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U.S. Launches Blame Game as Vienna Talks Resume

► Page 3

Report

Israel leaving no stones unturned to stop Vienna talks, UK plays along

TEHRAN — As the first day of the new round of talks in Vienna ended, one thing is certainly noticeable: Israelis are knocking on every door to stop Iran and P4+1 reach an agreement on how to find ways to lift illegal sanctions imposed on Iran.

On the eve of the Vienna talks, the first since Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi took office, the UK Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, co-authored an article with the Israeli Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid, published in the Daily telegraph.

Truss and Lapid wrote that they will work together "night and day" to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power.

"We will also work night and day to prevent the Iranian regime from ever becoming a nuclear power. The clock is ticking, which heightens the need for close cooperation with our partners and friends to thwart Tehran's ambitions," they wrote on Sunday, November 28.

On the same day, and prior to publishing the aforementioned article, Iran's top negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, wrote for the Financial Times, clarifying Iran's demands and positions.

"We are ready for a fair and careful discussion, based on the principles of 'guarantee' and 'verification'. This must prioritize compensation for the violation of the deal, which includes the removal of all post-JCPOA sanctions. In return, Iran is ready to voluntarily fulfil its nuclear commitments in accordance with the agreement. We remain prepared to react proportionately to ► Page 2

Report

Israeli President's visit to holy site draws fierce reaction

TEHRAN - The Israeli President's intrusion of the Holy Islamic Ibrahim Mosque in the occupied West Bank city of al-Khalil (also known as Hebron city) has drawn angry reactions. Isaac Herzog, entered the Mosque accompanied by a crowd of settlers. Prior to his arrival, Israeli forces expelled all Palestinian worshippers from the site, closed the gates of the Mosque and forcibly prevented anyone from praying or even standing nearby. Palestinian media reports say Israeli forces physically assaulted Palestinian activists who came to protest the arrival of Herzog (social media footage backed up the reports) shop owners were forced to shut down while the work of journalists and other press crew was hindered; again, Israeli forces assaulted a number of reporters and other media crew members. Israeli occupation forces expanded already strict restrictions on the movement of Palestinians living near the Ibrahim Mosque and closed all outlets leading to the site.

The mosque's director, Sheikh Hafthi Abu Sneh, has said that the Israeli army only allowed Israeli settlers to visit the Mosque and its vicinity for a Jewish occasion, banning the entry of any Muslim worshippers to the Mosque or accessing its courtyards. In September, the Ibrahim Mosque was closed by Israeli authorities during the Jewish New Year, a move that was strongly condemned by Palestinian officials, who said the measure was a blatant attack on the most basic human rights. In 2017, the Old City of al-Khalil, where the Ibrahim Mosque is located, was deemed a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. ► Page 5



New round of Vienna talks kicks off

TEHRAN — On Monday, Iran, and the P4+1 nations gathered in Palais Coburg Hotel in Vienna to discuss ways to lift the illegal sanctions imposed on Iran by the U.S.

The informal coordination meeting of JCPOA participants without the presence of

Iran and the U.S. was convened in preparation for the official meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission and the opening of the seventh round of the Vienna talks at 13:30 local time.

The Iranian team then entered Palais Coburg to join the P4+1 countries.

Having walked away from the deal, the Americans can't be in the talks. They are in a separate hotel with Europeans shuttling between them and the talks relaying what's going on. ► Page 2

High-ranking Iranian delegation visits Syria seeking expansion of economic ties

TEHRAN - Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin has visited Syria on top of a high-ranking delegation to attend an Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee meeting and also to launch the country's exclusive exhibition in Damascus.

As Mehr News Agency reported, upon arrival on Monday morning, Fatemi Amin met with the Syrian Minister of Economy and

Foreign Trade Mohammad Samer al-Khalil in which the Iranian minister said the focus of his visit to Syria will be on economic relations in various sectors.

"Many products can be produced in Syria and exported to other Arab countries and the countries in the region," Fatemi Amin said.

Regarding the promotion of trade and economic cooperation, Fatemi Amin stated: "The

first point that we will focus on is balancing the trade between the two countries; Certainly, Syria is facing serious economic problems, and unilateral exports may not be a viable option, so the key point is to establish a balanced economic relationship that benefits both sides."

"We have prepared several practical proposals, which we will share with Syrian ministers, ► Page 4

Mark Esper sues Pentagon for blocking parts of his memoir

Report

TEHRAN - Former Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper on Sunday sued the Pentagon, accusing officials of improperly blocking significant portions of an upcoming memoir about his tenure under President Donald J. Trump.

Esper, who served as defense secretary from July 2019 until

being fired by Trump in November, filed a lawsuit against the Pentagon on Sunday, contending it is "improperly" withholding "significant text" from his memoir - A Sacred Oath- "under the guise of classification."

Esper said in a statement that his goal with the book, which is expected to be published in May, was to give the public ► Page 5

Beach volleyball player Salemi says Iran were beyond expectations

Interview

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Bahman Salemi Injehboroun, the Iran beach volleyball national team player, is satisfied with the team's performance at the 2021 Asian Beach Volleyball Championships.

Iran became runners-up of the

competition held in Thailand's Phuket.

Iran's Abolhassan Khakizadeh/ Bahman Salemi lost to Australia 2-0 in the final match of the tournament.

"The level of the competition was so high compared to the previous editions of the tournament," Salemi said in his interview with Tehran Times. ► Page 3

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Interview

Wahhabism lacks rationality: Indonesian expert

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN - An Indonesian expert in international relationship says that Wahhabism lacks rationality and it creates division, instead of unity, among the Islamic Ummah.

Dina Yuliant tells the Tehran Times that Wahhabism "does not encourage rationalist thinking".

"The doctrines put forward by Wahhabism are purification and takfirism. Such doctrines will lead to division and conflict among the Muslim world," Yuliant remarks.

The lecturer of the International Relations Program at Universitas Padjadjaran believes that Islamic civilization requires rationality and unity.

"So, how is it possible for such a teaching to be the leader of the Islamic world?" she asks.

Following is the text of the interview:

What is your evaluation of some sectarian tensions in West Asia that were sponsored by the West in order to sow the seeds of discord between Shia and Sunni?

During the ten years of the Syrian war, the West, assisted by (Persian) Gulf countries, tried to create an image that the Assad regime was a Shia regime that carried out massacres of Sunni civilians. However, this distorted information was finally revealed. The public is now aware that the ones attacking the Syrian government and its people are takfiri groups affiliated with Al Qaeda and Daesh. Sectarian issues are only used to mobilize fighters and seek support from Muslims around the world. Now we see several Arab countries are trying to establish relations with Damascus again. This development shows that the West constructs the Sunni-Shia conflict to overthrow a regime they do not want. ► Page 5

Battle of wills: First step in Vienna battlefield

TEHRAN - Needless to say, reaching a good agreement requires the will and seriousness of both sides, but the heterogeneity in the level of expertise of the delegations suggests other goals of the West, Nour News said in a commentary on Monday.

The first meeting of the new round of talks between Iran and the P4+1 nations began on Monday at Coburg Hotel in Vienna.

From the Iranian point of view, the headline of these negotiations is the effective and verifiable lifting of all sanctions, along with the provision of a guarantee that the previous situation will not be repeated in the face of the timely implementation of Iran's remaining obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

However, the political and media arrangements in the West - especially the United States, which, despite not being directly present at the negotiating table, is practically leading the Western ► Page 2

Regarding our previous tender under Ref. 1400-1009 we hereby extend mentioned tender till 16 December 2021

TO: Whom it may concern,
Subject: tender for purchasing 1500 MT, Silicon Metal (441) tender No. 1400-1009
Based on our requirement for purchasing 1500 MT, Silicon Metal for years 2021-2022: please find attached Tender instruction contract template and send your offer officially through sealed envelopes. Based on tender instruction before deadline dtd 16-December -2021, 16:00 PM based on Tehran time.
It would be appreciated if you confirm receipt of this email.
If you need more info please do not hesitate and ask.

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



TENDER INVITATION NO. 1400-1012

IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO) would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of Different types of cathode on tender basis.
Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 16-December -2021
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Tel: +98 86 32162014 +98 86 32162181
NO.49, Mollasadra Ave., Vanak Square, Tehran- Iran, Postal code: 1991614581
Name of office: Managing Director Office, Iranian Aluminum Company. Fax: +98 21 88049028 Tel: +98 21 88049024
For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: www.iralco.ir

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



Fakhrizadeh assassination was result of ‘smiling policy’: civil defense chief

TEHRAN — The head of Iran's Civil Defense Organization has said the assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh on November 28, 2020, was the result of a “smiling policy” toward the enemy, IRNA reported on Sunday.

“One year has passed since the martyrdom of one of the competent sons of the Revolution, who was targeted by the global arrogance to strike at the movement and scientific efforts of his country,” Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali wrote in a message on Sunday.

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was assassinated in a terrorist operation in the Absard region of Damavand on November 28, 2020. Israel's Mossad spy agency through a cooperation with the U.S. are considered the main culprits for the assassination. Fakhrizadeh was the only scientist whose name had been mentioned by former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2018. He said, “Remember the name, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.” Experts then inferred this act as a direct threat against Fakhrizadeh's life.

Jalali noted that Fakhrizadeh was little known before his martyrdom, and many aspects of his personality, scientific services, and actions may remain a secret for the betterment of Iran.

“He was one of the sincere figures of the Revolution who preferred to remain anonymous and instead of gaining fame and a position, he committedly took steps towards the scientific progress of Islamic Iran, especially in the field of defense. But in manifesting his greatness and influence, it is enough to say that one of the most complex assassinations of the century was devised and carried out to stop his thoughts,” Gen. Jalali stated.

His scientific movement in the direction of creating authority, civilization and innovation in the service of the people, Gen. Jalali noted, was like a “pain in the neck of arrogance” and his martyrdom was evidence for the “malice and brutality” of the enemies which again revealed their “evil goal.”

According to the commander, the assassination is a symbol of the futility of the JCPOA (the 2015 nuclear deal) and smiling policy toward the enemy.

Elsewhere in his message, Jalali highlighted, “Twenty years of living in the shadow of



assassination for the security and welfare of the people is undoubtedly a beacon for the talented youth he trained in the Research and Innovation Organization of the Ministry of Defense to provide great support for improving the country's defense against new radiological, biological and chemical threats. Indeed, he is a full-fledged nuclear and defense scientist.”

In his message, Jalali stressed that Fakhrizadeh is rightfully a martyr of civil defense and the personnel of the Civil Defense Organization will never forget his efforts in the field of biological defense, especially in the field of advanced equipment such as mobile laboratory with level 3 biosafety, production of diagnostic kits and the coronavirus vaccine, as well as in the field of modern defense as the initiator of the civil defense industry in the field of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high yield Explosives (CBRNE).

In his message, Jalali added, “On the anniversary of the martyrdom of this revolutionary scientist, while commemorating his memory and that of all the martyrs of the Islamic Revolution, we declare that undoubtedly the scientists, professors and scholars of the country, despite the enmity of the foes, will continue the path of Fakhrizadeh and the blood of these martyrs of the Islamic Revolution will be the cause of unity and solidarity of the nation in standing against the enemies, especially the criminal America and the usurping Zionist regime, and the perpetrators of this sinister assassination will pay a heavy price.”

“Fakhrizadeh is rightfully a martyr of civil defense”

Iran to unveil first marine diesel engine soon

TEHRAN - The commander of the Iranian Navy has announced that the first marine diesel engine, which is designed and built entirely by Iranian experts, will be unveiled soon.

Admiral Shahram Irani broke the story in a TV program on Saturday night. His remarks came as Iran was celebrating Navy Day, which fell on November 28.

“The first marine diesel engine designed entirely by the youth of this country will be unveiled soon. This engine, the parts of which are all-Iranian, will be unveiled in the coming days and will be installed on the first Iranian missile-launching warship,” Irani stated.

The top commander noted that this engine has “very special features” and was built in accordance with the continuation of naval missions and made Iran self-sufficient in the production of diesel engines.

“There are only five countries in the world that can build marine diesel engines, and fortunately Iran is one of these countries with the production of these engines,” Irani stated, according to the Mehr news agency.

The Navy chief also referred to Operation Morvarid (Pearl) during the Holy Defense, saying, “Operation Morvarid was the result of a series of

operations, and in fact it was the result of our forces in the Navy that changed the course of the war.”

The admiral was referring to the early days of Saddam Hussein's war against Iran in the 1980s in which the Iranian Navy destroyed the Iraqi warships in the Persian Gulf.

Irani said the operation had special features the first feature of which was cutting off the economic artery of the enemy. Thereby, he added, the Saddam regime's ability to export oil through the Persian was cut off.

“The destruction of the naval power of

the Iraqi Baathist army was another of our achievements in Operation Morvarid, which took place in the early days of the war, and shows the importance of this operation. On the other hand, with the destruction of the Baathist army's naval capability, Iran's maritime trade transportation lines for oil exports and the export of goods and the import of basic goods became safe, and the Iraqi army could no longer threaten these sea lines,” Admiral Irani stressed.

In another part of his remarks, he referred to the bravery of the personnel and crew of the Peykan (Arrow) destroyer, saying, “At that time, the destruction of

the Baathist regime's naval force was necessary, and they (personnel and crew) sacrificed their lives to defend the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

The Navy chief added, “Although the Sacred Defense is over, but war and threats in the military field have always existed and the enemies have always tried to threaten the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran with malicious intent.”

It was at this time that the Navy undertook the mission of escorting merchant ships, including oil tankers, and was able to carry out the mission well, he said, adding this mission is

continuing with the spread of piracy and now Iran's trade borders have expanded to more than 2,000 kilometers.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the admiral referred to the manufacturing of equipment and ships in the Navy, saying, “We started with the reconstruction of the vessel and then entered the field of construction of ships; of course, the process of producing destroyers was launched with the order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and on this basis, and with initiative and creativity, we have reached a point where we can produce the required ships.”

Israel leaving no stones unturned to stop Vienna talks, UK plays along

From page 1 ► any pressure and reciprocate any goodwill gesture. We have made our choice. We will now find out whether or not the West has the will to enter real negotiations,” Bagheri noted.

In response to the article written by the UK foreign secretary and her Israeli counterpart, the Iranian foreign ministry on Monday tweeted, “UK issues anti-Iran statement w Israeli regime- a nuke-holder & enemy of '15 agreement.”

Utter lack of good will & evident sign that London doesn't seek to preserve the deal.

You can't have lunch w foe of a deal & for dinner sit at another table to claim support for the same deal.”

The difference is clear. The Iranian top negotiator writes and

clarifies Iran's position, speaks of goodwill and seriousness to have fruitful talks. But we have the UK top diplomat, allying with Iran's biggest enemy. This sends the signal that the UK thinks that the Vienna talks are doomed to failure before it even started.

In line with the UK-Israeli alliance to portray the Vienna talks as a failure, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett released a video. In that video, Bennett said, “I call upon our allies around the world: Do not give in to Iran's nuclear blackmail!”

He continued his bogus speech by saying that Iran deserves no rewards.

Iran has sent a delegation to Vienna consisting of 40 experts from various fields, including diplomacy, law, economy, trade,



oil, banking, and so on. The well-staffed team Iran has put together means one thing: From the first round, Iran is determined to seriously enter the talks and examine ways that the sanctions can be removed. However, the United States has brought a delegation to Vienna, consisting of political experts.

Are Israel, the UK, and the U.S. on the same page? has a plot been engineered by the three buddies to stop Iran from getting its frozen assets being unlawfully blocked by the United States?

The United States has imposed crippling sanctions on the Iranian people, even threatening the lives of the sick. The sanctions have affected cancer patients and EB patients among others. The EB patients are even deprived of the special band-aids they need. Iran

is negotiating to lift sanctions to lessen the sufferings of these patients.

In an article on Monday, November 29, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that Tehran is determined to achieve a “good, sustainable, and effective verifiable deal.”

“Despite the unfulfilled promises of the West and distrust towards the unconstructive approach and policies of the White House, the Islamic Republic of Iran will endeavor ‘with true determination’ and ‘in good faith’ in the Vienna negotiations to achieve a ‘good,’ sustainable and effective verifiable deal for the lifting of sanctions,” the foreign minister wrote.

Is the West ready? If yes, they must end the excuses and seriously enter the talks.

New round of Vienna talks kicks off

From page 1 ► Iran's chief negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani made his introductory remarks, setting out Iran's demands for lifting all sanctions.

After the meeting, EU coordinator Enrique Mora told reporters that the JCPOA Joint Commission will discuss sanctions removal on Tuesday, and the nuclear working group will start working on Wednesday. He then went on to say that Iran has agreed to resume the talks from the sixth round, but has insisted that the new administration's “political sensibilities” be incorporated into the talks.

Mikhail Ulyanov, the Russian ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, described the talks as “quite successful,” saying that the participants agreed on further immediate steps.

The sides will reconvene on Tuesday.

Battle of wills: First step in Vienna battlefield

From page 1 ► side - indicate that they did not enter the negotiations with the aim of reaching a good agreement. Their main goal is forcing Iran to give concessions and surrender to their extravagances.

Before the Islamic Republic of Iran announces its consent for the start of a new round of negotiations, a series of statements and actions by the Western side and the smear campaign of blame game by their media outlets set the stage for a far-reaching effort to shift the blame onto Iran as the victim in order to escape from being held accountable for the violation of their legal obligations and deliberate inaction, which pushed the JCPOA to the brink of complete collapse.

The Western side's psychological operation, which was accompanied by widespread media propaganda, was orchestrated on the illusion that Iran (under the current administration) was fundamentally opposed to negotiations and did not believe in the 2015 nuclear deal.

After setting a date and expiration of the previous tactic, suddenly the subject of the psychological operation changed and the number and quality of the Iranian delegation in Vienna became an excuse for the Western media system, so that the predetermined path for psychological pressure on the Iranian negotiating team and public opinion would continue.

However, the logic rules that if the parties are serious about negotiating and reaching a final agreement, they must use all their capacity in this direction and focus on what is to be resolved

at the negotiating table instead of sidelining the main priority.

The battle of the will of the negotiating parties, the day before the start of the negotiations, clearly shows which side has a serious plan to conduct a technical and principled negotiation with the aim of achieving a result in the first step of the Vienna battlefield and which side only seeks media game and escape from adhering to its commitments.

The background, knowledge and experience of the Iranian team, mainly selected from experts in economic, monetary, financial, oil and banking fields, indicate that Iran has entered the negotiations vigorously to “effectively lift sanctions”, while the Western delegations are mainly political and legal experts that seek to intensify pressure on Iran in the nuclear field and raising time-consuming and fruitless issues.

Needless to say, reaching a good agreement requires the will and seriousness of both sides, but this heterogeneity in the level of expertise of the delegations suggests other goals on the part of the West.

Beyond the composition of the delegations, the inconsistency and incoherence of the Western side is another sign of their lack of seriousness in conducting a result-oriented negotiation. Internal disputes between the three European countries on the one hand, and the dispute between E3 and the European Union on the other, have further reduced the European side's role as an intermediary messenger between Iran and the United States.

On the other hand, contrary to repeated statements by

Washington officials that accuse Tehran of wasting time, the experience of six rounds of negotiations in the previous administration and the sending of insincere messages by the Americans show that the negotiation by itself is more important than just reaching an agreement.

The lack of unity in the U.S. administration documented in the outspoken statements of strong opponents of the talks, as well as the administration's reluctance to accept responsibility for its legal obligations, are all clear evidence that Washington is not serious and is exploiting its European allies for demonstrating an interest in negotiating and reaching an agreement.

The recent and ridiculous threats of Kenneth McKenzie, commander of the U.S. Central Command, and Robert Malley, the White House's special envoy for Iran, as well as their internal differences, are only one example that emerged in the recent remarks of Republican Senator Ted Cruz. It is a sign for lack of sufficient will on the part of Washington and consequently the Western parties on the P4+1 group to reach an agreement and lift sanctions.

On the other hand, as long as the United States is committed to making all its decisions in line with the prescription of the Zionist regime and its allies in West Asia, one cannot, of course, expect the necessary coherence and will on their part to reach an effective agreement, and therefore their strategy is limited to playing with the JCPOA and the intensification of pressure on Iran.

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U.S. launches blame game as Vienna talks resume

TEHRAN – After long months of discontinuity, the Vienna talks on how to lift U.S. sanctions on Iran formally kicked in on Monday, with Iran catching Western negotiating partners off guard with a 40-strong team.

The talks began against a backdrop of low expectations in the U.S. and Europe on the possibility of bringing them to a swift conclusion. Several U.S. and European officials expressed concerns over the way Iran would tackle the talks and the possibility that Iran would present new tough demands.

Over the past few days, American and European officials have leveled many accusations against Iran ranging from pursuing “false expectations” to “playing for time.”

Two European diplomats told Reuters that “it seemed Iran was simply playing for time to accumulate more material and know-how.”

Also, Western diplomats told the British news agency that “if Iran continues with its maximalist positions and fails to restore its cooperation with the IAEA then they will have to quickly review their options.”

This threatening language also was evident in quotations made by anonymous Biden officials speaking to American media.

A senior Biden administration official told Politico that the U.S. objective in Vienna is to “disabuse Iran’s new negotiators of ‘false expectations’ about what the United States will do to accommodate them.”



This is while Iran has set out its demands in no uncertain ways and is all-prepared to achieve a “swift” and “good” agreement. Iran’s chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, outlined these demands in an opinion piece for the Financial Times. “In order to secure the rights and interests of our nation, we are ready for a fair and careful discussion, based on the principles of ‘guarantee’ and ‘verification’! This must prioritize compensation for the violation of the deal, which includes the removal of all post-JCPOA sanctions. In return, Iran is ready to voluntarily fulfill its nuclear commitments in accordance with the agreement,” he wrote.

Iran’s demands center on a few issues. First, the U.S. should effectively and verifiably remove all its sanctions on Iran. Second, Washington should provide guarantees that it won’t renege on its commitments again.

Instead of addressing the root causes of the current situation, American and European officials are spreading pessimism about the

outcome of the talks in what appears to be an effort to blame their potential failure on Iran.

Western diplomats are already moving in this direction. They are portraying Iran’s demand on the need to lift U.S. sanctions as a maximalist one. “If this is the position that Iran continues to hold on Monday, then I don’t see a negotiated solution,” one of the European diplomats told Reuters.

Concurrently, talks of an interim agreement gained ground among Western diplomats, something that Iran rejected out of hand given the U.S. track record in backing down on its commitments.

The American and European complaints about the so-called maximalist demands of Iran marked a quick shift in the West’s negotiating strategy toward Iran. Over the past few months, the U.S. and Europe have been pressing Iran for a return to Vienna. And when Iran set a date for its return, they quickly shifted their focus on Iran’s demands, warning of

the failure of the talks in case Iran pursued a hard line.

They cautioned that any Iranian move to pursue maximalist demands would mean that Iran isn’t serious about the talks. This is while Iran has said time and again that it is dead serious about the talks.

Iran’s seriousness was evident from the relatively large number of its negotiating team. While in previous rounds, Iran sent a small, coherent team, this time it put together a 40-strong team comprised of experts from mainly economic sectors.

This team was another indication that Iran is serious about the talks, unlike the U.S. which sent a relatively small legal and political team. The U.S. team has raised eyebrows in Tehran as it was seen as a sign that the U.S. came to Vienna with the expectation that the talks won’t be concluded during the current round.

In all rounds of nuclear talks, the number of experts on the opposite team was several times that of the Iranian team, and included a mix of experts related to sanctions. Now, this time, Iran has decided to use all its capabilities to counter the oppressive sanctions, according to Iran’s state news agency, IRNA.

Some pundits in Iran and beyond believe that the U.S. desire for reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has largely dissipated and it is now trying to play the blame game by accusing Iran of not being serious and seeking impossible demands.

the Republic of Azerbaijan and said, “Baku attaches special importance to its fraternal relations with Tehran and we will not allow any damage to happen to these relations.”

Referring to the talks and contacts between the officials of the two countries to resolve some misunderstandings between the two countries, the president of Azerbaijan stated, “We are committed to the security of the border areas and will not allow any country to disrupt bilateral relations.”

Referring to the importance of transit and road transport, he said, “We are determined to solve the problem of transit and provide the ground for the presence and activity of Iranian companies in Azerbaijan.”

Aliyev also said, “This meeting will be a turning point in relations between the two countries and we are committed to securing the regional interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Gas swap deal

At the end of the meeting, a gas swap agreement was signed.

Raisi also had meetings with his Turkish, Turkmen, and Pakistani presidents. Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan also signed a tripartite gas swap deal from Turkmenistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan through the territory of Iran.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Ayatollah Raisi and Aliyev.

According to the agreement, which was signed by the oil ministers of the two countries on Sunday night after the end of the bilateral meeting between Ayatollah Raisi and Aliyev, 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters of gas will be transported annually from Turkmenistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On Sunday, Ayatollah also met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In the meeting, Ayatollah Raisi said, “Iran and Turkey can bring economic and political relations closer to the strategic level by improving the current level of trade and exchanges.”

Referring to the wide and diverse areas of cooperation between Iran and Turkey in various sectors, including energy, banking and monetary issues, and trade and commerce exchanges, Ayatollah Raisi said, “We should facilitate the development of economic relations and in this regard, preferential tariffs can be reviewed.”

Emphasizing the close cooperation and relations between Iran, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey, the president said, “The three countries have many cultural, religious and ideological commonalities, and these relations should not be allowed to be disrupted, but should be as close as possible to disappoint our common enemies.”

IRAN IN FOCUS

NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Beach volleyball player Salemi says Iran were beyond expectations

From Page 1 ▶ “Most of the teams had improved and become stronger than before. Australia were the great team. Christopher McHugh is an experienced player that I have met him in many tournaments, and in this tournament, he was better than ever,” he said.

Salemi started playing in 2010 and has since collected several medals in AVC and FIVB tournaments, including an Asian Championship title in 2017.

“Before the 2021 Asian Beach Volleyball Championships, the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) had considered Iran the third chance to win the tournament. But we went beyond expectations and had a great run during the competitions,” Salemi stated.

“My teammate, Abolhassan Khakizadeh, played very well, even though it was his first year in the national team and the first major tournament he played in. He is a young and talented player who has a bright future ahead.

“We only had 12 days to practice together before the Asian championships. However, with the efforts of the national team coaches, Maziar Houshamnd and Arash Ramsari, we could handle the difficult challenge.

“One of the most difficult games for us was the game against the Philippines 1. They have improved a lot during the recent years and were a tough team to defeat. It proves that beach volleyball is popular in many countries across Asia and progresses rapidly,” said the Iran national team player.

“Thailand were a great hosts for the tournament, and everything was perfect in terms of facilities. I hope that we can have the same facilities and infrastructure in Iran for beach volleyball. In my hometown city, Gonbad-e Kavus, people are passionate about volleyball and beach volleyball, but there is no standard training camp for us. My request to the officials is to pay more attention to the development of beach volleyball in Iran so that we will be able to achieve many honors in international competitions,” concluded the 32-year-old star.

Sepahan defeat Nassaji to remain top: IPL

TEHRAN- Sepahan football team defeated Nassaji 2-0 on Matchday 7 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Monday.

Shahriar Moghanlou scored a brace in Isfahan’s Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium.

In Tehran, Persepolis defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman thanks to Mehdi Abdi’s 50th-minute goal and moved up to second place.

Earlier in the day, Esteghlal were held to a 1-1 draw against Sanat Naft in Abadan. Mehdi Hanafi scored for the hosts just eight minutes into the match and Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh levelled the score in the 39th minute.

Gol Gohar edged Paykan 1-0 in Tehran courtesy of Amin Pourali in the 23rd minute.

Mes also defeated Havadar 1-0. Godwin Mensha scored the winning goal from the penalty spot in the 70th minute.

Sepahan remain top with 16 points, two points ahead of Persepolis.

Iran volleyball reaches agreement with Campedelli

TEHRAN – Iran volleyball federation reached an agreement with women volleyball coach Alessandra Campedelli.

The Italian coach will travel to Tehran on Dec. 23 to finalize a contract with the Iranian federation.

The federation had also negotiated with Canadian coach Melanie Sanford, Chinese coach Feng Kun and Italian Monica Cresta.

Iran women volleyball team will participate at the 2021 Asian Women’s Volleyball Championship.

Mohammadreza Davarzani, head of Iran volleyball federation, has already said they want to book a place in the competition’s top four.

The 2021 Asian Women’s Volleyball Championship will be held in the Philippines in May 2022.

The competition was Originally scheduled for Aug. 29 to Sept. 5, 2021, but was postponed to May 15 to 22, 2022 due rising COVID-19 cases.

Mark Selby stunned by Iran’s Hossein Vafaei

TEHRAN – World No 1 Mark Selby crashed out of the UK Championship after suffering a shock 6-2 defeat to Iran’s Hossein Vafaei in York.

Vafaei raced into a 5-0 lead with breaks of 105, 69, 55 and 56 before an out-of-sorts Selby won the next two frames to threaten a comeback in the second-round clash.

“I think I was a little bit lucky,” Vafaei said. “At the end I’m sorry to Mark. He’s one of our legends, total respect to him.”

Selby was equally magnanimous in defeat, saying: “I didn’t really get a chance the first two frames, Hossein played great, settled really quickly.

“I probably should have won the third frame, missed an easy black off the spot and had half a chance in the next frame, so could have easily been 2-2 at the interval. But after the interval he kicked off great again and thoroughly deserved to win the match,” the Englishman added.

Iran futsal team to play Italy: friendly

TEHRAN – Iran national futsal team will play two friendly matches with Italy.

Ehsan Osooli, director of Iran’s Futsal Committee, said Iran will travel to Italy on Dec. 19 to play the Azzurri.

Mohammad Nazemosharia’s team are scheduled to meet Italy on Dec. 20 and 21.

Iran futsal team showed a poor performance in the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup where the team lost to Kazakhstan 3-2 in the quarterfinals.

Iran prepare for the 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup which will be held in Kuwait.

Iran defender Khalilzadeh ruled out for four weeks

TEHRAN – Iran national football team defender Shoja Khalilzadeh has been ruled out for four weeks, Qatari club Al Rayyan announced via Twitter.

Khalilzadeh underwent a hernia surgery on Monday and will be sidelined for four weeks.

The 32-year-old defender has played a key role in Iran football team’ success in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

He will be fit for the match against Iraq in Group A scheduled for Jan. 27 in Tehran.

Five Iranian players arrive in Malaga

TEHRAN – Five Iranian players arrived in Spanish city Malaga on Monday to join Juventud de Torremolinos.

Center forward Mehdi Mohammadyari, attacking midfielder Hamid Reza Taherkhani, center back Mehdi Rahimi and goalkeeper Mehdi Amini have signed for Spanish third-tier football team Juventud de Torremolinos.

Iranian woman defender Ghazaleh Salehipour has also joined women’s Juventud de Torremolinos, Tasnimnews reported.

Founded in 1958, they play in Tercera División – Group 9, holding home matches at Estadio Municipal El Pozuelo.

Ayatollah Raisi wraps up visit to Turkmenistan

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi returned to Tehran on Sunday night after concluding a visit to neighboring Turkmenistan where he attended a regional summit and met with a number of foreign leaders.

Ayatollah Raisi arrived at Tehran’s Mehrabad Airport and was received at the airport by his first-vice president, Mohammad Mokhber.

The main reason for the visit was to attend a summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) which was held at Ashgabat with the presence of the leaders of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Upon his arrival at the airport, the president said, “The presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran as one of the founders of ECO had different messages and in this meeting all members of the regional organization emphasized the need to increase economic relations between member countries.”

He noted, “The achievements that the Economic Cooperation Organization has had so far are not enough and greater steps must be taken to develop economic cooperation.”

Referring to the bilateral meetings with the leaders of the countries participating in the ECO Summit, the president said, “The most important focus of the talks with the presidents was to use the existing capacities to develop economic and trade relations.”

Ayatollah Raisi described the developments in Afghanistan as another focus of talks with the heads of state and said, “In our talks, we emphasized the establishment of an inclusive government that can represent all ethnic groups and political groups in Afghanistan, because the establishment of such a government can both provide security for Afghanistan and eliminate its neighboring countries’ concerns.”

Referring to the meeting and talks with the president of Turkmenistan, Ayatollah Raisi said, “The central issue in this meeting was the development of economic relations and solving the problem of transit and gas. These issues were resolved and the issue of transit was set to be resolved in such a way that it facilitates connections with different countries.”

He noted, “The issue of gas, which was interrupted, was also discussed and eventually led to the conclusion of a contract, and we hope that there will be no concerns in this regard after this.”

Ayatollah Raisi pointed out, “Our feeling in the meeting with the heads of state was that there are issues between the Islamic Republic of Iran and some countries, many of which were easily resolved during the meetings and talks.”

The president added, “For example, after a visit to Tajikistan and a meeting with its president, the level of trade and economic relations between Iran

and Tajikistan has tripled.”

Ayatollah Raisi stressed, “Neighborhood policy of the government has worked and we must continue to insist on continuing to develop relations with neighboring countries and facilitate the activities of businesspersons and economic activists with these countries politically.”

Referring to the meeting with businesspersons, traders and entrepreneurs in Turkmenistan, Ayatollah Raisi said, “Economic activists raised their serious problems in this meeting, and in order to solve these problems, concluding a gas contract and solving the transit problem can be suitable conditions for traders and provide merchants in Turkmenistan.”

During his stint in Ashgabat, the Iranian president met with a number of his counterparts who traveled to the Caspian Sea nation to attend the ECO summit. Ayatollah Raisi met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Ashgabat. The two presidents discussed important regional issues and bilateral relations, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Referring to the deep roots of civilization, culture and religion between the two nations of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ayatollah Raisi said, “The two countries have a long-standing and deep-rooted relationship and we will never allow these relations to be influenced by the enemies.”

Recalling Iran’s support for Azerbaijan’s independence and territorial integrity, the president said, “We do not allow insecurity and foreign interference in the affairs of countries in the region, and experience has shown that wherever countries in the region resolve their issues through understanding and negotiation, outsiders have not been able to interfere.”

Expressing concern over insecurity and the presence of outsiders in the region, he stated, “ISIL and Zionist terrorism are two threatening factors in the region and must be confronted.”

Referring to the goals of the United States and the Zionist regime to disrupt relations between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ayatollah Raisi stressed, “Foreign interference is to the detriment of the countries of the region and we must be vigilant against their conspiracy.”

Ayatollah Raisi welcomed the request of the president of Azerbaijan to strengthen economic relations between the two countries and develop transit routes with the presence of Iranian companies.

The president of Azerbaijan said, “A special work group will be formed from senior government officials to follow up and implement the agreements reached.”

In the meeting, President Aliyev praised Iran’s unprecedented support for the independence of

High-ranking Iranian delegation visits Syria seeking expansion of economic ties



Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin (2nd L) and Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mohammad Samer al-Khalil (2nd R)

From page 1 ► so that a practical and agile picture of the two countries' economic cooperation may be drawn," he noted.

The Syrian minister for his part said that his country's new investment law has provided good opportunities for foreign investors.

"Iranian companies have significant experience and capabilities, we are interested in taking advantage of the opportunities and offer them customs and tax exemptions," Samer al-Khalil said.

There is no doubt that the economic authorities of Tehran and Damascus are seeking trade and economic development that would serve the interests of both countries, he added.

During his three-day visit to Damascus, Fatemi Amin is also scheduled to meet with other Syrian officials, including the minister of Interior, the minister of finance, as well as the minister of oil and mineral resources to discuss ways to expand economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

Iran unveils modern domestically-made customs equipment, systems

TEHRAN – Iran unveiled a series of domestically produced smart customs systems and equipment on Monday in a ceremony attended by the country's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and the Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Satari, IRIB reported.

As reported, the unveiled equipment includes two container X-ray machines that have been indigenized by the experts at the Ministry of Defense in collaboration with knowledge-based companies and will be used in Shahid Rajaei Port in southern Hormozgan

Province and Incheh-Boroun port in northern Golestan province.

With the mentioned X-Ray devices going operational, the total number of X-ray machines at the country's borders reaches 15.

Several small drones were also among the unveiled equipment. These drones are used to control transit cargoes at border crossings.

Some other systems for speeding up the clearance of goods and smartening the customs procedure were also among the unveiled equipment.

Gas transmission hits record high of 800 mcm/d

TEHRAN – Gas transmission in Iran hit a new record of over 800 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) on November 21, Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC)'s Managing Director Mehdi Jamshidi Dana announced.

The official said that due to the special position of the IGTC and the existence of potential capacities, the development of the gas transmission network is on the new agenda of this company.

Referring to the beginning of the cold days of the year and the increase in gas consumption, Jamshidi Dana also stressed the need for more effort and ability of employees to transfer this clean, safe and sustainable energy.

In early October, Head of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Majid Chegeni said that over 1,700 kilometers of high-pressure gas pipelines are currently under construction across the country.

Speaking in a meeting with Bahram Salavati, the head of the Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company (IGEDC), Chegeni said: "The implementation of more than 1700 kilometers

of high-pressure transmission lines including Bidboland - Ahvaz, Qom - Mohammadiyeh - Parchin, Rasht - Chelvand, Laft - Gourzin - Bandar Abbas and Bidboland - Gachsaran shows NIGC's determination for completing under-way projects on schedule."

"Implementation of projects on time, in accordance with the current standards and regulations of the Oil Ministry, will lead to further development of the country's gas industry," he added.

The official noted that his company has put strengthening the gas infrastructure on the agenda as one of its main priorities of the company in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Operating the largest natural gas network in West Asia, NIGC continues to expand this network into the country's most remote areas so that currently over 95 percent of the country's popula-

tion enjoys natural gas through this huge network.

Overall, about 98.4 percent of the country's urban population is currently enjoying natural gas through the gas network while the figure stands at 84 percent for the rural population, the report showed.

This level of access is unprecedented in the world since based on the International Energy Agency (IEA) Energy Access Outlook even in the world's advanced countries the average access to natural gas through the pipeline is nearly 75 percent.

With a total length of over 36,000 kilometers, Iran's gas network is also among the world's most modern networks and it enjoys the most modern and update measuring, transmission, and pressure boosting instruments and equipment.

This vast network of pipelines is growing bigger and bigger every year as NIGC tries to increase

Iran's national gas network's total length is expected to reach 45,000 km by 2025

Housing price rises 1.2% in Tehran City

TEHRAN- Average housing price rose 1.2 percent in the capital Tehran during the eighth Iranian calendar month of Aban (ended on November 21), compared to its previous month, according to a report by the Central Bank of

Iran (CBI).

Based on the CBI data, the average price for one square meter of a residential unit in Tehran stood at 320.1 million rials (about \$7,621) during the mentioned month, IRIB reported.

The average housing price in the said month also increased 17.7 percent in comparison to the same month in the previous fiscal year.

Although, the number of real estate deals stood at 7,300 in the capital city in the eighth month of this year, rising 33.5 percent and 63.5 percent, from the previous month, and the same month of the past year, respectively.

NITC to take special measures to improve livelihood of personnel

TEHRAN – Hossein Shiva, the new managing director of the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), has said the company will take special measures to resolve the problems of the sailors and the company's personnel and to improve their livelihood.

Speaking on the sidelines of a visit to the country's maritime fleet in the southwestern Bushehr Province, Shiva stated that improving the livelihood of the company's human resources is one of the most important priorities of the new management team.

"From the very beginning of my presence in the National Iranian Tanker Company, I decided to meet with the sailors of the fleet directly and hold talks with them regularly," he said.

Shiva pointed to the importance of preserving the dignity of personnel as his red line



NITC Head Hossein Shiva (3rd R) visiting a vessel in Assaluyeh, southwestern Bushehr Province

and said: "the human dignity of personnel and sailors has different dimensions. From improving management interaction with sailors to how staff personnel are treated, are all among the priorities for pro-

moting the human dignity of the personnel."

He continued by stating that the branding and improvement of the organization should be among the goals and priorities

of all the company's personnel, adding: "The NITC brand, as one of the largest oil shipping companies in the world, should be revived and promoted."

Hossein Shiva was appointed as the NITC managing director earlier this month.

Shiva, who was previously a member of the NITC Board of Directors and also the company's deputy managing director, was appointed to the post replacing Nasrollah Sardashti, who was the managing director of the company since March 2018.

NITC, which operates the largest tanker fleet in West Asia and has the world's largest fleet of supertankers, transports Iranian crude and also acts as an independent entity in contracts with foreign concerns for crude oil transportation based on prevailing international freight rates.

POGC begins new exploration operation in South Pars field

TEHRAN – Iran's Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the country's giant South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf, has begun new drilling operations in this field to explore the possibility of new reserves, an official with the company announced.

Ali Akbar Majed, head of POGC's Oil and Gas Engineering Department, said the drilling operation of a new descriptive well at the northern part of the mentioned field is started to assess the possibility of new reserves in the field's undeveloped areas, the POGC portal reported on Sunday.

"This well is aimed at determining the extent of expansion of South Pars gas field in the north side of the field and evaluating the potential of uncharted areas of this section for development," Majed said.

The drilling operations are carried out by Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company (IOEC) under the supervision of Pars Oil and Gas Company, the official said.

According to Majed, identifying and ex-



ploring undeveloped parts of the South Pars gas field is among POGC's top programs for maintaining production from this joint field, and in this due, four descriptive wells are planned to be dug in the northern areas of the field.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters and the remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in the Arab country's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for

about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

The development of the South Pars field started in 1998 and 29 different phases were defined for the project along with a separate oil block. The field, however, is currently divided into 24 standard offshore phases, the output of which is processed by 14 gas refineries on land.

Since the beginning, the field's development project has gone through so many ups and downs and many foreign and domestic companies have contributed to the completion of the field's various phases.

Despite all the U.S pressures which led to the departure of almost all of the foreign companies from the project, and despite all the technical and engineering problems faced in the process, Iran has managed to proudly finish the development of almost all the phases of the field and even the field's oil layer is also producing nearly 50,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil.

Qom province records lowest inflation rate

TEHRAN – A review of the latest statistical data released by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) shows that Qom province with 40 percent recorded the lowest inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on November 21, which marks the end of the eighth Iranian calendar month Aban.

The highest 12-month inflation rate is related to Ilam province with 52.2 percent, according to the SCI's statistics.

The SCI has put the average inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on November 21 at 44.4 percent, falling one percent from the figure for the twelve-month ended to the seventh month.

SCI has put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 35.7 percent in the eighth month of this year, which means families have paid an average of 35.7 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the previous year.

The point-to-point inflation rate has also dropped by 3.5 percent in comparison to the figure for the preceding month.

The point-to-point inflation rate for urban households was reported to be 35.3 percent, which is 3.1 percent less than the figure for the previous month. The figure was 37.4 percent for the rural households, with 6.5 percent drop from the figure for the previous month.

The Statistical Center of Iran had put the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on March 20 (the end of the previous Iranian calendar



year) at 36.4 percent, rising 2.2 percent from the figure for the twelve-month period ended on the last day of the preceding year.

Last week, the head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said considering the recent data provided by the Statistical Center of Iran the inflation is expected to be curbed in the next Iranian calendar year (begins in March 2022).

"No money creation has taken place in the last three months, and a recent report by the Statistics Center of Iran shows that inflation is declining, these are indications that the inflation could be curbed by the next year," Masoud Mir-Kazemi stated.

Referring to the current economic problems, the PBO head stated: "The problem of people today is livelihood, business situation, household income, and inflation, and solving problems in these areas is one of the tasks of the Planning and Budget Organization. Over the three-month, since the 13th government took office, PBO's priority has been economic stability to restore confidence in the economy."

ous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) with 85 percent annual growth.

The information obtained from Kilid website (which is a major platform for housing trades) indicated that the housing price index in Tehran grew by 85 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year, compared to its preceding year.

The highest monthly price increase of 12.5 percent occurred in the Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22-August 21, 2020), while the biggest monthly price decrease occurred in Azar (November 21-December 20,

2020) with a decline of 8.1 percent.

Back in April, the head of Iran's Property Advisers Union said housing prices in the country should decrease at least 25 percent in order for people to be able to afford to purchase.

Mostafa Gholi Khosravi stressed the need for establishing a market regulation headquarters for the housing sector to monitor the activities of dealers and real estate agencies in order to balance the prices.

Housing prices in Iran have been constantly rising over the past year due to various internal and external factors.



The housing market in Tehran was the second-highest returning market in Iran among the country's four major markets in the previ-

Wahhabism lacks rationality: Indonesian expert

From page 1 ► **Do you think the Wahhabism has enough capabilities to lead the Islamic world?**

Islamic civilization requires rationality and unity. Wahhabism, on the contrary, is very textual and does not encourage rationalist thinking. The doctrines put forward by Wahhabism are purification and takfirism. Such doctrines will lead to division and conflict among the Muslim world. So, how is it possible for such a teaching to be the leader of the Islamic world?

How can Muslim states agree on a mechanism to consolidate Islamic unity?

There are two conditions needed to create Islamic unity; first, it needs awareness about the importance of unity. The Muslims must realize that without unity, they continue to be marginalized and hegemonized by external forces. Second, it is necessary to carry out internal dialogue to understand each other and resolve issues that are a source of division among Muslims.

Don't you think that Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban will turn into a new epicenter for



export of terrorism?

It depends on the ability of the Taliban regime to fulfill its promises to the international community, including promoting unity and inclusiveness among the Af-

ghan nation and rejecting terrorism and violence under the name of religion.

Why are Muslim states trying to ignore or marginalize each other while European states

succeeded to build a bloc?

If we look more closely, the European Union is not that united. The Covid-19 pandemic has proven that rich EU countries are selfish and refuse to help poorer European countries. President Aleksandar Vucic once criticized this selfish attitude by saying, "European solidarity does not exist... that was a fairy tale. The only country that can help us in this hard situation is the People's Republic of China. To the rest of them, thanks for nothing."

When we talk about divisions and conflicts in the Islamic world, we need to consider two factors. First, the spreading of takfirism, and second, the Western powers which in various ways, including by using the Muslims hands themselves, to pitting Muslims against each other.

"If we look closely, the European Union is not that united."

No deal in sight as US debt ceiling deadline approaches

Congress has only a couple of weeks to avert another government shutdown over the federal debt ceiling and Senate leaders do not appear to be anywhere close to a deal.

The United States narrowly avoided default in October after congressional Republicans refused to vote to increase the nation's debt borrowing limit, forcing Democrats to pass a short-term extension, setting up another showdown for early December.

Lawmakers now face a December 3 deadline to raise the debt ceiling before the US defaults on its debt.

There is no indication that lawmakers can unite behind an omnibus spending bill before that deadline, especially since Republicans have already signaled their opposition to another increase to the debt ceiling, despite the potentially severe consequences of a US default.

In a recent letter to Congress, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned that the Treasury would be left with insufficient remaining resources to finance the government beyond December 15.

The debt ceiling puts a cap on how much the federal government can borrow to pay its bills. Since the end of World War II, Congress has passed nearly 100 modifications to the debt limit to keep financing the government. But lawmakers from both parties have in recent years turned the process into a partisan political cudgel.



Rep. Brendan Boyle, a Pennsylvania Democrat, reintroduced a measure in February that would abolish the debt limit. It has only seven co-sponsors, all Democrats. A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate.

"I think that's the most sensible way to do it because it serves no purpose," House Budget Committee Chairman John Yarmuth, Democrat of Kentucky, said of the debt ceiling. "I mean, it's been in effect for 100 years and it certainly hasn't constrained the debt in any way. And all it's done is open up opportunities for mischief and brinkmanship."

Secretary Yellen also testified in September that she supports abolishing the debt ceiling altogether.

The US government has been shut down over failure to raise the debt ceiling before but it has never defaulted on its debts.

A default, Yellen has recently warned, would "probably cause a recession" and could put Social Security and child tax credit payments at risk.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has also painted a grim picture should the US default on its debts, warning that the military might not be able to pay service members, civilians or contractors.

Despite catastrophic repercussions that a default would have for the US economy, Republicans and Democrats are still far away from reaching a deal to raise the debt limit.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, has suggested that Democrats handle the issue on their own given that they have pursued a massive social spending agenda without Republican support.

Democrats insist that Majority Leader Chuck Schumer should not allocate a week of Senate floor time to the arcane budget reconciliation process to raise the debt limit without any Republican votes.

The federal government provides states with about \$750 billion in annual aid, which they use to fund programs ranging from Medicaid, which covers about 75 million Americans, to food stamps, used by about 42 million households. The federal aid also includes funding for schools, roads, transportation, and various housing programs for low-income families.

(Source: Press TV)

Mark Esper sues Pentagon for blocking parts of his memoir

From page 1 ► "a full and unvarnished accounting of our nation's history, especially the more difficult periods."

"I am more than disappointed the current administration is infringing on my First Amendment constitutional rights. And it is with regret that legal recourse is the only path now available for me to tell my full story to the American people." He added.

"The withheld text is crucial to telling important stories discussed in the Manuscript," the lawsuit reads.

The book, chronicles Esper's experience in what he described as a "tumultuous second half of the Trump administration."

Esper claimed in a statement that his goal is to give the public "a full and unvarnished accounting of our nation's history, especially the more difficult periods."

He wrote that his tenure was "an unprecedented time of civil unrest, public health crises, growing threats abroad, Pentagon transformation, and a White House seemingly bent on circumventing the Constitution."

He said in the lawsuit that the Pentagon is unlawfully imposing restraint on his book by "delaying, obstructing and infringing on his constitutional right to publish" his book.

He noted defense officials redacted 60 pages of his memoir and told him not to quote Trump and others in meetings or mention their conversations. He added officials also asked him not to use certain nouns and verbs while writing about historical events in the book.

Defense officials redacted 60 pages of his memoir and told him not to quote Trump and others in meetings or mention their conversations.

John F. Kirby, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, said the agency was aware of Mr. Esper's concerns. "As with all such reviews, the department takes seriously its obligation to balance national security with an author's narrative desire," Kirby said. "Given that this matter is now under litigation, we will refrain from commenting further."

Esper and Trump clashed over using the military to corral demonstrators protesting the police murder of Black George Floyd last June. Trump accused him of not being sufficiently loyal while Esper claimed he was trying to keep his department politically neutral.

Esper is among the most senior former government officials, if not the most senior, to sue for prior restraint related to a book. The lawsuit came a year after a presidential campaign in which President Biden promised to restore the norms that had been tossed aside by his predecessor.

Executive branch employees — ranging from senior officials like the secretary of state and the national security adviser to low-level ones like federal prosecutors and agents — have to submit their manuscripts to the prepublication review process. That process is intended to prevent materials that may damage national security from becoming public while protecting the author's First Amendment rights.

In cases where an agency or a department has an issue with information being revealed, that section of the book is supposed to be removed or edited to obscure the problematic content.



Israeli president's visit to holy site draws fierce reaction

From page 1 ► The Palestinian Authority condemned Herzog's move. In a statement, the Palestinian Foreign Ministry said the visit was "provocative and rejected."

The Foreign Ministry held the Israeli occupation fully responsible for the "attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque" saying Israel bears the consequences for security in the region, considering that "the storming of the Ibrahimi Mosque and al-Lubnan al-Sharqiya is an official adoption of settler terrorism." Activist group "Youths against Settlements" also denounced the visit, calling it a "clear violation of international law."

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement warned of the consequences of Herzog's intrusion noting that "the Al-Aqsa Intifada came in response to the storming of [the Ibrahimi Mosque] by former Israeli PM Ariel Sharon." A spokesman for the movement in the West Bank, Tariq Ezzedine says, "the Israeli occupation's president's move is a continuation of the Judaization process [of al-Khalil]." He told news networks that the resistance faction will not allow the occupation to impose new facts on the ground and pointed out that "It is highly probable that popular demonstrations will take place in defense of the Ibrahimi



Mosque." Ezzedine noted that the uprising never ended and the Palestinian people will continue resisting by all means possible. Mohammad Hamadeh, the Hamas spokesman in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds told the media that "the Israeli president's step proves that everyone is leaning toward the right."

A member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Wasel Abu Yousef says "there is an aggressive policy of escalation against the Ibrahimi Mosque, the storming by the President of the Israeli occupation of the site reflects the aggressive and criminal policy of escalation."

Ayo Youssef stressed that "the occupation is trying to impose facts on the ground by storming the site and there is U.S. support for the Israeli occupation in eroding the rights of our people."

Meanwhile, the Arab League condemned the "desecrating entry" of the Israeli President to the Holy Mosque. In a statement, the Arab League said the move comes in light of the "continued and persistent Judaization of Islamic and Christian

holy sites by the Israeli occupation. The pan-Arab organization added that the forced intrusion comes within the context of the Judaization of the Ibrahimi Mosque after its temporal and spatial division, following the massacre committed by an extremist Israeli settler in 1994, who killed 29 worshippers inside the Mosque itself (by shooting them to death while they were praying). The statement said what the city of al-Khalil is exposed to, especially the Ibrahimi Mosque, and the planned storming of the Israeli president confirms the occupation authorities' persistence to go on with their aggression and racism. This proves the continuation of Israel's official and organized terrorism against the

"The Al-Aqsa Intifada came in response to the storming of [the Ibrahimi Mosque] by former Israeli PM Ariel Sharon."

Palestinian people, their rights, and sanctities, in the same approach they practice in Judaizing Jerusalem al-Quds, and targeting Al-Aqsa Mosque and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory" it added.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation also condemned the move. In a statement, the OIC said this is a "provocation of sentiments of Muslims and a continuation of Israeli assaults on the rights of the Palestinian people, their land and holy sites." The OIC called on the international community to "act urgently to protect the holy and historical sites [in Palestine] and to force the Israeli occupation authorities to respect the sanctity of the holy sites."

The city of al-Khalil is occupied by 400 Israeli settlers around the perimeter of the mosque compound. Monitoring groups say these settlers regularly use violence against Palestinians with the help of the Israeli occupation forces. On an International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian

People, rights groups have called on the UN and humanitarian organizations to take a stand against the situation of forced entries into the sanctities by the Israeli occupiers.

Palestinian families living in al-Khalil are subject to perhaps some of the worst human rights violations and settler attacks in the occupied West Bank. Palestinians must cross through a maze of Israeli military checkpoints to move from one place to another. The city is home to roughly 200,000 Palestinians and hundreds of notoriously aggressive Israeli settlers who are heavily guarded by more than 2000 Israeli troops (some reports put that number higher). In 2019, Israel kicked out the only international observers protecting al-Khalil's Palestinians from the hundreds of heavily armed settlers, one of whom committed the 1994 massacre that triggered their deployment. There is frequent violence between the sides with settlers frequently attacking the homes of Palestinians in a bid to expel them from the city entirely. However, many Palestinians say they are going nowhere, no matter what the cost.

As an occupying power, Israeli occupation forces have a duty under international law to protect the Palestinians living in al-Khalil, and the entire occupied Palestinian territo-

ries for that matter, from any act of aggression and provide them with security. Instead, the more than two thousand Israeli troops stationed in al-Khalil are accused of doing the exact opposite. At times, when the settlers, known for their brutality, attack Palestinians or their property, Israeli forces sit back and watch on. Worse still, many rights groups have accused the Israeli forces of joining the settlers who attack the Palestinians and their property or businesses. It's a shameful silence from the international community that Israel is not sanctioned or punished for the crimes that are committed on an almost daily basis in al-Khalil. The odd statement of condemnation here from the European Union is about as much as the Palestinians will hear from the international organizations.

This is where the international community needs to question why Palestinians turn to resistance to defend their rights, their holy sites and their ancestral land from being stolen by settlers. All Israeli settlers squatting in the occupied West Bank are doing so illegally as all Israeli settlements are illegal under international law, yet Israel has been given a green light to expand its settlement activity in al-Khalil, Jerusalem al-Quds and other parts of the occupied territories.



Boosting maritime tourism needs careful planning, deputy minister says



TEHRAN – A carefully planned strategy is needed to promote maritime tourism on Iran's northern and southern coasts, the deputy tourism minister has announced.

The country should focus on developing its maritime tourism sector while preparing upstream documents, Ali-Asghar Shalbfafian said, ILNA reported on Monday.

Operational measures should be taken with the aim of increasing the motivation of private investors, the official added.

"By partnering with the private sector in the maritime industry, and promoting the implementation of executive measures, even if they are small and infrequent, we will increase motivation to work in the field," he explained.

In order for maritime tourism to flourish, there has to be interaction and coordination at all levels of government and the private sector, he noted.

Coastal and maritime tourism

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

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

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

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

16 properties in Hamedan made national heritage

TEHRAN – A total of 16 aging structures and historical buildings in Hamedan province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, CHTN reported.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Sunday in separate official letters it submitted to the governor-general of the west-central province.

Shiri, Sharafkhani and Ahadi mansions as well as Tuchaqaz Mosque were among the properties added to the prestigious list.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamadan has had many names: it was

possibly the Bit Daiukki of the Assyrians, Hangmatana, or Agbatana, to the Medes, and Ecbatana to the Greeks. One of the Median capitals, under Cyrus II (the Great; died 529 BC) and later Achaemenian rulers, it was the site of a royal summer palace.

About 1220 Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386 it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, and the inhabitants massacred. It was partly restored in the 17th century and subsequently changed hands often between Iranian ruling houses and the Ottomans.

Sitting on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy.

Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.

Iraqi tour operators to visit Golestan on fam tour



TEHRAN – A group of 10 Iraqi tour operators and travel agents along with their Iranian fellows are to commence a familiarization tour across the northern province of Golestan, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The group will start a four-day familiarization tour on Tuesday with the aim of getting acquainted with the province's tourism potential as a travel destination, Ahmad Tajari said on Monday, CHTN reported.

During the tour, there will be specialized meetings to exchange information and to build a stronger relationship between both sides, the official added.

Both sides will also visit

tourism, cultural heritage, and handicraft sites to learn more about their capabilities in these areas, he noted.

The tour will also highlight the province's strengths, including its natural, cultural, historical, handicrafts, agricultural tourism, and other assets, he mentioned.

The Golestan province, with its ethnic diversity, various climate and potential in handicrafts and cultural heritage, has a very high potential for foreign tourism, and Iraq is one of its important target countries, the official explained.

Last week, several Iraqi travel insiders and tour operators requested Iran to waive visa requirements for Iraqi nationals

who want to enter the Islamic Republic via land borders.

Earlier this year the two neighbors agreed to abolish visa requirements for air travelers.

The announcement came after Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi met in Tehran, discussing various issues including visa waiver, a joint railway project, and increasing the level of trade.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, Iraqi constituted Iran's largest source of tourists. In return, hundreds of thousands of Iranian pilgrims head for the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala each year to attend the Arbadeen pilgrimage, aka the

Arbaeen trek, to mark an end to the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst its most famous. Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that the tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Historical mansions in Semnan to turn into handicrafts markets, workshops

TEHRAN – A number of historical mansions in the north-central city of Semnan are planned to be turned into handicrafts markets and workshops, Semnan's tourism chief has announced.

The project will be carried out in collaboration with the Semnan Municipality and the City Council, Hamidreza Dustmohammadi said on Monday.

Such markets are scheduled to be established in eight more cities across the province, the official added.

Handicraft markets are a great way to develop opportunities for artisans and home-based businesses, he noted.

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



nan has a fine old covered bazaar.

The history of Semnan dates back to ancient Iran when the city was part of the Median Empire. At the time of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia, Semnan was a magnificent city. After the attack of Alexander, Semnan became famous as Koomesesh. The great era of the prosperity of this city began after the advent of the Parthian Empire.

Wide-ranging handicrafts

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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz,

Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qasemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

The value of Iran's handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country's handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

Historical sites in Kermanshah unaffected by quake

TEHRAN – A medium-sized 4.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Kermanshah on Sunday caused no damage to historical sites across the western province.

Based on field visits by experts of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, no damage to historical relics and monuments has been reported so far, the provincial tourism chief Jabbar Gohari said on Monday.

"However, experts are on standby to inspect the possible harms to historical sites and aging structures of the province," the official added.

In 2017, a powerful 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck the province causing relatively minor damage to several historic and heritage sites in Kermanshah and Ilam provinces.

It damaged five historical sites including a Safavid-era caravanserai and a Sassanid-era fortress in the counties of Qasr-e Shirin, Sarpol-e Zahab, and Dalahu in Kermanshah province while it caused

some cracks in the walls of an archaeological museum in Darreh Shahr, Ilam Province.

Unfortunately, the natural disaster claimed the lives of at least 400 people and injured more than 6500 and it was felt in several other provinces.

Iran is crisscrossed by major geological fault lines and has suffered several devastating earthquakes in recent years.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites including Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan, both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that

Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Another popular historical site of the province is the Temple of Anahita in the city of Kangavar, which is believed to have been built circa 200 BC. Several column bases and ruins of a wall remain from the magnificent Greek-style temple.

The temple was used during the Parthian era (248 BC-224) as well as the Sassanid era (224-651).

The monument was damaged as it was used for various purposes by the Seljuk, Ilkhanid, Safavid, and Qajar dynasties, which ruled Iran over the past centuries.

The Temple of Anahita was seriously damaged by an earthquake in 1957. Afterward, people invaded the perimeter of the site, using stones from the temple to rebuild their homes at that location.



From past to present, there have been some ceremonies regarding the harvest of crops grown throughout the year. Feast of Pomegranate and Pomegranate Picking is one of the oldest rituals that is yet held by people who live in the areas where there grows pomegranate although there are fundamental changes in the methods used to harvest pomegranates.

The Feast of pomegranate takes place in mid-autumn, with many tourists from all over Iran celebrating the harvest. Feast of Pomegranate is celebrated simultaneously with harvesting in Anbooh, the beautiful, historical, and faraway village, which ages about three thousand and five hundred years, and also in Nowdeh, a mountainous and almost pristine and traditional village during mid-autumn days. Although there grows pomegranate in other provinces in Iran, especially the famous pomegranate of

Saveh (situated in Markazi province), this feast is held in Anbooh village every year.

Anbooh, this historic village that has climate variation in different seasons of the year, is one of the villages included in the Tourism Development Plan. It has many touristic attractions like staircase houses built by native materials in the area (hence it is called the second Masuleh), located in a geographical impasse (so it is not easily accessible), anthropology, historical attractions, agricultural and animal products, handicrafts and special rituals.

Sweet, large, and juicy pomegranate of this village is well known and widely grown in this area. Feast of Pomegranate is one of the most important and oldest local celebrations of the village which, along with the natural beauty of the area, represents the rituals and practices of harvesting and growing pomegranate. This is done during a special ceremony in the morning of last Friday of Mehr (the seventh month of the solar year and the first month of autumn) with the call of "Ya Allah (God)" by Pakar Karpi (a person introduced by the gardeners to guard the pomegranate gardens for one year).

After gathering all the locals and prayers, the ceremony began with traditional music (playing the Dayereh, Sorna, and Dohol), local games and com-

petitions, and baking local bread and confectionery; then people enter the gardens and begin to pick pomegranates. The people of this area believe that pomegranates are a fruit of paradise and a symbol of beauty, while respecting the traditions and efforts to preserve it, believe that before this day and before picking this blessed fruit (from mid-Shahrivar to late Mehr), no one has the right to enter pomegranate gardens and harvest their pomegranate.

If someone picks the pomegranates before this day, he will be outraged and punished by the custom of the people of the region. On this day, during the celebration, all the villagers, even those who have emigrated from the village, come to the area to help, pick pomegranates, and celebrate with others. Women and girls of the village wear beautiful and colorful local costumes and accompany men to pick pomegranates from the trees till dusk. Along with harvesting the fruit of their garden, gardeners also represent irrigation steps, making pomegranate paste and other fruit products. People and visitors who came to the area to watch the pomegranate feast buy some of the collected pomegranates and most of the products sold for sale in the city.

(Source: Visit Iran)

Iranian festivals: Feast of Pomegranate

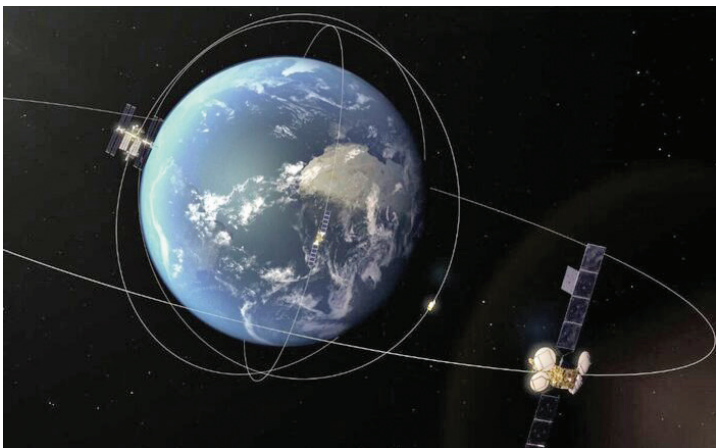
Iran planning to launch 3 satellites into space

TEHRAN – Iran is going ahead with the launch of three satellites into orbit in line with a national plan to develop the space industry over the last 10 years.

In the first meeting of the Supreme Council of Space on Friday, President Ebrahim Raisi has highlighted the importance of developing the national space industry, calling on the related organizations to join hands in this regard.

Raisi stressed the low-cost indigenization of the space industry and said that “All sectors active in this industry should work together, use each other’s experiences and avoid parallel work, to realize the order of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei in order to launch a satellite into an orbit of 36,000 km.

Acceleration of the space arena, strengthening synergy and all elements of industry actors and maximum attention to space diplomacy, achieving the goals of the country’s space programs as



much as possible, providing the resources needed to accelerate the space industry, was the most important issued discussed in the meeting.

According to the activities of the Space Research Institute, the Space Agency, and the Ministry of Communications, there is no concern in the satellite injection directly by the launcher and valuable steps have been taken in this regard, but to achieve orbits higher

than Leo, which eventually reaches Geo, the transition block can play a decisive role.

Altitude up to 2,000 km is called the Low Earth Orbit (LEO). From 2,000 kilometers to 35,786 kilometers are called the geosynchronous orbit (GEO).

The first and most advanced remote-sensing satellite is Pars-1 satellite, which has been designed and constructed by the research-

ers of the Iranian Space Research Center.

Pars-1 is supposed to take pictures of all parts of the country using a high-resolution 15-meter-camera and send its photos from a 500-kilometer distance to the earth stations using a high-powered telecommunication transceiver.

According to previous reports, the Iranian Space Agency has plans to launch a number of satellites including Pars-1, Pars-2, Zafar-2, and Nahid-2.

According to the Ministry of Communications, there are short-cuts to reach the 36,000-kilometer circuit, such as the use of orbital transmission systems. Saman orbital transfer system is ready for initial tests, which can transfer a 100-kilogram satellite from the park orbit with a height of 400 kilometers to an elliptical orbit of 700 kilometers and then to 10,000, 21,000, and 36,000 kilometers.

Nobel-winning stock market theory used to help save coral reefs

A Nobel prize-winning economic theory used by investors is showing early signs of helping save threatened coral reefs, scientists say.

Researchers at Australia’s University of Queensland used modern portfolio theory (MPT), a mathematical framework developed by the economist Harry Markowitz in the 1950s to help risk-averse investors maximise returns, to identify the 50 reefs or coral sanctuaries around the world that are most likely to survive the climate crisis and be able to repopulate other reefs, if other threats are absent.

The study recommends targeting investment in conservation projects that have the “strongest potential to succeed” in protecting priority reefs. The gains go beyond positive ecological outcomes and include crucial social, economic, health and nutritional benefits for communities, according to partners, organizations and funders interviewed by Blue Earth Consultants.

Prof Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, a climate scientist at the University of Queensland, who helped lead the “50 reefs” project, said: “It’s essentially a strategy to help us make decisions about what to protect, if we are to have corals at the end of the century.”

“It is our best shot at having a long-term future for coral reefs,” he said, the Guardian reported.

Coral reefs face a dire future. Even if drastic emission reductions ensured global heating was limited to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels – which would require almost halving global CO2 emissions by 2030 from 2010 levels – 70% to 90% of today’s corals would vanish.

In October, a study of coral reef health found 14% has been lost globally in less than a decade, with bleaching events caused by raised sea-surface temperatures the biggest culprit.

“Modern portfolio theory is a framework that aims to reduce risk while maximising returns,” said Hoegh-Guldberg. “It’s treating conservation sort of as an investment opportunity.”

The strategy, which came out of a meeting of scientists at the Hawai’i Institute of Marine Biology in 2017, tapped into the theory to help scientists choose a “balanced” portfolio of coral reefs.

“You’ve got hundreds of these reefs across the planet,” said Hoegh-Guldberg. “Which one do you pick, so that you concentrate your efforts on it?”

Dr Hawthorne Beyer, a fellow at the University of Queensland researching the use of quantitative modelling in managing environmental systems, said: “Talk to people in the business world and they get it immediately. It’s a very logical idea and makes a lot of sense. Ours was the first to apply it on a global scale.”

The scientists divided the world’s coral reefs into “bioclimatic units” (BCU) of 500 sq km (190 sq miles). They used 174 metrics, in five categories, including temperature history and projections, ocean acidification, invasive species, cyclone activity and connectivity to other reefs, for each one. Then, using a process called “scalarisation”, they produced estimates for each BCU. This captured the widest range of possibilities for the future. “We don’t know which metrics are the best metrics at predict-



ing risk,” explained Beyer.

The team then used MPT to quantify threats and identify the reefs offering the best options for conservation, while allowing for the uncertainty over future risks from climate change.

“You don’t want to put all your eggs in one basket, or bet on one measure of risk, when we have massive uncertainty about what the risks will be,” he said.

The project identified reefs across the Middle East, northern and eastern Africa, Australia, the Caribbean, Pacific islands, South America, south-east and south Asia. They include parts of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the Egyptian and southern Red Sea, and parts of the “coral triangle” around Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. But, based on the criteria for climate and connectivity, the model excluded several ecologically significant areas, such as Hawaii and Central America’s Barrier Reef.

Nearly \$93m (£70m) has been invested in the project, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Vibrant Oceans initiative and others. The report found the 50 reefs-inspired approach had helped at least 26 organisations, and eight funders have now prioritised 60 coral reef ecosystems across more than 40 countries.

Coral reefs cover just 0.2% of the ocean floor but are home to at least a quarter of all marine species and support hundreds of millions of people. Conservation efforts inspired by the study have focused on five threats to coral: fishing; “non-point source pollution”, such as from fertilisers, runoff from roads, or sediment; wastewater pollution; coastal development; and stress to reefs from climatic extremes.

Emily Darling, director of coral reef conservation at the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), said part of the benefit was having a clear blueprint of where best to focus their efforts.

“One of the biggest benefits of the 50 reef approach has been this compelling message that climate change is the critical threat to coral reefs and this is an approach that can give reefs a fighting chance.”

The WCS has \$18m in funding for work in 11 countries, including Fiji, Indonesia, Kenya and Tanzania, on 21 of the 50 reefs, to help communities reduce pressure on the precious ecosystems.

“We are looking at non-climate threats such as overexploitation, destructive fishing, unsustainable tourism, coastal development, water pollution. We then ask ‘well, what are the top local pressures?’,” said Darling. “And that’s how we identify which intervention to tailor to those different situations.”

Coronavirus reduces AIDS diagnosis, treatment

TEHRAN – The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the identification and treatment of HIV patients in Iran, so that we could not control HIV properly and the identification of these patients has decreased, Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, head of the diseases management center of the Ministry of Health, said.

“AIDS care programs have not been established in health care centers

around the world due to policies related to COVID-19, while by timely identification and treatment of patients with HIV and AIDS, these people can live longer lives.

We must intensify educational and information programs and provide medical and diagnostic facilities for this disease, as well as the necessary tests for people living with AIDS and HIV infection,” he explained.

The Fifth AIDS Strategy Plan has been developed in the country and the final stages of approval are underway. All the organizations that prepared this plan must implement it with full support in order to achieve good results.

“We have prepared a one-month program to fight AIDS, and have maximized education and information, and we try to identify infected people and take basic measures as soon as possible,” he added.

In the past month, about 60,000 tests have been conducted across the country with high-risk behaviors, he stated, IRNA reported on Monday.

There are an estimated 54,850 people living with HIV in the country, while 42,933 cases of this infection identified.

Currently, there are an estimated 54,850 people living with HIV in the country, and we have identified 42,933 cases of this infection, and so far 20,284 people have lost their lives, and 6,885 people have not yet been referred to the treatment centers, he lamented.

Also, 22,684 people living with HIV are now alive and 15,800 are being treated, 14,000 of whom have been successfully treated, he added.

HIV prevalence in the world

The human immunodeficiency viruses are two species of Lentivirus that cause HIV infection and over time acquired immunodeficiency



syndrome. AIDS is a condition in humans in which progressive failure of the immune system allows life-threatening opportunistic infections and cancers to thrive.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, 75 million people have been infected with the HIV virus and about 32 million people have died of HIV.

Globally, 37.9 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2018. An estimated 0.8% [0.6-0.9%] of adults aged 15–49 years worldwide are living with HIV, although the burden of the epidemic continues to vary considerably between countries and regions.

The WHO African region remains most severely affected, with nearly 1 in every 25 adults (3.9%) living with HIV and accounting for more than two-thirds of the people living with HIV worldwide.

actors at the national and local level, UNODC implements “Line Up, Live Up” in a variety of settings, including schools, community centers, sports clubs, and juvenile facilities.

The program is being implemented in multiple countries across Africa, Central Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, West Asia and North Africa.

The program is on the agenda of the Ministry of Sport and Youth and Drug Control Headquarters, the title of which is changed to “dynamic life”.

cognitive, emotional, and social skills among youth, and increasing knowledge on the consequences of crime and substance use, will also strengthen pro-social attitudes and ultimately pro-social behavior.

The “Line Up, Live Up” curriculum includes a 10-session manual and additional materials available in several languages to assist coaches, trainers, and others working with young people to deliver life skills training to youth aged 13 – 18 years. Working in close partnership with multiple



havioral control.

The theory of change behind the program asserts that building

Youth ministry, UNODC to launch “Line up, Live up” program

TEHRAN – The Ministry of Sport and Youth in cooperation with the Drug Control Headquarters and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), will launch “Line up, Live up” program to prevent social harm among young adults.

UNODC worked with international experts to develop an evidence-informed, sport-based life skills training program called “Line Up Live Up”. The program aims to address risk factors associated with crime, violence, and substance use, such as poor be-

ENGLISH IN USE

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COVID19- lockdown moves most cities out of “red” zone

Strict COVID-19 restrictions which took effect on October 26 have caused 87 out of 89 infected cities to get out of the high-risk “red” zone.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities undergone restrictions.

The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow. All of the cities, except for two, are now out of the red condition and have turned orange or yellow so that the hospitalization rate has decreased, said Alireza Raeisi, the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control spokesman, expressing hope that the death toll will also drop within two to three weeks.

In some 160 cities and towns that were on the highest alert, the disease prevalence has begun to decrease in about 145 cities. And the remaining 15 cities will also experience a downward trend this week, he explained.

اعمال محدودیت ها اکثر شهرها را از وضعیت قرمز خارج کرد

علیرضا رئیسی، سخنگوی ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا گفت: از ۸۹ شهری که از پنجم آبان محدودیت‌های کرونایی در آنها اعمال شده است، ۸۷ شهر از وضعیت قرمز خارج شده اند.

او با اشاره به محدودیت های کرونایی در ۸۹ شهری که (از ۵آبان در ۴۳ شهر و از ۱۴ آبان در ۴۶ شهر) اعمال شده است، گفت: از این تعداد به جز دو شهر همه شهرها از حالت قرمز خارج و به نارنجی یا زرد تبدیل شده اند. با توجه به ورودی بیمارستان ها و اینکه میزان بستری هم کاهش یافته است امیدواریم روند فوتی ها هم تا حدود دو تا سه هفته دیگر آثار خود را نشان دهد و روند کاهشی پیدا کند.

وی اعلام کرد: اکنون در ۱۶۰ شهر و شهرستان که قرمز رنگ بودند در حدود ۱۴۵ شهر روند کاهش بیماری آغاز شده است. در ۱۵ شهر باقیمانده هم در همین هفته این روند کاهشی شروع خواهد شد.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON NOVEMBER 29

New cases	4,310
New deaths	82
Total cases	6,113,192
Total deaths	129,711
New hospitalized patients	645
Patients in critical condition	3,338
Total recovered patients	5,873,441
Diagnostic tests conducted	38,654,574
Doses of vaccine injected	106,162,208

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:53 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:27 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:56 (tomorrow)

Let the dust settle

By Saeed Shirkhani
[Spoiler Alert]
The first book from Frank Herbert’s Dune collection, published about six decades ago. After some desperate and failed attempts from Hollywood to bring it to the big screen, Dennis Villeneuve finally blew the dust off the book.

In 1974, Chilian–French Filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky tried to adapt Dune to a film that “gives LSD hallucinations without taking LSD to change the young minds of all the world” – as he quoted in the 2014 documentary Jodorowsky’s Dune. Salvador Dali as the Emperor, Orson Welles as Harkonnen, Pink Floyd for the music, and a script which was “the size of a phonebook” and could result in a 14–Hour movie. Obviously, the studio didn’t invest in his massive ideas, and the script never got the chance to turn into a film.

1984 Dune was a box–office flop, negatively reviewed by critics and disowned by its director David Lynch. Herbert was reportedly pleased with the movie but cited the lack of “imagination” and some production techniques. Dune was – and still is – the Bible of science fiction. After all those not–so–well jourmies, Legendary Entertainment acquired the film and TV rights, and Villeneuve appointed as the new cinematic guardian of Dune in 2017.

Dune: Part One was admired by critics (82% on Rotten Tomatoes and 74% on Metacritic), and the so long anticipation was over for the fans. Besides the astonishment around the movie, there is a flow of analysis on what Herbert’s novel and the film meant to tell us about colonialism, religion, and our future. Now, as those impassionate reviews have passed and the dust has settled, it’s time to look deeper into the Dune.

Dune undeniably is a critique of colonialism. Fremens cast entirely from people of color, and their planet’s environment, clothing, and language are visions from West Asia and North Africa. The book was released three years after the end of the Algerian War, during which Algerians survived brutal tactics employed by the French to wrestle back their country after more than 100 years of crushing colonial rule. According to Herbert’s son and biographer Brian, the Algerians – as well as “nomadic Bedouins of the Arabian plateau, separated from civilization by vast scratches of the desert” – inspired Herbert’s Fremen. On the other hand, Harkonnen’s makeup is as white as it gets. In House of Athreidis, characters are crossing the representational barrier – some

clear visual metaphors completed by the sympathetic lens to the indigenous oppressed people of Fremen. Fat white Harkonnen, who looks like the capitalist leaders in soviet caricatures, lay down in a tub filled with oil to revive a failed assassination. With a face covered in oil, he talks about keeping the prices of the Spice high! Is there anyone who didn’t get the metaphor? Spice is our world oil, and there are wars over it on Arrakis, our Wes Asia, and North Africa, galaxy’s only source of this crucial resource.

In his researches, Frank Herbert often refers to Seven Pillars of Wisdom – autobiographical book of T. E. Lawrence, British army officer and spy to the Arabs during the Arab revolt against the ottoman empire – and we can see the references in the white savior narrative: a noble outsider infiltrates into an oppressed nation and helps them to revolt against an emperor. Nevertheless, as Villeneuve explains in an interview with Now magazine, by the end of the story, Lawrence realizes that he has been an “instrument of colonialism.” Still, Dune is “a criticism of this savior figure.” Paul Atreides is aware of the oppressed and wants to revolt against the oppressor he initially represented himself.

Explaining the core element of his narrative, Frank Herbert says in an interview: “We’ve [western man] set out our missionaries to do our dirty work for us, and then come along behind them with the certain belief that we are right in anything that we do because God has told us so -- God and the person of the avatar.”

Much like the Catholic church in European feudalism, Dune has the Bene Gesserit, a quasi-religious sect of seemingly-mystical women engaged in a 10,000-year-old selective breeding program that essentially aims to create ultimate extra-human. They’ve seeded myths and legends about themselves so they can potentially leverage their power in the future.

When Paul assumes the role of messiah to the indigenous people of Arrakis, he employs Bene Gesserit’s colonial myth for his own purposes to make his way to the top of the Fremen society pyramid. It’s just like the way of colonialists – when Spanish and Portuguese invaded south America, bringing Christianity with them. Colonialists and missionaries supplanted Christian myths over indigenous myths.

Although Villeneuve’s Part One ends in the climax of Paul’s narrative arc and we should wait till 2023 to sum up, but by relying on some of his predictive visions and Villeneuve’s urge to make the movie “as close to Herbert’s descriptions,” Dune: Part two is unlikely to offer a different narrative: “Paul Atreides is an anti-hero. He’s not a savior but someone who brings calamity and chaos to the world, and he knows that.”

Good science fiction is science fiction which is either a mirror or an indirect criticism of our reality. If Dune is just a penitence letter about the western colonial past to seek forgiveness, then fine. But if Herbert’s text or Hollywood is trying to warn us about the real savior, let’s agree to disagree. The SAVIOR isn’t supposed to be the output of eugenics programs, and a white savior narrative will not deceive the real Fremen in the future. It seems that the Dune’s suspicion about a savior’s emergence is rooted in the guilty feelings of the colonial past. As we all know, a guilty conscience is always suspicious.

Book on Iran theater pioneers published

TEHRAN – A book giving an account of those people who developed Iran’s modern theater has been published by the Tehran-based publisher Mahris.

The stage director Nasser Hosseimehr, the author of “Theater in Iran: From the Coup to the Revolution”, has also written the book, “Pioneers of Iranian Theater”.

Before the pandemic, Hosseimehr planned to stage Franz Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis”, however, the frequent theater management changes thwarted his plan after many rehearsals.

This situation followed by the pandemic led him to focus on writing, whose outcomes are “Pioneers of Iranian Theater” and “Theater in Iran: From the Coup to the Revolution”.

“For my part, I have tried to familiarize the present generation with the works carried out by our theatrical ancestors in the past,”

Hosseimehr told the Persian service of MNA.

“There is a distance between the new generation of our theater and the early forerunners of this field; ties between the generations have been severed,” he stated.

“The situation is very critical since the younger generation of our thespians do not have a great deal of knowledge about the history of Iranian theater, particularly about the history of the first three golden decades of theater after the [Anglo-American] coup in Iran in 1953,” he added.

Recalling the names of a number of Iranian theater pioneers, including Reza Kamal, Seyyed Mohammadreza Kordestani, Seyyed Ali Khan Nasr, Seifeddin Kermanshahi, Esmail Mehrtash and several of their successors such as Mahin Oskui, Rokneddin Khosravi, Jamileh Sheikhi, Mehdi Fat’hi and Parviz Fannizadeh,

A poster for Nasser Hosseimehr’s book “Pioneers of Iranian Theater”.

Hosseimehr lamented that the younger generation is not familiar with any of them.

“I definitely do not expect the younger generation in Iranian theater to memorize the biographies of the people; the present generation is indifferent to the history and theater culture and to sum up, we have become alienated from ourselves; our cold stages are empty of the love of and mystery surrounding these people,” he noted.

This book explores the views of Iran’s theater pioneers, with whom Hosseimehr held meetings recorded by his “timeworn but efficient” tape recorder.

Rarely discussed topics such as Seifeddin Kermanshahi’s doomed love for singer Qamarolmoluk Vaziri, setting fire to the Sadi Theater and the arrival of Iranian women to theatrical performances have been scrutinized in the book.

Cinéma Vérité to review seven hits from world’s documentary cinema

“Sabaya” by Swedish filmmaker Hogir Hirori.

TEHRAN – Seven hits from the world’s documentary cinema will be reviewed during the Cinéma Vérité festival in the Special Screening category.

“Gorbachev. Heaven”, a co-production between Latvia and Czech, is one of the films.

The film features an interview with former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev, one of the most influential figures of the last century, whose rule heralded the end of the Soviet Union. In an intimate setting, he gives his view of Russia then and now.

Vitaliy Manskiy won the IDFA award for best director for this film.

Another highlight of the films is “Nemesis” directed by Thomas Imbach from Switzerland.

The film explores the destruction of a unique train station in Zurich and the construction of the new prison and police center in its place. From the perspective of the filmmaker’s window, and with testimony from prisoners awaiting deportation, the film probes how we deal with the extinction of history and its replacement with total security.

The film directed by Thomas Imbach has won awards at several international festivals, including the best film award at the Zurich Film Awards 2020.

Danish filmmaker Robin Petré’s “From the Wild Sea” will also be screened in this section. This film takes a look at the relationships between humans and wild animals of the ocean.

“Sabaya” by Swedish filmmaker Hogir Hirori has also been selected for the category.

The film follows a group into Syria’s Al-Hol, a dangerous camp in West Asia, as they risk their lives to save women being held by ISIS as abducted sex slaves.

The film was named best documentary feature film

at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2021.

“President”, the winner of the Special Jury Award in Verite Filmmaking at the Sundance Film Festival 2021, will also be reviewed.

Directed by the Danish filmmaker Camilla Nielsson, the film is about a young and charismatic leader who takes on the corrupt ruling party in Zimbabwe’s 2018 presidential election.

“Nothing But the Sun”, a co-production of Switzerland, Paraguay and Argentina by Arami Ullon, and “Ostrov – Lost Island” by Swiss filmmakers Svetlana Rodina and Laurent Stoop have also been selected to be screened.

“Nothing But the Sun” follows Mateo Sobode Chiqueno and his recorded stories, songs and testimonies of his Ayoreo people on an old tape recorder.

“Ostrov – Lost Island” tells the story the inhabitants on the island of Ostrov in the Caspian Sea, which survive through poaching after being left alone by the Russian state after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The 15th edition of Cinéma Vérité, the major Iranian international festival for documentary films, will be held online from December 9 to 16.

Movies from Iran line up for Intl. Amity Short Film Festival

TEHRAN – Fourteen movies by Iranian filmmakers will be screened in the different sections of the 4th International Amity Short Film Festival, which will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, from December 1 to 5.

“Bridge”, “Burned”, “Death Locked Out”, “Emergency” and “White Clad” have been selected to be screened in the official competition section.

“Bridge” directed by Vahid Hassanzadeh is about Roya, an urban girl who had failed in a relationship with her boss. She gets out of her boss’s car on a bridge. An old man who notices her, assumes that she wants to kill herself. When the old man is gone, Roya decides to pretend suicide to get the attention of people whom she knows, but no one cares, until a young laborer passing by changes her point of view towards life.

In “Burned”, every night when

A scene from “White Clad” directed by Reza Fahimi.

Hafeez hears the sound of gunfire at the border, he goes there to gather the belongings of immigrants’ corpses to make a living. One night among the corpses, he notices a young girl and her child who are hiding in a corner. The film has been directed by Fatemeh Mohammadi.

Directed by Amir Karami, “Death Locked Out” follows a young, rural girl who, as a nurse, enters the house of an old army man who is dying.

“Emergency” by Maryam Esmikhani is about Nazanin, a

seven-year-old girl who is trying to reveal a secret that bothers her by getting close to the emergency agent who has come to their house to check on her mother.

“White Clad” by Reza Fahimi tells the story of a grandma who gives Ahmad, a ten-year-old boy, a cake of cheese, so that he can give it to his father, who is a teacher. His father should intervene and stop them from hanging grandma’s son.

The Humanitarian Eye Section features “Incurable” by Bahareh

“The Computer and the Brain” offered at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – A Persian translation of the Hungarian-American mathematician John von Neumann’s 1958 book “The Computer and the Brain” has come to Iranian bookstores.

Rendered into Persian by Reza Amirrahimi, the book has been published by Now Publications.

In this classic work, one of the greatest mathematicians of the twentieth century explores the analogies between computing machines and the living human brain.

Von Neumann, whose many contributions to science, mathematics, and engineering include the basic organizational framework at the heart of today’s computers, concludes that the brain operates both digitally and analogically, but also has its own peculiar statistical language.

In his foreword to this new edition, Ray Kurzweil, a futurist famous in part for his own reflections on the relationship between technology and intelligence, places von Neumann’s work in a historical context and shows how it remains relevant today.

Von Neumann was a mathematician who made major contributions to a vast range of fields, including set theory, functional analysis, quantum mechanics, continuous geometry, economics and game theory, and computer science.

He is generally regarded as one of the foremost mathematicians of the 20th century.

Most notably, von Neumann was a pioneer in the application of operator theory to quantum mechanics, a principal member of the Manhattan Project and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and a key

Front cover of the Persian translation of John von Neumann’s book “The Computer and the Brain”.

figure in the development of game theory and the concepts of cellular automata and the universal constructor.

Along with Edward Teller and Stanislaw Ulam, von Neumann worked out key steps in the nuclear physics involved in thermonuclear reactions and the hydrogen bomb.