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Heavy Clashes in Afghanistan



Report

TEHRAN – The Taliban seized control of another provincial capital early on Monday to raise the total number of capitals it has overrun so far to five, a major military achievement that marks a strategic shift in the group's military strategy.

The first indication of this shift emerged on Friday when mainstream media outlets broke the news that the Taliban has captured the first provincial capital in southwestern Afghanistan. On that day, Zaranj, the capital of the southern province of Nimruz, fell to the Taliban without any fighting.

Rouh Gul Khairzad, deputy governor of Nimruz, confirmed the news, saying that the Taliban took Zaranj from government forces without fighting, something that delivered a strong blow to the morale of the Afghan government troops and unleashed a series of military campaigns by the Taliban that led to the conquest of many other provincial capitals across the war-torn country.

By Monday the total number of the provincial capitals that have fallen to the Taliban increased to five, with many other capitals under threat. The Taliban movement seized control of five of the capitals of the thirty-four Afghan provinces, after seizing three of them the previous day, including the city of Kunduz, in a major attack that the Afghan army seemed unable to thwart. ▶ Page 3

Iran: Persian Gulf is our red line

TEHRAN — In his press briefing on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh answered to a series of questions, including the G7 statement, security in the Persian Gulf and negotiations for a possible revival of the JCPOA.

Khatibzadeh said the security of the Persian Gulf is a red line for the Islamic Republic.

On the recent allegations made by the British foreign secretary against Iran regarding a suspicious attack on the Israeli-operated oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman on July 29, Khatibzadeh stressed that such accusations are not new and

are part of a series of irresponsible statements by British officials.

The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street was attacked off the coast of Oman while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. Britain along with the U.S. claimed that Iran was responsible for the attack without being able to substantiate their claims.

Khatibzadeh said it is Britain which has a history in making sea routes insecure. He was referring to the British Royal Marines that seized an Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar, a British over-

seas territory on July 4, 2019.

"Iran is concerned about the blatant breach that Britain made of its tanker in international waters," he said.

Khatibzadeh advised the UK to act responsibly.

"My strong advice to the British government is to pay attention to its responsibilities and duties. The security of the Persian Gulf is a red line for Iran, and we did our best to protect this waterway from the insecurities of countries like Britain," he explained. ▶ Page 2

STAY UPDATED #JCPOA

Report

Saving karst aquifers vital to survive drought

By Farnak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – While the country is dealing with severe drought due to improper withdrawal of groundwater and low rainfall, karst water resources can supply the whole water needed by the country, only if managed.

Mohammad Reza Espahbod, an expert in groundwater resources, said that Iran is the fifth country in the world in terms of karst water resources.

Well known and described as a landscape, karst is a geological formation established in carbonate, limestone, and dolomite rocks. It is first and foremost an aquifer, a formation in which groundwater accumulates, circulates, and emerges at often important sources. It is often a remarkable and very special groundwater reservoir.

On a global scale, these karst formations cover 12 to 15 percent of the continental surface. It is estimated that about 25 percent of the world's population is supplied with domestic water from groundwater extracted from the karst.

Many countries supply 30 to 40 percent of their drinking water from karst water, which can reduce the drop in water levels in aquifers and access to renewable water with appropriate quality. ▶ Page 7



A man crosses an empty street in downtown Tehran decorated with flags and banners for Muharram mourning rituals on August 9, 2021.

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

It takes 10-20 years to eradicate Covid-19: Vaxine research director

Interview

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Professor Nikolai Petrovsky, the Vaxine research director, rules out the possibility that the world can easily eradicate Covid-19 in a short time before immunizing the entire people in the world against the virus.

"I do not think we will easily eradicate Covid-19; at a minimum this could take 10-

20 years as we would need to immunize the whole global population and develop new vaccines better able to block transmission and prevent infection entirely against all the variants – this is what our own vaccine is trying to achieve, but it is not going to be an easy task as the virus can keep mutating," Petrovsky tells the Tehran Times.

The founder of Vaxine – a company funded by the national institutes of health to develop novel vaccine technologies – believes that "almost all the vaccine so far has just gone to ▶ Page 5

"Authoritarian" health pass protests in France show no signs of letting up

Anger is mounting in France against mandatory Covid "health passes".

Without the permits French residents are prohibited from entering many places including shopping centers, restaurants, cafes, hospitals as well as boarding long-distance trains. Even somebody dining on an outside terrace will need the pass.

Despite a public backlash and four consecutive weeks of protests against the "health pass", Paris has extended the legislation known as Pass Sanitaire from August 9.

The passes are shown in the form of a QR code, digitally or on paper and sent to those who are fully vaccinated, have a negative Covid-19 test or had the disease and recovered.

The government hopes it will boost vaccination rates. But French President Emmanuel Macron is facing a tricky task just eight months before he seeks re-election in April 2022.

Official figures say more than 237,000 people took part in demonstrations nationwide across the weekend. Organizers say the turnout was higher.

Opponents of Macron's plans strongly believe the pass violates the most fundamental of French principles: the "liberty" and "equality" of the country's national motto.

The protests have united the far right and the far left and many in between. ▶ Page 5

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NIOC's monitoring center officially launched

TEHRAN – The monitoring center of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) was officially inaugurated in a ceremony attended by the outgoing Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Sunday, Shana reported.

The center is established with the aim of collecting, assessing, and displaying online information on the production, distribution, and foreign trade of oil, gas, gas condensate, petroleum products, and naphtha.

As reported, the inauguration ceremony was also attended by the NIOC Managing Director Masoud Karbasian and NIOC's Deputy Head Farrokh Alikhani, as well as other oil industry officials.

Speaking at the event, Alikhani who was the executive director of the monitoring center project, noted that all the processes related to the production and distribution of major oil and gas products are displayed online in this monitoring center.

According to Alikhani having access to up-to-date information and data in the oil industry will pave the way for making optimal decisions in various areas. "In the monitoring center of the National Iranian Oil Company, all information related to oil and gas production and its quantity and quality as well as the processes related to supply and distribution are fully collected and displayed online at any time," he explained.

Based on the information collected in this center, the share of each province, city, and even facilities in the country's oil and gas production is known and this information can help the NIOC determine the share of each facility in the oil and gas production process and set priorities for reconstruction and renovation operations, accordingly.

According to Alikhani, the monitoring center of the National Iranian Oil Company also provides the ability to determine the amount of production in desired time periods making it possible to compare production in different time periods with each other.

Referring to the important position of the National Iranian Oil Company in the country's economy, Alikhani pointed to the establishment of such a center as an inevitable necessity and expressed hope that with the addition of information from the downstream sectors, the center will play a more effective role in the oil industry in the future.

Foolad beat Esteghlal to win Iran's Hazfi Cup

TEHRAN – Foolad football team defeated Esteghlal on Sunday and claimed Iran's Hazfi Cup for the first time.

Foolad defeated Esteghlal 4-2 in penalty shootout in Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium after a 0-0 draw.

Foolad also qualified for the 2021/22 AFC Champions League as Hazfi Cup winners.

Esteghlal are the most decorated team in Hazfi Cup competition, winning the titles seven times. The Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975.



Qalibaf hails outstanding achievements of Resistance front

TEHRAN — Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf says the Islamic Republic will keep supporting the oppressed nation of Palestine until the al-Quds is fully liberated.

Qalibaf made the comments in a meeting on Monday with Ziyad al-Nakhalah, the secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement, in Tehran.

The speaker emphasized Tehran's unwavering support for the struggles of the Palestinian nation and the Resistance front.

"Protecting the oppressed country of Palestine is an image of the revolutionary spirit of the Islamic Republic of Iran and could continue until the Holy Quds is liberated," Iran's top parliamentarian said.

He pointed to the outstanding victories of the Palestinian people and the Resistance front in their recent battles with the Is-



Ziyad al-Nakhalah, head of the Islamic Jihad Movement (L), greeting Parliament speaker Qalibaf

raeli regime, announcing that the important achievements made with the aid of the Palestinian troops, in particular the Islamic Jihad Movement, suggest the cohesion amongst diverse Palestinian Resistance groups.

"The usurper Zionist regime in no way imagined this sort of

defeat, and the heroic resistance of the Palestinian nation became very painful to them," Iran's parliament speaker said.

The latest battle with Israel, which started out on May 10, was caused when Israeli forces again stormed al-Aqsa Mosque in al-Quds.

Iran will give definite response to any Israeli mistake: MP

TEHRAN — Seyed Nezam Mousavi, the spokesman for the Majlis Presiding Board, has responded to recent military threats against Iran by some Zionist regime's officials, saying, "Iran will give a definite answer to any wrongdoing of the Zionist regime."

The statements of the Zionist regime's officials are primarily intended to influence the public opinion in Israel, Mousavi said on Monday.

"In recent years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has become accustomed to the boasting and exaggeration of the occupying regime," Mousavi told Tasnim.

Following a suspicious attack on an Israeli-operated oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman on July 29, the Tel Aviv regime along with the U.S. and Britain blamed Iran for the attack without presenting any evidence to substantiate their claims. Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said Israel is ready to take military action against Iran.

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

Mousavi, who represents Tehran in the parliament, stated that the Tel Aviv officials have at different times tried to influence the Iranians' public opinion by making exaggerations and uttering empty threats.

The people of Iran and the region have become

accustomed to such threats by the Zionist regime, the MP added.

The senior parliamentarian stated that the Zionist regime is today surrounded within occupied lands, adding that resistance groups in Palestine and Lebanon have easily emerged from the threats of this "hollow regime".

"How can the Zionist army, which cannot even confront the jihadist groups which are fighting with bare hands, stand up to a regional and global power like Iran and threaten it with a military attack?" he asked.

Mousavi added, "The Zionist regime has repeatedly claimed that no missiles will be able to pass through the Iron Dome, but in recent months we have witnessed that jihadist groups were able to tear this dome to pieces."

In a meeting on Sunday, Iran's top security official Admiral Ali Shamkhani said the collapse of the Zionist regime will happen in the not-too-distant future.

Ali Shamkhani made the remarks in a meeting with Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas Political Bureau.

Admiral Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, also lashed out at plots by the Israeli regime, saying Tel Aviv not only uses military tools to advance its sinister goals, it also uses cyberspace for psychological warfare to create rift among the Resistance Front.

Iran: Persian Gulf is our red line

Iran never left JCPOA table



tunately, we are witnessing the state terrorism of the Zionist regime with the support of some countries in international waters. Iran does not remain silent about the security of its merchant ships and supports any comprehensive action that leads to the security of merchant ships and peace and stability in sea routes," he explained.

Khatibzadeh also decried the G7 statement, saying that while the members of the G7 have been silent for months about the Zionist regime's "aggression, banditry, state terrorism, and sabotage of merchant ships, they should not take an unreasonable, biased position."

On August 6, the G7 issued a statement calling the incident for the Mercer ship "a targeted and deliberate attack," pointing fingers towards Iran.

"It is surprising that after the G7 issued that statement and Iran condemned that statement, Borrell made such remarks. These statements do not contribute to peace and stability" in the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf waterway, he asserted.

At a conference on Monday at the United Nations Security Council on maritime security, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Moscow is committed to ensuring peace and security in the Persian Gulf waters.

Russia strives to contribute to ensuring security in the Persian Gulf and Atlantic areas, where cases of sea piracy have become more frequent, Putin said, according to Sputnik.

"And of course, we strive to contribute to ensuring security in the Persian Gulf zone, in the Atlantic, in the waters of the Gulf of Guinea, where cases of sea robbery with taking hostages have become more frequent," the president said.

"Iran never left the JCPOA negotiation table"

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman also said Iran has never left the talks for a possible revival of the JCPOA in Vienna.

"There is a process of democratic transfer of power in Iran and changes are inevitably made in the executive teams," he said, implicitly hinting a change of the nuclear negotiating team.

The diplomat said that Iran is a member of the JCPOA and has acted within the framework of the deal, and the country that has left the nuclear deal and has not fulfilled its obligations is the United States.

Russian ambassador to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, Mikhail Ulyanov expressed

hope for a resumption of the nuclear deal talks in Vienna as soon as the new Iranian government starts its work.

"Looking forward to the resumption of the #ViennaTalks on #JCPOA as soon as the Iranian side gets prepared, hopefully in a few weeks," Ulyanov tweeted on

Monday afternoon.

Regarding Mora's visit to Tehran, Khatibzadeh said that Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a possible candidate for the position of foreign minister, reflected the president's opinion to Mora.

"Mora also held talks with Foreign Ministry officials. President's positions are explicitly stated in his inauguration speech. They also explained their positions in a press conference with reporters, and this counts more than speculation," he said.

Khatibzadeh added that the important thing is that Iran has never left these talks.

"A process of democratic transfer of power has taken place in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and naturally in this process changes are taking place in the executive teams, and this

is not only understandable, but also shows the glory of democracy in the Islamic Republic of Iran," he pointed out.

The spokesman said that Raisi, in his speech on the day of his inauguration and also in his first press conference, explicitly stated that he had no doubt about the lifting of the oppressive sanctions against the Iranian people.

It is going to happen by observing all the details and instructions announced and specified by the higher institutions, Khatibzadeh said.

He added that all sides have to wait for the government to be fully established, ministers to be announced and approved and "this path will surely continue."

Khatibzadeh warned officials in the Biden administration that they should know that they cannot achieve results with Trump's mentality other than what has happened in the last few years of maximum resistance by the Iranian people.

"America's approach must change and they should pay more attention to the facts on the ground."

"They know that maximum pressure has failed and that nothing beyond the JCPOA is acceptable to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and that nothing less than the nuclear deal is acceptable to the government and the system in lifting sanctions," he said.

Khatibzadeh underlined that a return to the Vienna talks with a realistic approach is possible so that "we can achieve results in the shortest time."

He added, "Certainly, if we reach a solution, the United States returns to its obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 and fulfills its obligations, the Islamic Republic will stop its compensatory actions based on what it has announced and will fulfill its obligations."

"Iraqi FM will pay a visit to Iran soon"

Khatibzadeh also said that the Iraqi foreign minister's visit to Iran is on the agenda and will take place soon, but it is too early to speculate on the content of the message that he will deliver to President Raisi.

"We will decide based on the message we receive," he added.

Khatibzadeh continued, "Iran has always been a forerunner of dialogue and regional relations and has always tried to invite other countries in the region to regional relations, and Iraq can play an important role in this regard."

"Japan FM to visit Tehran"

Khatibzadeh also announced that the Japanese foreign minister's visit to Tehran has been on the agenda for several months and will take place "as soon as the details are finalized."

Macron phones Raisi, calls for deeper relationship

TEHRAN — French President Emmanuel Macron made an hour-long phone call with new Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi on Monday, calling for continuation of talks between Tehran and Paris with the aim of deepening bilateral relations.

In the phone call, Raisi pointed to the repeated and gross violations of the 2015 nuclear deal by the United States and non-compliance by the three European parties to the international agreement.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and returned sanctions lifted under the nuclear agreement - officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - and introduced new harsh ones.

Following the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the legally binding agreement, France, Germany and Britain, known as E3, also failed to abide by their commitments. The E3 officially set up a European mechanism, called INSTEX, to facilitate non-dollar trade with Iran, but it was not realized.

"By imposing new sanctions, the Americans have clearly violated their commitments and even extended the new sanctions to the humanitarian



Emmanuel Macron (R) phones President Raisi

sector," Raisi lamented in his telephone conversation with the French leader.

Emphasizing that both the United States and the Europeans must fulfill their obligations under the JCPOA, Raisi said, "In any negotiation, the rights of the Iranian people must be upheld and the interests of our nation must be ensured."

Iran and the remaining members to the JCPOA started nuclear talks in April to revive the JCPOA with an indirect involvement of the U.S. under the Biden administration.

Though some significant pro-

gresses made in six rounds of talks, the sides failed to conclude the talks as the U.S. raised new conditions, such as Iran's missile program and Iran's influence in the region.

The last round of talks ended on June 20. Now it is expected that nuclear talks get started under the new government in Iran.

Raisi also noted that the Islamic Republic is very serious about providing security and maintaining deterrence in the Persian Gulf region and the Oman Sea, and will confront the factors that undermine security.

Regarding Lebanon, the president

also stressed that Iran supports any action that is aimed at stability, security and improvement of the economic situation in Lebanon. Raisi said Iran welcomes France's support in this regard.

For his part, the French president congratulated Raisi on his inauguration as president and wished him success.

Macron added, "Iran and France can play a role in establishing peace and stability in the region through their cooperation."

The French leader also called for revitalization of the nuclear agreement.

"We are looking for a solution to this issue and we hope that negotiations will start again," Macron said.

Referring to the issue of maritime security, the French president said that Paris and Tehran must create a framework for stability and make sure that there will be stability in all areas, including maritime navigation.

Macron added that France has always tried to provide a solution for stability in Lebanon, and expressed hope that the ground would be laid for stability and solving the country's problems with Iran's help.

In the Majlis stated that the MPs are ready to hold public sessions to study the competence and vote of confidence to the proposed ministers in two or three work shifts, so that the government can be formed and start work as soon as possible.

Previously, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution had asked both the government and the parliament to cooperate with each other to immediately form the cabinet.

ing to this decision, they have the opportunity to review the competence of ministers until next Tuesday (August 16).

Based on the decision made in the meeting of the presiding board, public sessions will be held in the court of the parliament from Sunday, August 21, to assess the competence and vote of confidence to the proposed ministers, Salimi clarified.

The representative of Mahalat

submitted to the parliament tomorrow (Tuesday, August 10), the members of the ad hoc committees will start studying the records and plans of the proposed ministers in the afternoon of the same day," Alireza Salimi stated.

The parliamentarian went on to say that according to the parliamentary regulations, the committees have the opportunity to evaluate the plans of the proposed ministers for a week, so accord-

Parliament ready to study competence of proposed ministers, says MP

TEHRAN — New President Ebrahim Raisi is expected to give the list of his proposed minister to the Majlis (parliament) in the current week.

In the recent meeting of the Majlis presiding board details regarding vote for proposed ministers was discussed, a member of the presiding board of the Parliament told Tasnim on Monday.

"Finally, it was decided that if the list of proposed ministers is

IRGC chief: Zionist regime will collapse soon

The chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the final collapse of the Zionist regime in Tel Aviv is not just an aspiration, but a reality, which will materialize in the near future.

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks in separate meetings on Monday with Ismail Haniyeh, who heads the political bureau of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and the secretary general of the Islamic Jihad movement, Ziyad al-Nakhalah, in Tehran.

During the meetings, the Iranian commander congratulated the Palestinian resistance movements on their achievements in the recent Israeli aggression against the besieged Gaza Strip, saying, "In view of undeniable realities on the ground, we believe that the collapse and fall of the Zionist regime is far beyond a mere aspiration and is a reality, which will be realized in the near future."

He said the balance of power between the Israeli regime and the Palestinian resistance groups in "Operation al-Quds Sword" was quite different in comparison with previous wars, adding that the Palestinian front was more powerful and achieved a victory beyond just a military triumph.

Tel Aviv launched a brutal bombing campaign against the besieged Gaza Strip on May 10, following Palestinian retaliation against violent raids on worshippers at al-Aqsa Mosque and the regime's plans to force a number of Palestinian families out of their homes at the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East al-Quds.

According to Gaza's Health Ministry, 260 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli offensive, including 66 children and 40 women. At least 1,948 others were also wounded.

In response, Palestinian resistance movements, chief among them Hamas, launched Operation al-Quds Sword and fired more than 4,000 rockets and missiles into the occupied territories, killing 12 Israelis.

Apparently caught off guard by the unprecedented barrage of rockets from Gaza, Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire on May 21, which Palestinian resistance movements accepted with Egyptian mediation.

Elsewhere in his remark, Salami said only power can harness the rebellious Zionists and emphasized



that strengthening Palestine is a strategy that should never be stopped.

The recent developments in Palestine, particularly Operation al-Quds Sword, shattered the idea of the Israeli regime's invincibility, which has been promoted by hegemonic and Zionist rulers as well as arrogant media, suggesting that Muslim and Arab countries have no option but to engage in a peaceful coexistence with occupiers of al-Quds, he added.

"This battle (Operation al-Quds Sword) showed that it is Palestine that has become more powerful and that the elimination and collapse of the fake Zionist regime is definite," the IRGC chief commander pointed out.

Nakhalah, for his part, described Iran and the IRGC as a defense shield for the Muslim world and the resistance front in the region.

The world today is witnessing the reality that the balance of power is tilting in favor of the Palestinian resistance while the Zionists are extremely concerned about the outcome of Palestinians' increasing power in the occupied territories.

Haniyeh also hailed Iran's decisive role and stance in supporting the Palestinian resistance and said the Israeli regime is suffering a terrible nightmare after its defeat in Operation al-Quds Sword.

"Today, the Zionist regime is more than ever in a nightmare after the defeat in Operation al-Quds Sword, and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance, at the peak of its power and using past experiences, seeks to continue its successes and victories in the future," he added.

(Source: Press TV)

From Page 1 ► In parallel with its advances in the south, the Taliban also made headway in the north of the country. In Balkh and Takhar, two provinces situated in the north and northeast of Afghanistan, heavy clashes between the Taliban and government forces are underway.

The Afghan Tolo News television network reported on Monday that the clashes are underway in the close vicinity of another important capital city. City sources and the network reported that heavy clashes have been going on in the Dehdadi district of Balkh since Sunday night. The clashes are close to Balkh capital Mazar-e-Sharif city and Pul-e-Imam Bukhari area. There, too, the situation seems fragile. The defense lines will break if reinforcements are not sent to the province, sources from Balkh told the network.

Central parts of the city of Sar-e-Pul and many areas in Kunduz city have also fallen to the Taliban after heavy clashes between the two sides. Taliban attacks on these two northern cities intensified over the last 24 hours after the Taliban took Sheberghan, the provincial capital in Jawzjan, Tolo News reported.

“The only remaining area is held by a regiment in the center of Sar-e-Pul province and (another) in Balkhab district,” said Behzad Haidarizada, a Sar-e-Pul resident.

“The central and local governments have paid no attention. The security forces did not even have food while they were under siege,” said Yar Mohammad Maihanparast,



Heavy clashes in Afghanistan

the head of the Sar-e-Pul residents' council in Kabul.

The Afghan government was strongly criticized by lawmakers hailing from Kunduz and Jawzjan. They accused the government of not paying sufficient attention to the situation in the north while the Taliban is intensifying its military campaign. “The Taliban was focused on Kunduz as an important location but the government saw it as a small village,” said Rabbani Rabbani, a member of Kunduz’s provincial council.

Recent advancements of the Taliban were indicative of its new strategy. The group intensified its crusade in May but largely remained focused on rural areas and small cities, delaying the battle for provincial capitals until the proper time. Now, it seems that the Taliban thinks the time has come for it to gradually take over the major cities. They are currently going after provincial capitals one after another with Kabul is more likely to be the last and biggest battle.

The overall mayhem in neigh-

boring Afghanistan aroused much concern in Iran, which has expressed its readiness to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict. “Iran is deeply concerned about the developments in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always considered the security of Afghanistan as its own security and has used all its facilities and capacities to contribute to the peace, stability, and tranquility of Afghanistan at bilateral, regional, and international levels,” Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said on Monday.

“In this context, we are ready and willing to pursue the Tehran Peace Initiative to form an inclusive government in a genuine intra-Afghan dialogue, including all the groups that exist in Afghanistan today,” he continued.

The spokesman also urged Afghanistan’s neighbors to engage in regular dialogue about the situation in the war-torn country.

Iran is ready to facilitate and play host to such a dialogue, Khatibzadeh added.

Iran has had contacts with almost all Afghan stakeholders and played host to at least one round of intra-Afghan peace talks. It also held talks with the Taliban in an effort to hear their views on the future of Afghanistan. Iran has always underlined the need to form an all-inclusive government in Afghanistan, one that would include representatives from the Taliban and the Kabul-based Afghan government.

Zahra Nemati to take centerstage in Tokyo: NPC

TEHRAN — International Paralympic Committee (NPC) says that Iranian archer Zahra Nemati will take centerstage in the 2020 Paralympic Games.

With excitement at a fever pitch, thousands of Paralympic athletes worldwide are gearing up to compete in 539 events across 22 sports.



Paralympian legends Daniel Dias of Brazil, USA’s Jessica Long and McKenzie Coan look to add more swimming medals to add to their collection, whilst Germany’s Markus Rehm will attempt to defend his long jump titles as well as Iranian archer Zahra Nemati – a two-time Paralympic champion – returning to take centerstage in Tokyo.

The Paralympic Games will take place from Aug. 24 to Sept. 5.

Iran volleyball no longer the best Asian team

TEHRAN — Iran volleyball team have dropped to 12th place in the latest FIVB ranking released on Monday.

The Iranian team finished in ninth place in the 2020 Olympic Games.

Brazil lead the table, followed by Poland, Russia and France. Japan volleyball team are the best Asian team in the ranking, sitting in 11th place.

Iran were placed in eighth place before the start of 2021 Volleyball Nations League and Olympics.

Akhbari nominated for ACL 2021 Group Stage goalkeeper

TEHRAN — Tractor football team goalkeeper Mohammad Reza Akhbari has been nominated for the best goalkeeper of the 2021 AFC Champions League group stage.

When Tractor played out a thrilling 3-3 draw against Pakhtakor in its tournament opener it looked like its fans could be in for a rollercoaster ride but, instead, its eventual progression was the result of a resolute backline that had the outstanding Akhbari as the last line of defense, the-afc.com reported.

The 28-year-old kept five successive clean sheets after conceding three against Pakhtakor, including two excellent shutouts against group winners Sharjah, the second of which helped seal a place in the Round of 16.

Dheeraj Singh (FC Goa), Kampol Pathom (At-takul – Ratchaburi FC), Jo Hyeon-woo (Ulsan Hyundai) and Mohammed Al Shamsi (Al Wahda) are also nominated for the best goalkeeper of the 2021 AFC Champions League.

Ataei to lead Iran at 2021 Asian Volleyball C’ship

TEHRAN — Iran U21 volleyball team coach Behrouz Ataei will lead the senior team at the 2021 Asian Men’s Volleyball Championship.

After departure of Russian coach Vladimir Alekno, the Iranian volleyball federation appointed Ataei as new coach of the National Team.

According to head of volleyball federation, Mohammadreza Davarzani, Iran will participate at the Asian championship with a mixture of young and experienced players.

Iran have been drawn in Pool B along with Thailand, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

Iran expresses deep concern over developments in Afghanistan

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has voiced “deep concern” over continued clashes in neighboring Afghanistan as the internecine war between the Afghan government and the Taliban continued to rage on.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, Khatibzadeh said, “Iran is deeply concerned about the developments in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always considered the security of Afghanistan as its own security and has used all its facilities and capacities to contribute to the peace, stability, and tranquility of Afghanistan at bilateral, regional, and international levels.”

He added, “In this context, we are ready and willing to pursue the Tehran Peace Initiative to form an inclusive government in a genuine intra-Afghan dialogue, including all the groups that exist in Afghanistan today.”

The spokesman also called on Afghanistan’s neighbors to hold regular and structured dialogue in order to coordinate their efforts, manage the humanitarian issue of war-displaced people, prevent the geography of Afghanistan from being exploited by extremist groups, and help end the war, bloodshed, and fratricide.

Khatibzadeh said Iran is ready to facilitate and play host to such a dialogue.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has hosted millions of its own Afghan brothers and sisters for the past four decades and has never had anything but a kinship view of the Afghan people, and this humane view has always existed and will continue, God willing,” he pointed out.

As the conflict in Afghanistan intensified over the past few weeks, Iranian officials have increased their peace efforts regarding Afghanistan. Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian, the Iranian foreign minister’s special envoy for Afghanistan affairs, recently had a phone conversation with Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar.

In the phone call, the two sides conferred on the latest developments in Afghanistan.

The two sides also discussed the significance of ongoing Afghan peace processes, especially the continuation of intra-Afghan talks in Tehran.

Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also held talks with UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan Jean Arnault, who has traveled to Tehran heading a delegation to exchange views with Iranian Foreign Ministry officials, according to a ministry statement.

In the Sunday meeting, Zarif touched upon the dire situation in Afghanistan and the growing complexity of the circumstances in the country, dismissing foreign powers’ inappropriate policies as one of the root causes of the current situation in Afghanistan.

He expressed Iran’s readiness to help with and facilitate negotiations among Afghan sides in order to advance the peace process in Afghanistan.

Zarif said intra-Afghan talks are the only solution to the problems facing the country.

“The international community should adopt a

Iran says Saudi Arabia still seeking military solution to Yemen crisis

TEHRAN – Iran on Monday expressed regret that Saudi Arabia still pursues a military solution to the Yemen crisis, saying that this approach will result in nothing other than death and destruction.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh urged Riyadh to abandon the military solution and instead seek political ways to put an end to the devastating war in Yemen.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing, the spokesman said, “It is unfortunate that the Saudi government is still looking for a military solution for Yemen although it knows and it has understood after a long time that war has no other result than killing innocent and civilian people and harming the nations of the region and the security of the region.”

He added, “The sooner the Saudi government shows its commitment to political solutions and ends this devastating war, the better for both this country and the region, and the peace and security of the region.”

Responding to a question about the talks with Saudi Arabia and their latest

status and whether Riyadh is waiting for the formation of a new government in Iran, he said, “Talks with Saudi Arabia have been held in several rounds on bilateral, regional and international issues and important questions for both sides. Important questions were brought up for discussion for both sides.”

“We, in Iran, think that in a way based on dialogue and settlement of issues between us, we can reach a common view on some issues. Of course, differences between the two countries, as the case with many other countries, do not need to be resolved in one place and may never be resolved,” Khatibzadeh pointed out.

He added, “But we think that if Saudi Arabia pays due attention to the message of the Islamic Republic of Iran that our region is a region that only regional arrangements between the countries of the region can bring it to a comprehensive and lasting solution, we think these talks will arrive at a good point.”

The spokesman also voiced Iran’s readiness to cooperate with the new UN envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg.

straightforward stance to support a political settlement of the crisis in Afghanistan and condemn violence and its consequences,” said the Iranian foreign minister.

The UN envoy, in turn, stressed the importance of the role of Iran and other regional countries in helping move forward with the peace trend in Afghanistan.

He said no country or a limited number of countries alone will be able to help calm the current situation in Afghanistan, adding only collective cooperation can defuse the situation in the country.

Arnault emphasized intra-Afghan talks as the only way to tackle the current situation in the country, and described his negotiations in Tehran as fruitful and significant.

Arnault also met with Taherian and exchanged views about the ongoing issues in Afghanistan.

Earlier this week, the Iranian Foreign Ministry urged the Afghans to sue for peace and expressed readiness to facilitate dialogue between the warring sides in a statement issued to mark the anniversary of the terrorist attack against Iranian diplomats and a reporter in Afghanistan’s Mazar-i-Sharif.

August 8 marks one of the most bitter days for the diplomatic arm of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

23 years ago, on such a day, Iranian diplomats and an Iranian reporter were martyred at the country’s consulate general in the Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif, in an act of cowardice and in violation of commitments made to Tehran as well as international regulations and treaties and the human and Islamic common sense.

International condolence and empathy with the people and government of Iran, following the terrorist incident, and especially the message of condolence from the oppressed people of Afghanistan, who were themselves victims to blind terror, was a fresh dazzling show of deep ties between the peoples of the two countries of Iran and Afghanistan, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

It said these are the ties, which in the midst of unjust wars and suffering of the oppressed people of Afghanistan, led to the reciprocal support of the people of Iran for their subjugated Afghan brothers and sisters.

Deep and true ties between the Iranian and Afghan nations leave the two sides with no better choice other than to take up constructive approaches with an eye on ensuring the interests of both countries, the statement said.

The people and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, just as in the past, are standing alongside their brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and support any solution that helps end more than four decades of baleful and devastating war and protects the achievements

of the people of Afghanistan, which are the fruit of the blood of thousands of martyrs, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in the statement.

It added that the Islamic Republic of Iran honors the memory of the martyrs of this incident and, once more, strongly condemns the act of terrorism.

Tehran also pledges to pursue the issue as an obvious demand of the Iranian government and nation until the hidden aspects of the incident come to light, the ministry stated.

In the end, Iran invites all parties to the war in Afghanistan to end their conflict and fratricide and look for a settlement through negotiations and expresses its readiness to continue to facilitate and host these talks, the Foreign Ministry concluded.

“The need to prevent influx of Afghan refugees to borders”

Arnault also met with Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, an aide to the speaker of the Iranian parliament who is rumored to become the next foreign minister of Iran. During his meeting with the UN envoy, Amir-Abdollahian stressed the importance of the security of the people inside Afghanistan and the prevention of the influx of refugees to the borders and stressed the need for unity among all parties.

Explaining the views of Iran on the developments in Afghanistan and the region, he said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the intra-Afghan talks with the presence of all parties.”

Amir-Abdollahian also stressed the role of the United Nations in establishing peace and security in Afghanistan and added, “The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the United Nations initiatives in resolving the Afghan crisis.”

At the same time, he criticized the UN for not taking active action in response to recent developments in Afghanistan.

“The irresponsible actions of the Americans and the behavioral effects of the occupiers have multiplied the problems of the suffering people of Afghanistan,” Amir-Abdollahian noted. “We should not see the Americans continue to act irresponsibly and remain calm at the United Nations.”

In the meeting, Arnault considered the role of neighbors, especially Iran, in resolving the Afghan conflict significant and said, “There should be a stronger international consensus on the issue of Afghanistan, and this issue requires the support of neighboring countries.”

At the end of the meeting, the UN envoy for Afghanistan stressed the need to support a political solution to the Afghan crisis and praised the constructive role of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



“As the Islamic Republic of Iran, we have had extensive cooperation with the United Nations, and we will certainly continue to work closely with the UN Special Representative, who is a well-known figure to us,” Khatibzadeh said.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has named Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg as his new Yemen envoy after a delay of several weeks as China considered whether to approve the appointment, which needed the consensus of the Security Council.

The 15-member council approved

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

Uzbekistan chosen to host AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification Group G

TEHRAN — Uzbekistan will host the 2022 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification Group G matches.

Bangladesh was originally chosen to host the competition but the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has named Uzbekistan as hosts.

Iran, Jordan and Bangladesh are in Group G.

The 2022 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification will be the qualification tournament for the 2022 AFC Women’s Asian Cup.

A total of 12 teams will qualify to play in the final tournament in India. The hosts and the top three teams of the previous tournament in 2018 will qualify automatically, while the other eight teams will be decided by qualification, with the matches scheduled to be played from Sept. 13 to 25 in centralized venues.

This tournament will also serve as the first stage of Asian qualification for the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup, where five teams from the Women’s Asian Cup qualify directly for the World Cup (plus co-hosts Australia), and two teams qualify for a 10-team playoff tournament.

Naderi to part ways with Esteghlal

TEHRAN — Mohammad Naderi will reportedly part ways with Esteghlal football team.

The 24-year-old winger joined Esteghlal from Persepolis for the 2020-21 Iran Professional League season but failed to win the league and Hazfi Cup with the Blues.

He bade farewell to his teammates after the final whistle of the Hazfi Cup final in Isfahan, where Esteghlal lost to Foolad on penalties, Tasnim news agency reported.

The media reports suggest that Naderi has been linked with Greek and Portuguese teams.

Iraq football team start training camp in Spain

TEHRAN — Iran national football team began their training camp on Monday in Malaga, Spain.

The Iraqis, headed by Dutch Dick Advocaat, are preparing for the 2022 World Cup qualification Round 3.

Iraq are drawn with Iran, South Korea, Syria, Lebanon and the UAE in Group A. They will start the campaign with a match against South Korea on Sept. 1.

“Iraq will hold a 10-day training camp in Malaga and play friendly matches with Spanish teams in their camp,” head of the normalization committee of the Iraq Football Association, Iyad Bunyan, said.

The team will also travel to Izmir, Turkey to continue their training camp, he added.

Azmoun on Roma’s radar: report

TEHRAN — With Edin Dzeko seemingly heading towards Inter, Roma is looking at Zenit striker Sardar Azmoun as its first choice.

Media reports suggest that Dzeko is one of two forwards who will replace Chelsea-bound Romelu Lukaku at San Siro this summer.

That means the Italian side needs someone to work with Borja Mayoral and Eldor Shomurodov upfront at the Stadio Olimpico.

According to the Corriere dello Sport, Azmoun is the first name on the list, having already been linked several weeks ago.

He had seemed on the verge of a move to Bayer Leverkusen, but the Germans renewed their contract with Lucas Alario instead.

Azmoun is a 26-year-old Iran international who spent practically his entire career in Russia with Rubin Kazan, Rostov and since February 2019 at Zenit.

He had a spectacular start to the 2021-22 season, scoring five goals in four games.



Trade with Afghanistan in limbo as exporters look for alternative markets

TEHRAN – Following the recent unrests in Afghanistan, Iran's exports to the country have fallen significantly and Iranian exporters should look for alternative markets to replace the neighboring country, the head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said on Sunday.

According to Hossein Salimi, the country which was the top export destination for non-oil Iranian commodities has fallen to second place recently, the portal of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) reported.

Afghanistan accounted for 11 percent of Iran's total non-oil exports in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), during which the country imported 296,000 tons of agricultural and food products worth \$134 million from Iran, the official said.

Tomatoes, apples, potatoes, sweets, and fruit juice concentrate were the top exported items to the neighboring country, according to Salimi.

He noted that the deployment of Taliban militants in provinces and cities adjacent to the Iranian border has left Iranian exporters unsure about sending goods to the country.

Salimi had previously said that exports from Iran to Afghanistan have declined more than 85 percent due to the increasing tensions in the country.

"With the escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan, the number of trucks carrying Iranian goods to this country has decreased from 100 trucks every day to two or three trucks per day," he said on

August 6.

According to Salimi, Iranian exports to Afghanistan over the past two weeks have been only 15 percent of the figure for the same period in the previous year.

"When turmoil or conflict arises in a country, the first area that will suffer is that country's economy and trade," he said, adding: "Unfortunately, the situation is so bad that at the moment it is not easy to predict what awaits us. We still do not have an accurate estimate of the amount of damage inflicted on Iranian traders. We have to see how long this situation will last."

In response to the question that if the Taliban finally takes control and peace is restored, the economic relations between Iran and Afghanistan will continue in the same way or not? Salimi said: "In any case, the needs of that country will not be eliminated. Any group that gains power in Afghanistan, the country will still need food and construction materials and so on and their best option [for meeting those needs] would be Iran."

Underlining the probable decline in the two countries' trade in case of the ongoing conflict, Salimi said: "If this situation continues for even another month, we will not reach 50 percent of our normal export volume to Afghanistan this year."

According to the official, Iran has targeted \$2.7 billion of exports to Afghanistan in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), but considering the current situation realizing this goal will not be possible.

Afghanistan accounts for 11% of Iran's non-oil exports.

7 idle production units revived in Semnan since late March

TEHRAN – As announced by a provincial official, seven idle production units have been revived in Iran's central Semnan province since the start of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

Ali Teshneh-Del, the head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, said that this year, these units returned to the activity cycle by examining, identifying and solving various problems and difficulties.

As reported, the industry and mining sector accounts for 34 percent of Semnan province's employment and 22 percent of the province's GDP.

In early July, the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) had announced that 240 idle industrial units have been revived in the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.

Emphasizing that one of the most important programs of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade is to activate the semi-active and stagnant units, Ali Rasoulzadeh said that reviving 1,600 idle and semi-active industrial units in the industrial parks and zones is targeted for this year.

With the revival of each idle industrial unit, 26 job opportunities will be created, which is expected that more than 100,000 jobs will be created in the country this year through the return of industrial units to the production cycle, the official stated.

Last year, 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial



parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (over \$833 million), providing employment for 27,000 people, the ISIPO head further said.

With the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity, 900 consultants from the private sector and knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of these units, Rasoulzadeh has previously stated.

"Despite the two major challenges of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, which imposed severe restrictions on the country, we tried to activate domestic capacities by turning to localizing the technology of manufacturing parts and equipment," he added.

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he

said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

Iran is proud that despite these restrictions and pressure from these two important challenges, its industry has grown by more than seven percent, according to the statistics and reports from various sectors, the official further highlighted.

Also, as announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which

Iran, Brazil mulling over expansion of mining cooperation

TEHRAN – Iran and Brazil are considering expansion of cooperation in the mining sector, according to the Head of Iran Mine House (IMH) Mohammadreza Bahraman.

Mentioning a recent visit of a Brazilian delegation to the IMH, Bahraman noted that the two countries have great potentials for cooperation in the mining sector and mineral industries, especially in manufacturing machinery, IRNA reported.

According to Bahraman, the mentioned delegation was comprised of senior Brazilian officials including the president of Brazil's

Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Chairman of the Brazilian Mines Commission, as well as the country's ambassador and commercial attaché in Tehran.

During the meeting, it was decided to prepare a memorandum of understanding for technical cooperation, supply of mining machinery, and attracting investment for both parties.

The MOU is expected to be signed in the near future, Bahraman said.

Accordingly, it was also decided to continue reciprocal meetings in Iran and Brazil with the presence



of representatives of the governmental and parliamentary sectors of the two countries, as well as the two countries' private sectors, the official added.

"During the meeting, the Brazilian delegation presented a full report on the content of their activities and presented a review of the country's mining law with a look on foreign investment and the private sector," he noted.

Bahraman further mentioned Brazil's significant mining activity, noting that more than 200,000 mines had been auctioned off in the country over the past year and

that a low turnout had led to a change in Brazil's mining law.

The IMH head also pointed to Brazil's high capacity to produce mining machinery and the extensive cooperation of its mining companies with major American, German and Japanese brands, which could be very beneficial for Iranian mining companies.

Brazil is one of the leading countries in the world in the mining industry and it is one of the largest suppliers of iron ore in the world; the country uses its own technologies in the field of exploration and extraction.

Tavanir might cut electricity supply to industries to manage consumption surge

TEHRAN – Mohammad-Hassan Motevalizadeh, the managing director of Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir), has announced the possibility of imposing electricity supply limitations for industrial subscribers, IRIB reported on Monday.

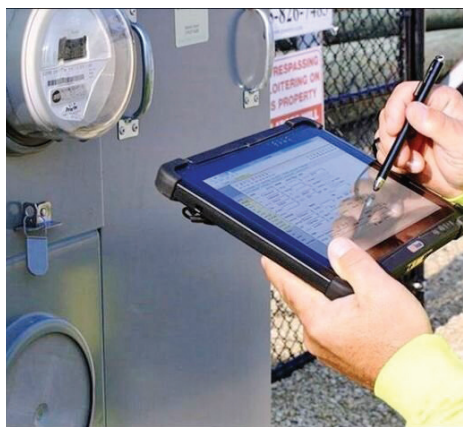
"If household consumers do not cooperate by managing their consumption we might be forced to impose supply limitations for industrial subscribers in the steel sector," Motevalizadeh said in a press conference.

Back in May, Motevalizadeh had warned that this year the country will have a difficult peak consumption period.

"This year, we are facing major issues. First, there was a very severe drought during which we saw a reduction in the water supply to the country's hydropower plants to less than half. In this way, we lose the generation of about 4,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity from hydropower sources", the official said on May 19.

On the other hand, due to the intense premature heat, the cooling equipment entered the consumption circuit earlier than usual, he noted, adding: "And a new problem we are facing this year is the power consumption by illegal cryptocurrency mining units."

Although every year nearly 3,000 MW is added to the country's power generation capacity, the reduction in the rainfalls and the



decline in the water storage behind the dams has reduced the electricity generation offsetting the added capacity.

Daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 66,250 MW (66.25 gigawatts) on July 6, to register a new record in the history of Iran's electricity industry as a new heatwave has blanketed the country this summer.

According to the Iranian Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, the mentioned figure was 8,000 MW more than the consumption in the previous year's peak period, and 10,000 MW more than the figure in the previous year's

same date.

The country's power plants are currently able to generate only 54,000 MW of electricity which is nearly 12,000 MW less than the power demand, Rajabi Mashhadi said at the time.

The official noted that each degree of temperature rise would boost the country's electricity consumption by 1,500 MW and the temperature is expected to increase even more in the future.

He underlined the increasing use of air conditioning devices in the summer period as one of the major reasons for the increase in the country's electricity consumption, calling on people to manage their consumption and use the automatically regulated devices to decrease energy waste.

He also announced that the Energy Ministry was importing 650 MW more electricity to offset the surge in demand.

In early July, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian attended an emergency meeting of the country's electricity management headquarters along with other senior officials from the Energy Ministry to discuss the issue and explore ways for alleviating the situation.

Tavanir had also previously announced that the company was implementing over 40 different programs for managing the situation and to prevent blackouts in the country.

Exports from South Khorasan increases 41% in 4 months

TEHRAN – The value of exports from Iran's eastern South Khorasan province rose 41 percent in 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, according to a provincial official.

Hassan Rahimizadeh, the director-general of the province's Customs Department, announced that 848,200 tons of commodities worth \$262.898 million has been exported from the province in the said four-month, which shows 19 percent drop in terms of weight.

The official further said that 495 tons of products worth \$6.119 million has been imported to the province in the first four months of this year.

He mentioned Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan as the major export destinations, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Afghanistan as the main sources of imports in the said time span.

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.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China with about 10 million tons worth \$4.3 billion, Iraq with 10.9 million tons worth \$2.8 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 4.3 million tons worth \$1.6 billion, Turkey with one million tons worth \$923 million, and Afghanistan with 1.8 million tons



worth \$728 million.

The official further announced that Iran has imported 12.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$14.5 billion in the first four months of the present year, with 32 percent growth in value and five percent rise in weight year on year.

He said that the basic goods accounted for 9.4 million tons of the imported items.

Mir-Ashrafi named cellphones, livestock corn, sunflower oil, barley, meal, wheat, soybeans, sugar and rice as the main imported commodities.

The United Arab Emirates with four million tons of goods worth \$4.7 billion was the first largest exporter of goods to Iran in the four-month period, followed by China with one million tons of goods worth \$3.1 billion, Turkey with 1.3 million tons worth \$1.5 billion, Germany with 351,000 tons worth \$563 million, and Switzerland with 672,000 tons worth \$539 million, the official stated.

As Mir-Ashrafi has previously announced, the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

He has put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons, and said that the figure shows a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the result of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic.

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

TEDPIX climbs 15,000 points on Monday

TEHRAN – TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 15,314 points to 1,433 million on Monday. As reported, over 9.886 billion securities worth 67,155 trillion rials (about \$1.598 billion) were traded at the TSE on Monday.

The first market's index gained 10,864 points, and the second market's index rose 31,939 points.

TEDPIX rose 90,000 points, or 8.5 percent, in the

past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1,406 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Group, National Iranian Copper Company, Social Security Investment Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

By Ali A. jenabzadeh

TEHRAN – A Lebanese novelist says that Arabic and Persian are languages of poetry due to cultural and historical causes that has kept the poetry ahead of the art of narration in these two languages.

“I think that Arabic and Persian are similar in that they are languages of poetry par excellence,” Zeinab Merhi tells the Tehran Times.

“Of course, this is also related to the culture and history of both countries, as I think that poetry is actually still ahead of the art of narration in these two languages,” she says.

Despite some Arabic masterpieces in the field of novel, Merhi believes that Arab writer needs to keep distance from his poet ego.

“The works of the new Lebanese novelists as well as the Arab writers in general, there is a need to abandon the “me” of the poet, and pay more attention to the other and the outside world that creates the magic of the novel,” Merhi remarks.

Following is the text of the interview:

Could you tell us how were you drawn to the field of writing? And what are the works that inspired you with the sense of novel?

Since I was a little girl, I loved imaginary stories and reading.

Then I was fortunate because in my home as in my school, there was a large library containing a great number of French novels, which had the greatest impact on me and through which I was able to develop my love for the novel.

Unfortunately, the Arabic library lacks this type of novel.

However, these books introduced me to the feelings and problems of people in my age, so I was very sympathetic and identified with them as we grew up together. At that time, I understood the emotional and intellectual impact and power of writing on the reader, and my attachment to it increased.

I do not like to mention works that inspired me, but they are actually writers and novelists, such as: Haruki Murakami, Milan Kundera and Dostoevsky.

Recently, my second novel was published by Dar Hachette-Antoine (Nofal), “Floating House on the River”, which is currently being translated into Persian.

The Lebanese civil war ended on the ground, but it is still fresh in the mind of successive generations in Lebanon. There are novels, stories, as well as films that address this painful scene of history of Lebanon. As a novelist, how were you inspired by the war and how did you see its repercussions on the daily lives of the Lebanese?

Arabic and Persian are languages of poetry rather than novel: Lebanese novelist



There are many literary and cinematic works that are inspired with the Lebanese civil war, especially in the nineties of the last century and the beginning of this century.

For me and for someone of my generation, born around the end of the Lebanese war, our questions and preoccupation with the civil war were somehow different from the generations lived with that war and touched its depth.

“There are many literary and cinematic works that are inspired with the Lebanese civil war.”

My first novel, “The Abyss” or “Dozakh” in its current Persian translation, recently published by Morward publishers, started from a main question: what happened to the fighters of the civil war after the war came to an end?

I mean, there are people like Sohail, the main character in the novel, who failed to complete their basic education because of the outbreak of war, and then had to take up arms and fight in the war, whether it was for a few years or for a whole fifteen years.

Then suddenly, after the fighting ended at the beginning of the nineties, they were asked to lay down their arms and try to integrate into society, find a normal job and start a family as if nothing had happened!

In “The Abyss” I was trying to find these people; where are they among us and how do they live? Are they psychologically able to build a family? Then it became clear to me in one way or another that they are only physically present among us, but that they actually live in another world and time.

How can a novel and a story link the reality of society and the dreams of folks? Do you think the novel embodies the social subconscious?

The writer reflects many of the characteristics of his cultural milieu and the society in which he lives in the novel. After all, he belongs to a particular social and cultural context. When I thought of Sohail, the main character of “Dozakh”, a man in his late fifties, born and living in Lebanon, it was impossible to think of this character and

make it real, without thinking about the Lebanese civil war and its impact on his life and personality, as it took place 15 years of his generation.

It is not possible to simply overlook this major and extended impact on the life of the character or its creation, or talk about his life without addressing the subject of war.

From here, many of Sohail’s character traits and behaviors, his dreams and hopes, success or failures were related to the security and social atmosphere that prevailed at the time in the country.

Thus, it can be said that the novel is linked to society, but it is also a space to speculate about it as well.

Do you follow Iranian novels? What are the common bonds linking the Iranian and Arab mentality in novel?

Unfortunately, my Persian is not good enough to actively follow Iranian works. I read some translations, but they are not enough, I think, to express an opinion on the Iranian novel.

However, I think that Arabic and Persian are similar in that they are languages of poetry par excellence. Of course, this is also related to the culture and history of both nations, as I think that poetry is actually still ahead of the art of narration in these two languages.

How would you describe the level of Lebanese and Arab novels compared to their international counterparts? What are the areas of development for the Lebanese novel?

As I mentioned before, the Arabic language is initially a language of poetry, and it took a time to get used to the novel.

However, today, in Lebanon and the Arab world, we have a number of distinguished international novelists whose works have been translated into many languages around the world.

Among them, for example, are the Lebanese novelists like Hassan Davoud, Abbas Beydoun, Jabbour al-Douaihy, Rabie Jaber, and others.

Then between the Egyptians, though they have a large cinematic industry, the storytelling takes precedence over anything else, as they have Naguib Mahfouz and Bahaa Taher, for example, and in the Maghreb as well, where many writers are influenced by the French School of the Novel, so they focus on high proficiency in form and content; there is Rachid Boudjedra for example, or Malik Haddad.

But at the end of the day, I see that in some of the works of the new Lebanese novelists as well as the Arab writers in general, there is a need to abandon the “me” of the poet, and pay more attention to the other and the outside world that creates the magic of the novel.

“Authoritarian” health pass protests in France show no signs of letting up

From page 1 ► Critics accuse Macron of running a health “dictatorship” by forcing people to get vaccinated against their will.

They argue that the pass limits their movements outside their houses, and implicitly makes vaccinations mandatory.

During the demonstrations, protesters pointed out they are not, in principle, opposed to vaccines, but object to being forced to have them.

Experts say the key debate around the health pass has been the power of the state against the people.

Presidential Candidate, Jean-Luc Melenchon, describing the health pass as “absurd, unfair and authoritarian”.

The French government has defended the plan saying nobody is being forced to be vaccinated, but opponents say they are certainly being coerced.

Meanwhile, Italy also saw thousands turn out in opposition to the country’s Green Pass, which is now required for teachers and anyone attending indoor events.

The Italian Green Pass is required to enter museums, sports venues, cinemas and for indoor dining. School teachers, university staff and students are also required to show the pass.

Saudi Arabia’s jailing of Palestinians slammed

Saudi Arabia’s sentencing of Palestinians residing in the Kingdom has been met with anger by Gaza based resistance groups. The Hamas political party says the rulings by a Saudi court was aimed at pleasing Israel.

A high-ranking Hamas official says the Palestinians sentenced have not committed any crime in the Kingdom. Mahmoud al-Zahar added that the trial of the prisoners was not a legal matter, saying the issue was one of a political nature.

The Gaza based Islamic Jihad movement also condemned the Saudi court’s verdicts, saying the detainees are being jailed simply because of their support for the resistance of the Palestinian nation.

Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad labelled the court verdicts as cruel that contradict Arab values of defending the oppressed Palestinians.

The Palestine Shehab news agency says a Saudi court issued verdicts against 69 Palestinians with sentences ranging from 3-22 years over alleged support for the Palestinian resistance. During a mass trial, Riyadh sentenced the Palestinians as well as Jordanian activists supporting the Palestinian struggle against Israel.

Among those handed a prison sentence was 82-year-old Mohammed al-Khudari, a prominent figure and former Hamas’s representative in Saudi Arabia; who is now looking at 15 years behind bars. The son of al-Khudari has also been reportedly sentenced to three years.

In October 2020, human rights group, Amnesty International, condemned the detention saying that Mohammed al-Khudari and his son Hani had been detained for over a year in Saudi Arabia and denied access to a lawyer.

Since the beginning of 2019, Saudi security forces began to round up scores of academics, students and businessmen; who went on to face trials at a Specialized Criminal Court. Many of them had been residing in the Kingdom for decades.

A Hamas official says the detainees have been subjected to torture and cruel interrogation methods.

In March 2020, Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, sent a letter to the Saudi King demanding for the release of the Palestinian detainees. The letter noted “amid the coronavirus pandemic that is sweeping the world, out of fear for the lives of the honorable brothers...the release of Palestinians becomes a humanitarian and national necessity, and we are all sure that His Majesty will not hesitate to do it”

However, the call fell on death ears.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad have now once again called on the Saudi monarchy to immediately release the prisoners.

Saudi authorities have declined to comment on the verdicts.

Reports suggest the mass arrest campaign was part of a widely secretive and sensitive matter revolving around the warming of ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Hamas is widely viewed in the Islamic world and beyond as a legitimate resistance movement against Israel’s occupation of Palestine.

Taliban say no ceasefire reached as battles continue

Speaking to Al-Jazeera TV, a Taliban spokesman says there was no ceasefire agreement with Afghanistan’s government.

Muhammad Naeem Wardak also warned the United States against “further intervention” in the country.

This comes as the group has taken over several provincial capitals in lightning advances.

However, Afghan Special Forces have launched a counter-attack to take back the strategic city of Kunduz that was seized a day earlier by the Taliban.

Since the United States announced a withdrawal date from Afghanistan’s 20-year occupation, violence has surged in the war-ravaged country as infra-Afghan peace talks have stalled.

Yemen says new UN envoy changes nothing

The head of Yemen’s national negotiating delegation, Mohammed Abdulsalam, says the appointment of a new UN envoy to the country does not mean anything.

Abdulsalam says there is no point in entering talks with the official, unless there is an explicit declaration to stop the aggression and lift the deadly siege.



He called for the reopening of Yemen’s airports and ports first as a priority saying this is an urgent humanitarian necessity.

Abdulsalam also warned that Saudi Arabia and its allies, waging war on Yemen, must acknowledge the suffering and destruction caused by their aggression and siege. He says they must be aware that the continuation of their intransigence will backfire.

Abdulsalam also denounced the United Nations’ role in the war saying it is an “accomplice” in the crime of closing Sana’a airport and the port of Hodeidah, as well as the siege imposed on the country as the world body has failed to live up to its responsibility.

“The continuation of the siege and the closure of Sana’a International Airport and the port of Hodeidah is a crime in which the United Nations is a participant, for it has allowed the aggressive forces to keep on with their aggression and crimes against an entire population” Abdulsalam said.

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, named Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg as his new Yemen envoy.

Grundberg replaces Martin Griffiths who (by his own account) failed at meditation efforts over the past three years to end the nearly seven-year war on Yemen.

Abdulsalam says a meeting would be pointless as Grundberg “has nothing in his hands”. He added that there has been zero progress following last month’s visit to Riyadh by the U.S. envoy for Yemen, Tim Lenderking.

This comes as ground battles continue in Yemen’s gas-rich Ma’arib region, Saudi Arabia’s last stronghold in the country.

The war which Saudi Arabia waged on its southern neighbor, has killed tens of thousands of people and pushed Yemen to the brink of famine.

It takes 10-20 years to eradicate Covid-19: Vaxine research director

From page 1 ► a small number of the wealthiest countries, so this is definitely a concern.”

He adds, “Our company Vaxine Pty Ltd is trying to address by making our cutting-edge recombinant protein vaccine technology available to partners in developing world countries.”

Vaxine Pty Ltd is a biotechnology company. The company develops and manufactures therapeutic and prophylactic vaccines for the treatment of infectious diseases, allergies, autoimmunity, and cancer.

“The company we are working with Cinnagen and other partners to scale up manufacture of the vaccine to ensure we are ready to meet future demand which we expect to be very large,” Petrovsky states.

Following is the text of the interview:

Could you update us about your collaboration with Iran’s Cinnagen for the Covid-19 vaccine? Would you help the company to produce the vaccine locally?

Vaxine is committed to making its vaccine technology available to much of the globe as possible. Our strategic alliance with Cinnagen, is the way in which we are helping to make our cutting-edge recombinant protein vaccine available to the people of Iran and regional countries.

We are similarly working with companies, governments and aid agencies to produce the vaccine locally in different parts of the world, thereby ensuring local vaccine self-sufficiency while at the same time ensuring the very best vaccine technology is available everywhere.

What are the main phases of vaccine manufacturing?

Vaccine manufacturing does not have phases like clinical trials. Instead, it is a matter of scale – how many doses can be achieved with one batch. With the vaccine now in final Phase 3 clinical trial, we are working with Cinnagen and other partners to scale up manufacture of the



vaccine to ensure we are ready to meet future demand which we expect to be very large.

Which companies or countries are involved in producing the vaccine? What are the advantages of the vaccine in comparison with others?

“Almost all the vaccine so far has just gone to a small number of the wealthiest countries.”

We are in confidential discussions with companies and governments in many countries around the world to implement our Covid-19 vaccine technology. We cannot mention exact names for commercial confidentiality reasons. Our vaccine is protein based so it is very safe and has few side effects. In animals it has shown potent protection and has even been shown to block virus transmission, which is very exciting.

Once in a while the world is hearing with great fears reports of new variants of

Covid-19. Can the world eradicate this virus totally? How long does it take to do so?

I do not think we will easily eradicate Covid-19; at a minimum this could take 10-20 years as we would need to immunize the whole global population and develop new vaccines better able to block transmission and prevent infection entirely against all the variants – this is what our own vaccine is trying to achieve, but it is not going to be an easy task as the virus can keep mutating.

Some critics are talking about systematic discrimination in distribution of the Coronavirus vaccine. How do you assess international cooperation in transferring vaccine to developing countries?

Almost all the vaccine so far has just gone to a small number of the wealthiest countries, so this is definitely a concern; our company Vaxine Pty Ltd is trying to address by making our cutting-edge recombinant protein vaccine technology available to partners in developing world countries.

What is your analysis about the origin of Coronavirus? Basically, are the claims about the origins of the virus provable?

Despite being over a year and a half since the start of the pandemic, the world still does not know how this pandemic started, whether as a chance cross over event from an animal host to humans as in previous pandemics, or as a laboratory leak. Definite evidence to rule in or out either of these possibilities has not been found, so either option remains possible.

Most importantly, this pandemic has exposed the need for much greater international cooperation on a truly global basis to better manage and ideally prevent any future pandemic. Citizens of all countries suffer greatly from any pandemic so it is important that political considerations are put aside in identifying better strategies to prevent future pandemics.

of loans to Belarus.

In addition to the sweeping aviation, trade and financial sanctions, the UK has also specifically designated prominent Russian businessman, Mikhail Gutseriev, on account of his allegedly strong ties to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

While the FCDO statement doesn’t set out the measures against Gutseriev, presumably any assets he may have in the UK will be frozen and he will be prohibited from entering the country for a limited period.

UK imposes ‘significant’ new sanctions on Belarus

In a sign of sustained tensions between the UK and Belarus, the Foreign Office has announced the imposition of “significant new package of economic sanctions”.

The Foreign Office – now officially called the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) – claims the sanctions are to mark the first anniversary of Belarus’ “fraudulent election”.

The latest sanctions – timed to coincide with broadly similar US sanctions against Belarus – primarily target the trade, financial and aviation

sectors of the East European country.

Most significantly, the aviation-related sanctions prevent Belarusian air carriers from overflying UK airspace or landing at British airports.

The trade sanctions primarily target potash, petroleum products and goods used in cigarette manufacturing.

Furthermore, the financial sanctions prohibit purchases of transferable securities and money-market instruments issued by the Belarusian state, in addition to those issued by state-owned banks. They also prohibit the provision

Coronavirus: Iran tightens travel restrictions to keep Delta variant at bay

TEHRAN – Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) has announced new travel restrictions to the Islamic Republic, banning visitors from coronavirus hotspots in a bid to keep the highly transmissible Delta variant at bay.



On Sunday, Mohammad Hassan Zibakhsh, the CAO spokesman said that all flights to and from Brazil and Uruguay have been suspended due to the latest decision of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, ISNA reported.

The official noted that flights are operated under special measures for travelers from 42 “very high-risk countries” that include Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Botswana, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Swatini, Fiji, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, The Netherlands, Oman, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Sicily, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

For incoming passengers from the cited countries, they must be re-examined for laboratory PCR tests upon their arrival and that is in addition to negative PCR tests they have been passed before departure, he added.

The Delta variant first detected in India remains the most worrisome. It is striking unvaccinated populations in many countries and has proven capable of infecting a higher proportion of vaccinated people than its predecessors.

The WHO classifies Delta as a variant of concern, meaning it has been shown capable of increasing transmissibility, causing more severe disease, or reducing the benefit of vaccines and treatments.

Tourism minister unveils brocade-weaving machine



TEHRAN – On Sunday, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan attended the unveiling ceremony of a domestically-made brocade-weaving machine.

The household brocade-weaving machine, which is locally known as “Dastgah-e Zaribafi”, was designed and made by a team of Iranian under the auspices of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, CHTN reported.

The traditional versions of Zaribafi machines, which are used in workshops measure ten meters in length and four meters in width. And they do not fit in typical houses and apartments at all.

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

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

Strolling around Zayandeh riverside

TEHRAN – Many travel insiders say there are few better ways to spend an afternoon than strolling along the Zayandeh River, crossing back and forth on the river's bridges – or even meandering along the often empty riverbed itself.

Such a stroll is especially pleasant at sunset and in the early evening when most of the bridges, five of which date back to the Safavid era, are brilliantly lit, according to Lonely Planet.

All but one of the historic Safavid-era crossings lie to the east of Chahar Bagh Abbasi St – the exception is the shorter Pol-e Marnan (Marnan Bridge) – but most people satisfy themselves with the walk from Pol-e Si-o-Seh (Si-o-Seh Bridge) to Pol-e Khaju (Khaju Bridge), and back.

Usually, the people of Isfahan paused their perambulations to drink tea and enjoy a qalyan (hubble-bubble) at one of the atmospheric teahouses on Khaju, Chubi, and Si-o-Seh arched bridges.



Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons.

The city has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into “half the world”; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning “Image of the World”), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning.

TEHRAN – The great mosque of Goharshad is an astonishing Islamic structure due to its age, architectural characteristics, and rich tile decorations.

Since its construction in the early 15th century, it has served as a Friday Mosque for pilgrims to the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad.

Over the centuries, several new buildings have been added to the shrine complex, but the Timurid mosque remained one of the most dominant monuments and the only place for congregational prayer.

The construction started in 1418 by the order of Queen Goharshad, the wife of Shahrokh. The mosque took about 12 years to be completed under the supervision of capable Iranian architect Ghavameddin Shirazi by the use of the architectural and decorative manpower supplied from the Iranian cities of Shiraz and Isfahan.

Covering an area of about 10,000 square meters, the mosque consists of a large azure dome, two 40-meter minarets, four verandas, a courtyard with seven big bed-chambers, and a large altar made of a stony dado and mosaic faience shell.

Standing in the courtyard one can recognize the ensemble's exuberant color and solidity among the tower-like minarets, merging with the outer corners of the portal screen spreading to the ground together with the high foundation revetment of marble.

The entire court facade is faced with enamel brick and mosaic faience of the finest quality.

The entire surface of the minarets, walls, and the surrounding colonnades are decorated with fine mosaic and glazed tiles produced in a variety of colors including ultramarine, turquoise, white, clear green, yellow, light yellow, and ebony.

The lucid and vigorous patterns are artfully adapted to their decorative role, whether for eye panels, or dome ornament meant to



Goharshad Mosque highly distinctive in terms of history, beauty, and architecture

be effective at a thousand feet.

This is accomplished by the energy of the faience floral patterns and brick geometrical schemes; by the emphatic rhythm of the arcades, open galleries, and deep recesses.

On the margins of the main veranda's entrance, there is an old inscription carved by the famed Iranian calligrapher Baysunqur Mirza. This comprehensive deed of endowment suggests that the mosque was built when Shahrokh,

the Timurid king, was on the throne.

The northern veranda of the Goharshad Mosque or Dar al-Siyadeh, which has the shallowest veranda measuring 18x12 meters, was constructed concerning the inscription on the portal in 1087 lunar hejira during the time of Sulaiman Shah of Safavid Dynasty.

The eastern veranda measuring 7x1 meters and the western one measuring 1x3 have rich tile work decorations. The mosque

has a broad courtyard measuring 56x51 square meters which have been restricted by verandas and colonnades.

The mosaic faience of the courtyard is covered by dark stone and the rest of the surface is decorated with tiles of flora, artistic and arabesque designs.

The main dome of the building constitutes two dissociated onion-like layers with a short shaft and a hatchway diameter of 15 meters, a circumference of 63, and a thickness of 5.2 meters. The convex part of the dome's shell is decorated with an inscription in the Kufic script.

Moreover, the mosque has a public library holding a large number of books. There is also a museum that represents various handicrafts including a collection of carpets and gold-woven works donated to the holy shrine of Imam Reza. Most of the gold-woven works date back to the 11th and 12th centuries. Among precious artifacts of this museum are the handwriting inscriptions by Ali Reza Abbasi, the renowned Safavid calligrapher, and painter.

The Goharshad Mosque was renovated several times when Shah Abbas, the powerful Safavid king, was on the throne. He contributed a lot to the restoration, construction, and reconstruction of various religious and historic sites in the country. However, time marches on and the mosque was relatively ruined by a devastating earthquake that happened in 1803.

It was time for Qajars to undertake required renovations in the early 19th century.

Another disaster that happened by the 1911 Russian bombings resulted in severe damage to the mosque's double-layered dome.

Distinctive in its beauty and architecture, the Goharshad Mosque is still standing firm to host millions of pilgrims every year and maintain its position as one of the most magnificent mosques of Central Asia.

Iranian, intl. experts to discuss post-coronavirus tourism

TEHRAN – Travel experts from Iran and other international fellows are scheduled to attend a webinar to discuss new marketing strategies to rebuild tourism in the post coronavirus era.

Benefitting from recent international case studies and experiences, the webinar, which will be held on August 28, is expected to yield a roadmap “to rebuild a sustainable tourism industry for all”, according to organizers.

The deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri, Hassan Ansari, and Hamid Zargham from Iran, Shirin Amonzadeh from Tajikistan, Beka Jakeli from Spain, Kazem Vadadari from Japan, and Zohreh Zareza-deh from Australia are amongst experts who will explore the challenges and opportunities for sustainable travel.

According to organizers, tourism, in addition to its economic strength, promotes movements among members of the global community presently distanced because of unfortunate Covid-19

and other political incongruities. “Thus, in its full force, tourism has the capacity of promoting both peace and prosperity in our global village.”

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Teymouri explained how traveling and hospitality sectors of the country are adopting the virus-related limitations, stressing the need to re-analyze target markets, redefine tourism products and improve the level of e-services. “We need to revise marketing strategies, and to redefine tourism products by paying great attention to nature tours, rural tourism, ecotourism, agricultural tourism as a tool to empower local communities and travel businesses.”

Last year, Iranian tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced that mass, unplanned travels are not approved. “The outbreak of the coronavirus has caused damage to the tourism industry in Iran and [other parts of] the world in such a way that according to statistics, 50 million people are directly and indirect-

ly exposed to unemployment due to the virus spread in the global scene... yet, mass or unplanned and irresponsible travels are not approved to take place during the coronavirus era.”

Smart and responsible traveling should replace “do not travel” recommendations, the minister stressed, adding: “In our country, Corona has caused problems in the tourism industry and the worrying point is the continuation of this trend.”

Mounesan has repeatedly announced that his ministry is in full coordination with the Ministry of Health for strictly implementing health protocols in travel destinations, hospitably centers, and museums, amongst others, underlining that “people's health is our priority.”

Tourism [industry of Iran] was growing before the corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, near the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent, the minister explained.



ter explained.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

House of handicrafts to open in ancient Bam

TEHRAN – A house of handicrafts is set to be inaugurated in the ancient city of Bam, which is famed for its magnificent UNESCO-registered adobe citadel.

“A house of handicrafts will be inaugurated in Bam to help develop and promote various fields of handicrafts and to train new crafters,” Kerman province's deputy tourism chief said on Monday.

Weaving kilims, woodcarving, handwoven textile, stone carving, precious and semi-precious stones, and leatherwork are amongst arts and crafts to be practiced in the house, which covers an area of 500 square meters, the official noted.

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

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

Bam and its Cultural Landscape is located on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau in Kerman province. It's highly regarded as an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement.

According to UNESCO, the origins of the citadel can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) and even beyond. The ensemble was at crossroads of important trade routes as well in its heyday sometime between the 7th to 11th centuries.

Iranian handicrafts: Mo'araq



TEHRAN – Mo'araq is a form of art in which colorful pieces of wood are cut and arranged next to each other on a wooden or polyester background.

A variety of woods are used to make marquetry, from seventy to eighty species, with a variety of colors, and sometimes camel bone, seashells, copper, brass, silver, gold, and ivory are incorporated to create a very beautiful material.

In Iran, it was believed that marquetry was practiced from 90 years ago, however, a wooden comb found recently in “Shahr-e Sukhteh”

proves the craft dates back thousands of years. Wood pieces were cut and attached to the handle using tree gum to make the comb's handle.

One of the many examples of marquetry is the stand for Holy Quran at the Metropolitan Art Museum. This piece dates back to the 15th century and is made from carved wood, latticework, and inlaid veneers.

The inlay is a technique used in early marquetry, which is created by cutting out parts of the background based on the design and by using tools such as chisels. The cut areas then receive sections of a dif-

ferent material such as wood, ivory, bone, or seashells.

Additionally, several more elaborate designs were applied on door inlays and boxes during the Safavid dynasty. During the same period, there was also another kind of marquetry in which pieces of wood, bone, and layers of “Khatam” (an ancient Persian technique of inlaying) were attached.

Over time, marquetry has undergone many changes. When it was first designed, it was based on arabesque patterns and used only five limited woods: ebony, silverberry, pear, and areca.

Marquetry was primarily used to decorate the tops of tables, cabinets, doors, backs of chairs, mirror frames, and chessboards. Currently, this beautiful craft is used to create elegant tableaux in addition to making useful objects.

A wide variety of wood types have been incorporated into marquetry products since the 1950s due to advances in the understanding of wood. Today marquetry is frequently practiced in many cities, towns, and villages across the country.

Iran to establish advanced telesurgery centers in Indonesia

TEHRAN – Iran will set up two advanced centers for robotic remote surgery in Indonesia, ISNA reported on Monday.

In a virtual meeting on Sunday, Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari hosted Indonesian Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin.

Also, a delegation led by the Indonesian Deputy Minister of Health Abdul Qadir also met with Sattari to discuss expanded bilateral cooperation.

A contract was signed between the two countries to export Iran-made surgical robots and establish two centers for remote robotic surgery skills in Bandung and Jogjakarta.

The agreements are also set to create a joint accelerator between the two countries to further develop medical biotechnology startups and commercialize them.

Sattari expressed readiness to export domestically-made medicine and medical equipment to Indonesia, especially, coronavirus protective equipment.

Referring to the successful production of new treatment medicine for coronavirus, he stated that currently, more than 400 high-tech companies are operating in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment sector.

“We are ready to start bilateral scientific and technological cooperation in the field of health with Indonesia and to develop any cooperation in the field of joint ventures, technology exchange in various scientific and academic fields, and research projects,” he further suggested.

During the virtual meeting, Sadikin also said that Indonesia needs to buy medicine from Iran, medicine produced with sophisticated and applied



technology and those effective in the treatment of coronavirus disease.

Innovation in Iran developed rapidly in 5 years

Knowledge-based companies and creative startups have grown over the past five years, and Iran has risen 45 places in the Global Innovation Index, according to the UNESCO 2021 Report.

The Global Innovation Index in Iran from 2015 to 2019 has risen from 106 to 61 with continuous improvement, showing 45 steps growth.

The development of accelerators and innovation centers over the last five years has led to a rapid increase in startups and knowledge-based companies.

Between 2014 and 2017, exports of knowledge-based goods grew by a factor of five, before slumping in 2018 after the U.S. withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (2015), commonly referred to as the nuclear deal, and re-imposed sanctions.

“Indonesia needs to buy medicine from Iran, those produced with sophisticated and applied technology.”

The report states that innovation in Iran has developed rapidly over the past five years, and by the end of last year, 49 accelerators and 113 innovation centers had provided services to

start-ups with the participation of the private sector.

Knowledge-based companies

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

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

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

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

Revenue from sales of technological products of companies located in science and technology parks in 2020 was close to 137 billion rials (nearly \$3.2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), which compared to 4.6 billion rials (about \$152,000) in 2013, shows the growth of 2878 percent.

This issue was quite evident in the export sector of these companies so that the export of knowledge-based products was equal to \$1.14 million, but this amount increased to \$63.2 million in 2018, while reached \$98 million in 2020, despite the very harsh sanctions imposed on the country.

Saving karst aquifers vital to survive drought

From page 1 ► Currently, the country, especially in the Zagros region, has abundant karst water resources.

In karst areas, water can be withdrawn by digging wells of at least 250 meters to a maximum of 500 meters. In order to achieve deep water, a well with a depth of more than one thousand meters must be drilled, Espahbod explained.

At present, 5,000 liters, or 5 cubic meters of water per second, is extracted from karst sources in the world, the highest of which is in Yugoslavia, he added.

Vital resources that migrate

Alireza Shahidi, head of the Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations Organization said that the task of identifying karst waters is our responsibility, and based on this, we published the National Atlas of karst water areas.

Due to the climate change and drought that has been happening in recent years, karst water can be replaced as unconventional water that has a very high quality, he highlighted.

Referring to the studies conducted in the field of karst water in “Kopet Dag” region, Shahidi stated that “If these studies were successful, we could supply a large part of Mashhad’s water, but due to the lack of proper attention, karst waters, especially in border areas, flow to neighboring countries.”

According to Shahidi, Turkmenistan is located at the top of the Kopet Dag region, and karst water in Iran enters Turkmenistan.

Saravan region in Sistan-Baluchestan province is a water-rich region, and despite the urgent need for water in this region, karst water is flowing into Pakistan, he lamented.

He went on to note that karst water resources in some cities of the country are emerging as springs in the ground, and the amount of water flow in these springs depends on the amount of rainfall.

Unlike groundwater, karst water resources can be regenerated, but the water that we extract from the underground reservoirs results in their shrinking day by day, therefore, many aquifers are in danger of depletion and the phenomenon of subsidence, he regretted.

Due to the fact that karstic waters are mostly in calcareous rocks and mountains if the water is harvested improperly, it will eventually dry out, but when it rains, water will enter the cavities in the mountains through the pores and these water sources will be regenerated.



ed, he said, emphasizing that underground aquifers cannot be regenerated.

Water resources shrinking

Renewable water resources have decreased by 30 percent over the last four decades, while Iran’s population has increased by about 2.5 times, Qasem Taqizadeh, deputy minister of energy, said in June.

On a global scale, karst formations cover 12 to 15 percent of the continental surface.

The current water year (started on September 23, 2020) has received the lowest rain in the past 52 years, so climate change and Iran’s arid region should become a common belief at all levels, he lamented.

A recent report by Nature Scientific Journal on Iran’s water crisis indicates that from 2002 to 2015, over 74 billion cubic meters have been extracted from aquifers, which is unprecedented and its revival takes thousands of years along with urgent action.

Three Iranian scientists studied 30 basins in the country and realized that the rate of aquifer depletion over a 14-year period has been about 74 billion cubic meters, which is recently published in Nature Scientific Journal.

Also, over-harvesting in 77 percent of Iran has led to more land subsidence and soil salinity. Research and sta-

tistics show that the average overdraft from the country’s aquifers was about 5.2 billion cubic meters per year.

Mohammad Darvish, head of the environment group in the UNESCO Chair on Social Health, has said that the situation of groundwater resources is worrisome.

More drought, water crisis

In March, Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management, forecasted that the country will not receive much rain until the end of summer. A month later, he announced that an unprecedented drought had occurred in some parts of the country.

This is while in the following weeks, statistics showed that precipitation has declined by 60 percent in Iran over the first two months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-May 21) compared to the same period last year.

And, it dropped by 41 percent compared to the long-term average.

Drought impacts on human societies

The drought consequences will be very severe, and as long as we do not manage water consumption, we will attack groundwater resources. All the lakes, rivers, and wetlands of the country have environmental water rights, but in drought conditions, it is always natural ecosystems that are neglected and their water rights are not paid.

In drought conditions, the water right of rivers and wetlands must be granted, but not only does this not happen, but the water goes to agricultural lands where water-intensive crops such as onions and watermelons are grown. Therefore, water resources are wasted, because the Ministry of Agriculture has not succeeded in implementing the cultivation pattern.

Iran is a country where rainfall is one-third of the world average and has gone through many periods of drought throughout history, some of which have led to famine.

However, employment in the country is water-based and based on agriculture. However, due to the dry climate of the country, we should have used the tourism and handicraft capacities of local communities, but unfortunately, we have put all our energy, capital, and focus on agriculture.

During the severe drought of this year, the possibility of migration from rural to urban areas and from southern to northern provinces will definitely increase.

Tehran to host intl. webinar on wetlands protection

TEHRAN – Tehran will be host to an international webinar on wetlands protection and promoting environmental literacy, which will be held on August 16.

Domestic and foreign experts gather to attend the specialized webinar to discuss the role of wetland education centers in enhancing environmental literacy and the CEPA program (communication, education, participation, awareness).

The event will be attended by Chris Rostron, International Engagement Manager at Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, and Hossein Badripour, facilitator and director of specialized network for resilience and sustainable land management.

Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They store water and ensure its quality, providing resilience against drought. They play a central role in sustainable development by supplying all our freshwater. More than 40 percent of freshwater fish are said to live in wetlands.

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

Iran is rich in terms of having a variety of wetlands due to its climatic diversity. In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified, of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.

Of Iran’s 25 Ramsar sites about one-third are under pressure or in critical condition.

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



PEOPLES OF IRAN

(Part 4)

In the northwest after the fall of the Assyrian empire in 612 B.C. refugees moved to the mountains of eastern Anatolia and gradually to the Lake Urmia region where the modern Assyrians lived until recently.

Armenians from the west dominated the Urartians and others, giving their language to the peoples in northern Azerbaijan and in the Caucasus. The descendants of the Medes, speaking many dialects, occupied most of the present provinces of eastern and western Azerbaijan.

The Iranian-speaking Kurds had not expanded into Azerbaijan in the pre-Islamic period but were confined to the Zagros mountains. Such was the situation before the Arab conquerors.

The Islamic period. The 7th century C.E. saw new invaders, the Arabs from the west and later Turks from the north. The number of Arabs and Arameans (called Naba in Arabic) who settled in Iran and mixed with the local population is difficult to determine, for we have little information about the tribes in western Iran.

In Khorasan and Central Asia, however, it has been estimated that the number of Arabs who settled among the local population may have reached almost a quarter million (Daniel, Sharon). Likewise, the much smaller number of Africans, mainly brought as slaves, or who settled on the coast of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, is difficult to determine.

In any case, the Turks who came, especially beginning from the tenth century, moved in sufficient numbers to change the linguistic map of the whole area. Whether the ease of learning Turkish, as compared with Arabic, was a reason for the adoption of Turkish by Iranian speakers is uncertain, but it may have been one of the factors in the adoption.

The final invasion brought few Mongols to Iran, but they left their traces in the Berber population. Probably the migration of Baluch tribes from Turkmenistan and Khorasan to the southeast, where they are found today, was impelled by the Turkish tribes who inundated the region and remain there today as Turkmen. By the time of the establishment of the Safavid dynasty in the sixteenth century the peoples of Iran came to form their present state.

The only measure of ethnic diversity that appears in official statistics is identification by the language normally used at home: Iranian languages, including

Persian, Luri (Lori), Kurdi (Kordi), Gilaki and Mazandari, and Baluchi (Baluchi); and non-Iranian languages, including Azeri Turkish, Arabic, and Turkmeni.

For Afghanistan, which has perhaps one third of Iran’s population, but is less nationally integrated, no reliable data is available, but the number of generally recognized identities is larger.

According to a rough estimate (U.S. Library of Congress, Afghanistan, Country Studies, Washington, D.C., 1986, pp. 104-16; for recent data see its website) the main ethnic groups, which are politically the most important, include Pashtun (Pashtun; 40 percent, mainly of Dorrani tribal groups; q.v.), Tajik (*q.v.; 25 percent), Hazara (q.v.; 18 percent), Uzbek (*q.v.; 6 percent), Aymaq (q.v.; 4 percent;), Turkmen (*q.v. 2.5 percent), Baluch (2 percent), many smaller groups such as Arab, Kirghiz (Qerghiz), Wa’i, Farsiwan, Nurestani, Brahui, Qezelbash, Kabuli and Jat.

In the Central Asian successor states of the Soviet Union with about 30 million population, where such identities have been shaped by seventy years of strong government control under the Soviet nationalities policy, little differentiation of identity remains besides Tajik, Yagnobi, Kazak, Kirghiz, Turkmen, Uzbek, and Pamiri.

The largest group of people in present-day Iran are Persians (*q.v.) who speak dialects of the language called Farsi in Persian, since it was primarily the tongue of the people of Fars. A number of dialects exist in the province including Lari spoken in Larestan, Bakkerdi (q.v.) on the eastern border with Kerman and Baluchistan, where the inhabitants are settled in villages, and other minor dialects.

It is not the intention here to discuss dialects (see vi. below), but it should be noted that along the coast in the past speakers of Swahili were reported, presumably migrants from Africa. Also the presence of Negritoes, as speakers of Baluchi dialects, has been claimed on the eastern coast of Baluchistan, again these may be descendants of slaves.

Among the people of Fars, as well as elsewhere, are Gypsies (q.v.), and they were mainly traveling musicians. In addition to their own language of Indian origin they speak Luri or Persian. Their number is unknown but small, and many have left Iran since the revolution of 1979.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

COVID-19 UPDATES ON AUGUST 9

New cases	40,808
New deaths	588
Total cases	4,199,537
Total deaths	94,603
New hospitalized patients	5,081
Patients in critical condition	6,561
Total recovered patients	3,565,805
Diagnostic tests conducted	26,586,805
Doses of vaccine injected	15,148,375

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran suspends China flights due to coronavirus

Iran has restricted all flights and recreational travels to and from China due to coronavirus outbreak, IRIB news agency reported on Saturday.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki said that screening and surveillance is underway across all the country’s air and sea borders, and no cases of coronavirus have been reported so far.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, head of the health ministry’s center for infectious diseases, told IRNA that rumors that the novel coronavirus has reached Iran’s neighborhood are untrue, according to reports by the World Health Organization.

لغو پروازهای ایران- چین برای پیشگیری از شیوع ویروس کرونا

ایران تمام پروازهای به مقصد چین و بالعکس را برای پیشگیری از شیوع ویروس کرونا بطور موقت لغو کرده است.

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما، سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت، گفت غربالگری و مراقبت‌ها در همه مرزهای زمینی، هوایی و دریایی کشور در حال انجام است و هیچ موردی در خصوص ابتلا به ویروس کرونا مشاهده و گزارش نشده است.

در همین حال، به گزارش ایرنا، محمد مهدی گویا رییس مرکز مدیریت بیماری‌های واگیر وزارت بهداشت اعلام کرد آنچه شایعه شده که ویروس کرونای جدید به همسایگی ایران رسیده، بر اساس گزارش‌های سازمان جهانی بهداشت صحت ندارد.

TEHRAN TIMES





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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There are many educated people who have ruined their future on account of their ignorance of religion. Their knowledge did not prove of any avail to them.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:10 Evening: 20:47 Dawn: 4:19 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:20 (tomorrow)

History of art in Iran: post-Qajar painting

Part 3

Artists were sent abroad to study and given the means to participate in art exhibitions such as the Salon d’Automne in Paris and the Venice Biennale, and government ministries were encouraged to give public commissions to the artists.

Eventually, a number of museums concerned with modern art were founded. Moreover, by the 1960s the number of the private collectors of Iranian modern art was increasing, and by the 1970s even corporate collectors began to emerge.

Two more landmarks in the history of modern art in Iran should be discussed further: the establishment of the School of Decorative Arts (Madrasa-ye Honarha-ye Tazini) in 1961, and the inauguration of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art on October 22, 1977.

School of Decorative Arts

This was created to give degrees in the field of applied arts such as interior decoration and graphic arts to, among others, the graduates of Iran’s Secondary Schools of Fine Arts for Boys and Girls who were not admitted to the School of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran.

A number of the more successful Iranian modernists were graduates of the School of Decorative Arts, a fact that led some observers to give it higher marks than the School of Fine Arts as a breeding ground for artists.

The first group of professors and instructors assembled at the College of Decorative Arts (as it was initially called) were in fact instrumental in instilling in the students a fresh outlook, especially when it came to the choice of subject matter and treatment of materials.

Graduates of the School of Fine Arts of the same generation were found to be more formal, and less flexible, in their approach to art.

Museum of Contemporary Art

The creation of the museum had been a dream of many artists, but it remained a long dormant project until it was finally allotted a plot of land in the park on the northern edge of the University of Tehran and construction work was started in the early seventies.

The museum’s collection, when it was finally opened in 1976 in a weeklong gala-celebration that appears surrealistic in retrospect, included paintings and sculpture by many internationally known artists, from the impressionists down to the cubists, expressionists, and abstractionists.

Since the museum was conceived as devoted rather to international modern art, works representing later movements such as Action Painting, Pop Art, and Op Art were also present. The museum continues to function even today.

Development of modern Iranian painting

An observer of the local art scene searching for significant trends in the course of the developments that have shaped the art movement in Iran during

the 20th century is struck by the diversity of the works created during this period and often finds it very difficult to discern links between contemporary creations and Iran’s cultural past.

On the other hand, it would be much simpler to accuse many of the modernists of being copyists and faddists who have merely jumped on the latest fashionable artistic bandwagon and have completely forgotten their homeland’s cultural heritage.

Things are not of course all that simple, and Iran’s modern painters and sculptors should not be judged in isolation.

Similar trends are to be observed in many other art forms, poetry and drama in particular, and the whole question should be evaluated within the framework of Iranian society’s experiences with Western-style modernization.

Qajar art was of course traditional, even though it was no longer so pure and unadulterated as, say, Safavid art which preceded it.

This files photo shows art enthusiasts visiting an exhibition at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

In the course of the country’s contacts with Russia and western Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries, certain innovations had been introduced, but these were mainly in the use of materials (for instance oils) or in the manner of execution (use of gradation instead of applying colors as totally flat surfaces of uniform intensity) rather than in outlook.

When Kamalalmolk spent five years painting his famous canvas Talar-e Ayeneh (Hall of Mirrors), patiently observing and recording the reflections of light in each single mirror fragment, his more tradition-bound colleagues were still laboring over pen cases and jewel boxes, peopling their outer surfaces with idealized stereotypes emanating from the world of myths and legends, and not from everyday reality.

Their subjective view of the scene determined the size of the personages depicted, and not the distance of the figures from the viewer.

Kamalalmolk introduced a basic change in outlook. He turned an objective eye on nature, and spared no effort in recording the minutest details of what he observed.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued.

Iranian bookstores offer “Body as a Cinematic Thing”

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of American scholar Lesley Stern’s book “Dead and Alive: The Body as a Cinematic Thing” has been published in Tehran.

The book translated by Saleh Najafi has been released by the Lega publishing house.

In the cinema, many were living and many kept on living and many became dead, as Gertrude Stein might say. Some kept on living and some kept on being dead and some became things.

Bodies proliferate in cinema. Living bodies to be sure, but also dead bodies, and transitional bodies, suspended between the being of a subject and objecthood.

We tend to use the same word to designate both a living and a dead body. We also, of course, use the word “corpse.” Dead is dead, no doubt, but if there are degrees of deadness then a corpse is probably deader than a dead body.

Stern is more interested in things than in death. It is thus the liveliness of corpses that lures her. Not dead bodies which act as though they were alive, nor live bodies which may really be dead, nor bodies which may in fact be composited, or even digitally constructed bodies.

Rather, ordinary, old-fashioned bodies, bodies once living and now dead which exhibit a performative potential for conjuring a quality of cinematic thinness.

They are bodies that insist on existing after they are dead. In some films in which dead bodies persist, time is concentrated in the body, and dispersed. When life leaves the body, time—or a particular quality of time—enters into the body, and into the film. The body, then, becomes an index of cinematic temporality.

Stern is a professor emerita of visual arts at the University of California.

A painting by the 11-year-old boy Ali Tamoradi from the IIDCYA branch in Baghmalek, Khuzestan Province, won a gold medal at the 4th Piatra Neamt Creative International Art Competition for Children in Romania.

Iranian children honored at Romania’s Piatra Neamt art competition

TEHRAN – A large group of Iranian children has been honored with awards at the 4th edition of the Piatra Neamt Creative International Art Competition for Children in Romania.

All the children are members of various branches of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) across Iran, the institute announced on Sunday.

Kowsar Rezai, Ali Tamoradi, Maryam Yazdani, Danial Rezai and Reyhaneh Alizadeh received gold medals.

Anida Heidari, Diana Veisi, Reza

Geravandi, Melika Amjadian, Kiarash Samimitabar, Ailin Saripur and Amir-Hossein Karimi won silver medals.

The competition also awarded honorable mentions to Mohammadreza Masudinia, Parnaz Gudarzi, Nahal Dideban, Nazanin Sadati, Ava Jelviani,

Iran’s nominees for IBBY reading promotion awards unveiled

This combination photo shows a logo for the IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award and Iran’s nominees Zohreh Qaini and Nader Musavi.

TEHRAN – The Children’s Book Council of Iran has announced the country’s nominations for the IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award and the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award.

Children’s literature expert Zohreh Qaini was nominated for the award in 2021 and the Iran-based Afghan book reading promoter Nader Musavi received the nomination for 2022.

67-year-old Qaini is a Children’s literature translator, lecturer, researcher and historian. She is the co-writer of the 10-volume research book “The History of Children’s Literature in Iran”.

She is the director of the Read with Me project. She also served as a member of the IBBY Executive Committee from 2016 to 2020.

As a foreign member of the Iranian

Association of Writers for Children and Youth, Musavi seeks reading programs in Afghanistan.

The Children’s Book Council of Iran has previously nominated Musavi for the 2021 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, a prestigious Swedish honor to promote children’s and youths’ literature in the world.

In addition, the Children Cultural Development Center has been nominated for the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award in 2022.

The IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award has been established by the Shenzhen iRead Foundation and IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) to encourage a real commitment to the cause of reading promotion in the hope of spreading this dedication to others around the globe.

The IBBY-iRead Award jury selects two winners every year. The two winners

Anahid Amuzesh and Hasti Zanganeh.

Zohreh Shamlufard, an IIDCYA worker at the Department for International Affairs, was also honored for the efforts she made to send the children’s works to the competition.

“Your Hometown/City/Village” and “Flowers” were the themes of the competition.

Romania’s Cultural Association of Arts and the organizers of the contest held an exhibition of winning works and a selection of submissions at the central library of Piatra-Neamt.

The exhibition brought together artistic creations from children and young people aged 5-19, who were carefully selected from over 1600 submissions received from 41 schools, high schools and clubs in 19 countries, including Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Iran and the UK.

School 1955 in Russia, Simply Art in Hong Kong and Bannadokmai Art School in Thailand were the winners of the grand prizes of the contest.

Fifteen schools were awarded gold medals, and fourteen schools were nominated for a silver medal for their collections of exceptional works submitted to the competition. All participating schools and clubs also received participation diplomas.

Also, 21 students won the Grand Prize for Individual Work for the original and creative works sent to the competition.

In addition, 93 students were awarded gold medals, and another 57 children received silver medals for their outstanding paintings.

Cartoonist Masud Shojaei denied Serbian visa allegedly over Holocaust denial exhibits

TEHRAN – Iranian cartoonist Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai has said that Serbia has refused to give him a visa allegedly over his Holocaust denial exhibitions.

Speaking to the Persian service of MNA on Sunday, he said that he had been invited to preside on the jury of the 21st Kragujevac Salon of Antiwar Cartoon in Serbia.

He also said that the organizers had sent him a plane ticket to Serbia and made all arrangements for his attendance at the event, however, the embassy said that I had no chance to get a visa to enter the country.

“I was very badly treated by the staff at the entrance to the Embassy of Serbia in Tehran today,” Shojaei-Tabatabai said.

“They refused to give any explanation and even didn’t allow me to enter the embassy,” he added.

“For me, paying respect for an Iranian is more valuable than anything and, due to the Holocaust issues and political reasons, I expected such treatment,” Shojaei-Tabatabai noted.

He announced to the organizers of the antiwar cartoon exhibition his readiness to collaborate with them online.

Art Bureau’s Visual Arts Center director Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai poses at an exhibition for the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest at Abolfazl Aali Gallery in Tehran on April 12, 2021.

Shojaei-Tabatabai has previously organized the International Holocaust Cartoon Contest in two editions in collaboration with the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization.

The second edition of the contest took place in 2016 after a ten-year hiatus as he said, “We do not

seek to deny the Holocaust but mean to portray the oppression of the Palestinians and say that we believe the Zionist regime has been the root of all the difficulties the Palestinians have been through.”

In 2017, he was named the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year by the Art Bureau for his efforts to organize the International Holocaust Cartoons Contest.

Following French President Emmanuel Macron’s defense of the insulting cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad (S) in October 2020, Shojaei-Tabatabai announced his plan to organize another edition of the exhibition in the response to the Macron’s remarks.

As the director of the Art Bureau’s Visual Arts Office, he also organized the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest in April.

“Since we started running international cartoon contests about Palestine and the Holocaust, the Israeli media has stated that we are denying the Holocaust. However, we have never denied it. We simply have asked why the Palestinian people should be made to pay the price for the Holocaust,” he said at that time.

Poland New Horizons festival to screen movies from Iran

TEHRAN – Three Iranian films will be screened in various categories of the New Horizons International Film Festival, which will be held from August 12 to 29 in Wroclaw, Poland.

“The Wasteland” by Ahmad Bahrami will be screened in the New Horizons International Competition.

The drama is about Loftollah, a man who lives in a godforsaken land. He is a dutiful messenger between his boss and the destitute inhabitants of a colony that has manufactured bricks as long as anyone can remember.

Its time has now come, however: bricks are no longer in demand. Everyone must leave. Loftollah, who has lived there his entire life, delivers the bad news and helps people pack up and move away. But what will become of him?

This neorealist film made a low-key sensation during last year’s festival season. Upon its world premiere in Venice, it won three awards, including

Best Film in the Horizons section and the critics’ FIPRESCI Prize.

The remarkable picture posits, among other things, that the most destructive consequence of job loss is not poverty, but the ensuing loss of empathy for others. When people no longer realize that they’re part of a near-feudal system, they won’t protest, even if life is on the line.

The film’s original statement is framed by black-and-white images, mining a rich vein of captivating atmosphere and timeless symbolism out of the forbidding wasteland.

“The Wasteland” also won the Firebird Award for the best film at the 45th edition of the Hong Kong International Film Festival in April.

“A Hero” by Asghar Farhadi has been selected to be screened in the OPPO Gala Screenings section.

It is a fascinating drama about a man

Mahdieh Nassaji and Ali Baqeri act in a scene from “The Wasteland” by Ahmad Bahrami.

who goes to debtor’s prison. During a two-day leave, Rahim receives a bag of valuables and faces a dilemma of whether to appropriate the loss, pay off the creditor and ensure his freedom, or follow his conscience and find the owner.

Another Iranian movie is “Hit the Road” by Panah Panahi will be

showcased in the Discoveries section.

The film revolves around a four-member family that is driving through a picturesque, mountainous Iranian landscape. But it soon becomes clear that this is no ordinary family outing.