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Female referee Nazemi supports Iranian women

BY FARROKH HESABI
Gelareh Nazemi, the Iranian elite female referee, believes that Iranian women can achieve high levels of success in international refereeing as well as other fields of sports.

She has recently been selected to officiate at the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup in Lithuania.

As a trailblazer in the Iranian refereeing community, Nazemi wants to do her best in the upcoming tournament.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, the Iranian official talked about the experience of officiating in the men's competitions:

"It's a great feeling to be the representative of Iranian futsal – and football – in the World Cup. It was the target that I set for myself after whistling the final match of the 2018 Youth Olympics Women's Futsal Tournament in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Now I am grateful that I've been able to make my dreams come true.

"I have officiated in the men's futsal competitions in the past. It is more difficult than whistling in women's matches. In terms of physical contact and the game's speed, you will face more challenges in male competitions.

"Also, as a referee who has worked both in football and futsal, I can say that refereeing in futsal is much more difficult than in football because it's full of clashes and you have to decide in a fraction of a second!" she said.

Nazemi has also officiated in the AFC Women's Futsal Championship and the UEFA Women's Futsal Euro 2019 semi-final contest between Spain and Russia in Portugal.

She explained about the difficulty that she has faced on the way to glory: "It is a path that I started 20 years ago. During all these years, I tried with perseverance and motivation to fight all the problems in my path because I believed in my goal. People have often said that women aren't good referees. I used it as a motivating tool. I'm sure that it will not take 20 years for those who have followed this path after me, and they will reach their goal much sooner. It is because that some of the problems that I faced in my career have been solved over the years. However, the situation is still difficult for the Iranian female referees," Nazemi concluded.

The 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup will be held from Sept. 12 to Oct. 3 in Lithuania.

Iranian archaeologists in search of new clues on history of Qazvin

TEHRAN - A team of Iranian archaeologists has found further evidence concerning the history of Qazvin, which was the capital of the Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98.

Remnants of a water duct constructed by brick and earthenware, and some clay and bone material have so far been discovered in the survey conducted near the Sabze-Meydan sq. of the west-central Iranian city.

The archaeologists, however, concluded that the clay, bone, and some other discovered objects are not "in situ cultural material", believing they had been transferred from others places.

Two trenches, measuring two by two meters, and four by four meters have so far been dug to probe possible evidence of the past around the square that was a busy place in the time of Safavids.

The final results of the archaeological survey are expected to uncover clues of the historical

city that is now a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums.

Qazvin sits in a wide, fertile plain at the southern foot of the Alborz mountain range. Originally called Shad Shahpur, it was founded by the Sasanian king Shapur I about 250 CE. It flourished in early Muslim times (7th century), and was surrounded by strong fortifications by Harun al-Rashid. Genghis Khan laid waste the city, but it revived under the Safavids when Shah Tahmasp I (ruled 1524–1576) moved the capital from Tabriz to Qazvin.

The city lost its eminence once again when Shah Abbas I (the Great; ruled 1588–1629) transferred the government to Isfahan in 1598. Nader Shah assumed the crown in Qazvin shortly after his return from invading India in 1739 and before returning to Mashhad, the capital of Iran.

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How Yemen turned the tables on Saudi Arabia

Throughout history, in various battles where a country or territory has been placed under blockade, siege, sanctions, occupation, or other forms of military and economic pressure, one of two things happen.

The country or territory surrenders or a resistance emerges and successfully fights back. When it comes to Yemen, the latter is taking place. Back in March 2015, when Saudi Arabia backed by some of its allies in West Asia, as well as the United States and other Western powers, waged a war on Yemen, the Yemenis fought back using a stockpile of weapons and Scud missiles, purchased and left behind by former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. However, the arms cache soon ran out and the Yemenis had very little to protect their country but remained steadfast despite difficulties in resisting.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia had purchased hundreds of billions of dollars

worth of advanced weapons from the West. Saudi Arabia enjoyed and continues to enjoy Western support in terms of military logistics and training. Saudi Arabia had the support of Western mainstream media, Saudi clerics declared the war on Yemen as a war on the Shia knowing tens of thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of extremist theorist mercenaries would come and fight on Saudi Arabia's behalf. And sure, enough they did. During this era, the Saudis placed Yemen under a tight blockade and a siege; preventing anything from entering the country, even humanitarian supplies. Human Rights groups accused Riyadh of using starvation as a weapon of war, leading to the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

During this era of hardship, Yemenis say they relied on Kalashnikovs and God.

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Tehran to host peace meeting on Afghanistan on Monday

TEHRAN — Iran will host a peace conference on Afghanistan on Monday, July 19, with the participation of various Afghan and international groups and parties influential in the Afghan peace process.

The conference, titled «Afghanistan, Sustainable Peace and Security» is initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran and hosted by the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening.

The conference will begin with a speech by Ali

Akbar Velayati, secretary-general of the assembly.

Hossein Akbari, the deputy secretary general of the assembly, told a press conference on Sunday that more than 40 Afghan figures and representatives from Afghanistan's neighbors and regional states, including Pakistan, China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran, will address the conference.

The focal point of the meeting is to focus on negotiations in the "process of developments

in Afghanistan."

Personalities from different ethnic groups in Afghanistan will present speech at the meeting, according to Akbari. The conference, slated to start from 9:30 to 13 and then from 14 to 17, will be broadcast live by Iranian radio and television, he stated.

Akbari continued by saying that there is a hope that the meeting would help the peace process in Afghanistan.

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Biden following Trump's policies in Afghanistan: analyst

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - A geopolitical analyst says that President Joe Biden is pursuing the same approaches toward Afghanistan that his predecessor Donald Trump did.

"The Biden administration's policy towards Afghanistan is a direct continuation of former U.S. President Trump's," Andrew Korybko tells the Tehran Times.

"The incumbent is carrying through with his predecessor's promise to fully withdraw U.S. military forces from the country," Korybko adds.

U.S. President Joe Biden is withdrawing all American troops from Afghanistan, completing the military exit by the 20th anniversary of Sept. 11 attacks that drew the United States into its longest war.

Political pundits say that Biden can't speak the obvious truths about his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan so rapidly. Like the Vietnam war, the U.S. war on Afghanistan will continue to haunt Americans. It lost much more than it gained in the 20-year war.

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime for hosting al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden considered responsible for the 9/11 attacks. However, the Taliban have emerged stronger, forcing Washington to sit and negotiate with it.

To say any of those quiet parts out loud, Biden would undercut the political value of being the president who pulled the U.S. out of its longest war.

Korybko argues the U.S. is pulling out its troops from Afghanistan to focus on China.

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Tehran Municipality opens Iranian handicrafts center

TEHRAN — A center to showcase and promote Iranian handicrafts and works of traditional arts was opened by the Tehran Municipality on Saturday evening.

The center named "Castle of Art Garden" is located in the Abbasabad neighborhood and is also scheduled to offer courses on Iranian handicrafts and traditional arts.

Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi and officials from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts attended the opening.

PM Saleh bin Habtoor praises Iran's position toward Yemen

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to Yemen Hassan Irloo met with Abdul Aziz Saleh bin Habtoor, the prime minister of the Yemeni National Salvation Government, in Sanaa on Saturday.

According to the Yemeni news agency Saba, the prime minister once again congratulated the leadership, government, and people of Iran on the successful holding of the June 18 presidential election, saying this has a great impact on the region, especially the axis of resistance.

Ibn Habtoor pointed out that the axis of resistance and its positive achievements are in the interest of the Islamic Ummah and its crucial issues.

He stated that all the supporters of the axis of resistance are in a single stronghold and their common goal is to resist U.S. plots in the region and a wave of normalization of relations with the Zionist regime.



The prime minister appreciated the Iran's position in condemning brutal aggression against his country.

For his part, the Iranian ambassador praised the historical and fraternal relations between Yemen and Iran and said Tehran will stand by the Yemeni people until a just and comprehensive peace is established in the country.

He pointed out that there are two axes in the world, one is the "axis of resistance," and the other is the "axis of mercenaries."

"Iran and Yemen are the main partners in the axis of resistance, and the endurance of the legendary resilience of the Yemeni people for seven years against aggression and siege is a miracle that the Arab and Islamic ummah is proud of," the ambassador stated.

Irloo also stressed Iran's continued support for Yemen in various fields, including education, economics, health, and humanitarian assistance.

Several officials from the Yemeni National Salvation Government, including Jalal al-Rawshan, Deputy Prime Minister for Security and Defense Obaid bin Dhabi, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Ghazi Ahmad Ali, Minister of Technical and Vocational Education, and other ministers and officials were present in the meeting.

Over the years, Saudi Arabia's blockade of Yemen has been widely documented as the main reason behind the crisis. However, this policy of placing an entire region or country under siege or economic blockade did not originate from Riyadh. The U.S. was behind the move.

The situation has worsened dramatically with the coronavirus pandemic. According to the UN and aid agencies, official figures from the disease are underestimated. This is largely because of the lack of proper medical facilities. The real figure is believed to be much higher than what is being stated.

In April 2015, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif submitted a letter to Ban Ki-moon, then UN secretary general, outlining Iran's four-point peace plan for Yemen.

The plan called for an immediate ceasefire and end of all foreign military attacks, humanitarian assistance, a resumption of broad national dialogue and establishment of an inclusive national unity government.

Wang says China willing to work with Iran to counter unilateralism

‘China will continue to strengthen ties with Iran during Raisi administration’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Saturday that China is willing to work with Iran to continue to oppose unilateralism and intimidating behavior.

In a phone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohamed Javad Zarif, he said that the two countries will work together to better safeguard the common interests of China, Iran, and other developing countries.



Wang said that President Hassan Rouhani has made positive contributions to the development of relations between the two countries over the past eight years.

He added that China will continue to strengthen communication and cooperation with the new Iranian government under the Ebrahim Raisi presidency.

"China thanks Iran for its support on issues involving the country's core interests, and will continue to support Iran in safeguarding national sovereignty and national dignity and choosing a path that suits its national conditions," Wang said.

For his part, Zarif thanked China for providing anti-epidemic vaccines and supplies to Iran and supported Iran's fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

"Iran hopes to continue to strengthen cooperation with China in the fight against the pandemic," Zarif said.

The Iranian foreign minister gave significant importance to Iran-China relations, saying he believes that after the new Iranian government takes office, relations between the two countries will deepen further.

The two sides also exchanged views on the situation in Afghanistan.

Tehran to host peace meeting on Afghanistan on Monday

→ 1 The meeting falls within Iran's strategy which has "has always been trying to persuade the parties to negotiate instead of going to war."

Iran also hosted intra-Afghan talks on July 8 and 9.

The deputy secretary general of assembly noted that Afghanistan has now entered a new phase.

The war between the Afghan government and the Taliban has intensified as the U.S. and its NATO allies have left the Central Asian country after 20 years.

"The 20-year presence of the United States in Afghanistan and the eventual expulsion from that country has created a power vacuum and power imbalance in Afghanistan that affects all developments and equations. In other words, even though the Americans came to fight terrorism, to bring peace and security, and to provide welfare for the people of Afghanistan as an achievement, yet, despite these claims, we see today that drug production in Afghanistan has reached an unprecedented record, sometimes up to 50 times mass-produced. According to official statistics, the Americans have spent \$ 3.6 trillion over the past 20 years and were eventually forced to leave the scene and flee Afghanistan," he elaborated.

Americans carry insecurity and poverty with themselves

He also said that the Americans, despite their claims and based on their natural behavior in different countries, seek their interests and do not pay much attention to nations and geography.

"The U.S. goal and strategy of presence in Afghanistan was to get closer to Iran, China, and India to pursue its interests," Akbari said.

He noted that Afghanistan has an extraordinary capacity in terms of resources and reserves, and one of the main strategies of the United States after the collapse of the Soviet Union was to be present in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Akbari added, "There is a serious question that if the Americans came to fight terrorism, where are they after 20 years?" Another point is that the presence of the Americans was to be able to create a strong mechanism in the government of Afghanistan that in the future will provide the minimum security, independence, and prosperity, but with the vacuum created, we see that the 20-year-old army that was equipped and trained by the Americans cannot defend itself in the slightest."

"Wherever the United States goes, it has two messages: one is to create insecurity and the other is to incite poverty," he said.

In another part of his speech, Akbari said that during these 20 years, many Afghans sought a place to fight the Americans, and they formed a front due to the lack of attention of the Americans to the local beliefs, traditions, and customs of the Afghan people.

"Today we see the Americans leave the



scene despite all the claims that they are using NATO capabilities," he added.

"Over the past 20 years, many Afghan officials and people had hoped that the United States might be able to do something with all the international tools at its disposal, and today we see total insecurity and war in the absence of Americans," he highlighted.

All ethnic groups should participate in the future of Afghanistan

The deputy secretary-general said that it is thought that the Taliban is advancing rapidly due to the current situation and the question is what will happen to the future of Afghanistan.

"Ethnicity is one of the main and influential components of power in Afghanistan. If we consider the Taliban as Pashtuns, half of the Afghan people are present in government structures, so it is not a question of ethnicity to say that the Taliban are Pashtuns, another point is that many ethnicities sought a place to fight the United States and joined the Taliban," he remarked.

In any case, Akbari said, the ethnic groups in Afghanistan make up a significant population, and how much power the Taliban will have in the future is a "logical debate".

"If the Taliban are thought to have 20 percent of the popular base, the rest will be demanding their rights, and if it is done today with a military force, logic dictates that in the future, the tribes will participate in the future of Afghanistan, so that lasting peace and security will prevail in Afghanistan. Otherwise, we will see a long civil war in Afghanistan. It will not work and they will have to negotiate with each other," he underlined.

Iran's strategy in Afghanistan is negotiation instead of war

Akbari added, "The U.S. strategy after

leaving Afghanistan is to create insecurity, chaos, and civil war, given that the Americans have been expelled from Afghanistan, and that NATO itself has failed in Afghanistan and left the country prematurely."

According to Akbari, the resumption of war in Afghanistan is in the interest of the United States for whatever reason.

"This is because the Americans, to justify their presence in the other occupied countries, and to reform their past in some way, want to send the message that when we are not there, a civil war will break out in Afghanistan and killing will start again. Using a media strategy, they seek to get Afghanistan into an even short-term civil war," he stated.

Regarding the strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Afghanistan, Akbari said that there should not be a war in any way, and the negotiating parties in Afghanistan should sit down now and negotiate with each other, considering the components of power in Afghanistan, and think about welfare, prosperity, and independence of Afghanistan.

The withdrawal of the Americans was a great victory for the

Afghan people and the Muslim nations Akbari said that the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan is a great victory that was registered in the name of the Muslim nations and the people of Afghanistan.

"It is the first time that the Americans were expelled from a country and their expulsion was ordered in Iraq. Today, the Taliban have gained tremendous power and Joe Biden said that he does not want to send the next generation of Americans to fight them."

He added that the vital solution for the Afghan people is to celebrate the day of the expulsion of the United States and for all ethnic groups to participate in the future of Afghan-

istan, and the only solution is negotiation.

According to Imam Khomeini, no foreigner will survive in Afghanistan

Akbari went on to say that negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban in Doha have been going on for more than 10 months and there were meetings in Moscow, Istanbul, etc.

He noted that a session was supposed to be held in Pakistan but was canceled.

"The Tehran meeting (on July 8-9) had several different features. All influential and powerful tribes in Afghanistan participated in this meeting, and it was not only the government and the Taliban, but also various other groups and movements, and this goes back to the fact that Iran's relationship with Afghanistan has special linguistic, cultural, and religious characteristics compared to other neighboring countries," he stated.

According to the official, Iran hosts 3.5 million Afghan immigrants.

"More than 500,000 Afghan pupils study here and we have more than 16,000 Afghan students studying in Iranian universities. Given our trades, economic and neighborhood relations, and the history we have had in the distant past, Iran has always been acting as a mediator from the beginning," he said.

Akbari also referred to the saying of Imam Khomeini, who in February 1980 warned the ambassador of the Soviet Union who came to see Imam and said we want to occupy Afghanistan. Imam said, "you may occupy Afghanistan with military power, but neither you nor any other foreign country can survive in Afghanistan."

He added that because the people of Afghanistan are Muslims and defend their beliefs, today all can see that the Americans were forced to flee Afghanistan at the behest of Imam Khomeini.

"We hope this issue can be an example for the Western imperialist system that is present in the Islamic countries."

He also said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has had good relations with the Afghan government and various groups from the beginning and has tried to establish peace and security in Afghanistan, and this is in the interest of the people of Afghanistan, neighboring countries, and the Islamic world.

"At the Doha meeting yesterday (Saturday), they finally decided to nominate 14 people to continue the talks," he said.

Senior Afghan officials to attend the Raisi inauguration

Akbari also said high-ranking officials from neighboring countries and other countries in the world have been invited to attend the inauguration ceremony of President-elect Raisi.

Of course, government officials and some former presidents and important political figures from Afghanistan have also been invited, he added.

Iranian diplomat suggests closing eyes to the past and looking to the future in Afghanistan

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — An Iranian Foreign Ministry official said on Saturday that Afghanistan has no option other than dialogue, common understanding, compromise, forgiveness, and "closing eyes to the past and looking into the future."

Rasoul Mousavi, Director-General of West Asia Department in Foreign Ministry, said he just "returned home from Kabul" and "more concerned than ever about what is happening in Afghanistan."

Writing on his Twitter account, Mousavi said, "Opportunities pass like clouds. The opportunity of peace must be taken today, not tomorrow, as it might be late."

Mousavi travelled to Kabul on Thursday and Friday for talks with several senior officials of Afghanistan, including Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah.

Iran hosted talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban on July 8 and 9.

At the second day of the meetings, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif urged the two sides to put an end to the decades-long war in Afghanistan.

Zarif advised the sides that "showing courage in peace is more important than showing courage in war."

"Showing courage in peace is more important than showing courage in war; because to achieve peace, one must sacrifice and forgive and ignore maximum demands and [instead] heed the demands of the other side, especially in these negotiations where ... both sides are brothers and in pursuit of peace and well-being of the Afghan nation," Zarif told the final session of the talks.

On the first day of the meeting on July 8, 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

Qassem Sa'edi said that unfortunately "some



stands with our Afghan brethren," Zarif tweeted.

Iran is planning to host a second meeting between the Afghan government and other Afghan groups to bring peace to war-torn Afghanistan.

The meeting "Afghanistan, sustainable peace and security" is initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran and hosted by the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening, and will be inaugurated on Monday, July 19, 2021, with a speech by Ali Akbar Velayati, Secretary-General of the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening.

The summit will be attended by various Afghan and international groups and parties influential in the Afghan peace process, hosted by Tehran.

Representatives of the Afghan government and the Taliban met in Doha for talks on Saturday, AFP correspondents said, as violence rages in the country with foreign forces almost entirely withdrawn.

The two sides have been meeting on and off for months in the Qatari capital, but the talks have lost momentum as the insurgents have made battlefield gains.

Several high-ranking officials, including Abdullah, gathered in a luxury hotel on Saturday after morning prayers. They were joined by negotiators from the Taliban's political office in Doha.

Former president Hamid Karzai had also been due to travel

MP: Terrorist groups shot people at Khuzestan province

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Representa-

tive of Dasht-e-Azadegan in the parliament said on Sunday that terrorists have misused the atmosphere created in protest over water shortage and shot two young people at Shadegan and Karoun cities.

Qassem Sa'edi said that unfortunately "some

of the Zionist servants and puppets used the atmosphere to infiltrate the people by chanting destructive slogans and opening fire at protesters, killing two young people at Shadegan and Karoun cities in Khuzestan province.

"The people of Khuzestan, as soon as they saw these behaviors, separated their position

from these people and declared their support for the establishment," he said.

He also said at the time of the protests, security forces did not resort to any force against protesters, and the shooting was carried out by the terrorist groups.

On July 15 and 16, some of the streets at

Shadegan became crowded and a group of citizens staged protest rallies in several other southern cities of Khuzestan.

Videos posted online showed police showing composure, guiding people at the bottom of the line or in front of the line to prevent damage to public properties.

SPORTS

Iran NOC unveils uniforms for Tokyo 2020

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The Iran's National Olympic Committee (NOC) unveiled the official opening ceremony uniforms for its Tokyo Olympic Games-bound contingent.



The collection features blue sky long garment and white trousers with headscarf for women, while the men will wear the dark blue suits.

Iran delegation is made up of 66 athletes in 16 sports in Tokyo. Iran had sent 63 athletes in 15 sports to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

Male basketball player Samad Nikkhah Bahrami and female shooter Hanieh Rostamian are the country's flagbearers in the 2020 Tokyo.

The 2020 Olympic Games will begin on Friday, July 23 with the Olympic opening ceremony.

Faraz Kamalvand steps down as Saipa coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Faraz Kamalvand stepped down as coaching of Saipa football team just two months after he took charge of the Iranian top-flight team.

Kamalvand was appointed as Saipa coach with the aim of helping the Tehran based team avoid relegation.

He had replaced Ebrahim Sadeghi who left the team following poor results.

Saipa are on brink of relegation from Iran Professional League. Machine Sazi have already relegated from the league and Saipa, Zob Ahana and Naft Masjed Soleyman struggle to escape relegation.

Azmoun scores as Zenit wins Russian Super Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Zenit St. Petersburg defeated Lokomotiv Moscow 3-0 to win Russian Super Cup Saturday night.

In the match watched by 16,388 spectators in Kaliningrad, Daler Kuzyayev opened the scoring for Zenit in the 27th minute.

Azmoun made it 2-0 in the 57th and Alexander Yerokhin scored the third goal in the 83th.

The Iranian iconic forward has been repeatedly linked with a move to English Premiere League and Serie A over the past years.

FC Zenit has been awarded the Russian Super Cup six times (in 2008, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2020 and 2021). FC Lokomotiv has won the trophy three times (in 2003, 2005, and 2019).

Hazfi Cup: semifinals draw to be held on July 26

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's Hazfi Cup semifinals draw will be held on July 26.

Esteghlal, Gol Gohar and Foolad have qualified for the semifinals so far. On July 24, Malavan Bandar Anzali will play Kheybar Khoramabad to determine the fourth team.

Two days later, the semifinals draw will be held in Iran's Football League Organization.

The semifinal and final rounds will be held on August 4 and 9.

Gelareh Nazemi chosen to referee at Thailand Futsal Tournament

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian international woman referee Gelareh Nazemi has been invited to Bangkok to officiate at the Continental Futsal Championship Thailand.

The tournament will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from July 25 to 30.

Iran national futsal team have been pitted in Group B along with Lithuania, Egypt and Tajikistan.

Thailand, Uzbekistan, Kosovo and Mozambique are in Group A.

Nazemi had already officiated the men's competition. She has most recently whistled in the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup qualifiers held in Sharjah, the UAE in May along with her compatriot Zari Fathi.

Nazemi has also officiated in the 2018 Summer Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Iranian male referee Ebrahim Mehrabi Afshar will also referee at the Continental Futsal Championship Thailand.

Carlos Queiroz linked with Iraq: report

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Iran national football team coach Carlos Queiroz has been reportedly linked with a move to Iraq.

The reports in Iraq stating that the Portuguese coach could take charge of the west Asian football team.

Queiroz has not coached any team since parting company with Colombia in December 2020.

Queiroz is the longest-serving coach in the history of the Iran national team, serving for almost eight years between 2011 and 2019. He led Team Melli in the 2014 and 2018 FIFA World Cups.

Iraq are one of Iran's opponents in Group A of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

Bennet follows in the footsteps of Netanyahu

POLITICAL
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TEHRAN — Israel's government has changed, but Israeli oppressive and discriminatory policies against the Palestinians remained in place. This was on full display on Sunday morning when Israeli security forces attacked worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque with rubber bullets and tear gas.

Israeli occupation forces, along with scores of Israeli settler fanatics, broke into the courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on early Sunday morning, attacking worshippers at the holy site and detaining many of them while firing tear gas canisters and stun grenades into the worshippers, Palestinian News and Info Agency (Wafa) reported.

Early in the morning, dozens of Israeli police officers started raiding the holy site through the Chain and Moroccan gates, before they embarked on beating and assaulting the Muslim worshippers attending prayers at the holy site in an effort to make way for the entry of hundreds of Israeli settlers there, Wafa said. The police locked down the southern main building inside the holy site, and hundreds of worshippers were left inside and were unable to leave. Groups of Israeli settlers later broke into the courtyards after it was almost emptied of all Muslim worshippers by force. Israeli extremist groups have called on settlers to force their way into the Al-Aqsa complex in large numbers on July 18, on the occasion of the anniversary of what Israel calls "the destruction of the temple."

A source in the Palestinian Islamic Waqf Council told Al Araby Al Jadeed newspaper that more than 420 Israeli settlers have participated in storming the third-holiest site in Islam.

The first round of settlers' incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque, which took place Sunday before noon, ended with the Israeli special forces protecting the fanatics. These special forces continue their attacks on worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque and its gates, as well as their siege of Old Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Islamic Waqf Council warned of the repercussions of the Israeli



occupation and its settlers' violations against Al-Aqsa Mosque. In a statement on Sunday, the council confirmed that the violations and attacks against al-Aqsa were instigated by Jewish fanatic groups, with the support and political cover of the Israeli government. It stressed that the Israeli actions against the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which coincide with the Muslim holidays, reveal extremism and malice that aim at dragging the region into a religious war in which consequences cannot be contained, according to Wafa.

The Palestinian presidency condemned Israel's provocations and held it fully responsible for the escalation resulting from the Israeli incursion into the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex.

The presidency said attacks by Israeli occupation forces and settlers on Al-Aqsa Mosque and worshippers there are a grave danger to the stability and security of the region, and that these attacks provoke the sentiments of the Palestinian people.

"These Israeli provocations pose a challenge to the American demands that have called for preserving the historical status quo in Jerusalem," the presidency said in

a statement.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry also reacted to the Israeli violations of the basic rights to worship, calling on the international community to take a decisive stance against the ongoing Israeli aggression on the holy mosque.

"This [Israeli] attack falls within the framework of an official Israeli decision to perpetuate the temporal division of the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque. It also comes within the framework of Israelization and Judaization of Jerusalem aimed at emptying the city of its Palestinian citizens," the ministry said in a statement.

Palestinian officials have put Israel's provocations into the broader context of Tel Aviv's efforts to destabilize the region by cracking down on Palestinians and desecrating Muslim sanctities. Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said Israel is tampering with the security and stability of the region and is dragging the region into a religious war that will burn the entire region.

"By continuing its policy of incursions into religious places, as is happening today in the

Counter-revolutionary forces kill two people in Khuzestan protests: senior cleric

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — A senior cleric representing the protest-stricken province of Khuzestan in the Assembly of Experts has confirmed that two young protestors have been killed in recent protests over water shortage in the region, saying that the two young victims were killed by counter-revolutionary forces.

Ayatollah Mohsen Haidari noted that one of the protestors was killed in the city of Shadegan while the other was shot dead in Kut Abdollah, a city on the outskirts of Ahwaz. The cleric did not name the victims but state media identified them as Mustafa Naimawi and Qassem Khuzeiri. Ayatollah Haidari said Naimawi and Khuzeiri were both killed by counter-revolutionary forces.

"Criminal people, affiliated with foreigners and counter-revolutionaries, have abused the people's demands and shot at them and killed innocent people," Ayatollah Haidari told Fars News on Monday.

Underlining that "counter-revolutionary groups do



everything in their power to achieve their evil interests," the senior cleric said, "These people are even willing to kill

innocent people in order to achieve their interests."

Protests have erupted in several cities of the oil-rich province of Khuzestan in recent days. Demonstrators called on local authorities to release waters stored behind the numerous dams on rivers flowing into Khuzestan plains and marshes, where hundreds of thousands of people make a living by tilling lands and raising water buffaloes and dairy cows among other livestock.

The local authorities, however, complain that the region is suffering from a rarely seen drought that caused them to reduce the waters flowing into it.

Ayatollah Haidari said the demonstrators' demands and concerns over water shortage are legitimate but called on them to act with care, insight and vigilance so as not to create any grounds for the enemy to abuse them.

The cleric warned that the people's rights would be destroyed if the Islamic Revolution is harmed and that the people should avoid "playing into the hands of the enemy."

Iran voices readiness to implement prisoner swap deal with U.S., UK

→1 "We're in a transition period as a democratic transfer of power is underway in our capital. Vienna talks must thus obviously await our new administration. This is what every democracy demands," the deputy foreign minister said in a tweet on Saturday.

He added, "US & UK need to understand this and stop linking a humanitarian exchange—ready to be implemented—with the JCPOA. Keeping such an exchange hostage to political aims achieves neither. TEN PRISONERS on all sides may be released TOMORROW if US&UK fulfill their part of deal."

The U.S. rushed to deny that already a swap deal had been agreed with Iran, accusing it of an "outrageous" effort to deflect blame for the impasse in the Iran nuclear deal talks. "These comments are an outrageous effort to deflect blame for the current impasse," U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said.

"We stand ready to return to Vienna to complete work on a mutual return to the JCPOA once Iran has made the necessary decisions," Price added.

The spokesman also said "there is no agreed deal yet" on the swap.

"We had been engaged in indirect talks on the detainees in the context of the Vienna process, and the delay in restarting that process is not helping," Price noted. "While it would be more effective to make progress if we were meeting in Vienna, we are also prepared to continue with talks on detainees during this period."

Khatibzadeh lashed out at the U.S., reiterating that a deal on the prisoners had been agreed with Washington. "Outrageous—the U.S. denying simple fact that 'there IS an agreed deal on the matter of the detainees.' Even on how to announce it," he said.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman added, "Humanitarian swap was agreed with

US & UK in Vienna—separate from JCPOA—on release of 10 prisoners on all sides. Iran is ready to proceed TODAY."

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.

After the sixth round, Iran and the U.S. called on each other to make tough decisions to break the deadlock over the deal.

Ever since the end of the sixth round of nuclear talks in Vienna on June 20, the U.S. and its European allies, namely France, Germany and the UK — collectively known as the E3 — have been urging Iran to make "tough decisions" to revive the JCPOA, as if it was Iran that pulled out of the deal in the first place.

The U.S. envoy to the Vienna talks went so far as to threaten to walk out of the talks if Iran insisted on its rights under the nuclear deal. "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," Rob Malley told NPR in a recent interview.

He also made it clear that the Biden administration wouldn't lift all the sanctions imposed by its predecessor. "We're not going to lift all of the sanctions that the Trump administration imposed," Malley asserted.

The U.S. and French foreign ministers have called on Iran to make "tough decisions" to revive the deal. U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken hinted at a U.S. withdrawal from talks with Iran if Tehran continued to increase its nuclear activities.

Iran responded by saying that if a party is to make tough decisions it is the United States



and its European allies, not Iran. Because Iran had already made tough decisions after the U.S. unilateral decision to withdraw from the JCPOA in May 2018.

Araqchi has said Iran had already made tough decisions to preserve the deal and now it's the U.S.'s turn to make such decisions.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has already made tough decisions. When the United States withdrew from the JCPOA and Iran decided to stay in the JCPOA. It was Iran's big and difficult decision that led to the preservation of the JCPOA so far. Now it is the turn of the opposing parties, and according to the negotiations we had, they must decide and reach a conclusion on the revival of the JCPOA in order to reach an agreement," Araqchi said in recent remarks to Iran's state media.

Khatibzadeh has reiterated the same call, putting the onus of making tough decisions on the U.S. "The progress made in the Vienna

Home appliances export up 34% in 2 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s export of home appliances has increased 34 percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the secretary-general of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran announced.

Abbas Hashemi put the value of the two-month export of the mentioned products at \$54 million, and named Iraq, Afghanistan, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), North Africa, and Persian Gulf states as the major export destinations of these products.

Some Iranian home appliances such as wall-mounted water heaters have also been exported to the European Union countries, especially to Italy, he underlined.

Iran exported \$200 million worth of home appliances during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to an official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

Keyvan Gordan, director-general of the electrical, metal, and home appliances office of the Industry Ministry, said the ministry has targeted \$600 million of exports for the mentioned sector in the current year.

Gordan said, “Iran halted the imports of home appliances in June 2018 to support domestic production, and last year we achieved self-sufficiency in this sector.”



“This year we intend to increase production and have a strong presence in export destinations,” he stressed.

Pointing to the \$6 billion turnover of the home appliance industry, the official said: “This industry has provided 300,000 direct jobs as well as one million indirect jobs in the country and 500 manufacturing companies are currently active in this sector.”

As reported, over 15 million sets of home appliances have been manufactured in the country during the past Iranian calendar year, which was 78 percent more than the output in its preceding year.

Rise in home appliances manufacturing and export has been also planned for the current year.

Iran’s Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki has stated that the production of home appliances in the country has increased by 36 percent following the exit of foreign brands.

“Following the imposition of U.S. sanctions and the withdrawal of South Korean companies from Iran, the production of Iranian home appliances increased by 36 percent,” Niaraki said on the sidelines of a visit to a production unit.

According to Niaraki, the indigenization of the knowledge for the production of such products has also increased by 20 percent since the Iranian calendar year 1396 (ended on March 20, 2018).

“Currently, Iranian producers have indigenized the knowledge for manufacturing about 70 percent of the country’s home appliance needs, and the figure has reached 90 percent for some products,” he said.

Niaraki noted that considering the Iranian home appliance industry’s infrastructure and capacities, the country will be able to become an exporter of such products in the near future because most of the raw materials needed by the mentioned sector are produced domestically.

Regarding the return of foreign brands like Samsung and LG to the country, Niaraki said: “Currently, the return of foreign companies is not on the agenda; domestic companies have found their place and are fully capable to produce and meet the needs of the country.”

Stating that the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry will definitely support domestic manufacturers and national brands, the official added: “Today we have the necessary manpower, knowledge, and infrastructure in the field, so there is no reason to look for foreign sources to meet the country’s demands.”

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19) this industry’s production capacity increased by 10 percent compared to the preceding year.

TEDPIX loses 8,300 points on Sunday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 8,326 points to 1,302 million on Sunday.

The index had risen 23,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

It 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.

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

These systems are going to offer various services to the companies and people active in the market.

Launching these single window systems would accelerate and facilitate many affairs and hopefully services would be provided more quickly and easily to the clients and companies.

Quarterly steel ingot output rises 9% on year

→ 1 The country’s major steel producers also manufactured 3,895,167 tons of steel products in the first quarter of the current calendar year to register a three-percent rise year on year.

Rebars, rectangles, belts and coils, wide sheets, galvanized sheets, and beams were the main steel products manufactured by the mentioned companies.

Meanwhile, the major steel producers exported over 2.78 million tons of steel during the said quarter, which was 128 percent more than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

The mentioned producers exported over 916,236 tons of steel in the third month of this year, 104 percent higher than the figure of the third month of the previous year.

The highest amount of steel exports was made by Khuzestan Steel Company with 523,321 tons, followed by Esfahan Steel Company with 315,844 tons and Mobarakeh Steel Company with 267,861 tons in the second and third places.



The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years

against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S.

sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world’s top producers.

Last year, major Iranian steel producers had produced over 22.54 million tons of steel ingots in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), registering an eight percent rise year on year.

The said companies produced over 2.04 million tons of steel ingots in the last month of the previous year (February 19-March 20), 17 percent more than the figure for the same month in the preceding year.

Mobarakeh Steel Company had the best performance in the previous calendar year with a production of 9.8 million tons of the mentioned product while the highest production growth was registered by Sirjan Steel World Company with 141 percent growth.

Iran is currently the tenth largest steelmaker in the world and is estimated to climb to seventh place by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

Annual garment exports up 99%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran’s garment exports reached over \$113 million during the previous Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20) to register a 99-percent rise year on year, an official at the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade said.

Afsaneh Mehrabi, the director-general of the Weaving and Garment Industries Department of the ministry, put the value of exports of such products in the Iranian calendar year 1398 at \$59 million, IRNA reported.

Speaking at a press conference on the sidelines of the International Exhibition of Textile Industry (Tehran Modex) on Sunday, Mehrabi noted that the production of garments and textile products in the previous year increased by 25 percent compared to the preceding year.

She also said that the production of the said commodities

had increased by 20 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020) compared to its previous year.

Mentioning the negative impacts of the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic on the clothing markets in recent years, the official noted that the government decided to ban the import of such products in order to support domestic producers and provide them with an opportunity to improve the quality of their products and become more competitive in global markets.

She further stressed that this industry has enjoyed growth and dynamism over the last four years, saying: “holding such exhibitions in this field will present the industry’s latest achievements and can be a significant help for the industry.”

As announced by the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Ruhollah Latifi,

Iranian garments are exported to Iraq, Kuwait, Australia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Germany, Korea, Japan, UAE, UK, Venezuela, Ivory Coast, Italy, Turkey, Canada, Qatar, Oman, Nigeria, Switzerland, Pakistan, Georgia, Spain, and Denmark.

According to the chairman of Tehran’s Union of Garments Manufacturers and Sellers, domestic units are supplying 70-80 percent of the requirement for clothing inside the country.

“After the ban imposed on the imports of clothing, domestic units are taking all endeavors to boost the quality and quantity of their products in a way that we saw no shortage in clothing market before the new year holiday (early March),” Abolqasem Shirazi has said.

Stock market seen improving in H2

shares of export-oriented companies,” Safari told IRNA on Sunday.

“Reducing costs will eventually increase the profits of corporate stocks; Therefore, we hope that the lifting of sanctions will be implemented as soon as possible so that we can see the positive impact of this event in the market,” the analyst added.

Safari further mentioned the support programs carried out by the government as another positive factor that has impacted the trades in the stock market, saying that such measures have ensured the growth of the market in the future.

He mentioned the upward trend of the market over the past two months and noted:

“despite the fact that the market has always experienced some decline in the last two months of summer, this summer the positive news over the nuclear deals and the prospects of lifting the sanctions pushed the market up.”

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

Earlier this month, Market Expert Reza Alavi said that the inflow of liquidity into the market and the increase in the value of transactions indicate that people are once again trusting the capital market.

“At present, other markets such as gold, foreign currency, and cars are not attractive enough for investors, and the stock market is still a good place for people’s investments,” Alavi told IRIB.

“After the election debates, people have come to the conclusion that the stock market is one of the priorities of the new government, and for this reason, they have re-trusted this market, and as a result, the inflow of new capital into the market has increased,” he said.

He further mentioned the rise in the global oil prices and the stability of the foreign currency exchange market as factors that resulted in the stability of the stock market.

Caviar output reaches 12 tons in a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has said the country’s annual caviar production has reached 12 tons, IRNA reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Sixth National Conference and Exhibition on Caviar and Related Industries, Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei said over 3,500 tons of sturgeon meat have also been produced which indicates an upward trend in the production of the mentioned product.

Underlining the outstanding growth in the production of the mentioned fish, the official noted that the country’s annual caviar output stood at only one ton in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended on March 20, 2014), and only 600 tons of sturgeon meat was produced.

“With the ban on commercial sturgeon fishing following the agreement of the Caspian littoral states, the breeding of these fish species has accelerated in the region,” the deputy agriculture minister said.

He stated that the development of the sturgeon breeding



industry is on the IFO agenda, adding: “In recent years, in some parts of the country, sturgeon breeding in cages has been on the agenda and we are trying to develop this type of breeding.”

Nearly 895,000 tons of commodities traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 894,604 tons of commodities worth over \$341 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by the IME’s Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange sold on its metals and minerals trading floor, more than 490,000 tons of commodities worth over \$158 million.

On this floor the exchange traded 153,446 tons of steel, 1,820 tons of copper, 3,010 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 220 tons of zinc ingots, 268,890 tons of cement, 400 tons of coke, 35,500 tons of iron ore, 8 kg of gold bars, 10,000 tons of cast iron and 20,000 tons of sponge iron.

Furthermore, the IME saw trade of 397,728 tons of commodities on both domestic and export pit of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at almost \$181 million.

The IME’s customers purchased on this floor 3,075 tons of bitumen, 66,481 tons of

polymeric products, 30,508 tons of chemicals, 27,000 tons of lube cut, 4,426 tons of base oil, 120 tons of argon, 1,000 tons of slops wax, 615 tons of sulfur and 370 tons of insulation.

Also, the exchange played host to trading 7,970 tons of commodities on its side market.

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

More than 3,623 million tons of commodities worth over \$1.88 billion was traded at the exchange in the past month, indicating also 22 percent growth in terms of weight as compared to its preceding month.

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

Commodities traded on this floor included 979,170 tons of various types of steel, 550, 280 tons of cement, 26,060 tons of copper, 690 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 129 tons of precious metals concentrate, 31,245

tons of aluminum, 165,000 tons of iron ore, 33,705 tons of zinc, 400 tons of metallurgical coke, 60,000 tons of sponge iron, 250 tons of lead and 13 kg of gold bars.

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

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

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

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

During the past year, about 3.5 quadrillion rials (about \$83.5 billion) worth of commod-



ities were traded at the mentioned market.

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

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

Biden following Trump’s policies in Afghanistan: analyst

➔ “He’s doing this because the military, which when combined with the U.S.’ permanent intelligence and diplomatic bureaucracies constitutes the so-called ‘deep state’, prefers to concentrate its resources on ‘containing’ China in the so-called ‘Indo-Pacific’,” Korybko notes.

Following is the text of the interview:
How do you evaluate the Biden administration’s policy when it comes to West Asia, especially Afghanistan? Is it a continuation of his predecessor Donald Trump’s policies?

Most experts don’t regard Afghanistan as part of the Middle East/West Asia, but either as part of Central or South Asia, though some consider it as being within the U.S.’ so-called “Greater Middle East” concept.

Having clarified that, the Biden Administration’s policy towards Afghanistan is a direct continuation of former U.S. President Trump’s. The incumbent is carrying through with his predecessor’s promise to fully withdraw U.S. military forces from the country. He’s doing this because the military, which when combined with the U.S.’ permanent intelligence and diplomatic bureaucracies constitutes the so-called “deep state”, prefers to concentrate its resources on “containing” China in the so-called “Indo-Pacific”.

The U.S. failed to achieve any of its strategic goals in Afghanistan. The government there remains very weak and unpopular, Western-style liberal-democracy never truly took hold in the country, and Afghanistan didn’t turn into a base for destabilizing the rest of the region through Color Revolutions and terrorism. It’s objectively a waste of time, money, and military resources for the U.S. to remain there. A scenario also exists whereby the U.S.’ accelerated withdrawal at least temporarily increases instability in Afghanistan and thus creates fertile ground for ISIS-K to expand its presence there. It’s unclear whether that will ultimately happen though since the Taliban actively fights against that terrorist group, but it might be the U.S.’ last-ditch effort to destabilize the region.

Don’t you think that the Taliban will take full control of Afghanistan in the near future? In that case, what will be the reaction of Russia?

The Taliban claims to control approximately 85% of the country but it’s difficult to independently verify this assessment. The Kabul government remains popular in some of Afghanistan’s largest cities, especially the capital of course, but the Taliban could theoretically cut off their supply routes and therefore try to force them to surrender if its nationwide offensive continues to succeed. Even if it doesn’t, though, there’s no doubt that the Taliban is probably the most powerful military force in Afghanistan right now. It’s also wildly popular with many in the rural areas, especially among fellow Pashtuns, though it’s recently begun to appeal to other groups over the past few years too.

Although Russia officially regards the Taliban as a terrorist group, it’s cultivated excellent relations with it on the political level over the last couple of years through the Moscow peace process which saw the Eurasian Great Power even hosting the Taliban in its capital on several occasions, the most recent of which was earlier this month. Russia simply doesn’t want the Taliban to threaten the



Central Asian Republics (CAR), which the group promised not to do, nor host foreign militant groups. The latter point was already agreed upon as part of last year’s peace deal with the U.S. Russia is also concerned that the continued intensification of the Afghan Civil War might create a regional refugee crisis as well as embolden ISIS-K.

Should the Taliban return to power whether in part due to a peace deal or in full through conquering Kabul, Russia is likely to retain its excellent political relations with the group provided that they keep their promises not to threaten the CARs or host foreign militant groups. Russia’s long-term vision is to capitalize upon the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan (PAKAFUZ) railway that was agreed upon in February in order to finally connect with the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which is the Eurasian Great Power’s centuries-long strategic goal. It would also like to progressively incorporate Afghanistan into regional multipolar structures such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and perhaps also the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union.

Is there any chance to launch initiatives like the Astana process to bring peace to Afghanistan?

Probably not since the situations in Syria and Afghanistan aren’t all that comparable. In the first, Russia, Iran, and Turkey are the three most powerful military actors with literal boots on the ground while no regional country officially has such a military presence in Afghanistan. Furthermore, while Turkey occupies part of Northern Syria, no regional country occupies any inch of Afghan territory. The last point of relevance is that the Taliban is on the upswing and marching across the country while the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) never had such a lightning-fast offensive since the war there began. It was, therefore, easier for Damascus to at the very least temporarily compromise on its interests than it is to get the Taliban to do the same.

Nevertheless, there already exists the so-called “Extended Troika” between Russia, Pakistan, China, and the U.S. for facilitating the Afghan peace process. Islamabad recently said that it’s difficult to get the Taliban to compromise nowadays after Washington set a clear date for its full military withdrawal. Even so, these countries could still work to encourage some positive political progress even if success is unlikely. The Taliban recently promised to

unveil a written peace plan during the next round of peace talks in August so it remains to be seen exactly what it has in mind and whether the “Extended Troika” can convince Kabul to comply with most of the group’s demands in the interests of peace.

It deserves mentioning that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov floated the idea of broadening the “Extended Troika” last week to include India and Iran. It’s unclear whether this initiative will succeed in full since Pakistan will likely remain opposed to having its hated rival join this peace format, though it might not even have much to worry about in the first place since New Delhi doesn’t have official contact with the Taliban, at least not yet. Iran, however, might become a more important diplomatic player if its recent hosting of the Taliban in Tehran is any indication, even if the Islamic Republic remains outside the existing multilateral peace framework. It would be ideal though for Iran to have a more formal role if it wants to since it has a direct stake in the war’s outcome.

Observers should remember that the “Extended Troika” is incapable of replicating Astana’s relative successes due to the earlier mentioned differences between the situations in Syria and Afghanistan. Despite this, it can still function as a platform for coordinating the interests of regional stakeholders and enabling them to agree upon the role that they’ll play thereafter the war finally ends. The best-case scenario is that Afghanistan serves as the crossroads of regional connectivity projects stretching from Pakistan to Russia (PAKAFUZ) and China to Iran (“Persian Corridor”). India can also continue to be one of Afghanistan’s premier investors, though provided that it abstains from waging a proxy war against the Taliban and Pakistan like those two previously accused it of.

Don’t you think superpowers like Russia and China have the desire to fill the power vacuum left by America in Afghanistan?

Neither Russia nor China has any desire whatsoever to fill the power vacuum left by America’s withdrawal from Afghanistan in any military sense. They have excellent political relations with the Taliban and won’t support any proxy war against it since this would only prolong the ongoing Afghan Civil War and therefore harm their respective regional connectivity visions that were described in the

answer above. All that they’re willing to do at this moment is coordinate their security strategies through the SCO, and in Russia’s case, also through the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) mutual defense pact with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and especially Afghan-neighboring Tajikistan.

Instead of being guided by geopolitics like before, both they but also importantly Pakistan are now formulating their policies based on geo-economics. They don’t want any zero-sum outcomes that harm regional countries’ interests but would preferably like to bring everyone’s said interests together in order for them all to mutually benefit through Afghan-transiting regional trade routes like PAKAFUZ and the Persian Corridor. The only vacuum that they have any interest in directly filling is the socio-economic one through those two projects. That requires sustainably stabilizing Afghanistan though, which is a lot easier said than done, particularly because peace continues to be a distant prospect there.

America, after it invaded Afghanistan, preferred to follow unilateral policies. It only aligned with its Western allies in the country. Why has the U.S. been reluctant to collaborate with its rivals, including Russia and Iran, to tackle troubling regional crises?

It’s true that the U.S. behaved unilaterally in Afghanistan, but it’s not entirely accurate to claim that it hasn’t collaborated with Russia there. Even before the fall 2001 invasion, the U.S. worked closely with Russia to secure regional military bases in Central Asia which were granted with Moscow’s permission. Although that was initially the limit of their cooperation, they’ve recently begun consulting one another regarding the impending military withdrawal according to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov in comments that he made last week.

Regarding the Iranian angle, there have been unconfirmed reports over the years that the U.S. might have even discussed its invasion of Afghanistan with Iran, which really hated the Taliban around that time due to the group’s terrible mistreatment of Shias, killing of Iranian diplomats, and the threat that it posed to the Islamic Republic. That, however, seems to be the extent of their contacts on the issue if those reports are even true that is. In general, the U.S. behaved unilaterally in Afghanistan because it wouldn’t be able to attain the strategic goals enumerated in the first answer – especially encouraging regional destabilization - if it worked closely with Russia and Iran to those ends since neither of those two wanted to be destabilized by Afghan-emanating threats.

The very question being asked implies that the U.S. might have some kind of benign motives for its many military interventions abroad, including in Afghanistan, but that’s arguably an inaccurate assumption. It doesn’t invade other countries to bring peace, Western-style democracy, Western notions of human rights, and security, but to enhance its strategic position relative to its top regional rivals, which are Russia, Iran, and China in the Afghan case (and eventually expanded to Pakistan for some time too). As such, the question that should really be asked is, “What regional strategic goals did the U.S. want to advance against Russia, Iran, and China in Afghanistan?”

Bahraini opposition urges ‘political leap’ in push to end dictatorship

A Bahraini opposition protest movement has underlined the need for “a real political leap” and a new constitution drafted by the will of the people to put an end to dictatorship in the Persian Gulf country.

In a statement released on Saturday, the February 14 Youth Coalition, taking its name from the date when the popular uprising against the ruling Manama regime roared into life, said that any political process that disregards people as the source of power lacks legitimacy.

It also attached great importance to recent remarks by Bahrain’s most prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim about “full political right” and “public sovereignty,” noting that the comments provide a ground to end dictatorship and initiate a stable political life.

According to Press TV, the February 14 Youth Coalition also said, “The people of Bahrain no longer trust the dictatorial and criminal administration. The successive Intifadas (uprisings) and revolutions in Bahrain are a clear proof that the people will no longer accept the violation of their genuine political rights to form a government which respects principles and values and relies on the religion of Islam in its rulings. Our nation does not accept any solution that is not based on the full realization of political rights.”

Putin, Biden discussed use of Russian bases to ‘coordinate actions’ in Afghanistan

A Russian media source has alleged that Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and his American counterpart, Joe Biden, have discussed the possibility of exchanging information on the conflict in Afghanistan and the use of Russian military bases to monitor the situation in the war-ravaged country.

The Russian Kommersant daily newspaper reported on Saturday that negotiations between the two presidents to “coordinate actions” in Afghanistan had taken place at their June 16 summit meeting in the Swiss city of Geneva.

Citing a source familiar with the talks, the business paper said the discussions included a proposal by Putin to use Russian military bases in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, possibly to exchange information obtained by surveillance drones.

The U.S. “has not yet given a clear answer,” according to the source.

The Russian daily provided no further details about the matter.

Commenting on the report, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed that the situation in Afghanistan was on the agenda of the June summit, but made no remarks on whether the discussions included talks about Russia’s Central Asian bases.

U.S. special representative for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, also refused to comment on the report.

Russia has a major military base in Tajikistan, one of Afghanistan’s northern neighbors, which houses at least 7,000 troops, several hundred tanks and armored personnel carriers.

Taliban leader says ‘favors political settlement’ to Afghan conflict

Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has urged Kabul to stop relying on “foreigners” to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan, saying the militant group favors “a political settlement” by the Afghan parties.

Akhundzada said in a message on Sunday that despite the group’s “military gains and advances, the Islamic Emirate strenuously favors a political settlement in the country.”

“Every opportunity for the establishment of an Islamic system, peace and security that presents itself will be made use of by the Islamic Emirate,” he added.

He said the Taliban remained committed to forging a solution to end the war but slammed “the opposition parties” for “wasting time.”

“Our message remains that instead of relying on foreigners, let us resolve our issues among ourselves and rescue our homeland from the prevailing crisis,” Akhundzada added.

He made the remarks as representatives from Kabul and the Taliban sat down for a new round of talks in the Qatari capital, Doha, on Saturday.

The two sides were due to talk again on Sunday.

Resistance News

Mahathir Mohamad reminds world to continue supporting Palestinian cause

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Former prime minister of Malaysia Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has reminded the world to continue supporting the Palestinians and to denounce the Israeli regime for the crimes it committed in Palestine.

He said the Palestinians had been suffering for 73 long years and human beings are duty-bound to stand up and express their disgust for crimes against humanity which were committed by the Israelis with such impunity.

“With more and more people coming forward denouncing the belligerent regime, and as international public opinion swings sufficiently against the illegal occupation of Palestine, we may still hope to see the end of Israel’s apartheid, hopefully in our lifetime.

“In more ways than not, Palestine exposes the ugly truths about Western democracies and the advocates of free world, their hypocrisy, double standards and self-serving diplomacy. We cannot just sit back and let it persist. We have to actively support the movement for Justice for Palestine. It is the Palestinians’ basic right to return to their land,” he said at the official launching ceremony of Justice For Palestine Action Front (JPAF) via Facebook live today.

The JPAF is an initiative by a few individuals, mostly university professors and academics, who wish a better future for the Palestinians, especially their youths and children.

How Yemen turned the tables on Saudi Arabia

➔ 1 When a nation has this level of willpower, determination and resolves to fight for its natural right to independence and freedom from hegemony, history proves these kinds of nations will not back down from a rightful duty, which to them is obligatory to perform.

In 1982 when Iraq, under the regime of Saddam Hussein and supported by literally everyone, invaded Iran, the Islamic Republic was prevented from purchasing barbed wire to defend its borders. And so that same year, two members of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, both now martyred, General Mohamad Hemmet and then General Qassem Soleimani traveled to Syria seeking to advise on ways to build an indigenous missile program. Iran relied on self-production and is now among the top countries in the world when it comes to missile technology. Here, a similar scenario can be drawn with Yemen.

Another is the besieged Gaza Strip where Israel has enforced a land, air and sea blockade. Despite Gaza being labeled as ‘the world’s largest open-air prison’, when Israel violated the sanctity of the holy al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds; the Gaza based Palestinian resistance shocked the world and certainly took Israel by surprise, by launching hundreds of barrages of missiles. All Israeli settlements that occupy Palestine and all sensitive Israeli targets and infrastructure were within reach of Palestinian missiles.

One of Saudi Arabia’s biggest foreign policy blunders was keeping Yemen under strict blockade and preventing Sana’a from obtaining any weapons. A policy that has backfired on Riyadh, as over the past two- or three-years Yemen started its own impressive indigenous missile and drone program. In other words, Yemen reached a point, where it did not need to rely on anybody, and once it mastered the technology of manufacturing drones and missiles, it began mass-producing them and building modified versions with longer ranges and stronger warheads.

And so, the retaliation begins, with Saudi military targets inside the Kingdom coming under regular attack and then

more sophisticated attack and then wide-scale sophisticated attack. The hundreds of billions of dollars Riyadh spent on radar equipment have failed to detect cheaply made armed drones that are wreaking havoc inside the Kingdom. State-owned Saudi Aramco has taken a heavy hit damaging the Saudi economy. Riyadh did not anticipate the day when Yemeni forces had the ability to strike hundreds of kilometers deep inside the Kingdom at targets that included its all-important oil industry.

Meanwhile, on the ground, Saudi tanks and other military vehicles and checkpoints guarding the Kingdom’s borders are being attacked and destroyed one after the other. Inside Yemen, the country’s forces, spearheaded by Ansarullah have liberated many regions that had been occupied by the Saudis or their mercenaries on the ground or the ever-decreasing militants loyal to the former government. The last major Saudi stronghold in Yemen, Ma’rib, is on the verge of collapse as fighting intensifies in the city. No number of financial bonuses, courtesy of the Saudi King, can lift the morale of Saudi troops or the armies of Saudi-backed mercenaries. They are being defeated and killed on the battlefield. The nature, scope and sophistication of Yemeni retaliatory attacks and cross border land operations are increasing. In July 2019, the United Arab Emirates, which strongly backed Saudi Arabia’s war and

had also been the subject of retaliatory operations from Yemen, realized this battle was not winnable and withdrew the majority of its support in the form of money, weapons and ground troops. This is not to say the UAE is still not interfering in Yemen, the Emiratis maintain interest and support for southern separatist groups in addition to the Yemeni island of Socotra. As far as the Saudi war on Yemen is concerned, Riyadh is stuck in a quagmire. The days that the Kingdom were on the offensive are long gone. Yemeni forces are now on the offensive and Saudi Arabia is searching for the best way to find an exit strategy (from a war that it initiated in the first place) while saving face at the same time. This is why a Saudi peace offer earlier this year was rejected by Sa-

na’a as the terms of the ceasefire proposal reflected this. The Saudi ‘peace’ initiative did not include a lifting of the deadly blockade it has imposed on its southern neighbor. Rightly so, Yemen rejected the offer because they don’t see Riyadh in a position anymore to use the humanitarian crisis as leverage. In addition, the popular Ansarullah forces, who have spearheaded the resistance, backed by the Yemeni army are now in a position to dictate the details of a ceasefire; one that protects Yemen’s territorial integrity. As Saudi Arabia mulls what to do next, it faces another dilemma, this time from the United States. Under the administration of President Joe Biden. The Biden White House acknowledges the war was long lost yet continues to support Saudi Arabia but Biden wants to shift focus elsewhere and the Saudi war is getting in his way. Biden wants to end military support for the Saudis and would rather the war (which has been a terrible public relations exercise for Washington) just ends... unless Riyadh can pay for more weapons. However, the oil market is not exactly performing fantastic with a Coronavirus pandemic. Yemen meanwhile, has not just defeated Saudi Arabia, it has become part of a regional resistance against Israel. As was seen in the 11-day battle between the regime occupying Palestine and resistance forces in the besieged Gaza Strip, the demonstrations and words of support from the Yemeni leadership towards the Palestinians spoke volumes. In one particular speech, the leader of Ansarullah, Abdul Malik al-Houthi said Yemen is ready to support the Palestinians in any future conflict. Something that won’t go down well in Tel Aviv such has been the miscalculation and lack of leadership Saudi Arabia has shown under its de facto ruler Crown Prince, Mohamad Bin Salman.

For the Yemenis, it was difficult to reach the mountaintop. Staying there is always more difficult. For nearly seven years, the Yemeni nation, with its willpower, dignity, steadfastness, resistance, patience and pride has managed to maintain its presence on the mountaintop as well as in the history books.

Iranian archaeologists in search of new clues on history of Qazvin

➔1 Agha Mohammad Khan of the Qajar dynasty reestablished Qazvin about 1796 as a major base for foreign trade with the Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf, and Asia Minor. Interference by Russia and Britain in the internal politics of Iran in the 19th century and the autocratic rule of the country resulted in unrest and the growth of a nationalist movement.



The city fell to a nationalist force from Rasht in 1909. The British established a military headquarters in Qazvin in the 1920s. For most travelers, Qazvin is primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley. Qazvin is also home to one of the biggest roofed caravanserais of the country, Sa'd-al Saltaneh caravanserai. Dating back to the Qajar era, it's a place for discovering tens of Højreh or shops, cafes, yards, and a stunning mosque. It's a place for visitors who want to experience the culture, culinary, and hospitality of Iran.

Cultural heritage elements in southeast Iran added to national list

HERITAGE TEHRAN —A total of eight cultural elements, which are practiced in Kerman province, have recently been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.



The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Saturday announced the inscriptions in an official document it submitted to the governor-general of the southeastern province, CHTN reported. The skill of making Ab-Roghanu, a traditional sweet dessert, Bibi Dan ritual, the skill of Khos Bafi, and the talent of making Lupet dolls were among the elements added to the prestigious list. The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few. Kerman province is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut.

Ten properties in northern Iran made national heritage

HERITAGE TEHRAN —A total of ten aging structures and historical buildings in Mazandaran province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, CHTN reported. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Sunday in a letter to the governor-general of the northern province. Ojabeit Castle, Dadar Mansion, Sarukola Public Bathhouse, and Qaemshahr Textile Factory were among the properties added to the prestigious list. An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).



Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty. The northern section of the region consists of lowland alongside the Caspian and upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains. Marshy backlands dominate the coastal plain, and extensive gravel fans fringe the mountains. The climate is permanently subtropical and humid, with very hot summers.

No threat to ancient Narin fortress, official says

HERITAGE TEHRAN — No potential threat poses Narin Qa'leh, an ancient mud-brick fortress, which is located in the city of Meybod, Yazd province. "Narin Qa'leh is steady and there is no danger to this historical monument," a local official in charge of cultural heritage protection said on Saturday, CHTN reported. "A witnessing mark, which was installed on the fortress's wall (the Iranian calendar year) 1379, has not been shifted at all," Abdolmehdi Hematpour added. This magnificent fortress is under constant monitoring and restoration..., the official explained. His comments came after a video clip on social media websites that tried to display that the ancient fort is at risk of destruction. The monument rises imposingly above the oasis town that has grown up around it. Revealing three layers of construction, the oldest of which suggests some kind of settlement was built here as early as 4000 BC.



Legend has it that the fortress belonged to King Solomon and was built by jinns (spirits), but whatever the original provenance of its foundations, most of what can be seen today dates from the Sassanian era. Standing near the ancient Silk Road, the fort was used by soldiers who provided an armed escort for passing caravans, charging a tax for their services, historical sources say. The view from the top of the castle gives an interesting view of the town of Meybod and shows how the growing population of the citadel spilled beyond the castle walls. Watchtowers dotted around town until recently formed the further reaches of the urban area but these have since been breached as new houses stretch into the surrounding desert. In many ways, Iran under the Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that during Sassanid times, the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance.

Legal boundaries of UNESCO-designated Hyrcanian Forests declared

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Legal boundaries of the UNESCO-designated Hyrcanian Forests have recently been declared to the governor-general of Gilan province. Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced the legal boundaries on Sunday in a letter to the governor-general of the northern province, IRNA reported. According to the communiqué, the demarcated forests and their properties are under the supervision of Gilan's cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts department, and any encroachment on the area and violation of the protection rules is a crime and the perpetrator is subject to legal penalties. Hyrcanian Forests (also known as Caspian Forests), extends from the south of Azerbaijan to about 900 km to the east to the Iranian northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan. This forest forms the outermost boundary of the west-Eurasian nemoral deciduous

forests to alpine thorn cushion corridors and forest-free dry vegetation of the Iranian highlands and Central Asia. The Hyrcanian Forests cover the northern slope of the Alborz Mountain in Iran at the southern edge of the Caspian Sea and it contains very rich ecosystems due to the particular orographic and climatic situation (precipitation rich, warm-temperate, high moisture from the Caspian Sea and damming effect of the Alborz Mountain range). According to UNESCO, the forests contain the most significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation. It also contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance. It is an outstanding example in the record of significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms and significant geomorphic or physiographic



features. It is also a significant example representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, ecosystems and communities of plants.

Tehran geological museum gets affiliated with UMAC

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The Geological Museum of the University of Tehran has become affiliated with the International Council of Museums Committee for University Museums and Collections (UMAC), ISNA reported on Sunday. According to the UMAC, the Geological Museum has a "worthy and unique" collection of Iran's rich representatives of Geo-materials, scientific documents, and various geological resources, diverse minerals, rocks, and fossils. The museum was established in 1934 by



the late Professor Yadaleh Sahabi, Chair of Geology at the University of Tehran. Then, with his guidance and the continuous ef-

forts of colleagues and students, finally, the museum was opened to the public and students in 1940. The museum features various samples of rocks, minerals, and fossils, which were purchased from abroad. Later, with the increasing number of student admissions and field trips all over Iran, the museum samples became richer continuously. After Dr. Sahabi's retirement, Dr. Sirus Zareian, became the director of the Museum of Earth Sciences. The Museum, to enhance the level of education in geology and other earth sciences, provides numerous visits

annually for various institutions including schools, universities, and research institutes. The fossils of vertebrates and invertebrates in the museum are very unique and diverse. In the vertebrate section, traces of early human activities have been collected. In addition, specimens from the scientific and educational activities at the university are documented and maintained here. The museum plays a major role in placing the foundation and vitalizing scientific and applied research and advancing the earth sciences with the experience gained on the Iranian geo-heritage.

250 people attend handicraft courses in Yazd

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A total of 250 people attended various handicraft courses across Yazd province during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), the deputy provincial tourism chief has said. The courses covered fields such as weaving kilim carpets, traditional jewelry, wood carving, pottery, and traditional embroidery, Mohammadreza Dehqan Mehrjerdi said on Sunday. "The courses are intended to effectively contribute to the educational, cultural, and social development of the crafters in the region," the official explained. Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. It is teeming with mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgers (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape. The city is known today for its traditional districts, the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad. The city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. 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. In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14. Shiraz was named a "world city of [diverse] handicrafts". Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a

"world city of filigree". And Qassemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village. 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), Mehr reported. The country's handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade. The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Webinar to turn spotlight on traditional ice storage

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Robat Karim in Tehran province plans to organize a webinar on Thursday to discuss the historical Yakhchals (ice storages) and their usages in the past. Throughout the webinar, participants will learn about the main characteristics of desert cities, including features of the traditional Yakhchals, Robat Karim's tourism chief has announced. Because of its location on the southern outskirts of Tehran and its proximity to the desert, Robat Karim has a different architecture compared to the northern

cities and villages of Tehran province, CHTN quoted Hamid Karimi as saying on Sunday. Architects and cultural heritage experts are scheduled to participate in the webinar, the official added. When there was no electricity, no refrigerators, and no appliances, people kept a huge amount of water next to the high walls of Yakhchals, which cast a shadow that kept the water cool. The water turned into ice during the wintertime. Then people cut the ice into many portable parts and put them in the ice house and covered the surface of the ice with special local grass.

The structure is built high to minimize the contact of warm air with the ice surface as the warm air floats upwards. The feature of the ice storage was essential to its functioning. There were also wells behind the ice storage with a connective canal at the bottom of the ice storage to the wells with a slight slope. When people piled up the ice, a little amount of water remained under the heap of ice. If the water was not removed it would make the rest of the ice melt. By channeling the water into the well, not only did they prevent the ice stored in the ice house from melting, but also they



had cold and tasty water during summer months when the weather went up to 40 degrees Celsius.

Over 140 national macro technology projects launched

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 141 national macro technology projects have been launched across the country until June 21, according to the Center for National Macro Technology Projects.

A total of 316 projects have been approved so far, 141 of which have been completed and 54 percent of these projects are related to health sector.

Other areas included agriculture, advanced machinery, environment, defense and military industries, digital intelligence, basic knowledge, transportation and other sectors.

Supported by the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, "national macro technology projects" are knowledge-based and technological projects with commercialization abilities, implementation of which requires the extensive cooperation of various players.

However, these projects respond to the strategic and fundamental needs of the country. Given their impact on production, self-efficacy, and job creation, these projects must be supported as important tools for the realization of a knowledge-based economy in the country.

In order to implement the national macro projects, the Vice-Presidency coordinates the government and private ministries, organizations, and units and financially supports the advancing of the projects using the budget of the Vice-Presidency and the relevant units.



"National macro technology projects" are knowledge-based and technological projects with commercialization abilities, implementation of which requires the extensive cooperation of various players. However, these projects respond to the strategic and fundamental needs of the country.

The output of the national macro technology and innovation projects in the Vice-Presidency is often products manufactured in the country for the first time in a way that it can solve a serious problem in a production industry.

Technology development in Iran
Despite sanctions putting pressure on the country, a unique opportunity was provided for business development and the activity of knowledge-based companies in the country.

Currently, over 7,000 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari told the Tehran Times in October 2020 that "U.S. sanctions caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline three years ago, however, it has returned to growth and is projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2021).

Fortunately, last year, companies achieved a record sale of 1.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$28.5 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which is expected to increase by 40 percent this year."

UN provides humanitarian aid to help fight COVID-19 in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN – With the contribution of the EU Humanitarian Aid, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) procured 1,000 ventilators to help Iran fight against the pandemic.

The ventilators will be delivered to more than 300 centers for the elderly covered by the Welfare Organization of Iran.

Some 800 devices have so far been provided and 200 will soon be delivered, which will be distributed in 13 provinces across the country.

Mohammad Nafrieh, deputy head of rehabilitation at the Welfare Organization said that there are now more than 1,000 nursing homes in the country, of which 350 are offering care only to the elderly.

The ventilators are distributed in elderly care centers, and those extra amounts among the centers with a larger elderly population, he added.

Two months after the first coronavirus case was identified in Iran, the Welfare Organization formed an infectious



disease committee to take preventive measures, he said.

Due to preventive measures, the mortality rate in nursing homes of Iran was much lower than the global norm and even compared to the advanced countries. For example, the World Health Organization in the region has praised the practice of virtual education for children with disabilities, Nafrieh explained.

During the pandemic, nursing homes have given priority for vaccination, and almost 100 percent of people in nursing homes received vaccines, so that the new cases and mortality rate were significantly reduced.

Farabi International Award announces 37 winners

SOCIETY TEHRAN – The 12th Farabi International Award (FIA) on the Humanities and Islamic Studies announced 37 winners during the closing ceremony held on Sunday.

Some 37 domestic and foreign winners from Germany, Afghanistan, Italy, Belgium, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Russia were introduced and honored in the ceremony including the owners of 11 works in the Adult section, eight works in the Young section, seven selected figures in the Foreign section (Iranian Studies and Islamic Studies).

Also, 11 selected figures in the other sections including pioneer scholars in the Humanities and Islamic Studies, pioneer personalities of Humanities and Islamic Studies (Deceased), one top translator, one top theorist, one top Scientific Journal, and one top scientific association.

Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19, the closing ceremony was held virtually and only in the presence of a limited number of domestic winners

in compliance with health protocols.

Held annually, Farabi International Award purpose is specified in both theoretical and applied fields, the Award has been organizationally defined in a way that enables it to receive the highest amount of support from research and educational organizations active in the field of Humanities.

In addition to that, all scientific and research seminars and universities were invited to participate in the Award's policy-making process, making up a comprehensive effort and collective action to identify and appreciate the selected works of Islamic Humanities.

The Award receives, reviews, and chooses the selected works at the two young (under 35 years) and adult levels and, in terms of territory, covers both domestic and foreign areas. Where the domestic area is concerned, all the works produced by Iranians, regardless of their current location and profession, are considered.

Over 465,000 passengers screened for COVID-19 at borders

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 465,505 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the country's official borders since March 10, Mehdi Valipour, head of Relief and Rescue Organization affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), has stated.

During the aforesaid period, IRCS forces have screened 465,505 passengers, 45,880 of whom with symptoms underwent PCR and 66,019 rapid tests, he said, IRNA reported



on Sunday.

He went on to lament that some 174 individuals, who tested positive, have so far been temporarily quarantined, under a plan to rapidly identify suspected cases of coronavirus and prevent the spread of new UK strain.

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

With the cooperation of ministries of health and transport, a plan is being

implemented with the goal of rapidly identifying and testing incoming passengers and keeping them in quarantine facilities, if necessary.

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

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

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Hospital beds capacity rises to improve medical system

Health Minister Saeed Namaki inaugurated 23 health centers, including 201 hospital beds, in Lorestan, Kermanshah, and Khuzestan provinces on Tuesday.

Built on 26,935 square meters area, the centers were constructed with a budget of 2.9 trillion rials (nearly \$70 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

The Ministry of Health is scheduled to add 10,600 hospital beds to the capacity of the country's medical system within the next 7 months.

Two years ago, there were a total of 140,859 beds in the country, which means 1.7 hospital beds per 1,000 population.

افزایش ظرفیت تخت‌های بیمارستانی

سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت امروز به صورت مجازی ۲۳ مرکز بهداشتی و درمانی را شامل ۲۰۱ تخت بیمارستانی در استان‌های لرستان، کرمانشاه و خوزستان افتتاح کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، این مراکز در زیربنای ۲۶ هزار و ۹۳۵ مترمربع و با اعتباری بالغ بر ۲۹۸۰ میلیارد ریال ساخته شده است. وزارت بهداشت قرار است تا ۱۲ فروردین سال ۱۴۰۰، ۱۰ هزار و ۶۰۰ تخت بیمارستانی به ظرفیت بیمارستان‌های کشور اضافه کند.

در انتهای سال ۱۳۹۷ مجموعاً ۱۴۰ هزار و ۸۵۹ تخت فعال در کشور بود که اگر این میزان را به ازای جمعیت محاسبه کنیم، ضریب تعداد جمعیت به تخت‌مان، ۱.۷ تخت به ازای هر ۱۰۰۰ نفر است.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. July 17

New cases	22,184
New deaths	195
Total cases	3,523,263
Total deaths	87,161
New hospitalized patients	2,012
Patients in critical condition	4,306
Total recovered patients	3,135,060
Diagnostic tests conducted	25,044,984
Doses of vaccine injected	8,448,070

COVIRAN vaccine beats Delta variant

➔ Earlier this week, Alireza Biglari, head of the Pasteur Institute, announced 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.

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.



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.

Flood hits 10 provinces, leaving 6 dead, 2 missing

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Torrential rain has triggered flooding in 10 provinces across the country, leaving six dead and two missing so far, Mehdi Valipour, head of Relief and Rescue Organization affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), has stated.

Some 30 cities in 10 provinces of East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, Alborz, Kerman, Fars, Sistan and Baluchestan, Semnan, Mazandaran, Hormozgan and Kurdistan were affected by floods and inundations in the last four days.

"Relief and rescue forces worked tirelessly to help 737 flood victims, in addition to providing emergency accommodation to 194 flood victims, and relocated 43 to safe areas," he stated.

He went on to lament that six people lost their lives and two people went missing in Kerman province, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Some 62 rescue and relief teams, including 248 IRCS forces, participated in operations to save flood-affected people, he noted.



Wet spell or still short of rain?

Rainfall extremes over the past three years slowly questioned the conception that Iran is experiencing a long-term drought and some of the experts announced that a wet spell will embrace the country.

So, some experts claimed that Iran has entered a period of a wet spell after experiencing dry spells over the past few decades, some others highly rejected the claim implying that the country faced a lack of rain by 50mm over the past 5 decades.

However, during the current water year (September 23, 2020), the country has experienced severe rainfall shortages.

Climate disruption or global climate disruption, is the new term scientists are using to explain the extreme fluctuations that can and will occur to our weather systems as anthropogenic-caused carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases increase in our atmosphere, the oceans get warmer, and weather events go wild.

The report regrets that climate disruption will be continuing as climate change is on the rise and it calls on taking proper and effective measures to alleviate the adverse effects of climate change on the country.

In fact, experiencing two or three consecutive years of rainy days cannot ensure that drought no longer hits the country, but then it may enter a multi-year drought.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Value of each man depends upon the art and skill which he has attained.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prophet Joseph (AS) in Persian literature

Part 4

The same general theme is elaborated on in his Hadiqat al-Haqiqa with expressive religious exhortations. He calls the Quran the rope that man’s wisdom may use to save him from the abyss that the trickery of Satan has made him remain, as Joseph (AS) was from the well into which he had fallen through the duplicity of his brothers. Thus, man will reach salvation and bliss like Joseph (AS) when he can discover the hidden secrets of the Quran.

Joseph’s story in other Sufi works is mostly along the same lines as that which one finds in the poetry of Sanai, distinct only in terms of the imagery and poetic expressions. For instance, Farid ad-Din Attar (d. 1221) refers to the transcendental world as Mesr-e jan (the Egypt/city of souls), Mesr-e alam-e jan, and Mesr-e ezzat (the Egypt/city of glory).

According to him, the Joseph (AS) of soul, which must return to the Mesr-e jan from his captivity in the abyss of this world, succeeds in this pursuit only when he has replaced the lascivious spirit (nafs-e ammara) by the Solomon of pure soul on the throne of his existence.

Thus, he will be able to release the truthful Joseph of pure soul from this dusty residence and set him on the throne in the Egypt of glory.

Elsewhere, Attar uses Joseph (AS) as the symbol of the beloved in the profane love of those who consider divine love, which is the one and only true love, beyond the reach of man.

In most mystical interpretations of the story, however, Joseph (AS), or the human soul, is able to be in command of the higher universe through self-mortification, and that is when the soul that has reached perfection leaves its physical prison and returns to its original abode.

Versified versions of the story

The composition of versified romantic epics dates from the early phase of the history of Persian poetry. The earliest versified version of the romance of Joseph (AS) in Persian (Yusof o Zolaykha), now lost, was composed by the 10th-century poet Abul-Moayyed Balkhi.

More versified versions were composed during the following centuries, all of which, bearing the same title of Yusof o Zolaykha, were based on the Quranic narrative (chap. 12).

The first version is the one that is attributed to Ferdowsi by some copyist, a view taken at face value by a number of scholars, including Theodore Noldeke, Hermann Ethé, and Edward G. Browne.

Some scholars have considered such attribution only a possibility. More recent scholarship, however, has demonstrated that the attribution of this work to Ferdowsi is totally unfounded.

It is the work of a poet known probably by the name of Am-ani or Shamsi, who composed it for his patron, Shams ad-Din Toghan Shah ibn Alp Arslan Saljuqi, who had released the poet from the prison “in which he had been held like Joseph”.

A versified romance of Yusof and Zolaykha has been attributed to the poet Amaq Bokharai (d. 1147-48) by some biographers, but it has been lost. It could reportedly be read in two different meters.

The most celebrated versified rendering of this romance is the Yusof o Zolaykha by Nur ad-Din Abd ur-Rahman Jami (d. 1492, q.v.), who composed it in 1483.

It follows the meter of Nezami Ganjavi’s Khosrow o Shirin and forms the fifth poem in the poet’s collection of seven masnavis known as Haft Owrang “Seven Thrones”. The romance ends in the union and the eventual death of both protagonists. It was edited with metrical German translation by Vincez Edlem von Rosenweig (Vienna, 1824). There are also two English renderings done by R. T. H. Griffith and A. Rogers rendered in the late 19th century.

We have another versified version of the story from the 15th century, composed by Khajeh Masud Qomi (d. 1490), a poet on the entourage of Amir Ali-Shir Navai.

It is a masnavi of 3,900 verses based on the thirty-second chapter of the Quran and its exegeses. It follows the meter of Nezami’s Leyli o Majnun.

There are several more versions of the romance of Yusof and Zolaykha narrated in verse. More notable among them are those of Mahmud Big Salem Tabrizi (fl. 10th cent.), Nazem Heravi (fl. 11th cent.), and Azar Bigdeli (d. 1780), the last two emulating Jami’s masnavi.

Other versified versions of the romance are by Pirjamali Ard-estani (d. 1474), Jonayd-Allah Makhdum Heravi, Khavari Shirazi, Mirza Dawlat Beig, Molla Mahdi Sholeh Golpayagani, Shahab Torshizi, Nazem Heravi, Shamsi Eraqi, etc.

All of these are versified romantic stories that are in essence based on the text and exegeses of the thirty-second chapter of the Quran (chap. 32), with overtones of mystic ideas and symbolism.

Jami and Azar Bigdeli explicitly identify their versions as a mystical narration of this romance. Jami, describes Zolaykha as an example of a person who has devoted her entire life to love in order to remove all existing veils so that she could get bask in the Sun of the Truth.

(Source: Encyclopedia Iranica)
(Concluded)

“The Crab”, “May She Rest in Peace” win awards at Dresden filmfest

A R T **TEHRAN** – Iranian films d e s k “The Crab” and “May She Rest in Peace” were honored with awards at the 33rd Dresden International Short Film Festival in Germany, the organizers announced on Saturday evening.

“The Crab” directed by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi won the Golden Horseman of the Audience in the International Competition and the Special Mention of the International Competition Youth Jury.

The animation produced by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults is about a shy schoolboy who is interested in performing in a play with his school’s theater troupe. But the only part offered to him is to play the role of a crab.

“Gloomy and traumatic, yet still lively despite that,” the jury said about the movie in their statement.

“A child’s emotions, and especially his fears, are accentuated brilliantly through the dramatic music and menacing visual language. The composition has an extremely powerful impact, affecting the audience deeply,” the statement added.



“The Crab” directed by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi.

As a co-production between Iran and Germany directed by Nazgol Kashani, “May She Rest in Peace” received the ARTE Short Film Prize in the National and International Competition.

“We are delighted to be a partner of the

festival, which we would like to thank for the wonderful and interesting film selection,” the ARTE jury said.

“This year, the ARTE Short Film Prize goes to a film with a universal reach that transposes its audience to the Middle East and metes out social criticism against the background of humankind’s ‘last resting place’. A film with much humor and sensitivity, which reminds us that the class struggle continues to provide highly powerful substance,” they added.

The film shows that the social status of a former bourgeois family is in decline. The family’s preoccupation with their socio-economic identity continues even into death, as they decide what the best burial plot is for their aunt.

The Golden Horseman for best animated film in the International Competition went to the Germany-Bulgaria production “Aiva” directed by Veneta Androva.

“A Lack of Clarity” by Stefan Kruse Jorgensen from Denmark was awarded the Golden Horseman best short fiction film.

“New Goods” by Loic Hobi from Switzerland and France won the youth jury’s Golden Horseman.

Young Photographers House launches intl. photo contest on Muharram rituals

A R T **TEHRAN** – Iran’s Young Photographers d e s k House has launched an international contest to honor top photos on Muharram rituals that take place across the world.

The Red Frame International Photo Contest has been set up to raise the knowledge of the world community about the great tragedy of Karbala and introduce the event from different angles, the organizers announced on Sunday.

The organizers also intend to build up an extensive archive of photos on Muharram rituals from the submissions to the contest.

Amateur and professional photographers from across the world can apply for the contest with photos taken by cellphones or professional cameras.

The deadline for applicants is July 22, 2021. The applicants must send their works to ghabesorkh1400@gmail.com.

A jury composed of Young Photographers House director Rasul Oliazadeh and art experts Hamideh Jafari, Mohammad Babai, Davud Yarahmadi and Nasser Mohammadi will come together on July 26 to select a number of top photos

for an exhibition, which will open on August 10, the first day of Muharram, the first month on the lunar calendar.

Shia Muslims gather in mosques, religious sites and places for seasonal religious ceremonies every year to commemorate the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions with rituals that begin every year from the first day of Muharram.

The rituals reach their climax on Ashura, the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala as a result of their valiant stand against the injustices of the oppressive Umayyad dynasty in 680 CE.

The rituals continue until Arbaeen, which marks the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions on Ashura.

Over the past decade, Iran has initiated the Arbaeen gathering, which is held by Shia Muslims in Iraq every year. Hundreds of thousands of Iranians and Shia Muslims from other countries embark on a journey to the Iraqi city of Karbala to observe the day of Arbaeen at the holy shrines



A poster for the 1st edition of the Red Frame International Photo Contest.

of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shia, and his brother, Hazrat Abbas (AS).

Iranian troupe to perform Ionesco’s “Bald Soprano” in native language

A R T **TEHRAN** – An Iranian d e s k troupe is planning to perform Romanian-French writer Eugene Ionesco’s play “The Bald Soprano” bilingual in Persian and French.

The play is scheduled to be staged at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater during autumn, director Rahmat Amini told the Persian service of MNA on Sunday.

“The idea for staging a bilingual performance came to my mind after returning from my recent educational trip to France,” he said.

“I launched a workshop with a number of actors, who could speak French and some other people who are interested in such projects,” he added.

“The reasons why I decided to stage the play in French are that there are plays on words and language that hollows out profound concepts and these are among the topics of the play,” Amini noted.

Aspects of dualism can be perceived in the music, acting and set design of the project, he said.

“In foreign plays, which enjoy strata of comedy, I usually seek something that the plays have in common with Iranian dramas,” Amini stated.

“In this play, I found the plays on words and absurd characters, and we have tried to change the characters of the play to absurd Iranian characters, which are strongly reminiscent of characters in Ionesco’s plays,”

he added.

He noted that if everything goes as well as is expected, the play has the potential to be performed in French-speaking countries.

Behruz Sarv-Alishahi, Pegah Moradi, Ayat Nattaj, Mona Abyaz and Yasaman Mirzai are members of the cast. Mehdi Amin-Lari also is collaborating in this project as a cast member and music composer.

Amini planned to stage “The Bald Soprano” in autumn 2020, but a new wave of COVID-19 in the country forced him to postpone his plan.

Written in 1950, “The Bald Soprano” centers on the Smiths, a couple from London, and another couple, the Martins, who come over for a visit.

The two families chatter in meaningless banter, tell stories and relate nonsensical truisms and poems. They are joined later by the Smiths’ maid, Mary, and the local fire chief, who is also Mary’s lover.

When the Martins and the Smiths are alone, they begin to argue without resolution or sense. The play ends with the Martins reciting the same lines spoken by the Smiths at the opening.

“The Bald Soprano” is considered a modern classic and a seminal work in the Theatre of the Absurd. It holds the world record for the play that has been staged continuously in the same theater for the longest time.

Several other Iranian directors have previously staged the play.

Nigeria Real Time festival picks 14 films from Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** – A lineup of 14 movies by d e s k Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the Real Time International Film Festival, which will take place from 20 to 25 in Lagos, Nigeria.

“The Badger” directed by Kazem Mollai is a highlight of the lineup.

The acclaimed drama is about Sudeh, a 40-year-old woman who faces a strange incident right before her second marriage. Sudeh and her son Matiar live in an old apartment. One day, she hires a pest control company to solve the termite problems in the apartment. While the pest control company is working, Matiar is recording the procedures, as this is his hobby. The next day, Matiar gets kidnapped after school, and the kidnapper asks Sudeh to pay 10 Bitcoins for her son. Tremendous pressure is put on Sudeh, but the truth hidden beneath will surprise everyone.

Directed by Javad Safavi, the short drama “Sonia” is also in the lineup.

It is about Mina, an Iranian journalist who is forced to accept a position in a tabloid magazine. Mina gets assigned to conduct an interview with a woman named Sonia, who claims to be a medium even though she did



“We Are Not Venice” by Komeil Soheili.

not believe in this type of supernatural capability.

“We Are Not Venice” by Komeil Soheili has also been selected to be screened at the festival.

The documentary is about a village in Iran, which has banned all kinds of hotels and hostels, as people believe

this could affect their hospitality culture. While locals offer tourists a place to stay in their homes, some members of the younger generation believe that this should change and they should earn more money from tourists.

The festival will also screen “Wooden Sword” co-directed by Behzad Alavi and Susan Salamat. The film tells the story of two little boys who meet each other in a green space, and make friends. On the other hand, their fathers have a big problem.

“Fireworks Wednesday” by Reza Muri will compete in the event. It is about a teenage boy who lives in an oil town in Khuzestan province. He discusses with his friend about threats to burn down his house. The boy does not know that this night there will be a fireworks display. He does not sleep that night in order to protect his friend’s house, which is built on gas pipes.

The lineup also features “The Wooden Doll” by Mohamadreza Misaqi, “A Letter to God” by Bahman Zangeneh, “Life Gone with the Wind” by Siavash Saedpanahi, “Glasses” by Pardis Azizi, “Bed Bug” by Puria Osati, “Belonging” by Seyyed Morteza Sabzeqaba, “The Dragon Comes Out” Azam Khodarahmi, “Running” by Mohsen Rahmani and “The Start” by Shervin Vahdat.

“The Fall into Time” appears in Persian

been published in Persian.

Soalar is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Mohammad-Sadeq Raisi.

Profundity wedded to supreme style characterizes the dazzling philosophical essays of Cioran. “The Fall into Time” is the second of this writer’s books to be translated into English, and it cannot but enhance his growing reputation in the English-speaking world as a modern philosophical writer of the first rank.

Who other than Cioran could write: “Whatever his merits, a man in good health is always disappointing.” Or: “Nature has been generous to none but those she has dispensed from thinking about death.” Or again: “If each of us were to confess his most secret desire, the

one that inspires all his plans, all his actions, he would say: ‘I want to be praised.’”

Cioran has been variously described as a skeptic, a pessimist, an existentialist. But none of these labels quite fits. Cioran’s is a unique voice, one that comes - elegantly, ironically, pointedly - out of the void to describe the modern predicament with an almost excruciating sharpness. “Our determination,” he writes, “to banish the irregular, the unexpected, and the misshapen from the human landscape verges on indecency; that certain tribesmen still choose to devour their surplus elders is doubtless deplorable, but I cannot conclude that such picturesque sybarites must be exterminated; after all,

cannibalism is a model closed economy, as well as a practice likely to appeal, someday, to an overpopulated planet.”

Susan Sontag has declared E. M. Cioran to be “the most distinguished figure writing today in the tradition of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein.”

St.-John Perse, the Nobel prize-winning poet, has hailed him as “one of the greatest French writers to honor our language since the death of Paul Valéry.”

“The Fall into Time” brilliantly continues what Cioran himself has called an “autobiography” in the form of his thoughts. The book has been translated by Richard Howard, winner of the 1970 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry.

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