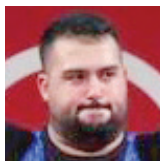




Raisi to be sworn in as Irani president today *Page 2*



Tokyo 2020: Iran weightlifter Davoudi snatches silver *Page 3*



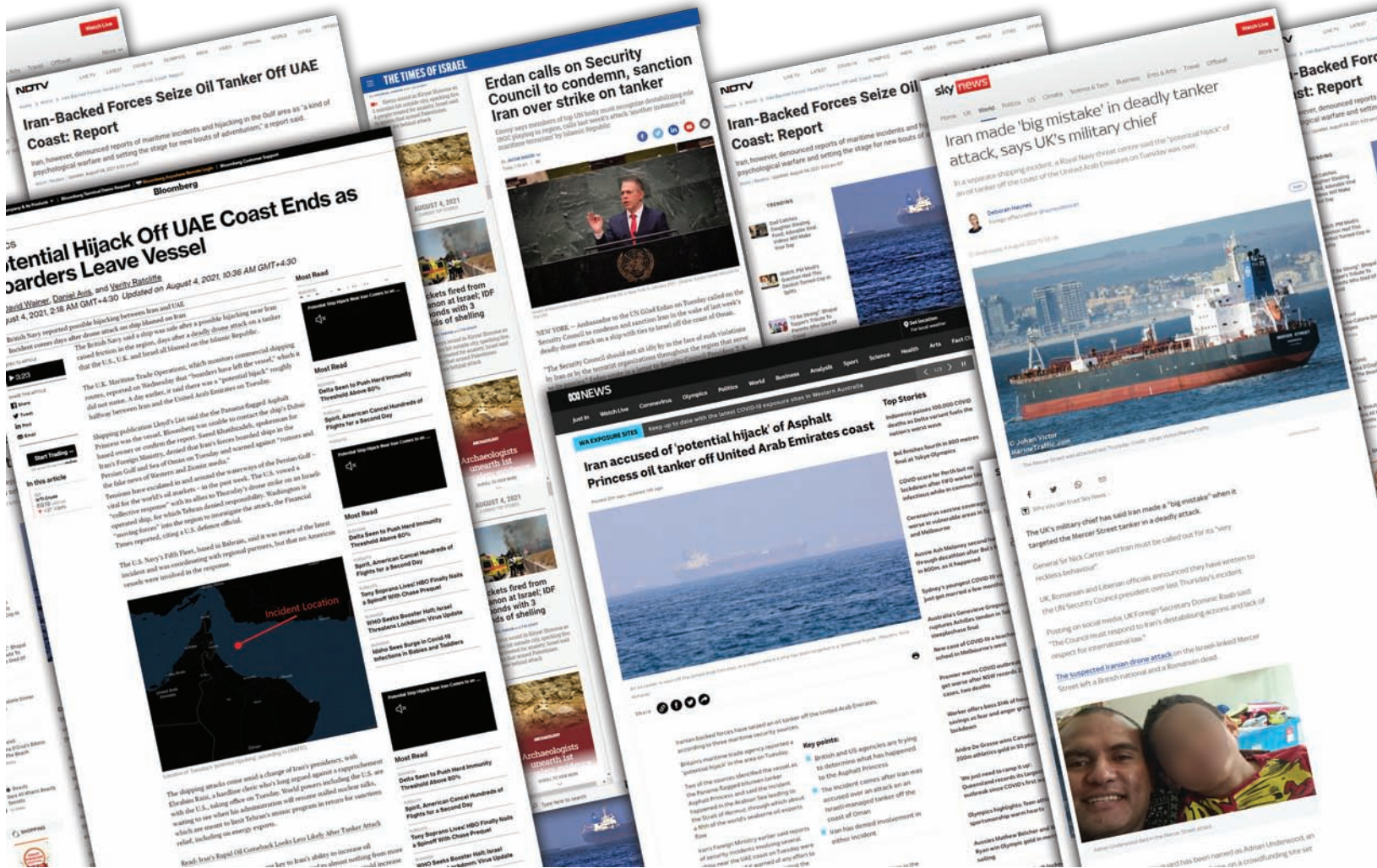
Energy Ministry unveils water, electricity training system *Page 4*



Imam Mosque: elegant, iconic, and visually stunning *Page 6*

False flag operation

See page 3



Iran: Reports of maritime incidents Western psywar for new adventurism

The Iranian Armed Forces have denounced recent contradictory reports of maritime incidents and hijacking in the Sea of Oman as a Western "psychological warfare" meant to set the ground for new adventurism.

Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesman of the Armed Forces, made the remarks on Tuesday, after Reuters claimed that "Iran-backed forces" were believed to have seized an oil tanker off the

coast of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Citing maritime security sources, the report identified the seized vessel as the Panama-flagged asphalt/bitumen tanker Asphalt Princess.

Meanwhile, The Times of London newspaper quoted British sources as saying that they were "working on the assumption Iranian military or proxies boarded" the Asphalt Princess.

Continued on page 2

Loading, unloading of goods up 16% at Shahid Rajaei port

TEHRAN- Loading and unloading of goods rose 16 percent at Shahid Rajaei port, Iran's largest and most-equipped container port, during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official stated.

Alireza Mohammadi, the director-general of Ports and Maritime Department of southern Hormozgan province where the port is located, announced that 563,908 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of car-

goes were loaded and unloaded at Shahid Rajaei port in the four-month period.

The official also said that 550 container ships have been berthed at the port since the beginning of this year.

As announced by an official with the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), 46.18 million tons of commodities have been loaded and unloaded at Iranian ports during the first four months of the current year.

Continued on page 4

Artist Ruholamin offers free copies of Ashura paintings for Muharram rituals

TEHRAN – Iranian artist Hassan Ruholamin has published high-resolution copies of a number of his paintings on the tragedy of Ashura for the use of the Muharram mourning rituals.

The digital pictures of "The Farewell", "After Abbas (AS)", "Are You My Brother?", "Monastery of the Monk", "Beginning of Silence" and several other paintings can be downloaded for free on his Telegram channel.

In a statement published on Monday, 36-year-old Ruholamin, who is most famous for illustrating stories from the history of Islam, said the decision to publish the copies of his artworks was made due to popular demand.

"These pictures are not for sale," he noted and added, "Sales and marketing of these pictures is haram [forbidden] based on sharia [Islamic law] and I'm not satisfied with it."

Continued on page 8

Ex-player Mahmoudi hits out at volleyball federation

BY FARROKH HESABI

Behnam Mahmoudi, the Iranian volleyball expert, hit out at the Iranian volleyball federation for the disappointing results in the 2020 Olympic Games.

Iran national volleyball team bade farewell in the group stage, finishing in fifth place in Group A's six-team table and failing to book a place in the quarter-finals. They finished in ninth place in the final standings of the Games.

In an interview with Tehran Times, the former player of the national team opined about the performance of Iran's volleyball at Tokyo 2020.

"I appreciate the efforts of the players of the team. They tried hard and did their best. However, when you talk about performance, it's firstly based on the results. Iran national team failed to qualify for the next round while our goal was to be among the top four of the Olympics' volleyball competition. So, it's a failure for our volleyball," said Mahmoudi.

"I heard that Mr. Davarzani, president of Iran's volleyball federation, has apologized for the results. It's good but not enough. When we cannot reach our goals and fulfill our promises, it means we have serious problems and weaknesses.

"In my opinion, several factors contributed to this failure. The team and the players did their best, and I thank them for their efforts. The main reason is related to the management problems in the federation. The changes in the management and presidency of the Federation were not in the interest of this sport and caused instability in our volleyball. The Sports Minister, Masoud Soltanifar, did not supervise the performance of the Volleyball Federation, and everything was at the power and based on the desire of Mr. Davarzani.

"Anyone who had a comment about the federation or criticized the federation's decisions were kept away from volleyball! They did not tolerate any criticism," added Mahmoudi.

The first Iranian volleyball player to ever play professionally abroad also said: "When Iran suffered 10 defeats at the 2021 Volleyball Nations League (VNL), most of the volleyball experts pointed that it should be analyzed because there were obvious weaknesses in the performance of the team. I offered the federation to examine the team's problems by a technical committee consisting of Iranian volleyball experts. But the federation didn't pay attention.

"Instead, the team didn't train for two weeks after the VNL! And nothing was done to solve the problems of the team!" he concluded.

Iranian-made Sputnik vaccine in final testing phase

TEHRAN – The Iranian-made Sputnik vaccine is undergoing the final testing phase, IRIB reported on Wednesday.

Iran has the ability to produce 900,000 doses of Sputnik V and 3.5 million Sputnik Light per month.

The results of the clinical trial of the Sputnik Light vaccine in Azerbaijan and Russia have been very successful, Hossein Ali Shahriari, member of the Majlis (Iranian parliament), said.

He said that the injection of the vaccine to the age group of 18 to 50 years has been successful and the results of these studies have caused the speed of vaccination of young people in Russia in critical conditions and now Sputnik Light vaccine is widely injected in 12 countries, which has had beneficial effects in reducing mortality.

"Sputnik vaccine produced in Iran has

already gone through all test stages and sent to the Gamalia Institute of Russia to undergo final tests," he concluded.

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

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

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

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

Saudi authorities ramp up "ruthless" crackdown on activists

Reports emerge that Saudi Arabia has executed a young Shia man for taking part in protests against the ruling tribal monarchy, the Kingdom has been accused of "brazenly" intensifying its brutal repression.

A new report by a prominent Human Rights Organization says once Saudi Arabia handed over the G20 presidency, documents show authorities have prosecuted, sentenced, or ratified sentences of activists and dissidents. It accuses the Kingdom of "ramping up" its crackdown using grossly unfair trials.

Amnesty International says during Saudi Arabia's G20 presidency last year authorities are said to have lowered the prosecution of activists and use of the death penalty.

However, according to the rights group, at least 40 people were put to death between January and July 2021 – more than during the whole of 2020.

Amnesty International says "The brief respite in repression coinciding with Saudi Arabia's hosting of the G20 summit last November indicates that any illusion of reform was simply a PR drive."

The organization added that "as soon as the G20 spotlight on Saudi Arabia faded the authorities resumed their ruthless pursuit of people who dare to express their opinions freely or criticize the government. In one case, the Specialized Criminal Court sentenced a humanitarian worker to an outrageous 20 years in prison for a simple tweet in which he expressed criticism of economic policies"

The rights group also says trials that are held before the Specialized Criminal Court are "intrinsically unfair, with defendants subjected to flawed procedures that violate both Saudi and international law."

Continued on page 5

America is still headed for a material collapse eventually...

BY MARTIN LOVE

Some Americans, but far too few, want to know how Barack Obama gets to plan his upcoming 60th birthday bash this month on his 30-acre oceanfront estate on the island of Martha's Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts. There are 475 confirmed guests set to show up who will be catered to by a staff of some 200 people at the estate which the Obama family bought for \$12 million right

after he left the White House. One can imagine then party will cost close to a million bucks. And this for a president who was primarily a "social worker" before he became president?

One can recall that, in contrast, when Harry Truman left the White House and President Eisenhower took over in the early 1950s, Harry left his job in Washington and he and his wife drove home unescorted to Missouri where he had long maintained a

very modest family home.

Those were the days when the U.S. really was at the top of its game, and quite prosperous with a thriving middle class. Back then, too, the U.S. was THE respected world power. Eisenhower, a celebrated U.S. general in World War 2 who along with his peers was instrumental in helping defeat Nazi Germany, turned out to be a solid president.

Continued on page 5

Taliban are serious for peace talks: Pakistani analyst

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – A member of an Islamabad-based think tank is of the opinion that the Taliban are serious for peace talks while the Afghan government is reluctant.

"The Taliban have been serious for dialogue and that is the reason why they signed a deal with the U.S.," Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai, a senior research associate at Strategic Vision Institute (SVI), tells the Tehran Times.

Political observers say that the Taliban had capitalized on the withdrawal of U.S. and other foreign troops from Afghanistan to launch a series of lightning offensives across the country.

The group is now believed to control roughly half of the nation's 400 districts, several important border crossings, and has laid siege to a string of vital provincial capitals.

But questions remain over how much control the Taliban's leaders have over commanders on the ground, and whether they will be able to convince them to abide by a potential agreement if signed.

"However," the Pakistani analyst claims "it is the Afghan government that doesn't want any negotiations because it can lead to an end of their government."

"When the Doha accord was signed on February 29, 2020, the next day, Ashraf Ghani announced he would not release 5,000 Taliban prisoners which had been agreed in the Doha agreement," he adds.

The U.S.-led military coalition has been on the ground in Afghanistan for two decades following an invasion that followed the September 11 attacks.

Continued on page 5



Wrestler Geraei wins gold medal

TEHRAN – Mohammadreza Geraei won Iran's second gold medal at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

He defeated Ukraine's Parviz Nasibov 9-1 in the men's Greco-Roman 67kg final bout.

Shooter Javad Foroughi had previously claimed Iran's first gold in the Games.

Freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani has advanced to the final bout of 86kg and will meet David Taylor from the U.S. on Thursday.

The 97kg Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadhadi Saravi has also won a bronze medal for Iran in the Games.

Just solution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute is indispensable for peace in South Asia

By S. M. Qureshi



Our government came into office in 2018, focused on fulfilling the promise of delivering Naya Pakistan to our voters. We wanted to provide education, jobs, and better health care by leveraging our connectivity infrastructure to foster regional trade and investment. We knew that this would require a peaceful neighborhood.

Accordingly, shortly after his election, Prime Minister Imran Khan declared that Pakistan “will take two steps towards peace, if India takes one.” He hoped that Pakistan and India would fight poverty instead of each other.

Unfortunately, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India has no interest in peace. India’s ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, is steeped in the racist, hate-filled Hindutva creed of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a paramilitary organization whose founding fathers wrote admiringly of Hitler and Mussolini.

The BJP government thrives on inciting hate and violence against religious minorities - especially Muslims - and builds political capital by saber rattling against Pakistan. Indeed, India’s penchant for brinkmanship brought our two nuclear-armed countries to the brink of war in February 2019. If tragedy was averted, it was only because of Pakistan’s restraint and no thanks to India.

We thought that a close brush with war would have sobered the Modi government. But we had underestimated the extent to which RSS ideology had infected the Indian government’s DNA.

New Delhi continued to spurn Pakistan’s offer for dialogue on the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir as well as other issues that bedevil our relationship. Prime Minister Modi, it appears, confused Pakistan’s desire for peace with weakness.

On Aug. 5, 2019, India imposed an armed siege and communications blackout on Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). Since then, thousands of Kashmiris, including minors, have been arrested and tortured. Popular Kashmiri leaders, like the 91-year-old Ali Shah Geelani, have always been at the receiving end of Indian state repression. This time India did not even spare those political leaders, including three former chief ministers, who are seen by ordinary Kashmiris as enablers of the Indian occupation.

More than 8 million Kashmiris remain inmates in the largest open-air prison camp in the world today, with 900,000 Indian military and paramilitary forces standing watch over them. No credible observer or human rights organization can visit them lest their voices be heard. India has forbidden U.S. Senators from visiting Kashmir. It has detained and deported a sitting British Member of Parliament because she had criticized Indian human rights violations in Kashmir.

Since August 5 last year, the first anniversary of India’s military siege and lockdown in IIOJK, its security forces have killed 390 Kashmiris. In 2021 alone,

Some 85 Kashmiris have been murdered in extra-judicial killings. Indian security forces routinely stage fake encounters to kill young Kashmiri protestors, and use pellet guns against women and children, blinding and maiming hundreds.

As Pakistan has warned, the Indian government is proceeding with the enactment of illegal measures to effect demographic change in Kashmir. The displacement of the local population by non-residents in an internationally disputed territory is a violation of international law and, in particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention. The entire spectrum of Kashmiri political leadership has rejected these moves by the Indian government to create “settler colonies.”

Mr. Modi’s actions have landed India and the region in a cul-de-sac. Baffled with its inability to crush the Kashmiris’ struggle for self-determination, India is looking for a new generation of collaborators from among the Kashmiri leadership to lend a gloss of legitimacy to its occupation. Meanwhile, a systematic campaign to erase the Kashmiri people’s religious, cultural, and linguistic identity continues apace.

This, too, shall fail - just as all other attempts at quashing the Kashmiris’ demand for independence have failed.

What will the Indian government do then? Will it resurrect the familiar bogey of “cross-border terrorism” to smear the Kashmiri freedom struggle? Will it manufacture another crisis with Pakistan to deflect attention from the never-ending stream of scandals (including the recent revelations about India’s attempts to spy on Prime Minister Imran Khan) that keep rocking the BJP government?

India harbors ambitions to be a great power. Indeed, it has powerful champions who want to help India become a great power, but look the other way when India makes a mockery of the democratic values and human rights that they espouse.

It is incumbent on the international community to call India out on its atrocities against the Kashmiri people and push it towards a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute. While a tenuous ceasefire has held across the Line of Control since February, the situation remains tense. And with the situation in Afghanistan rapidly deteriorating, renewed regional tensions over Kashmir are in no one’s interest.

There is only one solution. India needs to reverse its actions of August 5, 2019, and create conditions for a result-oriented dialogue with Pakistan and the legitimate representatives of the Kashmiri people towards the resolution of this longstanding dispute.

The people of South Asia - one of the poorest regions in the world - yearn for peace, prosperity, and a better future for their children. They should not be held hostage to India’s stubborn refusal to face reality: that there can be no peace in South Asia without the peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi is the foreign minister of Pakistan. The article only reflects the views of the author.

EU’s Enrique Mora holds talks with Araqchi in Tehran

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — European External Action Service (EEAS) Deputy Secretary General Enrique Mora, who has visited Tehran to attend the inauguration of Ebrahim Raisi as the new Iranian president, held talks on Wednesday with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, who led the Iranian team in six rounds of nuclear talks in Vienna.

Mora has been leading the nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran, the European Union, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the United States with the aim of reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA.

The talks have been held within the Joint Commission of the JCPOA.

Negotiators from the U.S. has been participating in the talks indirectly because Iran has said it will not talk directly with the U.S. until Washington decides to return the JCPOA and lift sanctions.

According to the media office of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Mora and Araqchi exchanged views about the most important regional and international issues, especially developments in Afghanistan.

Relations and mutual cooperation between Iran and the EU in different areas also featured in the talks, the Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry said the last issues surrounding the JCPOA and continuation of talks



were also discussed between the two sides.

Stephan Klement, the EU ambassador in Vienna who also acts as EEAS special advisor on Iran nuclear issue, and Bruno Scholl, head of the EU Task Force Iran, are accompanying Mora to Iran.

On Tuesday, before Mora arrived in Tehran, EEAS spokeswoman Nabila Massrali said, “It is crucial to engage diplomatically with the new administration (in Iran) and to pass directly important messages.”

Massrali also said Mora “will attend the inauguration on behalf of [EU top diplomat Josep Borrell].”

As coordinator of the deal, Borrell’s “key priority is to resume negotiations ... and to

facilitate the way back to full JCPOA implementation,” Massrali said, according to Politico. Mora is the EU official overseeing the negotiations on a day-to-day basis.

The talks to revive the JCPOA started in April. The last round of talks ended on June 20. No date is still being set for a resumption of the talks because of power transition in Iran.

In a tweet on July 17, Araqchi said, “We’re in a transition period as a democratic transfer of power is underway in our capital. #Vienna_talks must thus obviously await our new administration. This is what every democracy demands.”

On Tuesday, President Raisi said he “will certainly seek to lift the sanctions” on Iran.

Raisi to be sworn in as Iran president today

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi will be sworn in as the eighth president of Iran today at 5:00 PM local time in the parliament.

Raisi will be sworn in by the Judiciary chief to remain loyal to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The president will take the oath of office at the presence of the Guardian Council members and the parliamentarians.

The ceremony will be accompanied by the signing of a written oath by the president and will be delivered to the secretary of the Guardian Council.

Some dignitaries will also attend the inauguration ceremony.

115 officials from 73 countries are expected to attend the inauguration ceremony, including 10 presidents, 20 parliament speakers, 11 foreign ministers, 10 other ministers, and envoys of heads of state, deputy speaker of parliament, parliamentary delegations.

Representatives of the UN secretary general, the OPEC president, the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Inter-Islamic Union, the Asian Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, ECO as well as prominent religious and cultural

figures from the Islamic world will be present at the swearing-in ceremony.

As usual, after the bell rings and the ceremony starts, the speaker will give a welcome speech and the head of the Judiciary will deliver a speech as well.

The ceremony will end with a speech by Raisi. In the past, it was customary to sign a memorial stamp of the inauguration ceremony and take a photo of the guests present after the ceremony.

Raisi was elected president in the June 18 presidential election, defeating his three other rivals with a large margin.

Raisi vows to boost relations with Latin America

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — New Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi says strengthening political and economic relations with Latin American countries is one of Iran’s foreign policy priorities.

Raisi made the remarks in a meeting with Sacha Sergio Llorenti Soliz, the secretary general of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, formally known as ALBA, on Tuesday night.

“Iran is determined to further strengthen its political and economic relations with the member states of the union, and this is in line with the common values and positions of the two sides,” he added.

The president added that the arrogant and extravagant countries of the world despise and conspire against the efforts of independent and freedom-loving nations.

“Undoubtedly, activating the level of cooperation between Iran and Latin American countries can make the Americans and other arrogant people passive,” he highlighted.

Raisi also said Iran and the ALBA states share common values.

For his part, Llorenti Solz expressed his satisfaction with his presence in Tehran on behalf of the nine member states of the union and congratulated Raisi on his election as



the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

“The goal of the ALBA union is to enhance relations between the Alba member states and Iran,” added Llorenti Soliz who has visited Iran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Raisi.

Founded initially by Cuba and Venezuela in 2004, it is associated with socialist and social democratic governments wishing to consolidate regional economic integration based on a vision of social welfare, bartering and mutual economic aid. The ten member countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela. Suriname was admitted to ALBA as a guest country at a February 2012 summit.

Bosnian foreign minister meets Raisi

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Bosnian Foreign Minister Biserka Turkovic held talks on Tuesday night with Iran’s new president Ebrahim Raisi.

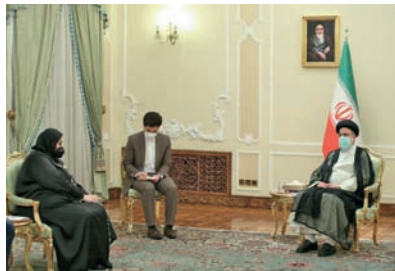
At the meeting, Raisi emphasized that Iran’s principled policy is to maintain security in all regions and protecting the territorial integrity of all countries.

“Our position is to maintain the safety and well-being of all regions,” he said. Iran also defends the oppressed people all over the world, Raisi pointed out.

The new Iranian president regretted that many human rights violations in the world are committed by those countries who claim to be human rights defenders.

Raisi also praised the friendly and profound relationship between Iran and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and called for efforts to identify and activate the potential for extensive economic cooperation between the two countries.

For her part, Turkovic congratulated Raisi for winning the presidency in Iran and thanked the Islamic Republic for supporting her country and expressed



Sarajevo’s willingness to strengthen relations with Tehran.

Bosnia and Herzegovina supports Iran on the international stage, she added.

Turkovic was one of dozens of foreign officials who flew to Iran to attend Raisi’s swearing-in ceremony on Thursday.

Dozens of high-ranking officials arrived in Tehran in the past two days to participate in Raisi’s inauguration ceremony, including European External Action Service (EEAS) Deputy Secretary General Enrique Mora, Foreign Minister of Oman Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, Pope Francis’s special envoy Christophe Zakhia El-Kassis, and South Korean Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Choi Jong Kun.

Iran: Reports of maritime incidents Western psywar for new adventurism

→ 1 In a warning notice based on a third-party source, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) alleged a “potential hijack” and advised ships to exercise extreme caution around 60 nautical miles east of the UAE’s Fujairah emirate.

Early on Wednesday though, the same agency said the suspected hijacking of a ship in the Gulf of Oman had ended and that the vessel was safe.

“Boarders have left the vessel. Vessel is safe. Incident complete,” UKMTO tweeted, without making any clarifications surrounding the incident, and without naming the vessel involved in the alleged incident.

The developments came days after the US, the UK and Israel blamed Iran for a deadly drone attack on an Israeli-managed oil tanker off the coast of Oman.

Also on Tuesday, Britain, Romania and Liberia in a letter to the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday repeated claims that it was “highly likely” that Iran had conducted a drone strike on the tanker last week, according to Reuters.

Tehran denied any involvement in the incident and rejected the accusations as “baseless.”

Iran’s Foreign Ministry earlier summoned Britain’s chargé d’affaires and Romania’s ambassador in protest

at the false accusations.

In response, Shekarchi said, “Contradictory news from some Western, Zionist and Saudi media about any maritime insecurity and hijacking of ships in regional waters is a kind of psychological warfare and setting the stage for new bouts of adventurism.”

“In addition to helping the safe movement of commercial ships, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran have full intelligence about any suspicious movements and stand completely prepared,” he told Fars news agency.

The commander also said, “The powerful naval forces of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and Army are ready to provide any assistance and dispatch relief units if necessary and at the request of foreign vessels.”

Iran’s Embassy in the United Kingdom also reacted to the news, citing its sources in the Persian Gulf as saying there was no information available about any new incidents involving commercial vessels.

Additionally on Tuesday, several vessels off the coast of the United Arab Emirates issued a warning via their Automatic Identification System (AIS) trackers that they were “not under command,” suggesting they had lost control of steering.

A senior military official in the Persian Gulf told Iran’s

Nour news agency the same day that based on reports from the Iranian naval forces in the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf, “the movement of commercial vessels is quite normal and no official naval sources or Persian Gulf countries have reported any uncontrolled incidents in the region.”

Referring to an announcement by several commercial vessels regarding the disruption of their navigation systems, the source said that the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran had offered assistance to the ships in order to solve the problem.

“Certainly, the psychological warfare, which has been waged by certain known Western and regional media outlets to portray the Persian Gulf region as insecure, is pursuing specific goals, whose dimensions will soon be determined,” the source said.

“However, what is significant is that the Islamic Republic of Iran — as one of the main pillars of stability and security in the region — is keeping up comprehensive efforts to safeguard the strategic waterways of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of ??Oman and is closely monitoring any attempt to instigate or insinuate regional insecurity and will take necessary measures to counter these moves,” the source said.

Source: Press TV

Zarif publishes six-volume book on JCPOA

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — A six-volume book titled “Sealed Secret” written by Mohammad Javad Zarif, Ali Akbar Salehi, Seyed Abbas Araghchi and Majid Takht Ravanchi has been published.

In the introduction of the book, which was published by the Information Institute

Publications, it is stated the “Sealed Secret” collection is a descriptive and documented report on the process of one of the most important files in the Iranian history that tries to cast lights on Iran’s important moments in contemporary history.

The book evaluates the narratives and

reports that the “mostly American” opposing parties have published and promoted over the past two decades, trying to shape minds and report history as they wish.

The Sealed Secret is a collection of the nuclear negotiations and the JCPOA.

Zarif told reporters on Sunday that the

Information Institute will publish the history of the JCPOA in six volumes by the end of the week, and then “people will see what their servants and devotees did in the JCPOA.”

The book has been compiled by Seyed Ali Mojtani.

SPORTS

Tokyo 2020: Iran weightlifter Davoudi snatches silver

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iranian weightlifter Ali Davoudi won a silver medal at the +109kg weight class of the 2020 Olympic Games on Wednesday.



He lifted a total weight of 441kg. His snatch lift was 200kg, with the clean and jerk of 241kg.

Georgian Lasha Talakhadze set a new world record in the snatch lift and clean and jerk with 223 and 265 kilograms respectively for a total of 488.

The bronze medal went to Syrian Man Asaad. He lifted 190kg in the snatch and 234kg in the clean and jerk, finishing third with a total of 424kg.

Davoudi's medal was Iran's fourth medal in Tokyo 2020 so far. Shooter Javad Foroughi and Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadreza Geraei have won two gold medals and Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadhadi Saravi claimed a bronze.

Wrestler Yazdani advances to 86kg final: Tokyo 2020

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iranian freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani booked his place in the final match of the 86kg in the men's wrestling 2020 Olympic Games on Wednesday.

He defeated Russian wrestler Artur Naifonov 7-1 in the semi-finals and advanced to the final.

Yazdani will face American David Taylor in the final match on Thursday.

In Rio 2016, Yazdani came from six points down to beat Russian Aniuar Geduev in a dramatic men's -74kg freestyle gold medal bout.

Kaveh Rezaei joins OH Leuven

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran international forward Kaveh Rezaei joined Belgian side OH Leuven on Wednesday.

The 29-year-old player signed a contract with the First Division A for one season with an option for an extra year.

Rezaei has joined Leuven from Club Brugge. In a hundred games in the Jupiler Pro League, Rezaei has scored 39 goals.

The Iranian international joined Sporting Charleroi in June 2017. In his first season he scored 16 times.

He joined Club Brugge in 2018 on a four-year contract.

Now, he is going to start a new chapter in his footballing career.

World never forget wizard of volleyball Marouf

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran volleyball setter Saied Marouf has announced his retirement from international duty. Marouf will absolutely be remembered as one of the all-time greats in his position.

The 37-year-old player orchestrated Iran through his ability for two decades and led a team that became one of the best in the world. He is truly a top-class entertainer and wizard of volleyball, FIVB.com reported.

Marouf showcased an amazing range of skills in defense and attack over the past years and helped Iran dominate Asia for many years. But his retirement could be a big blow to Iran. The captain will not lead Iran in the 2021 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship which will be held in Fumabashi, Japan from Sept. 12 to 19.

Iran must claim at least a silver medal in the competition to secure a place at the 2022 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship. Iran finished in ninth place in the 2020 Olympic Games under leadership of Russian coach Vladimir Alekno. It was a golden chance for Marouf to add a valuable accolade to his achievements but he left Olympics in tears.

But, volleyball fans in Iran and in the world will never forget the wizard of volleyball. -Saied Marouf in numbers
2014 – Year he won Best Setter in the World League
2005 – Year he started playing for the senior national team
2001 – Year he made his youth national team debut
1063 – His total number of set attempts in the World League
2014 preliminary round
327 – His total number of set attempts at the World League
2014 Group 1 Finals
189 – His height in centimetres
182 – The number of FIVB matches he has played
35 – His current age
10 – The average number of sets he made per set (10.47) in the World League Group 1 Finals
7 – The total number of national and international club titles he has won – Zenit Kazan (2), Matin Varamin (2), Paykan (1), Sanam (1), Kalleh (1)
6 – The total number of gold medals won in the Asian Championships (2), Asian Games (2), Asian Cup (2)
4 – His jersey number
3 – The foreign countries where he has played club volleyball - Russia (Zenit Kazan), Italy (Siena) and China (BAIC Motor)
2 – The number of times he led his team to qualify to the Olympic Games (Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020)
1 – The number of medals he won at an FIVB event (bronze medal at the 2017 FIVB Volleyball Men's Grand Champions Cup)

But, volleyball fans in Iran and in the world will never forget the wizard of volleyball.

Iran must claim at least a silver medal in the competition to secure a place at the 2022 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship.

Iran finished in ninth place in the 2020 Olympic Games under leadership of Russian coach Vladimir Alekno. It was a golden chance for Marouf to add a valuable accolade to his achievements but he left Olympics in tears.

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False flag operation

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – With the Vienna nuclear talks between Iran and the West hitting a deadlock, things seem to be deteriorating to a dangerous escalation by the West against Iran, which refused to bow to U.S. extravagant demands during six rounds of talks.

Since Tuesday afternoon, the Persian Gulf region has been abuzz with dubious, unconfirmed reports of unspecified incidents allegedly involving several vessels off the coast of the United Arab Emirates in the Gulf of Oman. Till now, there are no solid reports explaining what happened on the ground, with the countries directly involved in the issue are either silent or questioning the account of the Western press regarding the situation in the Gulf of Oman.

The UAE, where incidents are reported to have happened off its coast, has been dead silent and has refrained from commenting on the issue. On the other side, Iran, which has been accused of playing a role in the drama, said there have been no incidents taking place in the Gulf of Oman and that all Western press reports are a fuss about nothing.

While Western media outlets were busy publishing weird stories about possible scenarios such as hijack, attack, and kidnap, Iran said nothing unusual took place on its doorstep in the Gulf of Oman. Instead, Iran accused the West of staging a propaganda war with the purpose of extracting concessions from it ahead of a possible resumption of nuclear talks in Vienna.

The Iranian embassy in the UK even warned of an unfair game intended to mislead the public. "According to our direct links in the Persian Gulf region, no information on new incidents for any merchant ship in the region is confirmed so far. Misleading the public all around the world for diplomatic gain in New York is not fair game," the embassy said on Twitter.

This "game" came on the heels of another



attack in the Gulf of Oman blamed on Iran. Last week, an Israeli-operated oil tanker came under a mysterious attack in which two civilians, a Romanian and a Briton, were killed.

The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street was attacked off the coast of Oman last week on Thursday while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime, was reportedly attacked by suicide drones. Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and Romanian national, died in the attack.

"With profound sadness, we understand the incident onboard the M/T Mercer Street on 29 July, 2021 has resulted in the deaths of two crew members on board," the UK-based Israeli company said in a statement on Friday afternoon, a day after the attack.

Israel, the U.S. and the UK were quick to blame the attack on Iran without presenting any evidence. They also vowed to give a collective response to Iran even though Iran roundly denied any involvement. But the

trio of Tel Aviv, Washington, and London faced difficulties convincing the world that Iran had violated international law.

They sought to take the issue to the UN Security Council. Also, they urged their allies to take a stand against Iran. In continuation of this campaign, a British group called United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UK-MTO) reported Tuesday that a vessel near the UAE port of Fujairah was affected by a non-piracy incident. Then The Associated Press reported that at least four ships off the coast of the United Arab Emirates broadcast warnings on Tuesday that they had lost control of their steering under unclear circumstances as authorities reported "an incident" was underway in the area.

On Wednesday, The Times, citing UK government sources, claimed that a "squad" of armed Iranians stormed an asphalt tanker and tried to take it to Iran but the crew scuppered the engines of the vessel so it could not go anywhere.

These allegations were dismissed by Iranian officials as a prelude to new adventurism by the West against Iran. The senior spokesman

for the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, denounced the Western press reports about the alleged incidents in the Gulf of Oman as "psych ops" and an effort to pave the way for new adventurism against Iran.

"Conflicting reports Western, Zionist, and Saudi media about any maritime insecurity and hijacking of vessels in the region's waters are sort of psych ops and a prelude to new adventurism," the Iranian general said. "The armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while supporting passage of commercial ships, are well-prepared and have full intelligence surveillance over any suspicious moves."

Iran sensed the danger early on. Iran's Foreign Ministry dismissed the reports of successive security incidents involving vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman as "totally suspicious."

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement that Iranian naval forces are prepared to provide support, if needed, to vessels that send distress signals while passing through the strategic waters of the region.

"In case of problems in navigation systems, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to provide assistance and investigate the matter closely," he added.

The continuation of Western reports prompted Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Major General Hossein Salami to issue a stark warning against any provocation.

He called on the enemies to abandon wrong moves and plots and avoid challenging Iran, saying that, otherwise, they would receive a crushing response that would make them regret their moves.

Iran's warning came amid a growing understanding that the West has embarked on a dirty game to ramp up pressure on Iran even by resorting to false flag operations ahead of nuclear talks, which have been put on hold for more than a month.

Indonesia-Iran relations in the time of Covid-19

By Priadij

TEHRAN – Foreign Ministries of Indonesia and Iran had conducted the meeting of the Committee on Bilateral Consultation on July 5th 2021 through virtual platform/basis.

Both countries had times to more deeply explore much potential in face of the COVID-19 pandemic and also situation surrounding Iran related to sanctions still imposed on the country. Yet, the talks, simultaneous with the 70 years of Indonesian-Iran diplomatic relations commemoration /celebration, focused on issues deemed feasible to be concretely implemented for both countries' interest.

Indonesia viewed the meeting important to provide good opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues of common concern, to build better understanding, and to find best strategy to expand future cooperation on convergence issues among others: parliamentary cooperation, economic-trade promotion, information, science and tech cooperation, regional security and nuclear issue/sanction.

This short article will shed light on efforts, opportunities, challenges and prospects for the two countries. The short article focuses only on two issues, deemed as most concrete and resulting for cooperation: health and women's empowerment.

In the history of more than 70 years of bilateral relations, Indonesia has been a true friend of Iran while Iran has always been an important partner, not only bilaterally but also regionally and internationally. While the two countries have achieved several milestones but abrupted due to the pandemic, Indonesia and Iran remain optimistic in redoubling the efforts to further enhance the bilateral ties.

One of the biggest challenges on the relations are the



pandemic and sanctions on Iran. Due to Covid-19, a number of visits by both sides needed to be rearranged and reformatted, causing some delay in implementation phase. But more to be 'Blessing in Disguise' on the other way around, the pandemic further encourages stronger interaction between both sides: to follow up on phone conversation between President Joko Widodo and President Rouhani in April 2020, Indonesia welcomes any potential collaboration with Iran for joint production and transfer technology in medical devices and pharma products, including vaccines and therapeutic medicines for Covid-19.

The plan for the establishment of hemodialysis equipment assembly facility in Indonesia strengthen the confidence for further collaboration in achieving our national self-resilience in pharmaceutical and medical industries through joint research and development between our health institutions.

Following the visit of Indonesian Minister for Women's Empowerment to Tehran in July 2018, the two sides now proceeding with concrete actions that women are rising

to the occasion during the pandemic, not only as mother but as 'bread winner' as well.

Indonesia-Iran relations is prospective and have potential ahead for more cooperation. It is so, among others, considering the followings: President Joko Widodo's visit to Tehran in December 2016 followed by phone talk with President Rouhani in April 2020, signaled strong willingness of both parties for future collaboration, the concrete ones being mentioned above that are in health and woman empowerment issues.

The Iranian president-elect Ebrahim Raisi, upon his election as the next Iran President as result of the 18 June 2021 presidential election, had received congratulatory message from President Joko Widodo, one among other positive signs for further bilateral relations/cooperation.

The pandemic, as mentioned above, has just strengthen and necessitate more concrete collaborative works ahead. Other things being equal, but for one thing, the bilateral works, as the Iranian side convinced, can be further enhanced and promoted with the hopeful prospect of Iran-US relations in particular pertaining the nuclear/sanctions issue.

In conclusion, it suffices to say that both countries have many in common, and the pandemic strengthened further the collaborative works in dealing with pandemic, and simultaneously also elevates the issue of women's empowerment in both countries. In short, Indonesia and Iran will never lose the opportunity to promote the relations for the people and interest of both countries.

*This article only reflects the views of the author.

Priadij is a foreign policy enthusiast.

Iran embassy in UK rejects reports of insecurity in Gulf of Oman

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iran's Embassy in the UK has reacted to Western press reports on alleged incidents involving a number of ships off the coast of the United Arab Emirates in the Gulf of Oman, saying there were no new incidents in the region.

The embassy's reaction came after several Western news organizations reported that a number of ships in the Gulf of Oman were affected by unspecified incidents.

First, a group called United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported Tuesday that a vessel near the UAE port of Fujairah was affected by a non-piracy incident. The Associated Press reported that at least four ships off the coast of the United Arab Emirates broadcast warnings on Tuesday that they had lost control of their steering under unclear circumstances as authorities reported "an incident" was underway in the area. It wasn't immediately clear what was happening off the coast of Fujairah in the Gulf of Oman.

The vessels – oil tankers called Queen Ema, the Golden Brilliant, Jag Pooja and Abyss – announced around the same time via their Automatic Identification System trackers that they were "not under command," according to MarineTraffic.com.

Iran was quick to warn about an unfair game intended to ramp up pressure on it. The Iranian embassy in London said it had direct links in the Persian Gulf and it was informed that there were no incidents taking place in the Gulf of Oman.

It said the whole episode was an unfair game

designed to extract concessions from Iran.

"According to our direct links in the Persian Gulf region, no information on new incidents for any merchant ship in the region is confirmed so far. Misleading the public all around the world for diplomatic gain in New York is not fair game," the embassy said on Twitter.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh described as totally suspicious the reports of successive security incidents involving vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, warning against any effort to create a vicious atmosphere to pursue certain political goals.

Khatibzadeh at the same time reaffirmed Iran's policy of establishing security and stability in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and said Iranian naval forces are prepared to provide support, if needed, to vessels that send distress signals while passing through the strategic waters of the region.

"In case of problems in navigation systems, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to provide assistance and investigate the matter closely," he added, according to a statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

He further expressed Iran's preparedness to cooperate with the regional countries to boost maritime security and monitoring of naval transit routes.

In a separate interview with Tasnim on Tuesday night, Khatibzadeh dismissed rumors about the entry of Iranian military forces into foreign ships passing in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, warning against such false reports propagated by the Western and

Zionist media.

The comments came after the UK sources reported the "potential hijack" of a British vessel off the coast of the United Arab Emirates' Fujairah region.

British authorities claimed that the Panama-flagged Asphalt Princess oil tanker had been hijacked, and said they were "working on the assumption Iranian military or proxies boarded the vessel" in the Gulf of Oman.

Khatibzadeh categorically rejected as "untrue" the reports circulated by Western and Israeli media about the involvement of Iran's Armed Forces in the incident, Press TV reported.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman also called on all parties to be vigilant against the spread of fake news, given the contradictory news about maritime security in the region. Earlier, Iranian Ambassador to the UK Mohsen Baharvand cautioned that an escalation "doesn't help anybody." He told the Financial Times that London's decision to blame the Islamic republic for last week's assault on the MV Mercer Street was a "very premature reaction."

Iran and the UK both summoned each other's ambassadors amid heightened tensions over the attack on the Israeli ship.

The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street came under attack off the coast of Oman on July 29 while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime, was reportedly attacked by suicide drones.

Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and Romanian national, died in the attack.

"With profound sadness, we understand the incident onboard the M/T Mercer Street on 29 July, 2021 has resulted in the deaths of two crew members on board," the UK-based Israeli company said in a statement on Friday afternoon, a day after the attack.

Israel, the U.S. and the UK blamed Iran for the attack without presenting any evidence to support their accusations.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett claimed that Tel Aviv knows with certainty Iran attacked the Mercer Street ship and will respond to it.

"I determine, with absolute certainty – Iran carried out the attack against the ship," Bennett stated, according to the Jerusalem Post. "The intelligence evidence for this exists and we expect the international community will make it clear to the Iranian regime that they have made a serious mistake."

London also summoned the Iranian ambassador to the UK. "The Iranian Ambassador to the UK, Mohsen Baharvand, was summoned today to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office by the Minister for the Middle East, James Cleverly, in response to the unlawful attack committed on MV Mercer Street on 29 July," the UK Foreign Office said in a statement.

Iran responded by summoning the British charge d'affaires in Tehran, in the absence of the country's ambassador, to protest the anti-Iran accusations leveled by the British foreign secretary.

Iran, Finland explore avenues of mutual economic co-op

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie held talks with Finland's Ambassador to Tehran Keijo Norvanto to discuss avenues of mutual trade.



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie holds talks with Finland's Ambassador to Tehran Keijo Norvanto in Tehran on Tuesday.

As the ICCIMA portal reported on Tuesday, in the meeting Shafeie pointed to Finland's achievements and experiences in fisheries, agriculture, and maritime industries and expressed Iranian companies' readiness for using Finnish side's knowledge and experiences in this area.

"These areas are important to us; Because Iran, considering the natural situation and the severe drought in the country is looking to use new agricultural methods in the future. Therefore, we can have good cooperation with Finland in these areas," Shafeie said.

He further pointed to the new measures that ICCIMA is taking for boosting trade with Finland, including the establishment of the Iran-Finland Joint Chamber of Commerce which is going to start operating within the next three weeks.

The Finnish ambassador in his turn, referred to the inauguration of the new government in Iran, saying: "The current situation is a critical moment in Iran and we are waiting to see what new economic developments will take place in the government."

Emphasizing the favorable relations between Iran and Finland, Norvanto referred to the meetings of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee at the embassy and added: "considering the positive talks between the two sides, we can hope to take big steps towards boosting trade relations between the two countries; as an embassy, we have a duty to develop relations with you in all areas, especially in the economic field, and I hope we will be able to continue this path after the establishment of the new government."

He further stressed the importance of exchanging up-to-date information on the economic situation of Iran and Finland for greater cooperation between the two countries' businessmen and noted that the expansion of economic relations between the two countries requires the identification of potential areas of cooperation.

TCCIMA to hold Iran-Pakistan Business Webinar on Pharmaceutical Industry

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA) in collaboration with Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) will hold Iran-Pakistan Business Webinar on Pharmaceutical Industry on August 11.

As announced, official from the both sides including Hassan Nourian, the consul general of Iran in Karachi, and Masood Ahmed, the trade and investment counselor of Pakistan in Tehran, Najm-UI-Hassan Jawa, the chairman of Pakistan-Iran Business Counsel of FPCCI, and Tauqeer ul Haq, the president of Pharmaceutical Association of Pakistan, will deliver speech in the online event.



Iran and Pakistan have held several online conferences and forums on the expansion of economic and trade ties between the two sides since the coronavirus pandemic limited holding of such events.

Expansion of trade with Pakistan, and boosting exports to this neighbor is one of Iran's priorities.

Iran's Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Hassan Abqari has said that Iran and Pakistan are working together to remove the obstacles in the way of expanding mutual trade.

"Ways to address exchange and banking problems have been identified and pursued by the two countries' governments," Abqari who is also the Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Foreign Investment Company (IFIC), told IRNA.

"Fortunately, relations between the two countries are at a very good level under the government of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, and we are hopeful about the outcomes of these mutual efforts."

According to Abqari the major focus of the governments of Iran and Pakistan is the expansion of trade, especially in border areas.

The third border crossing between Iran and Pakistan called Pishin-Mand was officially inaugurated in April, in a ceremony attended by Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister and some Pakistani officials.

Pishin-Mand border crossing is located in Sistan-Baluchestan Province, southeastern Iran.

Loading, unloading of goods up 16% at Shahid Rajaei port

→1 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 further 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.

CBI to take all necessary measures for curbing liquidity, inflation: governor

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Akbar Komeijani has said the bank is going to take all the necessary measures for preventing the liquidity growth which will consequently lead to inflation, IRIB reported.

Speaking in a meeting with the managers of the country's banking system on Tuesday, Komeijani pointed to the sanctions and the budget deficit as the main reasons for the liquidity growth in the country, saying that liquidity growth would lead to inflation and the decline in the value of the national currency which will, in turn, affect major medium- and long-term economic decisions in the country.

The official put the country's liquidity growth in the 12-month period to June 21, at 39.4 percent, which shows an increase of 5.2 percent compared to the growth in the same period last year.



The main reason for this situation was the government's use of central bank resources which amounted to 560 trillion rials (about \$13 billion), he stressed.

The CBI governor further noted that under the framework of the open market operations and in order to manage liquidity and guide the interbank interest rate, the Central Bank has taken necessary measures for attracting liquidity in this market since the second half of the Iranian calendar month of Khordad (early June).

The liquidity growth has been inevitable in Iran considering the outbreak of the coronavirus and the injection of liquidity by the government for supporting households and businesses.

Back in February, CBI had announced that the country's liquidity reached 31.3 quadrillion rials (about \$745.2 billion) in the first nine months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), to register a 26.6-percent growth from the figure for the end of the preceding year.

Energy Ministry unveils water, electricity training system

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Ministry unveiled a comprehensive system for training and data analysis in the water and electricity industry, in a virtual ceremony on Tuesday, the portal of the Energy Ministry known as Paven announced.

The ceremony was attended by officials and managers from the Energy Ministry, energy-related companies and subsidiaries of the Energy Ministry as well as training institutions, IRIB reported.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, Deputy Energy Minister Mohammad Saleh-Olia referred to the need for developing information systems based on modern technology for scientific analysis in various fields of human resources, including training, and said: "Access to real statistics and information requires precise planning based on reality rather than speculation, and there are several benefits to using new ways of providing services over the Internet."

Saleh-Olia noted that using the new system will create great positive changes in the industry, the benefits of which will become tangible in near future.

Also in the ceremony, the Chairman of the Training and Vocational Qualification Center of Power and Water Mohammadreza Fadaei Tehrani emphasized the significant



role of the Energy Ministry in maximizing the benefits of information technology in creating accurate, realistic, and up-to-date reports and for implementing training courses and issuance of electronic certification in a unified form.

As reported, the comprehensive system of "Training and assessment of water and electricity industry" has been established with the aim of providing online educational services, creating a community of water and electricity teachers, updating educational content, unifying training procedures, and benefiting from various service providers inside and outside the Energy Ministry.

The system is also going to accelerate the issuance of electronic certificates to reduce the cost of training services and to improve the quality and effectiveness of training at the Training and Vocational Qualification Center of Power and Water.

Producing 500 tons of precious metals, gemstones in 4 years targeted

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has approved the draft of an operational plan for developing the industrial chain of precious metals and gemstones to reach the annual production of 500 tons of such products by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025).

The draft was approved on Wednesday in a meeting attended by the Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki and Ali Agha-Mohammadi, head of the economic group at the office of the Islamic revolution's leader, IRNA reported.

Speaking at the meeting, Niaraki mentioned the Industry Ministry's plans for developing the country's major industries, saying: "Last year, four action plans were prepared to develop the production chains of clothing and footwear, precious metals, food and beverages, and home appliance industries; these industries account for 40 percent of the total value of the country's industrial products."

According to the official, facilitating supply, production, and exports, providing trade infrastructures, developing export, supporting domestic manufacturing and import management, empowering human resources and strengthening de-



sign and research, as well as amending laws, regulations and directives related to the production of such items are among the most important axes of the operational plan for the development of the industrial chain of precious metals and gemstones.

Sadeghi Niaraki further noted that the mentioned operational plan has been prepared using the opinions of the private sector and will be unveiled in the near future after the final amendments are applied.

The plan will be communicated to the relevant organizations and agencies after official approval, he added.

Industry Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini had previously announced the allocation of over five trillion rials (about \$119 million) for supporting production units active in the field of precious metals and gemstones.

TEDPIX up 30,000 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 30,414 points to 1.406 million on Wednesday.

Over 9.309 billion securities worth 73.847 trillion rials (about \$1.758 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market's index rose 22,742 points, and the second market's index increased 59,812 points.

TEDPIX had risen 5,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.316 million points on Wednesday, July 28 (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Civil Servants Pension Fund (CSPF), Social Security Investment Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most



widely followed indices

Mostafa Safari, a capital market analyst, believes that trades in the Iranian stock market will be much better and more reasonable in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) compared to the first half of the year.

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

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

Value of exports from Qom province rises 42%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Qom province, in the center of Iran, has risen 42 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Mojtaba Farhadi, the director of Commerce Office of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that 63,000 tons of products worth over \$57 million has been exported from the province in the four-month period, indicating also 115 percent rise in terms of weight.

He said that the numbers of the prov-

ince's export destinations has risen 15 to 40 countries.

He named plastic materials, metal products, light and heavy hydrocarbons, dairy products, copper wire, shoes and slippers, synthetic fibers, aluminum and related industries, machinery and zinc products as the major exported items.

The official mentioned Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, UAE, Germany, India, Turkey, Russia, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan as the main export destinations of the products, and said that Bulgaria, Syria, Kenya, Kuwait, Romania, Italy, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Macedonia, Spain, Qatar and Ivory Coast have been added to Qom's target export

markets this year.

As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 47 percent during the first four months of the current year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi has said that Iran has traded 50.8 million tons of non-oil products worth nearly \$29 billion with other countries in the mentioned four-month period, which indicates also 21 percent growth in terms of weight on an annual basis.

The official put the four-month non-oil export at 38.3 million tons valued at \$14.3 billion, with a 65-percent rise in value and



a 27-percent growth in weight.

The IRICA head mentioned liquefied gas, polyethylene, iron semi-finished products, methanol, gasoline, iron and steel ingots, steel products, iron rods, liquid propane, bitumen, and copper cathode as the main exported products in the said time span.

America is still headed for a material collapse eventually...

→1 Just before he left office after eight years he gave his now famous speech warning about the dangers of what he called the “military- industrial complex” becoming too big a factor in the development of the country and potentially leading to all sorts of horrors, as it so amply has since the mid 1960s and the start of the Vietnam war debacle. Eisenhower was never interested in buying a \$12 million estate, unlike Obama.

But the question remains HOW any president, unless they were already filthy rich by inheritance like JFK or the two Bushes, and very much like many in Congress nowadays, manage to become very wealthy on relatively modest salaries while in office and especially after they leave office. The answer quite simply is rampant, obscene corruption. Favors done to so-called elites and special interest groups such as AIPAC and even the military while in office have resulted in huge rewards after they are retired. The Clintons are another case in point and so are many in or out of Congress today. Nancy Pelosi, who leads the Democrats in the House of Representatives, is another example.

So what the U.S. has become is a society of the haves and have nots like never before, and the results of this, including the decimation of a middle class and even industrial enterprise because of off-shoring to China and other countries, is a country that is unraveling socially, spiritually, economically and infrastructurally.

Biden has pledged to “bring back America” but already he has failed to live up to scores of campaign promises and America so far is not “coming back” except as a bigger threat, along with horrific allies like the



Zionist Apartheid state and the Saudis, to name just two.

But one really needs to ask just one question: What can you say about a country that has spent trillions of dollars over the decades since World War 2 building and often upgrading several THOUSAND nuclear weapons? (When, presumably, a hundred or so of the barbarous bombs, which ONLY the U.S. has ever used unnecessarily – twice on Japan in 1945 – are certainly sufficient as a threat to rivals such as the USSR was, and could easily destroy civilization.)

Indeed, one can say U.S. governance has been on the wrong path, at its peril, for decades just as Eisenhower warned against. The U.S. has eroded at home and not served its

citizens well overall, especially in the current century. Many realize this in the U.S. but far too few citizens understand exactly why and their scrambled reactions have often been absurdly counter-productive and severely fracturing to the social fabric and proper governance and respect from abroad.

The biggest “tell” pointing to the decline of the U.S. as a respected power seems to be this: the government has literally not been able to change directions under ANY president or party since Lyndon Johnson’s reign. Yes, for example, Biden has or is pulling the U.S. out of Afghanistan but that’s only because after 20 years and trillions spent and some 3000 grunts killed and more than 20,000 maimed the U.S. was utterly defeated in its

war there. It’s not because of a marginal change in direction.

So the question remains what action model or big COULD signal (before some sort of deep collapse occurs) the beginning of a real change in direction for the U.S. internally and abroad? Here’s a list of candidates, some of them seemingly minor, some major. 1. The U.S. lifts all the sanctions on Iran and restores the JCPOA with guarantees it cannot be cancelled again as Trump and Pompeo did. 2. Makes aid to the Apartheid Zionist entity conditional on how it treats the Palestinians, half the population west of the Jordan River and forces the entity to lift the siege on Gaza. 3. Slashes the obscene Pentagon budget materially. 4. Halts the rampant use of “sanctions” and lifts them from Cuba and Venezuela and other countries where deployed. 5. Raises taxes significantly for the billionaire and multi-millionaire “elites”. 6. Legislates Medicare healthcare for all citizens. 7. Raises the minimum wage for workers. 8. Cancels most of almost two trillion dollars in student debt. 9. Enacts strict environmental standards, many of which Trump trashed. 10. Dismantles unilaterally 90 percent of nuclear weapons. 11. Stops prosecutions of whistleblowers like Julian Assange.

Any one of these moves, however small (and none of them cater to the long entrenched “establishment”) could be seen as a breath of fresh air for most all Americans and many others overseas. Sadly for now, none of them are likely to happen until AFTER some sort of material collapse of the U.S. given the long road of bad governance the U.S. has been on. And as well, this ought to constitute a warning to other countries that seem incapable of changing directions themselves.

Taliban are serious for peace talks: Pakistani analyst

→1 Fears are growing that Afghan forces will be overwhelmed without vital coalition air support, allowing for a complete Taliban military takeover or the start of a multi-sided civil war in a country awash with weapons following nearly four decades of fighting.

He says, “Though Ashraf Ghani was not a part of the Doha deal, his master, the U.S., was there and they had taken Ashraf Ghani on board. We all know Khalilzad was frequently visiting Kabul.”

Zalmay Khalilzad, originally an Afghan national, has been acting as U.S. special envoy for Afghanistan.

In remarks on Tuesday, Khalilzad said the Taliban are demanding “the lion’s share of power” in any political settlement.

“At this point, they are demanding that they take the lion’s share of power in the next government given the military situation as they see it,” Khalilzad told the Aspen Security Forum in an online conference, according to the euronews.com.

The analyst rules out the possibility of civil war in Afghanistan, saying it is only warlords fighting for domination. “There could be no civil war but a war between the warlords for their domination of some areas,” Yousafzai argues.

“However, it is very difficult for them to hold on to the Taliban. Taliban have a psychological dominance over all the warlords in Afghanistan including the Ashraf Ghani government and that is the reason why any warlords could not have challenged the Taliban.”

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you assess the Taliban’s military advancements in the recent two months?

The Taliban’s recent advancements are part of their strategy where they have to put pressure on the international community on one hand and the Kabul administration on the other.

If we look, the Taliban advancements did start once there was no progress in the Afghan talks. The Afghan government is just busy passing their time and is not serious about negotiations as they realize they can gain nothing in talks with the Taliban.

The Taliban have almost surrounded Kabul at the moment. And this is a fact that they can attempt to take Kabul



by force but they will not take it as they know there will be a harsh reaction from the international community and that will negatively affect their stature. The regional courtiers are now more active to play a role in a negotiated settlement between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

The Taliban claim to control approximately 90% of Afghanistan’s borders with neighbors? Do you think these claims are real or just propaganda?

The Taliban do not control 90 percent of Afghanistan. However, they control a considerable part of Afghanistan that is why the Kabul administration is in extreme frustration. The Taliban have even control on the border with three neighbors: Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan and they collect taxes from transporters.

A report from Voice of America recently claimed the Taliban are collecting quite less toll tax from transporters and they are happy from them. If the Afghan government were capable of wiping out the Taliban, they would have done it earlier where the NATO and U.S. forces were supporting them. The morale of the Afghan forces is very down and they either surrender to the Taliban or quit their jobs. A week

before, 46 Afghan soldiers took refuge in Pakistan where they were encircled by the Taliban. And then Pakistan safely handed them over to the Afghan authorities.

Do you think regional initiatives like the Astana group can be viable when it comes to Afghanistan?

The Afghanistan issue is very complicated and only an international initiative and organization cannot resolve it. It can be resolved by those who have leverage over the power centers in Afghanistan. The U.S., Pakistan, regional countries and Russia could have a wider role in the peaceful settlement of the Afghanistan crisis.

How do the people in Afghanistan and Pakistan look at the U.S. troop pullout?

The U.S. withdrawal as many people believe is not good for Afghanistan, especially the Afghans who believe the U.S. will always protect them.

How ironic this approach is? The conflict in Afghanistan was due to the U.S. invasion in 2001 but now Washington is withdrawing from the country to show a sense of responsibility.

Now Afghanistan’s peace is at risk. If the Afghan government becomes serious, which doesn’t seem to happen, a settlement could be reached soon.

Is the Taliban ready to be seriously involved in talks or there will be a full-blown civil war?

The Taliban have been serious for dialogue that was the reason they signed a deal with the U.S. However, it is the Afghan government that doesn’t want any negotiations because it can lead to an end of their government. When the Doha accord was signed on February 29, 2020, the next day, Ashraf Ghani announced he would not release 5,000 Taliban prisoners which had been agreed in the Doha agreement.

Though Ashraf Ghani was not a part of the Doha deal, his master, the U.S., was there and they had taken Ashraf Ghani on board. We all know, Khalilzad was frequently visiting Kabul. There could be no civil war but a war between the warlords for their domination of some areas.

However, it is very difficult for them to hold on to the Taliban. Taliban has a psychological dominance over all the warlords in Afghanistan including the Ashraf Ghani government and that is the reason why any warlords could not have challenged the Taliban.

Putin declares “No more Mr. Nice Guy” to Israel. It’s about time

By John Wight

A recent article on the website of Bloomberg, “Putin flexes his muscles in Syria in a test of Israel’s new leader”, reports that “after years of tolerating Israeli strikes in Syria under former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Moscow is eager to do more to bolster Syrian President Bashar al-Assad with a new government in Jerusalem.”

The afore quoted revelation places a harsh light on Russia’s military intervention in the region since 2015, specifically with regard to its dependability as an ally in a conflict in Syria in which Israel has throughout been an active participant against Syrian government forces and those of its Iranian and Hezbollah allies.

Iran and Hezbollah are of course more than able and willing to defend themselves against Israeli aggression, as already proved. However, the principle stands: just as a woman cannot be half-pregnant, a state cannot be half an ally in a conflict into which it has committed its own military forces.

This principle was confirmed in 2018 when Syrian anti-aircraft units accidentally shot down a Russian military aircraft as it was returning to its Syrian airbase, with the loss of 15 Russian military personnel. The Russians alleged that Israeli fighter jets

had deliberately used the Russian aircraft as cover while heading inshore from the Mediterranean to carry out an airstrike. It was an allegation which, as you might expect, the Israelis summarily denied.

This is not to suggest that Russia should engage in a full-blown war with Israel over its repeated airstrikes against targets in Syria – airstrikes which, just in passing, are almost certainly illegal under international law, and inarguably so when it comes to repeated attacks against targets on the Golan Heights, which is annexed Syrian sovereign territory. It is to suggest that, hitherto, in going along to get along with Tel Aviv by acquiescing in said attacks as long as the Israelis provided their Russian counterparts with advance warning so that if Russian military aircraft or personnel were operating in the area of an intended attack, they can move out of harm’s way, they have been feeding a monster. Such a policy being followed by the Russians up to now has only satisfied the interests of the Israelis while failing to instill trust in its supposed allies and people across the region for whom terrorism is terrorism, whether committed by Salafi-jihadis militant groups or the apartheid Israeli regime.

So, then, what now where now? Well, if reports that Russia is intent on

recalibrating its stance on Israeli airstrikes in Syria are true, it marks a welcome development, even if long overdue. Such a step-change makes perfect sense given that three recent such airstrikes occurred close to where Russian forces were located in central and northern Syria, with the Russians going to far as to claim that they disrupted one attack with one of their renowned air defense systems.

Putin is commonly credited with being a shrewd political and geopolitical operator. In many respects, he more than any current leader of a major power encapsulates the thinking of the famed 19-century British foreign secretary, Lord Palmerston. To wit: ‘We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.’

The corollary to this thinking when it comes to geopolitics, of course, is that it also earns you the eternal and perpetual mistrust of those states whose foreign policy is rooted in first principles of resistance to the militarism, aggression, and brutality of an apartheid rogue state led by men who practice statecraft like gangsters.

Russia under Putin deserves credit for the role it has played in helping defeat the forces of terrorism that have done their best

to turn Syria into a vast graveyard of its religious minority communities since 2011-12. Russian airmen and soldiers have given their lives to this cause, which no right-thinking person should make the mistake of failing to appreciate.

As for Israel, with its repeated airstrikes against resistance forces, it has provided those same forces of terrorism with their own air force by extension. Consequently, it has written yet another page in the vast book of dishonor and ignominy it has compiled since coming into being on the back of a program of mass ethnic cleansing in 1948.

It is to be hoped going forward that President Putin’s stance towards Israel will be one of “No more Mr. Nice Guy.” The Russian leader previously went out of his way to court the goodwill of former Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. It got him nowhere and only managed to make him look weak and opportunistic. In this regard, we can only be honest.

When it comes to the current Prime Minister of Israel, Naftali Bennett, it seems Putin has finally woken up to the fact that per one Winston Churchill: “An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last.”

It’s about time.

(Source: Press TV)

Saudi authorities ramp up “ruthless” crackdown on activists

→1 The group adds that “In many cases, defendants are held incommunicado and in solitary confinement for months at a time and denied access to lawyers. The court routinely condemns defendants to lengthy prison terms and even death sentences, following convictions based on “confessions” extracted through torture.

The rights group has also called on international bodies to organize a system that would oversee and monitor the Kingdom’s human rights violations.

It argues that “Saudi Arabia’s plans for limited legislative and human rights reforms mean nothing while executions, unfair trials, and the relentless punishment of human rights defenders, activists and journalists continue. We urge the UN Human Rights Council to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia”

Western powers regularly allege their adversaries are violating Human Rights. The accusation is made without any evidence but is repeatedly used for international audiences to score political points on the international arena.

Meanwhile in 2019, the world celebrated America’s top ally in West Asia, Saudi Arabia, allowing women to drive cars.

Even then, Saudi rulers began detaining the very same women who had campaigned for the right to drive.

Was that really something to celebrate about or denounce?

Nevertheless, it shows how far the tribals ruling Kingdom has to go before the West chooses who to point fingers at over human rights.

Powerful explosion rocks Kabul’s most secure area

Security officials say a strong car bomb blast followed by sporadic gunfire has hit Afghanistan’s capital Kabul.

The attack and the ensuing exchange of fire took place near the heavily fortified “Green Zone”, where government offices are located and high-ranking officials reside.

The attack has left at least three civilians and three attackers dead. Reports citing eyewitnesses suggest multiple follow-up blasts were heard after the initial explosion. It is not immediately clear what caused the other explosions but some reports indicate the attackers had been carrying explosives.

The country’s Health Ministry spokesperson, Ghulam Dastagir Nazari, says at least 20 other people have been wounded. This is while an Interior Ministry spokesperson said operations by security forces ended with the death of all the attackers.

According to a senior security official the target of the attack appeared to be the acting Defense Minister’s home and the adjoining residence of a member of parliament. Afghan officials also say at least two attackers exchanged fire with security forces.

No group immediately claimed responsibility.

The attack – in the heart of one of Kabul’s most secure, if not the most secure area - comes amid an escalation of violence in the country.

New attack on U.S. occupation forces in Iraq

Iraqi media say another roadside bomb attack has targeted a convoy belonging to American occupation forces in Iraq.

Reports say the logistics convoy was hit in the southern province of Dhi Qar adding that the explosion took place on the Nasiriyah highway. No casualties have been reported and no group has claimed responsibility.

U.S. interests in Iraq have come under regular attack since Washington refused to withdraw its forces from the country.

The demand to end the U.S. occupation came in the form of a parliamentary bill.

This followed the U.S. assassination of Iran’s Lieutenant General, Qassem Soleimani, and deputy commander of the country’s Popular Mobilization Units, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, as well as eight members of their security personnel, at Baghdad International Airport on 3rd January 2020.

The terrorist attack was considered a huge escalation of tensions by America in West Asia. Analysts consider the assassinations as a turning point that will reshape the future of the region.

Following an investigation, then UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, killings, Agnes Callamard, concluded that the U.S. drone strike was “unlawful” and an “arbitrary killing” that violated the UN charter.

The UN expert said the U.S. had failed to provide any evidence that an imminent attack against U.S. interest was being planned; as Washington had claimed as justification for the assassinations.

Several rounds of dialogue between Baghdad and Washington over the American withdrawal have fallen short of the Iraqi parliament’s demands.

The Iraqi resistance says it will increase and expand the scope of its attacks on American forces until they leave the country.

U.S. officials reveal little over deadly violence outside Pentagon

The headquarters of the U.S. military was temporarily placed on lockdown after gunshots were fired.

The agency responsible for security at the building, the Pentagon Force Protection has confirmed that a police officer protecting the site has been killed during an “incident” outside the building.

Different American media outlets citing their own unnamed sources say one suspect is believed to have been behind the attack.

During a press briefing, the Pentagon Force Protection Agency’s chief of Pentagon Police, Woodrow Kusse, described the nature of the incident as an “encounter” that had resulted in “several casualties”. The “encounter” forced the entire Pentagon to go into lockdown because of what the Pentagon Force Protection Agency says was a “shooting event” near the building’s Metro transit center.

Kusse declined to provide any further details on the casualties, but did say the incident was “over” and “there is no continuing threat to our community.” Arlington County Fire Department also say first responders encountered “multiple patients”.

Kusse declined to provide information on the person behind the attack only saying law enforcement is “not actively looking for another suspect at this time”.

Kusse also declined to answer whether the person had been attempting to enter the heavily fortified site, just adding the information he had was “preliminary” and could “evolve”.

Archaeologists discover Seljuk-era structure in Ardabil

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — During their recent excavations in Ardabil, Iranian archaeologists have discovered some architectural remains, which are estimated to date from the Seljuk era (1037–1194).



“Archaeologists have come across some evidence of the Seljuk-era architectural structures after they dug trenches on the premises of a tire factory in Ardabil,” Saeid Sattarnejad, who leads the survey, said on Sunday, IRNA reported.

“It was the first archaeological season conducted on the site carried out to determine the extent and specifications of the [ancient] urban layers and human settlements,” the archaeologist explained.

“The results provided insights over the area, suggesting that it was occupied seasonally during the Islamic Middle Ages.”

Moreover, the archaeologists discovered some tomb chambers that are believed to date from the Islamic era.

“These graves have been created without architectural structures and in the form of holes in the sedimentary bed of the area, which, despite the high soil moisture, the bones in them have been severely damaged.”

Seljuk, also spelled, Seljuq, was a ruling military family of the Oguz (Ghuzz) Turkic tribes that invaded southwestern Asia in the 11th century and eventually founded an empire that included Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and most of Iran. Their advance marked the beginning of Turkish power in the Middle East.

The term Islamic art not only describes the art created specifically in the service of the Muslim faith (for example, a mosque and its furnishings) but also characterizes the art and architecture historically produced in the lands ruled by Muslims, produced for Muslim patrons, or created by Muslim artists. As it is not only a religion but a way of life, Islam fostered the development of a distinctive culture with its own unique artistic language that is reflected in art and architecture throughout the Muslim world.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is freezing in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

Bastam Jameh Mosque undergoes partial restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** - Bastam Jameh Mosque, which is the jewel of a magnificent historical complex in north-central Iran, has undergone restoration.

Flanked by several mudbrick monuments within Bastam historical complex, the mosque suffered damage from termites over the years, Hamed Adel, the director of the historical complex, said on Wednesday.



The eastern Shabestan of the centuries-old mosque is the subject of the restoration project, the official added. Shabestan is an underground space that can be usually found in Iran’s traditional mosques, houses, and schools.

The terms “Jameh Mosque”, “Masjed-e Jameh” and “Friday Mosque” are used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are/were performed: the phrase is used in other Muslim countries but only in Iran does it designate this purpose.

Bastam historical complex includes the holy shrine of Mohammad Ibn Jafar Sadegh (AS), Bayazid Bastami tomb, Bayazid Monastery, Bayazid Mosque, Eljaito Iwan, Ghazan Dome, Jame Mosque, Kashaneh Tower, and Shahrokhieh School, which were built in different eras from the Seljuk era (1037–1194) to Qajar period (1789–1925).

The prominent Persian mystic Bayazid Bastami lived in the historical city of Bastam, which is located six kilometers north of Shahroud. The monastery was a simple place where he studied and prayed.

Kashaneh Tower is a tower connected to the Jame Mosque. It has a cellar that is connected to the top of the tower through a staircase that runs through the interior wall of the tower. The outer covering of the building has collapsed but the lower covering (the current dome) is untouched.

Shahrokhieh School has been built for the use of seminary students with 28 rooms on two floors. It also has a very interesting plan and about 28 rooms on two floors, which have been built for the use of students of religious sciences. The school has a mosque, an iwan, and a zurkhaneh, a special traditional place where men practice heroic sport.

Imam Mosque: elegant, iconic, and visually stunning

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Imam Mosque, with its iconic blue-tiled mosaics and its perfect proportions, forms an elegant, visually stunning monument at the southern end of a UNESCO-registered square of the same name in the touristic city of Isfahan, central Iran.

Visitors to the monument are usually overwhelmed with good views of its crowning dome, its splendid profusion of turquoise-shaded tiles, and the unity of the overall design as one of the masterpieces of Islamic architecture.

Initially named Masjed Shah (“the Shah Mosque”), the place of worship was constructed in the early 17th century upon the orders of the Safavid King Shah Abbas the Great who reigned from 1588 to 1629. The mosque’s topmost dome was completed in the last year of his sovereignty.

Imam Mosque is not only impressive because of its sheer size and incredible decorations but also helps to get a good impression of the needs and challenges of always ongoing restoration works. The craftsmanship continues and is intricate with amazing views both on the façade and the interior. The monument boasts perfect proportions and iconic blue-tiled mosaics.

A very scenic huge entrance portal welcomes people to the mosque. It is built to face the square though the mosque is oriented towards Mecca. A short corridor connects



the square to the inner courtyard that is surrounded by four imposing iwans (porticos) with a pool dedicated to ritual ablutions nesting in the middle.

The walls of the courtyard feature sunken porches framed by seven-colored tiles of deep blue and yellow. Each iwan leads into a vaulted sanctuary covered with particularly

fine floral motifs on a blue background.

Some visitors say each of the mosque’s parts is a masterpiece that leaves a lasting impression. This palace of devotion owes its splendor mostly due to being covered with seven-color mosaic tiles and symmetrical calligraphic inscriptions.

On the other side of the square stands

Once highly-prosperous caravanserai undergoes restoration

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — One of the once highly prosperous Shah-Abbasi caravanserais, which is located in Mayamey town of Semnan province, has undergone some rehabilitation works, a local tourism official announced on Wednesday.

The project aims to prepare the historical structure that will soon be visited by the assessors and experts affiliated with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Seyyed Mohammad Sadeq Razavian said.

The assessors are slated to explore the caravanserai by the end of the current Iranian month of Mordad (August 22) for possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list, the official said.

The project involves repairing the damaged parts as well as strengthening the historical inn, the official added.

“As the caravanserai is relatively undamaged and stable, and because of its convenient location on the Tehran-Mashhad road, it could be repurposed and ceded to the private sector for better maintenance and use,” he explained.

There are four iwans (porches) and two entrances in this caravanserai that sprawls across 8,500 square meters. The courtyard is surrounded by rooms and platforms, and behind the rooms are stables. Unlike most caravanserais, the sanitary facilities of the caravanserai are located outside the building and on the western side.

The structure is named after Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588 – 1629), who ordered the construction of such roadside inns across the country. The mudbrick structure was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1986.

The historical structure of Mayamey includes several caravanserais, natural sights, and historical sites such as Shah-Abbasi caravanserai, Aqaian Mosque, Aqaian Mansion,

Aqaian bathhouse, and Emarat cistern.

The main population centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad). While few visitors spend much time in the area, driving through you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat), and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating). The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan, and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.

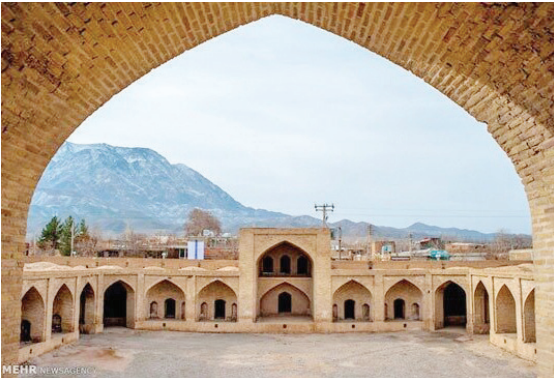
Iranian caravanserais being ready for collective UNESCO tag

An all-inclusive dossier of a select of Iranian caravanserais is being prepared to be evaluated during the next session of the World Heritage Committee, which will be held in 2022.

Last year, the tourism ministry announced that Iran is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravanseries for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In this regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.

Caravansary is a compound word combining “caravan” with “sara”; the former stands for a group of travelers and the latter means the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Iran’s earliest caravanserais were built during the Achae-



menid era (550 -330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravanserais across the country. For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age!

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. 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).

Old trees, springs, caves in southwest Iran made national heritage

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of seven natural properties in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province have been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the

inscriptions on Wednesday in a letter to the governor-general of the southwestern province, IRNA reported.

A cedar and two plane trees, Belqeys and Korsa springs, and two ancient caves were added to the significant list.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad is known

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

Having an opulent tourist circuit with 26 UNESCO World Heritage sites, of which the vast Hyrcanian Forest and Lut Desert are among the natural properties, Iran seeks to acquire a greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.

Eco-lodge unit comes on stream in oasis town of Ardakan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A new eco-lodge unit was inaugurated on Tuesday in the historical texture of Ardakan in Yazd province, a local tourism official said on Tuesday.

The private sector has spent eight billion rials (about \$190,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) on the project, Mohammad Mirshamsi said, CHTN reported.

Named Mah-o Mahi, the four-room eco-lodge has a capacity for hosting 13 guests, the official added. “Covering an area of 120 square meters, the eco-lodge unit is expected to generate two job opportunities.”

The creation of eco-tourism resorts can promote rural tourism by attracting travelers to natural areas and indigenous cultures, while at the same time providing the chance to familiarize tourists with customs and cultures, the official explained.

Located in Yazd province, the oasis town of Ardakan is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center.



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

The word Ardakan in Persian means “holy place” or “clean

Flood reveals centuries-old inscription in Iranian village

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A recent flood triggered the dramatic discovery of a centuries-old inscription, which was found by the locals on the riverbank in Zanjan province. “Flooding exposed a 400-year-old inscription on the riverbank in Golabar village

of Zanjan,” provincial tourism chief, Amir Arjmand, said on Wednesday.

The stone inscription, which bears a religious vow in Kufic script, was soon transferred to a nearby historical mosque under cultural heritage experts’ supervision, the official said.

Following the discovery, a team of police forces was dispatched to the region to protect the place till experts complete their survey for finding possible antiquities, he added.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE).

The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

Iran urges UNHCR to provide coronavirus vaccine for refugees

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Iran has urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide funding and strengthen the necessary infrastructure to receive vaccines and facilities for the refugees, ISNA reported.

A virtual meeting was held on Wednesday attended by Iranian officials, representatives of UN offices, and embassies in Tehran with the aim of providing vaccines for refugees and foreign immigrants.

Given the security problem in Afghanistan, we need to be more prepared in case of facing a number of refugees entering the country, Mehdi Mahmoudi, director of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs of the Ministry of Interior said.

Over the past 42 years, Iran hosted millions of refugees, especially Afghan nationals, with the least foreign aid and at the highest level of international standards, while adhering to ethical and humanitarian principles and international commitments, he said.

Despite many political and economic problems such as imposed war, imposition of cruel sanctions, and relying on its limited national and domestic resources in various sectors such as health, education, Iran has provided livelihood and vocational services to the refugees just like Iranians, he explained.

Referring to the humanitarian actions of the Islamic Republic since the outbreak of



the COVID-19 pandemic, he called on the international community to take immediate action to provide and expedite the delivery of vaccines for refugees.

Iran has been used as a gateway for the influx of illegal immigrants to European countries, which due to the inability and readiness of the Islamic Republic to accept new refugees, we need the support of Afghanistan and the international com-

munity, especially the European Union, in order to improve the security factor and control the eastern borders to combat this phenomenon, he explained.

Iran hosting world's fourth-largest refugee community

Iran is hosting the world's fourth-largest refugee community. The country has generously hosted approximately 1 million refugees for the past 30 years. The majority,

which mainly came from Afghanistan and Iraq, live in urban areas. Approximately 31,000 of the most vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements located throughout the country.

Based on the latest statistics, over 3 million Afghans are living in Iran - some 780,000 Afghan refugees, over 2 million undocumented Afghans, and another 600,000 Afghan passport-holders with Iranian visas.

However, in light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

The same happened for the vaccination when the country has generously considered refugees over the age of 75 for vaccination against coronavirus.

In order to support the refugees living in the country, the seventh phase of the health insurance plan will cover 120,000 vulnerable refugees through a memorandum of understanding signed between the Health Insurance Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In Iran, UNHCR is seeking \$16.2 million for its COVID-19 emergency, while requires an additional \$98.7 million to support Iran in maintaining and sustaining its commendable inclusive refugee policies, under the umbrella of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

370 knowledge-based firms working on smart transportation

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – There are currently 370 knowledge-based companies operating in the field of smart transportation fleet, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

One of the priorities of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology is to develop the intelligent transportation ecosystem in the country.

Thus, 9 state-run organizations with 41 sub-sectors and 200 knowledge-based companies, groups, associations, and private and semi-private sectors were identified.

According to this report, since last year (March 2020 – March 2021), over 90 new knowledge-based companies have been identified to work in this field and their total number has reached 290.

Meanwhile, 80 non-knowledge-based but creative companies have also been identified.

Smart transportation is one of the most important components of a smart city to improve the quality of life of citizens and improve sustainability, which more begins with the establishment of necessary infrastructure in the form of a smart transportation network.

The system takes advantage of technologies such as the Internet of Things and big data analytics to manage traffic, improve transportation infrastructure, manage traffic and transportation, enhance transportation infrastructure, and



create improved relationships for transportation services.

Technological achievements of Iran

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

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

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals,

and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

In recent years, the vice presidency for science and technology has been supporting knowledge-based companies active in the production of sanctioned items.

Iran also implemented a plan to return Iranian elites from the top 100 universities in the world, through the national model, the facilities are provided for their return, by creating technology parks, innovation centers, and factories.

The plan was able to bring back 2,000 Iranian students from the top 100 universities in the world over a three-year period, amounting to 600 people a year.

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

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

Reforestation hopes threaten global food security, Oxfam warns

Governments and businesses hoping to plant trees and restore forests in order to reach net-zero emissions must sharply limit such efforts to avoid driving up food prices in the developing world, the charity Oxfam has warned.

Planting trees has been mooted as one of the key ways of tackling the climate crisis, but the amount of land needed for such forests would be vast, and planting even a fraction of the area needed to offset global greenhouse gas emissions would encroach on the land needed for crops to feed a growing population, according to a report entitled Tightening the net: Net zero climate targets implications for land and food equity.

At least 1.6bn hectares – an area five times the size of India, equivalent to all the land now farmed on the planet – would be required to reach net zero for the planet

by 2050 via tree-planting alone. While no one is suggesting planting trees to that extent, the report's authors said it gave an idea of the scale of planting required, and how limited offsetting should be if food price rises are to be avoided.

Nafkote Dabi, climate policy lead at Oxfam and co-author of the report, explained: "It is difficult to tell how much land would be required, as governments have not been transparent about how they plan to meet their net-zero commitments. But many countries and companies are talking about afforestation and reforestation, and the first question is: where is this land going to come from?"

Food prices could rise by 80% by 2050, according to some estimates, if offsetting emissions through forestry is over-used. About 350m hectares of land – an area roughly the size of India – could be used for offsetting without disrupting agricul-

ture around the world, but taken together the plans for offsetting from countries and companies around the world could soon exceed this.

Dabi said: "Already, hundreds of millions of people around the world are going hungry. We need to consult countries on how they are going to use their land, and countries and companies need to reduce their emissions first [before relying on offsetting]. We also need to reduce emissions from agriculture, which is the second biggest source of emissions globally."

The report also found that two of the most commonly used offsetting measures, reforestation and the planting of new forests, were among the worst at putting food security at risk. Far better, according to the analysis, were nature-based solutions that focused on forest management, agroforestry – the practice of combining crop



cultivation or pasture with growing trees – as well as pasture management and soil management in croplands. These would allow people to use the land for food while sequestering carbon.

Dabi explained: "We are not against afforestation and reforestation, and we do not want to stop people doing these things. But they should not be used at a large scale and should be combined with other methods such as agroforestry."

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Northern forests store 3.6bcm water annually in Iran

The forests of northern Iran storing 3.6 billion cubic meters of water play an important role in strengthening the aquifers. Apart from physical care of natural resources, biological protection of these resources is also on the agenda of the Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO), Abbas Ali Nobakht, deputy head of FRWMO, said on Wednesday. In this regard, development, rehabilitation and enrichment operations in more than 232,000 hectares of rangeland, desert and forest lands of the country are underway, he added. Referring to the northern forests of the country, especially Golestan province, as the reserves of the rarest plant species, Nobakht noted that the importance of these natural resources is so high that some European countries requested to receive seeds of plant species of northern Iran.

جنگل‌های شمال ایران سالانه سه میلیارد و ۶۰۰ میلیون متر مکعب آب ذخیره می کنند

جنگل‌های شمال ایران با ذخیره سالانه سه میلیارد و ۶۰۰ میلیون متر مکعب آب نقش بسزایی در تقویت سفره‌های زیرزمینی دارد. به گزارش ایرنا، عباسعلی نوبخت معاون سازمان جنگل‌ها، مراتع و آبخیزداری روز چهارشنبه بیان کرد: در کنار مراقبت‌های فیزیکی از منابع طبیعی، صیانت و حفاظت بیولوژیکی از این منابع نیز در دستور کار سازمان جنگل‌ها قرار دارد که در این خصوص امسال عملیات توسعه، احیا و غنی سازی در بیش از ۲۳۲ هزار هکتار از اراضی مرتعی، بیابانی و جنگلی کشور در حال انجام است. نوبخت با بیان اینکه جنگل‌های شمال کشور بویژه استان گلستان ذخیره‌گاه نادرترین گونه‌های گیاهی هستند، اضافه کرد: اهمیت عرصه‌ها به حدی بالا است که برخی کشورهای اروپایی در مکاتبه با سازمان جنگل‌ها خواستار دریافت بذر گونه‌های جنگلی شمال ایران هستند.

COVID-19 UPDATES

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

New cases	39,357
New deaths	409
Total cases	4,019,084
Total deaths	92,194
New hospitalized patients	4,263
Patients in critical condition	5,959
Total recovered patients	3,444,798
Diagnostic tests conducted	26,168,347
Doses of vaccine injected	14,024,035

Agriculture in Iran

(Part 7)

While more than one million farmers benefited from this second phase of the land reform and its regulations (for details see Aresvik 1976, Lambton 1969, Planck 1975), in 1968 a third addition to the existing laws was proclaimed: The maximum size of property was determined by the amount of land which the proprietor and his family could work by themselves.

With minor additions and corrections, concerning, e.g., public and religious endowments and their distribution among farmers, one may say that by 1972 the land reform program seemed to have ended.

The important results of the first years of the land reform can only be summarized here—initial increases in the income of land recipients due to the abolition of sharecropping, the psychological and political awakening of the rural population, which for the first time had the right to determine land use and crop rotation patterns.

But the land reform was not connected with increases in agricultural productivity because of the perpetuation of traditional forms of tools, cultivation techniques, and the absence of aid through cooperatives and agricultural extension services.



A special problem turned out to be the Islamic laws of inheritance, as a result of which many of the new small holdings were fragmented only a few years after their foundation. It seems that this factor has contributed considerably to the rapid decrease of viable farm units. Renewed indebtedness of farmers to urban shopkeepers and former landlords and the final takeover of their lands by these persons became common.

In view of these negative results and because of almost stagnant agricultural productivity, it became obvious from 1972 onwards that a new agricultural policy was necessary. A period began which was characterized by the dissolution of the majority of small farm holdings created under the land reform and their consolidation into larger production units.

This movement has been termed the "reintegration phase of the Iranian land reform" (Planck 1975). Four types of large-scale agricultural enterprises came into existence after 1970: farm corporations or "agricultural shareholder companies;" agricultural production cooperatives; privately owned agribusiness and agroindustry companies; and government-owned agro industries.

The main goal of this restructuring of the agricultural scene was the establishment of large-scale agriculture with the aim of extensive use of agricultural machinery and the increase of productivity.

The overall strategy of this new policy becomes apparent in the aims stated by the Fourth National Five-Year Plan for 1968-72: the encouragement of increased production of commodities which are presently imported to meet domestic consumption; the encouragement of private investment and emphasis on public investment in areas which have a larger production potential; the establishment of agricultural joint-stock companies by farmers who have acquired land on cooperative principles; the mobilization of capital at present widely dispersed in rural and urban areas and the encouragement of capital-holders to establish large-scale production units or to participate in investments in units which aim at mass production for marketing purposes; the expansion and strengthening of cooperative societies by increasing their capital and the provision of means for guiding and training their directors and members; the adoption of policies that will ensure the maximum utilization of the investment made by the private sector for performing services at present undertaken by the government; the expansion of modern agricultural techniques at the rural level by fully utilizing the results obtained from practical and scientific agricultural research work; the utilization on a large scale and with modern technology of dam-irrigated land, by encouraging the private sector, and in the private sector, direct government initiative to establish large farming units.

Due to the revolution of 1979 these goals are no longer kept in view, but the reintegration of small holdings into larger units had been quite effective by 1978.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)



Without water,
everything
withers

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

Imam Ali (AS)

History of art in Iran: Islamic Central Asia

Part 1

Under Islam the sculpture and mural painting previously displayed in Central Asia almost completely disappeared, and ornament took pride of place.

In the 9th to 12th centuries, artistic handicrafts, including ceramics, metalwork, jewelry, and textiles, flourished to an exceptional degree.

In the ceramics of that period, some types of artistic pottery were common to all Central Asia, but regional schools can also be distinguished, as in northern Khorasan, Kharazm, Transoxiana (Ma Wara un-Nahr) (Samarkand, Bukhara, and Tokharestan), and northern Turkestan (Shash, Farghana, Semirechie).

The main achievements of this artistic pottery were connected with the use of glazes (opaque and translucent), the introduction of color and polychrome painting, and the elaboration of distinct principles for the decoration of ceramics.

Thus Central Asian glazed pottery evolved from uncomplicated, blurred green ornamental painting under a somewhat cloudy glaze, and the use of a three-hued, spreading, mottled coloring to the clear ornamental painting of the 10th-12th centuries.

The paint was applied on a white background in brownish black, reddish, and pistachio green colors, or on a black background with thick white and red angob colors.

Monochrome glazes of green (sometimes with an under-glaze, engraved design) or bright azure were used. The main ornamental motifs included auspicious Arabic inscriptions in a ceramic cursive variety of Kufic that gradually degenerated into ornamental pseudo-inscriptions; stylized plant motifs, including a wavy or coiling tendril (eslimi), tulip, pomegranate, palmette, or vine leaf; geometric interlace, and fantastic birds and beasts from the realm of folklore.

The unglazed pottery of northern Khorasan (Nisa) was frequently decorated by engraving with a sharp point in obvious imitation of the motifs and technique of metalwork.

In the 12th century, Marv was the center for the production of die (kelebe)-stamped ceramics. The motifs, occurring singly and in combinations, were extremely varied: geometric interlace, fronds and rosettes, zoomorphic images (birds, fish, the chase), and courtly scenes (enthronements, musicians, horsemen, and couples).

With the discovery of silicate (kashin) baked clay in the 12th century there appeared in Khorasan thin-walled bowls with milky and pale blue glazing and underglaze designs or graining.

In Dahestan, luster ceramics of the Iranian type were produced, including gold luster and minai with minute, stylized plant ornamentation, cursive inscriptions, and sometimes pictorial subjects.

The post-Mongol period saw a different style of glazed ceramics with a black outline design under pale blue glaze, and another with dark blue and greenish-black abstract motifs on a white background.

At the end of the 14th-15th centuries a completely new style evolved under the influence of Chinese porcelain: on a snow-white kashin background, twigs, flowers, and fruit were painted with cobalt, and Khorasan ware often depicts birds, animals, and human beings.

During the following centuries pottery products coarsened, kashin was no longer used, and the ornamentation acquired an abstract, decorative character.

Medieval Central Asian metalwork, with its use of chasing, over-chasing, and punching, follows the general style of medium in the Muslim East.

Dishes, jugs, kettles, lamps, stands, and other objects were fashioned, sometimes in precious metals but usually of bronze alloy.

The ornamentation of these objects is disposed in concentric bands and rosettes; epigraphic motifs (Kufic and naskh scripts) alternate with stylized plant motifs.

Extensive use was made of folkloric fairy-tale subjects in the representation of birds, griffins, sphinxes, hunting scenes, and quite frequently human beings.

Central Asian textiles were widely renowned in West Asia. In the 10th century particular fame was enjoyed by the teraz from Marv and finely patterned textiles produced for export in the royal workshops of Bukhara.

Regions inhabited by Turkmans were renowned for their carpets and were mentioned by Marco Polo in the 13th century.

Reproductions of carpets with a graphically clear geometrical design of deep reds, very close to the modern Turkman traditional carpets, can be found in Persian miniatures and in European paintings of the 15th-16th centuries. Apparently the practices observed in Kirghiz carpet weaving are no less deeply rooted.

The end of the 14th-15th centuries is marked by a revival of pictorial art in Central Asia. Details of landscape painting survive in the Samarkand mausoleums of Shirin-bika-aqa, Bibi Khanom, and Tuman Aqa.

According to the historical literature, some of the Samarkand palaces of Timur (e.g., Bagh-e Shemal and Bagh-e Delgosha) were decorated with painted portraits of the ruler, his wives, sons, and companions-in-arms, and with battle and feasting scenes. Their style seems to have been very close to that of the miniature paintings.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Artist Ruholamin offers free copies of Ashura paintings for Muharram rituals

→1 “Sharing these pictures is only for use at takaya [places for seasonal Islamic rituals], mourning ceremonies as well as at the houses of the lovers of the Prophet’s household (AS),” he explained.

A large number of Ruholamin’s artworks are about Imam Hussein (AS) and the tragedy of Ashura.

In the year 680 CE on Ashura, the tenth day of the lunar month of Muharram, Imam Hussein (AS) and a number of his loyal companions were martyred in a battle against the oppressive Umayyad dynasty.

“The Sky Fell Down”, a large painting featuring the last moments of the life of Imam Hussein (AS), is a highlight of his Ashura collection.

The painting features the Imam (AS) on his horse, severely injured by arrows, while the enemy is busy conspiring against the Imam and his household.

Ruholamin spent nine months doing the painting, which was unveiled at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in November 2018.



“The Sky Fell Down”, a painting depicting the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) in the Ashura event, is on display during an exhibition of paintings by young artist Hassan Ruholamin at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA) on November 1, 2016. (Mehr/Mohammad Mohsenifar)

“Monastery of the Monk” is another artwork from Ruholamin’s Ashura collection.

The painting depicts the meeting of a monk with Khawli ibn Yazid al-Asbahi, a member of Umar ibn Sad’s army, when he was taking the head of Imam Hussein (AS) to Yazid ibn Muawiya, the second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, after the Ashura event.

The artist has also blended modern events and with stories from Islamic history in some of his works.

“The Apocalyptic Companion of Aba Abdillah” is one of the paintings, which was created in memory of Quds Force commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani just hours after his assassination in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

The painting depicts Soleimani’s remains embraced by Imam Hussein (AS).

Ruholamin was nominated for the title of the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year in 2020 for creating the painting.

The Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year is selected by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization.

Nile Green’s book about Iranian students in Jane Austen’s London published in Persian

Cheshmeh is the publisher of “The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen’s London” translated into Persian by Amir-Mehdi Haqiqat.

In July 1815, six Iranian students arrived in London under the escort of their chaperone, Captain Joseph D’Arcy. Their mission was to master the modern sciences behind the rapid rise of Europe.

Over the next four years, they lived both the low life and high life of Regency London, from being down and out after their abandonment by D’Arcy to charming their way into society and landing on the gossip pages.

Drawing on the Persian diary of the student Mirza Salih and the letters of his companions, Green vividly describes how these adaptable Muslim migrants learned to enjoy the opera and take the waters at Bath. But

there was more than frivolity to their student years in London.

Burdened with acquiring the technology to defend Iran against Russia, they talked their way into the observatories, hospitals and steam-powered factories that placed England at the forefront of the scientific revolution. All the while, Salih dreamed of becoming the first Muslim to study at Oxford.

“The Love of Strangers” chronicles the frustration and fellowship of six young men abroad to open a unique window onto the transformative encounter between an Evangelical England and an Islamic Iran at the dawn of the modern age.

This is the rarest of books about West Asia and the West: a story of friendships.

“Asho” director Jafar Najafi takes “Makeup Artist” to Yamagata festival

A R T TEHRAN — Jafar Najafi, the director of the acclaimed documentary “Asho”, will be competing in the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival in Japan with his latest film “Makeup Artist”.

The film is about Mina, a makeup artist who is determined to realize her dreams. She not only refuses to succumb to her husband and mother-in-law’s fierce opposition, but also paves her own path and pushes forward along it. Gradually, it looks as if the people and world around

her are starting to change.

The film is scheduled to be screened in the New Asian Currents category of the festival, which will take place in the northern Japanese city of Yamagata from October 7 to 14.

Seventeen other documentary films will be screened in the New Asian Currents of the festival, which is held biennially.

Najafi’s short “Asho”, about a shepherd boy who is obsessed with Hollywood movies and wants to become an actor, won the



A poster for “Makeup Artist” by Iranian director Jafar Najafi.

award for best children’s documentary at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam in 2020.

The film was also screened at several other international events, including the 2020 edition of the Fribourg International Film Festival, which selected “Asho” as the best short film.

“Asho” also received the award for best short film at the 16th Sevastopol International Festival of Documentary Films and TV Programs in the Republic of Crimea, Russia.

Iranian movies competing in Italian festival Inventa un Film

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian movies “The Musician”, “Lasting” and “Pilgrims” are competing in the 23rd Inventa un Film Festival, which is currently underway in the Italian town of Lenola.

Directed by Reza Riahi, the animated short “The Musician” is a story of love, war and hardship in 13th-century Persia.

At the time of the invasion of the Mongols, a young musician and the love of his life are separated from each other. Fifty years later, the musician is summoned to perform at the castle of the Mongols where his beloved is being held.

“Lasting” directed by Rahim Sadr tells the story of a mother, her daughter and a single woman. Each of them is involved in a triangle of life: the mother with financial problems, the daughter with a forced childhood and the woman forced to decide whether to die or survive.

“Pilgrims” is about two children who decide to disobey their father and leave for Istanbul, embarking alone on



A scene from the animated short “The Musician” directed by Reza Riahi.

a journey in search of their mother.

The short has been co-directed by Farnush Samadi and Ali Asgari.

The 23rd edition of the Inventa un Film festival opened on Wednesday and will run until August 8.

The festival is directed by Ermete Labbadia and organized by the Cultural Cinema and Society of Lenola with the support of the Lazio Region, Department of Culture and Youth Policies, the Municipal Administration of Lenola and the Siproimi of the Municipality of Lenola.

Persian bookstores host “Best Friends Forever”

C U L T U R E TEHRAN — P.J. Night book’s “Best Friends Forever” has been published in Persian.

Published by Che Books, the book has been rendered into Persian by Maedeh Mortazavi.

In this book, Katie is getting a new BFF, whether she likes it or not.

Katie Walsh is majorly bummed when her BFF moves away. But her hopes soar when the new girl at school, Whitney, befriends her right away and invites her to spend the night at her house for a sleepover.

Katie loved sleepovers with her old BFF, so she’s sure she will have a great time. But Katie doesn’t have a great time. Something is not quite right at Whitney’s house. Whitney seems really, really into her dolls...and later that night, Katie’s convinced that the dolls are threatening her.

The next morning, a freaked-out Katie decides that maybe she hasn’t found a new best friend, after all. Whitney, however, has made up her mind about Katie—they’re going to be best friends forever...no matter what.

This too-close-for-comfort friendship tale is ranked at 5 on the Creep-o-Meter.



Front cover of the Persian translation of P.J. Night’s book “Best Friends Forever”.

Simon & Schuster, calls P.J. Night a lifelong night owl who often works furiously into the wee hours of the morning, writing down spooky tales and dreaming up new stories of the supernatural and otherworldly.

“Although P.J.’s whereabouts are unknown at this time, we suspect the author lives in a drafty, old mansion where the floorboards creak when no one is there and the flickering candlelight creates shadows that creep along the walls. We truly wish we could tell you more, but we’ve been sworn to keep P.J.’s identity a secret...and it’s a secret we will take to our graves!”

“The Crab”, “The Visit” to try luck at Lucania Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — The acclaimed Iranian movies “The Crab” and “The Visit” will be contending for another international honor at the 22nd edition of the Lucania Film Festival in Italy.

“The Crab”, an animated movie produced at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, is about a shy schoolboy who is interested in performing in a play with his school’s theater troupe. But the only part offered to him is to play the role of a crab.

The movie directed by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi has been screened at many international festivals and has won several awards, including the Golden Horseman of the Audience in the International Competition and the Special Mention of the International Competition Youth Jury at the 33rd Dresden International Short Film Festival in Germany.



“The Crab” by Iranian director Shiva Sadeq-Asadi.

Earlier on Sunday, “The Crab” was praised with an honorable mention at the Lago Film Fest in Italy.

The Lucania Film Festival will take place in Marconia di Pisticci from August 7 to 11, screening “The Visit” in its short film competition.

The movie directed by Azadeh Musavi is about Elaheh who is finally allowed to visit her husband, a political prisoner, after a delay of six months. She and her little daughter Tara have one single day to prepare for this important meeting.

The film won the Golden Cyrus Cylinder for best short at the 7th Iranian Film Festival in Zurich, Switzerland and will be competing in the Fike-Evora International Short Film Festival in Évora, Portugal, in September.

The Lucania Film Festival is organized by the Cultural Association Allelammie in collaboration with Namavista Film.