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What's Behind Shootings in Beirut

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STAY UPDATED #MosqueAttack

Report **T** White cane: symbol of social life of the blind

By Farnak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – White cane is a symbol that shows the index of the social life of visually impaired citizens and contributes to the independence of the blind.

Globally, at least 1 billion people have near or distance vision impairment that could be prevented or has yet to be addressed. Vision impairment affects people of all ages, with the majority being over the age of 50. Vision impairment and blindness can have major and long-lasting effects on all aspects of life, including daily personal activities, interacting with the community, school and work opportunities, and the ability to access public services.

World Sight Day is an annual day of awareness held on the second Thursday of October, to focus global attention on vision impairment, including blindness. This year, World Sight Day will take place on October 14 with the theme of "Love Your Eyes".

In Iran, October 16 is called White Cane Day.

In 1921 James Biggs, a photographer from Bristol who became blind after an accident and was uncomfortable with the amount of traffic around his home painted his walking stick white to be more easily visible.

On October 6, 1964, a joint resolution of the Congress, HR 753, was signed into law authorizing the President of the United States to proclaim October 15 of each year as "White Cane Safety Day".

In this law, all the social rights of the blind as a member of civilized society are reflected.

Blind people have the right to enjoy all the usual amenities in society. They must be able to use sidewalks, streets, highways, and public transportation such as airplanes, trains, buses, cars, ships, hotels, public places, and leisure and religious centers.

Drivers of vehicles are obliged to take full care of the blind who walk the streets with white canes. The government has a duty to encourage the blind to participate in government affairs. ▶ Page 7

Report **T** Saudis "serious" in talks with Iran

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister has said the kingdom is "serious" about talks with Iran, signaling Riyadh's desire to repair relations between the two sides following multiple offers by Iran to ease tensions with a number of initiatives that Tehran has publicly announced and presented the international arena.

A Saudi official added that Riyadh was considering reopening Iran's consulate in the port city of Jeddah but said the talks had not made sufficient progress in restoring full diplomatic relations, something Iran has been pushing for with some Persian Gulf neighbors.

Since April, the kingdom has held four rounds of talks with Iran, including a first meeting last month with the new government of president Ebrahim Raisi. Analysts say the negotiations are a sign of step-by-step attempts to de-escalate tensions in West Asia in the wake of the election of U.S. President Joe Biden and with the economic hardship in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic.

Speaking to the Financial Times, in a rare interview with a foreign media outlet, Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, the Saudi foreign minister, told the newspaper that the talks with the Islamic Republic of Iran have been "cordial" while describing the negotiations as "exploratory." He claims, "we are serious about the talks. For us, it's not that big a shift. We've always said we want to find a way to stabilize the region."

In January 2016, Riyadh and Tehran cut diplomatic ties after Saudi Arabia's embassy in the republic was subject to protests. The demonstrations came after Saudi Arabia beheaded senior Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr for voicing his opposition to Saudi Arabia's crackdown on the Shia minority population living in the Kingdom oil-rich Eastern province. Despite the region's wealth, Human Rights Groups have decried the social injustice saying the Shia in Saudi Arabia have been discriminated against, not provided the same opportunities as the Sunni population while at the same time prevented from any positions of authority. ▶ Page 5

Kandahar explosion: A sedition aimed to cause rift between Shias and Sunnis



TEHRAN — At least 68 people have been killed in an explosion at a mosque in the city of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, according to Al Jazeera.

The assault came just a week after a suicide attack on Shiite worshippers at a mosque in the northern city of Kunduz, which was claimed by the Islamic State group of Khorasan, known as ISIS-K.

There has not yet been any claim of responsibility for the assault in Kandahar, the spiritual hub of the Taliban.

"Our initial information shows it was a suicide bomber who blew up himself up inside the mosque. We have launched an investigation to find out more," a local Taliban official told AFP on condition

of anonymity.

Local medical sources said that they have spotted over 15 ambulances rushing in and out of hospitals. Of course, up until this article is being written, this has not yet been confirmed.

An Afghan doctor told AFP that they are "overwhelmed." ▶ Page 2

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Iranian heavy crude oil price rises 5.3% in September: OPEC

TEHRAN - Iranian heavy oil price increased \$3.74 in September to register a 5.3-percent rise compared to the previous month, according to OPEC's latest monthly report published on Wednesday.

Following the increase in oil demand in world markets in the mentioned month, the Iranian heavy crude oil price reached at \$74.08 per barrel, compared to August's \$70.34 per barrel.

According to the report, the country's average heavy crude price was \$66.65 from the beginning of 2021 up to the report's publishing day, in com-

parison to \$39.4 in the previous year's same period.

The report put Iranian crude output for September at 2.503 million barrels per day (bpd) indicating an 22,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the previous month.

Based on OPEC data, the country's average crude output in the third quarter of 2021 stood at 2.493 million bpd indicating a near 50,000-bpd rise compared to the average figure for the year's second quarter.

OPEC basket prices also rose \$3.55 or five percent to reach at \$73.88 a barrel in September from

the previous month.

Iranian heavy crude oil price had followed an upward trend since the beginning of the current year up to May, then following the increase in the OPEC members' production oil prices fell during June-August.

In addition to the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the global oil industry which resulted in the drastic fall in oil prices, the Iranian oil industry has also been under pressure from the U.S. efforts to isolate the country by re-imposing sanctions. ▶ Page 4

Saudi FM says Iran has been cordial

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister has said the kingdom is "serious" about talks with Iran, signaling Riyadh's desire to repair relations between two rivals that accuse each other of stoking tensions and instability across West Asia.

A Saudi official added that Riyadh was considering allowing Iran to reopen its consulate in the port city of Jeddah but said the talks had not made sufficient progress to restore full diplomatic relations, something Iran has been pushing for. The kingdom has held four rounds of talks with Iran since April, including a first meeting last month with the government of new president Ebrahim Raisi. The negotiations reflect a de-escalation in the region in the wake of the election of U.S. president Joe Biden and with the economic hardship wrought by the pandemic.

In a rare interview, Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, the Saudi foreign minister, told the Financial Times that the talks with Iran had been "cordial", while describing the negotiations as "exploratory."

"We are serious about the talks," he said. "For us it's not that big a shift. We've always said we want to find a way to stabilize the region." ▶ Page 2



Foolad crowned champions of Asian Club Volleyball
TEHRAN – Foolad Sirjan of Iran defeated Qatari side Al Arabi (25-19, 21-25, 25-23, 25-22) to win the 2021 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship on Friday. Earlier in the day, Burevestnik Almaty of Kazakhstan eased past Thailand's Nakhon Ratchasima QminC 3-0 (25-23, 25-17, 25-21) in the bronze medal match. The competition was held in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand from Oct. 8 to 15. Foolad Sirjan will represent Iran at the 2021 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship.

Persepolis manifestation of great Iranian art, president says

TEHRAN - Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi on Thursday said the UNESCO-registered Persepolis is an epitome of the great Persian art.

Persepolis displays the great artistic achievements of Iranians from past millennia, which are still remarkable and admirable after so many centuries, the president said.

He made the remarks during his visit to the prestigious site, which was once the ceremonial capital of the mighty Achaemenid Empire (c. 550 - 330 BC).

[The ruins of] Persepolis is also conveying a message to oppressors warning them of the fate of those who are cruel to humanity, he added.

The royal city of Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art.

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

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

The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall"). ▶ Page 6

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Interview **T**

Amir Abdollahian and the Iranian offers on the Lebanese table

By Abir Bassam

On the 8th of October, Mr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Iranian foreign minister, visited Lebanon. He was formally received and welcomed. So far, within the send and received diplomatic letters, everything was fine. He met with three presidents in Lebanon, the President, the Prime Minister, and the Head of the Parliament. Everyone was friendly and warmly welcomed the visit, but what about the offers he brought to Lebanon, and how receptive the Lebanese government was to these offers?

As usual, so far, nothing has happened! Mr. Abdollahian brought with him important offers to Lebanon, which are mostly needed. The first is to build two electricity factories, one in the South and the second in the North. The second is to give a hand in solving the transportation problem in Lebanon by construction of a subway station. Iran has vast experience in the two fields. And finally rebuilding Beirut Harbor, but?

Unless France has previously agreed to build the harbor with the help of the Iranians, it is difficult for Iran to receive this file. Ambassador Pierre Dukan was in Beirut during Mr. Abdollahian's visit. He came in an exploratory mission, during which he will meet with a number of senior officials in the Ministry of Finance, the Banque du Liban, and others to discuss developments related to the planned reform measures and to keep pace with the results of the Elysée meeting between Macron and Mikati. The visit came as a start of preparations for the resumption of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and a week after the Elysée meeting between Macron and Mikati. The commissioner is in Beirut to follow up on the decisions of the CEDRE 1 conference. It is common that France will rebuild the harbor, but it seems that it is also waiting for the American green light to begin. ▶ Page 5

"Yadoo" crowned best at Isfahan children's film festival

TEHRAN – The acclaimed Iranian drama "Yadoo" was picked as best film at the 34th edition of the Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and Youth.

The film follows a teenage boy named Yadoo living with his family and people under siege in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan in the early days of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The family is finally forced to migrate.

Produced by Mohammadreza Mesbah, the film brought Mehdi Jafari the Golden Butterfly for best director. Jafari also won the award of the International Centre of Film for Children and Young People - CIFEJ.

The award for best photography director was also given to Morteza Najafi for his collaboration in the film.

The festival, which opened last week in the central Iranian city of Isfahan, wrapped up with announcing the winners on Wednesday evening the Abbas Kiarostami Hall of the Farabi Cinema Foundation in Tehran. ▶ Page 8

Iran strongly condemns tragic shootings in Beirut

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh late on Thursday strongly condemned the tragic shootings at peaceful protesters in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon.

Emphasizing the importance of maintaining stability and peace in Lebanon, Khatibzadeh said Iran "closely monitors the developments in the country."

He added Tehran believes that the people, government and army, along with the Lebanese resistance, through their cohesion and unity, as always, will successfully and proudly overcome the seditions and conspiracies hatched by the Zionist regime and are carried out by the masters and agents of this regime.

He said it is essential that the Lebanese government take swift action to identify and arrest the perpetrators of these crimes and sedition.

"It is essential for the Lebanese government and officials to identify and arrest the perpetrators of these crimes."

Khatibzadeh expressed his condolences to the Lebanese government and people, especially the bereaved families, and prayed for the health and urgent recovery of the injured.



According to the Lebanese Red Cross, at least six people were killed and 30 others injured in the shooting in the Tayouneh area of Beirut on Thursday.

The Lebanese army was deployed to control the situation and warned that they would shoot any armed person found on the street. Nine people were arrested by the Lebanese Army following the clashes, Al Jazeera said.

The clashes broke out as demonstrators were calling for the removal of a judge leading a probe into last year's explosion in the port of Beirut.

Kandahar explosion: A sedition aimed to cause rift between Shias and Sunnis

From page 1 ► An eyewitness told AFP he heard three explosions, one at the main door of the mosque, another at a southern area, and a third where worshippers wash before their prayers.

The Fatemiyeh mosque in Kandahar was hosting many Afghan Shiites who were saying their Friday prayers, but were subjected to tragic death by people who work hard to create division among the brotherly Sunni and Shiite sects. Graphic images posted to social media, which could not be immediately verified, showed bodies lying on the floor of the mosque.

"Firing started after we ended the prayers. Then two or three explosions took place," said local resident Ahmadullah to AFP.

Taliban's interior ministry spokesman tweeted on Friday, "We are saddened to learn that an explosion took place in a mosque of the Shiite brotherhood in the first district of Kandahar city in which a number of our compatriots were martyred and wounded."

It seems that the enemies of the Islamic Ummah are planning to sow new seditions in an Afghanistan that has not yet found its way.

Once again, the hands of the enemies of

Islam and Muslims came out of the hands of the criminal Takfiri terrorists and killed another group of oppressed people during Friday prayers.

The Iranian foreign ministry issued a statement regarding the tragic explosion calling it "a crime against humanity."

The statement said, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the terrorist attack by Takfiri terrorists on the Fatemiyeh Mosque in Kandahar, which resulted in the martyrdom and injury of a large number of participants in Friday prayers."

It also called for patience by the bereaved families and urgent healing for the wounded of this "crime against humanity," and once again warned against divisive conspiracies and emphasized the need for unity of Shiites and Sunnis and the denial of violence and extremism in the name of Islam.

"This tragic incident, and the tragic events of the past, including the previous attack on worshippers in Kunduz, further highlight the need to increase surveillance and redouble the protection of Shiite and Sunni religious centers and other gatherings in Afghanistan," the statement highlighted.

EU says awaiting response from U.S., Iran before calling meeting of nuclear deal negotiators

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell is waiting on responses from Washington and Tehran before calling a meeting of negotiators on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, his spokesman said.

"We are awaiting the Iranians' response," spokesman Peter Stano said. "A meeting will be called if all parties are in agreement and are all ready," he said. "There is an urgent need to resume discussions very soon."

Borrell is in Washington, where he is meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken over the Iran nuclear accord.

The meetings are part of a push to resume talks to revive the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, between Iran and world powers.

EU chief negotiator Enrique Mora visited Iran on Thursday to underline the "urgency of resuming discussions."

Amid mounting pressure from EU countries and the United States for a swift resumption of talks, Mora met on Thursday with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri, who is in charge of the nuclear file for Iran.

Iran and the EU agreed to hold further dialogue in Brussels aimed at resuming talks after Mora and Bagheri met for several hours.

"At the end of this meeting, the two parties agreed to continue dialogue on questions of mutual interest in the coming days in Brussels," Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, which noted that Mora said the EU was "ready

to collaborate with Iran and the other parties."

Saudi Arabia on Thursday also discussed Iran's nuclear program with U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken, the country's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday, describing the meeting as "productive."

Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud also met with Robert Malley, the U.S. special envoy for Iran.

Al-Saud was also quoted as saying that Saudi Arabia's talks with Iran had been "cordial" and describing the negotiations as "exploratory," the Financial Times reported on October 15.

"We are serious about the talks," al-Saud told the newspaper in an interview. "For us it's not that big a shift. We've always said we want to find a way to stabilize the region."

The nuclear accord, which offered Tehran the lifting of some international sanctions in exchange for a ramping down of its nuclear enrichment program under strict UN supervision, was left in tatters after the United States unilaterally pulled out of the pact in 2018.

The administration of then-President Donald Trump started reimposing crippling sanctions on Iran.

Indirect negotiations between Washington and Tehran, via intermediaries from other parties to the accord -- Britain, China, France, Germany, and Russia -- began in Vienna in April, but the talks were suspended following the June election of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to the European Union on Thursday urges Afghanistan's invaders to bear responsibility for the damage that they have afflicted on the Central Asian nation and the refugee influx that their actions have brought about.

Qolam-Hossein Dehqani made the remarks on Thursday while addressing a virtual meeting of the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 to oust the Taliban regime for hosting al-Qaeda leader considered responsible for the September 11 attacks. Later, other NATO members joined U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Saudi FM says Iran has been cordial

From page 1 ► Riyadh cut diplomatic ties with Iran in January 2016 after Saudi Arabia's embassy in the republic was ransacked. The diplomatic mission was attacked after Saudi Arabia executed a senior Shia cleric.

Riyadh believes negotiations have not yet made sufficient progress to restore full relations with Tehran. But a Saudi official told the FT that it was considering an Iranian request for it to open its consulate in Jeddah. Riyadh was also considering allowing Tehran to reopen its representative office for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the port city. However, the kingdom was not yet ready to reopen a consulate in the Iranian religious city of Mashhad, with a senior official saying the dialogue so far lacked "substance".

The discussions have been taking place amid European diplomatic efforts to broker a deal on Washington's return to the nuclear deal Tehran signed with world powers in 2015. Talks have

stalled since Raisi's election in June.

Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran soared after Riyadh backed former U.S. president Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to unilaterally withdraw the U.S. from the nuclear deal with Tehran and impose crippling sanctions on the republic.

But Saudi Arabia appeared to have recalibrated its more assertive foreign policy after Biden took office pledging to reassess relations with the kingdom, criticizing the murder of Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents and freezing some arms sales to Riyadh.

Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's stewardship, Riyadh had aggressively pursued its war with Houthi rebels in Yemen; became embroiled in a bitter diplomatic dispute with Canada; and briefly detained Saad Hariri while he was Lebanon's prime minister. But Prince Faisal insisted that Riyadh "did not pick fights".

"The leadership has a clear policy that the priority is prosperity, building the country, Vision 2030 [reform plan],



and you can't deliver those things with a region in turmoil," he said. "So while we will vigorously defend our national security and our sovereignty, we will try to resolve them through diplomacy as well."

He added that there was a "confluence of events that made it feel like it was the right moment" to talk to Iran.

"We were always willing to talk if they might actually be serious," he said. "Various factors came into play."

Diplomats say Riyadh wants Tehran to use its influence over the Houthi rebels in Yemen to help end the war there, with the kingdom keen to exit the conflict after intervening in 2015 to back the ousted Yemeni government.

The Associated Press reported last month that satellite imagery showed that the U.S. had pulled its Patriot air defense system out of Saudi Arabia.

But Prince Faisal said Washington had assured the kingdom that its "commitment to our security and the

security of our border is ironclad, and we take them at their word".

"We have a robust dialogue with the Americans, we agree 90 percent of the time," he said. "Are we unhappy about the general tone in Washington, not the administration? We think it's not entirely based on where the true relationship is and the value of the relationship, but it's affected by domestic factors."

The Saudi foreign minister met U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington and exchanged views on Iran's nuclear program and international talks on the matter, Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry said in a statement on Friday.

"Had a productive meeting today with my friend Secretary Blinken, during which we discussed a range of issues of common interest & concern to both our nations & ways to strengthen our strategic partnership & cooperation on multiple fronts," Prince Faisal said in a twitter post on Friday, according to Reuters.

IAEA approach toward Israel sends negative message to NPT members: Iran



TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the international organizations based in Vienna on Friday warned about the consequences of the International Atomic Energy Agency's silence toward the Zionist regime's nuclear program.

Kazem Gharibabadi said the silence clearly shows the double standards exercised by the international body and sends a negative message to the signatories to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"In that case, what is the benefit of membership

in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the full implementation of the Agency's safeguards?" the outgoing diplomat said in a Twitter message.

Gharibabadi added, "How can the Agency be seen as a serious, professional and impartial body, while not pursuing its safeguards regime equally and fairly for all its members?"

Ambassador Gharibabadi said the example of Israel shows that refusing to sign the NPT even brings "rewards".

"Silence and negligence in the face of Israel's nuclear program sends a negative message to NPT members that 'membership in this treaty is tantamount to accepting the strongest verification and surveillance, while staying out of it means not bearing any commitment and criticism and even receiving rewards'" he lamented.

In an interview with Energy Intelligence a few days ago, IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi failed to provide a convincing answer to a question "why do you talk so much about Iran when you do not talk about Israel's nuclear program?"

Grossi said, "Well, there is a very clear reason.

Our relation with Israel is based on the one that you have with a country which is not a party to the NPT. Israel never signed the treaty... I'm not judging if this is good or bad. I hope they would, because I believe in the universality of this treaty, but instead they have a decision not to do that. But when you have a country that doesn't do that, the degree of inspection that we have is limited to whatever they declare. And we have a couple of places where we go and verify. In the case of Iran, Iran, like most countries in the world, is a party to the NPT, and from that legal status you will derive a number of obligations that they have. Not political gestures, but legal obligations that they have. Hence our much bigger role — not only in Iran, but in all the other 192 state parties to the NPT."

While Israel has refused to sign the NPT, it is the fiercest opponent to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

American foreign policy expert Barbara Slavin has said according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Israel has about 90 nuclear weapons.

Raisi: Prosperous future awaits Iran

TEHRAN — President Ebrahim Raisi has said a brilliant future is awaiting Iran, predicting the Iranian nation will witness progress and achievements in many areas.

The president said in a meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution he had pointed to this issue that a bright future awaits Iran and the Leader said he deeply believed in this vision.

Speaking on Thursday evening in a meeting of the administrative council of Fars Province, Raisi explained about 100 government ratifications following his visit to the province and the administration's plans to solve the problems in the province.

During the meeting of the administrative council, the president instructed the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism and the Governor of Fars to take measures to facilitate pilgrimage to the holy shrines of Shahcheragh, and Hazrat Seyyed Alaeddin Hussein Ibn Musa Al-Kazem (AS).

Importance of completing semi-finished plans

In another part of his remarks, the president stressed the importance of completing semi-finished projects in provinces and said that first half-finished projects should be completed and then new projects should be put on the agenda.

Referring to his quick visit to Kenareh village in Marvdasht city during his one-day trip to the province, Raisi said: "The people of the region had difficulty accessing water for bathing, and this shows that the issue of water is one of the



necessities and priorities."

The president went on to say that work has started to supply water to the region, which had been abandoned half-finished.

These unfinished projects should be completed as soon as possible, he insisted.

It is necessary to talk to the people

In another part of his remarks, Raisi spoke about the administration's efforts to solve the problems caused by drought in different provinces, saying: "This issue will be raised in the Supreme Water Council, including in Fars province."

The high-ranking official stated that if the capacities and credits in this sector were distributed fairly, the people would be satisfied.

Inactive industries should be revived

Elsewhere in his remarks, the president emphasized that dormant industries in Fars province should be revived. He noted that a number of industries in the province had been closed and some were semi-active."

He pointed to his visit to the Marvdasht Azmayesh factory that has been closed,

saying: "Today we saw a deplorable situation in this factory; it has been turned into an onion warehouse."

Referring to the concerns of some Marvdasht ranchers about a desire by some to import livestock instead of domestic production, Raisi underlined that solution to economic problems lies on production. "We must be producers in the agricultural and industrial sectors, because import will undermine independence."

The president urged banks to direct banking facilities to the production sector, saying channeling bank resources towards production would strengthen national economy.

"We believe that if liquidity and monetary and banking resources be at the service of brokers instead of producers, it will devastate the country," he affirmed.

"Whenever we have an increase in liquidity and these costs do not go to production, we have to worry about its harms, including its inflationary consequences," Raisi added.

"The policy and strategy of the 13th administration is based on this priority, and instead of injecting money, it seeks the right spending strategy to direct capital and liquidity towards production and strengthen resistance economy."

He noted that directing liquidity, capital and banking resources toward the production sector would make the economy to prosper, create jobs and revive hope in the society.

The president also called on investors and businessmen inside and outside the country to choose Fars Province for

economic activities.

Security of investment in various sectors such as agriculture, industry, tourism, trade, etc. is guaranteed in the province, he stated.

In another part of his remarks, the president underscored that his administration is determined to reduce unemployment, resolve the housing problems, etc.

He went on to say that the officials, especially the governors, should seek to solve the problems "with the cooperation and utilization of all capacities and the elites."

The Raisi administration has promised to build four million housing units with the four-year presidency. The high inflation rate that has mostly resulted from illegal sanctions on Iran has led to a sharp rise in house prices and renting.

"The ministers and (other) officials in this administration should think about solving the people's problems and what should be done to radically reduce poverty and improve the people's livelihood and resolve economic problems," Raisi stated.

At the beginning of his trip to Fars on Thursday, the president paid a quick visit to Marvdasht city, 45 km north of Shiraz. While visiting the Azmayesh factory, he talked face to face with people, including ranchers and farmers in the village of Kenareh.

The president also visited paper factory under construction, the Persepolis World Heritage Complex, the holy shrine of Shahcheragh (AS) and the tomb of Hafez, the famous Iranian poet, in Shiraz, the province of Fars province.

Iran says invaders should take responsibility for Afghanistan mayhem

TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to the European Union on Thursday urges Afghanistan's invaders to bear responsibility for the damage that they have afflicted on the Central Asian nation and the refugee influx that their actions have brought about.

Qolam-Hossein Dehqani made the remarks on Thursday while addressing a virtual meeting of the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 to oust the Taliban regime for hosting al-Qaeda leader considered responsible for the September 11 attacks. Later, other NATO members joined U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Dehqani said after the invasion "destroyed the social fabric and lifestyle" of the Afghan people, the Islamic Republic and a number of other countries neighboring Afghanistan were left to take the biggest share of refugees, according to Press TV.

This is while the invading countries have been "systematically" shirking from the responsibility of their actions concerning Afghanistan "and closing their borders to Afghan refugees," he stated.

The Taliban was in power from 1996 to 2001. They regained the control of Afghanistan despite 20 years of occupation by the U.S. and NATO partners. 20 years of the so-called nation building ended in shambles.

Just one week after the deadly terrorist attack on a mosque in Kunduz in northeast Afghanistan which resulted in the killing of more than 50 people and more than 100 injured, again on Friday, October 15, a large explosion tore through a Shiite mosque in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar. So far, over 68 worshippers have been killed and more than 80 wounded.

The Iranian ambassador to Brussels went on to say that continuation of such a trend "neither helps resolve Afghanistan's crisis, nor does it lessen Afghans' pain in any manner." He added, "You cannot keep supporting Afghans in words, and avoiding them in action."

Iran hosts close to 800,000 "registered" Afghan refugees and upwards of 2.3 million undocumented ones.

The number of the refugees have been on the rise since August, when the Taliban rose back to power in the Central Asian country.

Dehqani, meanwhile, repeated assertions that have been made on numerous occasions by either the Islamic Republic's officials or diplomats that the United States' oppressive and unilateral sanctions interfere with the host countries' ability to properly address the needs of the Afghan refugees.

Iran is hosting millions of Afghan refugees despite the fact that it is under illegal crippling U.S. sanctions.

What's behind shootings in Beirut

TEHRAN – Lebanon took another step closer to a devastating civil war on Thursday after militants reportedly affiliated with a firebrand politician opened fire on peaceful demonstrators protesting against a judge whom they accuse of using last year's blast at Beirut port to politically target Hezbollah and its allies.

The episode began when Tarek Bitar, the judge who leads the investigation into the Beirut port blast, started to issue subpoenas for some Lebanese politicians to interrogate them about the August 2020 explosion which razed the port to the ground. These politicians accused the judge of exploiting his mandate as a tool to target and discredit them.

Hezbollah Secretary General Sayed Hassan Nasrallah warned about the Bitar-led investigation going astray. In a recent televised speech, the secretary openly cautioned that Bitar is misusing the investigation and that his efforts will lead nowhere.

"We said from the beginning that we wanted to investigate the explosion of Beirut Port, and I say honestly if the families of the martyrs and the wounded abandon the investigation, we do not abandon it, and we consider that we are among those who have been morally, politically and media-affected," Nasrallah said, adding, "The current judge, instead of learning from all the mistakes of the previous judge, on the contrary, completed these mistakes. And he went even further."

Underlining that Bitar is politically motivated and has nothing to do with justice, the Hezbollah chief told the families of the victims, "You will not reach justice with Judge Bitar, who engages in politics and uses blood to serve political targets."

On Thursday, a number of Lebanese people took to the streets



to call for Bitar's dismissal. The demonstrators suddenly came under fire while marching through a Beirut neighborhood close to the Ministry of Justice. At least seven people, including a woman, were killed and many others were wounded. For a while, Beirut seemed to be on the brink of another civil war as some of the demonstrators took up arms to defend themselves.

Most of the victims were Shi'ite and the accused was a political party claiming to be a representative of Christians. Hezbollah said the assailant were members of the Lebanese Forces Party.

Hashem Safi al-Din, head of the Executive Council of Hezbollah, said the Lebanese Forces Party was seeking to incite a new civil war in Lebanon with help from the United States. "The Lebanese Forces Party meets the demand of the Americans for a handful of money," he warned.

Safi al-Din pointed out that the

blood of the martyrs of Thursday's incident in Beirut would not be trampled on, adding that the incident was one of the actions managed by the U.S. embassy in Beirut.

Many observers believe that the party, led by Samir Geagea, seeks to carry out the next phase of the pressure campaign against Hezbollah after all U.S.-led efforts to remove Hezbollah from power came to naught.

Over the last few years, the U.S. and its allies in the region, missed no opportunity to exert pressure on Hezbollah. They used everything in their power to cripple Lebanon's economy and then blame the economic malaise on Hezbollah. But all their efforts failed to bear fruit and Hezbollah skillfully weathered the storm.

With Lebanon breaking the deadlock over forming a new government without bowing to U.S. dictates, all the pressures Washington put on

Hezbollah over the last years seemed going up in smoke.

While the new government of Lebanon is in an early stage of improving the situation, Geagea and his Forces created a crisis that Lebanon is in an urgent need to avoid. Hezbollah and its allies seem to be aware of the intention of Geagea to drag Lebanon into another civil war. They all urged restraint while underlining justice for the victims.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh underlined the importance of maintaining stability and peace in Lebanon and said Tehran believes that the people, government, and army, along with the Lebanese resistance, through their cohesion and unity, as always, will successfully and proudly overcome the seditions and conspiracies that have their roots in the Zionist regime and are planned and carried out by the masters and agents of this regime.

IRAN IN FOCUS

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Al Hilal, Persepolis set for scintillating quarter-final

TEHRAN – AFC Champions League runner-up Persepolis lock horns with 2019 champions Al Hilal SFC at Prince Faisal bin Fahd Stadium in the second match of the 2021 quarter-finals on Saturday.

The two sides have been the dominant forces in West Asia over the past few years, with one of them reaching the final each year since 2017.

Al Hilal were beaten by Urawa Red Diamonds in 2017 and lifted the trophy in 2019 at the expense of the same side, while Persepolis came runners-up to Kashima Antlers in 2018 and to Ulsan Hyundai in 2020.

The two quarter-finalists have been just as dominant on the domestic front, with Persepolis recording five consecutive Iran Pro League titles and Al Hilal winning four out of the past five league titles in the Saudi Pro League.



And while the two teams are powers to reckon with, the head-to-head record heavily favours Al Hilal who have won three of their eight matches against Persepolis in the AFC Champions League, with the Iranian champions only winning once and four games ending in a draw.

Leading the line for Al Hilal is French forward Bafetimbi Gomis, the 2019 AFC Champions League top scorer has four goals to his name in the current edition, and he has been the competition's standout marksman since his debut in 2019, scoring 15 goals; a tally only matched by Al Nassr's Abderazak Hamdallah.

Persepolis may not have a big-name foreign forward in their ranks, with their last 33 goals in the competition being scored by Iranian players, but in Mehdi Torabi they possess the 2021 AFC Champions League's leading assist provider, with the winger creating five goals this term.

Persepolis needed a last-minute goal from Torabi to send them into the quarter-finals with a narrow 1-0 win over Tajikistan's Istiklol FC, while Al Hilal were more emphatic as Gomis and Salem Al Dawsari scoring either side of the break to knock out Persepolis' arch rivals Esteghlal FC in the round of 16.

Torabi a Persepolis' key player against Al Hilal

TEHRAN – Mahdi Torabi can inspire Persepolis football team into the third final of the AFC Champions League in four years, the-afc.com wrote.

In a Persepolis side that have seen so many of their stars depart in recent years, Torabi is one who has returned, with the Iran international spending a year in Qatar before opting for a move back to Tehran.

Unlike the other seven teams in the quarter-finals, Persepolis' domestic campaign have yet to kick off, but it was Torabi's last-minute cross-cum-shot in the Round of 16 that saw off FC Istiklol 1-0 to seal a return to the last eight.

While Torabi has goals in him, it is his creativity that makes him stand out. Going into the quarter-finals, the 27-year-old has more assists (5) and has created more chances (22) than any other player in the competition.

Torabi was on loan at Saipa when Persepolis reached the 2018 final and in Qatar for the 2020 edition; he may now view this as his chance to inspire the Tehran giants into its third final in four years.

Sato to officiate 2021 ACL quarters between Al Hilal and Persepolis

TEHRAN – Japanese referee Ryuji Sato has been selected to officiate a match between Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal and Persepolis of Iran.

Al Hilal welcome Persepolis at the Prince Faisal bin Fahd Stadium in Riyadh on Saturday in what is the two sides' seventh AFC Champions League meeting, having played against each other six times.

Sato, 44, has refereed many matches in the AFC

Champions League and FIFA World Cup qualifiers at the international level. He is also a referee in J. League Division 1 in Japan.

10 boxers to represent Iran at World Boxing Championships

TEHRAN – Ten boxers will represent Iran at the 2021 AIBA Men's World Boxing Championships.

A total of 105 nations are set to participate at the International Boxing Association (AIBA) World Boxing Championships in the Serbian capital Belgrade later this month, with 650 athletes registered to compete.

The event will be held from October 24 to November 6.

Sajad Mohammadpour (57kg), Danial Shahbakhsh (60kg), Ashkan Rezaei (63.5kg), Moslem Maghsoudi (67kg), Farhad Moradi (71kg), Shahin Mousavi (75kg), Meysam Gheshlaghi (80kg), Ali Jamali (86kg), Toofan Sharifi (92kg) and Pooya Amiri (+92kg) will be Iran's boxers in the prestigious competition.

Gold medalists are to receive \$100,000 at the Championships with silver medalists receiving \$50,000 and bronze medalists taking \$25,000.

Iran's Mojarad sidelined with torn Achilles tendon

TEHRAN – Iran international middle blocker Aliasghar Mojarad has been ruled out of action for up to six months.

He has suffered a torn right Achilles tendon.

Mojarad, who currently plays for Iranian team Shahr-dari Urmia, sustained his injury in a friendly match against Azar Battery in a friendly match on Thursday.

Mojarad was a member of Iran national team who won the 2021 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship in Japan, September.

Naft Masjed Soleyman complete signing of Karrar Jassim

TEHRAN – Iraqi attacking midfielder Karrar Jassim joined Iranian football club Naft Masjed Soleyman.

The 34-year-old player has previously played in several Iranian clubs.

Jassim joined Tractor in 2009 and after two years was transferred to Esteghlal.

The attacking midfielder has also played for Sanat Naft and Shahin Bushehr.

Jassim has rejoined his former coach Faraz Kamalvand in the Iranian team.

Azmoun shortlisted for AFC Player of Week

TEHRAN – Iran football team Sardar Azmoun was shortlisted for the Road to Qatar Player of the Week.

Big names came to the fore for Iran, Korea Republic, Syria and China, while fresh-faced youngsters left their mark for Japan, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam, with Asia's Qatar 2022 picture beginning to take shape.

After 12 matches and 38 goals, the-afc.com picked out 10 outstanding performers from the week that was.

For club and country, Azmoun is the player his teammates look towards when a goal is required, but Iran's finisher extraordinaire this week made his biggest impact as a provider.

A terrific give-and-go with Mehdi Taremi supplied the FC Porto man for the winner against the UAE, before a hanging looping cross against Korea Republic allowed Alireza Jahanbakhsh to net the equalizer, and Team Melli to retain top spot in Group A.

Son Heung-min (Korea Republic), Salaah Al Yahyaei (Oman), Ajdin Hrustic (Australia), Ao Tanaka (Japan), Mohammad Kdouh (Lebanon), Firas Al Buraikin (Saudi Arabia), Omar Khribin (Syria), Wu Lei (China) and PRNguyen Tien Linh (Vietnam) have also been shortlisted for the accolade.

Iran, EU agree to continue talks in Brussels

TEHRAN – Iran and the European Union have agreed to continue talks in Brussels over the possibility of Iran and world powers resuming the stalled Vienna nuclear talks.

The agreement was achieved during a visit by Deputy Director of the EU Action Service Enrique Mora to Tehran on Thursday amid ongoing tensions between Iran and the West over when to resume the Vienna talks.

Mora, who traveled to Tehran to discuss bilateral relations, regional issues, including developments in Afghanistan and Yemen, as well as talks on lifting sanctions on Iran, met with Ali Bagheri, the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs.

Bagheri emphasized that Iran has always proved to be a responsible player in the international arena, while the behavior of the other side shows that it is far from being a responsible player. He added that the side showing more responsibility is closer to the negotiating table.

Bagheri noted that achieving tangible results is important for Iran, saying Tehran is always ready for serious negotiations that result in a practical agreement and not merely a paper agreement, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

He pointed out that there are serious doubts about the real will of the United States to fulfill its obligations. Bagheri also criticized the inaction of the European parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Iran nuclear deal and stressed the need for them to act responsibly.

Mora explained his task as the EU coordinator, announcing his readiness to cooperate with Iran and other parties in order to continue negotiations to achieve a result acceptable to all parties.

In the meeting, the two officials also emphasized the promotion of relations between Iran and the EU, and it was agreed that in the forthcoming talks in Brussels, the topics and practical areas for the expansion of ties would be discussed.



Bagheri also stressed the need for the European Union to take responsibility for important issues in the region, including the developments in Afghanistan, especially in relation to the humanitarian situation of the Afghan people including the displaced and refugees.

Regarding the plight of the Yemeni people, including women and children, the Iranian deputy foreign minister also called on the EU to pay serious attention to their situation and fulfill its duties to end the humanitarian tragedy.

In the end, the two sides agreed that the consultations between them on issues of mutual interest would continue in the coming days in Brussels, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

Earlier, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the trip follows consultations

between the two sides on issues of mutual interest, including Iran-European Union relations, Afghanistan and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

The deputy FM says Tehran is always ready for serious talks that result in a practical deal and not merely a paper agreement.

Iran, Russia FMs hold phone conversation

TEHRAN – The Iranian and Russian foreign ministers held a telephone conversation on Thursday to discuss the resumption of talks between Iran and the European Union.

Following the resumption of talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union that saw negotiations between Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani and Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service Enrique Mora in Tehran, the Iranian and Russian foreign ministers held a telephone conversation and exchanged views on the matter, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

Hossein Amir Adollahian emphasized in the telephone conversation that the talks

with Mora were positive and both sides expressed their satisfaction and readiness to continue the negotiations.

"Our current talks with Enrique Mora are focused on finding practical solutions to the current problems and impasse in Vienna, which are due to Washington's non-aligned stance and approach to a complete and effective lifting of unilateral and illegal sanctions," he said.

Abdollahian also said at the end of Thursday talks, the two sides agreed to continue consultations between Bagheri and Mora in Brussels in the next two weeks. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also welcomed the talks between Iran and the EU. He stressed that, following his detailed meeting



with Abdollahian in Moscow last week, he had instructed his colleagues at the Russian Foreign Ministry to hold close consultations with their counterparts

in the Islamic Republic to follow up on issues related to the nuclear deal.

In the telephone conversation, the Russian foreign minister praised Iran's logical position on the return of all parties to their obligations.

In the end, Lavrov referred to his meeting with the foreign minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Thursday, saying he was informed of the good and constructive telephone conversation between Iran's foreign minister and his Azeri counterpart.

Lavrov stressed that Moscow welcomes the agreements reached in the telephone conversation and considers them a step in the right direction.

Iranian heavy crude oil price rises 5.3% in September: OPEC

From page 1 ▶ The country, however, has been ramping up its oil production over the past few months following the recent developments in the White House and also the recovery of the global markets from the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier in February, Fitch Solutions Incorporation, a subsidiary of Fitch Ratings, which is one of the U.S.'s three biggest credit rating agencies, forecasted a 6.8-percent growth for Iranian oil exports in 2021 if the U.S. comes back to the 2015 nuclear deal.

In one of its latest reports dubbed "Iran Oil and Gas Report", Fitch also saw the Islamic Republic's crude oil exports double in 2022 compared to 2020.

"The prospects for the Iranian oil sector have brightened significantly following Joe Biden's victory



in the U.S. presidential election on November 3. President Biden has indicated that he will seek to re-enter the U.S. into the Iranian nuclear deal, paving the way for a roll-back of secondary sanctions and recovery of around 2.0 million bpd in oil production," the report said.

Eshqi appointed as new head of SEO



TEHRAN- Members of Iran's Securities and Exchange Council have elected Majid Eshqi as the new head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), Securities and Exchange News Agency (SENA) reported.

Eshqi, who was previously the Deputy Chairman of the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), replaced Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi during a meeting of the mentioned council on Wednesday.

The new SEO's head has been also a board member of Lotus Parsian Capital Financing Company, and Noor Dena Development Investment.

Exports from Markazi province rises 70% in H1

TEHRAN- The value of export from Markazi province in the center of Iran rose 70 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Esmail Hosseini, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that commodities worth \$593 million were exported from Markazi in the six-month period of this year.

Exported goods including hydrocarbons, aluminum ingots, food and beverages, glass and plastic products and ceramic tiles were exported from the province to 86 countries, including Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan, the official stated.

He further announced that commodities worth \$230 million were imported to the province in the first half of the present year, indicating 46 percent rise as compared to the first half of the previous year.

Goods including clothing raw

materials, edible essential oils, juice bags, machines, and steel wire were imported from 42 countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China, India and Germany, he said.

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 1.5 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.

TEHRAN - Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) in collaboration with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry held a webinar on Iran-Pakistan trade opportunities on Wednesday.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the online event was attended by the heads of Iran's chambers of commerce, as well as officials and businessmen from both sides.

ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, President of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Nasser Hyatt Maggo, Consul General of Iran in Karachi Hassan Nourian, Pakistan's Commercial Counselor in Iran Ahmad Massoud, and the ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Karbasi were among the attendees of the online event.

The establishment of a mechanism for barter trade, resolving banking barriers, following up on Iran's export issues at the Mirjaveh border, and signing a free trade agreement between the two countries were among the topics discussed during the webinar.

Speaking in the meeting, Shafeie pointed to the reopening of Mirjaveh and Taftan border crossings for trade and student traffic and said: "This is a positive sign for the resumption of trade between the two countries



ICCIMA holds webinar on Iran-Pakistan trade

and the development of economic cooperation."

He mentioned the unacceptable level of trade between the two countries considering good capacities

for mutual economic relation, saying: "The volume of trade and economic cooperation between Iran and Pakistan, given the existing capacities and good political relations between

the two countries, is far from the level of expectations of both sides and is not acceptable."

"The share of the two countries' in each other's markets does not exceed two or three percent, and therefore there is a need for serious determination and efforts, both by the officials of the two countries and by the private sectors and organizations, to achieve the trade goals set," Shafeie added.

Referring to Iran's accession as a new member of the Shanghai Economic Cooperation Organization, the official noted that this has doubled the opportunity for cooperation between the two countries and called it an incentive that should not be missed.

"Although the potential for cooperation between the two neighboring countries is very wide, we all know that obstacles are also problematic in this regard and it is necessary to find a solution," the ICCIMA head said.

According to the official, lack of banking channels and brokerage relations between the two countries, tariff problems and the non-full implementation of the signed preferential agreement, as well as the imposition of export and import bans are the major barriers in the way of the two countries' trade.

President Raisi visits Fars Province

TEHRAN - Following a series of trips to various provinces, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi visited the southern Fars Province on Thursday to meet with provincial officials and follow up on the issues and problems of the mentioned province.

As IRNA reported, during the one-day trip President Raisi visited several cities in the said province and allocated over 60 trillion rials (about \$1.42 billion) of resources for completing semi-finished projects and developing infrastructure in the mentioned province.

The president was accompanied by some of his cabinet members and their deputies in his trip to Fars Province.

During the visit, Raisi attended a press conference to brief the press about the goals of his visit to Fars province and to answer some questions.

Speaking in the press conference, the president said the government has identified and prioritized the major development needs

of the province during the meetings with local officials and experts.

According to the official, completing semi-finished projects in various fields including water supply, agriculture, industry, trade, and mining is the top priority of the government, and a comprehensive plan will be prepared to pursue the completion of such projects.

"Over 100 [such] projects were identified and the expert views on the projects were assessed during separate meetings with ministers and officials of each field and finally those with higher priority were approved to receive funding to be completed," Raisi explained.

He further noted that a high council will be formed to follow up on the water problems of the province and will be tasked specially to monitor the water supply projects across the province.

Raisi underlined the significant role of the local officials in the success of the approved projects in the province and noted that



provincial officials and authorities should strongly pursue the fulfillment of their tasks and follow up on the completion of the projects in their affiliated areas.

Elsewhere in his remarks, President Raisi mentioned the great potentials of Fars Province in agricultural sectors and said: "Fars Province is ranked first in the country regarding the production of some agricultural products and we should support the province

to maintain this position."

Pointing to the province's industrial sector, the official noted that currently 40 percent of the province's total industrial capacity is idle and some industrial units despite having all the infrastructure are not active due to lack of capital and need to be provided with supporting facilities.

He called on the country's banking system to provide the productive sector with the required facilities in order to direct the country's liquidity toward production.

"Banks should know that liquidity must be directed towards production; if they do so it will result in the reduction of inflation and prosperity otherwise it will only lead to more inflation and worsen the economic situation," he said.

President Raisi has traveled to seven provinces since he took office back in August and according to the official, he plans to continue his visits to all of the country's provinces.

105 idle industrial units revived in Khorasan Razavi in a year

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 105 idle industrial units returned to the production cycle in Khorasan Razavi province in the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Ali Bahramizadeh, the managing director of the province's Industrial Parks Company, also said that 84 new industrial units started activity in the industrial parks of the province during the previous year.

As announced by the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), in the last Iranian calendar year, 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (over \$833 million), providing employment for 27,000 people.

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

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

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

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

Meanwhile, in late September, the ISIPO head announced the allocation of 10,000 hectares of land for the development and construction of industrial

parks across the country.

According to Rasoulian, new industrial parks are mainly planned to be constructed in under-developed regions of the country.

The index for development of Industrial parks in the country has increased by five percent, the official stated.

He pointed out that one of the important priorities of the ISIPO is to provide suitable land for establishing industrial parks, adding: "The organization has prepared a plan to provide 10,000 hectares of land for this purpose."

"Also, to supply electricity to industrial parks and zones, the required hardware and equipment, including posts and transmission lines, have been supplied and constructed in collaboration with the Energy Ministry."

He further noted that the country's industrial parks are currently facing over 2,000 liters of water deficit, saying: "Our approach to compensate for the water shortage is to use municipal wastewater, which we have communicated with the Ministry of Energy to purchase and have started using it in some areas."

Rasoulian also mentioned the construction of small workshops for companies that do not have a high financial capacity and added: "Last year, 72 workshops were established in the country's industrial parks and zones, and we hope that our plan for the current year, which was the construction of 1,000 workshops, will play a significant role in creating employment in the country."

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

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

Iran to launch 6 shipping lines in Caspian Sea to Russia, Kazakhstan

TEHRAN - Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) for cooperation in launching shipping lines from the country's northern ports on the Caspian Sea coasts to Russia and Kazakhstan.

Based on the MOU, in the first phase six lines will be launched from the northern ports of Iran to the ports of Astrakhan and Makhachkala in Russia, as well as the port of Aktau in Kazakhstan as of October 23, the TPO portal reported.

In the second phase, by the end of the current

Iranian calendar year (late March 2022) the number of these lines will increase to eight.

According to the MOU, Khazar Shipping Company will transport export goods on a regular and monthly basis on behalf of IRISL.

As reported, planning is also underway to establish regular lines for the Persian Gulf countries as well as African countries.

TPO is also collaborating with the country's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate the purchase of roll-on, roll-off vessels to be used in the mentioned lines.

TSE's main index drops 6.5% in a week

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 6.5 percent in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index lost 91,000 points to close at 1,397 million.

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

Capital market analyst, Soheil Kolahchi, believes the stock market is going to be able to compete with other parallel markets for bringing positive returns to investors in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22, 2021-March 20, 2022), IRNA reported.

Stating that the stock market can be one of the suitable markets for investment in the second half of the year, Kolahchi said: "The capital market can provide an acceptable return to shareholders and experience good growth compared to other parallel markets by the end of the year."

"The stock market can grow by the end of the year as the prevailing environment for investing in other parallel markets (including the forex, gold, and housing markets) is calm and nothing special is going to happen in any of them," he explained.

Emphasizing the sharp decline in the number of deals in the housing market in recent months, Kolahchi noted: "The foreign currency exchange market is also experiencing slight fluctuations."



The capital market expert continued: "Due to the existence of such conditions, the capital market takes the same path as other markets and takes a slow path to ascend. This market will be accompanied by many ups and downs in its path but eventually, it moves upward."

"It seems that the cement industry and the banking group can be suitable industries for investment and provide bigger returns by the end of the year; therefore, we can pay special attention to these groups compared to other industries for investment," he added.

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 year, compared to the first half of the year.

Safari had mentioned the support programs carried out by the government as a positive factor that has impacted the trades in the stock market, saying that such measures have ensured the

growth of the market in the future.

He pointed to the upward trend of the market and noted: "Despite the fact that the market has always experienced some decline in the last two months of summer, this summer the positive news over the nuclear deals and the prospects of lifting the sanctions pushed the market up."

It's over two years that stock market in Iran has been playing an outstanding role in the attraction of the people's investment.

Iranian people, who used to invest their money in some traditional ways such as buying gold, or deposit money in the banks, have taken a new approach for investment over the past two years, as they have been investing more and more in the stock market.

Different factors have created such condition, among them it could be referred to the efforts made by the stock market to attract people's more investment through laying the proper ground, for example via introducing new financial instruments, and also by making people more acquainted with this market.

The other factor is the government's policy and new approach toward the stock market, and putting emphasis on this market's role in funding and economic growth.

The status of the parallel markets such as forex, housing, and gold markets has also made stock market a more attractive place for the people to invest in.

Saudis 'serious' in talks with Iran

From page 1 ▶ Riyadh says it believes the negotiations with Tehran have not yet made significant progress to a level where the restoration of full diplomatic relations. But a Saudi official told the Financial Times that Saudi Arabia is working on opening an Iranian consulate in the Saudi port city of Jeddah. Riyadh says it is also considering Iran to reopen its representative office for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the same town. However, the kingdom says it was not yet ready to reopen a consulate in the Iranian holy city of Mashhad, with a senior official saying the dialogue so far lacked "substance."

Iranian authorities have not commented on the claims made by the Saudis officials.

The discussions took place amid European diplomatic efforts to broker a deal on Washington's return to the nuclear deal Tehran signed with world powers in 2015.

The Saudi official claims that Tehran is "focused on signaling, especially to the west, [they are signaling] that 'look, we have resolved our issues with the Saudis and any lingering things we can work out together so don't talk to us about regional security,'" he said. "Treat us like a normal country and let's do this [nuclear] deal."

Iran has repeatedly reiterated its stance on the Nuclear Deal, insisting that the United States (which unilaterally withdrew from the deal in May 2018) must remove all the sanctions it reimposed in a verifiable manner before rejoining the Iran Nuclear Deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Tehran says any other issues such as its missile defense program or support for allies is a red line.

The Iranian government says it is open to resuming the stalled talks in Vienna and is reviewing the details of the negotiations by the previous government and other signatories.

No direct talks between Iran and the United States have taken place in Vienna, with Tehran refusing to speak directly to the administration of President Joe Biden until Washington returns to the agreement first by lifting its unilateral sanctions, which Iranian officials have described as economic terrorism.

This year President Raisi took over from former president Hassan Rouhani, who inked the nuclear deal. The Saudi official alleges Riyadh always "had the philosophy we want to speak to the real decision-makers."

Tensions escalated between Saudi Arabia and Iran after Riyadh backed former U.S.



President Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to unilaterally withdraw the U.S. from the nuclear deal with Tehran and impose crippling sanctions on the republic. The following year Yemeni forces conducted a sophisticated missile and drone attack on Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure that temporarily knocked out half the kingdom's crude output. Riyadh blamed Yemen's retaliatory attack on Iran, despite Yemen growing its capabilities over the years in retaliating against the daily Saudi bombardment of its residential neighborhoods.

But Saudi Arabia appears to have reconsidered its more assertive foreign policy after U.S. President Joe

Biden took office and pledged to reassess ties with the kingdom, criticizing the murder of Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents and allegedly halting some "offensive" arms sales to Riyadh.

Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's leadership, Riyadh had aggressively pursued its

war with Yemen's popular Ansarullah movement and allied Yemeni army, became embroiled in a bitter diplomatic row with Canada and briefly detaining Lebanese Prime Minister Sa'ad al-Hariri, forcing him to publicly resign on Saudi state media. Despite this, Prince Faisal claims that Riyadh "did not pick fights."

He says, "the leadership has a clear policy that the priority is prosperity, building the country, Vision 2030 [reform plan], and you can't deliver those things with a region in turmoil. So while we will vigorously defend our national security and our sovereignty, we will try to resolve them through diplomacy as well."

He added that there was a "confluence of events that made it feel like it was the right moment" to talk to Iran. "We were always willing to talk if they might actually be serious," he claims. "Various factors came into play."

Saudi diplomats say Riyadh wants Tehran to use its influence over Ansarullah in

Yemen to help end the war there, with the kingdom keen to exit the conflict after waging war in 2015 to back the former Yemeni government.

However, experts say the quagmire Saudi Arabia finds itself in Yemen has nothing to do with Iran. Saudi Arabia began the war, and while Iran supports the Yemeni government, it cannot change the determination of the Yemeni people to liberate their land and restore their sovereignty from Saudi control. Iran has called for talks between Riyadh and Sana'a to halt the Saudi war and end the "world's worst humanitarian crisis" in Yemen.

Last month, the Associated Press reported satellite imagery showing that the U.S. had pulled its Patriot air defense system out of Saudi Arabia.

But Prince Faisal put a positive spin on the issue, saying Washington had assured the kingdom that its "commitment to our security and the security of our border is ironclad, and we take them at their word."

"We have a robust dialogue with the Americans; we agree 90 percent of the time," he said. "Are we unhappy about the general tone in Washington, not the administration? We think it's not entirely based on where the true relationship is and the value of the relationship, but it's affected by domestic factors."

In the aftermath of the chaotic U.S. withdrawal of Afghanistan and its abandonment of the Afghan government and army, analysts say Riyadh may have to think twice about relying on Washington for security.

Elsewhere, the Saudi foreign ministry said in a statement that the Saudi foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud had met U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington and exchanged views on the Iranian nuclear program and the international talks in this regard.

Iran says regional security can only be made possible by talks among neighbors in the region without foreign interference. Tehran has presented several initiatives to its Persian Gulf Allies to reduce tensions. Among them is the Hormuz Peace Endeavor, presented at the United Nations General Assembly in 2019. A carefully planned step toward reduction of the existing tensions in the region. However, under former President Donald Trump, who supported and armed Saudi Arabia to the teeth, Riyadh did not accept the proposal. With a change of Presidents in the White House and Washington focusing more on China and Russia, a delegation from Saudi Arabia has decided to sit down at the table with its counterpart Iran at several summits in the Iraqi capital Baghdad.



Amir Abdollahian and the Iranian offers on the Lebanese table

From page 1 ▶ Oddly, the Minister of Energy and Water of Lebanon, Kamal Fayad, denied receiving any formal offer from Iran and any other Eastern State, as if the offers from China and Russia have evaporated. It is either that the minister did not check the files on his desk, or he is turning a deaf ear. Indeed, he is expressing the political attitude of Mr. Najib Mikati's government towards turning east. In addition, there are two offers to build or rebuild electricity power in Lebanon besides the Russian, a German one, which Mr. Mikati and his government and the World Bank would be leaning for.

Frankly, it is not a strange attitude. It was expected since Mr. Mikati's government has come to apply the World Bank rules and regulations. He also offers himself as the true friend of Saudi Arabia. And unless the Arabian kingdom receives the American green light, which the kingdom will never receive; consequently, it cannot give it to Mr. Mikati. This permission will not be considered after the visit Mr. Abdollahian paid to Sayyed Hassan Nasrullah, Secretary-General of Hezbollah.

When the Foreign Minister visited Sayyed Nasrullah, the visit was seen as a message to both the Israeli and the Americans, at a time Iran is supposed to be heading for another round of nuclear talks. The minister verbally expressed the message that Iran is still openly supporting the Islamic resistance in Lebanon against Israel, and Iran is content to provide oil products to the Lebanese people. Iran, in providing part of the people's need of gasoline, has taken with Hezbollah a leap of faith and has won their respect and appreciation. And many people are waiting for the arrival of the Iranian benzene, hoping that it would be for more reasonable prices.

The bottom line is that the Lebanese can demand the Americans to exclude them if they accept the Iranian offer. However, there are other choices; Iran and Hezbollah are quite aware of those choices! They have tested them after the "Israeli" war on Lebanon in 2006. The American sanctions towards building factories for producing electricity are definitely different from building knocked down buildings in Dahia [the Sothern Suburb in Beirut] or from paving roads in South Lebanon. Even the general international atmosphere is different today from 2006. However, there are choices to be considered!

If the Lebanese government did not respond to the Iranian offer, then most likely, Hezbollah is going to act. By Lebanese law, if a grant or donation was offered to any municipality by any friendly state or organization, the municipality has the right to accept the grant without considering the government's accord, as long as Lebanon is not in a state of war with this particular

country. Therefore, Hezbollah can accept the Iranian offer to build an electrical factory in the Beqaa or al-Dahia, or many are in the South.

Accordingly, Ghoibeiry Municipality, which is located in the Dahia, on the 10 of this month has declared its willingness to offer land in Ghoibeiry for building one of the factories, considering that it is the right of the municipality to provide electricity for its own inhabitants as much as any other city did, such as Zahleh in Beqaa, and Jubail. These two cities have worked on their own source of electricity as produced a full-powered source of electricity 24/24.

Mayor of Ghoibeiry, Mr. Maan Al-Khalil, chose a specific land that certain powerful men manipulate as a private Golf Course. It is certainly the boldest step that will stir troubles. However, it can be considered as a good solution to rely on. On the other hand, some informative people suggested turning the Costa Brava area by the seashore or the wastes dump in Khalda and many other places on the seashore as a better alternative. The

Golf Course is considered to be an environment-friendly place.

Consequently, another factory can be built in the North. This is possible. There are choices that need brave initiatives and brave actions. Lebanon nowadays is living in a state of darkness in general. The private generators in Beirut provide 10 hours of electricity per day. However, they charge high prices; it is more than 12 times higher than the official state electricity.

Around our neighborhood, many houses have stopped generating electricity from private sources. They and their families are living in total darkness. It is heartbreaking!

The consecutive governments in Lebanon have been going from one failure to another in rebuilding the electricity sector. The electricity field is a gold mine; however, it is now indebted in 10s of billions of dollars. Let us boldly put the cards on the table: electricity, communication, water, and social security sections in Lebanon are at the risk of being offered privatization. This is one of the World Bank's demands in Lebanon to sell these sections to pay the Lebanese debts.

It is easy to conclude here the choices Lebanon has. They can either that keep rolling down in the trench of misery, which is an American demand so that the Lebanese would turn against Hezbollah, demand disarming it, and signing Abraham Agreement and go into the normalization process with the Zionist entity, or Lebanon can turn east and accept the Chinese and Russian investment offers. Nonetheless, suppose the current government will not take the second offer out of fear of the American sanctions. In that case, the only choice left is for Hezbollah to accept grants and offers presented through its elected municipalities.

Riyadh wants Tehran to use its influence to end the war in Yemen.

well."

He added that there was a "confluence of events that made it feel like it was the right moment" to talk to Iran. "We were always willing to talk if they might actually be serious," he claims. "Various factors came into play."

Saudi diplomats say Riyadh wants Tehran to use its influence over Ansarullah in

Israel is an apartheid regime: Irish lawmaker

An Irish legislator has described the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state as the only viable solution to the decades-long Palestinian-Israeli conflict, denouncing Israel as an apartheid regime.

In a series of posts published on his Twitter page, Richard Boyd Barrett of the People Before Profit/Solidarity alliance wrote that Israel should be treated like apartheid South Africa.

"As someone who lived in Israel/Palestine for a year, there is no doubt it is an apartheid regime. We must treat Israel as apartheid South Africa was treated," he noted.

Boyd Barrett dismissed the so-called two-statement solution, stating that the

policy is intended to deprive Palestinian refugees of their right of return granted under UN General Assembly Resolution 194 passed on December 11, 1948.

He also praised the decision by best-selling and award-winning Irish novelist Sally Rooney not to publish her new novel in Hebrew, and her support for the cultural boycott of Israel.

Rooney's new novel Beautiful World, Where Are You? explores the life and romance of intellectual, urbane millennials and topped the New York Times bestseller list when it was published in September.

Modan Publishing House has told Haaretz that Rooney won't allow her new book to be

published in Hebrew because she supports the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and does not want to work with an Israeli publisher.

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) said it "warmly welcomed" the author's decision.

Rooney is not the first author to boycott Israeli publishers.

In 2012, Pulitzer prize-winning author Alice Walker refused permission for publisher Yediot Books to print an Israeli edition of her classic novel The Color Purple, due to Israel being "guilty of apartheid and persecution of the Palestinian people."

(Source: Press TV)

Panic buying of fuel worsens UK fuel crisis

Britain grapples with a full-blown crisis as labor shortages, particularly a critical shortage of HGV truck drivers, have disrupted supply chain activities and caused several problems. The significant lack of drivers meant deliveries of fuel and food fell short.

As a result, the country witnessed panic buying of fuel and some goods dwindled. These events triggered chaotic scenes across major cities, leading to long lines at gas stations and fistfights among drivers.

Many factories and businesses are struggling with rising energy bills and are on the verge of halting production and closing down unless the government acts immediately in the face of sky rocketing natural gas prices.

In fact, the crisis has already forced a wave of collapses among energy suppliers. This is while the government is planning to impose

a levy on gas bills, which could push the prices further.

The British government is now under fire for its handling of the crisis. So, being under intense pressure, the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, blamed the trucking industry for Britain's supply chain mess.

The industry called Johnson's claims wrong and pointed to the government's immigration policy, and delays in testing and certifying new drivers as the main culprits. The government also claimed there is a global shortage of drivers.

However, the European countries have not faced a similar problem. Britain faces a shortfall of 100,000 drivers 20% of those are drivers who departed Britain after the country voted to leave the European Union. In addition, about 200,000 EU citizens left Britain during the Coronavirus pandemic.



The British government addressed the crisis by introducing a short term visa programme. But by offering short term visas to foreign truckers, the British government is admitting that exiting the EU was a decisive factor in the current crisis. In addition, many people are reluctant to uproot themselves, and move to Britain for temporary and difficult work while they have better options in EU member state countries.

"It is a crisis of the free market, a triumph of the free market, the government abandoned regulation, it has abandoned public ownership. So, it's private ownership. So, we're depending for energy on Britain on people who make lots of profits out of energy shortages.

So, if it's to someone's advantage to see gas and electricity prices shoot up, then they're going to go up, they're not going to say, Oh, we're not going to take profits because it's bad for the economy, they're going to say hey, send me more."

Ian Williams, Journalist

Households that spend a high proportion of their income on energy bills are considered to be in fuel poverty. Currently 4 million people in Britain are already enduring fuel poverty, while up to 1.5 additional British households won't be able to afford to heat and power their homes.

Last October, the government raised the energy price gap to control the sharply rising wholesale gas prices. The cap limits the impact of soaring energy prices on British households. The UK energy regulator said that the price gap must rise again next year if wholesale gas prices continue to go up.

This could mean a typical customer paying between 400 pounds and 600 pounds more annually. That's while natural gas prices are at record highs as economies around the world begin to recover from the COVID crisis.

The government in Britain has recently cut back on the minimum payments for welfare and support for all sorts of people, from unemployed to underpaid to pensioners, so a lot of the apparatus that was very leaky, a very leaky safety net we already had in Britain has been, has been torn up.

And the government has decided that people would, as a matter of conscious policy, they think that people only go to work if they're starving so they're trying to starve people, and that includes freezing, freezing and starving will get them to work is what they think.

Ian Williams, Journalist

The price rises have already pushed half a million more households into fuel poverty, unable to pay heating and energy costs, these low income families are at great risk.

Many actually die every year because they can't afford to heat their homes. In fact, 8500 people died in England and Wales last winter due to cold homes.

All in all, the British government should stop blaming others and start cleaning up the mess that it is responsible for.

(Source: Press TV)

Persepolis, a manifestation of great Iranian art, president says



From page 1 ▶ This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

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

surface) from the adjacent mountain.

According to Britannica, the stone was cut with the utmost precision into blocks of great size, which were laid without mortar; many of them are still in place. Especially striking are the huge columns, 13 of which still stand in the audience hall of Darius I (the Great; reigned 522-486 BC), known as the Apadana, the name given to a similar hall built by Darius at Susa. There are two more columns still standing in the entrance hall of the Gate of Xerxes, and a third has been assembled there from its broken pieces.

In 1933 two sets of gold and silver plates recording in the three forms of cuneiform—ancient Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian—the boundaries of the Persian empire were discovered in the foundations of Darius's hall of audience. Several inscriptions, cut in stone, of Darius I, Xerxes I, and Artaxerxes III indicate to which monarch the various buildings were attributed.

Russia to lift COVID ban on flights to Iran, other countries



TEHRAN - Russia is scheduled to lift its COVID-19 ban on flights to Iran and several other countries as of Nov. 9, the government coronavirus task force said on Thursday.

Moscow stopped normal commercial flights abroad when the pandemic struck last year, but it has since been gradually relaxing the restrictions, Reuters reported.

The restriction will also be eliminated on flights to the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Slovenia,

Oman, Tunisia, and Thailand.

"The flight bans dealt a heavy blow to Russia's airlines," Reuters said.

Russian tourists eager to visit Iran

Many Russian tourists are eager to travel to Iran, an Iranian travel expert said earlier in May, recounting his Russian counterparts.

"Many [potential] Russian travelers are motivated to visit novel and lesser-known destinations such as Iran that could be a safe and attractive destination," said Mostafa Sarvari who presides over the tourism marketing and advertising office of the Iranian Tour Operators Association.

"According to Russian tourism experts, the feedback from Russian tourists who have traveled to Iran has been very positive, and its reflection, especially on social media, has caused a great deal of enthusiasm and interest."

In 2017, President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked a visa-free agreement for tourist groups.

Eight ancient windmills under restoration in eastern Iran

TEHRAN - Restoration work has begun on a selection of eight ancient windmills, which are located in Darmian county of South Khorasan province in eastern Iran.

"Eight Asbads (vertical windmills) have undergone restoration in Darmian county. And a budget of two billion rials (about \$47,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to their restoration," a local tourism official said on Thursday.

"So far, those Asbads have been restored between 10 and 60 percent... Debris removal, strengthening of the walls, domes, and foundations as well as fixing their gutters have been among measures currently underway," the official explained.

A total of 126 Asbads have been identified in Darmian, which are being restored one by one due to a possible

registration of the windmills on the UNESCO World Heritage list, according to the official.

Iran seeks UNESCO recognition for arrays of its ancient windmills that can be found in the provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, and Khorasan Razavi. In 2002 the windmills were recognized as a national heritage site by Iran. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has almost completed preparations for a chain of ancient vertical-axis windmills for possibly becoming a UNESCO World Heritage.

UNESCO says Asbad is a smart technique to grind grains, a technique which goes back to ancient times when the people living in the eastern parts of Iran, in an attempt to adapt themselves to nature and transform environmental obstacles into opportunities, managed



to invent it.

Constructed of clay, wood, and straw, those ancient gears which are inherited from preceding generations, are perched on a cliff overlooking the village, milling grain for centuries.

Technically speaking, unlike European windmills, the Persian design is powered by blades arrayed on a vertical axis in which the energy of wind is translated down without the need for any of

Pasargadae is a symbol of human civilization: tourism minister

TEHRAN - The UNESCO-registered Pasargadae is a symbol of human civilization in ancient Iran, tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghani has announced.

There is no doubt that Pasargadae belongs to Cyrus the Great, who is regarded as a legend in the world, whether or not he was buried here, it is important to respect him as an Iranian, the minister said on Thursday.

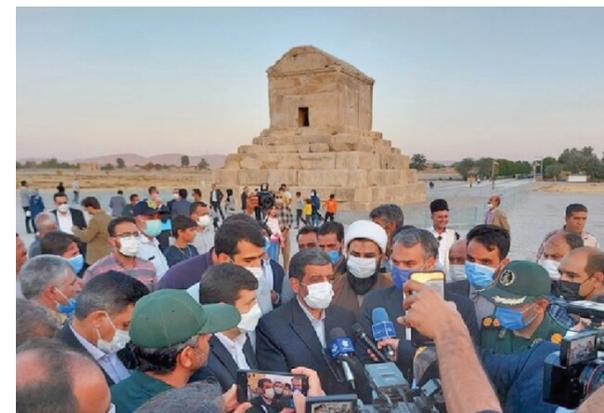
He made the remarks during a visit to the majestic World Heritage site, which is situated in the

southern Fars province.

"Pasargadae stands out for its uniqueness on the international stage, if not as a special place, but as a symbol of civil and human development," he noted.

The tourism status of Pasargadae was among issues discussed with President Ebrahim Raisi during his current visit to Fars..., and funds have been considered for it, the minister added.

He also noted that the majority of funds will be allocated to develop infrastructure and facilities, and



making repairs for the public benefit, he said.

There has already been an allocation of 200 billion rials (\$4.7 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) to the historical site, he mentioned.

Situated about 50 km north of Persepolis, Pasargadae embraces outstanding examples of the first phase of royal Achaemenid art and architecture and exceptional testimonies of Persian civilization.

Cyrus was the founder of the Achaemenid Empire which at its

greatest extent stretched from the Balkans to the Indus Valley, spanning 5.5 million square kilometers. The Persian king declared the world's first charter of human rights, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder.

Despite the minimal nature of the ruins, they make a good introduction to the wonders of Persepolis, some 60km to the south. Best visited en route from Yazd or Isfahan to Shiraz, most people fit them into an extended tour from Persepolis with stops at Naqsh-e Rostam and Naqsh-e Rabbaj.

Qeshm Island to hold cultural nights in Tehran

TEHRAN - Clusters of tourism insiders, artisans, and artists who are natives of Qeshm will stage cultural nights in Tehran to put the spotlight on the southern Iranian island.

Residents of Tehran will be exposed to the local culture, traditions, handicrafts, and tourist destinations of Qeshm during the three-day festival, which starts on Oct. 20, a local cultural official has announced.

A group of 15 artists from Qeshm will participate in the event as ambassadors of Qeshm's culture, art, and literature, Hamed Biazar said on Friday.

One of the programs of Qeshm cultural nights will be the display of some 20 photos of the beauties of the Island, taken by some professional local photographers, he added.

One of the main objectives of the event is to provide people with an overview of Qeshm Island, including tourist information on sightseeing sites,



accommodations, and hotels, he noted.

Sales exhibits and workshops on indigenous handicrafts, souvenirs, garments, as well as live performances of traditional music are also parts of the event, he mentioned.

He also expressed hope that holding such events will allow Qeshm to be promoted as a

tourist destination once the coronavirus crisis is over.

Qeshm Island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines.

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

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

Maritime excursions main mission of Bushehr tourism, deputy minister says

TEHRAN - Bushehr province should invest a great deal of effort to develop its maritime tourism, the deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbfafian has said.

"If the southwestern Bushehr province wants to develop tourism, it should focus on maritime sector," the official said on Thursday.

"The province needs to inform investors about its capacity in this sector, especially its favorable location on the Persian Gulf coast."

He made the remarks during a meeting with the provincial tourism chief Mohammad Hossein Arastuzadeh.

The coastal region, ports, islands and coasts of the Persian Gulf are among Bushehr's greatest natural gifts, therefore, directing the investment capacities and enthusiastic investors to the maritime tourism sector will facilitate the growth of Bushehr as a coastal tourist



destination, Shalbfafian explained.

For his part Arastuzadeh said that by using cruise ships and traditional Lenj boats in the region, maritime tourism has grown.

Over the past couple of years, the Islamic Republic has made various efforts to exploit maritime tourism potential by developing hospitality infrastructures, diversifying sea routes, and drawing private sector investors along its vast southern coasts.

Prosperous maritime tourism could

help the county to meet its ambitious target of attracting 20 million annual tourists by 2025. It also keeps an eye on tourism developments in the Caspian Sea in the north.

Back in February, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop maritime tourism and make the best use of its potential in the southern and northern coasts of the country.

Promoting the culture of using the sea as a tool to increase social vitality, development of coastal activities in the form of environmentally-friendly plans and programs, and creating the necessary grounds for cooperation and exchange of knowledge and information were also among the topics of the agreement.

With over 6,000 years of history and

significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr is one of Iran's most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Vintage cars stage rally in support of responsible tourism



TEHRAN - Tens of historical and vintage vehicles hold a three-day car rally between Tehran and the northern Mazandaran province in support of responsible tourism during the COVID-19 era.

On Wednesday, 130 historical and vintage cars left Tehran for Mazandaran province in the rally organized by the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI).

"This rally, which will continue until October 15, is aimed to promote responsible tourism and social enthusiasm during the coronavirus era," Mehr quoted TACI Director Hossein Arbabi as saying on Friday.

"Identifying and protecting historical vehicles, introducing them as a valuable part of our country's cultural-industrial heritage, encourages such car owners to obtain special license plates for their vehicles," the official explained.

Moreover, 30 vintage vehicles left Sari, the capital of Mazandaran on Thursday in order to join others in Namakabroud, the official said, adding "the event comes to an end of Friday as the cars come to Tehran."

The term "responsible tourism" was first promoted by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts as a "workable solution" for holidaymakers

to get assured of safe traveling during the pandemic.

"Definitely, people's health is our top priority and we are in full coordination with the Ministry of Health, which is now at the forefront of the fight against coronavirus and we should be treated in such a way that the disease does not spread [more]... Therefore, one of the solutions that can help us in the time of coronavirus is adopting smart travels or responsible travels," the former tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said last year.

Iran is home to thousands of remarkable classic and vintage vehicles. For instance, roaming Iran classic car museum, visitors find a collection of the best classic and unique automobiles, some of which single in kind even in the world.

Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran is an institution affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Its tasks include facilitating the travel of owners of vehicles abroad or foreign tourists who are traveling to Iran by their own vehicles. The institution also helps develop tourism through establishing tourism information offices at home and abroad, as well as developing infrastructures and tourism services.

Persian handicrafts: carpets of Fars

TEHRAN - Many Iranian cities and villages enjoy global reputations for carpet weaving in terms of intricate designs, lavish colors, and peerless craftsmanship.

The history of carpet weaving in the southern Fars province is very long and its exact date is quite ambiguous; however, evidence suggests that carpet weaving in Fars dates for millennia. Historians point to the presence of carpets in Cyrus' tomb during Alexander's invasion of Iran.

The eighth-century AH was the peak of Fars carpet weaving. The fame of Fars carpet in this period was so great that Ghazan Khan asked local artists to weave Fars carpets for his palace. In the ninth and tenth centuries AH, with the presence of more Qashqai, Khamseh tribes, and other tribes in this province, carpet weaving

flourished in this region. This art continued until the present and became one of the main features of this region.

Moreover, the nomadic lifestyle has a direct impact on using of elements of nature. People in this area created beauties and these beauties emerged to the Fars carpets gradually.

Regarding the Persian carpet, along with the most famous examples of it, which are the Qashqai and Khamseh carpets, we can also mention the weavings of the surrounding villages in this province.

In addition to the numerous varieties of designs and styles that exist in these types of rugs and carpets, there are also commonalities, such as the existence of geometric designs or the use of cheerful colors that are

inspired by the nature of this region. The most important common denominator among all types of Fars handicrafts is the loose texture of the knots and their lightweight, and of course, the dominance of geometric designs can be seen at first glance.

Due to the high volume of Fars carpets woven by nomadic women in this region, the loom carpet used for it is different. For example, unlike many areas, the loom carpet in this area is mostly on the ground and horizontal so that it can be easily moved during migration.

Fars carpets usually have a mental design and are woven in pairs or with a rug. The first carpet is called the "order" carpet, and the carpet or rug is woven with the ordered rug with the help of its design or mentally and inspired by the order carpet design.

TEHRAN – Iran has ranked fourth for publication of articles in the field of traditional medicine and medicinal plants in the world, ISNA quoted Nafiseh Hosseini, a Health Ministry official, as saying on Friday.

Iran also a fifth place for knowledge production in traditional medicine and medicinal plants in the world in 2020, however this year, the country improved and placed fourth after India, China, and the United States, Hosseini added.

The progress has been made over the past 10 years, she noted.

“By trying in the right direction of research and science, there is a possibility of producing effective traditional Iranian medicine.”

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has so far registered 120 national standards for medicinal herbs and traditional medicine to support the industry.

Earlier in September, ten national plans have been defined to promote the culture of production and consumption of medicinal plants by the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Iranian traditional medicine is one of the most ancient forms of traditional medicine. It is grounded in the concept of four senses of humor: phlegm (Balgham), blood (Dam), yellow bile (Safra), and black bile (Sauda). The concept of four senses of humor is based on the teachings of Rhazes and Avicenna into an elaborate medical system.

Iranian traditional medicine strongly focuses on prioritizing



Iran ranks 4th worldwide in traditional medicine citation

health maintenance and disease prevention over treatment.

8,000 herbal species grow in Iran

So far, about 30,000 plant species are identified in the world, with Iran's share of about 8,000 species that its plant diversity is more than the whole of Europe.

Currently, about 2,300 species of

medicinal plants have been identified in the country, accounting for one-third of the medicines used in human societies, the share of world trade in these products is about \$124 billion and Iran's share is \$570 million, which is only 0.5 percent of the total.

The per capita consumption of

medicinal plants in Iran is about one kilogram of dried plants. In other words, 83,000 tons of medicinal plants worth 1.2 trillion rials (around \$29 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) are consumed in the country, while in Europe this amount is 900 grams and in the United States is 2.5 kilograms.

Germany ready to help support refugees in Iran: envoy

TEHRAN – German Ambassador to Iran Hans Odo Motzel has expressed readiness to help solve the problems of refugees by expanding cooperation with international organizations, appreciating Iran for the services provided to refugees.

“We will do our best to remove the obstacles and challenges facing the refugees,” Motzel said in a meeting with Mehdi Mahmoudi, director of citizens and foreign immigrants of the Ministry of Interior, on Wednesday.

Regarding the supply of the COVID-19 vaccine, the ambassador said that Germany has also allocated a budget for the supply of the vaccine for refugees.

Mahmoudi, for his part, said that for more than 40 years, Iran has supported refugees in the fields of health, education, vocational training, employment, and emergencies such as floods, earthquakes, etc., despite numerous economic problems and unfair sanctions.

He further called on the international community to financially support the vaccination of refugees.

Due to the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and the possibility of a new wave of refugees, the Islamic Republic will not be able to accept newcomers due to existing restrictions and lack of necessary facilities, he lamented.

In 2021 alone, UNHCR is directly aware of some 18,000 Afghans who newly arrived in Iran using irregular routes, although the total number that has entered the country is likely to be significant-



ly higher. Since the beginning of the year, over 660,000 persons were newly displaced within Afghanistan itself.

Iran hosting world's fourth-largest refugee community

Iran is hosting the world's fourth-largest refugee community. The country has generously hosted approximately 1 million refugees for the past 30 years. The majority, which mainly came from Afghanistan and Iraq, live in urban areas. Approximately 31,000 of the most vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements located throughout the country.

Based on the latest statistics, over 3 million Refugees (SSAR).

Afghans are living in Iran – some 780,000 Afghan refugees, over 2 million undocumented Afghans, and another 600,000 Afghan passport-holders with Iranian visas.

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

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

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

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

For over 40 years, Iran has supported refugees in the fields of health, education, vocational training, and employment.

People's contribution to school building growing well

TEHRAN – Contributions of school-building donors have grown well in recent years, which is accelerating the process of school construction, Nasser Ghofli, the director of the School-Building Donors Association, has stated.

Since the establishment of the School-Building Donors Association in 1992, some 150,000 classrooms have been built across the country, he noted.

School-building donors allocated a total of 30 trillion rials (nearly \$714 million) to construct educational places nationwide in the last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March

2021), which has doubled this year, and the government increased its share by 330 percent.

“The Iranian School-Building Donors Association is the proudest non-governmental organization in Iran, which has succeeded in building 50 percent of schools for 20 years,” he emphasized.

According to Ghofli, 400 school-building charities have been registered in the country so far.

Mehroolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping, said in August 2020 that some 30



percent of the country's schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors; there are 450 school-building charities in Iran.

In line with the education reform plan, people who have a popular reputation are being invited as ambas-

sadors to attract public participation for school construction even by buying a brick.

Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

There are some 107,000 schools nationwide with 530,000 classes, 160,000 of which are dilapidated, not meeting safety standards. Some 30 percent of the schools nationwide are old, of which some 12 percent must be completely rebuilt and 18 percent must be retrofitted.

White cane: symbol of social life of the blind

From page 1 ► The white cane symbol makes all people, officials, and governments aware of their duty to this group of citizens so that we must rise up to provide their social and individual rights to make their life dynamic.

In the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of Iran, the welfare organization is responsible for providing most of the services required by the blind and visually impaired in the fields of education, rehabilitation, welfare, and social support.

Providing educational and rehabilitation services, living and educational grants, nursing and assistance, empowerment programs in the form of educational, artistic, and sports activities, and vocational training and facilitating the employment process of blind and visually impaired people is only part of the services.

Braille, a system for use in languages worldwide

Louis Braille was a French educator and inventor of a reading and writing system for use by people who are visually impaired. His system is known worldwide simply as braille.

Braille was blinded at the age of three in one eye as a result of an accident with a stitching awl in his father's harness-making shop. Consequently, an infection set in and spread to both eyes, resulting in total blindness.

At that time there were not many resources in place for the blind but nevertheless, he excelled in his education and received a scholarship to France's Royal Institute for Blind Youth. While still a student there, he began developing a system of tactile code that could allow blind people to read and write quickly and efficiently.

Inspired by the system invented by Charles Barbier, Braille constructed a new method that was more compact and lent itself to a range of uses, including music. He presented his work to his peers for the first time in 1824.

In adulthood, Louis Braille served as a professor at the Institute and had an avocation as a musician, but he largely spent the remainder of his life refining and extending his system. It went unused by most educators for many years after his death, but posterity has recognized braille as a revolutionary invention, and it has been adapted for use in languages worldwide.



Blindness is not a failure

Abu Abd Allah Ja'far ibn Muhammad Rudaki, better known as Rudaki, was a Persian poet regarded as the first great literary genius of the Modern Persian language.

Born in 859 in Rudak (Khorasan), Rudaki is one of the people who have proved in practice that blindness is not a failure and the end of life. He composed poems in the modern Persian alphabet

and is considered a founder of classical Persian literature. As it seems, Rudaki was the first person to combine different roles that were yet distinguishable entities in the 9th-century royal court: musician, poet, and declaimer/reciter, and copyist.

Social rights of the blind must be guaranteed

Due to their special circumstances, the blind community should have better and more access to individual and social rights than other citizens.

The rights of this group in receiving urban and social services, employment, education, and all aspects of life must go beyond the principle of competition and equalization of opportunities and elimination of normal discrimination because they have special conditions.

Accessible urban infrastructure, free public transportation, and employment are the main demands of the blind to participate in society and get out of isolation.

The blind is looking for a normal life with new technologies, and with 25,000 blind and partially sighted people living in the country, the government should take measures for full employment of this group.

Globally, at least 1 billion people have near or distance vision impairment that could be prevented.

Prolonged drought may increase Asiatic black bear-human encounters in Iran

By Jamshid Parchizadeh

Iran is facing its worst drought in 50 years which has resulted in water shortages for humans and wildlife species. With drought going on, animal species including the Asiatic black bear have had to leave protected areas for other places where they can find food and water resources (e.g. within or around human populated areas), which can result in encounters between black bears and humans.

The Asiatic black bear is a rare and vulnerable species in Iran that occur in the mountainous areas around Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Kerman Provinces. Reduction of natural foods within bears' familiar home ranges due to droughts may make bears leave their habitat and become highly attracted to anthropogenic sources of food in human populated areas, which can result in increased encounters with humans. Consequently, to reduce unnecessary encounters between humans and Asiatic black bears



at this critical time, it is recommended that the DOE consider: (1) educating local people about the difficult situation the black bears are currently in as a result of prolonged drought, which can result in sharing some water resources between humans and bears, and (2) establishing a program to compensate for any agricultural (i.e. livestock, or crops including plants, fruits, beehives) losses inflicted by black bears.

The author is a PhD student from the State University of New York

COVID-19 UPDATES ON OCTOBER 15

New cases	11,857
New deaths	197
Total cases	5,765,904
Total deaths	123,695
New hospitalized patients	1,591
Patients in critical condition	4,924
Total recovered patients	5,294,981
Diagnostic tests conducted	33,787,952
Doses of vaccine injected	70,529,794

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Female Asiatic lion to join male companion in Iran

Iran will play host to a female Asiatic lion from Ireland to accompany the recently returned male lion under a population management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), a veterinarian at Eram Zoo has said.

The female lion, born 4 years ago, now is coming back to its motherland after being extinct for 8 decades, YJC quoted Iman Memarian as saying on Saturday.

He went on to say that the lion has undergone genetic tests and diagnostics under the EAZA supervision, and the results have showed that the animal is completely healthy.

Both will be kept at Tehran Zoological Garden separately for a period, and then will live together, Memarian concluded.

شیر ماده ایرانی به جفت نر خود می پیوند

دامپزشک پارک پردیسان و مدیر باغ وحش ارم از پیوستن شیر ماده ایرانی از ایرلند به جفت نر خود تحت نظر برنامه تکثیر گونه‌های در خطر انقراض خبر داد.

ایمان معماریان در گفتگو با خبرنگار حوزه محیط زیست گروه اجتماعی باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، اظهار کرد: شیرماده ایرانی که در باغ وحش دوبلین ایرلند به دنیا آمده و ۴ ساله است، پس از ۸۰ سال در راه بازگشت به وطن است. وی افزود: شیر ماده ایرانی از نظر ژنتیک و نبود بیماری چک شده و هیچ گونه مشکلی نداشته، این شیر پس از استانداردسازی مورد تایید اتحادیه باغ وحش‌های اروپا به ایران جابه جا شد.

دامپزشک پارک پردیسان و مدیر باغ وحش ارم ادامه داد: دو شیر ماده و نر ایرانی مدتی جدا از هم زیست خواهند کرد و به صورت تدریجی این دوگونه به هم معرفی خواهند شد.



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OCTOBER 16, 2021

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One who says unpleasant things about others, will himself quickly become a target of their scandal.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon: 11:50 Evening: 17:46 Dawn: 4:49 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:13 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries

Painting

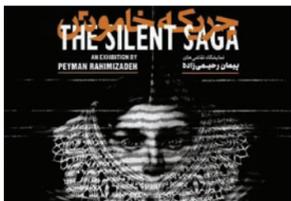
* RENEH SAHEB is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Aran Gallery.

The exhibition will run until October 29 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



* Paintings by Payman Rahimizadeh are on view in an exhibition at Mojdeh Gallery.

Entitled "The Silent Saga", the exhibit will run until October 26 at the gallery located at No. 27, 18th Alley off North Allameh Blvd. in the Saadatabad neighborhood.



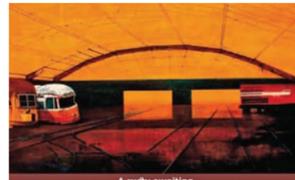
* Shokuh Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Sogol Amyari.

The exhibit named "Suspended Darkness of the Day" will continue until October 26 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.



* An exhibition of paintings by Uria Mahmudi is currently underway at Vaali Gallery.

The exhibit "Inside" will continue until October 26 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.



* Qasem Mohammadi is hanging his latest paintings in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "A Rusty Awaiting" will run until October 26 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Nastaran Rahimi is currently underway at A Gallery 2.

The exhibit named "Continuous Wonders" will run until October 25 at the gallery that can be found at 7 Arshad Alley, Azodi St. off Karim Khan St.



* Iranshahr Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Salim Salehi.

Entitled "Quietism", the exhibit will run until November 1 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.



Photo collage

* Shalman Gallery is hanging photo collages by Mohsen Tashkhourian in an exhibition entitled "History without History".

The showcase will run until October 20 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.



Illustration

* Illustrations by Qobad Shiva are currently being shown in an exhibition at Saless Gallery.

The exhibit centers on Iranian legends and will be running until November 2 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



Sculpture

* Sculptures by Atusa Vahdani, Behdad Lahuti, Shabnam Ghaffari, Payam Qorbani, Behruz Rastegar, Hadi Roshanzamir, Amin Aqai and several other artists are currently on view in an exhibition at Negah Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Rock, Paper, Scissors" will run until November 3 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motehahri Ave.



Multimedia

* On view at A Gallery 1 are artworks in various media by Amin Nadi, Fatemeh Khajenuri, Shervin Shirubi, and Amir-Hossein Mohammadkarimi.

The exhibit named "Irony" will run until October 25 at the gallery that can be found at 7 Arshad Alley, Azodi St. off Karim Khan St.



"Yadoo" crowned best at Isfahan children's film festival

From Page 1 ► Iranian drama "Sea Boys", written and directed by Afshin Hashemi and Hossein Qasemi-Jami, won the award for best screenplay.

The film tells the story of two boys from northern and southern Iran who are forced to live separated from their families.

"Sea Boys" also was selected best film in the national competition.

Yasin Habibpur was selected as best actor for his role in the film.

The Croatian sci-fi "My Grandpa Is an Alien" co-directed by Marina Andree Skop and Drazen Zarkovic won the special award of the jury of children. Skop and Zarkovic also won the Golden Butterfly for best artistic achievement.

The special jury award was given to "Lucia" by Spanish director Juan Pato.

The film is about nine-year-old Lucia who goes on a field trip with



Mehdi Jafari (R) receives the award for best director for his drama "Yadoo" from director Puran Derakhshandeh during the 34th Isfahan International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Tehran on October 13, 2021. (IFFCY)

her father. Suddenly, she finds herself alone in the middle of the woods anxiously awaiting the return of her father. Hours pass by and night falls, but no one shows up.

Actors Alireza Shojanuri and Ghazal Shakeri and director Mehrdad Oskui were the members of the jury.

The best music award went to the Indian drama "Sumi" directed by Amol Vasant Gole. Rohan Rohan has collaborated as a composer on this film.

"The Silence of the River" by Peruvian director Francesca Canepa was named best short.

In this film, Juan, a 9-year-old boy, lives with his dad in a floating house on the Amazon River. Through a dreamlike journey into the rain forest jungle, he will discover the truth about his dad.

"My Grandmother Matilde" by Mexican director Miguel Anaya Borja was picked as best animation.

"Careless Crime" director Shahram Mokri on Chicago festival jury

TEHRAN – Shahram Mokri, the director of the acclaimed Iranian drama "Careless Crime", has been selected as a member of the official competition jury at the 57th Chicago International Film Festival.

His latest film "Careless Crime" won the Premio Bisato d'Oro for Best Original Screenplay at the Venice Film Festival in 2020.

He made his debut with the feature film "Ashkan, the Charmed Ring and Other Stories", which had its international premiere at the Busan Film Festival in 2008.

His second film "Fish and Cat" won the Orizzonti Special Prize for Innovative Content at the Venice Film Festival in 2013 and the Berlin Film Festival premiered his 2018 feature "Invasion".

The jury also features Italian director Gianfranco Rosi, Canadian director Patricia Rozema and Mexican cinematographer Hugo Villa Smythe.

Thirteen films are competing in the official section of the festival, which opened on Wednesday

and will be running until October 21.

Among the films is "Petite Maman" by Céline Sciamma from France.

In this delicate, imaginative tale, precocious and bright eight-year-old Nelly travels with her parents to her mother's childhood home following the death of her grandmother. As her parents spend their days cleaning out the house, Nelly wanders in the surrounding woods searching for the fort her mother built as a child. To her surprise, she encounters a girl her own age, who is building a fort, and the two become fast friends.

Spanish director Iciar Bollain's "Maixabel" is another highlight of the official competition lineup.

It is the inspiring true story of a politician's widow who, in the face of unspeakable violence, takes a brave step toward forgiveness and healing. Eleven years after Maixabel Lasa's husband was killed by the Basque terrorist group ETA, she receives a shocking request: one of the men responsible for his death wants to meet with Maixabel in the



Iranian director Shahram Mokri attends the 70th Venice Film Festival in 2013. (AFP)

prison where he is serving his sentence.

"The Worst Person in the World" by Norwegian director Joachim Trier and "107 Mothers" by Slovakian director Peter Kerekes are other major films of the festival.

"Makeup Artist" wins Award of Excellence at Yamagata documentary festival

TEHRAN – Iranian filmmaker Jafar Najafi's latest movie "Makeup Artist" has won the Award of Excellence at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival in Japan.

The winners of the festival, which was held online this time due to the pandemic, were announced on Thursday, and the film received the award in the New Asian Currents category.

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

Another Award of Excellence in this category was given to "Three Songs for Benazir" from Afghanistan.

Directed by Gulistan Mirzaei and Elizabeth Mirzaei, the short documentary depicts a young man in a camp for displaced persons in Kabul singing for his beloved wife Benazir as if the whole world was theirs alone. We



A scene from "Makeup Artist" by Jafar Najafi.

see him next four years later, facing the consequences of the path he was forced to choose in providing for his family, after his struggle to find work.

"Little Palestine, Diary of a Siege", a co-production by Lebanon, France and Qatar received the Ogawa Shinsuke Prize, the grand prize of this section.

It is about life in a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria. The situation in the country worsens, with roads blocked and food so scarce that people start dying not only from bombardment but starvation as well.

With no end in sight, all they can do is put one foot in front of the next.

The Robert and Frances Flaherty Prize, the grand prize in the international competition, went to "Inside the Red Brick Wall" from Hong Kong.

This film shows Hong Kong shaken by the "one country, two systems" policy. In November 2019, protestors calling for democratic reform are besieged in a university by heavily armed officers. In scrupulous detail,

these anonymous filmmakers capture the worn out and anxious youth who are being beaten into submission by the violent and cunning forces of power.

"Camagroga" by Spanish filmmaker Alfonso Amador won the Mayor's Prize.

On the outskirts of Valencia, in a region rich in irrigation agriculture, lives a farming family that has been growing tiger nuts for generations. Camagroga follows their lives for one year as they continue to work on the farm. Despite the upheavals in modern development that encroach upon the area, we see their faces beaming with pride and joy in their trade, and learn about the history of the land itself.

The Awards of Excellence in the section were given to "City Hall" directed by Frederick Wiseman for the U.S. and "Night Shot" by Carolina Moscoso Briceño from Chile.

"The First 54 Years—An Abbreviated Manual for Military Occupation", a co-production from France, Finland, Israel and Germany by Avi Mograbi, was honored with the special jury award.

Iran: Persian music



This file photo shows the Tehran Symphony Orchestra performing a concert at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on December 20, 2017. (YJC/ Alireza Farahani)

Part 2

An important aspect of Persian music history is the influence of Persian music in South and West Asia. Much of the musical terminology of Arabic, Turkish, and (most of all) Azerbaijani cultures is of Persian origin.

The 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar introduced major changes in Indian music by bringing Persian musicians to his court.

Turkish classical music is dominated by the work and thought of the great Persian poet and Sufi Jalal ad-Din Mohammad Rumi. The twentieth-century history of Persian music is characterized by the

standardization of the radif, the body of about 250-300 short pieces of music memorized by musicians as a point of departure for improvisation and composition, which makes Persian music as a distinct system easily distinguished in its sound and structure from those of its neighbors.

Persian music in the 20th century is also characterized by use of the Western-based international system of music notation, which led to the formation of orchestras and distinguished ensembles and brought about noted composers of traditional and experimental music.

The existence of sizeable Persian diaspora communities in Europe and North America has been a major factor in the last few decades in introducing Persian music to the Western audience.

While the various non-Persian-speaking ethnic groups of Persia maintain their musical tradition, many of the musicians of Persian classical music (and of modern mainstream popular genres) have been members of minorities, particularly including Kurds, Jews, and Armenians.

Attitudes and values: Although Persia is rich in musical sounds, it is a fact that Persian society of

both earlier and recent past in the Islamic period has taken an ambivalent attitude towards music.

The concept of freedom is closely associated with musical values. This is evidenced by the centrality of improvised music, and by the concept of the ideal of amateur musicianship, in which the improvising performer has liberty of all sorts, from the freedom to perform what and as long as he wishes to the decision to select out of the musical vocabulary from moment to moment.

Professional musicianship is a specialized occupation, particularly in rural communities, in which performers typically restrict themselves to one genre of music or type of recited narrative.

Performers of classical music ordinarily do not participate in popular or folk genres, but musicians active in Persian classical music may also be active "Western" or "international" music.

Finally, Sufism and Sufi ideas play an important role in various aspects of Persian musical thought.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Persian music in the 20th century is also characterized by use of the Western-based international system of music notation.