

Deciphering Azerbaijani President's Provocations Against Iran

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Opinion

Iran's steel sector still booming despite sanctions

By Mahnaz Abdi

After the withdrawal of the United States from Iran's nuclear deal, the Islamic Republic has faced sanctions in various industries, including steel sector.

The United States has sanctioned entities and individuals associated with Iran's steel industry.

In early January, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) added twelve Iranian producers of steel and other metal products to the list of sanctions.

However, at that time, the U.S. experts said that the Islamic Republic of Iran had resisted the so-called U.S. maximum pressure policy for the past three years, and the Trump administration had failed to achieve any of its goals in the face of sanctions against Iran.

Also, those active in Iran's steel sector believed that sanctions against Iran which were in place for 40 years had nothing to do with the Iranian industry.

For example, referring to Iran's success in steel production in the country, the vice president of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) stated: "Iran is one of the 10 top steel producing countries in the world and no doubt U.S. sanctions will not take special action against Iran's steel industry at this stage." ► Page 4

Op-ed

After Tayouneh tragedy, will Hezbollah restrain itself?

By A. Bassam

TEHRAN - When Hamlet, the Danish prince, discovered by chance that his father was killed by his uncle, he was confused and puzzled. Hamlet is the main character in one of Shakespeare's plays, which was named after him. At that moment, the moment of truth, Hamlet changed and became a man with responsibilities. However, he was completely drained by the fact that his mother was involved in the conspiracy and she was married to his uncle, the killer.

The same bewilderment has taken over the people after the great crime committed in Tayouneh in Beirut on the 14th two days ago. It was not Hamlet alone in great confusion; it was the whole country. For sure, it is an incident that will take the country into its next step, once and for all. It is the moment of truth. It is what Hamlet expressed in his historical words: to be or not to be, that is the question!

More specifically, it is the moment of truth for the two Shiite parties in Lebanon, Amal, and Hezbollah and their allies. However, Hezbollah is more beleaguered in the matter. It has been an escalating and continued war on it to disarm it since 2006. ► Page 5

IRGC navy to be armed with 2000-km-range missiles

TEHRAN - The naval force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) will be equipped with anti-ship cruise missile with a range of 2000 kilometers in the near future, IRGC Commander Hossein Salami announced on Saturday.

Such missiles will be capable of targeting mobile vessels, Salami said while touring Persian Gulf islands.

According to Salami, the IRGC navy now has missiles with ranges of 35, 90, 300 and 700 kilometers.

He also said the IRGC navy has made significant progresses in areas of navigation in

recent years. For example, he said, now the speed of boats has reached about 100 knots, which is important in terms of speed in navigation industry.

The senior general went on to say that the IRGC navy now has hundreds of different kinds of drones for different purposes, such as reconnaissance, surveillance, combat and suicide.

Now the UAVs used by the force has the capability to fly 1200 kilometers, he said, adding the range of these drones are being increased.

The major general also said in the field of

electronic warfare systems, data collection systems, jammers, and offensive and defensive systems, good steps have been taken by the IRGC navy.

Iran has made major inroads in designing and manufacturing sophisticated weapons. For example, the air defense missile system, named Bavar 373, is believed to rival the Russian-made S-300. The progress in defense industry can serve as a catalyst for advances in other industries, including car production, in the country.

Iran, Pakistan to hold joint naval drill

TEHRAN — Expressing confidence over the results of his visit to Pakistan and emphasizing the common ground between the two neighbors on various issues, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, said that both sides agreed to expand intelligence sharing as well as holding a joint naval drill in the future.

At the end of his second official visit to Pakistan, which lasted four days and ended on Friday evening, Baqeri said in an exclusive interview with IRNA that Pakistan has a special place for the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Armed Forces for its commonalities with Iran, as well as the long borders the two countries share.

He added, "In the recent meeting and previous meetings, we have agreed on the need to provide better security for the common borders, and fortunately in recent years, significant efforts have been made by both neighbors to create border barriers, and to control human and drug trafficking.

The general noted that now the border between the two countries is much safer than in the past and is becoming one of the ideal

borders of Iran.

Iran's membership in Shanghai organization paves way for strengthening ties with members

Responding to a question about Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Baqeri referred to the serious will of Iran to expand relations with its neighbors.

The military chief, who led a high-level military delegation to Pakistan, underlined, "Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will definitely strengthen Iran's relations with Pakistan and other member states of the organization."

Making common borders completely secure

Referring to his meetings with senior Pakistani political-military officials and the conclusion of consultations and agreements, Baqeri noted, "In this trip, we agreed to continue our work to secure borders and finish the incomplete projects."

He added that based on the agreements reached, today Tehran and Islamabad can have simultaneous exercises on both sides of the border and establish joint bases in the Mirjavah border area. ► Page 2

Relics discovered from Austrian salt mine to go on show in Iran

TEHRAN - A collection of historical objects and tools, discovered from Austria's Hallein Salt Mine, also known as Salzbergwerk Dürrenberg, will go on display at Iranian museums in Tehran and Zanjan.

Based on an agreement inked between the National Museum of Iran, Zolfaghari Museum, and Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum (The German Mining Museum in Bochum), the exhibit will be put on show in two Iranian museums, CHTN quoted Zanjan tourism chief Amir Arjmand as saying on Saturday.

Parts of the properties of the Austrian mine, which are being kept in the Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum, have been transferred to Iran and are very similar to those found in Zanjan, the official explained.

Facebook under pressure over pro-Palestine suppression

TEHRAN - The tech giant has succumbed to criticism and will now appoint an external body to examine whether the social media platform suppressed posts supporting Palestine. Facebook will allow an independent body to launch an investigation into content moderation of Arabic and Hebrew posts after the company was accused of removing and suppressing pro-Palestine content.

In a statement, it said, "we have partnered with a non-profit organization expert in business and human rights, BSR, to conduct human rights due diligence of Facebook's impacts during May-June's intensified violence in Israel and Palestine."

The statement added that "BSR will examine relevant internal Facebook sources and engage with affected stakeholders." ► Page 5

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Interview

Foolad Sirjan's success predictable: Afshardoust

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Member of Iran Volleyball Federation's board of directors, Mahmoud Afshardoust, believes that Foolad Sirjan's success in the 2021 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship was predictable but valuable.

Foolad Sirjan of Iran defeated Qatari side Al Arabi to win the Asian Club Championship on Friday.

"First of all, I congratulate Sirjan club, including the management and the staff, and also the warm-hearted and passionate people of Sirjan, especially the volleyball fans, for such a great achievement. They all deserved it for what they have done during the recent years," said Afshardoust in an interview with Tehran Times.

The former player and coach of the Iran men's national volleyball team shared his view about the competition.

"The reality is that Iranian clubs have dominated the Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship in all the recent years and have won the trophy most of the time." ► Page 3



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Wrestler Geraei dedicates gold medal to unknown martyr

TEHRAN - Mohammadreza Geraei dedicated his gold medal to unknown martyr on Saturday. At a ceremony held in Iran wrestling federation's headquarters in Tehran, he dedicated his gold to the martyr. Olympic gold medal winner Geraei claimed a gold medal in the 2021 World Greco-Roman Wrestling Championships in Oslo, Norway last week.

Iran, China foreign ministers call for implementing 25-year partnership

China reaffirms support for JCPOA

TEHRAN — The foreign ministers of Iran and China discussed the latest status of bilateral relations and regional and international developments in a phone call on late Friday.

While reviewing the latest status of bilateral ties, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian put emphasis on the need to implement the comprehensive 25-year cooperation plan.

He praised China's valuable support in providing the vaccine needed by the Iran.

The Iranian side also discussed the latest status of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with his Chinese counterpart.

Abdollahian described relations between the two countries as strategic, emphasizing Tehran's serious efforts to follow up on the agreements reached between President Xi Jinping and President Ebrahim Raisi in a recent telephone call between the two sides, as well as the full implementation of the 25-year cooperation document.

The phone talks took place after Enrique Mora, deputy secretary general and political director of the European External Action Service, visited Iran on Thursday for talks with Iranian deputy foreign minister for political affairs Ali Bagheri. The talks mainly focused on resuming the stalled Vienna talks with the aim of reviving the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Abdollahian explained the framework of the talks and the definite policy of Iran which is the effective and complete removal of unilateral and illegal sanctions imposed by the United States. He also

criticized the inaction of the E3 (Germany, France, UK) in meeting their obligations under the JCPOA.

The top Iranian diplomat emphasized that the talks have started in a positive and constructive direction.

For his part, Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Councilor Wang Yi stressed Beijing's stance on the need for a full return of all JCPOA parties to honoring their obligations.

He praised the position of the Islamic Republic in this regard.

The top Chinese diplomat welcomed the beginning of talks between Iran and the European side.

The Chinese foreign minister stressed that he had instructed his colleagues to continue close consultations in this regard with their counterparts in the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Wang expressed Beijing's readiness to implement the 25-year cooperation plan.

He also stressed Beijing's commitment to continuing cooperation with Tehran to contain the coronavirus outbreak and providing any volume of the required vaccine for as long as Tehran demands.

In the conversation, the Chinese foreign minister stressed that the leaders of the two countries are determined to fully expand bilateral relations, and therefore Beijing, just as in the past, will continue to cooperate and consult with the Islamic Republic at all levels, including mutual cooperation in regional and international organizations.

Commander: Indigenousness is biggest advantage of Iranian drones

TEHRAN — The biggest advantage of Iran's drones is that the armed forces use completely indigenous technology in manufacturing, using, and overhauling them, the commander of Hazrat Vali-e-Asr UAV Group of the Army Ground Forces has said.

"The biggest advantage we have over drones in the region and the world is that our UAVs are indigenous and completely Iranian, that is, we have used and continue to use a completely indigenous technology in construction, use, and overhaul. We are not dependent on any country in supplying the UAV production chain, and this is our biggest advantage. It is possible for us to replace this cycle and continue it," Shahram Hassannejad said in an interview with IRNA published on Saturday.

Iranian drones had been designed and manufactured in accordance with the regional conditions in terms of climate and strategic areas of different parts of the country, the commander highlighted.

"Iran has different weather seasons and our 'birds' can perform missions in different weather conditions, in the sea, mountains, desert and in different climatic conditions," the military official explained.

Referred to increase in the combat capability of the Armed Forces after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, he said, "What is happening today in the Ground Forces and the Armed Forces is the result of a deep thought and a very valuable experience from eight years of sacred defense. Eight years of sacred defense is a sustainable source that we have used and will use many times."

The sacred defense refers to resistance against the invading Saddam Hussein army against Iran



in the 1980s. The war that Saddam launched against Iran in September 1980 lasted until August 1988.

The commander stated achieving high-tech science and capabilities in the field of drones is the result of the experiences that Armed Forces had gained during the eight years of sacred defense, noting that "at that time, we wanted to be able to identify and monitor mountainous areas to stop the enemy."

Explaining the necessities of using UAVs in today's wars, the commander said: "The idea of using UAVs was in fact according to the orders of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution. He said in one of his speeches that the navy had drones before the revolution, and advised that the Army should strengthen these drones and do something that is in line with the current situation, so the army entered this field by observing the Leader's orders."

Stating that the army ground forces have seriously entered the field of UAVs over the past 12 years, the general said that in the early years, the needs and requirements for reconnaissance and surveillance in drills, actions near borders, and the domestic areas created a new mindset in the armed forces.

At that time, he said, drones were only for reconnaissance and sur-

veillance.

The ground forces have left the defense strategy behind

He said the Army Ground Forces succeeded to master the technology to produce drones despite sanctions, adding that drones are the result of creativity by the youth in the army and other organizations

"Sanctions and maximum pressure did not prevent the designers, and today we have very good conditions in the field of UAVs, so we passed production of the reconnaissance and surveillance UAVs."

Hassannejad highlighted that today the strategy of the ground forces has departed from a purely defensive force and it now has an "offensive view".

With that in mind, he said, simply having UAVs for reconnaissance could not meet the ground forces' needs.

"In the last five years, we have gone through reconnaissance and surveillance UAVs, which of course we have a deep look at, to multi-rolle combat, and suicide drones, and more recently to basic electronic warfare drones so that we can conduct electronic warfare in managing the operational scene."

He also commented on training of UAV pilots.

"As the name of these UAVs indicates, the UAV is a remotely piloted aircraft and the pilots are present at the flight control stations and the UAV has its mission miles away from the pilot's base."

Hassannejad stated that the training of UAV pilots was centralized based on the needs of the forces.

The forces, after passing the officer training course, spend the course of piloting and controlling special UAV in that relevant unit, he explained.

Fortunately, in recent years, very good measures have been taken both in the field of training UAV pilots and in the field of training technical personnel.

Referring to the progress in Iranian products in recent years, the military official stressed that most of the drones were produced by the defense industry and these products were used in operational units such as the Hazrat Vali-e-Asr Ajal-ullah UAV group.

Round-the-clock readiness to carry out missions

Elsewhere in his remarks, Hassannejad said the durability of flights and operational range of Iranian drones were such that UAV Group of the Army Ground Forces can carry out reconnaissance, surveillance and even combat missions round-the-clock, wherever it is intended and communicated to it.

The commander also reiterated reality was that the wars are not like the past or in a classical form.

Wars and conflicts have shifted to impact-oriented wars and the use of enemy operational depth, he said, adding with this view, wars have also changed in terms of content and form.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran, Pakistan to hold joint naval drill



From page 1 ► The top general highlighted that now there are simultaneous and instantaneous lines of communication between the two neighbors.

He added, "Coordination between Iran and Pakistan will take place immediately in the event of any incident on the border, and fortunately our common borders are moving towards full security, which was one of the important areas of our discussion with our Pakistani counterparts."

Afghanistan problems and impacts resulting from American forces' escape

Responding to a question about Afghanistan, the top military official stated that one of the other issues that is extremely important these days is the issue of Afghanistan, which has been affected by the irresponsible withdrawal of Americans from Afghanistan.

He added that due to the power vacuum in the country, a plethora of problems may occur in Afghanistan.

"During the meeting with Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, which was also attended by the Pakistani ministers of defense and foreign affairs, both sides were able to share their views on many bilateral issues, regional devel-

opments, including Afghanistan," Baqeri added.

He also said, "Afghanistan's economic issues, the flood of refugees and insecurity and the serious problems that the ISIS terrorist group can create, affect both Iran and Pakistan."

He went on to elaborate by saying that Afghanistan was discussed in detail with the military and political officials of Pakistan and it was emphasized that a stable system should be formed with the participation of all ethnicities and sects in Afghanistan.

The top general noted, "Fortunately, there was a full agreement with the military and political officials of Pakistan in this regard, and it was agreed that the two countries will continue consultations in the military sector."

Deeper military ties and holding future naval exercises

Baqeri called the military cooperation between Iran and Pakistan the third issue that the Iranian delegation pursued during the trip, adding, "We have had educational cooperation with each other in the past and the navies of the two countries visit each other's

ports."

He went on to say that during the trip good agreements were reached. "In the future we will hold joint naval exercises both in the Pakistani waters, as well as the southern waters of Iran."

The top general also announced the presence of Pakistani ships in the joint Iran-Russia-China exercises, which began two years ago.

He said, "Military competitions between the armed forces of the two countries are developing. At the present time, Iranian pilots are being trained in Pakistan, and counter-terrorism training is being held in Iran, and in the next stages, various trainings will take place between the two countries."

Baqeri, who had visited some of Pakistan's defense and military industries in the maritime and aerial fields in Islamabad, added that during the visit both sides agreed to cooperate and exchange experiences in the field of building aircrafts and tanks.

Improving intelligence cooperation to combat terrorism

Elsewhere in his interview, the top general said that there is good cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in terms of intelligence relations, intelligence training and information exchange.

He noted that a mechanism has been set up to develop intelligence relations, stating that this cooperation has been deepened in the visits of intelligence officials from the two countries' armed forces, and that it is expected to have a major impact on counter-terrorism on both sides of the border.

The four-day trip of Major General Baqeri and the high-ranking delegation to the cities of Islamabad and Karachi ended on Friday.

In the future we will hold joint naval exercises



Deciphering Azerbaijani president’s provocations against Iran

TEHRAN – Is Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev sleepwalking into a conflict beyond his country’s capacity? Observers in the region gave intriguing answers to this question.

Ever since the sudden eruption of tensions between Tehran and Baku, many pundits and officials in Iran warned about the malign influence of foreigners on the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In the beginning, it was “third-parties” but as Azeri officials went further in their hostile statements against Iran, it became clear what third-parties exactly means. Initially, Iranian officials sought to defuse tensions with Baku through diplomatic channels, the favorite way of Iran in addressing misunderstandings with Azerbaijan.

To this end, Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyed Abbas Mousavi held several rounds of talks with Azeri officials in Baku in a bid to de-escalate tensions. But the Azeris took a step further and brought the spat to the media. In the meantime, several Azeri lawmakers made provocative remarks against Iran.

Again, Iranian officialdom avoided a war of words. Instead, some Iranian lawmakers responded to their Azeri counterparts.

But when Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev jumped in, Iran found itself in a position to respond to Azeri provocations. But even when Iran decided to respond, it did so quite diplomatically.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian spoke over the phone with his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun



Bayramov. During the conversation, the chief Iranian diplomat underlined the need for mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and stressed that Iran and Azerbaijan must prevent misunderstandings in their relations and it is worthwhile to continue their ties in the right and growing direction quickly.

Meanwhile, many Iranian commentators and officials politely warned that tensions between Baku and Tehran could only serve the interests of Israel, which seeks to turn Azerbaijan into a forward base for its malign activities against Iran.

In fact, some Iranians blame the whole episode on Israel’s provocations. Abdollahian told Bayramov that Tehran and Baku have enemies and the two sides should not give the enemies the opportunity to disrupt relations between the two countries.

Aliyev continued to make controversial remarks against Iran despite Iranian warnings that Israel

stands behind the tensions. Tragically, the Azeri president even moved to vindicate Israel while continuing his hostile remarks against Iran.

In the lasted move, he accused Iran of collaborating with Armenia in drug trafficking via Nagorno-Karabakh territories when they were under Armenian occupation, an accusation that drew a strong response from Iran.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh strongly rejected the “astonishing” new allegations made by Aliyev against Iran at the summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, calling them fabricated.

Again, Iran warned of an Israeli role in the drama. Khatibzadeh said such media accusations are only in the interests of the Zionist regime to affect the brotherly relations between the two nations of Iran and Azerbaijan.

Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani implicitly reiterated the same warning. Writing on Twitter, Shamkhani described as “false” Aliyev’s allegation on Iran’s involvement

in drug trafficking.

“Ignoring the neighborhood principles & making false statements can’t be a sign of a tact. Accusation against a country that the world recognizes as a hero in the fight against drugs has no effect other than invalidating the speaker’s words. Beware of the devil’s costly traps,” he tweeted.

So far, Iran has sought to brotherly resolve the dispute which lasted more than expected. But it seems that there are invisible hands prodding Aliyev into prolonging his war of words against Iran. But why?

A Russian expert says Baku is escalating tensions with Iran in a bid to ramp up pressure on it as part of the West’s pressure campaign on Tehran to resume the stalled Vienna nuclear talks over the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The expert, Dmitry Solomnikov, who is the director of the Institute of Contemporary Development in Russia, put the Baku-Tehran tensions into the broader context of the current state of play between Iran and the West.

“If there was no statement that Iran is about to build an atomic bomb..., then this confrontation between Azerbaijan and Iran would not have taken place now,” he told Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper.

If true, this assessment proves that Aliyev is dragging his country into an ill-advised confrontation that will cost his country dearly.

Iran rejects Azeri president’s ‘astonishing’ claims

TEHRAN – Iran has responded to latest remarks by Azeri President Ilham Aliyev who accused Iran of drug trafficking in collaboration with Armenia amid ongoing tensions between Tehran and Baku.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh strongly rejected the astonishing new allegations made by the Republic of Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev against the Islamic Republic of Iran at the summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, calling them fabricated, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

Khatibzadeh said such media accusations are only in the interests of the Zionist regime to affect the brotherly relations between the two nations of Iran and Azerbaijan.

Emphasizing the leading role of Iran in the fight against drug trafficking, Khatibzadeh stressed that thousands of martyrs and wounded Iranians during the past four decades in the fight against this ominous phenomenon is just a part of the committed and continuous efforts of the Islamic Republic on this path which have been approved by relevant international institutions over and over again.

While emphasizing the strong brotherly relations between the two nations, Khatibzadeh said, unfortunately, it seems that despite the private and positive messages received from Baku in different calls, there is an intention on the part of Baku to make baseless media statements, which, of course, will be answered in due manner.

The Azeri president has accused Iran of aiding Armenia in drug trafficking. In addition, he also went so far as to accuse Iran of playing a role on destroying Shusha city in the Nagorno-Karabakh region when it was under Armenia occupation.

“In the city of Shusha, Armenia has destroyed 16 out of 17 mosques that existed there before the occupation. One mosque was left to demonstrate

‘tolerance’, and there was an attempt to portray it as Persian with complicity from so-called specialists from Iran,” Aliyev claimed.

He added, “Houses and public buildings were taken down brick by brick and sold to Armenia and Iran.... Also, immense damages have been caused to the nature. About 60,000 hectares of forests have been cut down, sawn and sold to Armenia and Iran.”

Iran has strongly rejected the Azerbaijani allegations that it sided with Armenia during the wars over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Iran says it supported Baku in its efforts to liberate its occupied territories.

The remarks came against a backdrop of heightened tensions between Tehran and Baku. The episode began in early August when social media users in Iran reported mistreatment of Iranian truck drivers by Azerbaijani forces along the Goris-Kapan Highway which links Iran to Armenia through the newly-liberated Karabakh region. The Iranian trucks were carrying Armenia-bound goods from Iran but due to the change in Karabakh’s borders during a 2020 war had to pass through a road curve into Azerbaijan’s territory.

Azerbaijan also reportedly imposed a staggering tax on Iranian commercial trucks which drew criticism from Iranian merchants.

“Beware of the devil’s costly traps”

Since then, tensions have been on the rise between the two neighbors. On Friday, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani warned about the “costly traps” that could be set for Baku.

“Ignoring the neighborhood principles & making false statements can’t be a sign of a tact. Accusation against a country that the world recognizes as a hero in the fight against drugs has no effect other than invalidating the speaker’s words. Beware of the devil’s costly traps,” Shamkhani said on Twitter.

Last week, the foreign ministers of Iran and

Azerbaijan held a telephone conversation to defuse tensions. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov have discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations in a telephone conversation.

While emphasizing the need for mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, Abdollahian added that Tehran and Baku have a long-standing relationship with each other.

He stressed that the two countries must prevent misunderstandings in their relations and it is worthwhile to continue their ties in the right and growing direction quickly.

Abdollahian also said Tehran expects that the problem of transit traffic of Iranian trucks in the Azerbaijan Republic will be solved, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

The foreign minister spoke of the depth of relations between the two nations. He said Tehran and Baku have enemies and the two sides should not give the enemies the opportunity to disrupt relations between the two countries and concerns should be allayed through dialogue and cooperation.

The Azeri Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov also called relations with Iran friendly and added that ties with friendly countries are a priority for the Republic of Azerbaijan.

He emphasized the need to resolve the differences through dialogue and in a calm and sincere atmosphere. Jeyhun Bayramov suggested that the two countries’ customs officials hold talks to solve the problem of the transit of Iranian goods.

He stressed the pursuit of the release of two Iranian truck drivers detained in the Azerbaijan Republic.

The foreign ministers of the two countries invited each other to visit Tehran and Baku.

relations in all fields.

For his part, Laudemar Aguilar, the Brazilian ambassador to Tehran, referred to the great potential to develop ties, saying collaboration by the two countries’ parliaments, especially by the heads of the two countries’ friendship groups, in crafting and implementing the roadmap for relations is of paramount significance.

In the end, the two sides issued a joint statement that reads as follows:

Iran and Brazil in 2023 will celebrate the 120th year of their bilateral relations. The two countries have complementary economies and intertwined trade interests. As the obstacles to the development of these relations are removed and the necessary

infrastructure is provided, according to the existing capacities, direct and indirect trade between the two countries can be increased up to 10 billion dollars.

Parliamentary friendship groups in the parliaments of the two sides are fully aware of the importance of relations between the two countries and the role of parliament in this regard, and the recent visit of a delegation representing the Brazilian Parliament to attend the inauguration of the president-elect of this country is a testament to this importance and awareness.

The parliamentary friendship groups, supported by the speakers of the two countries’ parliaments, Mr. Qalibaf and Mr. Arthur Lira, will work to achieve the following vision by continuing talks and preparing joint programs:

SPORTS

Foolad Sirjan’s success predictable: Afshardoust

From Page 1 ► This year, there was a special situation for the tournament that made it slightly different from the previous editions. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the representatives of China, Korea, and Japan didn’t participate in this year’s tournament, and it somehow affected the level of the competition,” he said.

“But it is clear that Foolad’s success is of outstanding importance to us. It would help if you didn’t forget that Thailand’s Nakhon Ratchasima QminC had a lot of national team players. The Qatari side Al Arabi also benefited from high-level international players in their squad.

“Foolad had one or two players in the current Iran national team, but other players are not national players. It proves that Iran’s volleyball is a major Asian power in all aspects,” he said.

“We were expecting Foolad Sirjan to win the trophy, and it was predictable. If it was the other way around, we were shocked,” Afshardoust added.

When asked about the recent debate in Iranian volleyball about using “Iranian or Foreign” coaches in national teams, the member of the board of directors of the federation said, “I support the idea that the Iranian coaches should lead the Iranian national teams. We must set aside cynicism over the Iranian coaches’ ability to work with star players. They can handle their relationship with all players at the highest level.

“Iranian volleyball coaches need time to experience big international tournaments, and we should trust them and give them such a time. At the moment, the federation has chosen a good approach in this regard, and I support it,” Afshardoust concluded.

Shailaja Jain remains Iran’s women’s kabaddi coach

TEHRAN – Indian coach Shailaja Jain has extended his contract with Iran’s women’s kabaddi team.

She will lead the Iranian team in the 2022 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

Shailaja Jain led Iran in the 2018 Asian Games, where the Iranian women made history by winning the gold medal for the first time ever.

Gholamreza Mazandarani, who led Iran’s men’s team to a gold medal in the 2018 Asian Games, extended his deal with the team.

He will also coach the team in the 2022 Asian Games.

Iran to send nine swimmers to Leg 3 of FINA World Cup

TEHRAN – Nine Iranian swimmers will participate at the Leg 3 of the FINA World Cup.

Doha in Qatar is scheduled to stage the third event from October 21 to 23.

Mehrshad Afghari, Matin Balsini, Sina Gholampour, Mehdi Ansari, Matin Sohran, Homer Abbasi, Ali Jebelli and Abolfazl Sam will take part in the competition.

The competition will serve as qualification for the 15th edition of the FINA World Swimming Championships which will be held in Abu Dhabi from December 16 to 21.

Iran marks 14th National Paralympic Day

TEHRAN – Iran’s National Paralympic Committee (NPC) celebrated the 14th National Paralympic Day on Saturday.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the NPC this edition of the National Paralympic Day was symbolically celebrated in Tehran’s Olympic and Paralympic Academy.

Three-time Paralympic gold medal winner Zahra Nemati, Iran’s Sports and Youth Minister Hamid Sajadi and head of National Olympic Committee Reza Salehi Amiri attended the ceremony.

The main goals of the National Paralympic Movement to the Iranian society, contribute to the inclusion of people with disabilities, change attitudes towards people with disabilities and provide them with social opportunities.

“We celebrated the National Paralympic Day for the 14th time and want to register it as an International Day,” Iran’s NPC president Mahmoud Khosravi Vafa said.

“The National Paralympic Day can be an inspiring day for all people with disabilities. Due to coronavirus restrictions, the Day has been held symbolically in the previous two years but we will hold the ceremony with more participants when COVID-19 lockdown ends,” he added.

Iran first celebrated the National Paralympic Day in 2003 and was included in the National Calendar by a Presidential order in 2016.

At the Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Iran ended 13th in the medals table with 12 golds, 11 silvers and one bronze.

Esteghlal complete signing of Arthur Yamga

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club completed signing of French winger Arthur Yamga on Friday.

The 25-year-old player has successfully passed his medical exam.

Yamga has penned a two-year contract with the Iranian team but the contract details have not been revealed.

He has joined Esteghlal from Danish Superliga club Vejle Boldklub.

He is Esteghlal’s second signing in the last week. Iranian defender Rouzbeh Cheshmi returned to Esteghlal one year after he joined Qatari team Umm Salal.

Adiban seizes bronze at WTT Youth Contender

TEHRAN – Yekta Adibian from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the WTT Youth Contender Muscat on Friday.

She lost to Indian Hansini Mathan Rajan 3-1 (11-9, 11-6, 10-12, 11-9) in the U-15 Girls’ Singles semifinals.

Mathan Rajan had earlier defeated Iran’s Baran Arjmand in the competition.

The competition was held at the Sultan Qaboos Sport Complex in Muscat, Oman from October 10 to 15.

Japan announces new national teams coaches

TEHRAN – The Japan Volleyball Association announced on Thursday the appointment of Philippe Blain and Masayoshi Manabe as the new head coaches of the men’s and women’s national teams, respectively.

The two coaching personalities have both been part of the national programme recently, and will now lead Ryujin Nippon and Hinotori Nippon in this Olympic cycle, asianvolleyball.net reported.

Frenchman Blain succeeds Yuichi Nakagaichi as head coach of the men’s team after serving as his assistant coach since 2017. Blain was a prominent player before he led France as coach in the 1990s. He then moved to Poland as the assistant coach of Stephane Antiga from 2013 to 2016, and won the World Championship title.

Manabe takes the helm of the women’s team once again after leading Japan to bronze medals at the 2010 FIVB Volleyball World Championship, London 2012 Olympic Games and the 2013 FIVB Volleyball World Grand Champions Cup.

Iran's steel sector still booming despite sanctions



From page 1 ► “Iran's ranking among the top 10 steel producers in the world shows that the decline of Iran's position among steel producing countries will not be easy”, Bahador Ebrahimian noted.

And now, it's proven based on the reports and statistics released by the international bodies and also the Iranian sources that Iran's strong steel sector cannot be hit by the sanctions.

Based on the Iranian Steel Producers Association's data, Iranian steel companies managed to produce 30.2 million tons of steel in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), registering a three-percent annual growth.

And according to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), production of crude steel in Iran reached 17.8 million tons during January-July, 2021 to register a 9.9-percent growth year on year.

Iran's monthly crude steel output stood at 2.6 million tons in July 2021, rising nine percent compared to the figure for July 2020, the WSA's report also indicated.

The Islamic Republic maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer during

the mentioned time span, the report said.

The rising trend is also witnessed in the export of Iran's steel, as according to the latest report released in this due, Iranian major steel producers, including Mobarakeh Steel Company, Khuzestan Steel Company, Esfahan Steel Company, and Hormozgan Steel Company and some others, exported 3.811 million tons of steel in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), rising 48 percent as compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported on Saturday.

As stated by the deputy managing director of Mobarakeh Steel Company, one of Iran's major steel producers, “The sanctions have not only not bent the back of Mobarakeh Steel Company, but has led to various record breakings.”

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

According to the Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, the production capacity of the country's steel chain increased from 123 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 230 million tons in the previous year.

Iran is currently the tenth largest steel-maker in the world and is estimated to climb to seventh place by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

NDF to diversify input resources

TEHRAN – Head of the National Development Fund of Iran (NDF) has said the fund is planning to diversify its capital sources, IRNA reported.

Mehdi Qazanfari noted that the fund is considering the diversification of its input resources based on the country's potentials and capacities in various areas other than oil.

“One of our challenges at the National Development Fund is to determine how much of the fund's resources would be stabilization resources, how much development resources and how much should be kept for the future generations,” Qazanfari said.

Stating that the National Development Fund belongs to the people of Iran, he said: “We should all try to realize the fund's major goals and we hope that more steps will be taken in all dimensions to do so.”

The National Development Fund of Iran is Iran's sovereign wealth fund. It was founded in 2011 to supplement the Oil Stabilization Fund. NDF is independent of the government's budget. Based on Article 84 of the Fifth Five-year National Development Plan (2010–2015), the National Development Fund was established to transform oil and gas revenues into productive investments for future generations.

NIOC planning to use private sector capacities to boost oil sales

TEHRAN – Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has said his company is going to benefit from the potentials of the country's private sector to maximize oil and gas condensate sales in the future, Shana reported.

Referring to the NIOC plans in the oil sales sector, Mohsen Khojasteh Mehr said: “Since the maximum sale of crude oil and gas condensate is one of the priorities of the Oil Ministry, we will use all available mechanisms and tools such as barter trading, investment, and other sales methods [to boost oil sales].”

“Hopefully we can achieve the maximum amount of sales in accordance with the budget plan,” the official noted.

He further mentioned the NIOC programs for selling crude oil through the stock exchange and to diversify sale methods with the participation of the private sector, saying: “We use all legal capacities to sell oil to both foreign and domestic qualified buyers.”

“Oil sales should not be done only using traditional methods; rather, it must be done professionally and legally, using all the capacities of the private sector,” he stressed.

Exports from Gilan province rises 20%

TEHRAN- The value of export from Gilan province in the north of Iran rose 20 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Septembr 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Arsalan Zare, the governor-general of Gilan, said 503,000 tons of commodities worth \$315 million was exported from the province during the six-month period.

Stating that the export of goods during the second half of the year is more than the first half, the official added: “For this reason, we are confi-

dent that with the efforts of the relevant executive bodies we can achieve the targeted export of \$720 million from the province for this year.”

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

Iran-EAEU H1 trade up 40% yr/yr

TEHRAN – The value of trade between Iran and the members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) exceeded \$2.483 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – September 22) to register 40 percent growth compared to the previous year's same period, IRNA reported.

According to the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Ruhollah Latifi, Iran traded 5,549,311 tons of commodities worth \$2,483,129,784 with the EAEU members, up also 12 percent in terms of weight, IRIB reported.

The Islamic Republic exported over 1.167 million tons of goods worth more than \$514.399 mil-

lion to the EAEU in the period under review, five percent and 36 percent more than the previous year's same period in terms of weight and value, respectively.

During the said six months, the Russian Federation with \$270.394 million, Armenia with \$123.675 million, Kazakhstan with \$78.628 million, Kyrgyzstan with \$32.195 million, and Belarus with \$9.505 million of imports were the top destinations for the Iranian exports to the EAEU, according to Latifi.

Iran also imported over 4.381 million tons of goods worth more than \$1.968 billion from the bloc in the mentioned period, registering 14.5 percent



and 41 percent rise in terms of weight and value, respectively, the official said.

Russian Federation with \$1.716 billion, Kazakhstan with \$234.77 million, Belarus with \$12.183 million, Armenia with \$4.627 million, and Kyrgyzstan with \$372,441 were the top five sources of Iranian imports.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a free trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and officially came into

force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan).

The free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides.

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran's exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic's plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

SCO membership to facilitate Iran's foreign trade: TPO head

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said the country's accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is going to facilitate the country's trade relations with its foreign trade partners.

“Expanding exports and imports with members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will also facilitate Iran's trade relations with the world,” Alireza Peyman Pak told IRNA.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was officially accepted into the SCO on September 17 during the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the organization.

Iran's membership in this organization, in addition to political achievements, will also offer a wide range of economic opportunities to the Islamic Republic's businessmen.

Peyman Pak stressed that Iran should take advantage of this opportunity to develop its economic relations, noting that the country's economic diplomacy apparatus can benefit



from the conditions of membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to reduce tariffs, establish banking relations, and make the best use of transportation, logistics and energy transfer.

“Membership in SCO alone will not ensure development, but creates the conditions for us to expand our relations through bilateral and multilateral treaties,” the official said.

“There is the necessary synergy between the authorities in charge of developing relations with the members of the Shanghai

SEO head outlines new strategies, programs for stock market

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Majid Eshqi has outlined new strategies and programs for the country's stock market during his tenure, Mehr News Agency reported.

“The Securities and Exchange Organization will formulate, implement and monitor its policies and programs including supporting investors, creating a transparent, efficient and equitable market, and reducing inclusive risk based on the market's broad objectives” Eshqi said.

Referring to the SEO's seven main strategies in the new management period, Eshqi said: “The first strategy is to use modern mechanisms to increase public monitoring of the entities offering shares in the market; the second strate-



gy will be to develop regulatory tools in a preventive manner and in line with market development.”

According to the SEO head, the third strategy is to amend the market's rules and regulations to increase justice and accountability, while the fourth strategy will be strengthening the medium- and small-scale level financing through new mechanisms.

Facilitating the processes and developing the infrastructure for attracting and manag-

ing foreign capital in the market, along with engineering the media mechanism to provide the shareholders with up-to-date information are the fifth and sixth strategies, the official said.

The last strategy will be to re-engineering the new generation of technical infrastructure with the aim of increasing security, sustainability, and ease of access, he added.

Eshqi further noted that based on the strategies mentioned above, which have been developed taking into account the most important challenges of the capital market, various programs have been prepared in three areas.

The first program is to focus on the main mission of the organization which is the development of the capital market,

he emphasized.

“Diversification and promotion of the capital market (in terms of market, tools, and institutions), increasing the transparency and quality of information published in the capital market, reforming business processes and increasing the efficiency of financial markets, development of financial institutions and de-monopolization, development and strengthening of technical infrastructure, facilitating and clarifying the issuance of licenses in the capital market and the development of the debt market and increasing its liquidity will be pursued in this regard,” Eshqi explained.

Intelligent monitoring and regulating information access in the capital market are also among the major programs of the new SEO board.

TEDPIX gains 40,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 40,060 points to 1,437 million on Saturday (the first day of the Iranian calendar week).

As reported, over 5.609 billion securities worth 50.034 trillion rials (about \$1.192 billion) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.

The first market's index rose 37,188 points, and the second market's index gained 56,326 points.

TEDPIX 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.”

After Tayouneh tragedy, will Hezbollah restrain itself?

From page 1 ► Now Hezbollah is in a real difficult situation. It is not the uncle that is disturbing Hamlet anymore so that it can easily kill him and revenge his father. It is the mother. Hamlet could not believe that his mother was involved in the killing. Accordingly, it is not “Israel” or the Americans or any other terrorist group who are the executors of Tayounah’s massacre. It is a Lebanese doer who executed it, and Lebanon’s existence and security are threatened now. And the big question is about the way to respond to such a crime.

Can you kill everyone involved and drive the country into civil war between the Muslims and the Christians in Lebanon, which is the American defined aim, the moment they knew that they had lost their war in Syria in 2018. The question is: who will deter Geagea and his bodies? And who can punish them?

The two Shiite parties cannot forgive and forget, just like when it happened in Khaldah around two months ago. In Arabic, we say: two hammers on the head are quite hamful! And this is the second blow on the head. For the first time, I witnessed in years the anger expressed not only by the Shia intellectuals but also by their friends from all sects. What happened in Khaldah and what happened now in Tayouneh is a premeditated crime. Peaceful funerals in the first and peaceful demonstrators in the second were crossing the street. As the demonstrators were about to reach the House of Justice to express a political opinion were shot in cold blood by snipers in the upper part of their bodies, just like in Khaldah. They were ambushed.

Let us be true; everyone is waiting for Hezbollah’s response in particular. Hezbollah’s dilemma resembles Hamlet’s tragedy:

the mother is a killer! It is one of the country’s main parties who committed Tayouneh’s crime. It is the Lebanese Forces who did it. Hezbollah needs to put an end to targeting his partisans in broad daylight.

Sameer Geagea, the leader of the Lebanese Forces Party [LFP], and his party is known to be responsible for War crimes and mass murders during the Civil War in Leba-



non. He was incarcerated for many years because he was convicted of committing two mass murders in churches, assassinating Tony Franjeh and his family in their bed at night, and killing ex-Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami. Yet, Geagea was given a full pardon by the Lebanese Parliament in 2005. It was a fraction in the chain of reactions after the assassination of the Lebanese ex-Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Until yesterday, there were seven dead people and more than 30 injured. And the number of casualties killed may rise because many of them are in critical conditions. This time the crime cannot be finished by simply saying: let us kiss and make up. In addition, nine people have so far been arrested. They were involved in the shooting, three of them are LFPs, and one of them works as a security man at the American embassy. These men were shooting at unarmed protesters. It is clear that both Hezbollah holds evidence about the LFP’s involvement; otherwise, the Head of the Executive Council of Hezbollah, Mr. Hashem

There is an Israeli-made war, which Hezbollah needs to deter.

Safi al-Din, would not have openly accused the LFP and Geagea in particular.

One of the prominent Lebanese journalists, Ebrahim Bayram, said that Geagea is just like a beefed up lamp and about time to be eaten. He continues to say that now is the time for him to act and deliver for his makers. It is a common fact that Geagea is the most important

American Embassy contractor in Lebanon, and the rest of his choir are small time subcontractors.

In going back to the moment of truth, this is not a random act.

It is a deliberate deed and a message to Hezbollah, you and your allies have no say in investigating the crime of the Harbor booming in August 2020. As we have written before, the crime of the Harbor goals was matchable to the goals of the al-Hariri assassination in February 2005. And what happened in Tayouneh is actually a chain of reaction related to the Harbor crime, just like the successive assassinations that followed the greatest one of al-Hariri. The only difference here, political lead-

ers were targeted then, and now it is the people who are targeted.

The second truth is, if Hezbollah did not make the killers pay for their deeds, such incidents would be repeated, and the killing of more of his partisans would be an easier task. Their movement in the country will be limited to full Lebanese citizens. This eventually will lead to restricting their participation in political demonstrations and marches outside al-Dahia, and spreading fear and worry among them. These people are brave, but they are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and spouses. They need to feel safe and secure in their own country and not be treated as second degree citizens by a group of racists.

The third and most important truth that may reinforce the two facts above or it may cripple them forever totally depends on Hezbollah. Hezbollah has taken the first right step by declaring the high responsibility of everyone in Lebanon and that they should be acting upon, by Mr. Safi al-Din yesterday during the funeral. However, unfortunately, this is not enough. Hezbollah now needs to restrain the killers and not contain itself. This is an eternal Israeli-made war, and Hezbollah needs to deter.

Facebook under pressure over pro-Palestine suppression

From page 1 ► We will implement the Board’s recommendation in our due diligence, defining and prioritizing all salient human rights issues according to the guidance of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.”

The tech company says it will publicly announce the probe’s results next year, leaving many analysts to ask why the investigation will take so long. BSR’s website describes itself as an “organization of sustainable business experts that works with big business to create a just and sustainable world.”

Earlier this year, Facebook’s own Oversight Board released a report calling for an independent body to investigate claims of content suppression relating to Palestine. Activists and rights groups had accused the social media giant of censoring Palestinians and supporters following the removal of pro-Palestinian posts. Nearly 200 Facebook staff also accused the company of unfairly taking down Palestine content before and during Israel’s latest war on the besieged Gaza Strip.

The development comes after an uproar from rights groups and advocates of free speech. Last week, Human Rights Watch said Facebook has wrongfully removed and suppressed content by Palestinians and their supporters, including human rights abuses by Israel during its war on Gaza in May 2021. The International Rights Organization denounced Facebook’s acknowledgment of errors and attempts to correct some of them as insufficient, which do not go far enough in addressing the scale and scope of reported content restrictions or adequately explaining why they occurred in the first place.

The rights group had called on Facebook to take up the company’s Oversight Board’s recommendation to commission an independent investigation, which it has now done.

Human Rights Watch added that “Facebook has suppressed content posted by Palestinians and their supporters speaking out about human rights issues in Israel and Palestine. With the space for such advocacy under threat in many parts of the world, Facebook censorship threatens to restrict a critical platform for learning and engaging on these issues.”

In May this year, an escalation in violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory led people to turn to social media to either document, raise awareness, and condemn the latest cycle of human rights abuses. There were efforts to force Palestinians out of their homes, brutal suppression of demonstrators, assaults on places of worship, communal violence, and airstrikes that killed civilians.

Human Rights Watch had documented that Instagram, owned by Facebook, removed posts, including reposts of content from mainstream news organizations.

In one case, Instagram removed a screenshot of headlines and photos from three New York Times opinion articles. The Instagram user added commentary that urged Palestinians to “never concede” their rights. The post did not transform the material in any way that could reasonably be labeled as incitement to violence or hatred.

In another instance, Instagram removed a photograph of a building with a caption that read, “This is a photo of my family’s building before it was struck by Israeli missiles on Saturday, May 15, 2021. We have three apartments in this building.”

Users and digital rights organizations also reported hundreds of deleted posts, suspended or restricted accounts, disabled groups, reduced visibility, lower engagement with content, and blocked hashtags.

Rights groups have called on the tech giant to make the results of the independent investigation transparent.

Following the criticism, Facebook’s Oversight Board released a report calling for an independent review into potential bias in the moderation of pro-Palestinian posts. The report focused on one particular post that moderators took down and later reinstated; an Al Jazeera Arabic story about the Hamas-affiliated Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades that a user had reposted with the comment “Ooh.”



This is just one case where the Oversight Board agreed that Facebook was correct to reverse the original decision to remove content that just shared a news post of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Gaza based Palestinian group Hamas. Facebook initially removed the content under its “Dangerous Individuals and Organizations Community Standard” and restored it after the Board selected this case for review. The Board concludes that removing the content did not reduce offline harm and restricted freedom of expression on an issue of public interest.

In May, Tel Aviv widely escalated tensions with the Palestinians during the holy month of Ramadan by attacking worshippers at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound and evicting Palestinians from a nearby al-Quds neighborhood. This culminated in Israeli forces raiding the al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam’s third holiest site, and triggering an 11-day exchange of fire between Israeli warplanes and Palestinian missiles in the besieged Gaza Strip.

From May 6 to 19, 7amleh, the Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media (pronounced “hamla” in Arabic, meaning “campaign”), reported documenting “a dramatic increase of censorship of Palestinian political speech online.” In the two weeks alone, 7amleh said it recorded 500 cases of what it described as content being taken down, accounts closed, hashtags

hidden, the reach of specific content reduced, archived content deleted, and access to accounts restricted. Facebook and Instagram accounted for 85 percent of those restrictions.

The digital rights group Sada Social says it documented more than 700 instances of social media networks restricting access to or removing Palestinian content in May alone. On May 7, a group

of 30 human rights and digital rights organizations denounced social media companies for “systematically silencing users protesting and documenting the evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah in Jerusalem al-Quds.”

The Board of independent review into the alleged bias admitted the reviewer should not be “associated with either side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” and should examine both human and automated content moderation in Arabic and Hebrew.

The level with which Facebook is removing Palestinian content at the Israeli regime’s request, including the regime’s cyber unit and a highly organized network of regime volunteers who report pro-Palestinian content is of major concern among advocates in the digital world.

Observers say taking down the posts reflects how much influence the Israeli regime has on social media giants, especially Facebook, and its ability to halt the flow of information, raising awareness about the plight of the Palestinians and other oppressed people. It also reflects the close ties between Facebook and Israel, leaving a powerful question mark on how much Tel Aviv and its cyber army monitor social media platforms for the sole purpose of removing a narrative that criticizes the Israeli regime and its practices. And it also leaves open the question of why Facebook does not have such strong connections with anti-Israeli critics who have called on the social media giant to remove pro-Israeli posts that violate international law, yet Facebook refuses to listen.

Advocates say the best way to address the problem and have a narrative representing all sides would be to simply boycott the social media platform and search elsewhere for news on the most significant conflict in West Asia.

Turkey’s Erdogan threatens fresh military campaign against Kurdish militants in Syria

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to launch a new military campaign on the Syrian soil after a rocket attack blamed on Kurdish militants killed two Turkish special force police in northern Syria.

“We have run out of patience regarding certain areas in Syria that have been the source of terrorist attacks on our country. We are determined to eliminate the threats originating from those areas,” Erdogan said Friday, referring to Kurdish-held city of Tel Rifaat, located near the city of Azaz in the country’s Aleppo Province, where the attack took place earlier this week.

On Sunday, a guided missile was launched from Tel Rifaat by US-backed Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) militants, killing two Turkish police officers and wounding two others, according to Ankara.

Erdogan’s threat came as two unknown Turkish officials also said Ankara was preparing for possible military action against the YPG in northern Syria if talks on the issue with the United States and Russia failed.

“It is essential that the areas, notably the Tel Rifaat region from which attacks are constantly carried out against us, are cleansed,” one senior official was quoted as saying by Reuters.

The official added that the military and national intelligence agency MIT was making preparations, without providing any details about the time and nature of the Turkish military action.

“The decision for this has been taken and the necessary coordination will be done with particular countries. This subject will be discussed with Russia and the United States,” he stressed.

The officials said Erdogan would discuss the issue with US President Joe Biden at a G20 summit of the world’s major economies in Rome at the end of October.

Another Turkish official said the YPG must be pushed back at least 30 kilometers, claiming that Russia was completely in control of the ar-



reas from which recent attacks had come.

Erdogan will speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin after the talks with Biden, the official said.

“If there is no outcome from diplomacy and the PYD does not leave these areas, an operation appears unavoidable,” he said, using the abbreviation for the YPG’s political wing and referring to Tel Rifaat and “several other locations.”

In separate agreements with Moscow and Washington in 2019, Turkey halted its incursion in northeast Syria in exchange for the withdrawal of YPG militants 30 km south of its border.

On Monday, shells believed to have been fired from the YPG-controlled area east of Tel Rifaat exploded in the Turkish town of Karkamis, across the border from Syria’s Jarablus, causing slight damage.

Speaking at a news conference in Ankara, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey would “do what is necessary for its security” after what it described as a rise in cross-border attacks by the Kurdish militants.

Cavusoglu held the US and Russia responsible for the attacks, vowing that Turkey “will do

whatever it takes to cleanse the terrorists.”

In 2019, Turkish troops carried out a cross-border offensive in northeastern Syria — the third such operation since 2016 — in an attempt to clear US-backed YPG Kurdish militants from border areas and establish a “safe zone” there.

Ankara views the YPG as a terrorist organization tied to the homegrown Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), which has been seeking an autonomous Kurdish region in Turkey since 1984.

The Kurdish-led administration in northeastern Syria says the Turkish offensive has killed hundreds of civilians, including dozens of children since it started.

The Damascus government has repeatedly slammed violations of the Arab country’s sovereignty, calling on the Turkish military to withdraw its forces and end its occupation of the Syrian soil.

Syria has been grappling with foreign-sponsored militancy since 2011. Turkey has been supporting a number of militant groups operating to topple the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

(Source: Press TV)

Relics discovered from Austrian salt mine to go on show in Iran



From page 1 ► What was a catastrophe for the ancient miners has become a sensation for science. Sporting a long white beard, iron knives, and a single gold earring, the first salt mummy was discovered in 1993. He is estimated to be trapped in the mine in ca. 300 CE. In 2004 another mummy was discovered only 50 feet away, followed by another in 2005 and a “teenage” boy mummy later that year.

In 1993, miners in the Douz-lakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan province, accidentally came across a mummified head. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to Ancient History Encyclopedia.

The first mummy, dubbed the “Saltman”, is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive. The third, fourth, and fifth “saltmen” were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP,

placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The isotopic analysis of the human remains revealed where these miners were from. Some of them were from the Tehran-Qazvin plain, which is relatively local to the mine’s locality, while others were from north-eastern Iran and the coastal areas around the Caspian Sea, and a few from as far away as Central Asia.

Furthermore, the archaeozoological finds, such as animal bones found within the context of the saltmen, showed that the miners might have eaten sheep, goats, and probably pigs and cattle, as well. The archaeobotanical finds recorded showed different cultivated plants were eaten, indicating an agricultural establishment in the vicinity of the mine.

The wealth of fabric and other organic material (leather) worn by the saltmen have allowed a thorough analysis to be undertaken, detailing the resources used to make the fabrics, the processing, the dyes used to color the fibers of the garments, and not least they offer an excellent overview of the changes in cloth types, patterns of weaving, and the changes of the fibers through time.

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the *Taenia* sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area. The best preserved and probably the most harrowing of the saltmen is Saltman No. 4. A sixteen-year-old miner, caught in the moment of death, crushed by a cave-in.

What was a catastrophe for the ancient miners has become a sensation for science.

Historical gardens undergo restoration

TEHRAN – Several historical gardens, which are situated in Tiran-Karvan county of Isfahan province, have undergone restoration projects.

“Traditional mud-brick walls of the gardens, gates, and stone facades are amongst elements being rehabilitated to help preserve and protect this cultural heritage of the region as much as possible,” a local tourism official said on Saturday.

Mohsen Mazaheri added that many Iranian gardeners and farmers care about their lands as cultural heritage. “Fortunately, a culture of protection and preservation of such a unique cultural heritage has been developed



among gardeners and farmers in Iran,” he said.

He also expressed hope that the rich and historical texture of gardens in Tiran-Karvan would be restored in the shortest possible time.

Moreover, Tiran-Karvan is home to enigmatic stone doors that lead to the backyard of many houses. Some of the centuries-old doors

bear special engravings such as rose-like patterns. Despite being fairly heavy, they are easily opened and closed.

A selection of nine Iranian gardens, which bear important architectural, traditional, and cultural elements, have been collectively inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list under the title of “The Persian Garden.”

The genuine concept of the Persian Garden that is deeply rooted in time interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.

According to UNESCO, the flaw-

less design of the Persian Garden, along with its ability to respond to extreme climatic conditions, is the result of an inspired and intelligent application of different fields of knowledge, i.e. technology, water management and engineering, architecture, botany, and agriculture.

For millennia, Iranian gardens have combined the magic of nature with the aesthetic qualities of art and architecture to create a symbolic representation of paradise on Earth. UNESCO describes the Persian Garden as an idea that combines natural elements with manmade components to materialize the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.



Such discoveries prove the high antiquity of historical sites in Kerman, he noted.

Jiroft is one of the richest historical areas in the world, with ruins and artifacts dating back to the third millennium BC. Many Irani-

\$470,000 allocated to reinforce, restore ancient Belad Shapur

TEHRAN – The ancient town of Belad Shapur in the southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province has seen many measures taken to reinforce and reorganize its historical monuments, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Over 20 billion rials (some \$476,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to reinforcement and restoration of the historical monuments and aging structures of the ancient city, known by its current name, Dehdasht, Rahim Dadinejad said on Saturday.

Among the measures taken so far are the restorations of some historical mansions, mosques, holy shrines, and caravanserais, as well as the creation of a park, the official added.

A few historical monuments of the ancient city are also planned to be temporarily ceded to the private



sector during the current Iranian year to provide jobs for locals, he noted.

Last November, the provincial tourism chief Majid Safai announced that the historical neighborhood of Dehdasht and the historical monuments located inside it is planned to be restored and

revived.

Despite all the destruction that took place in this historical city in different eras, with an area of more than 45 hectares, it is currently considered as one of the largest historical structures in the country in terms of size and number of historical buildings. Inscribed on

the National Heritage list in 1985, the ancient city of Belad Shapur is one of the top tourist sites of the province.

Belad Shapur, known by its current name, was built at the time of Shapur I, also known as Shapur the Great, (reigned 241 CE–272), the second king of the Sassanid Dynasty. Under his leadership, the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

U.S. to lift ban on vaccinated travelers from Iran, other countries

TEHRAN – The United States is set to lift its COVID-19 restrictions for fully vaccinated visitors from Iran and several other countries, putting an end to historic restrictions that had barred much of the world from entering the country for as long as 21 months.

Starting Nov. 8, the U.S. will also admit foreign air travelers from the 26 so-called Schengen countries in Europe, including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Greece, as well as Britain, Ireland, China, India, South Africa, and Brazil, euronews reported on Saturday.

The ban has prevented many loved ones and foreign workers from reuniting with families. Besides, the U.S. had lagged many other countries in lifting such restrictions.

Restrictions on non-U.S. citizens were first imposed on air travelers from China in January 2020 by then-President Donald Trump and



then extended to dozens of other countries, without any clear metrics for how and when to lift them, the report said.

U.S. airline, hotel, and cruise industry stocks rose on the news, including American Airlines, up 2.8%; Marriott International Inc, up 3.7%; and Carnival Corp, up 0.9%.

U.S. international air passenger traffic was down 43% in August and overall passenger air traffic was down 21% over pre-pandemic levels, the U.S. Transportation Department said Friday.

Unvaccinated visitors will still be barred from entering the United States from Canada or Mexico at land borders. Non-U.S. air travelers will need to show proof of vaccination before boarding a flight and will need to show proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test. Foreign visitors crossing a land border will not need to show proof of a recent negative test.

Iran is also considering reopening borders to foreign vacationers as its new tourism minister has said the government will soon scrap visa restrictions. According to some sources, fully vaccinated travelers would be embraced first under the updated regulations.

‘Sacred Defense’ museums to open to public by yearend



TEHRAN – Three museums featuring elements and properties involving the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is called ‘Sacred Defense’ in the Islamic Republic, will open to the public by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

“Currently, 24 museums devoted to the Sacred Defense are operational across the country, and this number will reach 27 by the end of the year,” Mehr quoted deputy tourism minister Ali Darabi as saying on Friday.

For those interested to visit an epitome of frontlines elsewhere from the former battlefields, Iran embraces several destinations. The most famous ones in Tehran are the Sacred Defense Museum, Tehran Peace Museum, and Behesht-e Zahra—a graveyard where many of the martyrs are buried. The epic-scale Sacred Defense Museum does bargain something different in modern Iranian history where you can delve into wreckages of rockets, tanks,

rifles, vessels, mortars, radars, air defense systems, grounded jets, military supplies, and artillery pieces amongst others.

The Sacred Defense Museum is equipped with a state-of-the-art visual system including projections and video walls, while audio recordings relevant to each period contribute to its charm. The complex has vast garden areas, water features, and children’s play areas. Outside, a patchwork of domestically manufactured armaments such as rockets, tanks, and artillery pieces are on show. Currently, some 15 museums related to the Sacred Defense are active across the country.

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ordered the attack nearly 19 months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, setting the stage for an eight year-war. It drew to a close in August 1988 and the United Nations declared Saddam as the initiator of the conflict.

Urgent restoration carried out on monuments in Khorasan Razavi

TEHRAN – A total of 11 historical monuments and aging structures across Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh county, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province has undergone urgent restoration during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year 1400 (started March 21), a local tourism official has said.

The projects have been carried out in collaboration with the private, the

Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization, and related municipalities, Ali Mohammadi announced on Saturday.

Historical caravanserais, tombs, and mansions were among the restored structures, the official added.

So far 450 historical structures have been identified in Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh county -located 180 kilometers to the provincial capital of Mashhad- of which 80 properties



have been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

Over the past couple of years, Torbat-e Heydarieh and its surroundings have yielded traces of the ancient settlements. Last year, an archaeological site was exposed on the outskirts of Torbat-e Heydarieh after torrential rains washed the soil away. The site was accessed to date back to the early and middle Islamic eras, according to preliminary studies carried out by the cultural heritage experts.

According to archaeological studies, Torbat-e Heydarieh is home to several historical caves due to its favorable habitat conditions and traces of habitation from about 40,000 years have been identified in the caves of the region. The history of the area stretches back to the Achaemenian Empire from the 6th to 4th century BC and the Parthian Empire from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century CE.

TEHRAN – About 10,000 new taxis will replace clunker ones in the Tehran transport fleet by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2022), Seyed Mojtaba Shafiei, deputy Tehran mayor for transportation and traffic, has said.

Under the taxi fleet modernization plan, about 2,700 taxis have been renovated so far, which will play an effective role in reducing air pollution in Tehran, he explained, IRIB reported on Saturday.

There are currently 150,000 clunker taxis in the country, which will reach up to 240,000 by the next 2 years, constituting 75 percent of the country's total taxi fleet, Morteza Zameni, director-general of urban taxis union, said last year.

Referring to the renovation scheme of 90,000 clunker taxis over the past three years, he noted that some 186,000 taxis were extremely old, aged 10 or more, and required to be replaced with newer ones.

Air pollution incurs a financial loss of about 140 million rials (nearly \$3,300) for each family in Iran annually, however, both high-priced vehicles and low-cost fuel are to blame for the air pollution severely haunting big cities of the country, said Behzad Ashjaei, secretary of the technical inspection committee of the Department of Environment.

According to the World Health Organization, seven million people die from air pollution every year, making it the greatest environmental threat to health today. Urban air pollution, in particular, is increasing by 8

Tehran taxi fleet to add 10,000 new vehicles



percent every five years, and 95 percent of cities worldwide do not meet the World Health Organization's guidelines.

According to statistics, some 4,000 to 5,000 Tehrani citizens die each year from direct exposure to particulate matter (PM) emissions, and air pollution brings Iran a loss of over \$2.6 billion per year, or

about \$2,000 a day.

The Municipality of Tehran has prepared a comprehensive plan to mitigate air pollution in the metropolis, based on which a total budget of 174 trillion rials (nearly \$4 billion) is required over the course of four years.

The plan focuses on reducing particulate matter and the con-

centration of PM 2.5, so it reduces primary PM sources and secondary precursors like nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

It was envisaged that primary PM sources will be reduced by 55 percent and secondary precursors by 45 percent.

The plan claims that the main reasons behind air pollution intensification in the capital are lack of clean and cheap public transport, overcrowded transport fleet, poor quality vehicles, extremely old public transportation fleet, and poor urban development policies.

Some 4,000 to 5,000 Tehrani citizens die each year from direct exposure to particulate matter (PM) emissions.

Lake Urmia shrinks by 61cm

TEHRAN – Lake Urmia level has decreased by about 61 cm compared to last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), Mehran Nazari, West Azarbaijan province's department of environment chief, said on Saturday.

In other words, 1423 square kilometers of the Lake's surface has been reduced, losing 2 billion cubic meters of water, he added, Khabaronline reported.

He went on to say that this environmental problem has increased the risk of salt dust storms in the region, which can have adverse effects on human communities and the lake-shore.

Lake Urmia condition

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



including flamingos, pelicans, egrets, and ducks, and attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in the agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically.

In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one-tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

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

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

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

COVID-19 increases tuberculosis deaths in Iran

TEHRAN – The incidence and mortality of tuberculosis (TB) has increased due to the coronavirus pandemic, Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, head of the diseases management center of the Ministry of Health, said on Saturday.

He made the remarks on the occasion of National Tuberculosis Day, which is held annually on October 15, IRNA reported.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, the TB detection and control program is about 20 percent less than in 2019, and last year we identified 5,666 cases of the disease in the country, of which 18 percent were non-Iranians.

With the TB control program, especially due to the free diagnosis and treatment, the disease can be controlled, Gooya stated.

“Mortality from tuberculosis is now on the rise, mainly due to the incidence of COVID-19, and given that both diseases have similar clinical symptoms, anyone who goes to a medical center with acute respiratory symptoms is recognized as COVID-19 patient, which reduces attention to tuberculosis.

Also, people refer to medical centers less often for treatment, and if the cases are diagnosed late, they can infect others.

Major investments should be made in the field of finance, manpower, and new methods of diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis in the country, and the TB control program agreement should be revised because the epidemic has caused serious damages,” he explained.

According to the latest estimates of the World Health Organization, the incidence of tuberculosis in Iran is 13 per 100,000 people.

TB prevalence worldwide

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by bacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis) that most often affect the lungs. Tuberculosis is curable and preventable.

TB is spread from person to person through

the air. When people with lung TB cough, sneeze, or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air. A person needs to inhale only a few of these germs to become infected.

About one-quarter of the world's population has a TB infection, which means people have been infected by TB bacteria but are not (yet) ill with the disease and cannot transmit it.

A total of 1.5 million people died from TB in 2020 (including 214 000 people with HIV). Worldwide, TB is the 13th leading cause of death and the second leading infectious killer after COVID-19 (above HIV/AIDS).

In 2020, an estimated 10 million people fell ill with tuberculosis (TB) worldwide. 5.6 million men, 3.3 million women, and 1.1 million children. TB is present in all countries and age groups. But TB is curable and preventable.

In 2020, 1.1 million children fell ill with TB globally. Child and adolescent TB is often overlooked by health providers and can be difficult to diagnose and treat.

In 2020, the 30 high TB burden countries accounted for 86% of new TB cases. Eight countries account for two-thirds of the total, with India leading the count, followed by China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and South Africa.

Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) remains a public health crisis and a health security threat. Only about one in three people with drug-resistant TB accessed treatment in 2020.

Globally, TB incidence is falling at about 2% per year and between 2015 and 2020 the cumulative reduction was 11%. This was over halfway to the End TB Strategy milestone of a 20% reduction between 2015 and 2020.

Ending the TB epidemic by 2030 is among the health targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Worldwide, TB is the 13th leading cause of death and the second leading infectious killer after COVID-19.

Chemical in plastics linked to 100,000 premature deaths a year

A synthetic group of chemicals used in hundreds of plastic products may be linked with more than 100,000 premature deaths in the US, the Independent reported.

A new study led by researchers at New York University's Grossman School of Medicine estimates phthalates may be associated with somewhere between 91,000 and 107,000 premature deaths among adults aged between 55 and 64.

The study, published in the journal Environmental Pollution, found those with higher levels of phthalates were more likely to die prematurely from any cause, but particularly from heart problems.

Phthalates are a group of chemicals added to plastics to make them flexible, and are used in cosmetics, detergents, food packing, soaps, shampoos and many other products.

The agency, however, notes assessing the potential health problems in humans related to phthalates has been difficult as people are exposed to multiple endocrine disruptors – chemicals that can interfere with endocrine (or hormonal) systems and can cause cancerous tumours, birth defects, and impact fertility.

The researchers concluded that while further studies are needed, regulatory action is urgently needed.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON OCTOBER 16

New cases	7,515
New deaths	181
Total cases	5,773,419
Total deaths	123,876
New hospitalized patients	1,197
Patients in critical condition	4,840
Total recovered patients	5,309,992
Diagnostic tests conducted	33,898,978
Doses of vaccine injected	71,358,277

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Rainfalls brings life back to Gomishan wetland

Gomishan international wetland, northern province of Golestan, is once again partially filled with water with recent rainfalls, the provincial chief of the department of environment has said.

Over the past few days more than 60 percent of the wetland was filled due to the recent rainfalls and now 20,000 hectares of the wetland are covered with water, Amir Abdous said on Tuesday.

Due to the decrease in the water level at the Caspian Sea the wetland has been dried specially during hot seasons, Abdous said, adding that in winter a small part of the wetland was covered with water.

بارندگی های اخیر زندگی دوباره به تالاب گمیشان بخشید

مدیرکل حفاظت محیط زیست گلستان از آبیگری بخشی از تالاب بین المللی گمیشان در این استان خبر داد

به گزارش خبرگزاری ایرنا امیر عبدوس روز سه شنبه گفت: بارندگی های اخیر زندگی دوباره به این زیستگاه مهم بخشید و بیش از ۶۰ درصد تالاب بین المللی گمیشان آبیگری شد.

وی افزود: به علت پایین رفتن سطح آب دریای خزر تغذیه این تالاب از سوی دریا به حداقل ممکن رسیده بود و تقریباً تمام سطح تالاب بین المللی گمیشان در فصول گرم سال کاملاً خشک و در زمستان نیز بخش بسیار اندکی زیر آب قرار داشت.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:50 Evening: 17:45 Dawn: 4:50 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:13 (tomorrow)

Iran: Persian music

Naqaresh players perform at the naqareshaneh of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) on March 26, 2015. (Fars/Mehdi Bolurian)

Part 3

Vernacular music: “Vernacular music” is an imprecise term denoting the music in which a society as a whole participates, or which is known and appreciated by a broad segment of a population, in contrast to the fine-art music which belongs mainly to an intellectual or social elite.

In Persia, ceremonial music, rural folk music, and urban popular music might be considered “vernacular.”

Ceremonial Music: Ceremonial music (e.g., reciting of the Quran and the call to prayer, or other liturgies such as those of the Jewish, Zoroastrian, and Christian religions) includes the performances of the naqareshanehs.

These were places—in towers attached to the royal court and some shrines (e.g., those of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad and of Shahe Cheragh in Shiraz)—at which a kind of military band consisting of woodwind (reed) instruments and kettledrums played regularly at dawn and sunset and also on the occasion of public rejoicing (e.g., a military victory, Noruz, birth of a prince).

The institution had a long history in Persia, but it largely disappeared in the course of the 20th century. Also in the realm of ceremonial music is the singing or chanting, and drumming, of the morshed (lit. mentor) in the zurkhaneh, an institution best described as a traditional gymnasium in which men, typically in groups, engaged in physical exercises, some derived from ancient warfare with wooden clubs, and some related to the whirling dance of dervishes.

The morshed sings verses from epic poetry, particularly the Shahnameh, while his drumming helps the athletes keep time and rhythm and signals changes in movement.

In passion plays (tazieh), a ritual theater enacting the battle of Karbala and the suffering and martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the characters sing or chant, improvising to traditional motifs.

Finally, among ceremonies, there is the practice of sinezani (chest-beating) at mourning processions on the occasion of Ashura. Groups of men march and then, periodically, form a circle and chant, using short motifs in responsorial style and, as a kind of percussion, beating their chests or backs in rhythmic accompaniment.

Rural folk music: Musical cultures of rural Persia are contrastive to traditions in Europe, where the concept of “folk music” is widely defined and based.

There is relatively little group singing, or songs to accompany agricultural labor. Music is experienced largely through hearing various kinds of musical specialists.

Among them are professional instrumentalists and vocalists, referred to as motreb (musician), who perform at formal events such as weddings.

The storyteller (naqqal) may recite (using traditional melodic formulae) the Shahnameh and other epic poetry in teahouses, interspersing the recitation with spoken commentary (a practice found also in other epic traditions in Central Asia and the Balkans).

The rawzeh-khan recites verses in honor of Imam Hussein (AS), commemorating his martyrdom. The bakhshi, a wandering minstrel, entertains at social gatherings with romantic ballads about warriors and warlords.

Some of these music specialists belong to individual ethnic groups (e.g., Kurds, Turkmans, Baluchis), while others are generally distributed.

Folk musicians usually learn their art from fathers, uncles, or other relatives. In performance, they may read the words of their songs from printed or written sources, but the music is orally transmitted and often consists of tunes that exist in numerous variants.

Thus, a quatrain (do-bayti) with the rhyme-scheme aaba, is often sung to variants of a tune type called “the chahr-bayti tune.” Persians often stress the individuality of the folk music repertory of the various regions.

Urban popular music: Urban popular music, best defined as music largely distributed through mass media of broadcast, recordings, and film, has seen periods of development as well as decline in the 20th century.

Before 1978, it could be heard in urban music halls patronized largely by men. Public performances stopped shortly after the revolution of 1978-79, and there have been occasional public concerts since 1990. Outside Persia, this music has been significant in the integration of diaspora communities.

Persian popular music over the period after 1960 has been characterized by a great variety of styles, resulting from combination of elements deriving from Persian classical and rural folk music, Arabic, Indian, Russian, and a variety of Western European and American popular genres, ranging from French and Italian lyrical songs to rock music.

Popular music is most commonly performed by vocalists with elaborate accompanying ensembles, whose instruments include the traditional (e.g., tar, santur, ney, tombak, daf) mixed with European instruments such as violin, flute, piano or keyboard, and guitar.

The words of popular songs through the 20th century have had an enormous variety of subject matter, including romantic love, traditional folklore, devotional subjects, and, at various times, serious protest against intolerable social and political conditions (e.g., “Jomeh,” “Buye khub-e gandom,” “Shaabaneh”).

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Doc depicting Charlie Chaplin’s bittersweet world premieres at TMCA

TEHRAN – An Iranian documentary that delves into the bittersweet world of Charlie Chaplin premiered on Thursday at the Cinematheque of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA).

“Chaplin’s World” has been directed by Amir Tajik, the director of the acclaimed documentary “The Last Diplomat” about former Iranian diplomat Ardeshtir Zahedi.

Chaplin’s antiwar attitudes, his exile from the U.S., his impacts on the world during the twentieth century, and several other topics have been surveyed in the documentary.

Speaking to the audience before the screening of the documentary, Tajik said that the idea to make the documentary began to form with his visit to the Manoir de Ban, a manor house located at Corsier-sur-Vevey on the banks of Lake Geneva in Switzerland that was Chaplin’s home for 25 years from 1952 until his death in 1977.

He was in Switzerland to do research and shoot some scenes from “The Last Diplomat”.

“During this short time, I recorded scenes with my mobile phone camera in the home that has been converted into a museum. These

Director Amir Tajik speaks during the premiere of his latest documentary “Chaplin’s World” at the Cinematheque of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art on October 14, 2021.

formed the basic ingredients of the documentary that represents my experience of visiting Chaplin’s home and my childhood impression of this great artist,” he said.

“For me, having a plot is essential for making a documentary. In ‘Chaplin’s World’ I tried to use this method. In this documentary, we see Chaplin’s reaction toward contemporary society and the events of his age,” he added.

Tajik described Chaplin as a personality that changed into an effective cosmopolitan character and added that many directors in the world owe Chaplin a lot.

“In our country, many filmmakers and comedians have been strongly influenced by Chaplin. ‘Lizard’ was made [by Kamal Tabrizi] with inspiration from Chaplin’s ‘The Pilgrim’, and ‘5 PM’ [directed by Mehran Modiri] was inspired by his

‘Modern Times,’” he stated.

Mohsen Asgari, the writer of narration for “Chaplin’s World”, also attended the premiere of the documentary.

“Amir Tajik has his own independent view of issues and sometimes surprises the audience. This is due to the special narratives of his films and his concern for filmmaking,” he said.

Tajik’s “The Last Diplomat” on Ardeshtir Zahedi, a former Iranian diplomat who served during the reign of Iran’s last monarch Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as the country’s foreign minister and its ambassador to the United States and the United Kingdom during the 1960s and 1970s, premiered at the Mellat Palace Museum in Tehran in June 2020.

This film uncovers untold stories of Iran’s history witnessed by Zahedi, who was the son-in-law of the Shah.

His previous documentary “Afghanistan’s Safe Benches” premiered in 2019.

This documentary is about a Kabul’s soccer stadium where the Taliban used to stage public executions, and later found its practical application after the fall of the Taliban.

“Careless Crime” wins best New View award at Brazilian festival

TEHRAN – Iranian drama “Careless Crime” has won the award for best film in the New Views category of the Olhar de Cinema – Curitiba International Film Festival in Brazil.

Directed by Shahram Mokri, the film shows that protesters forty years ago, during the uprising to overthrow the Shah’s regime in Iran, set fire to movie theaters as a way of showing opposition to Western culture. Forty years have passed and, in contemporary Iran, four individuals also decide to burn down a cinema. Their intended target is a theater showing a film about an unearthed, unexploded missile.

This film won the Premio Bisato d’Oro for Best Original Screenplay at the Venice Film Festival in 2020, has been nominated for the best screenplay award at the 14th Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA).

The winners of the Olhar de Cinema – Curitiba festival were announced last Thursday in the Brazilian city of Curitiba as Felipe Fernandes’s

debut feature “Rio Doce” was selected as best film.

The Brazilian drama is a depiction of four siblings trying to cope after the suicide of their father, Augusto, a renowned socialist activist who was tortured during the military regime. Pedro and his two sisters discover the existence of Ana, a secret child their father had with a housemaid. She’s a young Black activist whose presence and political involvement resonate directly with their own particular conflicts.

“Rolê – Stories of Brazilian Protests in Malls” by Vladimir Seixas from Brazil won the special jury award.

The documentary, which won the audience award, is about the Brazilian malls’ protests which have mobilized thousands of Black people. Follow the lives of three characters and discover the dreams of a generation that has found new ways of dealing with violence.

Razieh Mansuri acts in a scene from “Careless Crime”.

“Vikken” by French filmmaker Dounia Sichov was named best short.

The documentary is about Vikken, a transgender. He’s about to take hormones for the first time. He records his voice that will disappear, and summons the figures of the past from all over the world for an intimate dialogue with himself.

Ashkan Rahgozar selected for Thessaloniki Animation Festival jury

TEHRAN – Ashkan Rahgozar, director of the acclaimed Iranian movie “The Last Fiction”, has been selected as a member of the jury at the 7th Thessaloniki Animation Festival in Greece.

He is scheduled to hold a masterclass at the festival, Hoorakhsh, Rahgozar’s animation studio in Tehran, has announced.

He will discuss the topic “How Hoorakhsh Studio started from Iran and expanded beyond borders” at the masterclass.

Teddy Grouya, Tassos Kotsiras, Piotr Michalowski, Michael Kalopaidis, Harry Ravelomanatsoa, G Beaudin, Debra Wootton and Alexia Melocchri are the other members of the jury.

The members will also hold masterclasses on different topics during the online festival, which is

Director Ashkan Rahgozar in an undated photo.

currently underway in Thessaloniki.

The TAF reviews Taiwanese animation cinema this year through a collaboration with the TIAF – Taichang Animation Festival.

Rahgozar was also a member of the jury of the Fantasia International Film Festival, which took place in Montreal, Canada in August.

The Fantasia festival also promoted Rahgozar’s new project

“Juliet & the King”, which is under production at his Tehran-based studio Hoorakhsh.

The animation features an early cultural relation between Iran and the West during the nineteenth century when Nasser ad-Din Shah, the long-serving monarch of the Qajar dynasty, receives an invitation to visit France.

He loves Europe and he always

“Foundations of the American Century” published in Persian

TEHRAN – “Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power” by Inderjeet Parmar has been published in Persian.

Translated by Mohammad Memarian, the book was released by Amirkabir Publications.

Parmar reveals the complex interrelations, shared mindsets and collaborative efforts of influential public and private organizations in the building of American hegemony.

Focusing on the involvement of the Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations in U.S. foreign affairs, Parmar traces the transformation of America from an “isolationist” nation into

the world’s only superpower, all in the name of benevolent stewardship.

Parmar begins in the 1920s with the establishment of these foundations and their system of top-down, elitist, scientific giving, which focused more on managing social, political and economic change than on solving modern society’s structural problems.

Consulting rare documents and other archival materials, he recounts how the American intellectuals, academics and policymakers affiliated with these organizations institutionalized such elitism, which then bled into the machinery of U.S. foreign policy and became regarded as the essence of modernity.

America hoped to replace Britain in the role of global hegemon and created the necessary political, ideological, military and institutional capacity to do so, yet far from being objective, the Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations often advanced U.S. interests at the expense of other nations.

Incorporating case studies of American philanthropy in Nigeria, Chile and Indonesia, Parmar boldly exposes the knowledge networks underwriting American dominance in the twentieth century.

Parmar is a professor of international politics and head of the Department of International Politics at City University London.