

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 50,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 43rd year | No. 14053 | Sunday | OCTOBER 10, 2021 | Mehr 18, 1400 | Rabi' Al awwal 3, 1443

Millions of Iraqis Heading to the Polls Early

Page 5

Opinion

Challenges facing new environment chief

By M.A. Saki

Ali Salajegheh, the new chief of the Department of Environment (DOE), must grapple with serious, difficult, and even sensitive issues.

The things that he must deal with are numerous, especially as the DOE is heavily underbudgeted and suffers from a lack of enough experts and workforce.

Reportedly, Salajegheh has blamed inexperienced persons as the most important challenge facing the DOE. It has been also reported in media outlets that Salajegheh is a critic of the administrative structure of the department.

However, it is a source of hope that Salajegheh's specialty is related to water and that 160 university professors and researchers in areas of environment and natural resources had written a letter to President Ebrahim Raisi calling on him to appoint Salajegheh as the head of the department.

It is also heartening that he has been a member of the Engineering Society of Water Resources in Iran.

According to certain reports, Salajegheh had asked Raisi, when he was the Judiciary chief, that the DOE must enjoy strong power in advancing its goals.

In light of Salajegheh's views and his specialty much is expected of him. However, it is quite clear that he will face serious hurdles and opposition in advancing his projects. This is because the protection of the environment, especially water conservation, is not still considered a national issue.

Like his predecessors, his views and concerns will be overruled by ministers of labor, agriculture, and industry in the cabinet, otherwise, the president strongly supports him. In such a situation, parliamentarians and all those who have a say or voice should help the new environment chief in his difficult job. Page 3

Opinion

Skocic has changed spirit of Iran football

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Iran overcame the UAE but the team didn't play as good as they played against Iraq. Nevertheless, it is increasingly clear that Dragan Skocic has changed the spirit of this side.

Iran edged the UAE 1-0 in Group A of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers and cemented their place at top of the group with nine points out of three matches.

The Croatian coach, Skocic, took the helm of the national team after the disappointment of the first leg of World Cup qualifiers Round 2 under former coach Mark Wilmots.

Before Wilmots, Iran also experienced failure with the Portuguese Carlos Queiroz at the 2019 AFC Asian Cup when the team were stunned by a 3-0 loss against Japan in the semifinals.

Queiroz's long reign had ended, and Wilmots just worsened the situation for Iran.

Some Iranian football fans are still trying to figure out what to think of this new Iran national team.

With the victory against the UAE on Thursday, Dragan Skocic set a new record of 10 consecutive wins in all competitions.

The Skocic era is picking up speed. Mehdi Taremi's winner against the UAE led to a hard-earned victory for Iran. Still, the important point was that Iran did win despite losing a penalty, and their manner of victory was indicative of the changes that Skocic has already instilled.

When Skocic explains his game model, he tends to summarize it in three words: attack, pressure, and ambition. Of these three items, the Croatian coach points to the first as the most fundamental of all.

Skocic's talk is not without purpose or effect, and his players do look like they really understand what is expected from them. Page 3



Greco-Roman wrestlers Saravi, Yousefi win two gold medals at worlds

TEHRAN - Mohammadhadi Saravi and Aliakbar Yousefi won two gold medals at the 2021 World Wrestling Championships on Saturday. Saravi defeated Hungarian wrestler Alex Szoke 3-1 in the final bout of the 97kg.

The Greco-Roman wrestler had won a bronze medal in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. Yousefi also defeated Russian Wrestling Federation's Zurabi Gedekhauri 5-1 in the final match of the 130kg.

Mohammadali Geraei in 77kg and Pejman Posh-tam in 82kg have already seized two bronze medals. A total of 800 wrestlers from 100 countries are competing at the Wrestling World Championships, being held from October 2 to 10 in Oslo, Norway.

Home appliance trade balance to become 100% positive by 2025

TEHRAN - Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin has said the country's home appliance exports are set to become twice as much as the volume of imports by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025), IRNA reported.

Speaking in a meeting with the representatives of the country's home appliance manufacturers on Saturday, Fatemi Amin said: "Statistics show that the export of home appliances is much less than the imports in this sector."

Emphasizing that despite the growth of production in the home appliance industry, the ratio of exports to imports is not defensible, the official added: "This trend should change so that the exports to imports ratio would double by 1404."

"Plans should be made so that next year we will see a 50 percent growth in exports over imports," he said, noting that an appropriate trade balance in the home appliances industry is the next goal in this sector for the Iranian calendar year 1402 (begins in March 2023).

Stating that Iran is in a good position in terms of variety and quantity of home appliance production the minister stressed: "It should be noted that the production growth and development of products in this sector should also continue."

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues. Page 4



Iranian weightlifter girl Hosseini makes history in world c'ships
TEHRAN - Ghazaleh Hosseini of Iran claimed a bronze medal in the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Youth World Championships in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on Friday. She lifted 74kg in snatch and won a bronze medal in clean and jerk by lifting 94kg in the -59kg weight category. She became the first Iranian girl to win a medal at the world championships.

Maragheh tomb towers on the verge of destruction

TEHRAN - The ancient city of Maragheh in northwestern Iran is home to magnificent tomb towers that are unfortunately at risk of being destroyed over time. Throughout history, nine circular tombs have been destroyed and now there are only four ones left in the city.

These historical tomb towers came into existence during the Ilkhanid era (1256-1353) and before. Some of the towers used to have astronomical and calendar functions. In the past, to create information about the time and day, they built such

towers using geometry and architecture.

In the order of their construction, the remaining tomb towers at Maragheh are the Red (Sorkh) tower, the Circular (Modavar) tower, the Blue (Kabud) tower, and the Ghaffarieh tower.

As the starting point of the Azari School of architecture, the Red tower is known as the most significant tower in the world. In the decoration of this structure, tiles and bricks have been combined for the first time.

Circular tower, built in 563 AH, has a simple outer

wall, with the exception of a cube shaped entrance, and it is decorated with considerable architectural details.

The Blue tower was built in 593 AH, 10 meters from the Circular tower, whose geometric shapes and exterior decoration have provided an artistic combination of mathematics and art.

Ghaffarieh tower is one of the standing domes in the city, which was built between 716 and 737 AH during the Ilkhanid Dynasty. The tower gets its name from a school built in the vicinity of the tower called Ghaffarieh. Page 6

Iranian universities make progress in THE Rankings 2022

TEHRAN - The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022 by subject has ranked 53 Iranian universities among the top institutions worldwide.

The ranking was announced by Times Higher Education (THE) in results of its World University Rankings by subject 2022 for Computer Science and Engineering, revealing the best institutions in the world.

The engineering subject ranking includes General engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical and aerospace engineering, civil engineering, and chemical engineering.

This year, 41 Iranian universities in engineering sciences and 12 universities in computer sciences have made a place among the top 1,188 universities in the world with the announcement of THE 2022 ranking.

In engineering sciences, "Sharif University of Technology, University of Tabriz, and Babol Noshirvani University of Technology" were ranked first to third among 41 universities in the country. Page 7

From Inside

- The process to review JCPOA talks will soon reach conclusion, Iran says P2
- Analyst: UK collaboration with US, Israel to assassinate Gen. Soleimani a 'near certainty' P2
- Iran likens unilateral coercive measures to Covid virus that prevent growth P2
- Leader urges punishment for 'bloodthirsty perpetrators' of Kunduz attack P3
- Iran's women's football team to hold camp in Belgium P3
- Comprehensive plans underway to develop non-oil exports' P4
- \$22b of investment required to maintain production in gas fields P4
- H1 daily gasoline consumption up 13% yr/yr P4
- What are expert prospects for tourism recovery? P6
- Iranian president tours Delvari Museum P6
- UN ready to support Iran's dealing with SDSs P7
- Over 700,000 passengers screened for COVID-19 at borders P7
- Charity creates 327,000 job opportunities for rural clients P7
- "The Wasteland" cinematographer Masud Amini honored at Asian Film Awards P8
- Festival Tous Courts picks movies from Iran P8

Interview

China has significant leverage over U.S.: American scholar

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - Noting that Beijing has leverage over Washington, an American anthropologist says that any damage to U.S.-China trade would harm U.S. economic interests.

"The United States is 'addicted' to the importation of Chinese consumer goods," William O. Beeman tells the Tehran Times.

"China holds trillions of dollars in United States debt in the form of bonds and other borrowing instruments. If China were to 'dump' these bonds, it would create chaos in the United States," professor emeritus of the State University of Minnesota adds.

Many American politicians have expressed concerns about unbalanced trade exchanges with China, supporting punitive measures against Beijing.

But some factors are deterring the U.S. from continuing pressure policy regarding trade ties with China.

"Chinese companies are widely sold on the American stock exchanges, so investors in the United States have invested billions of dollars in Chinese companies," Beeman notes.

"Any damage to U.S.-China relations results in a drop of the value of these Chinese stocks, making American investors angry. China has very large leverage over the United States."

Following is the text of the interview:

Reuters has said that several U.S. special operations forces have been rotating into Taiwan temporarily to train with Taiwanese forces. Could you explain to an Asian reader that what the U.S. is doing over there?

Taiwan has been threatened with annexation by mainland China ever since World War II. China considers Taiwan to be an integral Chinese territory, and Taiwan's international status is ambiguous as a result of this. The United States is committed to supporting Taiwan's independence from China, and these military operations have been longstanding. Page 5

Isfahan children's filmfest opens with tribute to national hero Ali Landi

TEHRAN - The 34th edition of the Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and Youth opened on Friday evening with a tribute to Ali Landi, a teenage boy who is hailed as a national hero for his heroic act.

15-year-old Ali saved two elderly women from a burning house in his hometown of Izeh, Khuzestan Province, in September. His heroic act cost him his life.

Speaking during the opening ceremony at the Isfahan International Conferences Center, the president of the festival, Alireza Tabesh, said, "The Iranian artist community feels responsible for the future of all innocent children of the country and this year's festival opens in memory of the teenage hero, Ali Landi." Page 8

Analyst: UK collaboration with US, Israel to assassinate Gen. Soleimani a 'near certainty'



together hand-in-glove. We all know this," he said.

"Mossad or a related Israeli agency has carried out numerous crimes against the Islamic Republic. We know this, too. It is entirely in keeping with the record to learn Israel's military intelligence had a part in the planning of the Soleimani crime," Lawrence added.

Asked to explain as to why the U.S., Israel and the UK decided to assassinate General Soleimani despite his efforts to eradicate Daesh, Lawrence suggested two reasons among many.

"There are many reasons the U.S., Britain, and Israel would plan and execute Gen. Soleimani's murder. I will suggest two. To begin with, the General's efforts to eradicate Daesh were quite undesirable to the three powers in question, given we have it on the record—I repeat, on the record—that all three have supported Daesh in its campaign against the Damascus government even while pretending to oppose Daesh," the American political analyst said.

"Second, my understanding has been that General Soleimani was playing an important role in efforts to negotiate a settlement between Tehran and Damascus as part of a larger effort, often mentioned by former [Iranian] FM [Mohammad Javad] Zarif, to develop a regional security mechanism that is not dependent on and will not include the Western powers.

"I also understand that the general was in Baghdad at the time precisely to participate in a round of talks on this question, with the participation of the Baghdad government. Such a settlement would be squarely against the Western strategy in the Middle East, which favors Sunni-Shia tensions and specifically Saudi animosities toward the Islamic Republic."

On January 3, 2020, the U.S. military conducted an air operation under former U.S. president Donald Trump's order to assassinate General Soleimani at Baghdad airport after his arrival in Iraq. The attack also killed the general's companions, including Deputy Commander of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

As part of its retaliation, Iran launched a volley of ballistic missiles at the Ain al-Asad airbase in Iraq's western province of Anbar and another airbase in Erbil on January 8, 2020, as a result of which 110 U.S. troops were diagnosed with "traumatic brain injuries".

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has said the U.S. cannot escape the consequences of the terrorist act, and that the operators and directors must be punished and brought to justice for their action.

Iran has identified and vowed to legally pursue 36 individuals, with Trump at the top of the list, for the assassination of Gen. Soleimani and his companions.

The collaboration of British spy agencies with American and Israeli operatives to assassinate top Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani is a "near certainty," says an American political analyst and foreign affairs journalist.

Patrick Lawrence, a writer and columnist in Norfolk, Connecticut, made the remark in an interview with Press TV on Thursday, commenting on a new research that revealed a secretive UK intelligence base was likely involved in the U.S. military's drone strike that killed General Soleimani in early 2020.

According to the research reported by the British daily The Guardian, it "was probable" that the assassination of General Soleimani — who headed the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) — had been planned using information obtained from the Menwith Hill intelligence base, run by the UK Royal Air Force, in Yorkshire.

"I think the collaboration of British intelligence in the unlawful murder of Lt.-Gen. Soleimani is more than probable—it is a near certainty, based on what we know," Lawrence told Press TV.

"In recent years it has become increasingly evident that British and American intelligence agencies are barely distinguishable from one another, so closely have they worked together," he added.

"There are many examples: The concocted 'Russiagate' case, the fake assassination attempt on the Skripals, the phony 'White Helmets' brigade in Syria, and so on. In the Soleimani case, it was almost certainly UK and U.S. cooperation in the planning and execution of the crime."

Lawrence also said it comes as no surprise to learn of Israel's collaboration in the assassination when Tamir Hayman, the head of the Israel's military intelligence department, recently acknowledged that the information provided by the regime to the United States had led to the assassination of the top Iranian commander.

"We cannot be surprised to learn of Israel's collaboration in the Soleimani assassination any more than we can to learn of Britain's, Israeli and American intelligence work

Mossad or a related Israeli agency has carried out numerous crimes against the Islamic Republic

The process to review JCPOA talks will soon reach conclusion, Iran says

TEHRAN – There are two stages for reviewing six rounds of talks to revive the JCPOA in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman says.

The first process of reviewing the negotiations has been concluded and based on that Iran decided to resume talks with the P4+1 in Vienna and the second process will soon reach the conclusion, Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

"As soon as the process of reviewing the previous talks is over, the talks will begin," Khatibzadeh told France 24.

Khatibzadeh was commenting on remarks by Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian that the nuclear talks will be resumed in the near future.

"After the new administration took office, we started two processes of reviewing the previous talks inside the country. The first review process has been completed and reached the conclusion, so we decided to definitely continue the nuclear talks with the P4+1 in Vienna and announce it."

The first review project was positive, but the second review process is not over yet, the diplomat added.

The spokesman went on to say that the new Iranian administration was reviewing all the details of the last six rounds of talks in the previous Rouhani administration.

During the last months of Rouhani's presidency talks started in April and six rounds of talks were held until June 20. However, Iran and the U.S. agreed on some points to revitalize the JCPOA but disagreed on a few important issues.

The U.S. was participating in the talks indirectly. The European Union was acting as a mediator between Iran and the U.S.

"Of course, the new (Iranian) administration has questions in this regard and wants to examine what the shortcomings are... and results of those talks will be examined... soon this review process will be finalized and we will be able to set a specific date for the new round of talks," the official highlighted.

Khatibzadeh, in response to the question whether he can announce an approximate time, said: "The President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that as soon as the review process of the previous talks is completed, the date will be announced".

A lot of efforts are being made right now in Tehran to review all the details of the previous talks as there are a lot of details about the talks, Khatibzadeh noted, adding, "I think this is less than what Mr. Biden's administration team needed to return to the Vienna talks."

Asked what details does he think should be further explored, the spokesman said: "There are questions for the new administration as why the previous talks did not lead to the desired result and a document that is to the satisfaction of all parties. We also seek to draft the issues that need to be addressed in the next round of



talks."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the diplomat underlined that the most important issue was the lifting of all sanctions imposed on Iran after the unilateral withdrawal of President Trump from the JCPOA.

"The Trump administration has imposed 800 new unilateral and illegal sanctions on Iran, all of which must be lifted. This has been our position from the beginning, so we must find a way to get the necessary guarantees to lift all of these sanctions effectively."

On whether Iran is seeking a lifting of all sanctions in the talks, Khatibzadeh, said: "There is no talk of progress in this regard, in fact, Iran and the P4+1 are all members of the JCPOA and this is the United States which wants to return to the negotiating room and needs an entry key, and this key is in fact the ability of this country to respond to the request of the P4+1 countries and Iran."

"There was a lot of hope for Washington's quick return to JCPOA"

The spokesman reiterated that there are important issues that need to be addressed and one of them is a lifting of all sanctions that have been re-imposed or new ones imposed by President Trump's administration under different headings, as well as ensuring that again no other president in the United States would violate the agreement.

Asked if Iran wanted any more concessions from the United States, he said: "The main point is that the signed and sealed agreement must be respected, so we must ensure that there is sufficient assurance for the full and committed implementation of the provisions of the nuclear deal by all parties."

On whether Iran has new hopes now that Joe Biden has entered the White House, he explained: "Mr. Biden during the election campaign promised to return to international agreements that President Trump's administration unilaterally withdrew; the Paris climate treaty and JCPOA were among them, and there was a lot of hope in Washington for a quick return to the deal, but in practice it did not happen in the case of the JCPOA."

The spokesman stressed: "If I want to be clear, the new administration

in the United States has not actually changed its policies and approaches towards Iran. The sanctions imposed by the Trump administration on the Islamic Republic of Iran continue, and we have not seen a major change in the new U.S. administration's policies toward Iran."

About the Israeli prime minister during his speech at the UN General Assembly who claimed that the nuclear program of Iran has reached a "critical point" and has crossed all red lines, Khatibzadeh noted, "One knows that Israel is not in a position to talk about Iran; this regime is sitting on more than hundreds of nuclear warheads."

Barbara Slavin, an American foreign policy expert, told the Tehran Times in September that according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Israel has about 90 nuclear weapons.

Khatibzadeh added that Israel was not a member of the NPT and was avoiding joining the treaty or any other international monitoring regime.

In addition, the regime, which refuses to join the IAEA safeguards agreement and opposes a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East, has no right to comment on Iran as a signatory to the NPT.

"Iran has fully complied with its rights and obligations, and the 15 consecutive reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency as the only specialized body in the field of nuclear energy show the full and sincere adherence of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the nuclear agreement," the Foreign Ministry spokesman added.

"My emphasis is that peaceful nuclear activities are our inalienable right and the Zionist regime, as a regime with nuclear warheads, has no place to comment on the peaceful nuclear activities of Iran," the official underscored.

Iran's membership in the NPT means that not only nuclear weapons have no place in Iran's defense doctrine, but it also means that Iran is trying to promote a non-proliferation system around the world, the spokesman said.

"We have clear and frank talks with our Saudi friends"

Elsewhere in his lengthy interview,

the Foreign Ministry spokesman also responded to a question about recent meetings between Iranian and Saudi negotiators, saying, "Several rounds of talks were held between the two countries' officials in Baghdad with the help of our Iraqi friends during which various topics of interest, including bilateral and regional, were discussed."

"We are now in a position with great hope that we can have clear and frank talks with our Saudi friends; I believe that if we see a change in approaches, we will see good results and a good outcome of these talks."

Currently, the main bone of contention between Iran and Riyadh is the Saudi-led war on Yemen.

"Yemen is in a catastrophic situation and we are all witnessing a critical situation in this country; there is a real human tragedy in Yemen, which is due to the Saudi war against Yemen, the bombings against it and the complete siege of that country," he regretted.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed that millions of people in Yemen were in need of basic necessities and that all parties should help resolve the crisis in the country.

All must mobilize their power to help form a political solution to the Yemeni crisis.

About Iran's approach to resolve the Yemeni crisis, he said: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has taken a very constructive approach, both in helping the UN initiative to talk to our Yemeni friends and facilitating the formation of Yemeni-Yemeni talks. The Yemen crisis was one of the topics we talked about during the talks with our Saudi counterparts in Baghdad, and we will continue to do so."

"Afghanistan must not become a haven for extremism and terrorism"

Asked what Iran's relationship with the Taliban government would look like, Khatibzadeh said: "It is a little early to talk about recognition now. The Islamic Republic of Iran is in contact with all the different parties in Afghanistan."

He noted that the most important issue was that the future of Afghanistan must be based on an inclusive government and the will of the people.

An inclusive government should reflect the diversity of the Afghan people that would guarantee future peace and stability in the country, and this view must be made clear to all, especially the leaders of Afghanistan, the spokesman pointed out.

Emphasizing that Afghanistan should not become a haven for extremism and terrorism, he added: "Afghanistan should be a party in all regional arrangements and a good friend to all in the region and beyond. These are things that we must all work together to ensure Afghanistan's future."

History has shown that lack of a strong or inclusive government will turn Afghanistan into a safe haven for extremism, he remarked.

Iran likens unilateral coercive measures to Covid virus that prevent growth

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to the United Nations on Friday called Covid-19 and the unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) as the two most destructive anti-growth and anti-development viruses, taking a swipe at the U.S. for resorting to illegal unilateral sanctions on developing countries.

Addressing the general debate of the second committee of the UN General Assembly, Majid Takht Ravanchi said the U.S. illegitimate unilateral coercive measures, including the imposition of illegal unilateral sanctions on developing countries, as well as the international community's inaction have turned the pivotal ideal of sustainable development, namely "no one should be left behind", into a purely decorative, absurd and meaningless claim.

What follows is the text of his speech posted on the Tasnim website:

My delegation would like to align itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the Republic of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madam Chair,

Covid-19 remains to be a wake-up call for the whole world, reminding us once again that the development, welfare and prosperity of all human beings are interdependent.

This virus not only threatens the life and well-being of people across the globe, it also drastically increases and exacerbates poverty, hunger and the inequalities that exist between and among countries.

It sounds alarming that the unjust, illegal, illegitimate self-serving and unilateral approaches adopted by a few are undermining and threatening multilateralism when it is needed most. In fact, the main and current global challenges remain to be the two most destructive anti-growth and anti-



development viruses, namely Covid-19 and UCMs.

The U.S. illegitimate unilateral coercive measures, including the imposition of illegal unilateral sanctions on developing countries, on the one hand, and the international community's inaction towards that, on the other, have turned the pivotal ideal of sustainable development, namely "no one should be left behind", into a purely decorative, absurd and meaningless claim.

Such measures are designed and executed to deny nations of their inherent human rights - in particular the right to development, depriving governments of means essential for achieving sustainable development. Currently, as this unprecedented global public health crisis continues to ravage communities throughout the world, UCMs are basically paralyzing national healthcare systems in total disregard to Goal 3 of the Agenda.

Despite all restraints, including the ones culminating from the U.S. unjustifiable and unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of illegal sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran, while deprived of the projected benefits of the accord, is geared to scale up its efforts to build a more prosperous and sustainable future for its people.

As a result of these unwavering efforts, Iran ranks 59th among 166 countries in the Sustainable Development Goals Index according to the "Sustainable Development Report 2020", which confirms the extent of Iran's achievements despite all constraints. For instance, in the field of education; ending illiteracy and providing universal free public education up to secondary school, has approached its full realization.

Pertaining to women and their participation in social as well as economic sectors, currently, 27%

of faculty members, more than 50% of college students and almost 37% of medical doctors are women.

At the decision-making level, there has been a 60% increase in women's appointments to these aforementioned careers.

In spite of unjust sanctions, we have also made astonishing progress in the area of biotechnology and stem cells. And today, we are proud to announce that Iran has become one of the manufacturers of Covid-19 vaccines.

As for the climate change mitigation and adaptation, the special circumstances of my country under the illegitimate unilateral sanctions have left no access to the means of implementation for climate action under the Convention.

Despite these obstacles, the strategy of a low carbon economy is just one of the environmental mandates, as stated by our Supreme Leader, under which Iran has made significant strides in transforming to a low carbon economy.

In the field of natural disasters, Iran has been committed to playing an important role and has a notable share in helping vulnerable countries to be more resilient against such catastrophes.

In this connection, Iran is hosting the UNESCAP Center for Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) and voluntarily funding its activities.

Here, let me refer to one of the most important challenges our Country and countries across the larger region face: sand and dust storms. Iran, with its arid land, faces the thickest barrier of sand in some parts for a large portion of the dry season.

A comprehensive national plan has been put in place to deal with desertification and drought. Cooperation with other affected countries in the region has been pursued to synergize our efforts in dealing with the problem.

Dear Colleagues, Iran has taken vital steps in the area of sustainable energy and unimpeded public access to it. Accordingly, to provide access to energy in a fair, cost-effective, adequate, reliable, sustainable and optimal manner in line with the UN "Sustainable Development Goal 7" (SDG7), Iran has, despite unilateral economic sanctions, spent enormous amounts of money to develop the critical infrastructure in an adaptable and resilient fashion.

The average access index of over 99.80 percent of the people to electricity and over 95 percent of the people to natural gas attests to our success in achieving the highest energy access indices and our accomplishments in the area of sustainable development.

The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to support the "Dialogue on Energy" initiative of the UN General Assembly.

It sounds alarming that the unjust, illegal, illegitimate self-serving and unilateral approaches adopted by a few are undermining and threatening multilateralism when it is needed most.

Leader asks for punishment of “bloodthirsty perpetrators” of Kunduz attack

TEHRAN— Following the deadly terror attack in Afghanistan's Kunduz, which resulted in the death of a large number of worshipping believers, Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei stressed that the incident saddened him.

“Authorities in Afghanistan's neighboring and brotherly country are strongly expected to punish the bloodthirsty perpetrators of the heinous crime and take the necessary measures to prevent a recurrence of such tragedies,” the Leader stated in his message on Saturday.

Iranian president censures deadly terrorist act in Afghanistan

In a message of condolences on Saturday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi strongly condemned the killing of scores of worshippers in Afghanistan in a terrorist attack on Friday.

The state-run Bakhtar news agency said the attack had killed 46 people and wounded 143. However, two health officials told Reuters the death toll could be between 70 and 80.

Responsibility for the blast, which took place in Kunduz, the capital of the province of the same name in the northeast of the country, was claimed by the Islamic State's local affiliate, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKAP), which has a long history of attacking Afghanistan's Shia minority, who make up about 15-20% of the population.



Raisi said this crime was “committed by those whose anti-human and anti-religious nature is obvious to everyone.”

Below is the text of Raisi's message:

“I offer my condolences to the people of Afghanistan and the entire human society on the martyrdom and injury of a large number of innocent people of Afghanistan who were praying in a holy place.

This crime, which was committed at the beginning of Rabi', the month of unity among Muslims, with the aim of sowing discord among Muslims, was committed by those whose anti-human and anti-religious nature is obvious to everyone. It is no secret that the development of this Takfiri terrorist movement has taken place with the support and plans of the United States, and in recent years, the United States has facilitated the expansion of the activities of ISIS criminals in Afghanistan and prevented their eradication.

I hereby express my concern over the continuation of terrorist acts and the combination of religious agitation with ethnic agitation, which is part of the new U.S. security project for Afghanistan, and emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as in the past, is ready to provide full support to our Afghan brothers and sisters, and we hope that with the vigilance of the Afghan groups and the formation of an inclusive government, a large part of this plot is thwarted and, God willing, the Afghan people will be able to see peace.

SPORTS

Iran's women's football team to hold camp in Belgium

TEHRAN – Iran's women's football team will hold a 10-day training camp in Charleroi, Belgium, head of Iran football federation, Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem, said.



Iranian women football team made history in late September by booking a place at the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup for the first time ever.

The competition will be held from Jan. 20 to Feb. 6 in India.

“The women's football team will travel to Belgium to hold a training camp in the European country. Our team will also play two friendly matches with Charleroi football club in their training,” Azizi Khadem said.

Azizi Khadem didn't talk about the exact time of the training.

PVAO Championships postponed due to lack of quorum

TEHRAN – The 2021 Para Volleyball Asian Oceania Championships were postponed for lack of quorum.

The championships were supposed to be held in Kish Island, Iran from Nov. 9 to 14.

“The PVAO Championships were postponed due to lack of quorum. A total of seven teams had announced their readiness to participate in the competition but South Korea, India and Japan withdrew from the tournament due to coronavirus limitations,” World ParaVolley representative Hadi Rezaei said.

He also announced that the Sitting Volleyball World Championships will be held in Hangzhou, China in March 2022.

Rezaei announced his retirement as Iran head coach at the end of 2020 Paralympic Games.

Rezaei won four Paralympic gold medals as the Iranian head coach at Sydney 2000, Beijing 2008, Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020.

The team won silver medals at Athens 2004 and London 2012 under his leadership.

Rezaei also won three Paralympic gold medals as a player in 1988, 1992 and 1996.

Iranian women referees at AFC Women's Asian Cup qualification

TEHRAN – Two Iranian women referees have been chosen to officiate at the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualification.

The competition will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from October 18 to 24 in Group D.

Myanmar, UAE, Guam and Lebanon will compete for one spot in the final round.

Saltanat Norouzi will officiate in the event as referee and Bahare Seifi Nahavandi has been chosen as assistant.

Persepolis coach Golmohammadi extends contract

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team head coach Yahya Golmohammadi extended his contract with the team for two years.

His current deal was set to expire at the end

of the season but Persepolis extended it for two more years.

Golmohammadi was appointed as Persepolis coach in January 2020 as Gabriel Calderon's replacement and led the Reds to win two titles in the Iran football league.

He also won a silver medal with Persepolis in the 2020 AFC Champions League.

Persepolis prepare for the match against Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia in quarterfinals round of the 2021 AFC Champions League on October 16.

Match against Iran not decisive: Paulo Bento

TEHRAN – South Korea head coach Paulo Bento says that their match against Iran in the 2022 World Cup qualification is not a decisive match.

The Taeguk Warriors are scheduled to meet Iran on Tuesday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in Group A.

South Korea, though, have never beaten Iran in Tehran, with two draws and five losses so far, Yonhap news agency reported.

With his team looking to end that drought, Bento acknowledged it will be “a different game than the last three games for sure.”

But at the same time, Bento also tried to deflect the pressure away from his players, saying, “The game that we're going to play on Tuesday isn't more important than the games we've played.”

“It's not a decisive game. It's just one more game,” Bento said in his postmatch press conference at Ansan Wa Stadium in Ansan, 40 kilometers south of Seoul. “It'll be a tough game and a very good challenge for us. But I am sure it will be a tough game for them as well.”

Bento balked at the notion South Korea should just try to settle for a draw against Iran in the difficult away match.

“A draw is just how the game starts. We should play and fight to reach three points,” he said. “From the beginning, we're not going to play to draw the match. We're going to play to win the match.”

Mohammadali Geraei, Poshtam take bronze medals at World Greco-Roman Wrestling

TEHRAN – Iran's Mohammadali Geraei and Pejman Poshtam won two bronze medals at the 2021 World Wrestling Championships on Friday.

Geraei defeated Hungarian wrestler Tamás Lévai 9-0 in the 77kg bronze medal match.

Poshtam also defeated Hungarian Laszlo Szabo 4-0 in the 82kg weight category.

The 2021 World Wrestling Championships are being held from Oct. 2 to 10 in Oslo, Norway.

Skocic has changed spirit of Iran football

From Page 1 ▶ Iran's ruthless ability to continually win the games and change the demanding situations to their favor is a critical element of the Skocic era.

On a night when Sardar Azmoun endured rather than enjoyed in Iranian jersey, with missing a penalty, Iran became a step closer to the World Cup.

Before Tuesday's thrilling match against Korea, the Iranian football fans can sense something special in the air around the Iran national team camp.

We witness a substantial transformation of Iran and the feeling that the 'Persian Leopards' are finally going to fulfill their potential. It reflects the fact that Skocic has generally been a successful manager, even though there has been a suspicion, by some of his critics, that under someone else, Iran could play better. But, with 10 wins out of 10 games, he has proved that nobody could win more and win better than him!

Amir Abdollahian says Iran will stand by Syria vigorously

TEHRAN – “Syria is on the path of development and progress and the Islamic Republic of Iran in this direction, as during the terrorist war against Syria, will support Damascus with all its might,” Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian told reporters upon his arrival in Syria on Saturday.

Amir Abdollahian visited Damascus after concluding his visits to Moscow and Beirut.

This is the second time that Amir Abdollahian is visiting Damascus as foreign minister. The first visit took place after he attended the Baghdad conference in late August.

“After my trips to Moscow and Beirut, today I am in Damascus to complete consultations and meet with President Bashar al-Assad,” Amir Abdollahian said, according to IRNA.

The chief diplomat added, “We have always paid serious attention to regional developments and bilateral relations, meeting, consultation with friends and with the strategic partner of the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely Syria, and the Syrian authorities.”

In recent weeks, important agreements have been

reached on a comprehensive development of relations between the two countries, the minister said, citing economic ties and trade exchanges as well as tourism cooperation as examples.

“Our bilateral agreements will be implemented quickly and the two nations will benefit from it,” Amir Abdollahian said.

Amir Abdollahian held talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and President Assad.

In the press conference, Mekdad said Syria and Iran are “strategic allies” and “we have shown during these years that we will not leave each other alone in difficult days.”

Amir Abdollahian also said Mekdad will visit Iran in future days.

On his visit to Lebanon, Amir Abdollahian, “We held important talks with Lebanon's high-ranking officials, party leaders and elite. We also held fruitful consultations with the secretary general of Lebanon's Hezbollah. I congratulated all Lebanese on the formation of the new government. The ground is prepared for the expansion of cooperation. We stand ready to support and help Lebanon



in difficult days.”

Amir Abdollahian visited Lebanon on Thursday. It was his first trip to the country as foreign minister. He met with senior Lebanese officials, including President Michel Aoun, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, Prime Minister Najib Mikati, and Foreign Minister Abdullah Bouhabbib. He talked about regional and bilateral issues.

Iran says looking for ‘big jump’ in relations with Russia

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic is looking for a “big jump in relations” with the Russian Federation.

Amir Abdollahian made the remarks before his talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on Wednesday.

After touching down in Moscow on Tuesday, Amir Abdollahian said the government of President Ebrahim Raisi is ready to quickly expand ties with Russia based on a foreign policy that seeks the same across the region.

“This doesn't mean that we'll be dependent on China and Russia, but from a strategic point of view, we'll use existing capacities to further the interests of both nations,” Amir Abdollahian said, Al Jazeera reported.

In addition to bilateral ties, the two officials discussed the situation in Afghanistan and tensions in the

South Caucasus in the meeting on Wednesday.

The Iranian Army and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) have recently held military drills close to its northwestern borders with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan and Turkey, in response, launched a joint military drill starting on Wednesday.

Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian also criticized Azerbaijan's dealings with Israel.

“We certainly will not tolerate geopolitical change and map change in the Caucasus, and we have serious concerns about the presence of terrorists and Zionists in this region,” he said.

Baku has hinged a significant portion of its defense policy on Israeli technologies such as drones. Azerbaijan relied heavily on these technologies in its war with Armenia

last year when it successfully reclaimed the previously disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, known to Armenians as Artsakh.

Amir Abdollahian said that Iran's drill had been a one-off event and had been announced beforehand through diplomatic channels.

“This maneuver was carried out inside Iran by the Iranian Armed Forces and its message was peace, friendship and security in the region,” Mehr quoted Amir Abdollahian as saying.

Before his meeting with Lavrov, Amir Abdollahian said Iran expects Russia “to be sensitive about any potential changes in borders across the region, and be sensitive about the presence of terrorists and the movements of the Zionist regime that threatens regional peace and stability.”

The meeting comes as world powers, party to Iran's 2015 nuclear

crops, the country may face security problems, like what happened recently in Khuzestan province.

Salajegheh should set certain priorities for his organization. For example, he should pay special attention to water desalination; prevent the use of wastewater in irrigating crops; stop the use of plastic bags which is polluting rivers, jungles, farmlands, valleys, and mountains; raise public awareness about the centrality of the environment; seek the help of the public and environmentalists in protecting the environment; force automakers to turn to electric cars; and many other essential things.

It is true that realizing these goals is difficult in times of crippling illegal sanctions on the country, but it must be borne in mind that environmental degradation will prove highly costly if the pollution of the environment is not considered a crime and is not dealt with, accordingly.

Challenges facing new environment chief

Salajegheh will not succeed if he is not fully backed

From Page 1 ▶ If he is not fully backed, he will not succeed to ban the growth of certain water-intensive crops, such as rice and onion, in provinces other than those lying on the shores of the Caspian Sea. If he is not supported, he will certainly be overwhelmed by influential persons who have been destroying forests and turning them into villas.

If the ministries of agriculture and energy don't cooperate, it will not be possible to encourage farmers to replace water-intensive crops with alternative ones.

The new DOE chief and ministries of agriculture and energy must cooperatively convince farmers that if they continue to use water in such a way, then they will face problems to cultivate crops such as wheat in the not-too-distant future. This is especially because Iran is heavily affected by climate change and that the country is located in a semi-arid area on the Earth.



Ali Salajegheh

If other ministries and state bodies don't help him in putting a brake on the cultivation of water-intensive

'Comprehensive plans underway to develop non-oil exports'

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said major plans are underway for developing the country's non-oil exports, IRNA reported.

"We are trying to boost our non-oil exports by improving the logistics sector and preferential tariffs, and also by reforming laws, regulations, and structures in the trade advisory sector," Alireza Peyman Pak said on Saturday.

According to the plans, priorities have been set for the export target markets to increase the country's exports by \$35 billion over the next four years, he said.

The official noted that in countries such as Venezuela, with which Iran has close financial ties, a mechanism has been defined for barter trade of priority goods, including home appliances.

"Considering the fact that most of the countries are promoting domestic production in recent years, we are also considering the exports of parts and even joint production of some products in the coming years," Peyman Pak added.

To support non-oil exports during the sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic, the Iranian government has defined some new strategies and has been pursuing them vigorously.

The major strategy is to focus on the neighboring countries and the trade partners in the region, and it is, in fact, one of the top priorities of the government for defying the U.S.



sanctions.

Back in April, Iran's Supreme Council of Non-oil Exports Promotion approved new regulations for facilitating the country's non-oil trade, especially with the neighboring countries, in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Earlier that month, former TPO Head Hamid Zadboum had announced the allocation of eight trillion rials (about \$190.5 million) for supporting non-oil export activities in the current Iranian calendar year.

Mentioning the current year's motto which is "Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles", the official underlined planning for the development and expansion of non-oil exports as well as the promotion of export culture as the TPO's main priority in the current year.

H1 daily gasoline consumption up 13% yr/yr



TEHRAN – Average daily gasoline consumption in Iran increased 13 percent in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22) compared to the figure for the previous year's same period.

Average daily gasoline consumption in the country stood at 85 million liters in the first half of the current fiscal year, while the figure was reported to be 74.5 million liters in the previous year's H1, IRNA reported.

As reported, the increase in the country's daily gasoline consumption is registered despite the transportation restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Gasoline consumption stood at 79.6 million liters per day in the first month of the current year (March 21-April 20) which coincides with the New Year holidays.

Gasoline consumption in Iran has fluctuated

since the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

In the early days of the pandemic, concerns over the virus minimized the travels across the country and led to a record decrease in consumption in the last Iranian calendar year's first month (March 20-April 20, 2020).

On some days in April 2020, gasoline consumption even fell to 40 million liters and the average daily consumption did not exceed 50 million liters that month.

In general, gasoline consumption in the country declined 20 percent in the past Iranian calendar year, as compared to its preceding year due to rationing this fuel and also the coronavirus pandemic.

Iran, which was an importer of gasoline for decades, exported over \$1.4 billion worth of the said fuel in the first seven months of the past Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21, 2020).

The significant increase in the country's gasoline production and exports comes despite the fact that nearly two years ago Iran was shipping in over 4.5 million liters per day of the strategic product.

The Islamic Republic became a net gasoline exporter in February 2019, after the inauguration of the third phase of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery (PGS) project which added 120,000 barrels to the country's daily gasoline production.

The increase in the exports of the mentioned commodity is a result of the increase in the country's refining capacity.

Home appliance trade balance to become 100% positive by 2025



From page 1 ▶ The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years.

Iran exported \$200 million worth of home appliances during the previous Iranian calendar year

(ended on March 20), according to an official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

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

Speaking in a gathering of the country's home appliance parts manufacturers in early May, Gordan said Iran halted the imports of home appliances in June 2018 to support domestic production, and last year we achieved self-sufficiency in this sector.

"This year we intend to increase production and have a strong

presence in export destinations," he stressed.

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

\$22b of investment required to maintain production in gas fields

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has said the country requires at least \$22 billion of investment to maintain the production level of the country's gas fields over the next six to eight years, ILNA reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of a visit to the southwestern oil-rich Bushehr province on Friday, Oji referred to the abundant gas reserves in Bushehr province and noted that about 50 percent of Iran's gas reserves and about 10 percent of the country's oil reserves are in Bushehr province.

"During our visit to Bushehr province, we will discuss the completion of semi-finished oil and gas projects," he added.

The official noted that a project for studying new methods of increasing the recovery factor of the country's gas fields will start by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (late March 2022).

According to Oji, a big part of the needed investment for maintaining the production level of the country's gas fields will be allocated to Bushehr province.

Back in September, Mohammad Meshkinfam,



the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the country's giant South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf, said proper planning must be made in order to maintain the field's production level in the future.

"So far \$80 billion has been invested for the development of the field and from now on we should try and make planning to maintain the production levels," Meshkinfam said in a meeting with Oji.

He noted that out of a total of 400 wells in the offshore section, 336 wells are active and

operational adding: "With the implementation of Corrosion Resistant Alloy (CRA) pipes, other remaining gas wells, whose drilling operations have been completed in the offshore section, will go operational."

Referring to the operation of all offshore platforms in the South Pars phases, the official said: "Currently, 37 platforms are operational [in this field] and only two platforms of phase 11 have remained. With these two platforms going operational, we will have a total of 39 active platforms in the South Pars gas field."

Pointing to the field's average daily production, Meshkinfam put the field's output at the time at 617 million cubic meters (mcm) and noted that POGC will ensure an average daily output of 700 mcm in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

He further mentioned the phase 11 development project, saying: "Over the past 20 years, nearly \$80 billion has been invested in South Pars, as a result of which the offshore section of this field has been completed except for the Phase 11 which will be completed over the next two years."

Manufacturing of washing machine up 36% in 5 months yr/yr

TEHRAN- Manufacturing of washing machine in Iran has increased 36.8 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the data released by Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry indicate.

As reported, 549,900 washing machines have been manufactured in the five-month period of this year.

Manufacturing of home appliances in Iran has risen 8.7 percent during the first five months of the present year, as 2.61 million sets of such products have been manufactured inside the country.

Home appliances manufacturing has also increased 78 percent to stand at 15 million sets in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

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

Last year, the industry was able to achieve 78 percent growth despite the restrictions on the manufacturing sector, Deputy

Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki has said, adding, "While foreign brands left Iran, manufacturers were able to achieve this leap by relying on domestic capacities."

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

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

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



reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that this industry's production capacity increased by 24 percent in the past Iranian year, and by 10 percent in its preceding year.

In early April, the secretary of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran said, "We expected to produce about 12 million units, including small and large appliances in the previous year, however, the figure increased to about 15 million by the yearend,

registering a 24 percent growth compared to the preceding year."

"We also had good growth in after-sales service, product quality improvement, indigenization and exports, so that last year \$345 million worth of home appliance products were exported," Abbas Hashemi added.

Pointing to the advantages of home appliance industry in Iran, the official said: "Production of home appliances in the country is an advantage considering cheap energy and workforce and the country's geographical situation", he noted.

"This industry should be more supported," he stressed.

Regarding the return of foreign brands to the country, Hashemi said: "we should prevent the imports of foreign finished products into the country in order to support domestic producers."

He further noted that foreign companies can invest in this industry and co-produce their products with local manufacturers.

Export from Mazandaran province increases 55%

TEHRAN- The value of export from Mazandaran province in the north of Iran rose 45 percent during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Ali Yousefi-Manesh, an official with the province's customs department, announced that commodities worth \$134.7 million were exported from the province in the six-month period.

He mentioned cement, minerals, kerosene and crude oil, dairy products, wood and wooden objects, plastics, various food products, paper and ordinary metals as Mazandaran's major exported goods, and Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iraq and Romania as the main export destinations.

The official also said that the province's foreign trade witnessed a 43-percent growth to stand at \$1.867 million tons in the first half of the present year.

He further announced that over 1.419 million tons of commodities were imported to the province in the six-month period, and named barley, corn, soybeans, animal and vegetable fats and oils, wheat, wood and wooden objects, oil coke, base oil, cardboard paper and machinery and its components as the main imported items, while Russia, UAE, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Turkmenistan as the major sources of imports.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 47 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period



of time in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said that Iran has traded 79.1 million tons of non-oil products worth \$45 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

The official put the six-month non-oil exports at 60 million tons valued at \$21.8 billion, with a 61-percent rise in value and a 30-percent growth in weight.

The IRICA head mentioned liquefied natural gas, methanol, polyethylene, semi-finished iron products, iron ingots, propane, urea, gasoline, iron rods and cathodes 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 14.8 million tons worth \$6.5 billion, Iraq with 13.9 million tons worth \$3.8 billion, Turkey with 7.2 million tons worth \$2.3 billion, the United

Arab Emirates (UAE) with 5.8 million tons worth \$2.2 billion, and Afghanistan with 2.5 million tons worth \$1.0 billion.

The official further announced that Iran has imported 19.1 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$23.1 billion in the first six months of the present year, with a 37-percent growth in value and a 15-percent rise in weight year on year.

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

The United Arab Emirates with 5.9 million tons of goods worth \$7.3 billion was the top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China with 15 million tons of goods worth \$5.0 billion, Turkey with 2.1 million tons worth \$2.4 billion, and Switzerland with one million tons worth \$900,000, the official stated.

According to the official, out of the total 19.1 million tons of goods imported into the country in the first six months of this year, 14.3 million worth \$8.9 billion were basic goods, which constitutes 75 percent of the total imported goods.

The IRICA head has announced that the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

Mir-Ashrafi 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.

TEDPIX drops 22,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 22,280 points to 1,465 million on Saturday (the first day of Iranian calendar week).

As reported, over 6.431 billion securities worth 55.327 trillion rials (about \$1.315 billion) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index dropped 21,540 points, and the second market's index fell 28,668 points.

TEDPIX rose 3.5 percent in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1,488 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Social Security Investment Company, Bandar Abbas Refinery, Iran Khodro Company, Sepid Makian Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed ones.

A capital market analyst has said the trades at the Tehran Stock Exchange are going to follow an upward trend in the remaining months of the current Iranian calendar year (ends in March 2022).

"Based on the forecasts, it seems that the stock market trading will experience a positive trend and be upward by the end of this year due to the current inflation in the country's economy," Soheil Kolahchi has told IRNA.

And another capital market analyst says the Iranian stock market is expected to be stable in the third quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (September 23-December 21), IRNA reported.

"We expect to see a steady trend in market

transactions in [the Iranian calendar months of] Aban and Azar (autumn months), and I suggest shareholders invest in leading industries," Salman Nasirzadeh said.

He pointed to the current risks of the stock exchange and added: "The stock market in the current situation, along with its positive movements, is associated with risks, now the most important risk that may be imposed on the market is possible macroeconomic decisions."

He emphasized the measures that can help the stock market to follow an uptrend and said: "By creating stability in the regulations, transparency of information and increasing the initial public offering in the market, it is possible to change the trend of the market."

Nasirzadeh stated that with proper knowledge of investing in stock exchange transactions, the capital market can be considered as a positive market in the medium- and long term.

Back in July, Market Analyst Mostafa Safari had said that trades in the Iranian stock market will be much better and more reasonable in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year compared to the first half of the year.

Safari believed that reaching a possible agreement on the nuclear deal will have a positive impact on the capital market and pave the way for significant growth in the market.

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

TEHRAN - As Iraqis prepare to head to the polls to cast their ballots for the early parliamentary election on Sunday, a lot is at stake. Observers say there are some aspects of this election that make it different from the previous ones. Firstly, the election is taking place one year earlier than it should have been.

Wide-scale demonstrations in October and November 2019 against alleged corruption led to the resignation of the government of Adil Abdul Mehdi. He had only been in power for one year following the 2018 election. His successor, who was selected by parliament, Mustafa al-Khadimi, pledged to tackle corruption and bring reforms to the electoral process. To avoid any potential fraud and vote-rigging, the country's Independent High Electoral Commission uses a German-made voting bio-metric system. This means every eligible voter, of which there are 25 million, receives a personal pre-issued bio-metric card.

One election observer explained to Tehran Times that fingerprints are taken before the card is issued. Once the voter enters the booth, a computer system checks the fingerprints again to avoid any fraud. Should any suspicions arise by local or international observers, then one or two boxes are chosen at random and hand-counted.

On election day, they must use this card to vote for the candidate of their choice, and once they do so, the card is disabled, so it would be impossible for the card to be used again at least within the following 72 hours; by which time the election is over. Nevertheless, analysts are also not ruling out the possibility that the entire "German-made" bio-metric electronic voting system would not be hacked by a foreign enemy power of Iraq.

The third point to the electoral reforms is that there are more constituencies in every city, which depends on the population of each town and province. Baghdad, Mosul, and Basrah, who have a higher population, will also have more constituencies, albeit a much lower number than previous elections. This is to lower the number of candidates and allow a chance for more independent candidates to win a parliamentary seat. Essentially, how this works is as follows.

If there are 25 constituencies in the province of Basrah, previously, a parliamentary candidate could place his name on the ballot ticket at all 25 constituencies. This time, the candidate can only run for one constituency in the province of Basrah and has been banned from running in any other constituency in Basrah, let alone the country. The ballot paper for each electoral



Iraqis heading to the polls early

district is printed months ahead of time with the name and logo of the party or the independent candidate.

Experts say this will potentially allow more independent candidates to win a seat against the traditional heavy-weight parties. The fourth point that differentiates this election from the previous ones is how the party leader can choose the candidate that is running on behalf of the party.

Previously if a candidate received the most votes in a specific area, it would not necessarily mean they would gain a parliamentary seat. If a party wins 30 seats, the party leader had the power to select 30 lawmakers of their choice, the ones that they saw most qualified to sit in the 329 seat legislature.

This meant the voter was essentially voting for the more popular party leaders and not the local representative they had perhaps wanted to represent them in parliament. In essence, the voter was voting for a party, not a local representative.

With the new electoral legislation, the candidate who gets the most votes will be the voter's representative in parliament.

Some say this will help as before; locals perhaps voted for a particular person because they saw him fit to serve the constituency, not because they

necessarily supported the party they were associated with. This could play a significant role with more independent candidates in power.

Another factor that may play a significant role in the election is a recent statement issued by Iraq's higher religious authority, Ayatollah Sayyad Ali Sistani, who called for a high turnout. The timing of the statement could not have come at a better time for Prime Minister Mustafa al-Khadimi, who is relying on a higher turnout to make a point that his work and effort on reforming the election process has been effective.

Another aspect that could play a significant role is the tribes, of which there are many large ones in Persian Gulf Arab nations. For example, the very large tribe of al-Suad is the ruling monarchy in Saudi Arabia. In Iraq, there are also large tribes, and while they do not rule the country, an entire tribe does tend to vote for the same person.

In any case, the traditional parties remain popular, and as with every election, it is impossible to tell in which direction the vote will swing in favor.

Early special voting had already started with Iraq's armed forces, inmates in prison, and the internally displaced people who have already cast their ballots on Friday, two days ahead of Sunday's general vote.

There are estimated to be more than 1.5 million security personnel who are eligible to vote, as well as over 120,000 internally displaced persons and hundreds of hospital patients and prisoners who also cast their ballots. The turnout on Friday's special elections had been reported at 69%.

Al-Khadimi also went on a small touring mission Friday, in several Baghdad neighborhoods, to oversee the election stations, saying he was satisfied with the turnout on the day and declared that the initial voting process had passed by smoothly. There are 3,449 candidates fighting for 329 seats.

More than 24 million of Iraq's estimated 40.1 million people are eligible to cast their ballot. After the results are announced (expected to be the following day), negotiations will kick off to form the largest alliance that gets a parliamentary majority tasked with choosing the country's next prime minister and cabinet ministers. Since elections in 2004, not once has a single party gained a majority; the most are around 65 to 70 seats, so forming an alliance is essential. As with every election, there are always surprises.

For example, in 2018, nobody expected the conquest alliance, a newly formed group of political parties that had previously been affiliated with the popular mobilization units (that liberated the country from Daesh terrorists), to come second in the elections. This time around, there are also new parties in town. For instance, the crowds that took to the streets in October and November 2019 demanding reforms have formed their party and fielded their candidates across the country. However, it remains unclear as to exactly how popular they really are.

There are many difficult challenges ahead for the next government. The protests in November 2019 were not limited to corruption. Essential services like 24-hour electricity, drinking water, farming in some southern provinces, other vital services, higher employment levels were among some of the other protesters' demands. These are not easy to fix, and one of the biggest challenges and demands of the people is fulfilling a parliamentary bill that was passed after the state-sponsored act of terrorism on January 3, 2020, that unlawfully assassinated Iran's Lieutenant General, Qassem Soleimani and deputy commander of Iraq's popular mobilization units, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis; to end the American occupation of Iraq and expel all American forces from the country.

UN only understands language of money, not law: Yemeni deputy FM



The deputy foreign minister in Yemen's National Salvation Government has lambasted the recent decision by the UN Human Rights Council to ditch its group of experts investigating abuses and Saudi war crimes in Yemen, stating that the world body only understands the language of money, and has no respect whatsoever for law and regulations.

"The United Nations has shown its resolutions are based on the amount of financial aids it receives, and regulations have no place in its decision-making," Hussein al-Azi said on Saturday, lamenting the measure as "unfortunate".

On Thursday, the 47-member UN Human Rights Council voted against renewing the mandate of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen (GEE) – the first time the United Nations' top rights body has ever rejected a draft resolution since its foundation in 2006.

"The vote against renewing the mandate of the UN team of inspectors is a concrete proof that statements made by the Sana'a government regarding the crimes of the Saudi-led coalition are entirely correct, while the alliance tends to make baseless allegations against Sana'a," Azi said.

"The UN would not have canceled investigation into abuses in Yemen and would not have end the mandate of its inspection team, if it were not for the sake of the Sake coalition."

The draft resolution seeking to extend the GEE's mandate for a further two years was brought forward by several European nations and Canada.

Some 21 countries voted against the draft resolution, 18 voted in favor, seven abstained and Ukraine did not register a vote at all.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) decried the result on "intense lobbying" by the Riyadh regime.

CIHRS said the vote amounted to "a blatant attempt by Saudi and its allies to ensure blanket impunity for themselves after having been linked to war crimes and other grave violations of international law in the country."

"Today's vote represents a grave failure – one that will inevitably lead to more violence and suffering in Yemen," Jeremie Smith, director of the CIHRS Geneva office, said.

He added, "States that voted against the renewal or abstained have chosen to appease Saudi Arabia instead of protecting the lives of millions."

Saudi Arabia, backed by the US and regional allies, launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing popular Ansarullah resistance movement.

The war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions more. It has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases.

Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees, however, have grown steadily in strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

(Source: Press TV)

China has significant leverage over U.S.: American scholar

From page 1 ► Recent military actions by China in the South China Sea and recent political declarations by China regarding Taiwan's independent status have raised concerns both in Taiwan and the United States. The United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan has also emboldened some factions of Chinese leadership to believe that the United States would not defend Taiwan and risk war with China. These military actions are designed to prepare Taiwan from any incursion from China and serve as a warning to China that the United States is not abandoning its commitments to Taiwan.

What are the repercussions of AUKUS for China, the Far East, and U.S. allies in Europe, especially France?

The AUKUS alliance is another response to China. The United States, U.K., and Australia concluded that the deal between Australia and France for submarines would not provide sufficient military power to counter any serious Chinese action in the South China Sea. The nuclear submarines provided by the United States were deemed to be superior for the military defense to the non-nuclear submarines provided by France. The AUKUS alliance is yet another indication of the seriousness of all three nations seeing a possible Chinese threat in the region.

Shanghai Cooperation members accepted Iran's full membership in this organization. Do you confirm that U.S. behaviors and provocations against Iran and China enhanced more importance to such regional coalitions in response to U.S. unilateral moves?



Yes, United States actions against Iran and non-progress on reviving the JCPOA have essentially driven Iran into a strengthened economic and trade alliance with China. China essentially defies United States sanctions against Iran and is providing an economic lifeline to Iran in the view of Iran's leaders. This has also raised concerns in some circles in Iran that the alliance between Iran and China is growing too close. Importing Chinese workers for port construction in Southeast Iran is viewed with concern by many, based on the experience of many developing countries in Africa and Latin America who have found that accepting Chinese development help often leads to unfavorable economic entanglements with China that are

hard to break.

How do American media outlets represent China for their public? Is China an absolute monster as it is portrayed in the U.S.?

American media outlets do not actually portray China as a "monster." They report on China's actions in the South China Sea and trade relations, but they do not portray China as a serious threat to the United States. China is largely portrayed as a non-hostile partner. Iran is far more demonized in the press than China, which is ridiculous since Iran does not pose a direct threat to the United States. In contrast, Chinese actions can potentially have a huge effect on American life.

However, politicians from both parties complain about the United States' economic relations with China, citing unfavorable balance of trade and, more seriously, theft of intellectual property (patent violations, industrial espionage) undertaken by the Chinese industry. But at this point, the United States is "addicted" to the importation of Chinese consumer goods. Moreover, China holds trillions of dollars in United States debt in the form of bonds and other borrowing instruments. If China were to "dump" these bonds, it would create chaos in the United States. Additionally, Chinese companies are widely sold on the

American stock exchanges, so investors in the United States have invested billions of dollars in Chinese companies. Any damage to U.S.-China relations results in a drop in the value of these Chinese stocks, making American investors angry. So China has very large leverage over the United States.

Donald Trump tried to "punish" China in an extremely crude way by imposing trade embargos, but this effort was rather stupid because Trump couldn't articulate what he wanted China to do to improve trade and economic relations, and his sanctions did not change China's economic or military behavior; it only hurt the American economy. These sanctions have largely been abandoned, and the United States is back to business as usual with China.

What are the effects and political fallouts of U.S. policies in the Far East, especially when it tries to picture China as a threat to Japan, South Korea, India, and Australia?

United States foreign and military policy in East Asia has somewhat "gone to sleep." Whereas in the Vietnam Era, the United States was deeply concerned with Asia, in the last 40 years, Chinese actions in the region have been of much less concern in the eyes of the American public. Military officials and some politicians are

indeed concerned about the long-term prospects for Chinese ambitions in the region and have been preparing Taiwan, Japan, and Korea to be on alert. You mentioned, and I discussed, the AUKUS agreement above as an example of concern with China at the political and military level. Still, this concern has not extended to the American public beyond occasional grumbling about Chinese trade practices. Chinese military efforts are, incorrectly in my opinion, at this point not perceived as a danger by the American press or the American public.

I should also mention the situation in Xinjiang where the Uyghur people have been demonstrably oppressed by the Chinese government, largely based on their Islamic religious faith and Turkic Uyghur language. This is of great concern for human rights representatives, but it has not sparked concern on the part of the American public. The same is true about the recent repressive actions taken by the Chinese government in Hong Kong.

As a footnote to this commentary, I should mention that I have often traveled to China and studied Chinese, which I now speak at a basic level. My feelings about China are mixed. I have had nothing but excellent experiences in China. I greatly admire Chinese culture and have only positive things to say about the Chinese people, who are highly cultured, hospitable, and immensely talented. But in my comments above, I reflect attitudes and concerns on the part of U.S. officials about the actions of the Chinese government.

Biden declines Trump attempt to block January 6 document release

TEHRAN - The White House authorizes the National Archives to turn over an initial set of documents associated with Trump's activities on January 6.

Trump tried to assert 'executive privilege' to prevent the release of White House records into a deadly Capitol riot.

The conflict became clearer Friday when Joe Biden rejected Trump's request to prevent documents from the House committee investigating the insurrection.

"The president's dedicated to ensuring that something like that could never happen again, which is why the administration is cooperating with ongoing investigations," the White House press secretary said Friday.

In a lengthy statement, Trump criticized the inquiry and blamed

Democrats for attempting "to use Congress to persecute their political opponents."

"Their requests are not based in law or reality — it's just a game to these politicians," Trump said.

Donald Trump plans to hold a rally in Iowa on Saturday. He is struggling with a legal inquiry by the U.S. House of Representatives into the events of January 6, including his actions and the activities of his staff.

On January 6, Trump gave a blazing speech in Washington, DC, to his Fierce supporters and asked them to march on the Capitol where U.S. legislators were



attending to confirm Biden's election victory. He was later impeached for "incitement of insurrection" after a mob stormed the building.

In a letter to the National Archives,

White House Counsel Dana Remus rejected Trump's lawyers' effort to block documents the House Select Committee requested regarding the former President's activities on January 6. He wrote, "President Biden has determined that an assertion of executive privilege is not in the best interests of the United States, and therefore is not justified as to any of the documents."

"These are unique and extraordinary circumstances," He added. "Congress is examining an assault on our Constitution and democratic institutions provoked and fanned by

those sworn to protect them, and the conduct under investigation extends far beyond typical deliberations concerning the proper discharge of the President's constitutional responsibilities. The constitutional protections of executive privilege should not be used to shield, from Congress or the public, information that reflects a clear and apparent effort to subvert the Constitution itself."

Two weeks ago, White House press secretary Jen Psaki had telegraphed the move, saying President Biden had already decided that it would not be appropriate to declare executive privilege related to January 6 requests.



What are expert prospects for tourism recovery?

Iranian president tours Delvari Museum



TEHRAN – On Friday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi toured Ra'is Ali Delvari Museum, which displays the personal belongings and weapons of the hero of the anti-colonial struggle in southern Iran.

The visit was conducted on the sidelines of a one-day trip to the oil-rich Bushehr province in which the president headed a high-ranking delegation comprised of six ministers.

"Ra'is Ali Delvari and his companions stood up to the British military aggressors, who had military facilities, support, and logistics, and defeated them," the president said.

The everlasting name of Martyr Ra'is Ali Delvari comes from his timely actions against the enemy and his risk-taking nature, Raisi added.

The Iranian independent fighter, who organized popular resistance against the British troops, was

martyred in 1915 at the age of 33 in a fierce clash with British aggressors in Bushehr.

Though Persia (Iran) declared the state of neutrality in World War I, it became divided into northern and southern spheres of influence under the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907 as the country was deemed as a great source of interest due to its significant oil reserve and strategic geography.

The treaty, however, was widely viewed by Iranians as having made the nation into nothing more than a British and Russian protectorate, so countless local uprisings occurred against the British and Russian forces from north to the south.

In northern Iran, the Jangal Movement of Gilan was the main indigenous resistance against the foreign occupiers, and in southern parts, Tangistani amongst other tribes constituted the main resisting power against the British Empire.

On the eve of World War I, Germany established the Intelligence Bureau for the East for the Central Powers, intending to promote and sustain anti-colonial movements and nationalist agitations in British India, Persia, and Egypt. Wilhelm Wassmuss led the bureau's operations in Persia seeking the goal to free Persia from the Allied Powers' influence and to create a wedge between Russia and the British forces.

That was the time when Delvari with the help of Wassmuss was formulating a general Anti-British uprising in Iran. The Iranian hero was, ultimately, killed by Anglo-Indian forces following months of bloody clashes.

TEHRAN – Though international tourism has revealed signs of a rebound as some destinations eased travel restrictions over the past couple of months, the lack of international coordination and slow vaccination rates in several countries and regions suggest it may need a longer time to bounce back.

On the one hand, according to the latest edition of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, an estimated 54 million tourists crossed international borders in July 2021, down 67% from the same month in 2019, but the strongest results since April 2020. This compares to an estimated 34 million international arrivals recorded in July 2020, though well below the 164 million figure recorded in 2019.

On the other hand, another research conducted by Oxford Economics on behalf of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reveals that countries' GDP is expected to increase only by less than one-third, as tourism is recovering even slower than expected. The research was based on the current vaccination rates globally, consumer confidence, and less stringent entry and travel restrictions in the world.

However, prospects for September-December 2021 remain mixed, according to the latest UNWTO Panel of Experts survey, with 53% of respondents believing the period will be worse than expected. Only 31% of experts expect the point to better results towards the end of the year. The survey also shows that most tourism professionals continue to expect a rebound driven by unleashed pent-up demand for international travel in 2022, mostly during the second and third quarters.

Almost half of all experts (45%) continue to see international tourism returning to 2019 levels in 2024 or later, while 43% point to a recovery in 2023. By regions, the largest share of experts pointing to a return to 2019 levels in 2024 or later are in Asia and the Pacific (58%). In Europe, half of the respondents indicate this could happen in 2023. West Asia is the most optimistic, with a full recovery expected by 2022.

As mentioned by the UNWTO Barometer, most destinations reporting data for June and July 2021 saw a moderate rebound in international arrivals compared to 2020. Nevertheless, 2021 continues to be a challenging year for global tourism, with international arrivals down 80% in January-July compared to 2019. Asia



and the Pacific continued to suffer the weakest results in the period January to July, with a 95% drop in international arrivals compared to 2019.

"West Asia (-82%) recorded the second-largest decline, followed by Europe and Africa (both -77%). The Americas (-68%) saw a comparatively smaller decrease, with the Caribbean showing the best performance among world subregions. Meanwhile, some small islands in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific, together with a few small European destinations recorded the best performance in June and July, with arrivals close to, or sometimes exceeding pre-pandemic levels."

Iran preparing for tourism rebound

Iran considers reopening borders to foreign vacationers as its new tourism minister has said the government will soon scrap visa restrictions.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami made the announcement last month following his conversations with President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, however, the minister did not specify the date upon which those regulations would be scrapped.

According to some sources, fully vaccinated travelers would be embraced first under the updated regulations.

The average of international travels

to and from the Islamic Republic fell by 80 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20, 2021) from a year earlier.

"During this period, 4,343,163 passengers entered the country, which included 3,030,464 Iranian passengers and 512,699 international travelers," according to Arezou Ghaniuni, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration. "From the beginning of 1399 to the end of it, we saw a significant reduction in passenger traffic to the country or vice versa in land, sea, rail and air borders, which were caused by various coronavirus restrictions."

Months of steep recession has taken its toll. Many travel insiders, hoteliers, and tour operators have faced big dilemmas such as bankruptcy, unemployment, debts, and the prospects of not being competitive on the international level.

Panels of travel experts have mapped out new marketing strategies hoping Iran's tourism would get back on its feet once again. For instance, the Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association has said the international tourist flow to Iran will return to normal until 2022.

Iran is potentially a booming destination for travelers seeking cultural attractions, breathtaking sceneries, and numerous UNESCO-registered sites.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Domestic tourism as a propeller in COVID era

The annual UNWTO Executive Training Programme, which was held in the Maldives from October 5 to 8, sharpened the focus on harnessing the power of domestic tourism to drive recovery and growth in destinations across Asia and the Pacific.

Now in its 15th year, the event brought together representatives of 25 countries, with six (Iran, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Nepal) joining hosts in the Maldives to attend the training sessions in person.

Reflecting the restart of domestic tourism ahead of international tourism, both across Asia and the Pacific and globally, the event focused on enabling destinations of all sizes to capitalize on this trend.

Opening the event, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili stressed that, as tourism restarts in many parts of the world, "the sector needs leaders who can recognize ideas that will make a difference, who will innovate and back entrepreneurs and start-ups."

Confidence in travel rising sluggishly

Such an enhancement was underpinned by the reopening of many destinations to international travel, mostly in Europe and the Americas. The relaxation of travel restrictions for vaccinated travelers, coupled with the progress made in the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines, contributed to lifting consumer confidence and gradually restoring safe mobility in Europe and other parts of the world. In contrast, most destinations in Asia remain closed to non-essential travel.

According to UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, there is a strong demand for international tourism, and many destinations have started welcoming visitors back safely and responsibly.

"However, the true restart of tourism and the benefits it brings remains on hold as inconsistent rules and regulations and uneven vaccination rates continue to affect confidence in travel," Pololikashvili says.

Maragheh tomb towers on the verge of destruction

From page 1 ► A notable feature of the building's exterior is the use of small geometric knots and many designs, created with glazed tiles invented during the Ilkhanid era. The Ghaffarieh tower can be considered as an exhibition of this art.

Throughout Iran, such domes dot the landscape, and now Maragheh has managed to preserve several old towers. When properly preserved and protected, all four tomb towers, which are listed on the national heritage list, could become Maragheh's most popular tourist attraction.



5th-century church in northwestern Iran being reinforced

TEHRAN – A project to restore and reinforce the ancient Saint John Church has begun in the village of Sohrol, near Shabestar city in East Azarbaijan province, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

The project involves the reinforcement of the church's main structure and its foundation, as well as repairing the damaged parts, Alireza Quchi said on Saturday.

Rehabilitation work has been ongoing on the historical structure for the past several years in order to make it stronger, the official added.

Last year retaining walls for stabilizing soil around the monument were constructed to prevent it from being swept away by a landslide, he explained.

Also known as Sohraqeh Church, the Armenian Catholic church was built in circa 5th century, but it was rebuilt on the older church foundation in 1840 by Samson Makintsev, a Russian general in

the service of Iran during the Qajar era.

The historical monument was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1968.

Iran is home to several ancient and historical churches. Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are the most significant religious minorities in the country with Christians constituting the bulk.

Iranian Azarbaijan was the center of several ancient civilizations. It formed part of Urartu and later of Media. In the 4th century BC, it was conquered by Alexander the Great and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. The area returned to Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

The provincial capital Tabriz embraces several historical and religious sites, including the Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic



Bazaar Complex to name a few. The city became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295-1304) and his successor, Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital, it was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz. Tabriz retained its administrative

status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548 when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin. During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

Neglected craft of weaving kilim to be revived in southern Iran

TEHRAN – The art of weaving kilims, which had been fallen into oblivion, is planned to be revived in the village of Shabjareh in the southern province of Kerman, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

A budget of two billion rials (\$47,600 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) is required to bring this art back into production, Kazem Hosseinzadeh said on Saturday.

Bringing this art back to life will create jobs for ten people in this village, the official added.

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Wide-ranging handicrafts

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 Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth



of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Iranian handicrafts: Khomeh-Duzi of Sistan-Baluchestan



The word "Khomeh", which has roots in the word "Kham" with the meaning of raw, refers to the fact that raw and not dyed silk yarns are used to make embroideries on white and soft fabrics, according to Visit Iran.

The silk yarn with its special sparkle is used to make geometric motifs like square, diamond, or paper windmill pattern, on the white and matte background which not only creates a spectacular view but also it adds to the durability and strength of the thin fabric.

The motifs are applied on the margins in the form of strips, and flowers and bushes are applied in the center. In some cases, patterns are also printed with wooden blocks or painted on the fabric with pencils and carbon copy papers.

It takes complete and elaborate needle working to make a beautiful and fine piece of Khomeh-Duzi. In the case of clothing, the Khomeh-Duzi is accompanied by Siah-Duzi, a kind of embroidery with black yarn. For example, the buttonhole is stitched with black yarn and the collar and hand cuff are decorated with black stitches.

The materials necessary for Khomeh-Duzi are satin or cotton fabric, needle, mirror, and white silk yarn. This is very delicate needlework and is used as margins and very thin stitches.

Khomeh-Duzi has a history parallel to the history of silk work, and they have undergone many amazing changes in time. Moreover, Khomeh-Duzi is practiced as a domestic activity in parts of Yazd province as well.

First nomadic tent hotel makes debut in Iran



TEHRAN – A nomadic tent hotel, which is first of its kind in Iran, has been inaugurated in the ancient town of Kowsar, northwestern Ardabil province.

Consisting of nomadic tents, the hotel is launched in one of the agritourism farms of the city, a local tourism official has said.

"The opening of this hotel will help draw tourists to the city, increasing its tourism potential," Jahangir Shahbazi announced on Saturday.

Iran seeks to boost ethnic tourism or tribe tourism in recent years. Tribal tourism

lays the ground for tourists and travelers to feel indigenous people by living with a nomad or rural family or enjoying an independent stay.

Many tourists from all over the world tend to observe the lifestyle of these hardworking people and spend a few days watching activities such as milking, yogurt making, buttering, oiling, woolen, carpeting, and much more. Many Iranian and foreign tourists are interested in sleeping in nomadic black tents.

The varied natural setting of the country never disappoints visitors when it comes to tribal tourism as the culturally diverse country is home to many regional people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as

Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

Language, music, indigenous cuisine, clothing, songs, anecdotes, crafts, live performances, and local rituals such as celebrations and wedding ceremonies

have always spurred many to experience life among the tribes.

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

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

Tribal tourism lays the ground for travelers to feel indigenous people by living with a nomad or rural family or enjoying an independent stay.

UN ready to support Iran's dealing with SDSs

TEHRAN – The United Nations (UN) is ready to support cooperation at regional and trans-regional levels with Iran to deal with the negative effects of sand and dust storms, Letizia Rossano, head of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), has stated.

APDIM recently published a report entitled "Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific" which found significant findings on the impact of dust storms on agriculture, energy, environment, aviation, human health, glacier melting, and cities.

The report reveals that sand and dust storms pose risks to both society and the environment and directly threaten the achievement of 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Mobilizing coordinated regional action is paramount to reduce risk and strengthen resilience to the negative transboundary impact of sand and dust storms.

We are ready to facilitate cooperation to reduce the negative effects of dust storms through action at the regional and trans-regional levels, Rossano stated.

"As a meteorological phenomenon, sand and dust storms derive mainly from arid and semi-arid areas and are spread across large parts of the study region. Major events can transport dust over great distances so that their impacts occur not only in the areas where they originate but also in communities far from the source areas, frequently across international boundaries.

Findings show that more than 6 million people in different cities of China, Iran, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan have been breathing unhealthy levels of air pollution caused by dust storms for at least 10 months in 2019.

In Central Asia, 80 percent of the total population is exposed to high levels of poor air quality caused by severe dust storms. In addition, large areas of agricultural land are affected by dust particles. In Turkmenistan, 71 percent,

Pakistan 49 percent, and Uzbekistan 44 percent of agricultural lands are affected by dust particles.

Large amounts of SDSs, with high salt content, are toxic to plants and also reduce soil and water quality. Some crops are more sensitive to this phenomenon. For example, dust can dramatically reduce cotton production considerably.

SDSs also have a significant impact on the energy sector. The assessment shows that in only a small part of the energy sector (economic losses due to reduced efficiency of solar generators), dust storms incurred losses of more than \$107 million in India, \$46 million in China, and \$37 million in Pakistan.

In the aviation sector, the report identifies the airports and routes with the highest risk of flight delays and cancellations, as well as possible damage to aircraft engines due to sand and dust storms.

In recent years, action has been taken in many countries, including Iran and its neighbors, independently or within the framework of United Nations cooperation. Each of these efforts offers specific approaches to counteracting this phenomenon, including land and water resources management, combating land degradation and desertification, as well as establishing monitoring and early warning systems.

The UN General Assembly, in its resolution 72/225, in order to coordinate these activities and further promote this issue, required the UN system to increase the synergy and alignment of efforts at the regional and global levels, through taking integrated measures, facilitating capacity building in member countries, increasing



countries' awareness, and improve their preparedness and response to dust storms in critical areas," Rossano explained.

Scientific solutions to deal with dust storms

The report identifies areas that are expected to see an increase or decrease in dust storms over the next decade, based on forecasts of drought and water stress, as well as the current situation.

Based on the report, some coping strategies can focus on prevention, for example, reversing deforestation and land degradation to reduce dust emissions, reduce the negative effects of dust by reducing exposure, sensitivity and improving resilience in different sectors.

Depending on the case and the resources available, a combination of these approaches can be adopted. It should also be borne in

mind that dust storms are a natural phenomenon that has both positive and negative effects. We cannot and should not think about eliminating this phenomenon completely. Our focus should be on minimizing the negative effects and being vigilant when climate change and human-centered factors take this phenomenon far beyond its natural course.

In Iran, internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, with an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, of which 122.7 kilograms of dust per hectare is raised annually.

To control it, measures such as planting 110,000 hectares of seedlings, conservation management of about 50,000 hectares of agricultural

land, 300 km dredging, and 3,000 hectares of windbreaks, have been taken through a 10-year plan, which has controlled the SDS sources to some extent.

We need to deepen our understanding of the effects of this phenomenon. We find that there is still a large gap that can be filled by scientists, universities, and research institutes. Unlike other disasters, there was no coherent reporting mechanism to record damage and casualties from dust storms in countries. In this regard, APDIM has provided guidance to help countries record and report such data in a coherent manner, Rossano stated.

Another suggestion is to create and develop a system for predicting the effects of dust in various sectors, especially the health sector so that we can not only predict this phenomenon from a meteorological point of view but also be able to predict what damage this phenomenon will cause in order to take targeted measures to reduce exposure and its risks. We also urge countries to take concerted action in high-risk areas with the highest levels of exposure to reduce the risk.

Iran forerunner in fighting SDSs

Iran is a leading country in the knowledge and analysis of dust storms and has conducted some of the most important research in this field. Therefore, it is recommended to rely on this ability and make more assessments of the economic and social impact in different sectors.

The country has a history of leadership in the international community in dealing with dust storms as a cross-border disaster.

Addressing issues such as climate change and natural disasters, such as dust storms that occur in different regions and their influence extends beyond political boundaries, requires bilateral or multilateral negotiations between governments and through developed political frameworks or international organizations such as the United Nations.

In Iran, internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, with an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year.

Over 700,000 passengers screened for COVID-19 at borders

TEHRAN – A total of 700,108 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the country's official borders since March 10, Mehdi Valipour, head of Relief and Rescue Organization affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), said on Saturday.

During the aforesaid period, IRCS forces have conducted 81,535 PCR tests and 108,847 rapid tests, he said, IRNA reported.

He went on to lament that some 212 individuals, who tested positive, have so far been temporarily quarantined, under a plan to rapidly identify suspected cases of coronavirus and prevent the spread of new UK strain.

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

With the cooperation of ministries of health and transport, a plan is being implemented with the goal of rapidly identifying and testing incoming passengers and keeping

them in quarantine facilities, if necessary.

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

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

On August 22, Iran announced that all travelers must have a negative PCR test certificate or a health card to enter the country during the Covid-19 pandemic, IRINN reported.

Due to the prevalence of delta variant, negative PCR test is also mandatory for vaccinated passengers, Mohammad Reza Seif, head of safety and quality assurance department of Imam Khomeini Airport Town Co, said.

All passengers entering Iran, even if they have been vaccinated and have a vaccination card, must have a negative test result, he stated.

Paint pollution in seas an 'overlooked threat' to marine wildlife, scientists warn



oceans every year, according to the IUCN.

Large pieces of plastic choke wildlife or lodge in their intestines or strangle them.

But microplastics – fragments less than 5mm long – are the most immediately deadly because they are more easily ingested by birds, fish and marine animals.

They are also found in drug capsules, clothing and toothpaste.

The new study, carried out by scientists from the University of Plymouth and the Marine Biological Association and published in Science of the Total Environment, found paint flakes appeared more densely distributed around the shelf seas of northwest Europe than in open oceans.

Their chemical composition was consistent with paint from hulls and other components of ships. In coastal zones, paint may also come from road run-off, buildings and waste and industrial sites, the researchers said.

Using more environmentally friendly, non-toxic paints and limiting inputs into the oceans would help, they added.

Clare Ostle, of the MBA and study co-author, added: "We now know that plastics are everywhere, and that most organisms are likely to be ingesting them, but less is known about how harmful this ingestion might be.

"This study has highlighted that paint flakes are an abundant form of microplastic that should not be overlooked, particularly as some may have toxic properties."

Lead author Andrew Turner, associate professor in environmental sciences at the University of Plymouth, said: "Paint particles have often been an overlooked component of marine microplastics but this study shows that they are relatively abundant in the ocean. The presence of toxic metals like lead and copper pose additional risks to wildlife."

Charity creates 327,000 job opportunities for rural clients



TEHRAN – Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has opened up over 327,000 jobs so far by supporting small and home-based businesses in the country's rural areas, during the Sixth Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2021).

With the implementation of business plans, 87,695 rural households have become empow-

ered and have left the support of the Relief Foundation, Ali Akbar Khademi, deputy head of the Foundation said.

In the same period, 470,000 villagers benefited from vocational training, skills, and job stabilization, he noted.

He went on to say that the Foundation has supported livestock farming projects, and currently, the number of livestock reaches up to 5.5 million.

Last year, the clients produced over 120,000 square meters of carpet, a large part of which is produced in villages and supplied to domestic and foreign markets.

The Foundation will create 748,000 jobs by March 2022, marking the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan.

"Some five million employed people are cur-

rently supported by the Foundation," IRIB quoted Morteza Bakhtiari, the head of the Foundation, as saying on October 5.

Breadwinner women account for 60 percent of the people supported by the Foundation, he noted.

During the year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), which was the start of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan, the Foundation created 154,000 jobs, although it was obliged to create 70,000 jobs annually, Bakhtiari explained.

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation works to provide employment in deprived areas and empowers financially struggling families, other services such as building or buying housing, cultural services, medical services, and other facilities are provided, for example, in the field of treatment, more than 80,000 patients of incurable diseases are currently under the Foundation's coverage.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

97% of Iran affected by long-term drought: expert

Based on the data collected over the past decade approximately 97 percent of the country is affected by long-term drought, director of the national drought warning and monitoring center, Sadeq Ziaieian, has said.

Some 12.7 percent of the country is hit by extremely severe drought, 53.6 percent of the country is affected by severe drought while 24.8 percent of the country is facing moderate drought and 5.9 percent of the country is withstanding mild drought, ISNA news agency quoted Ziaieian as saying on Wednesday.

He went on to say that extremely severe long-term drought has had negative effects on 14.2 percent of the country's total population, severe long-term drought has hit 47 percent of the country's population, 30.7 percent of the country's population is affected by moderate long-term drought and 5.1 percent of the population is stricken with mild drought.

۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تاثیر خشکسالی است

صادق ضیائیان رئیس مرکز ملی خشکسالی و مدیریت بحران سازمان هواشناسی اعلام کرد: بررسی داده‌های ۱۰ ساله خشکسالی بیانگر آن است که ۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تاثیر خشکسالی بلندمدت است.

ضیائیان در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا گفت: از این مقدار ۵۳.۶ درصد مساحت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۱۲.۷ درصد با خشکسالی بسیار شدید، ۲۴.۸ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵.۹ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی خفیف مواجه هستند. وی ادامه داد: ۲ درصد جمعیت ایران با خشکسالی بسیار شدید بلندمدت است همچنین ۴۷ درصد جمعیت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۳۰.۷ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵.۱ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی خفیف دست و پنجه نرم می‌کنند.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON OCTOBER 9

New cases	7,654
New deaths	173
Total cases	5,691,634
Total deaths	122,370
New hospitalized patients	1,286
Patients in critical condition	5,368
Total recovered patients	5,201,515
Diagnostic tests conducted	33,144,555
Doses of vaccine injected	62,978,788



OCTOBER 10, 2021

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A wise man first thinks and then speaks and a fool speaks first and then thinks.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon: 11:52 Evening: 17:54 Dawn: 4:44 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:07 (tomorrow)

Iranian languages and scripts: Writing systems



An Old Persian inscription in Persepolis.

Part 1

Writing systems for Iranian languages include cuneiform (Old Persian); scripts descended from "imperial" Aramaic (earliest monuments of Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, and Chorasmanian); two Syriac scripts, Estrangelo or "Manichean" (Middle Persian, Parthian, Bactrian, Sogdian, Modern Persian) and "Nestorian" (Christian Sogdian, Modern Persian); Hebrew (Modern Persian and local dialects); Arabic (Modern Persian, Chorasmanian, Kurdish, Pashto, Baluchi); Brahmi (Khotanese, Tumshuqese, Sogdian); Greek (Bactrian); Cyrillic (Ossetic, Tajik); Georgian (Ossetic); and Latin (Kurdish, Ossetic).

The earliest forms of "Imperial" Aramaic are those seen in Achaemenid and Parthian inscriptions, Parthian and Persian coins, and in the Sogdian Ancient Letters.

Later forms are those of the royal Parthian and the Sassanid Middle Persian and early Chorasmanian inscriptions. The latest and most cursive versions of this script are seen in the later Middle Persian (Pahlavi) script and the cursive Sogdian script (secular, Buddhist, and Manichean texts), which have in common the merger of many letters into identical shapes, which render them ambiguous and difficult to read.

Scripts of old Iranian languages

The Old Persian cuneiform script

Old Persian is written in a cuneiform script different from the Mesopotamian cuneiform writing systems, which are all descended from Sumerian.

The Old Persian cuneiform has a small number of signs, and the signs contain a relatively small number of strokes. It has been suggested that this script was invented under Darius I (522-486 BCE) for the purpose of recording his deeds and that the inscriptions purporting to be from his ancestors (the Ariyaramna, Arshama, and Cyrus inscriptions) are either modern forgeries or added by Darius or another Achaemenid king.

The script changes somewhat throughout its short history from Darius I (522-486) to Artaxerxes III (359-338) in the relative proportions of the strokes, but not in the composition of the signs.

The Old Persian cuneiform script is not ideal for the language. For instance, short and long vowels are not distinguished except a - aa. Several sounds that, judging from the history of the language and the way words are spelled in the Elamite, Akkadian, and Greek traditions, were presumably pronounced are not written, such as h before u (e.g., = huvaspa) and n before consonant (e.g., = bandaka). The diphthongs ai and au probably became ee and oo some time under the Achaemenids, but the orthography cannot show this.

The orthographic rules of Old Persian must have been determined by the kings' scribal offices, as it varies little under each of the kings Darius and Xerxes, but differs slightly between the kings. For instance, the word ahmi "I am" is spelled under Darius, but under Xerxes.

There was therefore no "standard" Old Persian orthography, as only the royal and other professional scribes wrote the language and only for a short period.

The Avestan script

Avestan is written in an alphabetic script created on the basis of the Middle Persian Pahlavi script in order to record the sacred texts precisely the way they were pronounced at the time, presumably by select priests whose pronunciation was considered to be especially reliable.

All the Avestan texts are known to us only the way they were pronounced (recited or read) about 1000 CE, the approximate date of the earliest known manuscripts.

This form differs already somewhat from that in which they were written down (perhaps sometime in the early 7th cent. CE), as several letters originally representing distinct sounds are no longer kept distinct in the extant manuscripts and, presumably, their archetype.

It is today tacitly assumed that the form of the letters in the manuscripts is that of the first manuscript (what Karl Hoffmann called "the Sasanian archetype"), but this need not be so.

We see considerable difference in ductus in the extant manuscripts, and it is not unlikely that the script was originally closer to that of the Pahlavi Psalter or other variants than to later Avestan and Book Pahlavi.

As the script developed, the letters that were identical with Pahlavi letters then changed as the Pahlavi letters changed, while the remaining letters stayed closer to their original form. Letters may also have been added or omitted over time, or their value may have changed.

Transliteration systems for Avestan proliferated in the 19th century, but a standard was established with Christian Bartholomae's (1855-1925) dictionary (1904), which lasted until Karl Hoffmann (1915-96) showed that a more adequate system was needed; and today Hoffmann's principles are, with few exceptions, universally recognized. In this system, each Avestan letter is rendered by one letter (with or without diacritics) in the Latin alphabet.

Scripts of Middle Iranian languages

Scripts derived from Aramaic

During the Achaemenid period (549-330 BCE), Aramaic ("Imperial Aramaic") was used as the chancery language; and the Aramaic script was subsequently, at the latest by the Parthian period (ca. 210 BCE-224 CE), adopted by several Iranian states: Parthia, the local Persian dynasty in Pars, Chorasmia, and Sogdiana. Over time, each script developed differently into its later standard form.

In the 3rd century CE, under the first Sassanids, Manichean missionaries used a Syriac-Aramaic script, the Estrangelo script, to write the various languages they encountered in Iran and Central Asia. To express sounds not found in Syriac, they modified some letters and added others.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Isfahan children's filmfest opens with tribute to national hero Ali Landi

From Page 1 ► The audience wearing Ali Landi masks stood in tribute to the national hero.

Tabesh pointed to the beginning of a new century on the Iranian calendar and said, "We begin this century with a pandemic and mourning; the corona crisis is the first collective memory of a generation, which is the target audience of the films selected to be screened at this festival."

"Although the pandemic's grief is really awful, at least, it gives us a guarantee that the younger generation has learned to deal with harsh conditions as well as about the value of cooperation and teamwork in major crises," he added.

He noted, "I am certain the future that will be created by this generation during this century will be more brilliant and exciting than what exists now."

Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili also sent a message to the festival, which was read during the opening ceremony.

In the message, he pointed to the motto of the festival "Cinema, Land of Dreams" and said, "The motto refers to cinema's task of maintaining the spirit of imagination and creating a happy world for children so that they can think about tomorrow in a peaceful



A boy wearing a mask of Ali Landi and his mother attend the opening ceremony of the 34th Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan on October 8, 2021. (ICFF)

and friendly world by the magic of cinema."

Mohammad Khazaei, the new director of the Cinema Organization of Iran, also sent a message to the festival, expressing his thanks to those filmmakers who, by means of their cheerful films, have kept the Iranian people hopeful about

the future, despite the severe international sanctions facing the country.

Nine movies have been selected to be screened in the official competition of the festival, which will run until October 13.

Turkish director Ferit Karahan's drama "Brother's Keeper" is a

highlight of the official lineup.

"Sumi" by Amol Vasant Gole from India, "My Grandpa Is an Alien" by Marina Andreevna Skop and Drazen Zarkovic from Croatia, and "Martin and the Magical Forest" by Czech filmmaker Dana Klempirova are also among the films competing in the festival.

"The Wasteland" cinematographer Masud Amini honored at Asian Film Awards

TEHRAN – Masud Amini Tirani has won the award for best cinematographer for the Iranian drama "The Wasteland" at the 15th Asian Film Awards.

Ahmad Bahrami had also been nominated for the best new director award for the film, which depicts the mounting tensions among the ethnically diverse workers of a crumbling, archaic brick manufacturing plant seemingly removed from civilization. The story focuses on 40-year-old Lotfollah, who has lived his entire life within the building and acts as a mediator between the workers and their boss.

The Asian Film Awards took place on Friday in conjunction with the Busan International Film Festival in South Korea.

"Wife of a Spy" by Japanese director Kiyoshi Kurosawa was picked as best film.

The romance drama follows a Japanese merchant who leaves his wife behind in order to travel to Manchuria, where he witnesses an act of barbarism. His subsequent actions cause misunderstanding, jealousy and legal problems for his wife.

This film also brought Yu Aoi the award for best actress and Haruki Koketsu the award for best costume designer.

Zhang Yimou won the best director award with the Chinese drama "One Second".

Yoo Ah-in was selected as best actor for the Korean thriller "Voice of Silence" directed by Hong Eui-jeong.

Aju Makita from Japan won the best supporting actress award for her compelling performance in "True Mothers", while Kim Hyun-bin from South Korea was named best supporting actor for his role in "The Silent Forest".

Chinese actress Haocun Liu received the best newcomer award for her role in "One Second".

The Indian drama "The Disciple", written and directed by Chaitanya Tamhane, won the best screenplay award.

In this film, self-doubt, sacrifice and struggle converge into an existential crisis for a devoted classical vocalist as the mastery he strives for remains elusive.

Winners in several other categories were also



Masud Amini Tirani was picked as best cinematographer for the Iranian drama "The Wasteland" at the 15th Asian Film Awards in Busan, South Korea.

honored at the Paradise Hotel Busan during the Asian Film Awards, which are organized by the Tokyo, Busan and Hong Kong International Film Festivals.

Festival Tous Courts picks movies from Iran

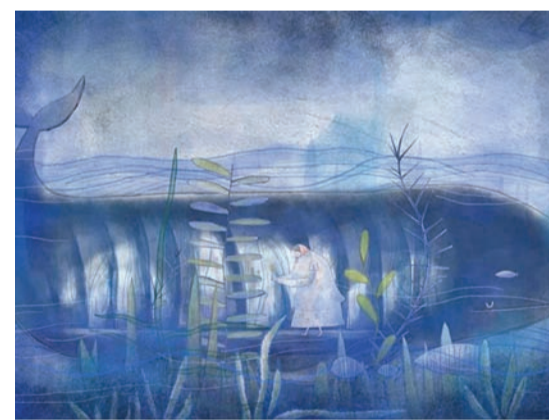
TEHRAN – The 39th edition of the Festival Tous Courts will screen the Iranian movies "Emergency", "Gabriel" and "Up to the Sea, She Weaves a Dream".

The festival will take place in the southern French city of Aix-en-Provence from November 30 to December 4.

"Emergency" directed by Maryam Esmikhani is about Nazanin, a seven-year-old girl who is trying to reveal a secret that bothers her by getting close to the emergency agent who has come to their house to check on her mother.

Director Yusef Kargar's acclaimed movie "Gabriel" tells the story of a middle-aged man who lives with his son. His wife has been missing for some time, and all the people are suspicious of him. One day news comes to him and he has to choose one: expediency or conscience?

The film has been screened in



A scene from "Up to the Sea, She Weaves a Dream" directed by Maryam Khalilzadeh.

numerous international festivals and has won some awards.

The 11th Karama Human Rights Film Festival in Amman, Jordan, selected "Gabriel" as best short in January.

It also won the award for best foreign narrative short at the 29th Berkeley Video and Film Festival in the U.S. in October 2020.

Directed by Maryam Khalilzadeh, the animation "Up to the Sea, She Weaves

a Dream" shows that in any war, there is always a soldier who is lost and the women who are waiting for him to return. The dreams these women weave carry them to the farthest seas. Knowing there is no return, they weave and weave to treat the wounds of war.

The film has been produced at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center.

The International Short Film Competition of the Festival Tous Courts is open to fiction, animation and documentary lasting no longer than 30 minutes and completed after January 1, 2020, the organizers have announced.

About twelve movies will also be screened at the 7th International Experimental Short Films Competition, which is organized on the sidelines of the festival.

"Every Time a Bell Rings" at Iranian bookstores



Front cover of the Persian translation of Carmel Harrington's novel "Every Time a Bell Rings".

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of Irish writer Carmel Harrington's novel "Every Time a Bell Rings" has been published.

Adash is the publisher of the book translated into

Persian by Behnaz Sheibani.

The book tells the story of Belle, who has taken all the Christmas decorations down. This year they won't be celebrating.

As foster parents, Belle and Jim have given many children the chance of a happier start in life. They've loved them as if they were their own. They shouldn't have favorites but little Lauren has touched their hearts. And now her mother is well enough to take her back and Belle can't bear the loss. Hence, Christmas is canceled.

So when Jim crashes his car one icy December night, after an argument about Lauren, Belle can only blame herself. Everything she loves is lost. And Belle finds herself standing on The HaPenny Bridge wishing she had never been born.

But what happens to a Christmas wish when an angel is listening... Will Belle realize, before it's too late, that her life is the most wonderful life of all?

Inspired by the timeless tale of beloved Christmas movie, "It's a Wonderful Life", Carmel Harrington's book

tells the story of Belle.

Full of Irish charm, magic and the warmth of the festive season, this is an emotional, heartwarming story that will stay with you long after you've reached "The End."

Carmel is the bestselling author of "The Life You Left" and "Beyond Grace's Rainbow", voted Romantic eBook of the Year 2013.

A Persian translation of "Beyond Grace's Rainbow" Sheibani was also published by Adash in August.

As an Irish Times bestseller and regular panelist on radio and TV, her warm and emotional storytelling has captured the hearts of readers worldwide. Her books have been translated into nine languages and have sold hundreds of thousands of copies worldwide.

Carmel's novels have been shortlisted for an Irish Book Award in 2016 and 2017, and her debut was awarded Kindle Book of the Year and Romantic eBook of the Year in 2013.