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Iran condemns interventionist remarks over Khuzestan events

TEHRAN – Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reacted to the interventionist and politicized statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the recent events in Khuzestan on Saturday evening.

Khatibzadeh on Saturday described the commissioner’s statement on the recent events in Khuzestan province as regrettable, saying it was totally “invalid” and tainted with false accusations and

wrong information.

“The accusations have been made without considering the extensive efforts of the government, judiciary, security and media officials to alleviate the suffering of the people of this province and to resolve the existing problems, and that is the most important proof that the statement is politicized and invalid,” he added, according to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Over \$742m of facilities paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in a quarter

TEHRAN - Iran’s Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade’s data show that 31.187 trillion rials (about \$742.5 million) has been paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21).

The mentioned facilities, which are provided for renewing machin-

ery, equipping production units, or completing semi-finished projects, have been paid in the form of bank loans to 917 projects and production units, IRIB reported.

The program for offering bank facilities to the SMEs and semi-finished projects was kicked off in February 2019 by the Industry Ministry in collaboration with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

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Pastu Covac is world’s only vaccine targeting several mutations: expert

TEHRAN – Pastu Covac coronavirus vaccine, developed jointly by the Pasteur Institute of Iran and Cuba’s Finlay Vaccine Institute, is the only vaccine in the world that can fight several mutations simultaneously, Alireza Biglari, head of the Pasteur Institute, has said.

Previously, preliminary results of studies show that the vaccine is 91.2 percent successful against new variants

of South Africa and California, which are the worst strains of the virus, according to Biglari.

The vaccine also includes use in children aged under 18, he emphasized.

Trials in both countries are coming to an end, which has also shown good results, as well as dealing well with virus mutations.

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Ban rice cultivation before it is too late

BY M.A. SAKI

Despite water scarcity, the cultivation of rice has been spreading in about 20 provinces across Iran like a pandemic.

The Ministry of Agriculture has even been boasting about the cultivation of this highly water-intensive crop.

Growing rice in lands other than those bordering the Caspian Sea is like shooting oneself in the foot.

The cultivation of rice, which started more than 20 years ago, has dried up rivers and led to the depletion of underground waters in some places. To compensate for water shortage, farmers are digging deeper and deeper wells to irrigate paddy fields.

The massive consumption of surface waters to irrigate paddy fields or other water-intensive crops like onion or watermelon has even disrupted the ecosystem in certain areas.

However, officials, especially those in the ministries of agriculture and energy, are either ignorant of the short-term and long-term consequences of this move or they are purely careless.

It is also possible that agriculture ministers want to take pride that during their management of the ministry the production of rice increased in the country.

Iran is an arid and semi-arid country, and during history Iranians had learned how to manage water resources. But now that Iran is seeing less precipitation and more droughts due to climate change farmers are being allowed to grow crops that need lots of water.

The official IRNA news agency published a series of photos on September 12, 2020, showing that farmers cultivate rice in the Qasr-e Qand region of Sistan-Baluchestan, which is famous as a desert province. IRNA said rice is cultivated twice a year in the region.

Even rice cultivation in northern provinces of Iran must be regulated. Mohsen Fallah Niazi, a native of Mazandaran province, says some farmers cultivate rice two times a year in Mazandaran despite the fact that underground waters are going down more each year.

The price of rice in comparison to other crops in the market is so enticing that it is very difficult to convince farmers to turn to other alternative crops. It is so profitable that some farmers dig wells without receiving a permit from the Ministry of Energy.

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U.S. heading to authoritarian model of governance: Iranian sociologist

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – An associate professor of sociology at the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies predicts that the U.S. will degenerate into an authoritarian state as democratic values no longer can resolve the disputes.

“This is the moment that was foreseeable in U.S. history as we saw differences between political actors step by step come to a point the institutions per se cannot resolve disputes,” Javad Miri tells the Tehran Times.

“I guess in the coming two decades we will see diminishing and weakening democratic institutions in America with a trend that has been anticipated by Andre Gunder Frank in 1999,” Miri adds.

The following is the text of the interview:
How do you evaluate the U.S. democracy while American officials always boast of their democracy while making claims that

countries like Iran are undemocratic?

At the beginning let me state my position and say how I am going to approach this question. I won’t address this question as an expert in international relations. My approach is sociological.

When we look at America and ask about democracy in this country, it would be better to understand this problem within a sociological framework. We have had three great revolutions in the world: First the French revolution, second the Russian revolution and third the Iranian revolution. Each of these three revolutions tried to give an understanding of world’s historical changes in the context of humanity. The revolutions after the French revolution, the American revolution and also the British revolution tried to conceptualize the French revolution based on three very important elements of the latter: liberty, equality and fraternity.

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U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq under scrutiny

During a meeting on Monday at the White House, Iraqi Prime Minister, Mustafa al-Khadhimi and U.S. President, Joe Biden, are set to specify a timetable for the withdrawal of all American combat troops from Iraq. It has been widely reported that this will take place at the end of the year.

The demand for the removal of American forces came in the form of an Iraqi parliamentary bill in January 2020 following the U.S. assassination of Iran’s Lieutenant General, Qassem Soleimani, and the deputy commander of the Popular Mobilization Units, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis along with eight others at Baghdad International Airport.

While the bill was non-binding, the approval of then Iraqi Prime Minister, Adel Abdul-Mehdi, made it binding meaning the U.S. presence in the country would now be considered an occupation. The demand to end the occupation was backed by a million-man march.

In May 2020, Parliament selected al-Khadhimi to replace Abdul-Mehdi on the condition of carrying out the mandate of expelling American forces. Since then, three rounds of dialogue have been held between Washington and Baghdad. All three have fallen short of providing a timetable for a complete withdrawal of American troops from the Arab country, instead statements had been issued saying American forces will transition their presence from a combat role to a training role or an advisory role.

Nevertheless, Iraqi foreign minister, Fuad Hussein, who has been in Washington for the past couple of days, has been spoken to media outlets back home making assurances that this time the talks will successfully establish a timetable for the withdrawal of American forces, but that some American military presence will be required for training and intelligence purposes.

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Amir Chakhmaq: a drop-dead gorgeous destination in central Iran

TEHRAN – Having a unique imposing façade and tranquil atmosphere, the 19th-century Amir Chakhmaq Complex is one of the drop-dead travel destinations in central Iran.

Located on a square of the same name in the UNESCO-registered city of Yazd, a three-story building constitutes the core of the complex, which highly is noted for its eye-catching rows of symmetrical sunken alcoves that are perfectly lit up following the sunset.

The structures that make up the complex include a mosque, a caravanserai, a bathhouse, a cold-water well, and a tekkeh where Shiite Muslims come together for observing special religious ceremonies, all of which have been designed following traditional layout principles.

The perfectly proportioned niches on the façade may seem at their best and most photogenic late in the afternoon, when towering exterior appears to

glow against the darkening sky and copper-colored sunlight is captured within each alcove.

A pedestrianized square overlooking the complex is usually full of visitors. It is landscaped with a vast pool, illuminated fountains, well-manicured trees, and shrubs that lend an attractive foreground to the splendid vista at night.

Underneath the complex is a small bazaar with rows of two-story arcades.

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Qatari Foreign Minister consults bilateral issues in Tehran

TEHRAN – Iran’s President-elect, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdul Rahman al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar met on Sunday in Tehran to discuss the latest developments in bilateral relations and important regional and international issues.

Raisi said in the meeting that the two nations of Iran and Qatar are religious brothers and regional partners of each other, said: Tehran has a special interest in relations with Doha and the foreign policy priority of the future government will be neighbors.

Pointing out that Iran has proven to be a reliable and trustworthy friend and partner, the President-elect stressed, “Be assured that Iran is benevolent to its neighbors.”

“The solution to the insecurity in the region must be sought outside it,” he said.

Raisi underlined that the solution is to establish lasting security and stability in the region based on mutual political trust and the practical denial of foreign interference in the region.

The Qatari Foreign Minister also congratulated the President on his victory and greeted the Emir of Qatar, saying, “Qatar seeks cooperation to strengthen bilateral relations and efforts to ensure security in the region with the cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Zarif, al-Thani discuss bilateral issues

On the sidelines of his visit to Tehran, Qatari foreign minister met with his Iranian counterpart.

In this meeting, Mohammad Javad Zarif and al-Thani discussed latest developments in the region.

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Iranian rower Malaei steals the show

TEHRAN – Iranian rower Nazanin Malaei advanced to the semifinals round of the women’s single sculls at the 2020 Olympic Games.

She caused something of a surprise by pushing into third to qualify for the semis.

Malaei came third with a time of 8:07.32 minutes. Emma Twigg from New Zealand and Swiss Jeannine Gmelin finished in the first and second place, respectively.

The event was held at the Sea Forest Waterway.

Qatari Foreign Minister consults bilateral issues in Tehran

➔ 1 Qatar's foreign minister visited Tehran just days after meetings in Washington.

In Washington, al-Thani met with National Security Advisor of the United States, Jake Sullivan, to discuss bilateral relations and cooperation, as well as developments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Iran.



The U.S. has been in negotiations with Tehran to rejoin the international nuclear accord that former President Donald Trump quit, though talks are now on hold until after the Islamic Republic's hardline president-elect, Ebrahim Raisi, takes office in early August.

In January, al-Thani told Bloomberg TV that Qatar was ready to broker talks between Iran and its Arab neighbors in the Persian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, in order to end the crisis triggered by the unraveling of the nuclear deal.

Iranian, Chinese ambassadors in Islamabad consult on Afghanistan

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to Pakistan has met with his Chinese counterpart to discuss bilateral cooperation, regional ties, including developments in Afghanistan.

Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini met with Chinese Ambassador to Islamabad Nong Rong on Sunday, IRNA reported.

"In this meeting, we discussed bilateral and trilateral cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran, China and Pakistan and the latest developments related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)," Iranian ambassador tweeted.

Hosseini added the Afghan peace process was reviewed and need for neighbors to play a role in helping to establish peace and stability in the country was emphasized at the meeting.

Pakistan last month welcomed the Tehran peace summit with Afghan groups, including the Taliban, and the role of the Islamic Republic in brokering peace between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Welcoming Iran's engagement with Afghan groups to reach a political agreement through negotiations, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed hope that the Afghan groups would seize this opportunity to achieve a comprehensive political settlement.

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

At the second day of the meeting, 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 stands with our Afghan brethren," Zarif tweeted.

EU has just paid lip service to JCPOA, says Iranian envoy to Madrid

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to Spain has said although the European Union has always been supporting the 2015 nuclear deal it has done nothing tangible in the face of repressive U.S. sanctions, IRNA reported on Sunday.



In line with his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, former President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the nuclear deal in May 2018 and slapped the harshest sanctions in history against Iran.

As a signatory to the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Europe failed to resist U.S. sanctions against Iran.

"Though from a political point of view the European Union has been always supporting the JCPOA, it has done no practical action in the face of the oppressive sanctions of the Trump administration," Hassan Qashqavi told a group of Spanish professors and students at the Foundation for Strategic and International Studies.

Since April the remaining parties to the JCPOA (Iran, the EU, Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China) and the U.S. under the Biden administration have started talks to revive the JCPOA. However, after six rounds of negotiations the sides have failed to restore the nuclear pact endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

"To show its goodwill Iran entered talks with the Western sides about six months ago with the aim of a complete cancellation of sanctions, but unfortunately due to the wrong approach of the former U.S. administration the negotiations have so far not borne results," Ambassador Qashqavi stated.

Iranian Navy fleet shows off power in Saint Petersburg

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — At the request of the Russian defense minister, two Iranian warships have participated in the Russian naval parade, which began on Sunday.

Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali said on Saturday that two warships docked at Saint Petersburg.

Iran's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi also visited Saint Petersburg at the invitation of Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu. He is heading an Iranian military delegation.

Jalali also said that Khanzadi plans to hold meetings with high military officials of the Russian Federation and other countries taking part in the event.

The Iranian naval destroyer Sahand and the accompanying support vessel Makran arrived in the Russian port city on Saturday to take part in the military parade.

Khanzadi said that the two Iranian ships that started sailing a few months ago have now reached the Gulf of Finland and the waters off St. Petersburg.

"During this long journey, these ships entered a strategic area of the world, which is unprecedented," the navy chief remarked.

The Gulf of Finland stretches between Finland in the north and Estonia in the south, east of St. Petersburg, Russia, where the Neva River merges.

The appearance of Sahand and Makran in the Gulf of Finland is a "historic event," Khanzadi said. "This success means that the gates of the North Sea and Finland are open to the fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The chief of the Iranian Navy also stated that during this trip he will meet with senior



Russian military and defense officials.

The two vessels left Iran's Bandar Abbas port in May. Images from Maxar Technologies dated April 28 appear to show seven Iranian fast-attack craft (FAC) typically associated with the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) on the deck of Makran.

Iran has been navigating the European waters legally, showing off its power and importance, especially when the Americans speculated Iranian vessels cannot navigate long paths.

The Danish Defense Ministry posted photographs online on Thursday from the Royal Danish Air Force of the new domestically built Iranian destroyer Sahand and the intelligence-gathering vessel Makran passing by the Danish Island of Bornholm.

"It is expected that they are on their way to the annual naval parade in St Petersburg," the Danish military wrote on Twitter.

The Danish military photos showed those seven vessels covered and still aboard Makran on Thursday. The fast-attack craft aboard Makran is the type that the IRGC uses in its encounters with U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf and its narrow mouth, the Strait of Hormuz.

The website Politico first reported in late May, citing anonymous officials, that the ships' last destination may be Venezuela. However, it appears the vessels instead went around Africa's Cape of Good Hope and continued north on an unusually long voyage.

Commissioned earlier this year, Makran is a former oil tanker and, with a length of 755 feet, is the largest vessel in the IRIN fleet, drawing comparisons with the U.S. Navy's Expeditionary Sea Bases (ESB), which are 764 feet long.

Makran can accommodate helicopters, but lacks hangars, and has also been used on maneuvers with drones, FAC, and mini-sub-

marines.

Sahand has in the past been described by Iran as a destroyer, with a displacement of 2,000 tons. It is more accurately categorized as a frigate or even a corvette. The design is a derivative of British-made warships that were supplied to the country in the 1970s, before the Iranian Revolution.

Sahand is fitted with launchers for Qader subsonic anti-ship cruise missiles, as well as Sayyad-2 surface-to-air missiles, an Iranian adaptation of the U.S. RIM-66 Standard Missile-1 (SM-1). The warship also features a 76mm main gun and torpedo tubes, as well as various automatic cannons and machine guns for close-in defense.

As well as a rare appearance in northern European waters for Makran and Sahand — and for the IRIN — the apparent upcoming visit to the Baltic Sea is a mark of the deepening military relationship between Moscow and Tehran.

In recent months, the IRIN and Russian Navy have taken part in joint maneuvers in the Caspian Sea.

With that in mind, while the imminent presence of two Iranian warships in Russian Navy celebrations in St. Petersburg is mainly ceremonial, it could also be a portent of increasing naval cooperation between the two countries in the years to come. It also proves the fact that the IRIN is now an important naval player in open seas.

This year, the fifth parade of the Russian Navy in the contemporary history of the country (30 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union), is being held on the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Russian military fleet, the Russian defense minister said.

Iran condemns interventionist remarks over Khuzestan events

➔ 1 "In this respect, the high commissioner's statement is more like a political declaration with a hostile tone than the words of an international human rights official," Khatibzadeh remarked.

The spokesman noted that making such unprofessional and biased comments on the management of Iran's water resources is not within the scope of the commissioner's responsibilities, and the institution under her responsibility does not have the authority and legitimacy to comment on this issue.

Khatibzadeh noted that the water crisis in Khuzestan is the result of a series of natural phenomena, especially the current year's drought, and a consequence of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Iran which have prevented the transfer of technology and investment in the water sector of Khuzestan.

"The question is why the commissioner has not yet, so blatantly, condemned the unlawful sanctions imposed by the United States against the Iranian nation which have led to the violation of many of the fundamental human rights of this honorable nation, and has just expressed a few short and weak sentences!"

It seems that the efforts by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to create minorities and cause rift among the united nation of Iran are in line with the political program of a few specific governments whose enmity towards the Iranian nation is obvious, Khatibzadeh pointed out.

"These governments are the abusers of the lofty concept of human rights and the main proponents of anti-human rights political resolutions against the Islamic Republic of Iran at

the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly," added the Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Khatibzadeh stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran respects its citizens' right to hold peaceful gatherings, and the country's authorities at the highest level have acknowledged the existence of water problems in the region and the people's right to peaceful protests.

He added that the presence of police in such gatherings are intended to prevent riots and damage to private and public property and this is legal and accepted in accordance with international norms and regulations.

"At the same time the martyrdom of one police officer and the injuries of others indicate the infiltration of foreign-affiliated elements into the ranks of the protesters that is aimed at inciting sedition and creating fake conflicts," he added.

Judiciary chief orders release of protestors detained in Khuzestan

Ejei: November 2019 convicts' cases will be reviewed

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a phone call with the chief justice of Khuzestan province on Sunday, Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei ordered Sadegh Moradi to release protesters detained at Khuzestan province.

Ejei asked the chief justice to provide the ground for the immediate release of those who have been detained during the recent events in the province solely for the sake of protest.

Protests 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 numer-

ous dams on rivers to flow into plains and marshes in Khuzestan, 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 the province.

Several anti-revolution groups coupled with certain foreign countries have been provoking protests in Khuzestan over shortage of water mostly originating from droughts and cultivation of paddy fields in upstream and provinces neighboring Khuzestan.



Ejei orders fast review of November 2019 cases

The judiciary chief has also instructed

Gholamhossein Esmaili, a top judiciary official, and Ali Elghasi, Tehran's prosecutor, to review the cases of those arrested during the November 2019 riots so that those with legal conditions of parole or pardon could be pardoned, be forgiven or released.

The head of the judiciary instructed the Tehran prosecutor to urgently review the cases of such convicts, and if they had behaved well during the sentence and the officials were assured that they would not commit a crime if released, they would be released on parole and on the list of amnesty recipients.

Ambassador: Russia itself suffers from vaccine shortage

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a post on his Instagram on Sunday, Iran's ambassador to Moscow said that Russia itself is suffering from a shortage of vaccine, therefore they cannot export vaccines to any country.

Kazem Jalali said after his meeting with Igor Morgulov, the Russian deputy foreign minister, he discussed various issues such as vaccines, the issues pertaining to Iranian merchants and students.

"Regarding the vaccine issue that I raised with him, he acknowledged that there is a shortage of production in Russia and because of this shortage, no vaccine is currently sent to any country, and after improving the vaccination process in his country, Russia will fulfill its obligations, the diplomat underlined.

"They will be committed to it," Ambassador Jalali added.

"It should be borne in mind that we are in the process of joint production (of vaccine) with Russia, and this process is a step forward for the Islamic Republic, and in the end, I asked him to discuss the issues with Mr. Lavrov in this regard. They explained that Mr. Lavrov and the prime minister and other relevant bodies are fully aware of the commitments made and will soon fulfill them," Jalali remarked.

He said that during his meeting with Morgulov, he had a wide-ranging discussion about the entry of students and businessmen to Russia.

"In these discussions, he said that we have three criteria and Iran does not fit into these three criteria, and we update these criteria day

by day, and when Iran has these standards, we will naturally pave the way," he wrote on his Instagram.

Jalali said that on the issue of students, some universities are consulting with the Russian Ministry of Higher Education about their application to study in Russia, and that the ministry should send requests to the Russian headquarters to combat coronavirus.

"We are currently holding intensive consultations with universities. Iranian students can follow up this request through their own universities," he added.

As for the Iranian merchants, Jalali said that the Russian officials explained to him that in any case the embassy should take notes of those who need to import the vaccine.

"We will inform Iran's coronavirus headquarters and the request will be examined there," he added.

"I would also like to remind you that some people say why do you raise the issue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; to them I say in the Russian system, embassies must do everything through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in coordination with the ministry," he added.

Jalili also said that the meeting was of utmost importance and constructive because Morgulov is a member of the Russian Coronavirus committee.

"He promised me that in his first visit to the Coronavirus headquarters, he would seriously consider the arrival of our dear compatriots," the diplomat highlighted.

Admiral says Iran enjoy superb military capabilities

Iran's Armed Forces have made considerable progress in various sectors and currently enjoy superb capabilities, says a senior Iranian commander, putting emphasis on the fact that the forces will never allow any violation against the Islamic Republic's territorial integrity and national interests.

Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari made the remarks on Sunday while addressing a military ceremony in the capital Tehran.

"The Armed Forces [of Iran] have a mission to defend the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic establishment," Press TV quoted the commander as saying.

Sayyari added that Armed Forces "must boost their combat capability in the face of any future threat in such a way that

they could announce with full self-confidence that no enemy would be ever allowed to violate the country's interests and territorial integrity."

The commander also stressed the importance of boosting Iran's deterrence power.

"If we are strong and have high deterrent power, the world will count on the Islamic Republic as a proud and revolutionary nation," the senior commander said.

Sayyari added, "Our deterrence power must be so high and we must have such [powerful] equipment and superb training ... that no enemy would ever think about taking any act of aggression against our country."

Sayyari added that the war theater has changed and new

battlefields have emerged, which calls for the preparedness of the Iranian Armed Forces.

Iran has made major breakthroughs in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing important military equipment and systems.

The Islamic Republic says its military might poses no threat to other countries, and that its defense doctrine is based on deterrence.

Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said in April that the enemies of Iran do not dare violate the country's territorial waters thanks to the powerful presence of the naval forces of the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in international waters.

Ayatollah Raisi breaks the ice of Iran-Saudi relations

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — With President-elect Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi preparing to take the helm in less than two weeks, relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are poised to be fully restored.

Ayatollah Raisi has made it clear that he wants better relations with Iran's neighbors, including Saudi Arabia whose relations with Iran were severed in 2016 in the wake of the storming of its diplomatic missions.

"As for Saudi Arabia, I say that there is no obstacle to having a dialogue with Saudi Arabia and relations with all countries. We are ready to reopen embassies," the president-elect said in his first presser after he won the Iran June presidential election.

The remarks came in the midst of Iran-Saudi security talks in Baghdad which was confirmed by both sides. Security and intelligence officials from both sides sat at the negotiating table in the Iraqi capital to address each other's concerns. The Yemen war was discussed in detail while other thorny points of contention such as Lebanon and Iraq were also touched on.

The Baghdad talks began in April. Since then, several rounds have been held, and lately, there have been unofficial reports that the venue of talks was moved to Oman. Over the past few weeks, no updates have been given on the latest status of the talks but Iran hinted at their continuation.

In his last week's press briefing, government spokesman Ali Rabiei said the talks are still underway and Iran is even ready to raise the level of its negotiators.

Responding to a question of the Tehran-Ri-



yadh talks, Rabiei once more underlined the importance of regional dialogue from Iran's perspective. "Regional negotiations are a perennial imperative and so far, we have underlined regional dialogue and talks between the region's countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in line with its principled positions, always wants the peace and security of the Persian Gulf region to be protected by the region's countries," he said.

The spokesman elaborated on the ongoing talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia. "Iran-Saudi bilateral talks have been ongoing through proper channels. We are committed to moving ahead with the talks to address all disagreements between the two countries

and if there is an agreement on and a need for elevating the level of talks, we have no limits for that," he continued.

It's true that this position was expressed by the outgoing administration of Hassan Rouhani but it's important to understand that Ayatollah Raisi is the driving force behind Iran's push to improve ties with the regional players. Had the Raisi team not been supportive of this push, the Rouhani administration would most probably have refrained from voicing readiness to dispatch an ambassador to Saudi Arabia in 24 hours on its way out.

The Raisi team showed its support of improving ties with the Saudis by inviting

them to the president-elect inauguration ceremony, which is expected to be held on August 5. Iranian media outlets reported that Saudi Arabia is likely to dispatch a representative to Iran to attend the inauguration. "Due to the resolution of all bilateral disputes, it is possible to announce the improvement of relations between Tehran and Riyadh and the reopening of embassies at any time," an informed source was quoted by the Etemad Online as saying. The source said the Iran-Saudi talks are ongoing in Arab capitals and the remaining issues do not pertain to bilateral issues. Instead, the unresolved issues have something to do with Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq. "The two sides are negotiating a symbolic move at the inauguration ceremony, after which relations will begin," the source said.

Ayatollah Raisi himself made sure to signal his openness to improving relations with the region's countries after winning Iran's presidential election. He spoke on the phone with a number of regional leaders. Most recently, he held a telephone conversation with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman, who has recently paid a vociferous visit to Saudi Arabia.

"Engagement, dialogue, consultation, and brainstorming with neighbors about the important issues of the region are a priority of the thirteenth government," Raisi told the sultan in their phone conversation.

After years of bitter diplomatic tensions, Iran and Saudi Arabia inching slowly toward a full resumption of diplomatic ties. Iran is ready to do it in a matter of hours, but is Saudi Arabia ready to do the same?

Presence of Iran Navy in Gulf of Finland 'historic': commander

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi, who is visiting Russia, has described the presence of Iranian warships in the Gulf of Finland as a "historic event."

He made the remarks on Saturday upon arrival in St. Petersburg, where he is expected to attend the annual parade celebrating the Day of the Russian Navy. Iranian Navy destroyer Sahand and accompanying support vessel Makran have already arrived in the Russian port city to join the parade, according to Press TV.

The Iranian commander noted that the two Iranian warships have reached the Gulf of Finland. "In this long voyage, these ships entered the world's strategic areas, something that is unprecedented," he said.

The ships are expected to represent the Iranian Navy in a parade celebrating the 325th anniversary of the Russian Navy.

Khanzadi arrived in Russia at the invitation of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. Iranian ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has said that Khanzadi will take part in the naval parade on the celebration of Russian Navy Day in St. Petersburg. Khanzadi will meet with high-ranking leaders of the Russian armed services and defense ministry on the sidelines of the ceremony, Jalali added.

On Friday, Jalali met with the Russian Deputy Minister



of Defense Alexander Vasilyevich Fomin in order to discuss military and defense cooperation between the two countries, Tasnim reported.

This conference focused on the Iranian Navy fleet's participation in the Russian Navy's parade in St. Petersburg, the prospects for defense and military cooperation between the two nations, and regional developments.

The meeting focused on the Iranian Navy fleet's participation in the Russian Navy's parade in St. Petersburg, the prospects of defense and military cooperation between the two nations, and regional developments.

The Gulf of Finland extends between Finland to the north

and Estonia to the south, and Saint Petersburg in Russia to the east, where the Neva River drains into it.

The presence of Sahand and Makran in the Gulf of Finland is "a historic event," Khanzadi said. "This success means the opening of the gates of the North Sea and Finland to the fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army."

The Iranian Navy chief also said that during his trip, he would meet with high-ranking Russian military and defense officials as well as his counterparts from the countries participating in the Russian naval parade.

On Sunday, the Russian Navy started celebrating its 325th anniversary with the parade of "54 ships, including frigates from India, Iran and Pakistan, and more than 4,000 military personnel," according to Shoigu.

Shoigu pointed out that the event "will involve 54 ships, including frigates from India, Iran and Pakistan, and more than 4,000 military personnel."

The two Iranian vessels left Bandar Abbas port in May, went around Africa's Cape of Good Hope and continued north through the Baltic Sea.

The sailing of Iranian vessels worried the United States, which feared that they would head toward Venezuela when they entered the Atlantic Ocean before turning toward the English Channel.

Iran slams U.S. stance on Khuzestan protests as shameful

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has castigated the United States for its comments on the Khuzestan water protests, saying Iran will not let anyone meddle in its internal affairs.

Responding to a question from Fars News on the protests over water shortages in the oil-rich, southwestern province of Khuzestan, the spokesman said Persian-speaking news organizations affiliated with foreign governments are seeking to undermine the unity and oneness of the Iranian nation.

"Of course, this is not their first effort in this regard and it will not be the last one. We are also aware of the comments by a U.S. State Department official [on Khuzestan protests]," Khatibzadeh told Fars News. "What is important is that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not let any country meddle in its internal affairs."

"The government and officials are well aware of their duties towards the honorable people of Iran, and at the highest levels, they take care of the rightful demands of their citizens and try to eliminate the shortcomings," he added.

The spokesman also called the stance of the United States and their claim of compassion for the human rights of the Iranian people "shameful" and stressed, "The U.S. regime itself is the direct cause of many of the sufferings that have been inflicted on the honorable people of Iran through conspiracies or oppressive sanctions."

He noted, "The brave Khuzestan will never forget the crimes of Washington's strategic partner, Saddam [Hussein] and the Ba'athist regime in Iraq."

Khatibzadeh also condemned the U.S. "hypocrisy" because of its insistence on continuing with the Trump administration's so-called "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. Khatibzadeh said the Biden administration is following in Trump's footsteps in terms of clinging to this campaign even though Trump has gone. "At the same time, they

shed crocodile tears over the Iranian people's human rights," the spokesman said of the Biden administration.

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.

Earlier, Khatibzadeh also reacted to the "interventionist" and "politicized" statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the recent events in Khuzestan.

Khatibzadeh on Saturday described the commissioner's statement on the recent events in Khuzestan province as regrettable, saying it was totally invalid and tainted with false accusations and incorrect information.

"The accusations have been made without considering the extensive efforts of the government, judiciary, security and media officials to alleviate the suffering of the people of this province and to resolve the existing problems, and that is the most important proof that the statement is politicized and invalid," he added.

"In this respect, the high commissioner's statement is more like a political declaration with a hostile tone than the words of an international human rights official," Khatibzadeh noted.

The spokesman noted that making such unprofessional and biased comments on the management of Iran's water resources is not within the scope of the commissioner's responsibilities, and the institution under her responsibility does not have the authority and legitimacy to comment on this issue.

Khatibzadeh noted that the water crisis in Khuzestan is the result of a series of natural phenomena, especially this year's drought, and a consequence of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Iran which have

prevented the transfer of technology and investment in the water sector of Khuzestan.

"The question is why the commissioner has not yet, so blatantly, condemned the unlawful sanctions imposed by the United States against the Iranian nation which have led to the violation of many of the fundamental human rights of this honorable nation, and has just expressed a few short and weak sentences!"

It seems that the efforts by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to invent minorities and cause rift among the united nation of Iran are in line with the political program of a few specific governments whose enmity towards the Iranian nation is obvious, Khatibzadeh noted.

"These governments are the abusers of the lofty concept of human rights and the main proponents of anti-human rights political resolutions against the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly," added the Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Khatibzadeh stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran respects its citizens' right to hold peaceful gatherings, and the country's authorities at the highest level have acknowledged the existence of water problems in the region and the people's right to peaceful protests.

He added that the presence of the police and law enforcement in such gatherings in order to prevent riots and damage to people and public property is legal and accepted in accordance with international norms and regulations.

"At the same time the martyrdom of one police officer and the injuries of others indicate the infiltration of foreign-affiliated elements into the ranks of the protesters that is aimed at inciting sedition and creating fake conflicts," he added.

Several high-ranking officials also addressed the concerns of the protesters and vowed to soothe them. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has called on government

officials to seek solutions to the Khuzestan water problems in accordance with the latest instructions issued by Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in that regard.

"Some of the problems in this province have been reduced, and we hope that the rest of the problems will be alleviated with the presence of the first vice president and other officials. The settlement of the Khuzestan issues must continue according to yesterday's directive of the Supreme Leader," Rouhani said on Saturday.

Rouhani underlined the "special importance" of the protest-stricken province as a resource-rich border region. "These days, we witness problems weighing on the lives of the people of Khuzestan province in terms of water [shortages] and hot weather which has reduced the input of water dams. In general, the people have faced problems some of which have been reduced," the president added.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution reacted to water protests in Khuzestan on Friday, underlining the legitimacy of the protesters' demands.

"In the past seven, eight days, one of our concerns has been the issue of Khuzestan and the people's water shortage problem in that area. It is really painful for us to see that despite the loyal people living in that province and with all the abundant natural resources in that area and with all the factories working there, the people have reached a point where they are dissatisfied with the shortage of water and sewage system," Ayatollah Khamenei said, according to the khamenei.ir.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted, "Well, the people cannot be blamed and their problem should be addressed, as should have been addressed until now. If the necessary measures had been adopted in due time, this situation would definitely not have arisen for the people. Thankfully, various organizations — executive and non-executive — have involved themselves and are pursuing the matter seriously and when the next administration takes office, they should seriously deal with the matter."

SPORTS

Shooter Foroughi wins Iran's first gold at Tokyo 2020

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** - Javad Foroughi became the oldest Iranian athlete to win an Olympic medal, earning gold in men's 10-meter air pistol.

Foroughi set an Olympic record with 244.8 points, finishing 6.9 ahead of silver medalist Damir Mikee of Serbia. China's Pang Wei, the 2008 gold medalist, took bronze.

The 41-year-old Foroughi surpasses weightlifter Mahmoud Namdjou, who was 38 when he took bronze at the 1956 Melbourne Games.

It was Iran's first medal in shooting in the history of Olympics. Iran delegation is made up of 66 athletes in 16 sports in Tokyo.

Tokyo 2020: Iran beat Poland in five-set thriller

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran defeated strong Poland 3-2 (25-18, 22-25, 22-25, 25-22, 21-23) in Pool A of the 2020 Olympic Games on Saturday.

Iran's Amir Ghafour earned 17 points while Leon Venero Wilfredo scored 20 points for Poland.

Iran will play Venezuela on Monday in their second match.

The volleyball tournaments at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo is played from July 24 to Aug. 8.

The indoor volleyball competition takes place at Ariake Arena in Ariake.

Montoya Fernandez named Iran handball coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Manuel Montoya Fernandez was appointed as head coach of Iran national handball team.

The 61-year-old coach has previously coached Spain, Qatar and Romania national teams.

Fernandez will lead Iran at the 2022 Asian Men's Handball Championship which will be held in Tehran from 21 January to 1 February.

Montoya Fernandez is a Ph.D. in Physical Education and Sport at the University of Barcelona, and his coaching career started at BM Granollers club (1992-1997, 2002-2008), with whom he won twice the EHF Cup (1995, 1996) and the Spanish Cup (1994).

Between 2010 and 2013, he was second coach with the Spanish national, with whom he won the bronze medal at World Championship 2011 and the gold at the World Championship 2013.

Asian Handball Championship acts as a qualification tournament for the 2023 World Men's Handball Championship, with top five teams from the championship directly qualifying for the event to be jointly hosted by Poland and Sweden.

Iran sitting volleyball learn fate at 2020 Paralympics

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran sitting volleyball team learned their opponents at the 2020 Paralympic Games.

The Persians are pitted against Germany, Brazil and China in Group B. Group A consists of Japan, Egypt, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Russia.

Iran sitting volleyball team are the most successful side at the Paralympics with six gold medals. They have faced Bosnia and Herzegovina in every men's sitting volleyball gold medal match since Sydney 2000.

The 2020 Paralympic Games will be held from Aug. 24 to Sept. 5, 2021 in Tokyo, Japan.

Iran basketball beaten by Czech Republic

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran basketball team were defeated against Czech Republic 84-78 in their first match in the 2020 Olympic Games in Saitama on Sunday.

Iran guard Behnam Yakhchali scored a game-high 23 points, also matching the number of letters in his name and surname. Patrik Auda scored 16 points for Czech Republic.

"We can't compare the stats to the final result, because we had 21 turnovers, we lost the rebounds, we missed seven free throws, we gave them a lot shots under the basket," Iran coach Mehran Shahintab said.

"In the second half the communication between the players was much better. But we still could've made ourselves stronger in the first half," he added.

Both teams return to play Wednesday, with Iran facing the U.S. and the Czech Republic playing France in Group A matchups.

Iran down Lithuania at Continental Futsal Championship

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran started Continental Futsal Championship in Thailand with a 5-0 win over Lithuania on Sunday.

Saeid Ahmadabbasi and Mehdi Javid each scored two goals and Aliasghar Hassanzadeh also was on target.

Iran will face Tajikistan on Monday in Group B.

The tournament is being held in Bangkok, Thailand from July 25 to 30.

Iran participate in the competition as part of preparation for the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup, which will be held in Lithuania from Sept. 12 to Oct. 3.

Iran are in Group F along with Argentina, the U.S. and Serbia.

para table tennis player Khazaei dies

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian para table tennis player Narges Khazaei died from covid-19 on Saturday.

She died at the age of 48 in Iranian city Mashhad.

Khazaei represented Iran at the 2008 Paralympic Games.

She was a member of Iran para table tennis team for about 20 years. The number of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in Iran increased to 88,532 with 259 more Iranians killed by the deadly disease over the past 24 hours, bringing the total deaths to 88,532, Iran's Health Ministry said on Saturday.

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

Quarterly manufacturing of TV sets up 20% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Manufacturing of TV sets in Iran during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) has risen 19.9 percent from that of the same period of time in the previous year, IRNA reported citing the data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

The ministry's data show that 269,000 TV sets have been manufactured during the three-month period of this year.



Production of home appliances in Iran has increased 29.4 percent during the first quarter of the current year, as compared to the first quarter of the past year.

As reported, over 1.048 million sets of the mentioned products have been produced in the three-month period of this year.

Meanwhile, over 15 million sets of home appliances have been manufactured in the country during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), 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.

Iran to hold 5 exclusive exhibitions in Iraq by March 2022

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Director-General of Iranian Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries has said the country plans to hold at least five exclusive exhibitions in Iraq during the current Iranian calendar year (ends in late March 2022).

According to Farzad Piltan, TPO also plans to make the necessary preparations for the participation of Iranian companies in more than 15 international exhibitions that are scheduled to be held in Iraq in the current year.

"According to the plans of the Trade Promotion Organization for introducing Iranian products and also the country's capabilities in technical engineering services to the markets of the neighboring countries, the presence of the country in the form of national pavilions in three Iraqi international exhibitions is on the agenda for the coming months," Piltan told ILNA on Sunday.



International Trade Exhibition for Construction Technology, Building Materials and Equipment (Project Iraq), and Sulaymaniyah International Agriculture and Food Industry Fair are among the exhibitions in which Iranian exhibitors will be participating, the official said.

Iran and Iraq have been taking serious measures for boosting all-out ties between the two countries and as a major exporter to the Iraqi market, Iran has played a significant role in meeting the needs of its Arab neighbor.

Iran and Iraq presidents have previously agreed to augment trade between the two countries to \$20 billion a year and in this regard numerous trade delegations have been exchanged between the two sides and several exhibitions have been held in both countries over the past few years.

CBI puts Iran's annual GDP growth at 3.5%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Akbar Komeijani has put the growth of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the previous Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20) at 3.5 percent, IRIB reported.

Speaking at the bank's 61st meeting of the ordinary annual general assembly on Sunday, Komeijani put the growth of the country's Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) in the previous year at 2.5 percent.

As reported, the CBI's 61st annual general assembly meeting was chaired by President Hassan Rouhani and attended by the bank's board members.

In the mentioned meeting, Komeijani presented a report on the bank's performance over the past eight years.

The official noted that when the current government took office in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (started on March 20, 2013) the country's economic growth was - 7.7 percent.

Following the strategic measures taken by the government and the CBI, the GDP growth started an upward trend in the following



years so that in the Iranian calendar year 1393 (started in March 2014) the country's GDP growth reached +3.2 percent, according

to Komeijani.

He further noted that the increase in the country's economic growth continued un-

Over \$742m of facilities paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in a quarter

➔1 According to the Industry Ministry data, under the framework of the mentioned program 2,023 SMEs and semi-finished projects in 31 provinces registered to receive facilities in the said quarter.

Over \$259m paid to export companies in Q1

The Iranian banking system has also paid 10.891 trillion rials (about \$259.3 million) of facilities to export-oriented production units during the said three months, according to the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's data.

The mentioned facilities have been paid to 56 such companies in the mentioned period.

Based on the mentioned data, 51 exported oriented-companies have also been introduced to banks to receive 12.704 trillion rials (about \$302.4 million) of facilities in near future.

As reported, over 23.422 trillion rials (about \$557.6 million) of facilities have been paid to export-oriented

companies in the 13-month period from May 21, 2020 to June 21, 2021.

Promoting exports in line with the support of domestic production has been one of the main strategies of the Ministry of Industry over the past two years.

In this regard, the trade policies of the ministry for the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), which is named the year of "Production: Support and Elimination of Obstacles", have been mainly focused on the development of production, employment and development of non-oil exports and eventually entering new markets.

According to the latest CBI data, Iranian banking system paid 4.976 quadrillion rials (over \$118.4 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year, registering a 71.3-percent rise from the same period in the previous year.



Plans are underway for managing Khuzestan water problems: Energy min.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian has said good programs are underway for managing Khuzestan Province's water problems, ISNA reported.

Speaking to the national TV on Saturday night, Ardakanian said the government has paid 50 percent of the total budget allocated for the mentioned province's energy sector in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) in order to accelerate resolving of the issues.

"Hopefully the other 50 percent will be paid soon," he said.

Severe drought and rising temperature have caused serious water-related issues for the people in southwestern Khuzestan province.



The Energy Ministry has been facing problems in supplying drinking water and water for the agriculture sector in the mentioned province.

"In the beginning of the current year, water inflow to dams in Khuzestan was 10 billion cubic meters less than the figure for the previous year which means rainfall in

this province was 30 percent less than the previous year, and neighboring provinces that supplied water to Khuzestan, also experienced about 40 percent decline in their rainfalls," the minister said mentioning the water situation in Khuzestan province.

According to Ardakanian, the ministry is seriously pursuing the mentioned programs for resolving the issues, including the water supply to 702 villages in the province by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (ends in March 2022).

The official also noted that several options are being considered for supplying water for the province's agricultural sector in order to prevent any possible damage to the autumn crops.

He further pointed to the lack of rainfall and water shortage over the past few years as a main reason for the current situation, saying: "Precipitation in Iran has been one third of the average global precipitation; the average global precipitation is currently 750 millimeters and in Iran it is 250 millimeters, which also varies every year."

"We must adapt our water consumption and cultivation patterns and our irrigation methods to the climate change," he stressed.

Since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2020), precipitation has declined by 40 percent compared to the long-term average and 53 percent compared to the same period last year, according to Ardakanian.

Over 304,000 tons of commodities exported from Kordestan in 3 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, 304,381 tons of products worth \$128.985 million have been exported from Kordestan province, in the west of Iran, during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21).

Khalil Heydari, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that the three-month export indicates a 57-percent fall in value, and a 44-percent drop in weight, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

He mentioned fruits and vegetables, construction materials, iron ore, dairy products and plastic products as the main exports of the province.

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

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



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

In total, the Islamic Republic traded 38.4 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$20.9 billion with its trade partners in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year, up 25

percent and 50 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, Mir-Ashrafi said.

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

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

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

The official also noted that over 2.742 million tons of goods were transited through Iran in the said period, registering a 121-percent rise compared to the same period in the previous year.

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

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

Issuance of industrial unit establishment permits rises 31%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — According to the latest data released by Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) 10,714 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country, which marked 31.8 percent increase year on year.

The estimated investment making for these units was more than 2.712 quadrillion rials (about \$64.571 billion), indicating 162 percent rise year on year.

The units are predicted to create jobs for 288,096 persons, with a 52.4-percent growth.

As announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the country increased 40 percent in the past Iranian calendar year

(ended on March 20).

"The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors", the official has stated.

He also said that over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year, which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

The official further said that 1,500 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the previous year.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the deputy minister said: "In

the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."

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

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

Iran's industrial parks play a significant role in making the country independent through boosting production, which is a major strategy of Iran to combat the U.S.



sanctions.

In fact, strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

U.S. heading to authoritarian model of governance: Iranian sociologist

➔ **1** Out of these if you want to build a good society you need first and foremost to concentrate on the question of liberty. If liberty is established in a society, after that the two other elements of a good society (i.e., equality and fraternity) will come.

The American democracy, the British democracy and in general the European democracy are based on these factors.

But what happened a few decades after the establishment of what we call European or Euro-Atlantic model of democracy? Within their societies, they tried to present themselves as societies that have established a democratic rule of law. But what kind of policies did they develop outside the geography of Euro-Atlantic civilization? A total militarism which is called in the sociological literature "the era of colonialism". These countries and peoples who call themselves the heirs of the French revolution, claim that they have established democratic societies. But outside this zone they have pursued a total militarism which came under the concept of colonial Rome that wants to rule India, Asia, Africa and many parts of the globe.

However, the most interesting point is that not only they pursued militaristic policies towards others, they also failed to achieve what they call fraternity or solidarity within their own societies.

Capitalism by its nature always reproduces a class society. So, when we go for example to America or Europe, we can see some sort of class division which after two hundred years of liberalism and democracy has not been able to realize what they call a society based on fraternity. So, what happened when the Russian revolution and afterwards the Chinese revolution occurred? These kinds of revolutions tried to cast a doubt on the French revolution's claims that if we establish liberty then we can have equality and fraternity. According to the Russian and Chinese revolutions, the European dreams failed to be realized because the most significant elements of a good society is equality and justice. So first and foremost, we need to establish a just society. The Russian revolution tried to work on this aspect but after seven decades it collapsed because a society without liberty or solidarity can't be a model of good society. That is why the Russian revolution that represented the Soviet Union turned to another form of colonial rule in the world. The Iranian revolution was based on the idea of the "Tawhidi" society, which means the common grounds of humanity. All human kinds have one common ground. If we can establish a society based on this notion then we will have liberty and equality. Iran's revolution also faces other different kinds of problems which can be discussed later.

But what can we learn from these different forms of revolutions in history? In a word, we can see that how American or Euro-Atlantic experts, sociologists or philosophers tried to build a model of democratic rule in the world based on the notion of Euro-centrism or Euro-Atlantic concept of democracy. I mean that these societies have their own history or what in sociology we call Euro-centric view of history; their experience of self, society, religion and values are unequally Western and we cannot apply it in other societies, culture or civilizations wherein you can see different forms of reality, history, value systems and political rules.

Is the American democracy a universal model or is it just a local form of democracy that has developed through militarism?

The Americans have been able to export or create some sort of hegemony. This hegemony by mistake has been understood as universalism. What we are facing is an American hegemony under the title of universal form of democracy. So the U.S. model is not universal, rather it is a local form that has been able to globalize itself.

Do you agree that we have various forms of democracy in the world including liberal democracy, social democracy or even Islamic democracy?



It should be noted that democracy or democratic tradition in the history, at least over the past two hundred years, has coupled with different approaches. One of them is the liberal tradition which has been dominant so far. However, we have other approaches like socialism that have impacted democracy in Scandinavia; they have a social democratic system. But the hegemony of the Euro-Atlantic doesn't allow other forms of traditions and political ideologies to come forward and try to work through democratic institutions.

In regard to the concept of Islamic democracy, I should tell you that this term is wrong as Islam is a revealed religion that has hosted Islamist tendencies on society, state, governance and the relation between state and religion since the nineteenth century.

Islamism or political Islam is not a single position; we have at least five different tendencies within Islamism in Iran. There is Islamism with a jurisprudential approach where Ayatollah Khomeini was its founding father. Ayatollah Khomeini had a normative approach towards Islamic society and Islamic state. Then we have another position within Islamism which can be called the liberal approach where the founding father of this position is Mehdi Bazargan (who was appointed prime minister in the interim government in February 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini). The third approach is a socialist concept of Islamism that was represented by Ali Shariati (one of the most influential Iranian intellectuals of the 20th century). The fourth approach is a democratic concept of Islamism that Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani (a senior scholar and Tehran's first Friday prayer imam after the Iranian revolution in 1979) was its founder. The fifth approach is Salafism, but it doesn't have a great number of proponents in Iran while it is widespread outside Iran within the larger geography of Islamic civilization. Sheikh Ibn Baz can be considered one of the founders of this approach (in Sunni countries).

So, we cannot reduce democracy to either social democracy or liberal democracy. We can have other forms of democracy, but if you look at political literature inside and outside Iran, most of the textbooks do not mention Islamism as a political ideology or legitimate approach that can host democracy, state, morality, women's rights, etc.

Mainly when they talk about Islamism, they say it is tantamount to extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism, whereas Islamism is a diverse ideology that grew in the context of Islamic civilization. This should be taken into consideration; but most experts have been silent about this. We cannot expect Europeans, Americans or non-Islamic pundits work on it or reflect this approach. It is upon us to make every effort to build a non-Euro-Atlantic approach based on Islamism.

Many American experts consider the U.S. as the bedrock of democracy whilst successive American administrations have undermined democratic states in history and consolidated relations with despotic states. How is it justifiable?

We need to review the history of two hundred years ago when the colonial forces

entered the geography of Islamic civilization. In 18th century we can see there are four major powers which are called Turku-Persian empires. One of these empires was established in the Indian subcontinent, what is known in the history as Gorkani dynasty (by mistake in English they are called Mughal empire while they were from Central Asia). Then we have Ottoman Empire besides the Safavid Empire as well as Sheibanian in Central Asia. These four empires were ruling in Muslim territories or Islamic civilization. When the colonial forces approached or in other words encroached and invaded this area, step by step they started to talk about democracy, liberal ideas and philosophical questions inside their own countries. When you scrutinize and try to understand their philosophers even the most famous ones like Kant and Hegel, they have a racist approach toward non-European peoples. Subsequently, the European policies towards other people are totally based on colonialism which has not changed a bit so far.

Western states are trying to present themselves at home as civilized liberal countries but when it comes to other countries, the Euro-Atlantic civilization spares no effort to bombard under the pretext of human rights and what they call humanitarian bombardment; or they try to contain their rivals including China, Russia, Iran, Cuba or other countries.

Either they contain them or sanction them. What they did against Iran was not a policy but a total genocide. It was economic genocide through efforts to destroy a country in its entirety.

Their sanctions against Iran and Yemen and before them against Iraq and many other countries were not human-centered. It always reminds us that what they call democratic rule at their countries has not been applied outside as their policies over the past two hundred years have been extension of militarism and even supporting state terrorism such as what they did in Haiti. They went to another country and assassinated the president and then claimed that they were not aware of the connection between the FBI and the killers of the Haitian president. It is naked state terrorism.

Successive American administrations have supported Israel whenever it has waged wars against Palestinians. How can a democracy help ignite devastating wars?

According to terms of international relations, it is double standards. Inside their country, they have the discourse of democracy but outside they spread discourse of militarism. If you look at the map of West Asia and Eastern Europe and even in China Sea, the Korean peninsula, Latin America, Panama, and Africa, you can see that they are full of American military bases. If any country tries to disobey or decide to get away from the world order it would be doomed to pay a heavy price. Without any doubt what we call today world order is Pax Americana which was established after 1945. This system, as long as it is possible, uses soft power like punishing other countries through WTO or by other

different institutions, and whenever it is not possible, they resort to their military capacities to wage a total war.

How do you read the riots that followed the November 2020 presidential election in the U.S. after Trump refused to concede defeat?

There was a German-American sociologist called Andre Gunder Frank. He was a leftist social theorist who said in 1999 he can hear footsteps of fascism in the White House. I think what he meant by fascism was that political solutions based on democratic negotiations no longer would succeed to settle differences. This is the moment that was foreseeable in U.S. history as we saw the differences between political actors step by step come to a point where the institutions per se cannot resolve disputes. We expect within ten or twenty years by the rise of China in the world order the American society would be exposed to deep transformation. Definitely, America would not be able to rule the world order which by the rise of China will look totally different. I don't argue that it will be a good or bad world order.

But China by itself is a country with a system where capitalism has coupled with authoritarianism. When capitalism is compounded with authoritarianism in politics, definitely it will result in a system with a great influence on world order. Even other European, American and other countries in the world will need to re-organize their political institutions. Consequently, the political institutions in America within ten or twenty years will become more authoritarian than they were before. Of course, outside Euro-Atlantic context, for example in Iran, we always have faced these authoritarian aspects of European and American colonialism and militarism.

We are aware of that. We know what happened to Salvador Allende in Chile. Or look at Nicaragua, Cuba, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. As non-Euro-Atlantic people we always have experienced the authoritarian face of America and colonial powers in Europe, but Americans and European people during the past two hundred years were feeling they are living in liberal societies. There was some sense of freedom in some aspects in these countries but the masses never really realize how their governments deal with others outside Euro-Atlantic zone; for example, how they killed Allende or how they were involved in the 1953 coup d'état in Iran and deposed the government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq and why the Western powers supported Saddam Hussein in an eight-year war he waged on Iran. Don't forget how Americans gave a green light to Saddam to invade Kuwait to send their arms to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. We know how they infiltrated Syria but the Western public is feeling that they live in free countries.

By the gradual rise of China within ten or twenty years and the authoritarian capitalism of China, the world order will change in a way that will affect the U.S. domestic politics if they want to survive.

I guess in the coming two decades we will see the weakening of democratic institutions in America with a trend that has been anticipated by Andre Gunder Frank in 1999 and even some scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein and Noam Chomsky have talked about it. Alexis de Tocqueville, a French political scientist and historian, in the nineteenth century warned about the future of American democracy where he discussed a kind of mass society that may result in populist government.

That is not just because of internal dynamics but due to external dynamics. In the coming decade, we may face a different scenario in the global arena as China is rising as an "other" in the eyes of Europeans. America was somehow an extension of the European development but China is a totally different story in terms of history, civilization, value system, the concept of humanity and power.

U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq under scrutiny

➔ **1** (That has already angered some parties in Iraq's parliament). However, American media are suggesting otherwise and it appears that Iraq is saying one thing and the Americans are saying something else. According to the New York Times, the Pentagon will only remove a small, unspecified number of American troops and keep the rest, again by reclassifying their role. The paper has described the talks as "diplomatic theater" to please the Iraqi side and more importantly the Iraqi parliament. According to the Pentagon, there are currently 2,500 American troops stationed in Iraq. However, that number has been disputed. The heavily fortified American embassy in Baghdad's Green Zone has a contingent of troops guarding it. There is no way of knowing exactly how many. Likewise, the heavily fortified Ain al-Assad military base in the Western Anbar province occupied by U.S. forces only has not been inspected by Iraqi security personnel. It is unclear how many troops occupy to base. There have also been reports of troops transferring between Iraq and Syria so it is impossible to confirm the figure of 2,500 U.S. combat troops. Bear in mind, there has been little to zero evidence of U.S. 'combat' troops actually engaging in combat on the ground against terrorists.



This raises the bigger question of what is exactly the nature of the American occupation of Iraq? If American troops are helping in the fight against Daesh, then Iraq's Foreign Minister has already said from Washington, that his country has enough forces to counter the terrorist Takfiri group. And remember, the group was defeated in late 2017 by Iraqi forces, spearheaded by the Popular Mobilization Units, the same branch of the Iraqi armed forces that America attacks every now and again. What remains of Daesh is sleeper cells that stage attacks sporadically and Baghdad certainly does need foreign assistance for that. The country has been the scene of such terror attacks since America invaded in 2003 and when it withdrew in 2011 and since it returned in 2014. In other words, it doesn't make a difference whether American forces are present or not. Iraqi intelligence services, through experience, have managed to decrease these terrorist attacks. The parties in Iraq's parliament who hold the most seats, as elected by the Iraqi people, say the U.S. is playing a sinister role in their country serving Israeli interests. Among the many troublesome aspects of the occupation, the U.S. stands accused of causing sedition among the Iraqis that is turning the locals against each other, using the country's airspace to spy on the Iraqi resistance which has grown in power.

Iraqi parties also accuse the U.S. of using agents on the ground in coordination with the American embassy and its diplomatic missions to lead a disinformation campaign (mainly on social media) against Iraq's neighbor Iran. For example, when Iraqis took to the streets in October 2019 to protest against legitimate rights, the demonstrations soon turned deadly with armed infiltrators shooting at civilians, that's according to Iraqi Security Officials, footage that appeared online indicated the same. At the same time, analysts say many social media accounts popped up out of nowhere claiming Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps had been shooting at protesters. This is despite Iraq's highest security official declaring on state media that no Iranian forces are even present in Iraq. Observers note that America's biggest concern is about ties between Baghdad and Washington's arch-enemy Tehran, growing stronger.

They say the presence of the U.S. in the country can disrupt the expansion of cooperation between the two neighbors and swing Iraq's hand of friendship elsewhere towards Washington's allies in West Asia, such as Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates. America's allies in the region of course just happen to be non-democratic ruling tribal monarchies, one of whom has normalized ties with Israel (the United Arab Emirates) and the other, Saudi Arabia, is widely believed to have secret ties with the regime. Analysts say America can't achieve that goal from Washington, it needs to have a presence inside Iraq to execute this mission and that's why, every year, its forces are transitioning from a combat role to an advisory role and from an advisory role to a training role and from a training role to an intelligence supporting role; as long as a presence is there, the Pentagon couldn't care less how that presence is labeled. Meanwhile, the Iraqi resistance says they will settle for nothing less than a full withdrawal in sync with a clear timetable. If that doesn't happen, the resistance factions say they will increase their attacks against the U.S. occupation, with not just more operations against American interests but also more sophisticated operations to end the occupation. They say this is needed to preserve the territorial integrity of the country. As one Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri Maliki, once said, onetime Iraq wanted something from the United States was very early 2014 when Daesh terrorists were gathering in large numbers inside Iraq near the Syrian border; Baghdad requested from Washington to deliver missiles and other weapons that Iraq had already paid for, so the Iraqi Air Force could wipe out the terrorists before they extend their presence across the country.

Those missiles came 14 months later along with the American 'combat, advisory, training, intelligence' (whatever you want to call them) forces when Daesh took over two-thirds of the country. The reality is a lot of blood could have been saved if America delivered on time. Experts say Washington had the same intelligence about Daesh's presence on the Iraqi-Syrian border and it had the same awareness, as the then Iraqi government had, that Daesh could have been wiped out there and then. If American intelligence could not figure that out and send what Baghdad had paid for and requested, then America is the last country Iraq can rely on. Allies are there at times of need, and in Iraq's darkest moments in June 2014, when sure enough, Daesh took control of large swathes of territory, Iraqi officials say it was the Islamic Republic of Iran that arrived at the scene within hours. It was Iran's Lieutenant General, Qassem Soleimani, and his team of military advisors who arrived at the scene within a few hours (not many months later), it was Iran that opened its weapons depots for Iraqi forces and provided the intelligence, support and training for all factions of Iraq's armed forces, including the Kurdish Peshmerga and Sunni tribal forces. But, that's one for the history books.

At least 50 Taliban militants killed, injured in Afghan airstrikes

At least 50 members of the Taliban militant group have been killed or injured in airstrikes by the Afghan government forces in two of the conflict-ridden country's provinces.

Afghanistan's Defense Ministry said in a statement on Saturday that 33 Taliban militants had been killed and 17 others injured in airstrikes in the northern Jowzjan Province and the southern province of Helmand.

"In Jowzjan Province, 19 militants were killed and 15 wounded after warplanes targeted militants' hideouts in Murghab and Hassan Tabbini villages on the outskirts of provincial capital Shiberghan," the ministry said in the statement.

"Fourteen Taliban, including two non-Afghan militants, lost their lives and two others wounded when the air force struck their position on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah, capital of southern Helmand province," it added.

The ministry also said three vehicles, six motorcycles, two bunkers and a big cache of weapons and ammunition belonging to the Taliban militants were destroyed.

The militants are believed to control about half of Afghanistan's roughly 400 districts.

The Afghan government has imposed a night-time curfew

over much of the country as it tries to deter the Taliban from advancing into key urban areas.

Aside from Kabul and two other provinces, no movement will be allowed between 22:00 and 04:00 in the other 31 provinces.

Dozens of civilians killed in Taliban-held areas in Kandahar

The development came as Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) said earlier in the day that 33 Afghan civilians had been killed in Taliban-held areas in the southern province of Kandahar over the past two weeks.

"Religious scholars, tribal elders, civil society activists, journalists and human rights defenders and female journalists are being sacrificed in targeted attacks," said Zabihullah Farhang, a spokesman of AIHRC. "Any group that resorts to harming civilians is conducting a war crime under the rules of war."

According to local media reports, hundreds of people in the districts that have fallen to the Taliban in Kandahar were detained and some were killed by the militants over their alleged association with the Afghan government and its security institutions.

"There are grave concerns that Taliban forces in Kandahar may commit further atrocities to retaliate against the government and security forces," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"Taliban leaders have denied responsibility for any abuses, but growing evidence of expulsions, arbitrary detentions, and killings in areas under their control are raising fears among the population."

Afghan media reports said on Thursday that unidentified gunmen killed "over 100 civilians" in Spin Boldak area of Kandahar, along the border with Pakistan.

The Afghan Ministry of Interior confirmed the reports, saying these civilians were killed without any reason.

The Afghan government blamed the Taliban for the murder of civilians in the area.

US-led foreign forces are withdrawing from Afghanistan after two decades of war and occupation.

The US and NATO allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 under the pretext that the Taliban militants were harboring al-Qaeda, which had just been blamed for the "9/11 attacks" in the US. The invasion removed the Taliban from power, but it worsened the security situation in the country.

Scaffolding put up to clear weeds off millennium-old tower

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A scaffolding has been installed over the UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus to let workers clear unwanted weeds off the millennium-old brick tower, which stands tall in northern Iran.



Work has commenced removing weeds from the conical roof and body of the UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus, Abdolmajid Nourtaqani said on July 21, CHTN reported.

“Considering the specific material of the building, Gonbad-e Qabus is exposed to the growth of various plants on it, and the reason is the presence of birds that carry seeds with them...,” director of the World Heritage site,” the official explained.

Moreover, experts of the World Heritage site are working on a medium-term plan that includes pathological studies to solve the problem, he added.

The tower was already planned to be sprayed by agricultural drones to get rid of weeds and prevent them from growing, however, it was discarded after local authorities realized that such an approach inflicts serious damage to the mortar and body of the monument.

The tower is of high architectural importance as an exemplar and innovative design of the early-Islamic-era architecture. The UNESCO comments that it bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

The UNESCO also credits Gonbad-e Qabus as “an outstanding and technologically innovative example of Islamic architecture that influenced sacril building in Iran, Anatolia, and Central Asia.”

The long-lasting structure capped by an eye-catching conical roof boasts intricate geometric principles and patterns which embellish parts of its load-bearing brickwork.

Two encircling inscriptions in Kufic calligraphy date the tower to 1006-7 CE while commemorating Qabus Ibn Voshmgir, Ziyarid ruler and literati (reigned 978–1012).

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond.

Ancient world: a jar with the name of King Xerxes

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — In the British Museum in London, you can see this calcite jar (almost 30 centimeters high), which was discovered in the ruins of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the monumental tomb of the satrap of Caria, Maussolus.

The object was probably made in Egypt and contains a very brief inscription in Old Persian that is also known from other vases: “The great king Xerxes.”

According to livius.org, there are Egyptian, Babylonian, and Elamite translations too. This inscription is rather stereotypical and not extremely interesting, but the fact that Xerxes’ jar was discovered in the Halicarnassian Mausoleum, is quite sensational.

It is well-known that the Achaemenid king Xerxes, who ruled the Persian empire between 486 and 465, tried to conquer Greece in 480. The Greek war is described in great detail by the Greek researcher Herodotus of Halicarnassus, who does not mention a visit by Xerxes to his native city. Yet, only the great king can have given this precious object with the almost sacrosanct royal signature to the ruler of Halicarnassus, queen Artemisia, who is also said to have been among the best commanders in the navy of Xerxes. The present must have passed through the Carian royal line and was eventually given as a funeral gift to Maussolus and his wife, who was also called Artemisia.



It is an intriguing thought that this little jar has been in the hands of king Xerxes, queen Artemisia, satrap Maussolus, and his wife Artemisia. It is also a fascinating object that illustrates the way in which the histories of Persia, Egypt, and Caria were once intertwined.

The Achaemenid Empire, founded by the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius, stretched from the Balkans to Central Asia at its peak. It was the first state model based on the diversity and tolerance of different cultures and religions.

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

The city was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

Trans-Iranian Railway gains UNESCO World Heritage status

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Trans-Iranian Railway that reaches a length of 1400 km has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The UN body accepted Trans-Iranian Railway during the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, which will be running through July 31 in China’s Fuzhou.

The railway can be regarded as a turning point for comprehensive developments in Iran. These developments include a wide spectrum of various economical, commercial, social, cultural, and even political aspects

in a sensitive and important period of contemporary world history.

Under the Pahlavi regime, the process of moving towards modernism gained momentum and the railway became the main pedestal of development in Iran.

Consequently, the 1394 kilometers long Trans-Iranian Railway was built with a width of 1435mm and 90 working stations along its route. It starts at a point north of Torkaman port located southeast of the Caspian Sea. After going through Sari and Qaem-Shahr cities, the railway enters the mountainous



Veresk Bridge, Trans-Iranian Railway, Savadkuh county, Mazandaran province

region of Alborz through the high Firoozkooch Pass which is linked with Tehran and Varamin Plain by numerous bridges and tunnels.

Further on after crossing the flatlands of Qom and Arak, the Trans-Iranian Railway penetrates Zagros highlands in Lorestan Province and passing through a large number

of tunnels and bridges reaches Andimeshk situated in the low Kuzestan Plain.

Finally extending to the vicinity of Dezful, Ahwaz, and its grand bridge on Karoon, the Trans-Iranian Railway is divided into two branches ending separately at Khoram-Shahr and Imam-Khomeini ports on the Persian Gulf.

Amir Chakhmaq: a drop-dead gorgeous destination in central Iran

→1 Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a “don’t miss” destination by almost all of its visitors. Partially covered alleyways together with streets, public squares and courtyards contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that destroyed many traditional earthen cities.

It survives today with 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.

Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. The concept of Persian Qanat was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2016 as they provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs by the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

Under tourists’ eyes:
Here is a selection of comments that visitors to the complex have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

So much to digest

You most certainly need a tour guide to appreciate all this Sq. has to offer. It took us over an hour to see everything. The best Sweet house in Yazd is just at the core of the crossroad. (73farpolo from Manchester; written December 2020)

Beautiful structure

Located at the very center of town, a must-stop especially at night after sundown with a nice reflecting pool in front and many ice cream shops around.... (Shadgerami from Nikolaevsk-Na-Amure, Russia; written October 2020)

Beautiful square with nice local food

The 3-story high facade to the mosque fronts the square with a 2-storeyed Hossaniyeh extending at right angles to the facade. The facade is magnificent. It is lovely illuminated at night, (but my photos don’t do it justice!) While we were in the square, a moving lamentation to the fallen of the Iran-Iraq War was performed. Just off the square, we had a lovely strange mini-noodle concoction mixed with rose water, and saffron ice cream. Sublime! (Rod F from Royal Wootton Bassett, UK; written February 2020)

Great location in the center of the city

Looks great lit up at night and it is a wonderful place to visit at any time of the day. Needs to be on everyone’s to-do list when they visit Yazd. (DominicDeBurca from Dunmore East, Ireland;



written January 2020)

Nice

At the main square, you can enjoy all the people coming from near and far to marvel at this place. Worthwhile. (Michael c from Ahus, Sweden; written November 2019)

Nice structure

I went to this place twice and I hope I can go to Yazd again in the future, this theater was a place for talking to people and doing religious ceremonies and I think the structure is extraordinary. It is the first place you should visit. (Berta Moretti from Genoa, Italy; written September 2019).

Paleolithic hand ax discovered by archaeologists in northwest Iran

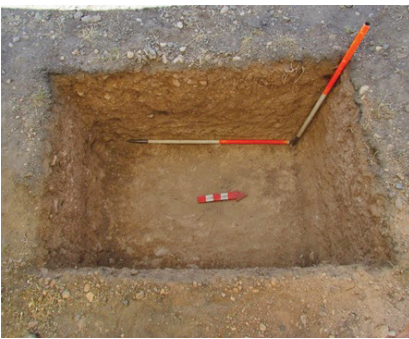
HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Archaeologists have unearthed a hand ax during a demarcation project held in northwest Iran. The object is estimated to date from the Paleolithic era.

The hand ax was discovered in one of the trenches dug to help determine the legal boundaries of Khalilabad, an archaeological site in Showt county, which is situated in West Azarbaijan province, CHTN reported.

Supervised by the Research Institute for Cultural Heritage & Tourism (RICHT), the demarcation project is underway under the direction of Iranian archaeologist Leila Gargari, the report said.

The archaeologist stated that the purpose of speculation in this area is to identify cultural periods and to identify legal properties of the site to prevent the destruction of this important cultural place.

Due to the abundance of similar stone structures so far being discovered in Khalilabad, the history of the site can



be traced back to the Paleolithic period, Gargari said.

The hand ax and many other similar objects discovered in the area are made of chert (which is a hard, fine-grained sedimentary rock composed of microcrystalline or cryptocrystalline quartz), she noted.

Furthermore, a new study reinforces a hypothesis that the Iranian plateau was like a bridge between East and West during the Pleistocene epoch, which began about 2.6 million years ago and

lasted until about 11,700 years ago. In an article published in the International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science (IRJMETS) in April 2021, Iranian researchers Mohsen Zeidi, Cyrus Barfi, and Shahram Zare concluded that the Iranian plateau served as a human migratory pathway in the Pleistocene.

“Increasing Paleolithic finds in this region and neighboring countries (Pakistan and Afghanistan) reinforces the hypothesis that the Iranian Plateau has been used as a human migratory pathway in the Pleistocene linking East and West.”

Based on the field observations, the surveyed areas seem to be mostly undisturbed through natural and modern human activities and our initial insight suggests that surface scatters of stone tools and debitage are usually located in the large area along the drainages and seasonal river terraces where probably water sources were attractive to the Pleistocene hominins. However, documenting the full extent of the localities

and their lithic scatter needs further intensive survey.

Since the early 20th century, the Iranian plateau has undergone several Paleolithic-based research. The German geologist Reinhold von Hückriede discovered a late Mesolithic site near Kuhbanan in Kerman in the framework of his geological investigations.

In 1964, Gary W. Hume at the request of Joseph R. Caldwell, director of the Kerman project explored the potential for Paleolithic sites in Bardsir valley near Kerman. Moreover, a later archaeological investigation in the Bam-Narmashir region of Kerman province revealed several archaeological sites dating from the Neolithic period to the Iron Age.

Throughout history, the big and sprawling Kerman region has been something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is bounded by the modern 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.

Restoration aimed to help preserve Sirvan for future generations

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A team of Iranian restorers and cultural heritage experts has finished work on Sirvan in a bid to help preserve the ancient town for future generations.

Situated in modern Ilam province, Sirvan was once one of the most important and prosperous Iranian cities in the Sassanid period (224–651).

A sum of three billion rials (about \$71,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was spent on the restoration project, provincial tourism chief Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh said on July 20, CHTN reported.

“We hope to be good custodians of cultural heritage and pass it on to future generations as part of our enduring culture,” the official said.

Sirvan is home to the ruined bridges, roads, yards, numerous castles, and fortresses, amongst other ancient settlements.

The under-the-radar province is making its best to grow into a major travel destination for both domestic and international holidaymakers, sightseers, history buffs, and nature lovers.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Experts believe during the Sassanid era the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general

renaissance. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

The Sassanid archaeological landscape also represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”-- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. It reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

The dynasty evolved by Ardashir I and was destroyed by the Arabs during the period of 637 to 651. The dynasty was named after Sasan, an ancestor of Ardashir I. Under his leadership who reigned from 224 to 241, the Sassani-



ans overthrew the Parthians and created an empire that was constantly changing in size as it reacted to Rome and Byzantium to the west and the Kushans and Hephthalites to the east, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

At the time of Shapur I (reigned 241 CE–272), the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys.

COVIRAN vaccine in process to WHO's registration

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — COVIRAN

d e s k BAREKAT, the first Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine, is in the process to be registered by the World Health Organization, Asghar Abdoli, an expert in the vaccine production project, has stated.

The whole process of the vaccine development and clinical trials must be presented in detail from the beginning, which we are doing, he said, adding, "in addition to presenting the documents, we must also defend our scientific achievements in person."

"Our first article on the pre-clinical phase of COVIRAN vaccine will be published soon."

Vaccine development technical knowledge is native to the country. In other words, the whole process is carried out in Iran, he noted.

He went on to say that some 2 million doses of the vaccine will be produced by the next week, and the production process will continue.

Made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, COVIRAN BAREKAT was unveiled on De-



cember 29, 2020, and received the license for public use on June 14.

It proved effective against Indian strain, according to Hojjat Niki-Maleki, head of the information center of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam.

Eleven countries from Asia and South America, and a European country have asked for importing COVIRAN vaccine, Hassan Jalili, the vaccine's production manager, has said in June.

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.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, 14 vaccines are being domestically developed in the country which are in different study phases.

193 passengers suspected of COVID-19 quarantined

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Some 193

d e s k passengers, who tested positive at the borders, have so far been temporarily quarantined since March 10, under a plan to rapidly identify suspected cases of coronavirus and prevent the spread of new strains.

Some 487,329 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the country's official borders, 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 conducted 48,973 PCR tests and 68,529 rapid tests, he said, IRNA reported on Sunday.

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.

Ban rice cultivation before it is too late

→ 1 However, it seems that officials have no plans to ban the cultivation of rice and other water-intensive crops. Probably, it is customary that officials don't try to resolve an evolving problem before it turns into a crisis like what has happened in Khuzestan province.

Now, in addition to droughts and water transfer, part of the water shortage in Khuzestan province is due to the fact that farmers who live along the rivers drain waters that run into Khuzestan. These farmers who mostly live in the mountainous Zagros regions use these waters to irrigate paddy fields or other water-intensive crops.

The excessive extraction of underground

water resources and rivers may continue until a time that officials find themselves unable to even provide potable water for citizens in certain areas.

Whatever difficult it may be, it is urgent to convince farmers to stop growing rice. A more delay to stop its cultivation, farmers will even lose the chance to grow crops that their ancestors had been doing for centuries.

To do this, first, it is necessary to educate the farmers about the dire consequences of this model of farming and then offer profitable alternative crops. Even if this approach fails to convince farmers to turn to alternative crops, the responsible bodies should introduce penalties.

Pastu Covac is world's only vaccine targeting several mutations: expert

→ 1 Those who received the vaccine were totally protected from death and severe infection, he stated, adding, in addition to being available for people under the age of 18, the vaccine may activate the immune system of those who have already been infected, and it may be a reminder of other vaccines.

Due to the vaccine's capabilities, the global demand is increasing day by day, because it is the only vaccine in the world that can fight several mutations simultaneously, he highlighted, IRIB reported on Sunday.

The third phase of the clinical trial is underway in eight cities being administrated to 24,000 people by August 20. Results of the evaluation will be announced, which will help obtain sufficient documentation for the approval of the World Health Organization, Biglari said.



In previous weeks, 130,000 doses of vaccines produced in Iran and Cuba were delivered to the Ministry of Health and have been distributed in several provinces across the country, he noted.

In September, the installation of the production line will be completed with a capacity of 3 million doses and will begin operation in early autumn.

Pastu Covac vaccine is a conjugate vaccine with two injectable doses. It consists of the receptor-binding domain of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein conjugated chemically to tetanus toxoid.

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

Iranian students shine at international Olympiads

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The

d e s k national teams of biology, physics, and mathematics won different medals at international Olympiad competitions, held in Portugal, Latvia, and Russia, respectively.

The biology team of Iran grabbed one gold, one silver, and two bronze medals. The physics team gained three silver medals and three bronze medals, and the mathematics team snatched five silver medals at the competitions, IRNA reported.

A total of 28 students participated in international Olympiads over the past year (March 2020-March 2021), who won 27 medals and one honorary diploma.

Last year, two international Olympiads of physics and geography were not held due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, but other Olympiads of mathematics, biology, computers, and chemistry and astronomy were held, Elham Yavari, head of the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents, said.

Six students participated in the international mathematics Olympiad, while the international biology Olympiad, the international chemistry Olympiad, and the international computer Olympiad each hosted 4 Iranian students, and 10 students from Iran attended the international astronomy Olympiad, she noted.

"Among the 28 students participating in the international competitions, seven won gold medals, eleven grabbed silver medals, nine grabbed bronze medals and one student



gained an honorary diploma.

Some 541 students participated in the national summer competition last year, of whom 507 were awarded national medals," she concluded.

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COVID-19: Iran reopens schools under strict health protocols

Over 15 million students attended schools nationwide on Saturday for the new school year under strict health protocols to protect teachers, staff, and students against the coronavirus pandemic. The opening bell of the new academic year was rung symbolically by President Hassan Rouhani at a girls' high school in downtown Tehran. The back-to-school ceremony is officially inaugurated by the president each year, as he rings the bells in a symbolic gesture at a chosen school.

Mohsen Haji Mirzaei, Education Minister, symbolically attended the virtual festival.

More than 15 million students started the new school year in 116,000 schools across the country, Haji Mirzaei stated.

This year, education is followed in three forms of in-person, virtual, and television-based, but our priority is school attendance, he noted, highlighting, all schools should strictly follow the health regulations so that the students are protected.

بازگشایی مدارس با پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی

بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را با رعایت پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی آغاز کردند.

زنگ آغاز سال تحصیلی به صورت ارتباط تصویری در مراسمی به دستور رئیس جمهور در دبیرستانی در تهران نواخته شد.

محسن حاجی میرزایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را در ۱۱۶ هزار مدرسه آغاز کردند.

وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: امسال آموزش دانش آموزان به سه شکل حضوری، مجازی، و تلویزیونی دنبال می‌شود، اما اولویت ما آموزش حضوری دانش آموزان است.

او افزود: همه مدارس باید شیوه نامه‌های بهداشتی را به طور جدی رعایت کنند تا مشکلی برای دانش آموزان پیش نیاید.

COVID-19 UPDATES

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

New cases	27,146
New deaths	268
Total cases	3,691,432
Total deaths	88,800
New hospitalized patients	2,935
Patients in critical condition	4,863
Total recovered patients	3,256,856
Diagnostic tests conducted	25,537,513
Doses of vaccine injected	10,265,811

Naybandan: meet Iran's largest remarkable sanctuary

Naybandan Wildlife Refuge located in the eastern province of South Khorasan, with an area of 1,516,994 hectares, is the largest wildlife sanctuary to safeguard the habitats native animals need to survive and thrive in Iran; known as the most important habitat of the Asiatic cheetah.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and natural national monuments. In 1997, the Department of the Environment (DOE) held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas. By the year 2003, the size of the DOE supervised areas reached 11,791,788.225 hectares.



The national park is a designated part of Iran's environment - including forests, rangelands, woodlands, prairies, water, or mountains - that is an outstanding representation of Iranian nature. As such, it is brought under protection in order to permanently preserve its natural ecology and to create a suitable environment for the flourishing of wildlife and the growth of flora under natural conditions. The national parks currently cover 1,649,771 hectares of the country's area.

Protected areas also are significantly important natural resources due to its impact on wildlife breeding, preservation of plant life, or its natural state. The total area of regions protected is 6,600,601 hectares.

A Wildlife refuge has natural habitats and special climate qualifications, which brought under protection in order to revive wild animals and is stretching to 3,524,181 hectares.

Held the highest population of Asiatic cheetahs, since 2006, Naybandan Wildlife Refuge was estimated to hold a share of at least 15 cheetahs.

The sanctuary has been under protection since [the Iranian calendar year] 1373 (March 1994- March 1995) but was designated as wildlife refuge 7 years later.

The sanctuary has various topographic areas like mountains, plains, sand plains, hilly desert plains, and water with different tastes from the saltiest water to the freshest water.

The dense forest of Tagh is one of the unique features of the area, in addition, due to its location on the Silk Road, many historical caravanserais have remained in this area since ancient times.

The height of this refuge is varying from 680.0 to 3,009.0 m from sea level, the climate variety is from the hottest part in the southeastern point of Nayband Mountain (Dig-e-Rustam) the coldest part in the northeastern part of Nayband Mountain (Aliabad).

Its average annual temperature is between 14 and 19 degrees Celsius and its average annual rainfall is between 50 and 150 mm, which has caused a high temperature, dry, and hot climate.

Naybandan Sanctuary is one of the most pristine and least conflicting habitats in the country in terms of the domestic industries and livestock.

More than 200 plant species have been discovered in the area, some of which include wild almond, bitter almonds, figs, tamarisk, haloxylon, Atraphaxis, mugwort, zygotyllum, ferula, and bitter apple.

Mammals like Asiatic cheetahs, Persian leopard, caracal, wild goat, jebeer gazelle, wild sheep, mouflon, ibex, Blanford's fox, Rüppell's fox are found in the sanctuary.

It is home to exotic and valuable birds like bustard, cuckoo, Pleske's ground jay, and other birds such as partridge, crao, hoopoe, lark, horned lark, different types of owls, eagles, and vultures.

Reptilians inhabiting in the area include the Jafari snake, viper, camel snake, asp, horned asp, gecko, and lizard. Rodents include rats and porcupines. Insect-eaters include the hedgehog and bat.

Jangal, a 12-year-old cheetah known as the world's oldest cheetah, lived in this area. The carcass of a Jangal was discovered in 2011 near the Aliabad at the Naybandan Sanctuary, which was dead due to old age.



Without water, everything withers

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Time wears out bodies, renews hopes, brings death nearer
and takes away aspirations. Whoever gets anything from
the world lives in anxiety for holding it and whoever loses
anything passes his days grieving over the loss.

Imam Ali (AS)

History of Qajar painting

Part 2

Like his colleagues, Mehr-Ali was also employed in painting wall murals; Sir William Ouseley saw a series of portraits of early Persian kings "painted within ten or twelve years by ... Mehr-Ali of Tehran" in a palace at Isfahan.

He may also have been responsible for an enormous canvas depicting Fath-Ali Shah crowned and bejeweled, hunting with a large number of his sons.

This was formerly in the India Office, London, but was handed over to the government of India in 1929, and now hangs on the ceiling of the ballroom at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the former viceroy's residence at New Delhi.

One last glimpse of Mehr-Ali is provided by a small watercolor study of a man's head, inscribed as having been executed by him in 1829 for his pupil Abul-Hassan Khan Ghaffari Sani ul-Molk who became the foremost Persian painter in the mid-19th century.

Abdallah Khan (b. ca. 1770) grew old in the service of the Qajar dynasty. His greatest achievement was the celebrated mural covering three sides of the old Negarestan Palace interior.

Mohammad-Hassan Khan was of a slightly lesser stature than the other three, but his work is competent and conscientious, and in a set of three portraits of princes, one with a child, now in the Negarestan Museum, Tehran, he reaches a high level.

There are several pictures of young women in which his hand may be detected from his soft method of rendering the features, a fondness for a sort of foxy red, and a vase of flowers that is almost a trademark. He has also left some excellent miniature paintings, usually in the form of monochrome portraits.

One other artist of the earlier part of Fath-Ali Shah's reign deserves notice, though nothing is known of him personally, and only one composition by him is known to have survived, and that in a fragmentary state. This was Abul-Qasem, who painted three of the best pictures of young women in the Negarestan Museum, and a portrait of the king, seated, in a private collection.

One of the former bears his signature and the date 1815-16. The fact that these all have the same continuous architectural background and are on the same scale makes it almost certain that they originally belonged to a single long composition, which may have been that described by Binning as adorning the house he occupied at Shiraz about 1855: "The upper part of the wall is occupied by a representation of his late majesty Fath Aleh Shah sitting in state, and attended by ten ladies. The figures, which extend round three sides of the room, are nearly as large as life, and gaudily coloured."

The portrait of the king does not stand up to those by Mirza Baba or Mehr-Ali, but the women are quite beautiful.

Among the second generation of court painters, active toward the end of Fath-Ali Shah's reign and during that of his successor, Mohammad Shah (1834-48), the best is probably Ahmad, who, to judge from his early style, may well have been a pupil of Mehr-Ali.

Two fine portraits of Fath-Ali Shah carry his signature. The first, showing the king in armor seated on a chair-like throne, is dated 1818-19; unfortunately the face has been almost entirely repainted.

The other, dated 1822-23, has been in the British embassy at Tehran ever since its establishment; here the king sits on a jeweled carpet with an elaborate qalyan beside him.

Later Ahmad's style became much more Europeanized, as in a large painting, dated 1844, of Mohammad Shah reviewing his troops, in the Hall of the Marble Throne, and a fine bust portrait of the same monarch, dated two years later, in a Persian private collection.

Another artist of this time who stands out as an individual may have been named Mohammad. His painting of a young woman in the Forugh collection, Tehran, bears the inscription ya Mohammad, presumably one of the punning invocation-signatures so popular among the Zand and Qajar painters, and the date 1842.

His plump, moon-faced women, somewhat resembling Renoir's are easily recognized, and good examples may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Negarestan Museum, and elsewhere. His male figures are less successful.

Sayyed Mirza makes a third in this slightly later group. His most impressive work, now in a Tehran private collection, is a very large group of Fath-Ali Shah enthroned with sons and courtiers; it was formerly in the Hasht Behesht palace in Isfahan.

Two rather stiff portraits of princes by him, dated 1829-30 are reproduced by Schulz, but his charm and skill are most evident in the Negarestan Museum painting of Yusof, represented as a handsome young Qajar nobleman against a landscape background. Sayyed Mirza was also an outstanding artist in painted lacquer and has signed the front cover of the new binding commissioned by Fath-Ali Shah for the great Nezami manuscript of Shah Tahmasp in the British Museum; the subject of this high-quality work is the favorite one of the king hunting with his sons.

Source: Encyclopædia Iranica
To be continued

Iranian scholar's studies on history of Islam published in German

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iranian scholar Asghar Montazeralqaim's book "Early History of Islam" ("Frühgeschichte des Islams") has been published in German.

The book published by Tredition Gmbh has been translated by Mir Kamaladdin Kazzazi.

In an introduction to the book, the scholar wrote that Islam has determined the fate of large parts of the world for fourteen centuries.

It has been an active player on the world political stage for forty years, he said and added that one of the tasks of a historian is to shed new light on the darkness of present events by illuminating the past, to make them understandable and - where possible - to find new solutions.

"I hope this book is an ointment for the wounds of Muslims... and motivates them to strive to create a better future," noted

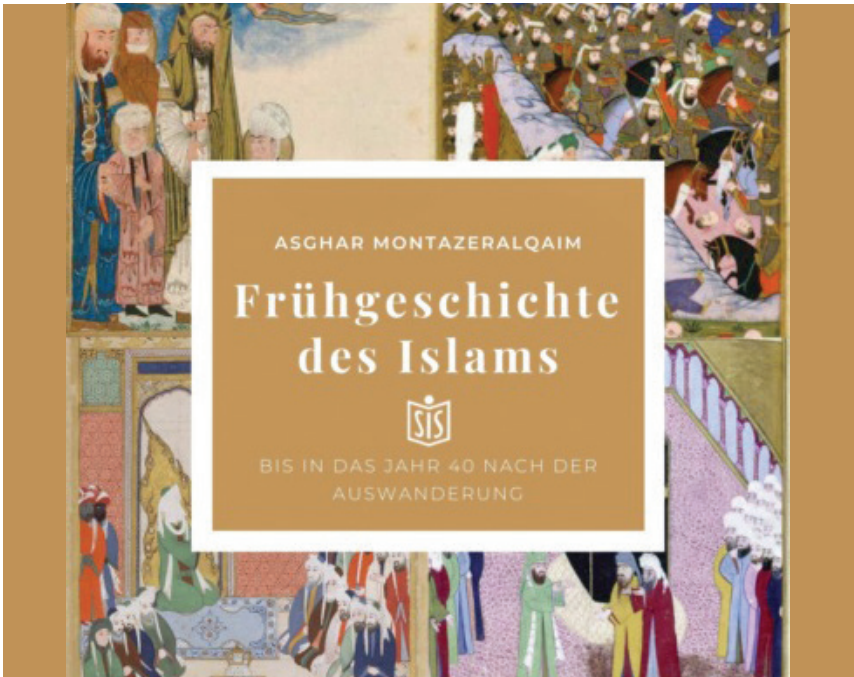
Montazeralqaim who is a lecturer at the University of Isfahan in Iran.

His specialty is the history of Islam with a focus on Shia history. He has learned from famous masters such as Seyyed Ghaffar Shahidi. Another book by him on Shia history is "The History of the Imamate".

The book also contains illustrations by Maassouma Dabbous of the Department of History and Cultural Studies at the Free University of Berlin.

Montazeralqaim has also worked on joint study projects, one of which is "Study of Women's Cultural Role in Safavid Period", which was completed with Zeinab Sha'bani.

Women's role in the preservation and transmission of culture, as a consequence of their being mothers, has been ignored in many studies carried out on women, they have written about the book.



Front cover of the German translation of Iranian scholar Asghar Montazeralqaim's book "Early History of Islam" ("Frühgeschichte des Islams").

Numerous historians deem the Safavid period the darkest period of women's life in Iran's history. This book was written to provide a deep insight into women's cultural and social status in this period. This study has been carried out based on

the travelogues of Iran written during the Safavid period.

Montazeralqaim has also written "The Status of Physician Historian in Islam Historiography" with contributions from Torab Attari and Hassan Abdipurfard.

“The Last Fiction” director Ashkan Rahgozar on Fantasia festival panel

screened at the festival.

The short animated movie "Jebeer" produced by Rahgozar is about a wildlife ranger who is patrolling a protective area while his soul is intertwined with nature and all the creatures he is protecting. He runs freely and lives with the animals, surrounded by beauty. But, as fate would have it, he is confronted with some poachers.

Rahgozar's new project at Fantasia

The festival also is promoting Rahgozar's new project "Juliet & the King", which is under production at his Tehran-based studio Hoorakhsh.

The animation features an early cultural relation between Iran and the West during the nineteenth century when Nasser ad-Din Shah, the long-serving monarch of the Qajar dynasty, gets an invitation to visit France.

He loves Europe and he always takes the chance to visit there. While visiting a Romeo-Juliet play in Paris, the actress catches his eyes. He falls in love with her so deeply that he asks her to perform the same play in Tehran, so he could impress her and win her heart.

Julie, the actress, decides to take this chance. With the help

of her friend Jamal, she goes to perform in Iran, anticipating progress in her career. But she suddenly finds herself among jealous court ladies, and the center of the king's attention.

The film, which is scheduled to premiere in 2023, portrays Qajar kings' passion for traveling to Europe in the 19th century, focusing on the cultural relations between Iran and France.

"Iran is a great and beautiful country with great history and amazing people who have a great culture," Rahgozar told Cartoon Brew in an interview published last week.

"I want to point out that there are lots of beautiful things that people around the world can learn from and remind each other about," he added.

The musical will feature 11 original songs by Iranian songwriter Meysam Yusefi and composer Behnam Jalilian.

Rahgozar is currently working on his second animation feature "The Dragon's Treasure" with Mystic House Production Ltd. based in the Canadian city of Toronto.

The animation tells a story in which the heroes embark on a magical journey to find a great treasure.

His first animated feature "The Last Fiction" became the first Iranian animation to qualify for an Oscar in 2020.

Sydney festival to review films by Abbas Kiarostami

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Sydney Film Festival will hold a retrospective of renowned Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami.

Ten films from the various periods of his career have been selected to be reviewed at Palace Central 1 during the festival, which will be organized in the Australian city from August 18 to 29, the organizers have announced.

"Taste of Cherry" is one of the films, which will be screened in the retrospective.

The first Iranian film to win the Palme d'Or at Cannes is one of great humanity and complexity, which boasts one of cinema's most daring and memorable endings.

Mr. Badiei is driving around construction sites on the dusty outskirts of Tehran. He's looking for someone to dispose of his body after he takes his own life, and attempts to enlist the help of a young soldier, a seminarian and a taxidermist.

"The Wind Will Carry Us", the winner of the grand jury prize at Venice Film Festival, is another highlight of the program.

It is a gently comic fable on the unpredictability of life. A key element across Kiarostami's films is the recurrence of a hero with an obsessive quest who fails. In his book on Kiarostami, Jonathan Rosenbaum argues that, while this narrative displacement is troubling for some viewers, these "digressions are moments drenched in personality, humor, and atmosphere."

"Where Is the Friend's House?", winner of the Bronze Leopard at the 1989 Locarno Film Festival, will be screened.

This poetic tale about a young boy who must return a classmate's schoolbook brought Kiarostami to international fame.

The first film in Kiarostami's beloved Koker trilogy opens in a rural school in northern Iran. Mohammadreza has completed his homework in the wrong book and if he does it again will

be expelled. When Ahmad accidentally takes Mohammad's book home, he's mortified and journeys into the night to find his best friend and return the book.

It is about responsibility and duty, which was inspired by an idea from Kiarostami's son Bahman and a story from a teacher.

The lineup also includes "And Life Goes On", "Bread and Alley", "Close-Up", "The Traveler", "Through the Olive Trees", "Orderly or Disorderly" and "Ten".

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

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

In addition, the Asian Film Archive, a non-governmental center in Singapore that preserves the film heritage of Asian cinema,



"The Wind Will Carry Us" by Abbas Kiarostami.

is currently holding a retrospective of the filmmaker.

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

“I Won’t Remain Alone” wins award at Parnu film festival



Iranian short film "I Won't Remain Alone" by Yaser Talebi.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian short film "I Won't Remain Alone" was named best doc on survival of indigenous peoples at the Parnu International Documentary and Science Film Festival in Estonia, the

organizers announced on Sunday.

Directed by Yaser Talebi, the documentary follows Sorayya and Seyed Jalal, a poor, elderly couple residing in a remote village in Northern Iran. Filmed over the course of 5 years, the film paints pictures of forgiveness, love, humanity and immortality.

"The School Of Hope", a co-production between Morocco and Finland by Mohamed El Aboudi, won the Estonian People's Award voted by the TV-audience.

Climate change and overgrazing have brought poverty to the old nomad tribes of the high plateau of Atlas in Morocco and forced them into a partial settlement.

"The School of Hope" tells of a nomadic tribe struggling to get an education for their children, and a young teacher trying to help them while suffering himself from the government's indifference toward rural regions.

The grand prize of the festival for best artistic achievement went to "A Man and a Camera" by Guido Hendrikx from the Netherlands.

In this film, a hand reaches towards the doorbell. There is a neat gravel path, a coat rack full of windcheaters and the

stranger who seems to know him so well. Searching through his past like a detective, he follows up the clues in the stranger's letters not realizing that he is beginning to fall in love.

The object of his passion exists only in words and in his imagination, but he comes to know this woman better than the pictures in his gallery, even though he has never seen her face. Or has he?

Barreau was born in Paris, the son of a French father and a German mother. He studied romance languages and literature at the Sorbonne and worked in a bookshop on the Rive Gauche in Paris but is far from an inexperienced bookworm.

With his other successful novels, "The Ingredients of Love" and "The Woman of My Life", he has gained an enthusiastic audience.

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