still some differences that need to be bridged. The U.S. should make an early decision to comprehensively and completely lift its illegal unilateral sanctions against Iran and third parties, while Iran should fully resume its compliance on this basis."

Lijian pointed out that China remains committed to preserving the effectiveness of the 2015 nuclear deal, underlining that Beijing plays a constructive role in the current negotiations between Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA as well as the U.S.

He stated, "As an important party to the JCPOA, China is firmly committed to upholding the authority and effectiveness of the JCPOA and the Security Council resolution, and taking a constructive part in the negotiations between the U.S. and Iran to resume compliance. We will work on all parties to build consensus, bridge differences and bring the JCPOA back on the right track at an early date. No matter how the situation may change, China will always stand on the right side of history, uphold justice, advance the political settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic means, and safeguard the international non-proliferation regime and peace



and stability in the Middle East. In the meantime, we will firmly safeguard our legitimate rights and interests."

China has increased its calls on the U.S. to return to the JCPOA in recent weeks as the Vienna nuclear talks, underway since April, started to stumble after the sixth round, which was concluded in June. In early July, President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese President Xi Jinping called on JCPOA parties to the window of opportunity for an agreement on the JCPOA. Earlier, China's foreign minister had underlined the need for the United States to make an earlier decision to return to the nuclear deal. Wang Yi said it is most critical for the U.S. to make an earlier decision to rejoin the agreement.

Wang was speaking at the World Peace Forum organized by Tsinghua University and the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, a government-run policy group.

The top Chinese diplomat described the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA as the root cause for the current situation around the tattered pact.

"The U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and its maximum pressure on Iran are the root causes of the current Iranian nuclear crisis," said Wang. "As the saying goes, he who tied the bow should untie it."

Former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018 and imposed sweeping economic sanctions on Iran. Trump piled up sanctions on Iran in a bid to force Iran into making more concessions to the U.S. within the framework of a new nuclear deal. Trump, however, failed to get his deal, bequeathing his successor a litany of unresolved issues with Iran. The Biden administration has said it wants to open a new chapter with Iran and change tack, though it is yet to make any move to break with the Trump legacy on Iran.

Since April, diplomats from the remaining parties to the JCPOA and the U.S. have held six rounds of talks in a bid to revive the deal. They made significant progress but failed to get Iran and the U.S. back to full compliance with the nuclear deal.

Iran, Syria underline strategic relations

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad has received a delegation from the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran headed by Assistant Foreign Minister of Iran Reza Najafi.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and how to strengthen these relations.

Talks during the meeting tackled the relations between the foreign ministries of both countries, as well as laying the necessary bases for strengthening coordination and

consultation in various fields of interest to them, especially working to confront terrorism to which both countries are exposed, including economic terrorism represented by unilateral coercive measures imposed on them, Syrian state news SANA reported.

Mekdad expressed the Syrian leadership, government and people's high appreciation for the important role played by Iran in all political, military and economic fields to support Syria in its war on terrorism, stressing the depth of the strategic relations between Syria and Iran and that Syria looks

with satisfaction at the high level which the relations between the two countries have reached in various fields.

The Syrian foreign minister stressed that the mutual visits will help consolidate and strengthen relations between the two countries, activate coordination, consultation and exchange of views between the two ministries of foreign affairs, and finding ways to uplift them due to the serious and fruitful cooperation required by the current stage in various international forums.

Najafi, for his part, indicated that the

visit includes many meetings aimed at activating cooperation and coordination with the Foreign and Expatriates Ministry in the Syrian Arab Republic.

He stressed that the relations between Syria and Iran are deep and significant and they meet the aspirations of the peoples of the two countries. He also reaffirmed Iran's continued support for the just Syrian stance at various international organizations, especially in the combat against terrorism to restore security and stability on all Syrian lands.

S P O R T S

Iran learn fate at Asian Volleyball Championship

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran discovered their fate at the 2021 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship.

The Iranian team have been drawn in Pool B along with Thailand, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

Pool A consists of Japan, India, Qatar and Bahrain.



Australia, China, Sri Lanka and Kuwait are in Pool C. Korea, Chinese Taipei, Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia have been drawn in Pool D.

The tournament will be held in Chiba and Funabashi, Japan from Sept. 12 to 19. The top two teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2022 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship as the AVC representatives.

The 2021 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship will be the 21st edition of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Japan Volleyball Association (JVA).

Iranian football critic Hamidreza Sadr passes away

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iranian long-serving football critic, author and historian passed away at the age of 65 on Friday.

He lost his long battle with cancer in Orange County, United States.

Sadr was well-known for his publications on various subjects such as football, cinema, and non-fiction based on history and social studies.

He wrote several books about football, namely Once Upon a Time Football (2000), The Hot Seat (2012), A Boy On The Terraces (2013) and The Eternal Jerseys (2018).

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Sadr's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Esteghlal beat Persepolis to qualify for Hazfi Cup semis

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team defeated Persepolis 4-3 in penalty shootout in the Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals on Thursday.

In a lackluster match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, two teams played out a goalless draw after 120 minutes.

In the penalty shootout, Esteghlal defeated their archrivals 4-3 and advanced to the semifinals.

In Ahvaz, Foolad defeated Sepahan 5-4 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

Gol Gohar came from one goal down to beat Aluminum 3-1 in Sirjan. Moein Abbasian gave the visiting team a lead in the 10th minute but Reza Shekari, Ahmadrza Zendehtrouh and Saeid Sadeghi scored three goals in the second half.

Malavan and Kheibar will play on July 24 to determine the fourth team.

Iran crowned Asian U21 Beach Volleyball champions

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran claimed the title of the 4th Asian U21 Beach Volleyball Championships on Thursday.

Iran 1 (Abolhassan Khakizadeh/Sina Shokati) defeated Thailand 1 (Pichakon Narathon/Phanphong Thanan) 2-1 (17-21, 28-26, 15-7) in the gold medal match.

Thailand 2 also defeated Thailand 3 in the bronze medal match. Iran 2's Amir Reza Zamani/Reza Naghizadeh Shamili also participated in the competition but lost to Thailand 1 and Australia 2 in the group stage.

The Asian U-21 Beach Volleyball Championships were held in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand from July 12 to 15.

Esteghlal defender Gholami out for six months

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team center back Aref Gholami has been ruled out for six months with a knee ligament injury.

He tore his left anterior cruciate ligament in the match against Persepolis on Thursday.

Gholami was forced to leave the field in the second half. Esteghlal defeated their archrivals Persepolis 4-3 in penalty shootout in Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals.

His absence will be a huge blow to the Iranian team since Esteghlal will have to play Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia in September in 2021 AFC Champions League Round of 16.

Feyenoord in contact with Brighton for Jahanbakhsh

S P O R T S
d e s k

TEHRAN — Alireza Jahanbakhsh is considering a move back to the Netherlands with Feyenoord, Sky Sports reported.

The Eredivisie club want to sign the former AZ Alkmaar player as a replacement for Steven Berghuis, who is expected to join Ajax.

The Iran international is expected to make a decision in the coming days.

Jahanbakhsh, signed by Brighton for £17m in 2018, wants to play more regularly and has been frustrated by a lack of consistent starts during his spell on the south coast.

He still has two years left on his contract.

The 27-year-old has made only 21 starts in a total of 50 Premier League appearances over the past three seasons.

Exports of dried fruits, nuts up 28% in a quarter on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – The value of the Iranian exports of dried fruits, nuts and seeds in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) increased by 28 percent compared to the same period last year, a senior official at Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said.

According to Mahmoud Bazari, director-general of TPO’s Co-ordination Office for Development of Agro Products Export and Processing Industries, 128,000 tons of the mentioned products worth \$319 million were exported to foreign destinations in the mentioned three months.

The official said that the three-month export also shows a 19-percent rise in terms of weight.



Pistachio accounted for 63 percent of the exported products, as 30,000 tons of pistachio worth \$204 million was exported in the mentioned time span, with a 33-percent rise in value, and a 39-percent growth in weight as compared to the first quarter of the previous year, he added.

Iranian pistachio was exported to 80 countries in the first quarter, Bazari said, and mentioned India, China, Germany, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Russia, Turkey, and Pakistan as some of the main export destinations.

TPO is constantly monitoring and determining new destination markets for Iranian non-oil products and with the increase in the number of Iran’s trade partners, the exports of the country’s foodstuff and agricultural products, which are of high quality, is increasing every year.

As announced by the head of the 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.

Bank loans to economic sectors up over 71% in 3 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian banking system has paid 4.976 quadrillion rials (over \$118.4 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), registering a 71.3-percent rise from the same period in the previous year, IRNA reported.

According to the data provided by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), banks had paid 2.71 quadrillion rials (about \$49.32 billion) of facilities to various economic sectors in the previous calendar year’s first quarter.



As reported, working capital loans paid to different economic sectors in the mentioned three months were above 3.466 quadrillion rials (about \$82.53 billion), accounting for 69.6 percent of the total provided facilities.

During the said period, the country’s mining and industry sector received over 1.269 quadrillion rials (about \$30.23 billion) in the form of working capital loans, accounting for 36.6 percent of the total such facilities.

Back in June, the CBI had announced that over 2.74 quadrillion rials (over \$65.2 billion) of facilities was paid to various economic sectors in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), registering a 46.6-percent rise from the same period in the previous year.

According to CBI, the country’s banking system offered 18.989 quadrillion rials (about \$452.1 billion) facilities to domestic economic sectors in the previous Iranian calendar year of 1399 (ended on March 20), 94.8-percent more than the figure for its preceding year.

CBI has defined supporting production as one of its major plans over the past two years.

Former CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has repeatedly stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country’s banking system.

In early May 2019, Hemmati had outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country’s economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

CBI’s plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

Iranian heavy crude oil price rises 7.4% in June: OPEC

→ 1 The country, however, has been ramping up its oil production over the past few months following the recent developments in the White House and also the recovery of the global markets from the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier in February, Fitch Solutions Incorporation, a subsidiary of Fitch Ratings,

which is one of the U.S.’s three biggest credit rating agencies, forecasted a 6.8-percent growth for Iranian oil exports in 2021 if the U.S comes back to the 2015 nuclear deal.

In one of its latest reports dubbed “Iran Oil and Gas Report”, Fitch also saw the Islamic Republic’s crude oil exports double in 2022 compared to 2020.

“The prospects for the Iranian oil sector



have brightened significantly following Joe Biden’s victory in the U.S. presidential election on November 3. President Biden has indicated that he will seek to re-enter the

U.S. into the Iranian nuclear deal, paving the way for a roll-back of secondary sanctions and recovery of around 2.0 million bpd in oil production,” the report said.

Transport, urban development projects worth over \$5.1b inaugurated

→ 1 As reported, the said projects have created job opportunities for 1,422 people.

Last week, Rouhani had inaugurated five major industrial and mining projects worth 400 trillion rials (over \$9.5 billion) in four provinces through video conferencing.

Since the previous Iranian calendar year, the government has been following a comprehensive program for completing semi-finished projects and putting new projects in operation in a variety of areas including industry, mining, trade, agriculture, transportation, infrastructure, and urban development.

In this regard, every week several projects have been inaugurated in various provinces across the country.

So far 81 series of such inauguration ceremonies have



been held under the framework of the mentioned program in which billions of dollars worth of projects have been put into operation and direct job opportunities have been provided for thousands of people.

The mentioned programs have been created for realizing the motto of the previous year and also the current year which have been both focused on boosting domestic production and moving towards self-sufficiency in all areas.

The last Iranian calendar year was named the year of “Surge in Production” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei, and the current year has also been named “Production: Support and Elimination of Obstacles”.

Over 180,000 tons of agricultural products exported via Astara since late March

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — As announced by a local official, 181,175 tons of agricultural products were exported via Astara Port in northern Iran since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

Sasan Karjouyan, the head of Agriculture Department of Astara County, put the value of exported products at \$53 million.

He said that 40 agricultural products including kiwi, onion, pepper, tomato, potato, raisin, cabbage, apple, grape, watermelon, cherry, lemon, tea, date and pistachio have been exported via Astara since the year start.

Astara Port is 60 hectares and it is the first port of the private sector in Iran. It is the closest and the most cost-effective way



for trade and transport between Asia, Africa, and Europe. It has been designed for loading and unloading 2,500-ton freighters.

Located by the Caspian Sea, Astara has sea, land, and railway borders points with the Azerbaijan Republic.

Even during the coronavirus outbreak, the port is considered one of the main points for Iran’s export and import.

Back in March, the managing director of Khazar Shipping Company said that Astara Port, located by the Caspian Sea, has become a new hub for container shipping in the region following the launch of new shipping services from this port.

Mentioning the establishment of regular container transportation services from Astara port to Aktau port of Kazakhstan and Astrakhan in Russia, Davood Tafti said: “According to the plans, two regular transportation services will operate on this route weekly, one service from Astara to Aktau port and the other service is done from Anzali- Astara

route to Aktau port.”

Emphasizing that the launch of these regular services has created a competitive environment between road and sea transport, Tafti continued: “One of the most important effects of launching a regular container shipping service between Astara and the ports of Aktau and Astrakhan is reducing land transportation rates and breaking the monopoly of land transportation so that as soon as the news of the activation of these regular container shipping services was announced, the road transportation rate in the region decreased to one thousand dollars.”

“Breaking the monopoly means reducing costs and increasing the options of traders, exporters and cargo owners,” he added.

Iranian road network needs 12,500 km of new highways to meet demands

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister has said over 12,500 kilometers (km) of highways are needed to be constructed across the country to meet the country’s current transportation demands, IRIB reported on Friday.

Noting that 90 percent of the country’s freight and passenger traffic is carried out through the highways network, Kheirollah Khademi has said: “In order to be able to balance the needs [with the current infrastructure], we must have 35,000 kilometers of highways across the country.”

“We currently have 20,000 kilometers of highways and 2,500 kilometers of freeways across the country,” he added.

According to Khademi the construction of

the mentioned ways requires 1.2 quadrillion rials (about \$28.5 billion) of investment.

The official noted that if about 850 to 1000 kilometers of highways or freeways are constructed every year, it will take 12 to 13 years for the mentioned goal to be realized.

He called on the government to accelerate the completion of transportation projects across the country.

Back in May, Khademi, who is also the managing director of Iran’s Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), had announced that 440 km of freeways and 1,200 km of highways are going to be added to the country’s road network by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2022).

TSE’s main index rises 23,000 points in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 23,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.305 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Civil Servants Pension Fund (CSPF), Social Security Investment Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

Iranian stock market is expected to follow an upward trend as the country’s foreign currency exchange market has become more stabilized over the past few months, according to stock market analyst Azim Sabet.

“As one of the important factors in the market, [foreign] exchange rates have reached a stage of stability; therefore, one can expect a reasonable upward trend in the market,” Sabet has told IRNA.

He pointed to the effective measures taken for improving the current trend of stock exchange transactions and added: “One of the significant issues regarding the stock market’s current trading environment is the management of fluctuations in the market.”

The expert stressed that people should not expect the stock market to always fol-



low an upward trend, saying: “Sometimes companies report on their performance and activities in a certain period of time and shareholders must use that information to make decisions based on the value of the companies.”

Exchange transactions can take a reasonable course if the macroeconomics of the country is managed and no sudden changes are made, he said.

Unprecedented fluctuations in the Iranian stock market over the past few months have led shareholders, experts, and scholars to call for the government to increase its support for the market.

Following the supportive measures taken by the government, the market has been gradually getting back on track and experts believe that the market is regaining people’s trust.

Second Announcement

IN HIS EXALTED NAME Beh-Abad Combined Cycle Power Plant Yazd Province INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION



Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (PJS) intends to award construction of Beh-Abad Combined Cycle Power Plant (the Power Station) with nominal capacity of 500 MW on Built, Operate and Transfer (BOT) schemes, consisting of one combined cycle Block, all ancillary and auxiliary equipment, common systems and the necessary interfaces, located in Yazd Province, to a qualified and competent investor through an international Bid.

Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (PJS) (the Off-Taker) will prepare a short list of bidders possessing the necessary qualifications via this invitation to prequalification after the required process and evaluation. Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (PJS) will then select an eligible Investor (successful bidder) possessing the required financing and technical capabilities and will award the engineering, procurement, construction and total financing of the Project to said investor (the Company).

Development and Construction periods: 30 Months
Authorization period: 12 years and 6 Months after calculated Commercial Operation Date of the Block
Construction Security: Five percent (5%) of The EPC Contract
Transfer Security: 90 % of Last 24 Monthly Invoices

Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain prequalification documents, within seven (7) calendar days after the first posting of this invitation notice till fourteen (14) calendar days after the last (second) posting of this invitation notice, in the following way:

A representative of the applicant, carrying a valid proxy letter, may refer in person to Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (PJS), No.28 Shabnam Dd., Rafiea Alley, East Atefi St., Nelson Mandela Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Tel.: +98-21-2620-8045, +98-21-7946-3122 (Mrs Salehi), Fax: +98-21-2620-8051

Deadline for submitting the completed Prequalification Documents is fifteen (15) calendar days after the deadline of obtaining the Prequalification Questionnaire based on second posting of this invitation notice.

Russia, Iran expected to play most important role in Syria's reconstruction, expert says

By Ali A. Jenabzadeh

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia are expected to play the most important role in reconstruction of Syria, despite Western attempts to cause friction between them, a Moscow-based expert says.

"Russia and Iran are the most influential countries of Syria's geopolitical landscape, and it is expected to play the main role in the post-conflict reconstruction phase, especially after U.S. Caesar Civilian Protection Act sanctions, which block foreign investments for reconstruction from entering Syria," Molhem Assef tells the Tehran Times.

According to the expert at Strategic Conjecture Center in Moscow, "Some Western analysts supposed that the Syrian reconstruction processes could aggravate two areas of friction between Russia and Iran! In our opinion, it is not true, because there are many economic sectors, where Iran and Russia can support Syria."

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you assess Russia's ties with regional powers like Iran and Turkey?

Firstly, we should know that in the world of politics sometimes problems emerge between partners as is the case between Russia and Turkey; Turkey is neither a strategic partner nor a rival for Russia.

So, in this case, they need to find compromise solutions to the contentious issues. In this context, it should be mentioned here that Ankara needs to formulate its foreign policy more carefully; because Western governments targeted Turkey as a plank to implement their political schemes in various regions (West Asia, Ukraine, Central Asia), as it was done with Iraq in the 1980s for confronting Islamic Revolution of Iran.

One of the obvious examples is the attempt of Western governments to create a Kurdish state in the region, although Turkey considers itself a friend of these governments. Moreover, in the last decade, Western media has focused on some historical questions, such as the Circassian problem, and Pan-Turkism movement, Crimean Tatars.

The real goals of these attempts are to create conflicts between Russia and Turkey, which can destabilize the region especially in the Black Sea basin, Caspian Sea basin, Central Asia, which adversely affects the stability in Russia and China.

Concerning Iran, the relationship with Russia has been strengthened in the last decades, and they have become closer partners. Tehran and Moscow share the same views on various regional and international issues. In foreign policy, Iran and Russia are broadly like-minded, their interests often align, in particular challenging the U.S. and the EU antipathy. There is substantial



"The progress in Russian-Chinese relations will be complicating Washington's strategic calculations and its Western partners. Undoubtedly, this cooperation can be characterized by strategic and pragmatic interaction and offers mutual advantages for both countries."

policy convergence on international issues in various arenas, political, economic and military; that can offer support to each other and enable solving of many problems in the region, such as the problem of terrorism and extremism emergence in Syria; and of course, the two powers can collaborate to solve other problems in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen.

China and Russia denounced new sanctions imposed by the United States against dozens of their companies and entities. Can we call it an economic war?

War is an armed conflict between two countries or different groups in a country, the aims of which can be territorial, economic, military, or other benefits. For several decades, the use of military power as a tool to implement political and economic goals constituted the main ideology of the ruling U.S. political elite. Arrogance and diktat of the United States' successive administrations encourage many countries to develop their armament systems so that the engagement in open war becomes very difficult and expensive; Libya, Yemen and Afghanistan ... etc. are vivid examples.

So, the USA has begun to use new tools to subdue the enemy without fighting, these tools are the economic and political sanctions. In

the past, the causes of conflicts could be ideological or territorial, in our times; resources are the main causes of all almost conflicts. Therefore, sanctions imposed by the USA against Chinese and Russian companies are, of course, an economic war.

How can Russia and Iran play an active role in a reconstruction of Syria and revive its economy?

Of course, Russia and Iran are the most influential countries of Syria's geopolitical landscape, and it is expected to play the main role in the post-conflict reconstruction phase, especially after U.S. Caesar Civilian Protection Act sanctions, which block foreign investments for reconstruction from entering Syria.

Some Western analysts supposed that the Syrian reconstruction processes could aggravate two areas of friction between Russia and Iran! In our opinion, it is not true, because there are many economic sectors, where Iran and Russia can support Syria. Moreover, we think that there are many Russian and Iranian companies, specialized in various areas (construction of materials and machinery, oil and gas, electricity, mining technology, food industries, textile industries ... etc.), which wish to invest in Syria reconstruction. So,

opportunities and prospects are very broad, and the complementarities between Russia and Iran will be the driving force of joint efforts, which decrease the possibility of negative friction between them.

Do you think Russia and China are going to form a regional coalition to curb U.S. influence in Asia?

Clearly, the progress in Russian-Chinese relations will be complicating Washington's strategic calculations and its Western partners. Undoubtedly, this cooperation can be characterized by strategic and pragmatic interaction and offers mutual advantages for both countries.

Certainly, the Russo-Chinese alliance has become a necessity to protect their national security; because the United States is continuing its geopolitical engineering in Central Asia and the Caspian region. These U.S. operations will threaten China's "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" project.

In fact, this giant project, the implementation of which is expected to end in 2030, will link China with six important economic corridors: Mongolia and Russia, Eurasian space countries, Central and Western Asia, Pakistan, some countries of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia countries. This project dissatisfied many Western countries, as it will lead to China's economic "dominance" in the world. On the other hand, many other countries, especially those whose territory would be a corridor for such roads, welcomed the Chinese initiative.

For Russia, U.S. interventions in regions close to Russian borders will destabilize the energy supply corridors, and as a result, impact the world oil and gas market.

Do you think Russia is keen to play a more active role in West Asia, given U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan?

In the foreseeable future, the situation in the post-U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan will be very complicated; not only Russia is interested in Afghanistan's stabilization, but also China and Iran. So, in our opinion, the joint efforts of these countries with the efforts of Central Asian states can stabilize Afghanistan. Obviously, Afghanistan's destabilization will be a source of instability in the entire region.

In fact, at the moment, there is no strategy, neither Russian nor Iranian or Chinese about Afghanistan; but evidently, this region is of great geopolitical and economic importance. So, it is expected to create a platform to discuss this issue, in various formats such as Russia-Central Asia countries plus Afghanistan (1+4+1), Russia-China-Central Asia countries plus Afghanistan (2+4+1), or Russia-China-Iran-Central Asia countries plus Afghanistan (3+4+1) ... etc.

Regional powers are engaged in diplomacy with Taliban: academic

→ **1** On the Greater Eurasian continent spanning from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, there are three large powers that oppose U.S. hegemony – Russia in the west, China in the east, and Iran in the south. This competition is fought with the military, economics, politics and information war. Economic sanctions have been a key instrument to weaken Russia in response to the rivalry over Ukraine.

Apparently, the U.S. is planning to quit West Asia. Do you predict that Russia will fill the gap, especially after its presence in Syria?

The departure of the U.S. will create a vacuum that will be filled by other powers. However, Russia will seek multilateral cooperation with other states in the region. Russia is not the Soviet Union as it has neither the hegemonic intentions nor capability to replace the U.S. in the Middle East (West Asia). Russia has largely acted as a status quo power in the Middle East (West Asia) by preventing Western-backed regime change in Syria. Regime change in Syria could only have led to one of two unfavorable possibilities – either a pro-West/anti-Russian regime or a failed state run by ISIS or other extremist groups. Russia will therefore seek multilateral cooperation with other states in the region, such as Iran, that are able to take into account Russian security interests and harmonize policies. That being said, Russia will likely keep its naval base and airbase in Syria to cement its presence in the very strategic eastern Mediterranean.

Do you think great powers, such as Russia and China, and regional powers like Iran and Turkey, launch can launch initiatives like the Astana process for Afghanistan?

Yes, the regional powers are already engaged in diplomacy with the Taliban and I expect a multilateral



Astana-like initiative to emerge. After the U.S. and NATO defeat in Afghanistan, there will be a vacuum and instability that should be addressed by the neighboring countries. I, therefore, think that Eurasian solutions will be pursued, led by countries such as Russia, China, Iran and others.

Ideally, there will be some power-sharing arrangement between the different political groups in Afghanistan as the neighboring countries are apprehensive about the Taliban's intentions. Russia will seek to prevent the destabilization of Tajikistan as it is a member of the Russian-led CSTO military alliance. China will aim to include Afghanistan in its trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative. Otherwise, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) may be an ideal organization to stabilize Afghanistan to the extent it can include the

participation of the regional powers – China, Pakistan, Russia, India and Iran.

Do you think Russia and China are involved in a strategic coalition to counter the U.S. hegemony?

Russia and China have formed a Greater Eurasian partnership that continues to deepen. The strategic partnership is to a great extent motivated by the need to push back against the U.S. hegemonic ambitions, although the partnership has a stronger foundation as it is also founded on shared national interests unrelated to the U.S. The Greater Eurasian partnership is primarily geo-economic as they work towards establishing a regional economic architecture consisting of new strategic industries, technologies, transportation corridors, development banks, payment systems and currencies. Russia and China are attempting to include Iran, Pakistan, India, Central Asia, Europe and other parts of the Greater Eurasian continent into this new geo-economic architecture.

What are the effects of U.S. sanctions on China and Russia's economy?

The U.S. sanctions against China and Russia create real economic problems; however, prolonged sanctions are also teaching China and Russia to adapt by learning to live without the United States. Russia responded to the sanctions from 2014 by ending its decades-long Greater Europe strategy that had aimed to integrate Russia with the West, and replaced it with the Greater Eurasian strategy that prioritizes economic integration with the East. China has also responded to sanctions by creating parallel economic structures to reduce reliance on the United States. Russia and China are thus inoculating themselves against sanctions by ending their reliance on U.S. technologies, industries, transportation corridors, financial institutions and the dollar.

British arms exports fueling Saudi war on Yemen three times more than government revelations

The UK government's official figures say London has signed £6.7 billion worth of arms sales to Saudi Arabia since Riyadh began its bombing campaign on neighboring Yemen in March 2015. These included bombs, missiles, and warplanes.

A new landmark investigation by the NGO, Campaign Against Arms Trade, which looked deeper into the records of both the government and weapons manufacturers shows the true number is closer to £20 billion. The probe says the government figure does not include sales under a parallel non-transparent "open license" system, which gives the green light to arms manufacturers to sell specific weapons without a monetary limit. Between 2014 and August 2019, the UK operated an "open license" for bombs and missiles to Saudi Arabia that had been used repeatedly in the war on Yemen. Equipment for warplanes, used in Saudi Arabia's bombardment, have also been sold under the same "open license" system.

In a report, the researchers warn that 'the use of open licenses also offers the government a convenient sleight of hand when it comes under pressure over arms sales to a particular country due to events such as wars, military coups, or well-publicized human rights abuses. The UK Department for International Trade has not disputed the findings of the study. The Campaign Against Arms Trade said: "The use of Open Licenses covers up the real extent of the UK arms trade and makes it impossible to know what quantities of weapons are being sold around the world. UK-made fighter jets, bombs and missiles have had a devastating impact on the ongoing bombardment of Yemen. The fact that the real total of these sales could be so much higher than previously reported emphasizes the central role that the UK government and UK-based companies have played in the war. So much of the arms industry takes place in secret, and that's how the arms dealers like it". The Saudi war on Yemen has killed tens of thousands of civilians while the United Nations says country has become the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Hezbollah can fire up to '3,000' missiles a day if Israel wages war on Lebanon

Speaking to journalists, Israeli general, Amir Baram, says since the July 2006 war on Lebanon, Hezbollah has turned into a full-blown army. He estimates that the Lebanese Resistance Movement has an arsenal of between 130,000 to 150,000 different projectiles. These include rockets with ranges of 200 kilometers, cruise missiles, land-to-sea missiles, armed drones and a number of precision-guided missiles, the latter being of major concern to the regime. However, he says Tel Aviv does not anticipate a war breaking out in the immediate future. Israel was stunned when Hamas in the besieged Gaza Strip fired hundreds of missiles per day during a recent 11-day battle between the Palestinian Resistance and Israeli forces.

New Israeli PM approves very controversial settlement expansion

Neftali Bennet has relaunched the project which will see the construction of more than 3,412 settlers' units and more alarmingly split the occupied West Bank in two, the north and the south. The EI project revolves around the construction of settler's units for Israeli squatters at an unbuilt area of the occupied territories. Bennet is known to be a strong advocate for expanding settlement activities vigorously in the West Bank. Palestinian officials have slammed the move saying Bennet is worse than former PM Benjamin Netanyahu, who also tried to push forward with the same settlement project.

However, it was halted under pressure from the international community and rights groups. Bennet's move is likely to be met with a similar response from international rights organizations. The project was first proposed over three decades ago by former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin but has remained frozen. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. This comes as Israeli has recently stepped-up demolition of Palestinian homes again without any condemnation from its top ally the United States.

Lebanon's prime minister-designate fails to form new government, announces resignation

Hopes of a much-needed political agreement in Lebanon have been dashed after the country's Prime Minister-designate Saad al-Hariri and President Michel Aoun failed to agree on a new cabinet lineup leading to the premier's resignation. Soon after the announcement by Hariri to step down, his supporters took to the streets in several cities, blocking highways and throwing projectiles at security forces. Hariri announced his resignation after a meeting with President Aoun who rejected the cabinet proposal. In a statement, the Presidential office said Hariri had not presented different faces and was not ready to discuss a cabinet with new identities as was requested by the President when he tasked Hariri to form a new government back in October 2020. The statement says Hariri's objections to discussing any amendments to the cabinet indicated he had intentions to resign regardless of the meeting's outcome. The statement added Aoun stressed the need to adhere to a previously reached agreement, but Hariri rejected any amendments or changes to ministers, the selection of ministers on the basis of their sect and the names associated with them. Hariri is also said to have refused to accept any opinions that had been put forward by parliamentary blocs thereby making it difficult for his government to obtain the confidence needed from Parliament.

According to the statement, Aoun will now set a date with members of parliament to choose a new Prime Minister as soon as possible. Last August, Lebanon's former government was forced to resign after a deadly explosion in Beirut. The country is also facing an unprecedented economic crisis and many Lebanese had pinned their hopes on a new government formation to strengthen the country's economy.

Iraqi, Syrian presidents stress need to join hands against terrorism

Iraqi President Barham Salih and his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad have underlined the need for their countries to work together to confront common dangers, especially terrorism.

"President Salih made a phone call today, with al-Assad, where they discussed bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries and the two brotherly peoples who have close historical, geographical and social ties, in addition to discussing challenges," the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported on Thursday, citing the media

office of the Iraqi president.

They underlined the need to "join hands together in the face of common dangers, especially terrorism and combating its remnants that seek to destabilize security and stability in the two countries and the region, and not allow terrorist groups to catch their breath and exploit loopholes to carry out their criminal acts."

According to Syria's official news agency SANA, the two sides stressed the necessity of joint cooperation to consolidate the positive outcomes achieved in the fight against terrorist

groups along the Syrian-Iraqi border regions.

Iraq and Syria, in recent years, have been faced with the emergence of foreign-backed terrorist groups, out of which Daesh popped up and dramatically deteriorated the situation in both countries.

Resistance forces of the two Arab nations, such as Iraq's anti-terror Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) which is composed of dozens of groups, have successfully dealt with terrorism, ridding both countries of Daesh and other terrorists, while their struggle to eradicate the remnants of the terrorists continues.



al-Assad

Salih

Centuries-old bathhouse designated as national heritage

➔ 1 Some cities had separate bathhouses for men and women. They were usually built next to each other. However, there were some bathhouses, which were used by men and women at different times of the day.



There were also male and female public bathhouses; at daybreak, a longhorn (booq-e javaz) was blown to announce that the bath was ready. Men came to the baths from daybreak till the afternoon. Women could use the bathhouses from then to sunset. In some cases, five days were allocated to men and two days to women.

Persian literature is full of proverbs, narrations, and folk stories about bathhouses, which indicate the importance of the place in the past time.

The capital city of Mashhad is home to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, which attracts thousands of pilgrims from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe.

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted around the holy shrine. The metropolis has the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded.

12 historical sites demarcated in Fars

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — New boundaries have been defined for 12 historical sites and structures across the southern province of Fars.

Fasa Jameh Mosque, Shishegari Ancient Hill, Ali Khan Public Bathhouse, and Dadras Building are those demarcated recently, CHTN reported on Friday.



The demarcation projects aimed to prevent further destruction and damage and to curb illegal constructions within the boundaries of the historical sites.

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.

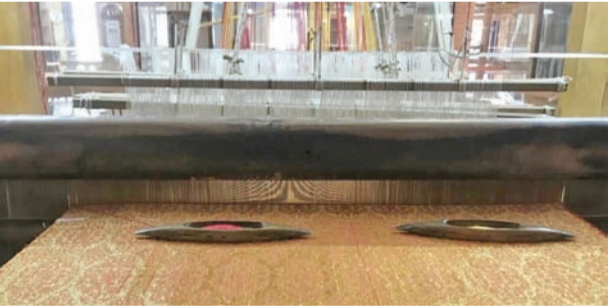
The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Household brocade-weaving machine made by Iranian artisans

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A working prototype of a household brocade-weaving machine has been made by a team of Iranian artisans and cultural heritage experts.

“The traditions versions of Zaribafi (“brocade weaving”) machines, which are used in workshops measure ten meters in length and four meters in width. And they do not fit in typical houses and apartments at all,” a cultural heritage official said, IRNA reported.

The household weaving machine which can be installed in a room covering six square meters is designed to help revive the ancient craft that is on the verge of oblivion.



Brocade is a class of richly decorative shuttle-woven fabrics, often made in colored silks and with or without gold and silver threads. Brocade is typically woven on a drawloom. It is a supplementary weft technique; that is, the ornamental brocading is produced by a supplementary, non-structural, weft in addition to the standard weft that holds the warp threads together. The purpose of this is to give the appearance that the weave was embroidered on.

Ornamental features in brocade are emphasized and wrought as additions to the main fabric, sometimes stiffening it, though more frequently producing on its face the effect of low relief. In some, but not all, brocades, these additions present a distinctive appearance on the back of the material where the supplementary weft or floating threads of the brocaded or broached parts hang in loose groups or are clipped away. When the weft is floating on the back, this is known as a continuous brocade; the supplementary weft runs from selvage to selvage. The yarns are cut away in cutwork and broché. Also, a discontinuous brocade is where the supplementary yarn is only woven in the patterned areas.

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

The value of Iran's handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021). Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

1,600-year-old ‘salt sheep’ from Iran reveals same genetic traits as modern breeds

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A team of geneticists and archaeologists from Iran, Ireland, France, Germany, and Austria has sequenced the DNA from a 1,600-year-old sheep mummy discovered earlier from an ancient salt mine in west-central Iran.

This remarkable specimen has revealed sheep husbandry practices of the ancient Near East and underlined how natural mummification can affect DNA degradation.

The salt-rich environment of Chehrabad, a salt mine where the animal remains had been discovered, preserved its skin and hair fibers, which were examined with scanning electron microscopy. The animal's well-preserved DNA revealed that it was genetically similar to sheep breeds living in the region today, according to a statement released by Trinity College Dublin.

“The sheep likely had a hairy or mixed coat, rather than a woolly one, and a fat tail, which is sometimes associated with being good for food and well adapted to an arid climate.”

Dr. Kevin G. Daly, also from Trinity's School of Genetics and Microbiology, supervised the study. He said: “Using a combination of genetic and microscopic approaches, our team managed to create a genetic picture of what sheep breeds in Iran 1,600 years ago may have looked like and how they may have been used.

The salt mine of Chehrabad is known to preserve biological material. Indeed, it is in this mine that human remains of the famed “Salt Men” were recovered, desiccated by the salt-rich environment.

The new research confirms that this natural mummification process – where water is removed from a corpse, preserving soft tissues that would otherwise be degraded – also conserved animal remains.

The research team, led by geneticists from Trinity, exploited this by extracting



The mummified sheep leg. (Image: Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum and Zanjan Cultural Heritage Centre, Archaeological Museum of Zanjan)

DNA from a small cutting of mummified skin from a leg recovered in the mine.

While ancient DNA is usually damaged and fragmented, the team found that the sheep mummy DNA was extremely well-preserved; with longer fragment lengths and less damage that would usually be associated with such an ancient age. The group attributes this to the mummification process, with the salt mine providing conditions ideal for the preservation of animal tissues and DNA.

The salt mine's influence was also seen in the microorganisms present in the sheep leg skin. Salt-loving archaea and bacteria dominated the microbial profile – also known as the metagenome – and may have also contributed to the preservation



of the tissue.

The mummified animal was genetically similar to modern sheep breeds from the region, which suggests that there has been a continuity of ancestry of sheep in Iran since at least 1,600 years ago.

The team also exploited the sheep's DNA preservation to investigate genes associated with a woolly fleece and a fat-tail – two important economic traits in sheep. Some wild sheep – the Asiatic mouflon – are characterized by a “hairy” coat, much different from the woolly coats seen in many domestic sheep today. Fat-tailed sheep are also common in Asia and Africa, where they are valued in cooking, and where they may be well-adapted to arid climates.

The team built a genetic impression of the sheep and discovered that the mummy lacked the gene variant associated with a woolly coat, while fiber analysis using Scanning Electron Microscopy found the microscopic details of the hair fibers consistent with hairy or mixed coat breeds. Intriguingly, the mummy carried genetic variants associated with fat-tailed breeds, suggesting the sheep was similar to the hairy-coated, fat-tailed sheep seen in Iran today.

“Mummified remains are quite rare so little empirical evidence was known about the survival of ancient DNA in these tissues before this study,” says Conor Rossi, Ph.D. candidate in Trinity's School of Genetics and Microbiology, and the lead author of the paper.

“The astounding integrity of the DNA was not like anything we had encountered from ancient bones and teeth before. This DNA preservation, coupled with the unique metagenomic profile, is an indication of how fundamental the environment is to tissue and DNA decay dynamics.

The study also probed how Sasanian-era (224-651 CE) herders likely raised sheep for meat consumption.

“Using cross-disciplinary approaches we can learn about what ancient cultures valued in animals, and this study shows us that the people of Sasanian-era Iran may have managed flocks of sheep specialized for meat consumption, suggesting well-developed husbandry practices,” Daly explained.

What was a catastrophe for the ancient miners has become a sensation for science; the first salt mummy, dated to 300 CE, was discovered in 1993, sporting a long white beard, iron knives, and a single gold earring. In 2004 another mummy was discovered only 50 feet away, followed by another in 2005 and a “teenage” boy mummy later that year.

National Museum of Iran, Peking University sign MoU to bolster cooperation

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iran's National Museum of Iran and China's Peking University signed remotely on Wednesday a memorandum of understanding to reinforce cooperation.

The agreement was signed by Jebrael Nokandeh, the director of the National Museum of Iran, and Hao Ping, the president of Peking University, during an online ceremony attended by officials and experts from both sides, a museum curator told the Tehran Times.

In an opening speech, Hao said China and Iran are both the birthplace of human civilizations and their ancestors have created brilliant cultures.

He added although there is a great distance between the two countries, since ancient times, along the Silk Road, China and Iran have had close exchanges, and this has led to cultural and economic exchanges, influences, and the prosperity of Eastern and Western civilizations.

Hao further said that the National Museum of Iran has numerous collections, strong research capabilities, and a window to Iranian civilization.

“This museum is one of the important museums of the world, with a world-famous reputation; it is a very ideal place for research on the origin of human civilization and cultural exchanges between East and West.”

Hao added that Peking University was the first university established in China, and one of the main goals of the university is to study Chinese civilization and to

know other civilizations of the world.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Hao added that professors and students at Peking University have traveled to many cities along the Silk Road and achieved many scientific achievements, as well as many talented experts in the field.

He concluded by saying that although we live in East and West Asia and our meeting is only possible in a virtual way, the desire for mutual understanding urges us to take common steps in the path of our ancestors and get closer to each other, and our efforts will make these ancient civilizations rejuvenate and shine!

Nokandeh, for his part, expressed his satisfaction over what he called a “valuable opportunity” to expand cooperation between the two scientific and cultural centers, the National Museum of Iran and Peking University, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Nokandeh said the National Museum of Iran has taken effective steps to strengthen cultural cooperation with Chinese institutions and museums by attending the “Glory of Asian Civilizations” exhibition and the “Longquan of the World: Longquan Celadon and Globalization” exhibition, which was visited by a large number of art and culture fans.

He said the National Museum of Iran, as the mother museum of the country and a huge treasure trove of archaeological finds from different parts of Iran, has



an important history of exhibition, research, and other related activities.

The museum has a high potential for research and cultural cooperation at the international level, and he concluded by expressing hope that by establishing this constructive relationship, we will see fruitful results, and this memorandum of cooperation is a new step in expanding cultural cooperation between two institutions in the field of cultural heritage.

At the end of his speech, Nokandeh thanked the staff of the National Museum of Iran and Peking University, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, especially the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Peking, for their assistance in organizing this cultural event.

Mosque in Rasht reopens doors to public following full restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — On Friday, the head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht unveiled the fully-restored Safi Mosque, which is located in Rasht, the capital of Gilan province.

During the restoration project, which lasted two years, worn-out bricks were replaced, the walls were strengthened, and the flooring was repaired, IRNA reported.

In June 2020, some historical objects and many ancient glazed tiles were discovered while the team of restorers was digging into the mihrab of the centuries-old congregational mosque.

Mihrab is a semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque that points out the qibla, the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca, and hence the direction that Muslims should face when praying.



According to the evidence, the historical objects discovered from the Safi Mosque belong to the Ilkanind and Timurid periods.

Archaeological evidence such as pottery pieces, interior ornamentations, and tiles suggest that the mosque was operational in time between the 8th to 10th centuries AH.

Safi Mosque, also known as Sefid and Shahidiyeh Mosque, which is widely con-

sidered as the oldest standing monument in Rasht, was reportedly established before Shah Ismail, the Safavid monarch, assumed power (in 1501).

Generally, a mosque differs from a church in many respects. Ceremonies and services connected with marriages and births are not usually performed in mosques, and the rites that are an important and integral function of many churches, such as confession, penitence, and confirmation, do not exist there. Prayer is performed by bows and prostrations, with no chairs or seats of any kind. Men stand in rows, barefooted, behind the imam and follow his movements.

Rich and poor, prominent and ordinary people, all stand and bow together in the same rows. Women may participate in the prayers, but they must occupy a separate space or chamber in the mosque. No stat-

ues, ritual objects, or pictures are used in mosques; the only decorations permitted are inscriptions of Quranic verses and the names of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions.

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the north, Gilan, in the far past, was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE.

Researchers hope to unlock mystery of 900-year-old mummy

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A team of Iranian researchers has performed a necropsy on a 900-year-old mummified skeleton, hoping to solve the mystery of the female body found in the central Iranian plateau.

To investigate and identify whether the mummy may have contained parasites, soil, and sediments from the abdomen and chest as well as a few hairs were collected for a range of parasitological and my-

cological studies, Mehr reported on Friday.

Being kept in the National Museum of Medical Sciences History in Tehran, the natural mummy was mummified due to climatic conditions and salt in the soil and was discovered in the central province of Yazd.

While practicing mummification of the dead was not common in ancient Iran, some natural mummies have been discovered across the country in recent years, of which salt men are the most famous.



Hope raises for precious biosphere reserves to survive

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Gorgan Bay and Golestan National Park are two precious biosphere reserves in the northern Golestan province, that have been endangered, however, the implementation of conservation plans in recent years raises hope for their revival.

Gorgan Bay and Golestan National Park, neighboring the Caspian Sea, play a vital role in preserving the ecosystem and the conservation of biological species, especially rare and endangered ones.

As a result, in recent years, important measures have been taken to solve the environmental issues or reduce the shortcomings of these important natural resources, although there is a long way to reach the desired condition.

Gorgan Bay

Covering an area of about 400 square kilometers, the Gulf of Gorgan also known as Gorgan Bay is the largest gulf in the Caspian Sea. It is located at the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea near the cities of Behshahr, Gorgan, and Sari and is separated from the main water body by the Miankaleh peninsula and extends until the Ashuradeh peninsula.

Increasing the water level of this water body in the past decades led to the prosperity and operation of ports including Gaz and Turkmen in Golestan and promoted relations with the Caspian littoral states.

Years later, uncontrolled water withdrawal of aquifers, reduced rainfall, and increased evaporation caused the drying up of Gorgan Bay.

For each centimeter decrease of the water level of the Caspian Sea, about one square kilometer of the area of Gorgan Bay has shrunk and many locals migrated to surrounding cities.

The significant decrease in the population caused some parts of the area to become the center of sand and dust storms posing a serious threat to the future of the green province of Golestan.

One of the serious damages to Gorgan Bay was the closure of the water transfer route through the water supply canals of the Caspian Sea.

Parvin Ghaffarian, director of the atmospheric sciences research institute affiliated with the National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric said that some people consider the lack of water release by Golestan dams



Gorgan Bay and Golestan National Park, neighboring the Caspian Sea, play a vital role in preserving the ecosystem and the conservation of biological species, especially rare and endangered ones.

as one of the factors for dried Gorgan Bay.

However, the only dam that leads to the Gorgan Bay catchment area is the Nomel Dam, which has a capacity of only seven million cubic meters, while Gorgan Bay needs at least one billion cubic meters of water to revive.

Mir Mohammad Gharavi, the former deputy governor of Golestan, also said that Gorgan Bay is drying up and this, in addition to quantity, has also affected the quality of water and has created many problems for birds and aquatic animals.

Over the last two years, about 50,000 migratory birds have died in the Bay due to botulism, and if there is no solution, it will have irreparable consequences, he added.

Industrial treatment plants should be established and sewage should be prevented from entering the bay. In addition, the three related canals should be dredged in order to provide the necessary water and oxygen to the bay, Hadi Haqshenas, the province's governor said.

Accordingly, the revitalization of Gorgan Bay has given priority, and finally, the dredg-

ing of the water canals was approved by the Department of Environment (DOE), and hope was raised for the Gorgan Bay to survive.

Issa Kalantari, DOE chief said that by the end of this year (March 21, 2022), the canals of Gorgan Bay will be dredged for better use of water resources.

If necessary, a pumping station will be set up from the sea to Gorgan Bay to eliminate the lack of water flow, especially in winter, which causes the production of botulism toxin and prevents loss of birds, he noted.

Rehabilitation of Gorgan Bay, in addition to increasing bird population, strengthening aquatic reserves, and the prosperity of tourism projects such as Bandar-e-Gaz and Bandar-e-Turkaman, reduces the risk of dust storms.

Golestan National Park

The 92,000-hectare area of Golestan National Park, in addition to low funds and insufficient manpower that almost all areas of the country's environment are struggling with, is dealing with different problems, including overhunting, wildfire, illegal constructions,

permanent loss of wildlife, and significant reduction of water and food resources, warming weather and drought.

It is home to one-seventh of Iran's plant species, one-third of all birds, and half of the country's mammals, hosting 1,350 plant species and 302 wildlife species. It has been listed as one of the top fifty ecosystems on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1930.

In recent years, in order to solve some of the problems, the government has determined an independent budget line for Golestan National Park since 2019, and after that, each year, the required fund is provided to the biosphere reserve separately from the provincial funds.

Another important problem was the occurrence of wildfire, which due to the fire large extent and lack of equipment and sufficient manpower, and on the other hand the impassable areas, several hectares of forests and pastures burnt each year.

One of the important plans devised to solve this problem is to equip Golestan National Park with technological advances for the early detection of wildfire and floods, by the DOE and the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The pilot operation of which began a week ago, and it is planned to install more cameras and sensors to cover the area.

Installing fences, equipping the protected areas with fire detection sensors, surveillance drones, modern motorcycles, night vision cameras to detect and deal with illegal hunters are among the technological advances the ICT ministry plans to equip the area with.

Issa Kalantari said that Golestan is the first national park in the country, which has been managed for three years by a board of trustees consisting of NGOs, locals, and government officials of the province.

"During the last three years, with the management of the board of trustees, the wildlife population of this park has doubled," he highlighted.

Mehdi Teymouri, head of the National Park said that currently, 13 protection stations and 4 active observation rooms are set up for the use of rangers and DOE forces.

He said that upgrading the vehicles, managing and reducing road conflicts in the national park, providing a garbage truck, setting up a center for visitors are among the needs of Golestan National Park.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. July 15

New cases	21,855
New deaths	199
Total cases	3,485,940
Total deaths	86,791
New hospitalized patients	2,410
Patients in critical condition	4,135
Total recovered patients	3,101,618
Diagnostic tests conducted	24,892,912
Doses of vaccine injected	7,938,263

Pastu Covac neutralizes new COVID-19 strains

➔ 1 The AstraZeneca vaccine, for example, is normally about 70 percent effective, but against the South African strain it drops to 10 percent, but the Pastu Covac can provide up to 62 percent protection against these strains, he explained.

Third phase of clinical trial underway

The third phase of the clinical trial is underway in eight cities being administrated to 24,000 people, Biglari said, IRNA reported on Thursday.

Although our focus is on clinical trials, mass production is underway. The goal is to produce and deliver about one million doses of vaccine to the Ministry of Health by the end of September, he explained.

"We are developing the production capacity to 2 to 3 times the current capacity," he added.

Developed by Cuba's Finlay Vaccine Institute and Pasteur Institute of Iran, Pastu Covac vaccine is a conjugate vaccine with two injectable doses. It consists of the receptor-binding domain of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein conjugated chemically to tetanus toxoid.

The two first phases of the human trial have been conducted in Cuba, while the third phase is underway with 24,000 volunteers in Iran and 44,000 volunteers in Cuba.

Mass vaccination

Mass vaccination against COVID-19 started on Iranian citizens with the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine on February 9.

While Iran continues efforts to mass-produce local candidates, 13 million doses of foreign vaccines have already been imported and others are expected soon.

Iran is also producing vaccines jointly with two countries Russia, and Australia, which may also be released by September.

Homegrown vaccines

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, which has received the license for public use on June 14.

The vaccine was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and started to be mass-produced on March 29.

Razi Cov Pars, developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, is the second Iranian-made vaccine that started the clinical trial on February 27.

Iran is producing a total of 9 vaccines.

Iran's ecology

(Part 3)

Another decisive factor is soils, further proof of the ecological diversity of Persia. According to M. L. Dewan and J. Famouri, there are four physiographical regions in Persia, encompassing nineteen soil associations. The soils of the plains and valleys cover an area of approximately 300,000 km2.

They include fine-textured alluvial soils, saline soils (solonchak and solonetz) typical of dasht areas and the many endorheic basins. Soils of the plateaus cover approximately 470,000 km2 and include gray and red desert soils, sierozems (extremely calcareous soils), and brown steppe soils, which are probably the most widespread types.

Soils of the Caspian piedmont cover an area of approximately 35,000 km2 and are related to the special climatic and floral conditions in the Caspian region, known for brown forest soils; red-yellow podzolic soils prevail, characterized by high humus content and intense weathering.

Because of the rugged topography of Persia and the distribution of mountains, combined with extremely dry climates and lack of vegetation, almost 50 percent of the land surface on dissected slopes and mountains is composed of soil types that are generally stony, shallow over bedrock, without a definite profile, and containing high proportions of unweathered rock fragments.

The lack of profile may reflect recent exposure or, more likely, forces of natural erosion vigorous enough to remove fine-textured soil material as rapidly as it is formed. These soils may be called lithosols. They are found in all climates but are particularly associated with arid and semiarid areas (Dewan and Famouri, p. 258).

Topography is a major component of ecological differentiation in Persia, especially because of the impact of the Alborz and the Zagros on the distribution of precipitation and the corresponding vegetation cover.

The human impact on nature. Persia has an ancient and more or less continuous settlement history in areas that favor human occupation. Human exploitation of the land must therefore be considered one of the most prominent ecological factors.

The impact of this exploitation on the natural environment has been quite varied and sometimes even disastrous, owing to the fragility of most ecosystems.

Major manifestations include destruction of forests for firewood and charcoal and agricultural colonization; expansion of agriculture into areas not ecologically viable (arid steppes, steep slopes), destroying the natural vegetation cover and greatly contributing to wind and water erosion of the soil; overgrazing of natural pastures by sheep and goats, with increasing negative selection of noxious plant species and of annual over perennial plants; and the trampling and compacting of soils and removal of bushy or slightly ligneous species for fuel, which have contributed to the impoverishment and destruction of natural vegetation.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

Social Security Law: a new reform in health system

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Social Security Organization (SSO) began its work in 1975, when the Social Security Law was approved, as a new transformation in the country's social and health system, providing coverage of wage-earners, salaried workers, homeless, the unemployed, the disabled, and the sick.

In Iran, July 16 was designated as the day of "welfare and social security" with the aim of achieving social justice.

SSO is a non-governmental organization and the largest pension fund in the country that covers more than 50 percent of Iran's population.

According to the latest statistics, over 14 million insured and more than 4 million retired and disabled benefit from long-term and short-term insurance and medical services of the organization.

More than 44 million people in the country are members of the social security organization, which provides 18 services in three areas of insurance, treatment, and economy.

The history of the Law on Social Services and Pension in Iran dates back to 1908 during the constitutional government in the first legislature, which was approved to provide services to government employees.

According to this law, in old age, disability, and retirement of the employees, 50 percent of the salary during the



employment period was given to the family of retired recipients, and no amount was paid to the employee during the post-retirement period.

The law was revised in 1922-1929 and 1945, and 1922 was named as the year of social security law in the country.

Following the establishment of some social insurance institutions and the formation of the Ministry of Social Welfare in 1974, the "Social Security Organization" was set up as the initiator of a new transformation in the social system and health.

Today, the organization provides medical services to the insured population with 378 medical centers, including 70 hospitals, 5 limited surgery centers, 5 independent dental centers, 83 specialized polyclinics, 121 specialized clinics, a geriatric center, and 90 general clinics.

In the field of insurance services, more than 3.6 million retirees receive pensions, and these days, with the outbreak of the coronavirus, more than 50 percent of the country's population has been supported in these health centers.

Offering services to COVID-19 patients in the hospitals, payment of sick leave and medical expenses, contracting with more than 50,000 centers to provide services to the insured, and accepting more than 190 million outpatient referrals in medical centers are among the most important measures during the pandemic.

A national electronic health record (EHR) system was established in March, in which every citizen is registered with the national ID number; it was also a fundamental change in the provision of medical services and the reduction in patients' expenses.

It is hoped that the promotion of this social organization in the three areas of insurance, treatment, and economics leads to the comprehensive satisfaction of the target community by increasing the population under coverage.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

COVID-19 lockdown moves most cities out of "red" zone

Strict COVID-19 restrictions which took effect on October 26 have caused 87 out of 89 infected cities to get out of the high-risk "red" zone.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities undergone restrictions.

The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow. All of the cities, except for two, are now out of the red condition and have turned orange or yellow so that the hospitalization rate has decreased, said Alireza Raeisi, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control spokesman, expressing hope that the death toll will also drop within two to three weeks.

In some 160 cities and towns that were on the highest alert, the disease prevalence has begun to decrease in about 145 cities. And the remaining 15 cities will also experience a downward trend this week, he explained.

اعمال محدودیت ها اکثر شهرها را از وضعیت قرمز خارج کرد

علیرضا رئیسی، سخنگوی ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا گفت: از ۸۹ شهری که از پنجم آبان محدودیت‌های کرونایی در آنها اعمال شده است، ۸۷ شهر از وضعیت قرمز خارج شده اند.

او با اشاره به محدودیت های کرونایی در ۸۹ شهری که (از ۱۵ آبان در ۴۳ شهر و از ۱۴ آبان در ۴۶ شهر) اعمال شده است، گفت: از این تعداد به جز دو شهر همه شهرها از حالت قرمز خارج و به نارنجی یا زرد تبدیل شده اند. با توجه به ورودی بیمارستان ها و اینکه میزان بستری هم کاهش یافته است امیدواریم روند فوتی ها هم تا حدود دو تا سه هفته دیگر آثار خود را نشان دهد و روند کاهشی پیدا کند.

وی اعلام کرد: اکنون در ۱۶۰ شهر و شهرستان که قرمز رنگ بودند در حدود ۱۴۵ شهر روند کاهش بیماری آغاز شده است. در ۱۵ شهر باقیمانده هم در همین هفته این روند کاهشی شروع خواهد شد.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Wealth converts a strange land into
homeland and poverty turns a native place
into a strange land.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



■ Negar Orang is showcasing her latest collection of paintings named “Dementia” in an exhibition at O Gallery 1.

O Gallery 2 is also playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Shiva Babai.

The exhibitions will run until July 27 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.



■ A collection of paintings by Saranj is on view in an exhibition at Soo Gallery 1.

Soo Gallery 2 is also hanging paintings by Yasamin Salehi in an exhibition titled “Miiin”.

The exhibits will continue until August 6 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off Somayyeh St.



■ Shabnam Jahanshahi is hanging her latest collection of paintings in an exhibition at Bavan Gallery. The exhibit named “Entwined” will run until August 2 at the gallery located at 7 Abdo off Lareztan St. off Motahhari Ave.



■ Paintings by Faran Fereiduni are on display in an exhibition at Sheidai Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “Strands of the Other's Presence” will continue until August 6 at the gallery located at 149 Bahar Shiraz Square near Hafte Tir Square.



■ Paintings by Limu Ahadi are currently on view in an exhibition at Outsider Inn Gallery. The exhibit will run until August 1 at the gallery located at 11 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.

Painting/installation



■ Farnaz Nikkhah is showcasing her latest paintings and sets of installation in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

Entitled “Patchwork”, the exhibition will run until July 23 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Drawing



■ An exhibition of drawings by Maryam Behruzina is currently underway at Vista Gallery.

The exhibition named “Deprivation” will run until July 23 at the gallery located at 1 Karkhaneh Alley off of Az-Zahra Alley, Sheikh Bahai Square.

Multimedia



■ An exhibition displaying artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Fatemeh Varkesh, Maryam Akbari, Lida Fazeli, Shima Nazerian, Mahsa Taqizadeh and Mansureh Gorji is currently underway at Entezami Gallery. The exhibit will run until July 20 at the gallery located at 608 Shariati Ave. near Motahhari St.



■ Artworks in various media by Zahra Ranjbar, Kiana Shomali, Nasim Latifi, Ruhollah Mohammadi, Sahar Moslemi, Maryam Bayat and several other artists are currently on view in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery. The exhibition entitled “Reflection” will run until July 21 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



■ Ehsan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of artworks in various media by Arghavan Rahimi, Elham Nargesvash, Forugh Sharifi, Samaneh Soltani and several other artists. The exhibit will run until July 20 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

Abbas Kiarostami films under spotlight at Moscow Garage Screen

A R T
d e s k

TEHRAN — Garage Screen, a major film center in Moscow that focuses on new cinema and the history of films in dialogue with contemporary art and culture, is holding a retrospective of Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami.

Films by Kiarostami, who gained global recognition for Iran's post-revolution cinema, are being reviewed in five sections of the retrospective named “Films, and Nothing More... An Abbas Kiarostami Retrospective”, the organized have announced.

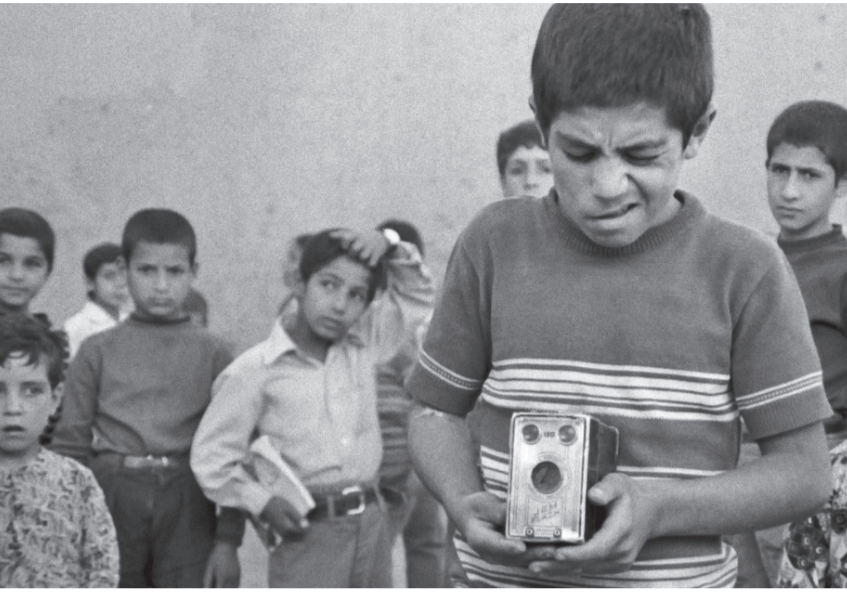
The first section organized from July 1 to 10 was dedicated to screening his early shorts and features made in the 1970s, before the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and Kiarostami's personal revolution that transformed his creative vision.

The restored copies of “The Bread and Alley”, “The Experience”, “Two Solutions for One Problem”, “Breaktime”, “The Traveler”, “Solution”, “A Wedding Suit” and “First Case, Second Case” were reviewed in the section.

The second part of the Kiarostami retrospective named “Dismantling the Fourth Wall” opened last Wednesday and will run until July 24.

This section features films that marked the beginning of Kiarostami's exploration of the nature of films and the moving image, and their connection with physical reality.

“Fellow Citizen”, “Orderly or Disorderly”,



“The Traveler” (1974) by Abbas Kiarostami.

“The Chorus”, “Close-up”, “Toothache”, “First Graders” and “Where Is the Friend's Home?” have been selected to be screened in this section.

“International Recognition” is the third part of the retrospective, which is scheduled to be held from July 28 to August 7.

This section will put the spotlight

on Kiarostami's films shot in the early and mid-1990s, which brought him international acclaim.

“Life, and Nothing More”, “Through the Olive Trees” and “The Wind Will Carry Us” are among the films.

In addition, “Taste of Cherry”, which

brought him the Cannes Palme d'Or will be reviewed. It is about a middle-aged man who drives through Tehran seeking someone to bury him after he commits suicide for a price.

The fourth section in the retrospective “The Magic of the Digital” is focused on Kiarostami's first digital films, the experimental works that naturally reanimated the magic of classical cinema in a new form.

“ABC Africa”, “Ten”, “10 on Ten” and “Five” will be screened in this section, which will run from August 18 to 25.

“A Return to the New”, the fifth section of the retrospective will present Kiarostami's later films shot in the late 2000s and early 2010s. This section

“Shirin”, “Certified Copy”, “Like Someone in Love”, “Take Me Home” and “24 Frames” are scheduled to be screened in this part, which will be held from August 28 to September 8.

Numerous international film centers and festivals have organized retrospectives of Kiarostami after his death on July 4, 2016.

The Asian Film Archive, a non-governmental center in Singapore that preserves the film heritage of Asian cinema, is currently holding a retrospective of Kiarostami.

Thirty-four feature and short films are being showcased during the retrospective, which opened on July 10 and will run until August 28 at the Oldham Theatre, National Archives of Singapore Building.

“At the End of Evin” wins MIFF Best Asian Film Award



Mehdi Pakdel acts in a scene from “At the End of Evin”.

A R T
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iranian drama “At the End of Evin” won Mèliès International Festivals Federation (MIFF) Award for Best Asian Film at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival, the organizers announced on Thursday.

Co-directed by Mohammad Torabbeigi and Mehdi Torabbeigi, the film is about Amen, who moves from a

small town to Tehran to do gender reassignment surgery.

He meets Nasser, a rich man who promises to pay for his surgery. It appears that Amen has a very similar voice to Nasser's daughter, Annie, who is about to inherit her grandmother's house and Amen is supposedly asked to play Annie's role in front of the grandmother. However, this is not the real reason.

The film was screened in the World Fantastic Red category of the Korean festival.

The Mèliès International Festivals Federation (MIFF), formerly known as the European Fantastic Film Festivals Federation (EFFFF) was established in Brussels in 1987 to promote and support European cinema, particularly films in the fantasy, horror and science fiction genres. It is a network of 22 genre film festivals from 16 countries.

“The Medium”, a co-production between Korea and

Thailand, was selected as best film in the feature film competition.

Directed and written by Banjong Pisanthanakun, the film revolves around a documentary team that follows Nim, a shaman based in Northern Thai, the Isan area, and encounters her niece Mink, who is exhibiting strange behavior that seems to be an inheritance of shamanism. The team decides to follow Mink, hoping to capture the shaman lineage passing on to the next generation, but her bizarre behavior becomes more extreme.

Lee Haven Jones from the UK was named best director for “The Feast”, while “Treat or Trick” by the Taiwanese film director HSU Fuhsiang received the special jury award.

The Audience Award went to “Nimby - Not in My Backyard” directed by Teemu Nikki from Finland.

“Stuffed” by Theo Rhys from the UK was picked as best short film.

“A Matter of Death and Life” reintroduced to Persian readers

C U L T U R E
d e s k

TEHRAN — Another Persian translation of “A Matter of Death and Life” written by Irvin D. Yalom and Marilyn Yalom has been released by Parseh in Tehran as three other Persian renditions of the book have previously been published by different publishers.

Zahra Ebrahimi is the translator of the book first published by Redwood Press in March 2021.

The book relates a year-long journey by the renowned psychiatrist and his writer wife after her terminal diagnosis, as they reflect on how to love and live without regret.

Internationally acclaimed psychiatrist and author Irvin Yalom devoted his career to counseling those suffering from anxiety and grief. But he had never faced the need to counsel himself until his wife, esteemed

feminist author Marilyn Yalom, was diagnosed with cancer.

In “A Matter of Death and Life”, Marilyn and Irv share how they took on profound new struggles: Marilyn to die a good death, Irv to live on without her.

In alternating accounts of their last months together and Irv's first months alone, they offer us a rare window into facing mortality and coping with the loss of one's beloved.

The Yaloms had numerous blessings — a loving family, a Palo Alto home under a magnificent valley oak, a large circle of friends, avid readers around the world, and a long, fulfilling marriage — but they faced death as we all do.

With the wisdom of those who have thought deeply, and the familiar warmth of teenage sweethearts who've grown up

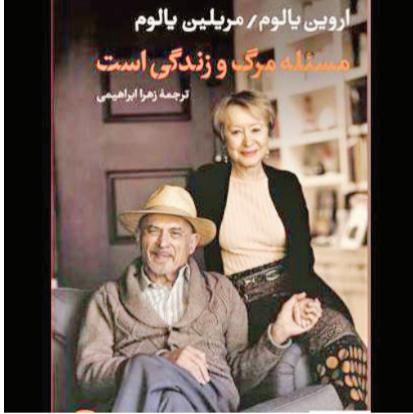
together, they investigate universal questions of intimacy, love and grief.

Informed by two lifetimes of experience, “A Matter of Death and Life” is an openhearted offering to anyone seeking support, solace and a meaningful life.

Three other Persian translations of the book by Ghazaleh Beigi, Elham Sharifi and Mehdi Azizi have been published previously in Iran.

Irvin David Yalom, is an author of fiction and nonfiction, emeritus professor of psychiatry at Stanford University, an existentialist, and an accomplished psychotherapist.

Marilyn Yalom grew up in Washington D.C. and was educated at Wellesley College, the Sorbonne, Harvard and Johns Hopkins. She was a professor of French and comparative literature.



Front cover of the Persian translation of “A Matter of Death and Life”.

“Tender Is the Night” published in Persian



Front cover of the Persian translation of Simon Levy's play “Tender Is the Night”.

C U L T U R E
d e s k

TEHRAN — “Tender Is the Night” by American playwright Simon Levy has been published in Persian.

Parham Al-e David is the translator of the book released by Ney Publications.

“Tender Is the Night” is a stage adaptation of a novel with the same title by American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The play is about Dick and Nicole Diver, a glamorous couple who rent a villa in the South of France and surround themselves with a circle of friends, mainly Americans.

Rosemary Hoyt, a young 17-year-old actress, and her mother are staying at the nearby resort. Rosemary becomes infatuated with Dick and also becomes close to Nicole. Dick toys with the idea of having an affair with Rosemary.

Rosemary senses something is wrong with the couple,

which is brought to light when one of the guests at a party reports having seen something strange in a bathroom.

Tommy Barban, another guest, comes loyally to the defense of the Divers. The action involves various other friends, including the Norths, a frequent occurrence being the drunken behavior of Abe North.

The story becomes complicated when Jules Peterson, a black man, is murdered in Paris and ends up in Rosemary's bed at the hotel, a situation which could destroy Rosemary's career. Dick moves the blood-soaked body out of the room to cover up any implied relationship between Rosemary and Peterson.

A stage adaptation by Levy, with permission of the Fitzgerald Estate, was produced at The Fountain Theatre, Los Angeles in 1995. It won the PEN Literary Award in Drama and several other awards.

Prophet Joseph (AS) in Persian literature

Part 2

Elsewhere Nasser-e Khosrow compares the effects of his own poetry on Persian to the prayer of Joseph (AS). In other words, his poetry has revitalized Persian in the same way that Joseph's incantation (afsun) restored Zolaykha's youth.

The scent of Joseph's shirt that restored Jacob's eyesight provides Nasser-e Khosrow with a metaphorical point that he uses to symbolize religion as a shirt that looks clean, new, and attractive on the learned, but a torn-out coarse piece of cloth full of holes on the ignorant.

Following this theme, he compares the shirt of Joseph (AS) to religion and the restoration of Jacob's eyesight to wisdom

and sagacity. Thus, it was Jacob's religion and his religiosity that were the source of his knowledge and wisdom.

In conclusion, the reader is encouraged to wear the shirt that the Prophet Muhammad (S) has brought forth, which is following his religion. In order to reinforce his final point, he refers to the romance of Bijan and Manijeh in the Shahnameh, and the imprisonment of Bijan in a dungeon (lit. chah “well”).

He then likens following carnal desires (e.g., gluttony, laziness, lust) to being imprisoned like a captive in a deep well, in order to conclude that the heavenly soul of man in the body is just a prisoner in the dungeon of this world, and its only salvation is

through recourse to wisdom and knowledge.

Khaqani Sharvani, a poet with poetical idioms and imagery of his own, makes frequent use of various aspects of the story of Joseph (AS) to elaborate his phraseology and to develop and drive across a poetical point.

For instance, he refers to the perfidious behavior of Joseph's brothers to highlight the duplicity of his own associates and to criticize it.

In the same vein, in order to criticize the prevalent injustice, in a metaphorical reference to the theme of Joseph (AS) and the wolf, he portrays the general condition of the time as the wolf of hearts (gorg-e delha) in order to articulate the grievance

of the people of piety, whom he refers to as Joseph of hearts.

He often generalizes a point to enrich it with connotations and covert references by the use of symbolic and metaphorical expressions, which is more noticeable in the poems containing a mention of Joseph's story.

Three poems are noteworthy in this connection: In a poem complaining about the sufferings and deprivations that he has endured, he calls himself an Alexander failing to find the Water of Life and a Joseph left waiting in the Egypt of expectations, but never finding his desired Canaan in spite of exerting every effort.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued