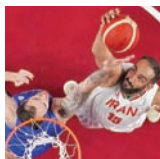




Iran Majlis speaker arrives in Syria for economic talks *Page 3*



Iran basketball to meet the U.S. in super tough match *Page 3*



Mangrove forests: a miracle of nature *Page 7*



Congratulations on Eid al-Ghadir



Unfulfilled expectations

U.S. fails to meet Iraqi demands on foreign troops withdrawal

GAAP

Joe Biden(R) and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi during their meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, July 26, 2021.

See page 3

British imperialism had an adverse effect on Iran-India cultural ties: historian

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
An Indian academic says British imperialism had an “adverse effect” on the cultural interaction between India and Iran. “British imperialism had an adverse effect on culture interaction between India and Iran,” Syed Ali Kazim tells the Tehran Times.

“In modern India, the impact of Iranian scholars could not remain what it was earlier because of the British imperialism,” Kazim adds.

Beyond political and economic relations, Iran and India have centuries-old historical and cultural ties. But these ties were greatly affected after Britain colonized the Indian subcontinent.

“Age-old ties between these two great nations suffered a lot from the British imperialism from which they haven’t been able to come out,” the assistant professor at the History Department of Aligarh Muslim University notes.

Following is the text of the interview:
How do you read the contribution of Iranian ulama and scholars to intellectual growth in modern India?

In medieval India, there had been a constant flow of Iranian ulema and scholars to the Indian subcontinent. No intellectual history of medieval India could be studied without the role being played by the above classes. Qazi Nurullah Shushtari, Mir Fathullah Shirazi, Hakim Humam, Hakim Abul Fath Gilani, Hakim Nuruddin to name a few were the scholars and administrators who ran the administration of the Mughal Empire.

One cannot imagine the great Mughal Empire without the presence of powerful Iranian nobility till the end of the 18th century. However, in modern India, the impact of Iranian scholars could not remain what it was earlier because of the British imperialism. Yet the cultural interaction between India and Iran led to the emergence of an intellectual class of Muslims in India who would always prefer Persian as their favorite language after Urdu. Several religious, political and philosophical texts continued to be written in Persian in the 19th and early twentieth-century India. Even we studied Persian as one of the optional subjects in high school.

Continued on page 5

Iran opens first ion therapy center in West Asia

TEHRAN – Iran inaugurated on Tuesday an advanced ion therapy center for the first time in West Asia, which will provide definitive treatment for all types of cancer by the next year.

With the aim of definite treatment of cancer using radiation with a synchrotron system, the center was designed in 2016 and its construction started in 2019.

This project is one of the largest national projects that has been pursued in cooperation with several countries around the world. This technology exists only in six countries around the world.

Today, with the presence of Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization, the equipment testing phase was performed and it will be ready by the next year (March 2021-March 2022).

Salehi said that some 200 million Euros have been allocated to equip the center, which was

fully financed by the investors. Its construction also costed a total of 10 trillion (nearly \$238 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

The center is unique in West Asia and is the seventh hospital in the world to be built with advanced equipment, he added.

Ion therapy is a unique and innovative form of radiation therapy in the world for the treatment of cancer, as the radiation can be focused exactly on the area of the tumor, ensuring that radiation-sensitive organs are best protected.

The method of therapy is based on the physical characteristics of ions – electrically charged particles, which enter the human tissue with enormous speed and accuracy, thereby releasing energy.

The released energy causes damage to the DNA of the cancer cells and destroys the tumor without damaging the healthy tissue.

Continued on page 7

America’s gun violence epidemic has no vaccine

Over the past several weeks, gun violence has dominated the headlines in America. Rightfully so, as of late, shootings have come at a relentless pace. There have been records almost broken, but no records to be proud of. According to the Gun Violence Archive, from Saturday, July 17 until Friday, July 23, at least 1,018 shooting incidents had been documented.

That accounts for a shooting incident every ten minutes. The 1,018 shooting incidents during that time frame killed 404 people and injured nearly 950 others. These numbers are updated so the figure could end up higher.

The injured may succumb to their wounds. If somebody didn’t know better, they would have thought a war had just taken place. The latest gun violence occurred at places of work, places of worship, grocery stores, on the streets, at parks, even at a baseball stadium. A 7-year-old girl was shot dead at a Drive-Thru at a fast-food chain,

the father is fighting for his life in hospital. The reality is not many places are safe in America. Many civilians are caught in the crossfire.

Following a spate of mass shootings earlier this year, President Joe Biden described gun violence as an “epidemic” and “international embarrassment”. The facts on the ground suggest he is correct. No place in the United States is immune to this “epidemic”. According to the U.S. President, every day in America, 316 people are shot and 106 of them are shot dead. According to the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, every year, gun violence is estimated to cost the United States \$280bn. Money that could go to helping the nearly 600,000 homeless Americans.

Gun violence has proven to be a difficult challenge for consecutive U.S. administrations to tackle, but recent figures are very concerning, to say the least.

Continued on page 5

Hajj and the struggle against the apartheid regime of Israel

BY DR. DINA YULIANTI

One of the messages of Hajj is to fight racism. Every-one who performs Hajj must perform tawaf and sa’i. During tawaf, a pilgrim must also circle the tomb of Sayidah Hajar, which is attached to one part of the Kaaba. Then, he or she must perform sa’i, to run back and forth, from Safa to Marwah.

Sa’i is a Hajj ritual that imitates what Hajar did. Who is Hajar? She was a black slave who was married to Prophet Ibrahim. In the sight of Allah, even a black slave woman turned out to have a very noble degree. Allah says the noblest among humans is the most pious, not the richest,

or a specific gender or race. Therefore, Muslims should fight racism in this world. One nation that is still a victim of racism is the Palestinian nation. Palestine is colonized by the Zionist-Israeli group, who claimed to be nobler and had the right to carry out occupation and various crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people.

In April 2021, Human Rights Watch issued a report describing Israel as committing apartheid and persecution towards the Palestinian people. Israel formally implemented an apartheid system of government that separated social, economic, and political life based on race. The Israeli Jews get far

more special rights and facilities than Palestinians.

The legal term “apartheid” has long been used by observers, writers, or diplomats who support the Palestinian cause. The 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the 1998 Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court (ICC) define apartheid as a crime against humanity as consisting of three main elements: the intention to maintain the dominance of one racial group over another; systematic oppression by dominant groups over marginalized groups; and inhuman actions (HRW, 2021).

Continued on page 3

TENDER INVITATION NO. 1400-1006

IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO) would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 30.000 MT Anode Carbone Blocks on tender basis.

Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 10-August -2021

Based on our required instruction to following address:

PO Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran Postal code: 3818998116

Attention: Mr. Omid / Mr. Nabuini Tel : +98 86 32162014 +98 86 32162181

NO.49, Mollasadra Ave., Vanak Square, Tehran- Iran, Postal code: 1991614581 Name of office: Managing Director Office, Iranian Aluminum Company. Fax: +98 21 88049028 Tel: +98 21 88049024

For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: www.iralco.ir

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



Tender invitation No. 1400-1007

Iran Aluminium Company (IRALCO) would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 15000 MT Calcined Petroleum Coke on tender basis.

Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 10-August.2021 based on our required instruction to following address:

P.o. Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran Postal code : 3818998116

Attention : Mr. Omid / Mr. Nabuini Tel : +98 86 32162014 +98 86 32162181

No. 49, Mollasadra Ave., Vanak Square, Tehran- Iran, Postal Code : 1991614581

Name of office : Managing Director Office , Iranian Aluminium Company. Fax : +98 21 88049028 Tel : +98 21 88049024

For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: www.iralco.ir

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminium Company



Turkish historian says Tehran and Ankara can stabilize Afghanistan

BY ALIA A. JENABZADEH

TEHRAN - A Turkish historian and political scientist is of the opinion that Iran and Turkey as two important countries in the region can restore peace in Afghanistan.

“Turkey and Iran are important states in our region,” Mehmet Perincek tells the Tehran Times. “Turkey-Iran cooperation has always achieved great success on behalf of the oppressed nations. The union between Turkey and Iran is also for Afghanistan and for all humanity.”

Biden’s decision to withdraw all U.S. forces from Afghanistan has spurred internal instability in the country, where violence is escalating as the Taliban score more battlefield victories against the Afghan government and foreign forces disengage.

But Washington’s decision to pull out has also triggered a regional power play, with different actors - from China to Turkey, from Russia to India - looking to take advantage of the diplomatic power vacuum in Kabul.

Afghanistan’s political, economic and military dynamics have long been influenced by larger and more powerful neighbors Pakistan and Iran. But one regional player, Turkey, is positioning itself in a key security role after the Americans withdraw.

Perincek emphasizes, “Cooperation, not competition, should be essential in any regional issue between Ankara and Tehran. This solidarity will disrupt the plans of the United States.”

Following the text of the interview:

Continued on page 5

Iran reacts to developments in Tunisia

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh reacted on Tuesday to developments in Tunisia, calling on both sides of the conflict to maintain empathy.

Khatibzadeh said Iran is closely following the current events in Tunisia.



The diplomat, while calling on all parties to show restraint and maintain empathy, stressed the need for dialogue between all groups and institutions in the country to calm down the current tension and fulfill the aspirations of the revolutionary nation of Tunisia.

Announcing that Iran is on the side of Tunisia to pass this stage, Khatibzadeh called for establishment of stability in Tunisia's political and security spheres and expressed hope that Tunisia would pass this critical stage through dialogue as soon as possible.

Discontent has been brewing in Tunisia since the revolution in 2011 and the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the country's economy and health care system toward the brink of collapse.

While the Arab Spring movement ushered in democracy and long-awaited freedom of expression, Tunisians say the string of governments since— there have been nine — have failed to deliver tangible fixes for rampant unemployment, poverty, inflation, and poor social services, says Monica Marks, Assistant Professor of Arab Crossroads Studies at New York University in Abu Dhabi.

Marks told NPR that the economic crisis and pandemic-related lockdowns have made conditions "more difficult than ever," and another recent spike has only increased the public's frustration.

On Sunday, Tunisian President Kais Saied dismissed the government and froze parliament in a dramatic escalation of a political crisis that his opponents labelled a coup, calling their own supporters to come onto the streets in protest, Reuters reported.

The president said he would assume executive authority with the assistance of a new prime minister after violent protests broke out in several Tunisian cities over the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economy.

It is the biggest challenge yet to a 2014 constitution that split powers between the president, prime minister and parliament.

"Many people were deceived by hypocrisy, treachery and robbery of the rights of the people," he said in a statement carried on state media.

"I warn any who think of resorting to weapons ... and whoever shoots a bullet, the armed forces will respond with bullets," he added, according to al Jazeera.

He also suspended the immunity of members of parliament, insisting his actions were in line with the constitution.

Tunisian Parliament Speaker Rached Ghannouchi accused President Saied of launching "a coup against the revolution and constitution".

"We consider the institutions to be still standing and supporters of Ennahdha and the Tunisian people will defend the revolution," Ghannouchi, who heads the Ennahdha party, told the Reuters news agency by phone.

Ennahdha is the biggest party in parliament. The party also condemned the president's move as a "state coup against the revolution".

"What Kais Saied is doing is a state coup against the revolution and against the constitution, and the members of Ennahdha and the Tunisian people will defend the revolution," Ennahdha wrote in a statement on its Facebook page.

Nuclear spokesman briefs MPs about nuclear steps

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi has reported to the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on the implementation of the nuclear law on strategic action to lift sanctions and protect Iran's national interests.



Parliamentary committee spokesman Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, in a flash interview on Tuesday afternoon, said that at the meeting the members of the committee asked questions about the fulfillment of the eight articles of the law and the questions were answered.

"In this meeting, it was decided that the nuclear sub-committee and the technical sub-committee of the Committee follow up on various matters related to the law and prepare a written and documented report to be presented to the public," he explained.

Meshkini pointed out that Kamalvandi described the law passed by the parliament as a valuable opportunity to review and rebuild and update the technical and production capacities for the country's Atomic Energy Organization.

Name of the Russian navy chief was typed wrongly in our Tuesday issue on page 2. The correct name is Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov. The mistake is regretted.

Editor

Basij is a sincere force: IRGC chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In an intimate meeting with the commanders and Basiji forces of the Kermanshah resistance bases on Tuesday, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami said the Basij is a powerful and endless force.

"If we look at history, we see that we have never been defeated by the enemies, and if there was a weakness, it was due to the weakness of our faith, not the power of the enemy," the top military official said in the western province of Kermanshah.

The power of the enemies is just in appearance and according to the Quranic teachings if all the infidels and enemies gather, they will not be able to make even one mosquito and they will not have the slightest value before God, he said.

However, he said, the Basiji forces and sincere forces of the Islamic world are dear to God, as they are sublime.

Emphasizing that Basij will put an end to the problems and dangers that are being created for the Iranian nation, the IRGC commander-in-chief stated, "The job of Basij is to rescue. We have a powerful force that we use to solve problems wherever the country faces problems, and Basij is in the realm of reality and in the field of solving the problems of society."

Recalling the history of the Basij since the victory of the Islamic Revolution until now, which has been accompanied by continuous brilliance, General Salami said during the Sacred Defense the Basij was the focal point of ending the war in favor of the Iranian nation.

Iran refers to resistance against the invading Saddam army in the 1980s as Sacred Defense.

"After the era of Sacred Defense, Basij continues to work vigorously and in the service of the people in all difficult crises, including natural disasters or pressures imposed on the Iranian nation by the enemies."

Salami pointed out that the activity that what Basiji forces are doing today is in line with the activities they have done in the past and their activity is moving in a long and endless path, which is to serve the people.

"The enemies are waiting for opportunities at the same time and have come to the scene with all the means to paralyze our economy and separate our people from the system," he said.

Salami noted that the enemies want to block the path of jihad for the Iranians.

"They cut off our external connection with the Islamic world to finally surrender us, but all these dreams failed," he highlighted.

The commander mentioned the Basij as a place for training the righteous and devotees. "Certainly, people who grow up in such a



spiritual atmosphere can be prepared to serve the country and the Islamic Revolution."

Salami stated that the enemies of Islam tried hard, but the more they try, the more they sink into the swamp.

He added, "By relying on God Almighty, sanctions are becoming ineffective one by one, and with the efforts of the faithful and talented youth of this region, we are making significant progress day by day in all areas."

The commander pointed out that the Islamic Republic's plan is not to fail.

"We plan to win and conquer larger arenas, and our jihad is to win against the extravagance of the enemies," he added.

He described Basij as "a school of love and a center for education, training, and character building of young people" who are known as a model of society.

The general said that the Basij is trying to win the hearts and minds of the people.

"We in the Basij must act as a refuge for the people to solve their problems."

"Despite all the conspiracies and tricks, today the enemies of the Iranian nation have realized that the military threat against us is ineffective," Salami said, adding, "Our enemies are not idle and are using every means to strike at the Revolution and the holy system of the Islamic Republic. They are not accountable, and if they take military action against Islamic Iran, it will backfire and they regret it."

"Any military act will backfire on perpetrators"

The commander also warned the enemies that any military action against Iran will backfire on the perpetrators.

He stressed that all the conspiracies against the country are doomed to failure.

"Despite all of their plots and contrivances, the enemies of the Iranian nation have found out today that [issuing] military threats against us is useless," Press TV quoted Salami as saying.

Such an option "does not bring them

[their expected] outcome," he said. "If they resorted to military action against Iran, they would get the opposite result and end up regretting [it]."

"However," the top general said, "military warfare does no longer rank among the enemy's choices."

The adversaries even stopped short of conquering the battlefield through their proxies, including Takfiri terrorists, he remarked.

He said now that the enemies have lost hope of military action against Iran, they have taken aim at the Islamic Republic's economy.

In remarks on Monday, he added though economic sanctions put pressure on the nation, they will lead to the victory of Islamic Iran.

In his Tuesday remarks, he said the enemies have also started targeting the people's affinity with the country's establishment and the nation's sense of hope.

However, all of the enemies' provocative schemes are doomed to fail, he noted.

The general added the Iranian youths are nullifying all of the enemies' sanctions and realizing remarkable instances of advancement every day.

"We have blocked the enemies' path and their calculations aimed at sowing sedition [among the nation] will get nowhere," he said.

"They have been defeated in all of these dreams," said the commander, adding the more they try, the more frustration they would experience in their efforts to target the Islamic Republic.

The senior general went on to say that the Islamic Republic's goal no longer rested only in avoiding defeat, asserting the country was now in pursuit of victory and conquest of greater arenas.

"We stand until the end, and the end of this steadfastness equals complete decline of an enemy, whom as we see is experiencing its twilight [era]," he stated.

Earlier on Sunday, General Salami also

hailed the Iranian nation's vigilance against the hostile plans for inciting insecurity and creating problems in the country.

He was indirectly referring to a series of protests in the southwestern province of Khuzestan over water shortages which have been misused by the opponents of the Islamic Republic and Persian language media outlets based in the West.

In his Sunday remarks, the commander also said the enemies are trying to create insecurity in Iran's border areas.

"Afflicting insecurity on Islamic countries' borders, including those of Iran, has invariably formed one of the enemies and foreigners' strategies," he stated.

"However, they will take this dream to their graves," he added.

"Our borders are safe and strong, and the Islamic Iran's youths are standing strong and preserving the security," he noted while visiting the western border province of Kordestan's Sanandaj County.

The commander made the remarks during a ceremony entitled to commemorating those who have been martyred in the service of defending the country.

He acknowledged the province's decades-old sacrifices in the face of the "vehement invasions" that the global arrogant powers have been waging against the country on various fronts, Press TV reported.

General Salami also paid tribute to the province's ongoing endeavors towards ensuring the country's security.

Earlier this week, General Salami paid a visit to Khuzestan, where he said that the IRGC will stay with the people of Khuzestan until problems in the province are resolved.

Speaking on the sidelines of his visit to Khuzestan on Saturday, Salami said the IRGC's Khatam al-Anbia Construction Headquarters has laid hundreds of kilometers of water pipes in different areas and stationed tankers in villages to alleviate the water shortage problem.

Regarding the sewage system in Ahwaz, the provincial capital of Khuzestan, the Khatam al-Anbia Construction Headquarters has signed a contract and provided equipment for the project, he added, according to Press TV.

"The important point I want to make is that we are committed and loyal to these people. We will not leave them alone and we will stand with them during hardships, as was the case in the 2019 flood," Salami asserted.

"We will work with these people until the work is done and we will never leave them alone."

Referring to Khuzestan's resistance during the eight years of war imposed on Iran by Iraq's former dictator Saddam Hussein, the IRGC chief said the province "is not only important but also sacred to us."

Iranian Intelligence Ministry deals 'heavy blow' to Mossad agents

→ 1 The terrorists were arrested through closely monitoring their activities outside the borders and conducting extensive operational intelligence.

"During the (June) elections, the Zionist regime intended to carry out acts of sabotage in different parts of the country on several occasions. By taking timely action,... soldiers of the ministry prevented terrorist acts and dealt a heavy blow to the Mossad terrorist network," the counterintelligence director stated.

He added, "The Ministry of Intelligence while thanking the constant vigilance of the people, especially compatriots living in the western provinces of the country in the face of the enemies of Islamic Iran, asks all

people to be aware of suspicious offers, especially in cyberspace and requests for some measures to receive money out of the blue and act with more vigilance and awareness and inform the press office of the Ministry of Intelligence at 113.

Also on Monday, Hojatoleslam Seyyed Kazem Mousavi, director of the Justice Department in Fars province, said members of the nucleus of a terrorist team have been identified and arrested in the province in an operation launched by the Intelligence Ministry and police.

Mousavi said 11 active members of the terrorist group were arrested in Fars and 25 others in six eastern and

western provinces in a coordinated operation.

To show its existence and create panic among the public, the terrorist group had released video clips in the virtual space, he explained.

The local official added a large amount of ammunition and weapons have been confiscated from the members.

According to Tasnim, Mousavi also said the group's ringleaders have been identified in foreign countries.

The group had plans to carry out simultaneous terrorist attacks in several provinces with the intelligence and financial support provided by the intelligence services of a European and a regional country, the local official stated without giving further details.

Iran's special envoy reassures Afghanistan of Tehran's supports

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian, the special representative of the Iranian Foreign Ministry for Afghanistan, and his accompanying delegation met with Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar in Kabul on Monday, discussing the latest developments surrounding Afghanistan.

Taherian assured the Afghan foreign minister of Tehran's support for peace process in Afghanistan while maintaining the achievements the Afghans have made over past two decades.

The special envoy also called for further cooperation between Kabul and Tehran in various areas, including border cooperation and coordination between different sectors.

According to the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Atmar said he appreciates the reasonable stances of Iran in supporting peace efforts, ending violence, putting an end to arbitrary killings and torture of civilians, and human rights violations in the territories captured by the Taliban.

Atmar also said that the presence of the Taliban and the escalation of violence by group will lead to a spread of extremism and presence of international terrorist groups, including ISIS, in Afghanistan and regional countries.

Foreign Minister Atmar also said political, economic, cultural, and trade cooperation between Kabul and Tehran is an urgent need and called for strengthening cooperation in various fields, especially in brokering peace between the government and the Taliban.

Iran tries to broker peace between parties in Afghanistan

Fighting between the Taliban and Afghan government forces has increased over the past two months as foreign troops pull out of the country.

The Taliban is thought to have captured up to half of all territory.

As U.S. forces have withdrawn, the Taliban have made rapid gains, retaking border crossings and rural areas.

The Taliban, who were pushed out of power by the U.S. invasion nearly 20 years ago, have also seized key roads as they seek to cut off supply routes.

According to the BBC, their fighters have been closing in on a number of major cities, but have not yet been able to capture one.

The Afghan government imposed a month-long curfew across almost all of the country on Saturday in a bid to stop the Taliban from invading cities.

The curfew bans all movement from



22:00 to 04:00 (17:30-23:30 GMT), apart from in the capital Kabul and two other provinces.

The Interior Ministry said the new curfew was "to curb violence and limit the Taliban movements", adding that Kabul, Panjshir, and Nangarhar were exempt.

Facing turmoil in neighboring Afghanistan, Iran has tried to broker peace by getting the warring sides of Afghanistan to sit together at the table and discuss ways to put an end to hostilities.

To this end, Iran hosted a meeting between a Taliban delegation and a group of figures who support the republican system on July 7 and 8. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who led the talks, urged both sides to show courage in making peace.

Unfulfilled expectations

U.S. fails to meet Iraqi demands on foreign troops withdrawal

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leaders of Iraq and the United States have sealed an agreement on ending the latter's combat mission in Iraq. Many Iraqi political circles have cautiously welcomed the deal, though it stopped short of ending the U.S. military presence in Iraq.

These circles still harbor premonitions about a U.S. plot to use the deal in justifying the continuation of its military presence in Iraq under the pretext of training the country's military personnel.

The deal was reached during a visit by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to Washington, where he met U.S. President Joe Biden as part of a strategic dialogue between Iraq and the U.S.

"I've been in — I've been in contact with Kadhimi. I have — anyway, I think things are going well. Our role in Iraq will be as a — dealing with not — it's just to be available, to continue to train, to assist, to help, and to deal with ISIS as it — as it arrives. But we're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat mission," Biden told reporters after he and al-Kadhimi met.

The Iraqi prime minister confirmed the deal in a statement issued following his meeting with the U.S. president. The statement said al-Kadhimi discussed with Biden "various aspects of strengthening relations between the two countries in all security, economic, cultural, educational and health fields."

It added that the two sides affirmed the transition of the security relationship between Baghdad and Washington to the tasks of consulting, training, supporting Iraqi military capacity-building, providing technical support to the Iraqi armed forces, and the absence of combat forces by December 31 of this year.

The deal came after more than a year of continual campaign on the part of Iraqi political groups to demand a complete U.S. withdrawal of troops from Iraq. This cam-



paigned began early last year when the U.S. army assassinated two prominent Iranian and Iraqi generals near the Baghdad airport. The generals, IRGC's Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani and Deputy Head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, were targeted by U.S. drones in the early days of 2020. A few days after the U.S. strike, the Iraqi parliament passed a bill obligating the Iraqi government to work in the direction of expelling all foreign troops from the country. In the ensuing months, the legislation sank into oblivion as angry protesters in southern Iraq brought down the government of Adel Abdul-Mahdi.

However, the political groups continued to insist on the withdrawal of U.S. troops even as al-Kadhimi took the helm in Baghdad. As the interim government of al-Kadhimi went forward with Iraq's strategic dialogue with the U.S. the Iraqi negotiators faced growing calls for the U.S. withdrawal.

When al-Kadhimi and Biden announced

the deal on withdrawal these calls seemed to have borne fruit. But a closer look at the announcement in that regard reveals that the deal may fall short of Iraqis' expectations on the U.S. withdrawal. For example, the Iraqis have long demanded a complete withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. But Biden explicitly said that the American troops will continue to be in Iraq in an advisory role.

This is by no means a concession to Iraq because the country is already stable and does not need any U.S. combat troops on the ground.

Furthermore, the deal does not meet the Iraqi demand of putting an end to U.S. arbitrary use of Iraq's airspace. This was on full display during the drone strike that targeted al-Mohandes and General Soleimani. When asked about the U.S. use of Iraq's airspace, former Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi complained that "U.S. drones and helicopters roam the skies over Baghdad without official permission."

Perhaps the most accurate report about the U.S. superficial withdrawal came from The New York Times which said that the U.S.-Iraq deal will not lead to a withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. Instead, their mission will be changed from maintaining a presence on the frontlines to training Iraqi troops behind the frontlines. Citing Pentagon officials, the Times said the U.S. appears to be agreeing to the Iraqi prime minister's request to set a date for the withdrawal of its troops from Iraq, but the troop levels in Iraq will remain at their current level of about 2,500.

The Iraqi Parliament's Security and Defense Committee confirmed that the U.S. will maintain its troops in Iraq but with a redefined mission.

Mahdi Taqi Amerli, a member of the committee, told Iraqi news website Baghdad Today that "From the beginning, we know very well that the United States of America does not want a military withdrawal from Iraq, and it is working to delay this matter, with many pretexts and justifications that do not exist on the ground. That is why it wants the strategic dialogue with the Iraqi government to find a new pretext for the retention of its forces in the country."

He pointed out that "the political forces, as well as the resistance factions, will not accept any American presence on the territory of Iraq, whatever the excuse of those forces, and we in the Iraqi parliament, we will closely monitor the results of the dialogue as well as the actual implementation of the American withdrawal in Iraq, otherwise we will take a firm stand against the procrastination of this file, whether by the Americans or the Iraqi government."

He made the remarks after Western media outlets reported that the U.S. intends to announce the withdrawal of its troops on paper.

Iran Majlis speaker arrives in Syria for economic talks

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Majlis Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf arrived in Damascus on Tuesday for talks to boost economic cooperation between Tehran and Damascus.

The visit is aimed to facilitate trade and economic ties between Iran and Syria, Fars News reported.

Removing trade barriers and solving the problems of Iranian businessmen and traders to use the economic potential of Syria are the most important agenda of Qalibaf in the trip, according to Fars News.

During the trip, Qalibaf met with senior Syrian officials, as well as businessmen and entrepreneurs from the two countries. According to Fars News, Qalibaf will specifically pursue economic and trade goals. It added the trip will focus on strategic cooperation, including economic agreements between Iran and Syria and the opening of new routes for Iranian traders and industries.

Qalibaf has underlined the need to boost Iran's trade and economic ties with non-Western countries and he even proposed to change the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to "Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade."

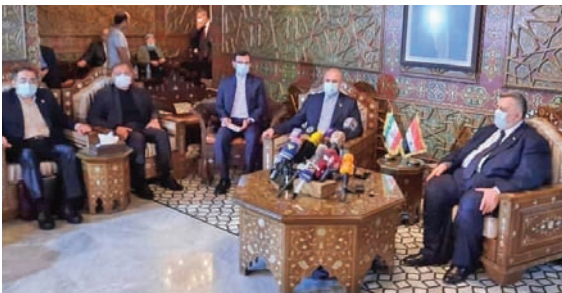
The Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly is the highest-ranking Iranian official to visit Damascus after the crisis emerged in the country.

In recent weeks, several Iranian officials visited Syria with the purpose of enhancing economic ties with the Arab country that has just emerged from a devastating civil war.

In mid-July, a delegation from Iran's Foreign Ministry led by Assistant Foreign Minister Reza Najafi met with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad.

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

Talks during the meeting tackled the relations between the foreign ministries of both countries, as well as laying the necessary bases for strengthening coordination and consultation in various fields of interest to them, especially working to confront terrorism to which both countries are exposed, including economic terrorism represented by



unilateral coercive measures imposed on them, the Syrian state news SANA reported.

Mekdad expressed the Syrian leadership, government and people's high appreciation for the important role played by Iran in all political, military and economic fields to support Syria in its war on terrorism, stressing the depth of the strategic relations between Syria and Iran and that Syria looks with satisfaction at the high level which the relations between the two countries have reached in various fields.

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

Najafi, for his part, indicated that the visit includes many meetings aimed at activating cooperation and coordination with the Foreign and Expatriates Ministry in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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

A few days earlier, another Iranian parliamentary delegation led by Abbas Golrou, the deputy head of the Iran-Syria Parliamentary Friendship Group, also met with Mekdad and other Syrian officials.

During his visit, Golrou said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the improvement of relations with Syria in various fields."

On the second day of his visit to Damascus, Golrou said during a meeting with Mekdad at the Syrian Foreign Ministry that "the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria are long-standing friends with historical background and religious commonalities who have supported each other in various developments in the region."

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that strengthening mutual commonalities and increasing the level of trade can strengthen the two countries in the face of U.S. sanctions."

The Iranian lawmaker noted, "Implementation of agreements and joint cooperation is very important in the process of strengthening the economic strength of the two countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the improvement of relations with Syria in various fields."

Golrou emphasized, "Special attention to economic issues and special cooperation in this field will further strengthen the interactions between the two countries."

He described Syria as a country enjoying a bright horizon and a bright future, and stressed the need to pay special attention to economic cooperation and strengthening cultural, social and economic capacities.

The Iranian delegation also met with Speaker of the People's Assembly Hammoddeh Sabbagh, who affirmed on Thursday the importance of boosting parliamentary relations through exchanging visits, viewpoints, and joint coordination at regional and international conferences, according to SANA.

In continuation of their visit, the Iranian delegation also met with Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous. The two sides stressed the importance of boosting parliamentary relations, increasing the joint visits to achieve the common interests of the two friendly countries and peoples.

Hajj and the struggle against the apartheid regime of Israel

→1 The legal term "apartheid" has long been used by observers, writers, or diplomats who support the Palestinian cause. The 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the 1998 Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court (ICC) define apartheid as a crime against humanity as consisting of three main elements: the intention to maintain the dominance of one racial group over another; systematic oppression by dominant groups over marginalized groups; and inhuman actions (HRW, 2021).

The definition of "inhuman acts" includes, arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment, dividing the population along racial lines by creating separate locations for certain races, forced displacement, land grabbing, denying the right to "leave and return to their country", and denied citizenship rights over certain races. Israel has been carried out all of these actions since its founding in 1948 (Allen, 2021).

The inhuman acts started in 1947 when the United Nations issued Resolution 181, dividing the Palestinian territories: 45% for establishing an Arab-Palestinian state and 55% for the establishment of "the state of

Israel". Since then, the Palestinians have experienced expulsion, land and house grabs, and even massacres. Most Arab-Palestinian citizens who stay in the 55% area of the future Israel become citizens of Israel. In 2020, there are 1.9 million Arab-Palestinian who are citizens of Israel. They became "second class" citizens and experienced various discriminations.

Among other things, many of them were arbitrarily evicted by the Israeli government. Arab citizens cannot freely choose where to live and are forced to live in special Arab settlements. In hospitals, schools and public facilities, they also experience discrimination. Arabs receive minimal medical services, in contrast to services received by Jews. Job opportunities are also minimal. It is not surprising that the poverty rate among Arab citizens is very high. In fact, even to get married, they do not have freedom. They are prohibited from marrying fellow Palestinians who are citizens of the West Bank or Gaza; also can not marry a citizen of "enemy of Israel" such as Syria, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon (Stead, 2019).

Meanwhile, Arab-Palestinian expelled from the 55% area became refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, or in refugee camps in



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surrounding countries (Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon). Starting in 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank, so that the area was referred to as "occupied Palestine." The Oslo Negotiations have transferred the control of 18% of the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority. The Israeli military is still in power for the rest area. Israel also continues to bring Jews from all over the world to the West Bank and build Jewish settlements there. This act of Israel is a violation of the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit occupying troops from changing the demographics of the occupied areas.

In this region, Israel also enforces an apartheid system. Israeli-Jewish citizens are allowed (even protected by the army) to confiscate land and houses belonging to Palestinians. Israel built roads, water and electricity system, and various infrastructures for Jews only, which Palestinians cannot use. In the West Bank, Israeli soldiers also make arbitrary arrests, detain without trial, and shoot at Palestinians. Middle East observers, UN commissions, humanitarian activists, and even diplomats already know all this. The UN has released many resolutions against the illegal settlement, but nothing seems to stop Israel's crimes.

The discrimination and racism felt by the Palestinians have been going on for more than seventy years. Muslims have the responsibility and duty to help the Palestinian people. During the pilgrimage, Muslims from all over the world meet and gather. In this most significant gathering of Muslims, there should be a voice in defense of the Palestinian people because one of the main messages of the Hajj is to fight against racism and apartheid. With the unity of Muslims and all people who loves humanity, Palestine will be free.

SPORTS

Iran basketball to meet the U.S. in super tough match

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Not an easy job to play the 15-time Olympics gold medal winners the U.S. but the Iranian team have no way to put fear aside.

Iran and the U.S. suffer losses against France and the Czech Republic in Pool A, respectively and need to win all their remaining group-stage games to advance to the quarter-finals of the competition.

NBA superstars Kevin Durant and Damian Lillard have traveled to Tokyo to win the gold and it make job for Iran difficult since a loss against the Iranian team will put them in trouble.

On the other hand, Iranian team can take inspiration from the fact that they were able to eat up a major portion of the Czechs' 22-point lead, not giving up until the final whistle.

Behnam Yakhchali had a game-high 23 points for Iran, and he is expected to shoulder the load of scoring once again when his team takes on the mighty Team USA. Mohammad Jamshidi scored 16, and Hamed Haddadi had 15 points and 10 rebounds in that game, while Yakhchali should lead the team's offense.

The match against the world giant can be turning point for Iran basketball but it will be a super tough match without a doubt.

Mohammad Mousavi fit for match against Canada

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran middle blocker Mohammad Mousavi will be fit for the match against Canada.

He was absent in the match against Venezuela but will be ready for Canada match.

Mousavi played a vital role in opening match against Poland, where Iran defeated the powerhouse European team 3-2.

Iran are scheduled to meet Canada early Wednesday in Pool A.

Iran will also meet Italy and Japan on Friday and Sunday, respectively.

Iran held by Egypt at Continental Futsal Championship

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran futsal team were held to a 2-2 draw by Egypt at the Continental Futsal Championship in Thailand on Tuesday.

Ahmad Abbasi and Mehdi Javid were on target for the Iranian team.

The Persians had previously defeated Lithuania and Tajikistan 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.

Former Esteghlal coach Schafer nominated to lead Iraq

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Former Esteghlal coach Winfried Schafer has been shortlisted to lead Iraqi football team.

According to an Iraqi reporter, the normalization committee for the Iraq Football Association (IFA) has negotiated with the German coach.

Schafer led Esteghlal from 2017 to 2019.

Carlos Queiroz, who led Iran from 2011 to 2019, is also a candidate to lead Iraq.

Iraq is in Group A along with Iran, Korea Republic, United Arab Emirates, Syria and Lebanon in Round 3 of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The competition will begin on September 1.

Para-shooter Javanmardi aims to defend title at Tokyo

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran's Sareh Javanmardi is going to defend her title at the 2020 Paralympic Games.

Javanmardi struck twin gold medals in women's 10m air pistol SH1 (P2) and mixed 50 m pistol SH1 (P4) events at Rio 2016.

"Like any other athlete, improving performance, defending the title with the best results are definitely my target in Tokyo," Javanmardi tol Paralympic.org.

"I will do my best. I assume the situation around the globe is the same for all athletes participating in the upcoming Games." "So, I am not worried about defending my title," she added.

Roma lose Azmoun to Leverkusen

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Roma are expected to miss out on Zenit St Petersburg center-forward Sardar Azmoun, as Bayer Leverkusen are closing on a deal.

The Giallorossi and Germans were both interested in the 26-year-old Iran international, Football Italia reported. His contract with Zenit is due to expire in June 2022 and he seems ready to move on for a new experience.

According to Tuttomercatoweb, Roma are not going to pursue Azmoun, as he has already pledged his future to Bayer Leverkusen.

The Bundesliga outfit still need to agree terms with Zenit, who are asking for circa €20m.

However, they are expected to whittle it down and probably get closer to that fee than Roma were prepared to.

Azmoun has 34 goals in just 52 senior caps for Iran, playing his club football for Rubin Kazan, Rostov and since February 2019 at Zenit.

He found the net 19 times in 29 competitive games for Zenit St Petersburg last season, as well as setting up six goals for his teammates.

Iran's exports to India increases 240% in a quarter on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – The value of Iran's exports to India has risen 240 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

Reza Seyed Aqazadeh, the director-general of the TPO's Asia and Pacific Office, said, "In the first quarter of the current year, India was our fifth largest export market, accounting for about 3.2 percent of our exports. In terms of imports, India was the sixth largest supplier to the Iranian market, accounting for 2.5 percent of the Iran's imports."



"In the previous year, when the coronavirus outbreak led to the closure of roads and the semi-closure of offices, this situation affected trade between Iran and India and reduced our trade relations; but in the first quarter of this year communication increased dramatically, compared to the first quarter of the past year as the roads were closed", he added.

Regarding the preferential trade agreement between the two countries, he said: "The most important issue that we are working on within the framework of the TPO's plans in order to increase and develop trade is the preferential tariff agreement."

"Many of the goods we export to India have a very good capacity in this country; there is good demand and we can have a good development in increasing exports to India", the TPO official said, adding, "In general, it can be said that there is an export capacity of more than \$25 billion to India."

Back in early May, during an online meeting between TPO Head Hamid Zadboum and Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendr, the two sides had expressed dissatisfaction with the current levels of trade between the two countries and called for serious measures to be taken for reviving the mutual economic exchanges.

Speaking in the meeting, Zadboum stressed the need to remove barriers to mutual trade and find new ways to develop trade relations between the two countries.

The official noted that the two sides should resume discussion on the preferential trade agreement and exchange the list of commodities that are going to be included in this agreement. He also noted that the necessary measures should be taken to bring back petrochemical, industrial, and steel commodities into the basket of Iranian exports to India.

In this regard, the two sides agreed to work on the raised issues and implement them as soon as possible.

The officials also concluded to make necessary coordination for officials of health, customs and standards organizations of the two countries to meet through video conference in near future to resolve problems and enhance mutual cooperation.

At the end of the meeting, the two sides stressed the two countries' determination to develop and improve economic and trade relations and agreed to discuss and implement the issues through video conferencing, to prepare the condition for face-to-face meetings after the pandemic is over.

India is the only foreign country that is currently participating in a major development project in Iran despite the U.S. sanctions.

The Chabahar Port development project is the anchor for the expansion of economic relations between the two nations.

India is going to install and operate modern loading and unloading equipment including mobile harbor cranes in Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

The strategic port in southeastern Iran is the only ocean port on the Makran coast and it has a special place in the country's economic affairs.

WB sees Iranian economy continuing positive growth until 2024

→ 1 Based on the report, the inflation in the country will also decrease over the next three fiscal years. The bank sees the inflation to stand at 29.3 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 21, 2022), while the figure is seen falling to 21.7 percent and 18.6 percent over the next two years.

The positive growth of the Iranian economy comes at a time when most of the countries around the world are facing sharp declines in their economic growth due to the negative impacts of the pandemic.



This achievement becomes more significant considering the fact that in addition to the negative impacts of the pandemic, the Islamic Republic has been tackling severe economic pressure imposed on the country due to the U.S. sanctions.

Back in January, the World Bank had predicted a 1.5 percent GDP growth for Iran in 2021.

"Growth in the Islamic Republic of Iran is expected to recover as domestic consumption and tourism begin to normalize, and disruptions related to COVID-19 taper," the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report released in late January stated.

In January 2020, the bank had predicted a 1.1 percent GDP growth for Iran in 2020 and 2021.

Over 46m tons of goods loaded, unloaded at Iran's ports in 4 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Some 46.18 million tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded at Iranian ports during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21– July 22), an official with the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced.

According to the PMO's director for ports affairs Ravanbakhsh Behzadian, the mentioned figure has increased by 9.8 percent compared to the previous year's same period during which 42.07 million tons of goods had been loaded and unloaded, IRNA reported.

Loading and unloading operations in the container sector stood at 6.66 million tons, in dry bulk at 13.69 million tons, while for the liquid bulk the figure was 1.47 million tons, for general cargo 6.89 million tons and for petroleum products amounted to 17.46 million tons, Behzadian explained.

He noted that the volume of loading and unloading of liquid bulk cargoes in the said four months increased by 39.8 percent compared to the same period last year, while the figure increased by 25.3 percent, and 22.7 for the general and petroleum cargoes, respectively.



As reported by IRNA, the outbreak of the coronavirus and the imposition of restrictions on the shipping traffic at borders led to a 55 percent decline in loading and unloading operations at the country's ports in the first 16 days of the

current Iranian calendar year, but the situation has improved gradually.

Despite all limitations and barriers created by the pandemic and the U.S. sanctions on the country, Iran's port activities, which play some major part in

the country's trade, have been improving in recent months.

The latest reports released in terms of the loading and unloading operation in the ports of the country are an indication of such improvements.

Official data indicate that 660,000 tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded at the eastern ports of Hormozgan province during the first quarter of the current Iranian year (March 21-June 21), 27 percent more than the figure for the first quarter of the previous year.

Imam Khomeini Port, in the south-western Khuzestan province, also had a good performance, as 73 vessels unloaded 3.622 million tons of basic goods at this port during the first quarter, rising three percent from the amount of basic commodities unloaded at this port in the same three-month period of the previous year.

The rising trend of loading and unloading operation has been also reported about the northern ports of the country.

The mentioned operation rose 28 percent at the ports of Mazandaran province, in the north of Iran, during the first quarter of the present year, as compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

Iran's frozen money in Seoul to pay off Korean exports: ambassador

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – South Korea's new Ambassador to Tehran Yun Kang-hyeon has said Iran's frozen oil money in his country will be used to pay off Korean companies that had previously exported basic commodities to Iran.

Speaking in a meeting with the Head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Masoud Khansari, Yun noted that the money cannot be used for exporting new items to Iran except for basic goods or medicine, the TCCIMA portal reported.

In the meeting, held in Tehran on Monday, the two sides discussed the latest state of trade relations between the two countries and explored ways for improving economic ties.

According to Yun, if the U.S. sanctions on Iran are lifted the amount of South Korean investment in Iran will be such that Iran's blocked resources in the Asian country will be insignificant compared to them.

"South Korea is committed to helping the Iranian people. Last year, a large amount of medicine and medical equipment was exported from Korea to Iran following a U.S. trade waiver issued by the United States government," the ambassador said.

He further mentioned the negative impacts of the

sanctions on South Korean companies and said: "South Korea's oil and petrochemical industries have suffered the most from sanctions against Iran."

"Fortunately, estimates suggest that governments are negotiating, and if sanctions are lifted, South Korea will begin investing heavily in Iran, especially in areas such as railways or equipping Iranian mobile networks with 5G technology," he said.

Further in the meeting Khansari also referred to the recent talks between Iran and other signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal on reviving the deal, saying: "Iran's private sector expects that after the conclusion of these negotiations and the lifting of sanctions, Iran and South Korea would make joint investments in various economic and industrial sectors."

The official said that before the Trump administration imposed new sanctions on Iran, the volume of economic relations between Iran and South Korea exceeded \$17 billion, but with the withdrawal of the U.S. administration from the deal, the level of trade decreased to less than \$2 billion.

The TCCIMA head also stressed that the Iranian private sector is ready to develop economic cooperation with



TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari (L) and South Korea's Ambassador to Tehran Yun Kang-hyeon meet in Tehran on Monday.

Korean companies.

"Holding business webinars between the companies of the two countries to get acquainted with each other's capabilities and capabilities is one of the Tehran Chamber's steps to revive Iran-Korea trade," Khansari said.

ICCIMA sends \$2.7m Covid-19 aid package to Sistan-Baluchestan province

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has sent 115 billion rials (about \$2.7 million) worth of medicine and medical equipment to the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province to help battle the coronavirus pandemic in the region.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the mentioned support package has been sent to the province due to its critical situation regarding the pandemic.

As reported, the shipment is comprised



of four large consignments including hospital and health equipment.

Two 600-liter hospital oxygenators, 15 ventilators, 15 serum pumps, 50 digital medical thermometers, 7,800 Covid-19 test kits and 8,000 Rapid test kits were among the items sent to the mentioned province.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran in early 2020, the country's private sector has been supporting the battle against the pandemic alongside the government and the support still continues.

According to the ICCIMA Secretary General Mohammadreza Ramezani, IC-

CIMA had previously sent support packages to various cities across the country in several stages.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, the total items and equipment donated by the private sector, including the Iran Chamber, provincial chambers, businessmen and the private sector charities, have amounted to 15.21 trillion rials (about \$36.214 million)," Ramezani said.

The private sector's support for battling the coronavirus pandemic is going to continue, he stressed.

825km to be added to railway network by next March

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian deputy transport minister said 825 kilometers of railroads are going to be constructed across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

This year, eight railway projects are in priority, and with their opening, 825 km will be added to Iran's railway, Kheirollah Khademi, who is also the managing director of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), stated.

One of the priority railway lines in the present year was the Khaf-Herat railway, 140 km of which was built inside Afghanistan and was put into operation in recent months, and the second is the Yazd-Eqlid 271-km railway, which is almost completed, the official explained.

The Zahedan-Khash railway is also part of the north-south corridor, 150 km of which has been laid, and the process of adjusting its line is underway, and it seems



that its operation will be final this year, he said, adding that the Bostan Abad-Tabriz railway with a progress of about 90 percent and a length of 44 km will be ready to open in the near future.

The Rasht-Caspian Railway, as an important part of the 37-kilometer north-south corridor with a progress of about 70 percent can be put into operation as one of the country's rail priorities by the end of this year, he noted.

Also, the Hamedan-Sanandaj railway line is 151 km long and has a physical progress of 76 percent, Khademi added.

The development of the railway industry has also been among the top priority plans of the governments in recent years.

The country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) has envisaged that the railway will account for at least 30 percent of cargo transportation and 20 percent of passenger transportation in Iran.

TEDPIX loses 8,400 points on Tuesday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 8,401 points to 1.314 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 6.29 billion securities worth 55.411 trillion rials (about \$1.319 billion) were traded at the TSE on Tuesday.

The first market's index dropped 2,611 points and the second market's index lost 28,043 points.

TEDPIX had risen 143,000 points to 1.311 million in the previous Iranian calendar month (ended on July 22).

Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has launched three

single window systems for facilitating the processes and procedures related to the stock market activities.

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

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

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

once again trusting the capital market.

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

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

He further mentioned the rise in the global oil prices and the stability of the



foreign currency exchange market as factors that resulted in the stability of the stock market.

Turkish historian says Tehran and Ankara can stabilize Afghanistan

➔ **1** Following the text of the interview: **How do you assess U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan?**

The main strategy of the United States for world hegemony was to control Central Asian energy resources and transport routes connected to them. In order for the United States to succeed in this strategy, it also needed to surround Russia and China. Afghanistan played a big role for Washington in this respect.

However, the United States suffered a major defeat in Afghanistan. Time magazine appeared with the cover "Last Days of the Taliban" on December 27, 2001, when the U.S. armies entered Afghanistan.

However, after 20 years, we are talking about the last days of the USA. The Taliban took control of most of the country. Washington's policy of "exporting democracy" has literally failed.

On the other hand, it should be noted that Afghanistan has been turned into a corruption pool for the Pentagon and a handful of generals.

The USA is not only withdrawing from Afghanistan, it is leaving the region completely. Neither Pakistan nor other Central Asian countries have agreed to give bases to U.S. troops leaving Afghanistan.

As the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan, it aims to inflict maximum damage on its strategic rivals. That is to turn Afghanistan into a region of chaos; to leave countries such as China, Russia and Iran all alone with instability.

Do you think other regional powers like Russia and Turkey can fill the power gap in Afghanistan?

The U.S. plan is to drag Afghanistan into civil war and set the region on fire. Then the countries of the region must unite to ensure stability in Afghanistan. Turkey, Iran, Russia, China, Pakistan, Central Asian republics can play an important role. It's all in their interest to disrupt the American plan.

It is important in this sense that Russia has contacts with the Taliban. The U.S. wanted to drive the Taliban over the countries of the region. Moscow saw this trap and although she considered it a terrorist



"Cooperation, not competition, should be essential in any regional issue between Ankara and Tehran. This solidarity will disrupt the plans of the United States."

organization, she made an important move to disrupt the U.S. game by meeting with the Taliban.

Lessons must be learned from the Soviet-era Afghan war and the last American invasion. Despite the Afghan people, military intervention is not the solution. As a result, Afghanistan must be governed from Afghanistan.

Turkey, on the other hand, should be in Afghanistan in order to mediate between the parties in cooperation with the countries of the region for lasting peace, to contribute to a safe transition, and to take an active role in possible regional cooperation.

In addition, the countries of the region should develop a holistic strategy against the U.S. plans not only in Afghanistan but also in the entire Eurasian geography, from the Middle East (West Asia) to the South Caucasus, from the Black Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean.

What will be the role of Afghanistan's neighbors in establishing peace in the country? How can Iran and

Turkey collaborate in this regard? Can the Astana process serve as a good model?

The Astana model proved itself in Syria. Countries in the region have shown that there is no problem that they cannot solve if they take the initiative by preventing the intervention of imperialist countries. We also see this in ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and resolving the Karabakh conflict.

A similar process should be applied to Afghanistan.

Turkey and Iran are important states in our region. Turkey-Iran cooperation has always achieved great success on behalf of the oppressed nations. The union between Turkey and Iran is also for Afghanistan and for all humanity.

Cooperation, not competition, should be essential in any regional issue between Ankara and Tehran. This solidarity will disrupt the plans of the United States.

How do the people in the region read the U.S. move in leaving Afghan-

istan alone in the midst of crises?

The United States is losing its world dominance in military, political and economic terms. The resistance of the Eurasian states and peoples is stopping American aggression. American plans are failing everywhere and will fail. There is a multipolar world now. Even this multipolarity has been reflected in the U.S. The United States also faces significant problems within itself.

In this respect, taking hostile actions against the countries of the region by relying on Washington will harm those countries and their governments the most. Eventually, America will leave our region and we will be left alone.

We all know the "use-and-throw" policy of the United States. The West uses states, governments, and peoples for its imperialist interests. As a result, it brings war, destruction and conflict to the region.

And when it's done or lost, it throws away the powers it uses. The United States is the most unreliable "partner", both because it is imperialist and because it is now losing power. Regional initiatives, on the other hand, offer prosperity, peace and stability to the region on the basis of equal relations.

Do you think China will be engaged in the Afghanistan conflict to advance its Belt and Road Initiative?

China is a great economic power. And it does not follow the imperialist path of the USA. China can contribute to the solution of the Afghanistan issue in an economic sense as well as in a political sense. This would also reduce American influence in the region.

Both the Taliban and the Kabul government have appealed to China. They all want Chinese investment to come to their country. There have even been meetings on this basis in Qatar between China and the Taliban. Against the U.S. plans, these meetings are very important in terms of ensuring internal peace in Afghanistan and the security of the surrounding countries.

As a result, economic development will ensure the establishment of peace in Afghanistan.

British imperialism had an adverse effect on Iran-India cultural ties: historian

➔ **1** **How could British intervention cut the cultural ties between Iran and India?**

Yes, the British imperialism had an adverse effect on culture interaction between India and Iran. Najaf Khan was the last Iranian general and administrator who played a crucial role at the end of the 18th century. Thereafter the British imperialism and the rivalry between Britain and Czarist Russia over Afghanistan and the control over Hormuz and Suez as well as the disintegrating Ottoman Empire and the Qajar's Iran proved to be detrimental to the Indo-Iranian ties. Age-old ties between these two great nations suffered a lot from the British imperialism from which that they haven't been able to come out.

Could you update us about the influence of Parsis in India? Can we track Zoroastrian education in India?

The Parsi community in India is a microscopic community that exercised massive influence in India disproportionate to its numbers in almost every walks of life.

The migration of Parsis has been going on to India since several centuries back. We have several references of Parsis from Yazd settling in Western India. The Parsis have been carrying the intellectual tradition of ancient and medieval Iran for centuries. In education, social sector, industry, science and technology they are second to none.

The intellectual father of Indian nationalism who articulated the critique of imperialism and colonialism was a Parsi, the second president of Indian National Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji. It was under the banner of the Indian National Congress that India waged an unprecedented battle against the British empire and succeeded in 1947.

How was the status of the Persian language in Indian culture and literature in the past? Why has it disappeared gradually?

Not only Persian but also Urdu which had been indigenously grown is also declining because of the lack of patronage and the growth of communalism from the both sides of the communities, Hindu and Muslim communalism. Urdu came to be identified as the language of the Muslims whereas Hindi came to be symbolized with the language of the Hindus. The British imperialist wanted these two communities to fight on these issues so that they could exploit the rich resources of India. The creation of Pakistan and the adoption of Urdu as the national language by the new nation of Pakistan gave a death blow to Urdu. Such was the fate of a lingua franca being spoken by millions of people then what happened to Persian was a foregone conclusion that was spoken and read by a microscopic class amongst the elite Muslims of India.

What are the main fields that can be capitalized on to revive Iranian-Indian old ties?

All is not lost. There are still grounds upon which India and Iran can revive their age-old ties. We have a thousand years shared past. Kushan Empire boundary touched Iran. One of the theories tracing the origin of the Aryans indicates Iran as the place from which Aryans migrated to India. There are several linguistic affinities between ancient Indian languages and the old and middle Persian. Rather than looking towards far-off countries, we can bank upon each other for trade commerce and education especially the progressive ideas whose hub Iran has been for ages.

There are innumerable platforms where India and Iran could find themselves on at the same time whether diplomacy or strategic interest. Indian intellectual class rate Iran quite high. Last but not the least, Iran is the only country that could provide the cheapest oil to India thereby mitigating the economic crisis we are faced with right now.

I would like to end this interview with a brilliant poem written by the great poet of India Allama Iqbal Lahori in praise of Iran. "Tehran ho agar aalam e mashriq ka Geneva...duniya kee taqdeer badal jaye..." (If Tehran could become the Geneva of the Orient ...The fortunes of this hemisphere might turn.)

Canada's serious problem with Islamophobia, anti-Black racism demands action

By Richard Sudan

For many years Canada has enjoyed an image that portrays the country as more tolerant than the United States and far removed from the surge in racist nationalism which has been manifesting across Europe in recent years.

Likewise, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is presented and thought of by many as a non-racist libertarian, standing in stark contrast to the many populist leaders who have occupied political office elected in various countries around the world.

But the notion of Canada being free from comparisons to other nations dealing with a rise in white supremacy and racism manifested in an increasing frequency of violent attacks, is contradicted by the realities being lived and experienced by non-white citizens, and in particular among Black and Muslim communities.

The problem has been building for many years and has culminated in a series of deadly shootings and knife attacks which have left communities living in fear, while Muslim groups have demanded that serious action is taken beyond words. They also argue that certain crimes have not been investigated as hate crimes when indeed they should be.

The deadliest and high-profile case took place several years ago. In January 2017 in a

shooting that rocked the nation, six Muslims were killed in a terror attack after a 27-year-old white male entered the prayer hall of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City and opened fire on worshippers for several minutes, following evening prayers. The impact of the atrocity reverberated throughout the community.

And, just last month in June 2021, four members of the same Muslim family were run over in a pick-up truck in Ontario in a hate-fueled suspected Islamophobic terror attack, with the only survivor being a nine-year-old boy. The killer who has since been charged with multiple counts of murder was reported to have been wearing swastikas at the time of his arrest.

There have also been numerous other cases of stabbings and street attacks which have been taking place across Canada, and in particular in Edmonton, Alberta, where Black Muslim women have been subjected to a number of physical and verbal attacks. In late June, two Muslim women were set upon by a knife-wielding white male who verbally racially assaulted them during the attack, while knocking one of the women unconscious.

While there has been a notable rise in the province of attacks on Black Muslim

women wearing the Hijab, members of the community argue that many of the attacks which take place simply go unreported. The scope of the problem may be far greater than many even realize.

The list of examples of attacks is never ending, and many are demanding that the government do more than simply offer words of condemnation and statements of so-called solidarity with the Muslim community in the wake of the increase of anti-Muslim racist attacks.

But expecting serious leadership and action from Justin Trudeau might be too much to conceive. He might say the right words at the right moment-sometimes. But Trudeau is a Prime Minister who himself has admitted to wearing Blackface in the past, on more than one occasion which is deeply offensive to Black people based on the violent history attached to it.

Trudeau is also accused of not doing enough to reconcile the country's shameful past and crimes committed against Canada's indigenous communities. And this is putting it lightly. The government has also faced accusations of actively pushing back against the fight for justice from those very communities, while Trudeau himself offers symbolic gestures of solidarity.

All of this paints a very different picture from the way Canada is often characterized by Western media. And for those on the receiving end, the lack of action means lives are at stake.

Anti-Black racism and Islamophobia are demonstrably rife in Canada and getting worse. Politicians not taking decisive enough action, while only offering sympathetic words and platitudes are therefore simply laying the groundwork and heightening the environment which allows violent racist attacks to continue unopposed and unpunished. And continue they will unless something is done. Waiting for more dead victims, after which a killer might have a day in court is not enough. White supremacy in Canada continues to be a ticking time bomb.

Countless Muslim organizations and groups are highlighting the problem and are demanding action. The frequency and occurrence of these attacks are also clear. Canada is no different from any other country dealing with an obvious surge in racism and Islamophobia, and non-white citizens deserve more than the lip service the issue is given by the political class. And they certainly need much more, than the weak leadership offered by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. (Source: Press TV)

America's gun violence epidemic has no vaccine

➔ **1** According to the Gun Violence Archive, 2020 marked the deadliest year for shooting-related incidents in at least two decades. More than 43,000 people were killed in shooting incidents.

Analysts point to a few factors for this, such as Americans feeling a need for protecting their homes during coronavirus lockdowns; a period that saw a record number of Americans purchasing firearms. They also say former President Donald Trump's polarizing policies put the nation on the brink of fear and civil unrest; another reason to purchase firearms by both his supporters, which include white militias and his opponents who feared them. Indeed, a recent homeland security report said white supremacists pose the biggest domestic terror threat. Other contributing factors that have been highlighted are inequality gaps and strained relationships between police and the local communities they serve.

Naturally, the more firearms on the streets, the higher the risk of gun violence.



However, more alarmingly is that data from the Gun Violence Archive suggests this year is on track to beat 2020 as the deadliest year for shooting-related incidents in at least two decades. The number of injuries, along with the overall number of shootings that have killed or injured at least one person exceeds those of the first five months of 2020. So far this year, 24,000 people have been killed from shooting incidents.

Highlighting the magnitude of the shooting incidents, earlier this month, New York became the first American state in history to declare a state of emergency, with governor Andrew Cuomo saying gun violence is taking more lives than covid-19. But this epidemic has no vaccine. While some Democrats have in the past tried to tighten controls on gun sales, this has proven difficult to pass through a congress that, mostly republicans, strongly opposes any firearm regulations.

The GOP, along with some democrats strongly believe in the second amendment 'the right to bear arms'; legislation ratified by Congress in 1791.

Not 1971. The year 1791.

The text of the Second Amendment reads as follows: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Less than 25 words that sum up America domestically and reflects its military adventurism internationally. America was built on people carrying firearms and that culture has only intensified and morphed into something bigger over the past centuries.

Let's put aside the controversial debate with regards to the wording of the text which clearly stipulates "militias" have the right to bear arms and not individuals. The next obvious question is when all this innocent American blood that has been shed and all the innocent lives that could have been saved and after all the mass shootings and other massacres, would it not be reasonable for the American congress to ask itself, that after 230 years, one of these 27 amendments we have sitting here before us might need a second look. Is that too much to ask? Is it not obvious that 230 years ago, it would take a minute or so to even load a rifle before someone can fire one bullet from it?

On October 1, 2017, a 64-year-old man fired more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition at a crowd attending a festival in Las Vegas, killing 60 people and injuring 411 others between 10:05 pm and 10:15 pm. That's a time frame of five minutes. Yes, believe it or not, the firearms industry has developed significantly over the past 230 years. But try telling that to congress who won't budge despite the deadly topic becoming an ever increasingly polarizing theme in the country. The reason congress members, especially the GOP, won't budge is quite simple. It all goes back to the powerful National Rifle Association, a group that advocates heavily for gun ownership and a group that has very heavy lobbying powers in Washington DC. Political lobbying stretches all the way back to the early 1930s and strongly influences policy decisions on Capitol Hill.

The NRA has millions of members and spends millions of dollars lobbying lawmakers. Once you are on the payroll of the NRA, which many representatives are, then it's difficult to see changes in the foreseeable future.

Unfortunately, lobby groups are the heart of American politics, in essence, they are the one who shapes future policy, not the lawmakers themselves. The congress members are just the face of the lobby groups. A good example here is the very aggressive Zionist lobby in Washington DC that shapes American foreign policy in West Asia, nothing is going to change when it comes to Washington's approach to the mass killings and massacres occurring in occupied Palestine. The Zionist lobby obviously doesn't care about the genocide of Palestinians in their homeland. Likewise, the NRA doesn't care about the families of victims of gun violence who are being killed on their own soil.

At the moment, Biden's nomination for the head of the ATF, the U.S. agency that plays the biggest role in overseeing gun rights, David Chipman, is in doubt. Gun control advocates had hoped Chipman who himself is a strong supporter of stricter gun laws would take the position and play a crucial role in the fight against gun violence. Standing in the way of this nomination which looks like it's doomed to fail; is none other than the NRA and Republicans in the pocket of the lobby group.

Iranian president inaugurates lodgings, crafts workshops and sports clubs on Qeshm Island

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated lodgings, crafts workshops, and sports clubs on Qeshm Island via a video conference on Monday. Four handicraft workshops in different villages were among the projects, providing 40 jobs in an area of 800 square meters, CHTN reported.



Some 100 billion rials (\$2.3 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) have been invested in the workshops, the report added.

A hotel worth 400 billion rials (\$9.5 million), two diving and water sports clubs worth 160 billion rials (\$3.8 million) as well as an eco-lodge unit were also inaugurated on the island.

One of Iran's seven free zones, Qeshm Island is a top holiday destination and a treasure trove of natural and ecological attractions in the Persian Gulf. The island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines.

The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature-lovers.

Many travelers to Qeshm believe that the Stars Valley or Valley of Stars is a "must see". It is home to bizarre-shaped gorges, tall pillars, canyon-like paths, hollowed-out spaces as well as the smooth and round stones, which have been formed by the wind and rain eroding the soil, rocks, and stones. Locals believe that a star once fell on this area thereby creating the rocky shapes that make it seem as if from another planet.

Aside from its geopark, sun, and sandy beaches, the island's famed mangrove forests in the Hara Protected Area attract a large number of domestic and foreign tourists. Hara Protected Area is one of the five forests in Hormozgan Province and arguably the most important feature of Qeshm Geopark. With an area of 85,686 hectares, Hara is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The ecological importance of the forests has compelled local officials to build a new museum dedicated to showcasing the woodland's ecological features.

Iran attractions: marveling at ancient ruins of Persepolis

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — One of the greatest ruins of the ancient world, Persepolis is of such importance that many believe no trip to Iran would be complete without marveling at the Achaemenid ceremonial capital.

Built by top architects and craftspeople of the mighty empire over several decades, the scale of Persopolice still amazes its visitors for hours and hours.

Dating back to 515 BC, Persepolis may have been ruined for millennia. Be sure to stay for sunset and pick out a great spot of Mt Rahmat to watch the entire ruins and desert enveloped in a soft red glow.

The royal city of Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art. Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy) 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. The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").



This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites. Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

The site is marked by a large terrace with its east side abutting the Kuh-e Rahmat ("Mount of Mercy"). The other three sides are formed by a retaining wall, varying in height with the slope of the ground from 13 to 41 feet (4 to 12 meters); on the west side, a magnificent double stair in two flights of 111 short stone steps leads to the top. On the terrace are the ruins of several colossal buildings, all constructed of a dark gray stone (often polished to a marble-like surface) from the adjacent mountain.

Commonly visited from Shiraz, there are many options for tours to the inspiring Persepolis. Try to take one with a qualified guide to gain a deeper appreciation for the historical significance of this world heritage site.

UNESCO grants world heritage status to Uramanat of Iran

→1 He made the remarks on the sidelines of a visit to the western province of Kermanshah. "I am proud of being chosen to assess the case and traveling to Iran as I could visit the local people in the region," he said.

Local officials believe that inscription of the property on the prestigious list of the UN body could jumpstart tourism in the region and

also look at it as a tool for better conservation of its natural landscapes and unique cultural scenes for the next generations, saying its unique rural texture, architecture, lifestyle, and agriculture is a prominent example of the integration of man into nature.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges,



bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist

arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20).

COVID-19 causes \$7.6b damage to Iran tourism

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran's tourism industry has suffered a loss of some 320 trillion rials (\$7.6 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The pandemic has also ruined more than 44,000 jobs in the once budding travel sector of the country, the report added.

As a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran and the subsequent unemployment and financial losses, accommodation centers suffered the most. These statistics cover the period between February 2020 and the spring of 2021.

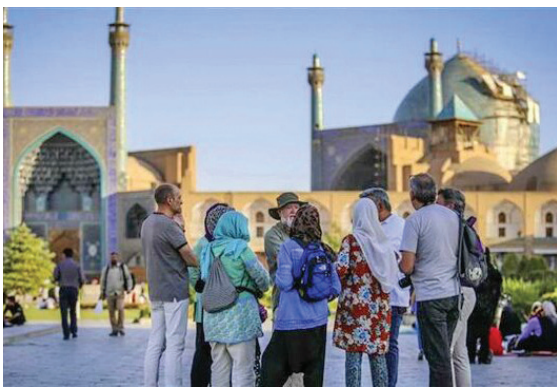
The accommodation centers have taken some 280 trillion rials (\$6.6 billion) hit from the virus, while over 21,000 workers in these centers have lost their jobs over the mentioned time.

Tourism agencies have been the second most affected group in the tourism industry, with over 10 trillion rials (\$238 million) of damage and more than 6,000 unemployed people since the outbreak.

In terms of employment and financial losses, tourism complexes, eco-lodges, and tour guides are also among the most affected groups in the tourism industry.

Government care and support packages

Last October, the deputy tourism chief, Vali Teymouri, announced that a new support package was approved to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.



Depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (\$3,800 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to nine billion rials (\$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate, he said.

The loans would be allocated to tourist guides, travel agencies, tourism transport companies, tourism educational institutions, eco-lodges and traditional accommodations, hotels, apartment hotels, motels, and guesthouses as well as traditional accommodation centers, tourism complexes, and recreational centers, the official explained.

Teymouri in September pointed to the 1.3 million tourism

workers in the country, who are facing several issues due to the coronavirus crisis and said "This number, in addition to their households, includes a significant population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be considered in ministry's decisions."

Back in August, Teymouri announced that the tourism ministry had approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million) to support corona-affected tourism businesses, covering as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector.

Tourism industry in a critical situation

Tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan in October warned that Iran's cultural heritage and tourism would be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue.

Last August, the tourism minister said that the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Genetic studies to shed new light on civilizations once flourished in Iranian plateau

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A new round of genetic studies is expected to shed new light on human communities and ancient civilizations which were once flourished across the Iranian plateau.

The Biodegradation Laboratory of Research Institute for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural and Historical Monuments in Tehran is slated to study the genetics of bone remains excavated from archaeological sites across Iran, CHTN reported.

The project is aimed to determine the ethnicity and authenticity of ethnic groups in the Iranian plateau, Parastu Erfanmanesh, the head of the laboratory, said on Tuesday.

Some samples, which will subject of the study, have been obtained from prominent discoveries made in Seymareh of Ilam, Gohar Tepe of Mazandaran, Kucheri Dam of Isfahan, as well as remaining connected

with the famed Saltmen found in Chehrabad Salt Mine in Zanjan, she explained, CHTN reported.

Human and animal bones discovered during archaeological excavations are very important for indicating the ethnicity of parts of a collection, while identification and preservation of these remains are very crucial, Erfanmanesh added.

Biotechnology, today, helps to solve many of society's problems in different fields, including medicine, agriculture, the environment, and climatology, and has accelerated the development process in these scientific and research areas in some countries, she explained.

To use it effectively, the first step is to identify and evaluate problems and needs, followed by setting research priorities across a range of scientific fields, she added.

She also noted that conserving cultural values as well as recognizing the historical identity of each nation should be considered



in every country and should be among the top priorities of relevant institutions.

Biological sciences can therefore answer many questions in ancient studies because their use is very practical in many fields, she mentioned.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It also

hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (ca. 550 – 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa, and Teogha Zambil in the Khuzestan province, and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

Hand-dug passageway, once served for military purposes, discovered in northern Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A hand-dug subterranean passageway, which is believed to once served for military purposes, has been discovered in northern Iran.

"An underground tunnel with an approximate length of 700 meters has recently been discovered in Gol Sarak village of Gilan province," deputy provincial tourism chief Vali Jahani said on Monday.

The tunnel, which is equipped with underground stairs, ammunition slums, soldiers' rooms, etc., is stretched in the north-south direction, and it probably dates from the Qajar era (1794–1925), the official added.

Jahani added that further research and analysis should be conducted to answer questions such as the exact construction time of the tunnel, its usage in



certain periods, as well as the way that construction materials and water were provided (by the original builders/users).

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

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

5th-century church undergoes another round of restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A fresh round of restoration work has been commenced on the Saint Hovhannes Church in the city of Maragheh, East Azarbaijan province.

A budget of three billion rials (\$71,400 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, Maragheh tourism chief Yaqub Talebi said on Tuesday.

The project involves repairing the arches and rooftop as well as restoring the adjoining premises of the church, the official explained.

Over the past four years, the historical church has undergone several rounds of restoration, costing some 10 billion rials

(\$238,000) to date, he added.

Constructed in the 5th century, Saint Hovhannes Church is Maragheh city's only church, which was popular during the Ilkhanid era (1256–1353), when Maragheh was one of the Iranian prosperous cities.

The church is an Armenian Catholic church named after one of the apostles called Johannes or John, also known as Hovhannes in the Armenian language.

Sait Hovhannes Church has three sections, the Archbishop's residence, a school, and an altar. The church's domed entrance is in its west wing, which is a conical-shaped dome with a steel cover holding the bell.

The main space of the church is a rectan-

gle with an altar in its east wing. Lighting is provided by the main entrance and small windows in the eastern, northern, and western walls. A string of one-story buildings has been constructed in the west wing of the courtyard which is now derelict. Other rooms, which were used by the poor, are also seen around the courtyard.

The original building has been destroyed many times throughout history, but the present structure was built in 1840 by French and Russian architects.

However, in recent years, the church has been abandoned due to the migration of Armenians to Tehran and other cities.

Iran is home to several ancient and his-



torical churches. Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are the most significant religious minorities in the country with Christians constituting the bulk.

Some \$3.5b spent on Lake Urmia revitalization

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – A total of 150 billion rials (nearly \$3.5 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been earmarked to the restoration of Lake Urmia over the past seven years, chief of the Department of Environment, Issa Kalantari, has said.

During the last seven years, 98 percent of the restoration progress is done, and the Lake will reach its ecological level by March 2022.

In an online ceremony attended by President Hassan Rouhani on Monday, the Lake Urmia futurology center was inaugurated.

In addition, environmental projects worth 9.2 trillion rials (nearly \$220 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) were unveiled. Accordingly, 13 construction projects, including environmental water demand studies for 21 wetlands and rivers in the country, came on stream.

Lake Urmia futurology center opened with the aim of using scientific and technical capacities at the local, national, and international levels, facilitation, and coordination between departments, presenting and expanding successful models of coexistence with Lake Urmia and sustainable use of its resources with public participation, raising awareness of all stakeholders about their



environmental rights and responsibilities and increasing public sensitivity and participation.

Lake level declines

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in West Asia. It was home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets, and ducks, and

attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in the agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically. In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a

billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one-tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

Lake's surface area has reached up to 2,917 square kilometers, indicating 1,582 square kilometers increase in comparison to 2013 when the Lake Urmia Restoration Program began.

The level of Lake Urmia has reached 1,271 meters, which indicates an increase of over 1.39 meters compared to the lowest volume recorded. However, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve Lake Urmia, but, this year, the drought and low rainfall are threatening the lake again.

This is while the water level of Lake Urmia has decreased by 30 centimeters in the first three months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-June 21) compared to the same period last year.

Due to the decrease in rainfall over the last two years, this catchment is experiencing a decrease in water level again, Ali Soltanpour, director of the hydrography of the National Cartographic Center said in July.

Iran opens first ion therapy center in West Asia

→ 1 Iran's achievements in fight against cancer

The development of cancer caregivers and specialists, increasing the number of service providers, and implementation of early diagnosis programs, along with support by NGOs and charities are the major steps Iran has taken in the fight against cancer.

Referring to the annual identification of 135,000 new cases of cancer in Iran, Ali Ghanbari-Motlagh, head of the cancer prevention department of the Ministry of Health said that the National Cancer Registration Program, implemented in 2017, reported that among the 135,000 annual cancer cases registered in the country, 52 percent are men and 48 percent women.

Pointing to breast and prostate cancer as the most common cancers in women and men, respectively, he said that cancers of the breast, prostate, colon, skin, and gastric are the five common in the country.

Lifestyle changes in recent years have led to prostate cancer replacing gastric cancer in men since the Iranian calendar year 1390 (March 2011-March 2012), he added.

National cancer control program

The national cancer control program was developed using the experiences of other countries, in particular, the World



Health Organization's recommendations and the experts' opinions, which sets out the Ministry of Health's roadmap up to the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025- March 2026).

The purpose of the program is to reduce cancer prevalence and mortality while improving the quality of patients' lives, which can serve as a model for other countries, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The cancer preparation program was designed to de-

termine the infrastructure and manpower needed over the next 6 years, to determine the type of centers, equipment, and distribution throughout the country using a geographic information system (GIS).

The program includes two important documents, namely, "development of national cancer care network" and "development of cancer human resources", which resulted in the establishment of the early diagnosis centers.

Prevalence in the world

Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally, accounting for an estimated 9.6 million deaths, or one in six deaths, in 2018. Lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach, and liver cancer are the most common types of cancer in men, while breast, colorectal, lung, cervical, and thyroid cancer are the most common among women.

Ghanbari-Motlagh went on to note that 16 percent of annual deaths, amounting to 51,000, are related to cancer, which makes it the second leading cause of death in the country after cardiovascular diseases.

Some 14 percent of Iranians develop cancer during their lifetime, which is lower than the world average of 20 percent. Also, 7 percent of cancer patients die, while the probability of recovery is 50 percent.

Mangrove forests: a miracle of nature

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – The mangrove forests, covering an area of 27,310 hectares in southern Iran, is one of the most valuable forest ecosystems in the world, which are under threat due to various pollutants.

Mangrove forests with an area of about 10 million hectares in the world are a safe habitat for thousands of waterfowls, shorebirds, and aquatic species of subtropical regions.

However, the influx of polluted water from municipal wastewater, industrial waste, and petroleum products, has threatened the survival of these precious ecosystems and has caused them to shrink more and more.

There are 107 species of mangroves, two of which grow in Iran, called Hara and Chandel. The forests are distributed in three provinces of Hormozgan, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Bushehr.

In Bushehr, there are three regions of Nayband, Bardestan and Mel Ganzeh. Nayind is the largest mangrove forest in Bushehr, covering an area of 390 hectares.

Mangrove forests are able to store about 6 to 8 tons of carbon per hectare of soil per year. Protecting beaches from floods and tsuna-

mis, preventing coastal erosion, supporting the nutrient cycle in water, suitable habitat for plants and animals, producing oxygen due to photosynthesis, providing resin and tannin raw materials, a food source for fish and shrimp, the use of the genes of these trees in biotechnology as genetic resources, medicinal properties, beauty, and natural landscape and tourist attraction are some of the benefits of mangrove forests.

These trees are even of spiritual value and sacred to local communities in some countries, but the question is how successful we have been in protecting them. The statistics show that not only were we not successful, but we have also tried hard to destroy the unique habitat.

Due to the importance of these trees, in 1972, mangrove-covered lands were nationally managed as a protected area.

In 1976, it was accepted and registered as a biosphere reserve. In 1977, the pristine areas of mangrove forests, flower gardens, and streams in the Strait of Khuran were registered as an important wetland of international value (Ramsar site).

The RAMSAR Convention, an international treaty, was adopted in 1971. Ramsar Wetlands are sites inscribed on the List of Wetlands

of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") under the Convention on Wetlands.

The scientific name of the mangrove forests is after the great Iranian scientist "Abu Ali Sina" (Avicenna Marina) because it is said that he was the first person to mention the natural properties of this plant.

The world is moving towards the protection of these forests; UNESCO celebrates International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem on July 26 with the aim of raising awareness about mangrove ecosystems and to promote their sustainable management and conservation.

Experts believe that the acidification of seawater is harmful to marine ecosystems. Because organisms with calcareous skeletons lose their calcareous skeletons in acidic water, they also lose the ability to build skeletons, such as coral reefs and bivalves, but a good feature of mangrove forests is that through a series of natural reactions that occur in the soil can naturally increase the percentage of alkalinity in the surrounding water and reduce acidity.

As the seas and oceans become more acidic, the protection of this marine forest ecosystem has received much attention from the world, but the problem is that these for-

ests may be able to moderate the effect of acidification, but up to an extent, so that, a definite solution is required.

In Iran, good measures have been taken to protect and rehabilitate these natural ecosystems. The National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences has done good work, such as planting mangrove seedlings in Bushehr and other neighboring provinces, and continuous monitoring.

Wetlands are important

Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They store water and ensure its quality, providing resilience against drought. They play a central role in sustainable development by supplying all our freshwater.

Wetlands play a major role in protecting the land against floods and the impacts of storms. They provide food and diverse habitats which support genetic, species, and ecosystem biodiversity. Wetlands play a key role in the life cycles of many species and in annual migration patterns.

Unfortunately, wetlands are being degraded and lost due to pollution, over-exploitation, climate change, and human population growth.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. July 26

New cases	34,951
New deaths	357
Total cases	3,758,197
Total deaths	89,479
New hospitalized patients	3,708
Patients in critical condition	5,100
Total recovered patients	3,291,979
Diagnostic tests conducted	25,667,604
Doses of vaccine injected	10,971,009

Agriculture in Iran

(Part 1)

The rural economy, for millennia the economic and social basis for all Persian governments, is characterized by a series of ecological and economic restraints that have hampered its development.

While the natural limitations of the country have effects on the extent of agriculturally usable land and the kinds of crops grown, the socioeconomic structure of Iran and its historical foundations are important for the organization of agricultural production and for economic development. Of special importance for the understanding of the historical development of Iranian agriculture is the theory of rent-capitalism developed by the Austrian Geographer H. Bobek (1959, 1961, 1974, 1976-77).



Ecological foundations of Iranian agriculture. Limited availability of agriculturally usable soils and the lack of water are the most important natural barriers for agriculture in Iran. Due to topography and unfavorable climate, only the mountainous north, northwest and west receive sufficient precipitation to carry out spatially extended agriculture.

That the agriculturally usable land is limited is shown by the survey by Pabot (1967), according to which only 15 per cent may be considered as farmland and another 25 per cent of the total land of the country as rangeland. The biggest part of the country (approx. 50 percent) is sterile desert or desert-steppe, which may be usable only for periodic pasturing, while the rest is mainly degraded forests.

The agriculturally usable lands of Iran can be divided into four categories:

1. Areas of intensive and widespread natural irrigation agriculture are characterized by adequate precipitation and natural water potential. In Iran, only the Caspian lowlands can be considered of this type. Gilan and western and central Mazandaran receive extensive precipitation (up to 2,000 mm) and are covered by such a dense network of brooks, ravines, and rivers that the whole strip between Astara east to the great delta fans of the Babol, Haraz, Tajar, and Talar rivers in central Mazandaran are characterized by intensive agricultural land use.

2. Areas of dry farming are the most characteristic and can be found in most parts of the country. Grains are grown on the basis of winter rains without additional irrigation; such lands are found especially along the mountainous fringes of the central Iranian plateau between Azerbaijan, Khorasan, and Fars. The plateaus of central Iran, as well as the eastern and southeastern parts of the country, are so arid that agriculture can only be carried out by irrigation.

3. Areas of artificial irrigation, typical for much of the central Iranian plateau, are characterized by relatively small patches of intensive agricultural land use amid unused or little used environments. There are different forms of artificial irrigation. The oldest form, still common, is to divert river water; equally common is the canalization of springs and brooks, especially along the foot of high-rising mountains. Most famous and ingenious of all forms of artificial irrigation in Iran is the capture of circulating ground water by means of qanats (q.v.). Dam-regulated irrigation, although known since Achaemenid and especially Sasanian times, has grown in significance in recent years. So has the large-scale construction of wells, due to which many qanats have dried up.

4. Pasture and rangeland, in terms of spatial distribution, represent the most common form of land use; animal husbandry is carried out both by the farming and the tribal population. Areas of animal husbandry cover, horizontally as well as vertically, the fringe areas of dry farming and include the dry farmed lands themselves. The fallow fields serve as stubble pasture, thus receiving a natural manuring. Of special importance is the animal husbandry in the high mountains beyond the limits of agriculture. Here grazing occurs not only on slopes too steep for agriculture but even more in those parts which, due to long snow cover or short vegetation period (i.e., at approximately 2,400 to 2,600 m altitude), cannot otherwise be used.

Land use in different parts of the country is determined by the ecological foundations described above; thus it decreases in intensity and in variety of crops from northwest to southeast. In general terms, these changes for agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as the distribution of irrigated and non-irrigated lands. The areas of dry farming are characterized by the regular change in land use between grain growing and fallow. In accordance with annual precipitation there are two dominant rotation cycles: (a) grain: fallow, and (b) grain.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

E-motorbikes come to curb air pollution in metropolises

The first phase of electric motorcycles development project will be implemented aiming at reducing air pollution in Tehran and other metropolises, IRNA news agency reported.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Tuesday that electric motorcycles will be promoted in big cities in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Through the first phase of the project, electric motorcycles will replace the regular ones used by the Ministry of Energy and state-run companies, he explained.

Ardakanian went on to say that, in addition to electric motorcycles being manufactured and marketed from now on, existing motorcycles will also change to use electricity sources.

آغاز طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوا

مرحله نخست طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران و دیگر کلانشهرها آغاز می شود.

به گزارش ایرنا، رضا اردکانیان وزیر نیرو روز سه شنبه گفت برقی کردن موتورسیکلت ها با همکاری وزارت صنعت، معدن و تجارت انجام خواهد شد.

وی افزود: هدف این طرح در گام نخست، برقی کردن موتورسیکلت های مورد استفاده وزارت نیرو و شرکت های دولتی است.

اردکانیان اضافه کرد بر این اساس علاوه بر اینکه از این پس موتورسیکلت برقی تولید و وارد بازار می شود، موتورسیکلت های موجود نیز برای مالکان آنها برقی می شوند.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A fool's mind is at the mercy of his tongue and a wise man's tongue is under the control of his mind.
Imam Ali (AS)

History of Qajar painting

Part 4
He designed and supervised the illustration of a Persian translation of the Arabian Nights (Hezar o yak shab), a six-volume manuscript in which pages of text alternate with pages of miniature painting, each page carrying at least three compositions.
Many of them are of extremely fine quality with vivid coloring and imaginative treatment, with the costumes and details those of mid-19th century Iran.
His second major project was a set of seven enormous wall panels for the Nezamieh palace, now in the Iran-e Bastan Museum, Tehran; they depict Nasser ad-Din Shah surrounded by sons and courtiers and attended by foreign ambassadors, with each figure a life-like and lively portrait. Preliminary sketches for many of them are preserved in the same museum.

Lithographed books with illustrations had begun to appear in Persia in the 1840s. Many of them were popular story books, the illustrations of which, despite their naivet  and charm, are often crude and incompetent.

Better, though sometimes duller, work is to be found in illustrated editions of the classics. Ali-Qoli of Khoy was prominent in this field; his Nezami (1848) and Shahnameh (1850) are noteworthy, the former containing a full-page illustration of various stages in the lithographic process.

A later Tehran Shahnameh (1891) was illustrated by the excellent lacquer painter Mosatafa. But in this field, as in every other that he touched, Abul-Hassan Khan had no serious rivals.

Although the art of manuscript illustration was still being practiced, with the notable exceptions of Mirza Baba's Divan of Fath-Ali Shah and Abul-Hassan's Hezar o yak Shab, it had passed into the background.

There is little of any great merit to record apart from the Anwar-e Sohayli in the Mahboubian collection, dated 1788-89, with unsigned miniatures possibly by Mirza Baba, and copies of the Shahnameh in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the India Office Library, the Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, and the Majlis Library, Tehran, each containing fifty-odd miniatures of a somewhat routine character.

The only other volume that should be mentioned is a copy of the Shahnameh formerly the property of the poet Vesal's family, illustrated at Shiraz between 1854 and 1864, mainly by Lotf-Ali Khan, but with a few miniatures by the sons of Vesal, some of startling originality.

Lotf-Ali Khan was chiefly, and justly, renowned for his flower paintings, a favorite branch of the miniaturist's art since Safavid times; as a rule they were executed as separate album-pictures.

He had an eminent predecessor in the field in the person of Mohammad-Hadi, whom Claudius Rich met as a very old man at Shiraz in 1821; flower paintings of the greatest delicacy and beauty were produced by many other Qajar painters, notably Mohammad-Baqer.

One other considerable class of miniature paintings calls for attention. This consists of single figures illustrating Persian types, costumes, and manners, painted on plain backgrounds.

The parallel with contemporary "Company painting" in India and the "rice-paper paintings" of Canton is close and striking. In all three groups genuine native styles of painting are simplified and adapted to make them acceptable to European purchasers, as a sort of superior tourist art.

In Persia, they were evidently a profitable line, and Sir William Ouseley relates that "many hundreds were brought for inspection to our tents, and offered daily for sale in the shops of Isfahan," though some of them were "unfortunately of such a description as precludes further notice." Actually the erotic or pornographic element in Persian art, compared with that of, say, India or Japan, is very small indeed.

The remainder of the period, after the death of Sani ul-Molk in 1866, does not call for extended treatment. One of the distinctions conferred by Nasser ad-Din Shah on that eminent artist had been the supervision of the painting department of the newly founded Dar ul-Fonun intended by the king—himself an enthusiastic amateur—for the instruction of Persian painters in the European style.

Prominent among its early alumni was Esmail Jalayer, a great favorite of the shah, and a painter of talent and originality. His style was meticulous, thoroughly Europeanized on the surface, but fundamentally Persian and touched with a sort of gentle melancholy.

Among his oil paintings a group of women around a samovar (London, Victoria and Albert Museum), Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac (Tehran, private collection, illustrated by Schulz), and a representation of the handsome young dervish Nur-Ali Shah surrounded by animals and birds in a luxuriant landscape, the last two executed entirely in monochrome, are outstanding.

His miniatures of saints and dervishes are in one of the albums in the Golestan Library. But the most notable figure in Persian painting of the later nineteenth century was Mohammad Ghaffari, nephew of Sani ul-Molk, who is usually known by the title of Mamal ul-Molk, which he received in 1892.

His mature style is dignified and impressive but completely Europeanized, as can be seen in many portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes in the Persian public collections. He died in 1940 at the great age of ninety-two.

Another skilled painter in European style was Mirza Mohammad Khan Malek ush-Shoara (Poet Laureate) who has left some almost photographic views of the royal palaces and gardens.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
Concluded

Doc sheds light on devices Iranian engineer Hafez Esfahani invented 500 years ago

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Farhad Bordbar has recently completed a documentary that studies the life of the prolific Iranian engineer Hafez Esfahani and the devices he invented during the 15th and 16th centuries.

"Things that Time Took away" focuses on Esfahani's scientific life and inventions, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) announced on Tuesday.

It took Bordbar and his crew about 18 months to study and make the documentary. He has also used animation techniques to illustrate how the devices he invented work.

The documentary is scheduled to be broadcast from various channels of IRIB.

Molana Mohammad, known as Hafez Esfahani, left a treatise entitled "Se Resaleh Dar Ekhteraat-e Sanati" ("Three Treatises on Industrial Inventions") that calls him the inventor of 14 devices, however, only three of his works are described in detail.

The three inventions are a special water mill, a hydraulic oil-mill, and a weight-driven mechanical clock built

following a European model.

Other inventions are mentioned only in passing. Among them is a house security lock designed in 1483, a paper-smoothing device made in 1506, a hydraulic machine to card cotton, a mechanical device to produce an ink of a higher quality, a device that catches a thief and holds him until the arrival of the proprietor, two different time-keepers, a special water elevator wheel, and other non-mechanical inventions.

Considering the dates of two recorded inventions, i.e., his house lock in 1483 and his paper smoother in 1506, Hafez Esfahani's productive life must have covered at least a time span of about 23 years from 1483 to 1506.

He was active even after the rise of the Safavids to power in 1501. He was certainly a Shia Muslim as he invented his 14 devices in remembrance of the 14 infallibles of Twelver Shiism.

The famous historian Khavand Mir is the only one of his contemporaries who mentions him. In his Maather al-Moluk, he states that Molana Mohammad Esfahani considers himself an engineer



Filmmaker Farhad Bordbar (L) directs a scene of "Things that Time Took away".

and that he has built a timekeeping device.

However, it is evident that Khavand Mir had not realized the real value of Hafez Esfahani's work. The timekeeping device that this historian refers to was the first weight-driven mechanical alarm clock ever made, not only in the Islamic world, but in the whole Orient.

Hafez Esfahani was not attached to any particular royal court, but he must have been a well-known engineer to be summoned by the Timurid court of Sultan Hussein Bayqera to build a clock along the lines of a European model.

Hafez Esfahani relates that in order to save the high esteem of Islam, the Ottoman Sultan, Bayazid II (1481-1512), whose engineers and artisans had failed to reproduce an essentially European type of mechanical clock, sent one of these clocks to Iran to be built there.

The European clock reached Tabriz and then Herat, but nobody seems to have managed to figure out how it operated.

The Timurid court then asked Hafez Esfahani to fulfill this task, and not only

did he solve the puzzle and describe it in his treatise, but he also made both a portable and a fixed kind of the originally European clock.

According to Zinat al-Majales, written in 1595, one of his reproductions, then out of usage, was installed in the tower of a hospital in Kashan.

His hydraulic oil-mill is proof of his mechanical knowledge. He also invited his contemporaries to build the new oil-mill by enumerating the advantages of his new invention.

The invention provided better hygiene in comparison to animal-driven mills where the oil was in contact with the dung and urine of animals, higher efficiency compared to traditional methods of oil extraction, the possibility of uninterrupted operation, and thus higher production of oil, lower costs of maintenance compared to other oil presses and mills.

In addition, it needed only a single operator and finally it was less dangerous than the traditional oil presses whose huge beam could cause irreparable damage.

"The Badger" named best at Swindon film festival

faces a strange incident right before her second marriage.

Her 11-year-old son, Matiar is kidnapped. After considerable effort, Sudeh is forced to ask for the ransom money from her ex-husband, Payman. After Matiar's release, Sudeh, being curious, comes to the sudden realization that it was all her son's plan to provide the grounds for his father's return.

"The Badger" has previously won awards at several international events.

It was honored in three categories, including the best audience and best actor at the 19th Riverside International Film Festival in the Inland Empire region of Southern California in May. It also received the festival's President Award for its ensemble cast.

Winners of the Swindon Independent International Film Festival were announced last Thursday.

Keith Allott from the United Kingdom won the award

for best director for his movie "Double Word Score", which shows lockdown boredom leads to a flirtatious game of Scrabble between neighbors Jamie and Ashley.

"Portrait" by director Keir Siewert from the UK was selected as best short film.

Based on a real story, Rhetta, an industrious model, sets up a shoot with a predatory photographer, notorious for his coercion tactics and aggressive actions. However, little does he realize that Rhetta has orchestrated this meeting as a sting to expose his inappropriate behavior on an online video live stream.

"1000 Days" directed by Jeanette Rourke and Ron Bambridge was picked as best documentary.

The documentary shows that no one is immune globally. Close to 800,000 people die from suicide every year. That is one person every forty seconds and we don't talk about it. The film's aim is to break that silence.



"The Badger" by Iranian director Kazem Mollai.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian drama "The Badger" has been crowned best feature at the Swindon Independent International Film Festival in England.

Directed by Kazem Mollai, the film tells the story of a 40-year-old woman called Sudeh Sharifzadegan who

"Zalava" to contend for grand prize of Venice Film Critics' Week

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian drama "Zalava" will be contending for the grand prize at 36th Venice International Film Critics' Week, the organizers have announced.

The Venice International Film Critics' Week is an independent and parallel section of the Venice International Film Festival organized by the Union of Italian Film Critics (SNCCI).

The program includes a selection of seven debut films in competition and two special events out of competition.

The story of "Zalava" directed by Arsalan Amiri is set in 1978 in a small village called "Zalava", where the villagers claim that a demon is among them.

A young sergeant who investigates the claim crosses paths with an exorcist attempting to evict the demon from the

village. He arrests the exorcist on a charge of fraud, but suddenly finds himself stuck in a cursed house with his lover. The villagers who believe they are both possessed by the demon, decide to kill them.

"Zalava" received the award for best directorial debut at the 39th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February.

Co-written by Amiri, Ida Panahandeh and Tahmineh Bahram, the film also won the best screenplay award and brought Puria Rahimi-Sam the award for best supporting actor at the festival.

The Critics' Week lineup also consists of six other movies, including the Spain-Colombia co-production "They Carry Death" by Helena Giron and Samuel M. Delgado.

Hungarian director/writer G bor Fabricius's "Erasing Frank" will also be screened, while Italian director by Alessandro

Celli will be competing in this program with his latest film "Dogworld".

Also included are "Mother Lode", a co-production of France, Italy and Switzerland by Matteo Tortone, "Detours", a joint production of Russia and the Netherlands by Ekaterina Selenkina, "The Salamander", a co-production of Germany, Brazil and France by Alex Carvalho.

Iranian director Shahram Mokri, whose drama "Careless Crime" won an award at the 2020 Venice International Film Festival, has also been selected for the Orizzonti jury of the 78th edition of the Italian prestigious event.

The Orizzonti section is dedicated to films that represent the latest aesthetic and expressive trends in international cinema.

The 78th Venice International Film Festival will take place in the Lido from September 1 to 11.



Hoda Zeinolabedin and Navid Purfaraj act in a scene from "Zalava".

Minimalist Photography Awards honors Iranian artists



"Walk under Moonlight" by Elyas Haqiqat won an honorable mention in the Night category of the Minimalist Photography Awards 2021.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian photographers have won honorable mentions at the Minimalist Photography Awards 2021.

Winners in the 12 categories of the competition, which

is organized every year by the black & white Minimalism magazine, while the Australian photographer, Allen Koppe, was selected as the photographer of the year.

In the Abstract category Mohammadreza Masumi's "Natural Expressionism" received an honorable mention. He also won another one in the Aerial section for "Cold Road".

In the Architecture category Vahid Qasemi-Zarnusheh's "The Historical City of Yazd" was awarded an honorable mention.

In the Conceptual Category Amir-Hossein Yusefi Keysari for "Leave", Sara Goli for "Waiting for Hope", Ali Zolqadri for "The Line of Hope" and Hamidreza Helali for "Separate" were the Iranian winners of honorable mentions.

The Fine-Art Category honorable mentions were Fatemeh Pezeshki-Moqaddam for "Eternity and a Day", Shervin Khanmohammadi for "The Drapery Falls", Ali Tehrani for "Tranquility" and Mohammadreza Masumi for "Whiteboard".

Mohammadreza Masumi's "Saltland" and Mani Gholamshahzadeh's "Branches and Water" won the Landscape category honorable mentions.

In the Long Exposure category, Amirali Meigani's "Sea"

won an honorable mention, while Elyas Haqiqat's "Walk under Moonlight" received the Night category honorable mention.

In the Open category, the honorable mentions went to Setareh Sanjari's "The Pass" and Hesameddin Baqeri's "Alone".

Mohtaram Sadrozzakerin's "The Vase" and Asef Azimai's "Lost" won honorable mentions in the Photomanipulation category.

An honorable mention in the Portrait section went to Javad Rezaei Salanquchi's "Mud Woman", while Mohammadreza Masumi's "Red" won an honorable mention in the Street category.

Nick Moore, Aula Tognarelli, Peter Ibsen, Craig Whitehead and Milad Safabakhsh were the members of the jury.

"The quality of the competition lies in the diverse range of images submitted," Moore said.

"Contained within the Minimalist Photography Awards are a set of artists who refuse to be overwhelmed by the 'visual noise' that surrounds them and instead find those moments of poetry, order and the sublime which gives this competition its strength" he added.