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Report **T** New chancellor in the office: What to expect?

TEHRAN— Olaf Scholz, or the “Scholzomat”, has been designated as the new German chancellor as Angela Merkel who kissed power goodbye on December 2.

Scholz is a Social Democrat, who served as vice chancellor to Angela Merkel and as minister of finance since March 2018. He was the deputy leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) from 2009 to 2019.

Originally established as a Marxist party, the SDF was founded in 1875.

When Ebrahim Raisi won the June 18 presidential elections in Iran, Scholz came on TV and said that the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is now more difficult.

“It is a laborious process and it’s now going to get more laborious in light of the elections that have taken place,” Scholz said on June 27.

“But the fact that it is so hard and laborious does not change the fact that this is very perilous for Israel, the Middle East and Europe.” ▶ Page 2

Report **T** Arms industry thrives despite pandemic

TEHRAN - Despite the global economy contracting as a result of the Pandemic which was and still is in full swing, a new report shows that one sector has remained immune to the virus. The arms exports industry. The world’s top 100 arms manufacturers have continued to increase revenue, racking up their business profits to the tune of \$531 billion in 2020. To put that in perspective it’s more than the whole economic output of Belgium.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has expressed surprise by the data from 2020, the first year of the pandemic saying that “even though the IMF put the global economic contraction at 3.1%, we saw that the arms sales of these top 100 companies increased nonetheless, we saw an overall increase of 1.3%.”

According to new data released by the prominent think tank and as with all previous data releases and reports it has published, the United States is at the top of the arms exports list. Some 54% of the \$531 billion was accounted for by the 41 U.S. companies on SIPRI’s top 100. The main companies in the industry are based in America, Lockheed Martin alone, for example, sold more than \$58 billion worth of military ▶ Page 5

Takaful insurance to make debut in Iran

TEHRAN - Iran will launch limited takaful insurance services for the first time after finance minister Ehsan Khandouzi said that there is a demand for Islamic takaful insurance.

Ebrahim Kardgar, Dana Insurance chief, said that the company will introduce takaful for the Sunni population in the country.

“The (Iranian) Insurance industry has lagged behind in this field and based on talks have had with the finance ministry it has been agreed that we launch Islamic insurance,” said Kardgar, according to ILNA news agency.

Unlike conventional insurance, takaful insured can benefit from a set of claims of the fund in which they have participated, if it remains in excess.

The system has not been used in Iran mainly over deficit concerns and also because religious authorities in the Shia-dominated country have not fully endorsed the system.

Takaful is currently the dominant system of insurance in Malaysia while it has been introduced in limited forms in some Muslim and non-Muslim countries. ▶ Page 7

Who’s Seeking Maximalist Demands in Vienna? ▶ Page 3



Nearly \$12.5b supplied for import of basic goods, vaccines in 8 months

TEHRAN- Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has supplied about \$12.5 billion for importing basic commodities as well as coronavirus vaccines in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), the CBI Governor Ali Saleh-Abadi announced.

“Fortunately, the central bank’s access to the country’s foreign exchange resources has increased this year.... We are in a very

good situation in terms of the inflow of foreign currency into the country, and we expect the situation to improve in the near future,” Saleh-Abadi told the state TV.

As Mehr News Agency reported, the official noted that the CBI is expected to supply a total of \$36 billion for the imports of basic goods, medicine, and services in the current fiscal year (ends on March 20, 2022).

He also said the country’s exporters have so

far injected \$22.4 billion into the Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), which is 70 percent more than the figure for the previous year’s same period.

“Facilitating the return of export revenues [into the country’s economic cycle] by providing incentives to exporters and creating direct exchanges between them is on the central bank’s agenda,” the official said. ▶ Page 4

Iran’s security chief says U.S. seeking to revive ISIS

TEHRAN - Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said on Tuesday that the United States is seeking to reenergize the terrorist ISIS group.

Ali Shamkhani made the remarks in a meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad who made an official two-day visit to Tehran on Monday and Tuesday.

“The United States is very exasperated regarding the collapse of Daesh in Syria and Iraq and the victory of the Resistance Front, which has consolidated the strategic power of this front and is looking for creating new crises,” Shamkhani remarked, according to ISNA.

The representative of the Leader at the SNSC called the plot to create a security crisis in Syria an American-Zionist plot and warned

of its dangerous consequences, which could jeopardize the security of the entire region.

The SNSC secretary added that the occupation of Syria by any country would cause insecurity and spread of violence.

“The fate of any aggression and occupation in history has been nothing but retreat and humiliating defeat,” Admiral Shamkhani asserted.

Shamkhani also condemned the Zionist regime’s continued violation of the Syrian sovereignty, describing such acts as a continuation of the regime’s brutal aggression against Palestine and Lebanon.

Syria’s military says Israeli fighter jets fired missiles on the Syrian port of Latakia, damaging containers. ▶ Page 2

Persepolis excavation yields glazed bricks bearing bull and dragon motifs

TEHRAN - A team of Iranian and Italian archaeologists has recently unearthed some glazed bricks, which bear bull and dragon motifs.

The discovery was made near the ruins of a majestic gateway, which is situated adjacent to the UNESCO-registered Persepolis in southern Iran.

The glazed bricks bear motifs of bulls and mushhushshu-dragons, the latter is a mythical creature once popular in ancient Mesopotamia, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Named Tall-e Ajori, the gateway is made of brick and clay material with its whole exterior decorated with painted bricks. ▶ Page 6

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Opinion **T**

Challenging days ahead of Iran football federation

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has challenging days ahead at the end of 2021 and the early months of 2022.

The most critical issue that has turned into a tricky case during recent years is the situation of the FFIRI’s statutes.

Indeed, as complicated as the statutes case has been so far, it might become even more complicated in the future.

The FFIRI held its Presidential election earlier this year, after resolving some of FIFA’s primary concerns, alleging the Government interference.

The removal of the Ministry of Sports’ role in internal FFIRI affairs was one of eight issues FIFA called on the governing body to address.

However, in a letter addressed to the Iranian Football Federation on Oct. 21, 2020, FIFA acknowledged that it had temporarily approved Iran’s amended football statutes, but it still has legal defects. In fact, FIFA had left the way open for the elections of the FFIRI president.

Elections were held in February after the FFIRI resolved FIFA’s concerns, with Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem becoming the president of the Iranian football federation by a majority of votes.

Now, it’s up to the Parliament of Iran (known as the Islamic Consultative Assembly) to institute the revised statutes of the FFIRI by March 1, 2022. ▶ Page 3

Cinéma Vérité announces Iranian lineup for international competition

TEHRAN - Seven documentaries by Iranian filmmakers will be screened in the various categories of the international competition at the 15th edition of the Cinéma Vérité festival.

The major Iranian international festival for documentary films will open with a limited number of guests and audience on Thursday at Tehran’s Charsu Cineplex.

“Eastwood” by Alireza Rasulinejad, “Makeup Artist” by Jafar Najafi and “Broken Bones” by Alireza Memariani will be screened in the feature-length documentary category.

“Eastwood” shows how a picture in an old newspaper sends director Rasulinejad on a mission to the Iranian city of Sirjan to find the Hollywood legend Clint Eastwood.

Wearing a motorcycle helmet and embarking on his impossible journey like an Iranian Don Quixote, ▶ Page 8

TENDER INVITATION NO. 1400-1011
IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO) would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 5000 MT HSP Pitch on tender basis. Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 22-December -2021 Based on our required instruction to following address: PO Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran Postal code: 3818998116 Attention: Mr. Omidi - Mr. Nabiuni 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 Aluminium 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 Aluminium Company**

TENDER INVITATION NO. 1400-1010
IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO) would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 1000 MT Crush Bath on tender basis. Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 22-December -2021 Based on our required instruction to following address: PO Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran Postal code: 3818998116 Attention: Mr. Omidi - Mr. Nabiuni 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 Aluminium 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 Aluminium Company**

Vienna talks great opportunity for Europe

How should U.S. pay for its unilateralism?

TEHRAN- Just as Europe failed to take an independent position after Trump's departure from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), it is not also willing to define an identity independent of the United States through a historic decision in the process of the Vienna negotiations.

Though the Americans are not directly involved in the Vienna talks they are constantly commenting on the talks, the Fars news agency said in a commentary on Sunday.

For example, in an interview with Reuters, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken claimed, "What we've seen in the last couple of days is that Iran right now does not seem to be serious about doing what's necessary to return to compliance, which is why we ended this round of talks in Vienna," Blinken told Reuters."

Blinken's comment suggests that despite the fact that the U.S. is not directly involved in the talks, it oversees the negotiation process and the decisions of the European parties.

History of U.S. Unilateralism

U.S. unilateralism and disregard for international obligations is a constant feature of U.S. foreign policy and is a consistent practice that has sometimes accelerated.

U.S. aggressive and unilateral behavior has historical roots, a behavior that has become more recurrent in various ways over the past two decades.

Bush is initiator of unilateralism

With the beginning of the third millennium, especially during the presidency of George W. Bush, the repercussions of the unilateralism became apparent, as exemplified by the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively. Although Barack Obama, during his presidency, tried to make the United States a supporter of multilateralism, once again during the Donald Trump administration, the United States returned to its roots.

Under Trump, unilateralism was unprecedentedly strengthened, shocking the international system. Trump's "retreat" doctrine started since the very first days he entered the White House. The world became a witness to the domino effects of disregard for international obligations under the shadow of his unilateralist policies.

During this four-year presidency, the United States unilaterally turned its back on dozens of key international treaties and organizations, some of which included the Pacific Trade Agreement (TPP), the Paris Climate Agreement, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations migration treaty, New York treaty, United Nations Human Rights Council, World Health Organization (WHO), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) and Treaty on Open Skies.

Europe's efforts to break yoke of U.S. and strengthen multilateralism

From 1950, when then-French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman presented a plan for European cooperation in coal and steel industry to end economic strife between the two countries, until 2007, when Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union, 57 years passed, but these 57 years mark the beginning of a historic step to strengthen multilateralism and to stand up to U.S. unilateral liberalism.

U.S. attempt to undermine EU through Brexit

That is why the United States has made every effort to defeat the European Union and perhaps the most obvious fruit of this effort has been Britain's withdrawal from the European Union known as Brexit. Britain was one of the great powers of the European Union, which was playing an important and influential role in international developments. Britain has been working hard to slow down convergence in Europe and opposed turning the union into a European federation. In addition, Britain has not been happy with a common European foreign and security policy and has sought to adopt independent security and defense policies.

Britain's withdrawal from the EU as a nuclear and veto-wielding country will reduce Europe's weight and bargaining power at the international level, and this is not in Europe's interest in the short term. Although some consider Brexit to be to the detriment of the United States in the long run, most political commentators do not see the unification of European countries in favor of the unilateral U.S. policies.

Failure in the UN Security Council

The U.S. unilateralist approach toward Iran was

such that its closest allies repeatedly criticized the White House in words and deeds and distanced themselves from Washington's policies.

The U.S. defeat at the UN Security Council in August 2020 was a historic victory for Iran. It showed that the world is fed up with U.S. unilateralism. At the council meeting, despite the continuous efforts and projections of Trump's team, the U.S. proposed a resolution to extend the arms embargo on Iran but it was flatly rejected.

At the time, the Guardian said the U.S. suffered a humiliating defeat at the UN as its proposal to extend arms embargo on Iran won support from only the Dominican Republic at the security council vote.

The U.S. resolution was never likely to be passed in the face of Russian and Chinese opposition. It was proposed as a ploy by the Trump administration to open the way to more drastic action against Iran.

But the scale of the defeat underlined U.S. isolation on the world stage.

The U.S. stripped anti-Iran rhetoric from earlier drafts of the resolution in the hope of recruiting more supporters, but its insistence that an extension to the UN embargo would be indefinite made that impossible. Estonia and Tunisia withstood eleventh-hour U.S. pressure to support the revised draft, a measure of diminished American clout at the UN. Russia and China voted against the resolution, the U.S. and the Dominican Republic voted in favor, and all the other council members, including Britain and France, abstained.

Vienna talks are another opportunity for Europe

The Americans are not directly involved in the current Vienna talks, which means an implicit endorsement of Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA by the Biden administration. This has nothing to do with the new Iranian administration and its policies, because the United States did not attend the meeting that was held virtually on December 21, 2020, in which "the ministers once again expressed their deep regret over the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement and reiterated that Resolution 2231 is still fully binding."

Resolution 2231 endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The U.S. behavior in breaching international obligations, which has become a trademark of the American foreign policy, by both Republicans and Democrats, also undermines international capacities and the independence of European countries.

At the end of the recent Vienna meeting, Deputy FM of Iran Ali Bagheri, in response to a question about the dissatisfaction of the European sides with Iran's proposals, said: "It is true that the European sides were not satisfied with our proposals, but the important point is that these proposals are based on common principles between the two sides; therefore, they did not object to the fact that these proposals are irrelevant, but said that they do not correspond to their views. I also told them that this is normal and that we are not going to say things in the negotiations that are in line with your views. We say things based on our own views, interests and policies, but the important thing is that these suggestions are based on one basis and that basis is accepted by the other side. Everyone agreed on this [issue], and no one and no European party claimed in any way that Iran's proposals lacked a legal basis acceptable to both parties."

Bagheri's remarks indicate that the Europeans consider Iran's proposals legal and based on international law. For example, Iran's insistence on lifting sanctions is one of Iran's proposals, because sanctions have no clear legal basis and are based solely on the political will of the Americans, depriving European countries and other countries of the Iranian market and putting pressure on the Iranian people and it is natural that they should be lifted.

Europeans have been resisting U.S. unilateralism for more than 60 years and the preconditions and proposed packages that Iran has put forward in the Vienna talks have created a unique opportunity for the Europeans to continue to defy the U.S. unilateralism. By striking a historic agreement with Iran the Europeans can make the U.S. pay heavily for its violation of legal and international rules, even though such an agreement will have economic and political costs for Europe. Such a policy will promote their status and identity.

Iran's security chief says U.S. seeking to revive ISIS

From page 1 ▶ The attack took place at 1:23am local time on Tuesday (23:23 GMT Monday), the SANA news agency quoted a military source as saying.

"Resistance and valorous confrontation are the only way to repel the Zionist cancer from the region."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shamkhani highlighted the strategic relations between Iran and Syria in the political and security areas. He also underscored the need to expand ties to other sectors, especially the economic ones.

Foreign Minister Mekdad, for his part, hailed Tehran for its full support to the Syrian people and government and said, "With the defeat of the united terrorism front and the restoration of relative stability in Syria, a new chapter in cooperation between the

two countries has commenced with the priority of economic relations."

The senior Syrian diplomat called the illegal U.S. military presence in Syria a violation of the principle of sovereignty and encroachment on the country's territorial integrity, stating that the United States sought to revive terrorist groups to prevent durable stability in Syria.

Mekdad termed the continuation of the Zionist regime's machination in the region and the repeated military aggression against Syria a real example of state terrorism and a provocative act, stressing, "Terrorism, military aggression and oppressive sanctions cannot disrupt the will of the Syrian people to resist the enemies' coercion and avarices."

Referring to abundant economic capacities by the two countries, the Syrian foreign minister called for an



Syrian FM Mekdad (right) held talks with Iranian Parliament Speaker Qalibaf late on Monday.

increase in presence of Iranian public and private companies in the Syrian market.

'Dangerous U.S. occupation of Syria's northeastern, southern parts must end'

In a meeting late on Monday with Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf Syria's foreign minister said occupation of northeastern and southern parts of his country by U.S. forces is dangerous and must come to an end.

Elaborating on the efforts made by Damascus to put an end to occupation of certain regions in the northwestern part of the country, Syria's top diplomat added, "U.S. occupationism in northeastern and southern parts of Syria is also dangerous and must end," Press TV reported.

"They are trying to impose their dominion and colonialism on our

countries through soft war and with the help of their various tools in the region, including nongovernmental organizations that are affiliated to them, economic instruments and paying off certain people," the Syrian foreign minister said.

He emphasized that the U.S. was forced to leave certain parts of the region after their failure to advance its goals through terrorism, direct interference in regional countries and establishing military bases, and it is now resorting to other means to achieve its goals.

The Syrian foreign minister said the U.S. has imposed inhumane sanctions on Iran, Syria and other countries in order to bring them to their knees, adding that Washington seeks to obtain whatever it has failed to achieve through military approaches via such bans.

New chancellor in the office: What to expect?

From page 1 ▶ We have to hang in there and try to get something good out of it and we hope that we will be able to achieve something with the new U.S. government, despite the gloomy prospects which I don't think can be sugar-coated," he continued.

Implying that Raisi is a hardliner, Scholz said that the hard line clearly achieves nothing, later criticizing former U.S. President Donald Trump over his unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal.

What is more interesting is Scholz's lenient tendency to side with Israel. His comments on the Vienna talks in June met with the Israeli appreciation. Of course, this was predictable, as

the new chancellor drew a very foggy picture from the Vienna talks in contrast with the reality on the ground.

Planting seeds of despair is an old media trick that the Tehran Times recently examined. All sides are planning to launch a blame game against Iran during the fresh round of talks in Vienna. Scholz started this game earlier than the other European troika leaders. Liz Truss, UK Foreign Secretary took the flag on 28 November and co-wrote an article with the Israeli Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid. France's leader, Emmanuel Macron, hammered the nail in the coffin on December 3, saying that the new round of talks was not "successful."

Iran will have a difficult job in Vienna with the current line-up in the European troika. The Scholz-Johnson-Macron triangle is not focused on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal. Iran has showed its seriousness by presenting two very detailed and technical draft proposals.

Perhaps the E3 must stop "evaluating and assessing" the Iranian delegation, as Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on December 6 during a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart.

"The other side did not come to negotiate. They came to evaluate the Iranian delegation," he said.

It is time to "negotiate."

Khuzestan governor proposes transfer of water-intensive industries to southern coasts



TEHRAN - Writing an article in the Iran newspaper on Monday, the governor of the southwestern province of Khuzestan proposes an array of solutions to deal with water shortage and droughts.

Sadeq Khalilian, who was also agriculture minister from 2009-2013, proposes a step-by-step transfer of water-intensive industries to Iran's southern coasts among other ways such as desalination of water, reducing water-intensive crops, developing greenhouse cultivation, etc.

Following is an excerpt of his article titled "Drought management and solutions":

The Iranian plateau is located in arid and semi-arid region of the Earth and climate change over the last three decades has intensified water

shortage in the country. Growing urbanization, establishment of water-intensive industries in the country's central regions, failure to use new technologies or enforce an efficient water consumption pattern in three areas of agriculture, industry and drinking water have exacerbated the situation, especially in 2020/2021 crop year.

It is a fact that drought in Iran is not an exceptional phenomenon. Over the last 40 years, we have faced droughts for at least two decades. Iran was hardest hit by droughts in 2007/2008 and 2020/2021 crop years.

In the face of droughts and Iran's geographical location, reforming water consumption and adopting related measures are a necessity.

The following policies and measures can be effective in the face of droughts:

1- Using technologies related to machinery and equipment, application of new irrigation systems, reducing cultivation of water-intensive crops in arid areas, and developing greenhouse cultivation.

2- Managing the storage and release of water in the reservoirs behind the dams during the year by predicting the

weather conditions more accurately, not relying on generating electricity in summer from the dams and controlling winter floods, especially in March, can be effective in preserving water in provinces that are most vulnerable to droughts.

3- Increasing price of drinking water in a step-by-step manner for those who consume water more than what is normally acceptable, as well as using new bio- and nano- technologies in industrial and agricultural sectors.

4- Gradually transferring water-intensive industries in central provinces to the southern coasts, increasing the price of water used in industrial sector in order to control consumption, and recycling water used by industries.

5- Transferring water from the southern and northern coasts of the country to central regions, especially for water-intensive industries and desalinating seawater for drinking.

6- Increasing water prices coupled with double taxation for water used in garden-houses, especially in the provinces that are facing water shortage.

7- Compensating farmers whose

share of water for irrigation is used by industries, garden houses, etc.

8- Using urban wastewater for industries and developing green spaces, gardens and wood cultivation.

9- Proper location of new water-intensive industrial projects and proper distribution of the population from areas facing water scarcity to areas in which citizens can have better access to water.

10- Paying attention to watershed management activities, integrated management of catchment, afforestation by using urban wastewater, preserving vegetation and allocating water for the environment.

To meet these goals, it is necessary to hold regular monthly meetings of the Supreme Water Council chaired by the president and form a permanent working group to deal with the drought under the guidance of the energy minister with the membership of the ministers of agriculture, industry, urban development, chief of the Department of Environment, and governors of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Khuzestan, Isfahan and Yazd to make proper decisions.

MP warns JCPOA parties of serious consequences if they fail to fulfill commitments

TEHRAN- A member of the parliamentary Internal and Councils Affairs Committee has stressed that the parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) should know that if the sanctions are not lifted in the new round of negotiations, the Parliament will pursue more serious ratifications that "will not be easily reversed."

In an interview with ISNA on Monday, Mohammad Hassan A'sfari underlined the need to lift sanctions on Iran, saying, "Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken confidence-building steps in the nuclear deal, and it is the turn of Europeans and Americans to gain Iran's trust and take steps to lift sanctions."

"The Europeans and the Americans must live up to their commitments in the JCPOA, and we will not

take any further steps until that happens," the MP said.

The new round of negotiations to lift sanctions on Iran were resumed in Vienna on November 29 that lasted until December 3. The talks were suspended due to the June presidential elections in Iran.

A'sfari warned if at this stage of the negotiations, the Western parties to the JCPOA do not take action to lift the sanctions, the parliament will assess other options on the table.

For example, he said, if the sanctions are not lifted, the parliament will take serious decisions to accelerate nuclear activities.

"There are several options on the table, but we

are waiting to see what the other side will do to lift the sanctions."

The MP said if the sanctions are not lifted the parliament "will certainly legislate tougher ratifications."

Late last year the Iranian parliament approved a bill obliging the government to enrich uranium to 20 percent in response to the illegal sanctions.

A'sfari highlighted that it was not in the interest of the JCPOA parties to put more pressure on the Iranian people.

He added Iran's negotiations with the Europeans and the Americans must lead to a "win-win" game in line with the interest of both sides.

Who's seeking maximalist demands in Vienna?

TEHRAN – With the negotiators preparing for a return to Vienna later this week, it's worth taking a look at how the Vienna talks ended up with the West blaming Iran for the alleged failure of the talks.

No exact date has been set for resuming the Vienna talks that ended on Friday. Enrique Mora, the EU Deputy Director General for External Action Service, only said that the talks would be resumed next week. Over the last few days, there have been unofficial reports that they will resume on Thursday.

The current uncertainty over the resumption date is per se seen as part of the West's response to what Iran presented during the much-awaited talks that took place last week after a five-month hiatus. Western diplomats were quick to announce the failure of the talks even before their end.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced the failure of the talks during his visit to Dubai the same day the negotiators in Vienna held a plenary session to review the progress made in the meetings of the experts. Speaking to reporters in Dubai, Macron claimed Friday that the current round of talks had not been successful, and hinted that there would be a delay before the next round takes place.

"I think it's probable that this round of negotiations, given the positions, does not succeed," he said according to Reuters. "It is most likely that these negotiations do not continue in the short term."

Since then, the Europeans, together with their American allies,



refused to announce a date for their return to Vienna. But Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, put an end to speculations over when the talks would resume. Speaking to reporters in Moscow on Tuesday, Bagheri Kani said the talks would resume on Thursday.

Aside from the date, the Vienna talks are expected to face a bumpy road in terms of how to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). On the one hand, the Europeans have inveighed against Iran, accusing it of pursuing maximalist demands.

"Iran's proposals regarding its nuclear file do not constitute a reasonable basis for any agreement," the French foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Earlier, the German Foreign Office echoed a similar position. It said Iran's proposals are "not a basis for a successful end to talks."

"We reviewed the proposals ... carefully and thoroughly and concluded that Iran violated almost

all compromises found previously in months of hard negotiations," a German Foreign Office spokeswoman said on Monday.

On the other hand, Iran keeps insisting that it has entered the talks with a realistic and pragmatic view and is ready to reach a good agreement but not at any cost.

In an interview with Iran's state TV from Moscow, Bagheri Kani described Tehran's proposals as "useful and constructive that can seriously push the process of talks forward."

During the current round of talks, the Iranian negotiators presented two draft proposals regarding sanctions and nuclear-related steps if talks were to lead to an agreement.

The Europeans and Americans dismissed the proposals as containing maximalist demands and therefore unrealistic. The Europeans' response created an atmosphere in which Iran was seen as the culprit for the alleged failure of the talks. But this is simply not true.

It soon came to light that it was Iran that made everything in its

power to push the talks forward at a time when Europe and the U.S. were pushing for maximalist demands that go beyond the terms of the JCPOA.

After the recent round of talks, Western diplomats accused Iran of backtracking on the previous hard-won compromises reached during the past six rounds. Again, this is not true because Iran made it clear that Vienna talks should only lead to the mere revival of the JCPOA without adding or deducting anything from it. In fact, Iran's proposals are based on the terms of the nuclear deal and only seek to revive it. The Iranian proposals made it crystal clear that the JCPOA is not re-negotiable. This is while the West seems to want to revive a renegotiated JCPOA that would give Iran less and extract more concessions from it. In other words, the West wants the JCPOA of 2021 not that of 2015. On the contrary, Iran does want the 2015 deal to be the basis for the U.S. to begin implementing its obligations.

Another point is the Western claim that Iran backed down on what has been achieved during the past six rounds. Iran's proposals have been drafted in strict conformity with the provisions of the JCPOA and have drawn on the past rounds to great extent. Obviously, the past rounds are mere drafts and should by no means be deemed a binding agreement.

As things stand, Western countries want the JCPOA to be adjusted to their behavior. This is just unfair and that Western behavior should be adjusted to the JCPOA.

Iranian Parliament research service outlines steps for verification of sanctions lifting

TEHRAN – The Iranian Parliament's research service has published a one-of-a-kind report on how to verify a potential lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran from the Iranian perspective in case the Vienna talks culminated in an agreement.

The 33-page report, titled Verification of Sanctions Removal: Main Topics and Executive Aspect, offers a "comprehensive guideline" regarding the verification of the lifting of the sanctions.

It has been compiled and published by the influential Islamic Parliament Research Center (IPRC), a think tank-styled studies center providing the Parliament with research and studies of legislative interest.

The executive summary of the report underlines the need to turn verification into an "inevitable demand" in the negotiations process as per the provisions of a nuclear law obligating the Iranian government to take certain measures if the other sides party to the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), failed to fulfill their obligations.

"According to the provisions of Article (7) of the law on 'Strategic Action to Remove Sanctions and Protect Iranian Nation's Interests,' as well as the definite policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the verification of the removal of sanctions and its subsequent benefits for Iran's economy should be the inevitable demand of the foreign policy apparatus in any negotiation process. In other words, the removal of Iran sanctions, regardless of the realization of the legal aspects of removing sanctions (removal of sanctions on paper), should provide tangible benefits for Iran's economy due to the removed sanctions," the executive summary stipulates. "Regarding the thirteenth government coming to power, the following report as a comprehensive guideline can play an essential role in advancing verification if the new government seriously considers the issue of Verification."

According to the IPRC report, verification has two main factors: monitoring guideline and monitoring organization. "Verification is a continuous activity in which a monitoring organization evaluates the other participants' compliance with the agreement provisions based on objective indicators and criteria related to the type of obligations," it said.

It added, "Therefore, three essential requirements must be considered in determining the verification process: first, developing a comprehensive, operational, and measurable guideline. Second, determining the unique features for the first stage of verification. Third, determining the quality and aspects of periodic verification."

The report proposes three main topics to meet the mentioned three

requirements, which will be presented as follows:

A) The verification authority can be beyond the parliament's approved power organizations



such as the Supreme National Security Council or the Iranian Supervisory Committee on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or even a newly established body with a professional expertise structure and a permanent secretariat. This authority has the responsibility to compose periodic reports on the verification of the removal of sanctions to decide whether Iran should continue to comply with the agreement or take countermeasure in the form of reducing or suspending its commitments. This authority has three crucial tasks: 1. Monitoring and analyzing the benefits of Iran's economy due to removed sanctions, 2. Receiving complaint letter from an Iranian citizen or institution (especially those individuals and entities that have been removed from the sanctions list) about the "Violation of JCPOA or the impossibility of deriving benefit from the removed sanctions"; 3. Develop a regulation for countermeasures. This includes but is not limited to implementing its provisions in proportion to the other participants' non-compliance by introducing a regulation that mandates suspending, stopping, or reducing nuclear activity limitations as countermeasures.

B) Providing a verification checklist of removing sanctions and permission to resume nuclear-related measures based on the JCPOA for the first stage of verification: The provisions of the proposed checklist of verification of removing sanctions are presented in two parts: Factors of the actual removal of sanctions: it includes realizing the minimum thresholds for oil sales and transactions with German EIH and Bank Tejarat branch of Paris, revoking U.S. President's executive orders, reviewing the related FAQ's of the OFAC website, avoiding issuing warning notices, and issuing specific and general Licenses for foreign individuals and legal entities who want to cooperate with Iran's economy.

Factors of reducing the risk of economic cooperation with Iran

The criteria of this topic are the acceptance of legal commitment and the adoption of practical measures by the leaders of the other participant countries on the normalization of trade and economic relationship with Iran, that include:

- Revoking executive orders and other regulations, continuing the issuance of the certification of Iran's compliance to JCPOA, eliminating instructions and advisories introducing the Iranian economy as a

jurisdiction with a high risk of money laundering, and issuing orders or approving regulations that are necessary measures for normalizing trade relationship with Iran.

- Avoiding any negative comments or actions discouraging nations from cooperating with Iran and acknowledging the possibility of establishing medium and long-term cooperation with Iran's economy.

- Altering the approach of Financial Crimes Executive Network (FinCEN) of United States Department of the Treasury from Risk-Based to Rule-Based.

- Removing Iranian individuals, entities, vessels, and aircraft from the sanctions lists and fundamentally revising the SDN and non-SDN lists.

- Eliminating warning instructions and advisories from OFAC and other U.S. agencies on trade of humanitarian goods and maritime trade with Iran.

C) Checklist of continuity of benefits from removed sanctions and issuance of periodic licenses to allow Iran to continue the implementation of JCPOA (Periodic Verification): on the issue of Continuity of Verification, it is recommended that the process of deriving benefit should be verified continuously and to publish the reports of this verification every three months. The threshold for the first part of continuous verification is 2.5 million barrels per day export of oil and condensate, monthly transactions of Iranian individuals and entities with the EIH Bank in Germany and the Paris branch of Tejarat bank worth at least \$4.2 and \$1.5 billion respectively.

In addition, the normalization of trade and international cooperation with the sanctioned sectors of Iran's economy is considered the basis for continuing the verification. The proposed mechanism for examining the normalization of relationships with each economic sector can be described as follows: the verification authority receives quarterly feedback from prominent governmental and non-governmental actors in each sector based on the dimensions introduced. Then based on those feedbacks, the verification authority will recommend whether to comply with the commitments or to reduce, suspend or cease Iran's actions as countermeasures. In fact, the verification authority should report to the main decision-making organization about the JCPOA (which is currently the Supreme National Security Council and the Iranian Supervisory Committee on JCPOA).

According to paragraph 36 of the JCPOA, Iran has the right to reconsider compliance to its commitments based on the domestic approved arrangements in the case of a violation of the JCPOA by other participants. However, taking these countermeasures does not prevent Iran from sending verification reports to the Joint Commission of the JCPOA as an international organization to convince foreign participants.

SPORTS

Women football team coach Irandoost not happy with preparation

TEHRAN – Iran's women's football team head coach Maryam Irandoost says that they were supposed to play some friendly matches ahead of the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup but the matches are canceled.

Iran are in Group A along with India, China and Chinese Taipei.

The 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup will serve as the final stage of Asian qualification for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand (Regulations Article 4.6), in which Australia already qualified automatically as a co-host. Five teams will qualify directly for the World Cup via the knockout stage (including play-offs for fifth place or possibly sixth place), and two more teams will advance to the inter-confederation play-offs.

"We have a difficult task ahead because we will participate in the competition without a single warm-up match," Irandoost said. "Iran will compete in the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup for the first time and I think the team had to play some friendly matches for the competition."

Iran football team were supposed to hold a 10-day training camp in Charleroi, Belgium but the camp was canceled.

Iran women's basketball team move up at FIBA ranking

TEHRAN – Iran's women's basketball team moved up two spots to 78th in the latest FIBA ranking released on Monday.

Following participation in the FIBA Women's Asia Cup Division B in Amman, Jordan in November, the Persians climbed in the ranking.

Some of the most impressive leaps were made by participants of the Division B, as winners Lebanon moved up the rankings eight places and into the top 50 at No. 45, while Indonesia catapulted skywards 13 places to No. 61 after finishing third.

Syria returned to the competition for the first time in 35 years and some positive results have seen them lift 16 places to No. 76. Similarly, event hosts Jordan made a return after a 26-year absence and have rocketed up 43 places to No. 81 after making it to the Final against Lebanon.

Celtic Glasgow eye three Iranian players

TEHRAN – Celtic Glasgow football club have sent scouts to watch three Iranian players in Iran and the UAE leagues.

Iranian wonderkid Mehdi Ghaedi, Persepolis forward Mehdi Abdi and Gol Gohar winger Armin Sohrabian are the players who have caught Ange Postecoglou's eye.

Celtic currently sit second in the Scottish Premiership standings, four points behind leaders Rangers.

Mehdi Ghaedi (Shabab Al-Ahli)

Little in stature at 5ft 5in, but big on talent, the 22-year-old wonderkid already has eight Iranian caps and topped the charts for assists last season before leaving Esteghlal with the league's young player of the year award and moving to UAE this summer. A left-sided attacker, Celtic already have Jota but with the Portuguese still just a loan deal and injured until at least January, Ghaedi could be a future option.

Mehdi Abdi (Persepolis)

One of the stand-out players with Persepolis, the top team in Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League, scored nine times from midfield en route to last season's title and featured in the Asian Champions League this term. In a league dominated by experienced professionals, Abdi looks a prospect, aged 23 – though yet to receive international honors.

Armin Sohrabian (Gol Gohar)

Capped once by Iran, much of current leader in the Persian Gulf Pro League Gol Gohar's early promise

has been aided by the 26-year-old left-sided, defender who has scored twice without defeat. Potentially a profitable asset.

Iran to participate at "Hubert Wagner"

TEHRAN – Iran national volleyball team have been invited to the 19th edition of "Hubert Wagner" memorial.

The competition will be held from Aug. 11 to 13, 2022 in Krakow, Poland.

Iran aims to take part in the tournament as part of preparation for the 2022 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship which are scheduled for Aug. 26 to Sept. 11 in Russia.

Iran are in Pool F along with Argentina, the Netherlands and Egypt.

The Iranian team, headed by Behrouz Ataei, have not competed in the tournament since 2015.

The Memorial of Hubert Jerzy Wagner is a volleyball competition for national teams, organized by the Hubert Wagner foundation. There are men's competitions, organized only in Poland.

The first Memorial was held in 2003. This competition has been held every year, except 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Iran captain looks to book 2023 FIFA Women World Cup berth

TEHRAN – Iran national women's football team Captain Behnaz Taherkhani says they want to make history in the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup and book a place in the 2023 FIFA World Cup.

Iran have been drawn in Group A along with India, China and Chinese Taipei.

"Our training camp for the AFC Asian Cup has started since Saturday and we want to travel to India as well-prepared team. We are motivated for the competition," Taherkhani said.

"Iran are drawn in a tough group but we want to qualify for the next stage. We just think about booking a place in the 2023 FIFA World Cup," she said.

Iran were scheduled to play several warm-up matches ahead of the AFC Asian Cup but the matches were canceled. "The warm-up matches could help us prepare better but there were canceled. However, we want to reach our goal in India," Taherkhani concluded.

The 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup will serve as the final stage of Asian qualification for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand (Regulations Article 4.6), in which Australia already qualified automatically as a co-host.

Five teams will qualify directly for the World Cup via the knockout stage (including play-offs for fifth place or possibly sixth place), and two more teams will advance to the inter-confederation play-offs.

Challenging days ahead of FFIRI

From Page 1 ▶ Earlier, Iran's Guardian Council, one of Iran's highest bodies, announced the approval of the statute of the Amateur Sports Federations of the Islamic Republic. The statute of the Football Federation is one of the sub-statutes of this general statute.

On Oct. 21, Ahmadreza Barati, head of the football federation's Regulations and Implementation Committee, asked the Iranian parliament to approve the government's bill to amend various statutes, especially the football federation's statutes.

The most disputed part of the amended statutes of the FFIRI was where the federation was described as a public and non-governmental organization. FIFA firmly emphasized that the word "public" in Iran's law meant that the federation is subject to some state laws, and the government can monitor it, so the title should be removed.

Privatization of clubs and allowing women to attend stadiums are the other issues that FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) have demanded the FFIRI to resolve. If these objections raised by FIFA in the statutes are not resolved before the deadline set by FIFA – March 2022 – many problems will be created for Iranian football; among them is the probable suspension of the FFIRI.

Over 16.5m tons of basic goods cleared from ports in 8 months



TEHRAN – Some 16.85 million tons (mt) of basic goods were cleared from the country's ports in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), according to the Transport and Urban Development Ministry data.

Based on the mentioned data, a total of 320 mt of commodities were distributed across the country in the mentioned eight months.

Back in July, Head of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization Darius Amani had announced that over 154 mt of goods were transported through Iran's roads in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) of which 6.5 mt were basic goods.

"Some 62 percent of these basic goods were distributed from Imam Khomeini port and the rest from Bandar Abbas and Amirabad ports," Amani said.

According to the official, last year, a total of 502 mt of goods were transported through the country's road network, which was unprecedented and grew by 5.6 percent compared to the preceding year.

Nearly \$12.5b supplied for import of basic goods, vaccines in 8 months

From page 1 ► CBI had supplied \$9.5 billion for the imports of basic goods as well as medicine in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

Back in August, the CBI had announced that the bank supplied about \$15 billion for importing basic goods, raw materials, and machinery as well as medicine in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), \$4.6 billion of which was allocated for the imports of basic goods and medicine, which was also 70 percent more than the allocation in the previous year's same time span.

Iran's former President Hassan Rouhani had said in July that enough basic and strategic goods were imported into the country and there are no worries over the supply of such commodities.

Iran, Kyrgyzstan ink MOU to establish joint trade committee

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic (ICC KR) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for establishing a joint trade committee between the two countries.

The MOU was signed on the sideline of a webinar held on the occasion of Kyrgyzstan's economy day on Tuesday, the portal of the ICCIMA reported.

As reported, the webinar was attended by the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, the Vice President of the ICC KR Roman Qasimov, and the ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Karbasi, as well as the ambassadors and businessmen of the two countries.

Speaking in this webinar, Shafeie said he was pleased that after many years the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding to form a joint trade committee.

"The presence of the ambassadors of the two countries in this meeting shows the support of the two sides' governments for their private sectors and the efforts of high-ranking officials of the two countries to remove existing obstacles and to draw the foundations of relations based on solid and reliable principles," he said.

"The formation of the joint trade committee, as well as the holding of such meetings, can have constructive effects, such as identifying trade opportunities and improving the level of trade and economic relations between the two countries," Shafeie added.



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (c), Kyrgyzstan Ambassador to Tehran Turdakov Sydykov (L) and ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Karbasi signing MOU documents in Tehran

Elsewhere in the meeting, ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Karbasi underlined the importance of signing the memorandum, saying: "Apart from membership in ECO, Eurasian Union, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which can be an advantage for the development of economic cooperation between the two countries in various fields, there are extensive bilateral capacities in various sectors of trade, services, and engineering and Iranian businessmen are increasingly interested in cooperating with Kyrgyzstan."

Roman Qasimov for his part mentioned Kyrgyzstan's membership in various international treaties including the World Trade Organization, and said: "This opens up new opportunities for traders to export more than 6,000 items to Kyrgyzstan; Kyrgyzstan's membership in Eurasian Union also has made the country a good transit hub in the way of North and South Asia."

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – Over the past few years and since the end of the war in Syria, Tehran, and Damascus have been taking major steps for expansion of mutual trade ties, and considering Syria's efforts for reconstructing the country's war-torn infrastructures, the construction sector has been one of the major areas that Iran has been focusing on for the expansion of ties with the Arab country.

Head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce Keyvan Kashefi has said that currently, commodity items in the fields of housing construction, bridge and dam construction, electricity supply, and technical and engineering services are at the top of the list of exports to this country.

According to Kashefi, the trade between the two countries has been following an upward trend over the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) and the two sides' trade balance stood at \$170 million in the said year.

The figure is expected to increase to over \$300 million in the current Iranian calendar year, according to the official.

Syria has repeatedly expressed eagerness for the participation of Iranian companies in the country's reconstruction projects and has invited private and public entities from Iran to join the Syrian government in reconstructing the country's infrastructure. The Islamic Republic, on the other hand, has also been taking serious steps in this regard.

Last week, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak said the country has allocated a special budget of \$50 million to support the Iranian export companies active in the Syrian market.

Syria, a huge capacity for Iranian construction, engineering services exports



"Iran and Syria have good political relations and we must use this opportunity to encourage the private sector and our businessmen to enter the Syrian market," Alireza Peyman Pak told the national TV.

Referring to a visit to Syria by a delegation headed by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi Amin in late November, he said: "During the visit to Damascus, we were mainly looking for ways to pave the way for the private sector to expand trade with this country."

The official noted that the TPO has it on the agenda to establish offices for promoting barter trade with not only Syria but also all other neighboring countries.

"Syria imports \$4 billion [of

goods] annually and exports \$800 million," Peyman Pak said.

Iran and Syria also signed four documents to boost cooperation in the fields of trade and industry during the visit of the Iranian delegation to Damascus.

The documents were inked at the end of the two countries' second Joint Economic Committee meeting which was held in the Syrian capital.

Since the first Iran-Syria Joint Trade Committee in late August 2019, the two sides have exchanged numerous trade delegations for discussing mutual cooperation.

Iranian private companies are now providing construction materials to Syria and are working on several major reconstruction

projects in the country.

However, despite all the mentioned improvements in the two countries' trade ties, the level of trade is far from the potentials and capacities of the two countries.

Head of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce believes that the value of Iran's trade with Syria should have reached \$1 billion in the current Iranian calendar year.

"We are far away from our trade targets," he said, adding: "Plans must be implemented to see the improvement of trades with this country."

"Exporting raw materials, steel and petrochemicals to Syria can lead to an increase in the level of trade between the two sides because Syria currently needs raw materials and by sending such items Iran can secure the market for the coming years," according to Kashefi.

Referring to the lack of infrastructure for trade between the two countries, he said: "In cases such as transportation, Turkey has advantages over Iran due to its neighborhood with Syria."

Iran does not share a border with Syria and has not been able to benefit from the Iraqi border for expanding trade with Syria, he regretted.

Since, there is also no regular shipping line between the two countries, the Islamic Republic plans to benefit from the capacities of the country's private sector to invest in establishing shipping lines between the two countries.

Economic forecasts indicate a doubling of trade between Iran and Syria in the current year (2021), this is while sanctions have slowed down the process of this trade growth.

Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia confer on establishing new transit route

TEHRAN – Iran, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have reached an agreement for establishing a transit route connecting the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, an official with Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) announced.

"Following a trip to hold two meetings [on road transportation] with Azerbaijan and Georgia, we proposed an initiative to the two countries to create a new transit corridor for regional convergence," Director-General of RMTP Office of International Transit and Transportation Javad Hedayati told ISNA on Tuesday.

"Of course, this plan was already proposed eight years ago, but due to the fact that many countries were involved in this agreement, it has not been implemented yet and the parties have not reached a consensus," Hedayati added.

He went on to say that the establishment of this new route could connect the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, adding: "Georgia and Iran are the two main parties to the agreement, as Iran is connected to the free waters through the Persian Gulf, and Georgia has two important trading ports east of the Black Sea; On the other hand, Georgia and Azerbaijan have made great efforts to improve and develop their transportation infrastructure, so we tried to increase cooperation with both these countries."

Based on the agreement, first, within the next four months some pilot cargoes will be sent from Iran to deliver Iranian goods to Azerbaijan through the Astara border and also to Bulgaria or other Eastern European countries via Georgian ports on the Black Sea.

"We are trying to carry out the pilot phase of this project before the end of the [current Ira-



nian calendar] year (March 20, 2022) so that obstacles and issues could be identified and finally in a final tripartite meeting between the three countries a mechanism will be created to reduce shipping costs and time," the official explained.

Iran is one of the countries that has a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Tehran, Prague explore avenues of economic co-op

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), in a meeting with the ambassador of the Czech Republic in Tehran explored ways of expanding economic cooperation between the two countries, the ICCIMA portal reported on Tuesday.

In the meeting, Gholam-Hossein Shafeie and Joseph Richtar emphasized the two countries' experiences in the field of rail transport and water resources management and called for cooperation in such areas.

During the talks, Shafeie described the Czech Republic as one

of the most stable economies in Eastern Europe which has experienced significant economic growth over the past decade and has progressive investment laws compared to other Eastern European countries.

He pointed to the conducting of joint projects for manufacturing electric motors and dual-fuel cars as suitable grounds for cooperation between Iran and the Czech Republic and continued: "The two countries can also invest in power plants, sugar industry, cement, crystal, and sugarcane, in which they have had successful experiences of cooperation in the past."

Petrochemical, auto industry, machinery, mining, home appliances, and energy were other areas mentioned by the ICCIMA head for mutual cooperation.

Richtar for his part announced that a delegation from his country is scheduled to visit Iran in January 2022, saying: "Companies active in the fields of mining, food, health, and heavy machinery have announced their readiness to cooperate with the Iranian side."

"From this perspective, as the ambassador of the Czech Republic to Iran, I try to participate in various exhibitions held in Iran and, while getting acquainted with the

In the south of Iran is the Persian Gulf, which is home to the world's major oil-producing countries. This region is considered the energy bottleneck of the world.

In the north of Iran is the Caspian Sea, which is the best bridge between Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan and can play an important role in trade between these countries.

The country, on the other hand, borders Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan to the west and east.

In other words, it can be said that Iran communicates with 15 countries through land and water borders, and at the same time it can act as a bridge between these countries (with each other and other parts of the world).

Considering the country's transit statistics, Iran is taking necessary measures to make the most of its strategic status in this due.

Iran, Romania to expand trade, agricultural ties

TEHRAN – Director General of the Iranian Agricultural Ministry's International Affairs Office said on Monday that Iran-Romania's scientific, technological, economic, and agricultural cooperation will be expanded.

Speaking in a meeting with the Romanian Ambassador to Iran Mirela Grecu, Ali-Morad Sarafrazi referred to the good record of bilateral ties between the two countries and reiterated that the last Iran-Romania Joint Economic Committee meeting was held five years ago in Bucharest.

"I hope this meeting will mark a new point for a new round of bilateral ties," IRNA quoted the offi-

cial as saying.

The Iranian official noted that Romania is the world's top producer of soybeans, which is used mainly as livestock feed in Iran, adding: "We wish to import soybean through various channels, including barter trade."

He also praised Romania for training a new generation of experienced and skillful farmers, arguing that Iranian farmers are often old and use traditional methods, and Iran, too, is in need of training a new generation of skillful and experienced farmers.

The Romanian ambassador, for her part, ex-

pressed happiness that the Iranian Agricultural Ministry is willing to boost cooperation with Romania, ensuring Iranian official that although the last joint economic committee meeting was held years ago, the two countries' economic ties have continued.

She further expressed hope that such ties will further expand in the agricultural field.

Grecu welcomed the Iranian official's proposal on sharing agricultural experiences and informed the Iranian official that in Romania there is no research center at the Agriculture Ministry, and the country relies on the universities for the purpose.



Arms industry thrives despite pandemic

From page 1 ► equipment last year, a sum that is bigger than the GDP of Lithuania. Experts say companies that sell big also wield strong political lobbying power.

Markus Bayer, a political scientist at the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), says arms companies are deliberately exerting influence in politics. He cites a report by the U.S. NGO Open Secret which notes “defense companies spend millions every year lobbying politicians and donating to their campaigns. In the past two decades, their extensive network of lobbyists and donors have directed \$285 million in campaign contributions and \$2.5 billion in lobbying spending to influence America’s military policy.”

And for the arms manufacturing giants, the spending appears to have paid off. SIPRI researcher Alexandra Marksteiner points out that the U.S. Department of Defense provided “targeted support” for the arms industry during the pandemic. “For example, they made sure that employees of defense companies were largely exempted from stay-at-home orders. On the other hand, there were some orders that were set up so that funds could be transferred to the companies a bit earlier, ahead of schedule, so that they would have a bit of a buffer.”

She has also highlighted that “information technology can no longer be separated from weapons technology.” In its new report, SIPRI specifically looked at the growing role technology companies play in the arms business. Some experts say that, if you want a clear picture of the arms industry, “you can’t just talk about traditional players like Lockheed Martin.” SIPRI says that, in recent years, some Silicon Valley giants like Google, Microsoft, and Oracle have sought to deepen their involvement in the arms, business and in return have been rewarded with lucrative contracts.

SIPRI has provided the example of a deal between Microsoft and the U.S. Department of Defense worth \$22 billion. The company has been contracted to supply the U.S. Army with a certain type of super-glasses, called the Integrated Visual Augmentation System, which will reportedly provide American soldiers with real-time strategic information about the battlefield. The U.S. military’s interest in Silicon Valley is quite easy to explain.

SIPRI researcher Marksteiner says “[the U.S. military-industrial complex] realizes that, in these new enabling technologies, be it artificial intelligence or machine learning or cloud computing, these Silicon Valley companies’ expertise is far beyond what you would see from traditional arms industry players.” She adds that “there is a chance that some of these companies will actually end up entering the [SIPRI] top 100.”

The European arms industry also has a combined 21% of the top 100’s sales on its books. In 2020, the 26 European companies listed sold \$109 billion worth of weapons. The four wholly German arms companies accounted for just under \$9 billion of this total. There are also trans-European companies like Airbus, which handled arms deals worth almost €12 billion, five percent more than in 2019. Europe is increasingly relying on joint ventures like these.

BICC’s Markus Bayer explains: “Europe is now trying, by political means, to expedite such cooperative ventures for the development of a ‘Next Generation Weapon System,’ the ‘Future Combat Air System,’ or the ‘Main Ground Combat System,’ so it can bear the high development costs for new systems like these.”

These joint productions certainly make sense from a cost point of view. But as far as arms export control is concerned, experts believe they can often be problematic. Referring to the Eurofighter Typhoon, a fighter jet developed by Germany, Britain, Italy, and Spain, SIPRI analysts say that “it is also specifically supplied to problematic third countries, such as Saudi Arabia, which is still waging war in Yemen.” National export regulations are often not applied to joint productions and it seems that Europe is still a long way from implementing effective joint controls on arms exports.

As Western powers sell more weapons to certain regions, thereby destabilizing them further, Russia laid back last year, according to SIPRI, the biggest drop in arms sales was recorded by Moscow. The nine Russian companies on the list sold 6.5% fewer weapons last year than in 2019. BICC

believes this drop, to just 5% of the top 100’s total sales, is directly related to India and China having developed arms factories of their own. Both countries were previously big buyers of Russian armaments. Experts cite the example of aircraft carriers. The first Chinese carrier was based on a Soviet-built ship purchased by Beijing in 1998.

But that argument can be debunked as India just purchased the Russian S-400 missile defense system at the anger of the United States. The Pentagon is strongly trying to undermine the deal which was inked during Russian President, Vladimir Putin’s trip to New Delhi on Turkey has also purchased the S-400 despite Washington warnings. In essence, Russia has been selling defensive and not offensive weapons.

There are 26 European weapons firms in the Top 100 which jointly account for 21% of total arms sales, and that equates to \$109 billion. There are seven British companies that, combined, registered arms sales of \$37.5 billion in 2020, up by 6.2% compared with 2019. Arms sales by BAE Systems, the only European firm in the top 10, increased by 6.6% to \$24 billion. According to Dr Lucie Beraud-Sudreau, SIPRI’s military expenditure and arms production program director “aggregated arms sales by the six French companies in the Top 100 fell by 7.7%. This drop was largely due to a sharp year-on-year decline in deliveries of Rafale combat aircraft by Dassault. Safran’s arms sales grew driven by increased sales of sighting and navigation systems.”

Meanwhile, arms sales by the four German firms in the Top 100 reached \$8.9 billion in 2020. That is an increase of 1.3% compared with 2019. Together, these firms accounted for 1.7% of the Top 100’s total arms sales. Rheinmetall, which is the largest German arms manufacturer

SIPRI concludes that despite a shrinking global economy and supply chain bottlenecks, the industry giants are “largely protected by continued government demand for military goods and services. Some governments have even increased their payments to the defense industry to mitigate the impact of the Covid 19 crisis.”

Catholic charity Misereor criticized the arms deals. The report says “once again” that “the states of this world set the wrong priorities in times of crisis,” its chief executive, Pirmin Spiegel, told a national newspaper. For many people, the Corona pandemic means the loss of their livelihoods. “At the same time, the arms industry is booming, and German manufacturers are also doing good business at the expense of people in conflict regions and at the expense of numerous victims of violence.” The new German government must now “get serious about its announcements on export control and disarmament,” he said.

He summed up the sales of arms during a pandemic not just on behalf of Germany but critics would say it applies to all. For many people, the Corona pandemic means the loss of their livelihoods. “At the same time, the arms industry is booming, and [arms] manufacturers are also doing good business at the expense of people in conflict regions and at the expense of numerous victims of violence.”

U.S. Department of Defense provided “targeted support” for the arms industry during the pandemic.

Yemeni army targets Saudi Aramco, defense ministry

The spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces has revealed details of a large-scale operation in retaliation for the Saudi bombing campaign on Yemen, saying it attacked Saudi Arabia’s Defense Ministry and Aramco facilities among other targets.

In a series of tweets on Wednesday, Brigadier General Yahya Saree said the Yemeni targeted military sites situated in Riyadh, Jeddah, Taif, Jizan, Najran, and Asir.

He explained that six Samad-3 drones and a number of Zulfiqar missiles targeted Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Defense, the King Khalid Airport, and other military targets in the Saudi capital city of Riyadh.

Six Samad-2 and -3 drones also targeted King Fahd Air Base in Taif and Saudi Aramco facilities in Jeddah, he further said.

According to Saree, five Samad-1 and -2 drones, as well as eight Qasef 2K drones and a large number of ballistic missiles targeted sensitive and important sites in Abha, Jizan, and Asir.

He stressed that the operation was conducted in response to the crimes of the Saudi-led coalition against the Yemeni people and the continuation of the siege and war.

He also vowed that the Yemeni forces “will carry out more military operations within their legitimate defense of the people and the country.”

The Yemeni Armed Forces regularly target positions inside



Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the bloody war, which was launched in March 2015 with arms and logistics support from the US and several other Western countries.

The aim was to return to power the former Riyadh-backed regime and crush the Ansarullah movement which has been running state affairs in the absence of an effective government in Yemen.

The offensive has stopped well shy of all of its goals, despite killing tens of thousands of Yemeni civilians and turning the entirety of Yemen into the scene of the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

Yemeni forces have pledged to continue their retaliatory attacks on Saudi targets until the devastating war and crippling all-out siege on their country come to an end.

Apartheid regime’s extrajudicial executions of Palestinians



Colonial Violence

Yet, much of the discourse obscures the colonial context and the asymmetrical power relations. The Palestinian’s actions are not the source of violence. In fact, he is a victim of the apartheid regime and has probably suffered his entire life under a brutal military occupation and the multifaceted abuses that come with it.

Not only can Israelis kill Palestinians at any time. They also enjoy impunity and the apartheid regime’s backing. Indeed, Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett was quick to express his support for the execution and, in appreciation, posted a picture of the killers on social media. “That is how our forces are expected to act and that is how they acted,” the apartheid leader said. Support for the killing was echoed throughout the Zionist political spectrum.

Referring to Israelis on illegally occupied land as civilians further normalizes Israeli colonial violence. Most Israelis, regardless whether they are actively enlisted in the occupying army or not, have undergone military training and enjoy backing by the apartheid regime. Settler violence, for example, is a well-documented, ongoing form of terrorism that is directly backed by the colonial “state” apparatus.

And, of course, the mere presence of Israeli forces in East al-Quds is illegal given that the territory is under military occupation.

“Suffering of Palestinians in East al-Quds

Palestinians in East al-Quds, where the killing of Mohammad Salima took place, are structurally oppressed by the Israeli apartheid regime and subjugated to its systematic detention, arrests, dispossession, land theft, and killings. For decades, Palestinians in East al-Quds have been victims of ongoing ethnic cleansing. The Israeli apartheid authorities have created a judicial system that allows them to steal Palestinians’ land and property and dispossess them in order to make place for Jewish settlers. Any media narrative that fails to identify the colonial context in Palestine further justifies the Zionist violence.

In this settler-colonial conquest of a nuclear-armed first-world power against an indigenous people under military occupation, Palestinians have long been criminalized for merely surviving on their own land and, thus, standing in the way of the Israeli colonizer. While their structural daily struggle is not newsworthy, their individual reactions to the Zionist terror become highly scrutinized in the mainstream media.

Palestinians have the right to use all means at their disposal to resist against the foreign occupation, including armed struggle. This is even acknowledged by the UN, which enshrined this right in resolution 37/43 from December 1982.

The killing of Salima became newsworthy because it was captured on camera and because the assassinated Palestinian allegedly tried to stab an Israeli. Meanwhile, Palestinians get shot and murdered by the Israeli regime continuously off-camera. A day before Mohammad Salima was assassinated, a Palestinian was killed by Israeli forces in Umm al Fahm in the occupied West Bank. A day later, 15-year-old Mohammad Nidal Younes was murdered by Israeli forces at a checkpoint near Tulkarm in the West Bank. The Israeli attackers and assailants, however, are not referred to as such in the dominant media discourse.

Denijal Jagic is an author and researcher from Lebanon.

By Denijal Jagic

Mohammad Shwkat Salima, a 25-year-old Palestinian, was shot at point-blank range and killed by Israeli occupation forces in occupied East al-Quds Zionist authorities and much of mainstream media framed him as an attacker. However, the extrajudicial killings of Palestinians on occupied land are part and parcel of the settler-colonial regime’s terror against the indigenous population.

Extrajudicial Assassination

A video of Salima’s assassination by Israeli occupation forces was filmed by bystanders and went viral on the internet. It shows that the young Palestinian did not pose any imminent threat to the heavily armed Israeli occupation personnel. He was shot repeatedly and killed as he lay wounded on the ground.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Israeli occupation forces denied access to the site and, thus, Salima could not receive any first aid. Israeli occupation authorities justified the murder, claiming that the assassinated Palestinian had previously tried to stab an Israeli.

Extrajudicial assassinations of Palestinians, including children, by the Israeli regime are not isolated incidents, but part and parcel of the genocidal settler-colonial terror. While the Israeli regime claims to be a democracy, Palestinians are not only subject to brutal military rule, but also excluded from the entity’s legal system. Palestinians are dehumanized to an extent that they can be killed in cold blood at any time. The justification for the killing of Palestinians is always present in the Zionist narrative, as is the jailing and kidnapping of Palestinians by the apartheid regime.

As part of the broader coercion strategy, in the aftermath of the killing, occupation forces terrorized residents in Salima’s home town of Salfit in the occupied West Bank, raided the home of Salima and arrested his brother.

Media Narratives: Palestinian Attacker and Assailant

While the story seemed newsworthy, much of mainstream media failed to identify the power relations, the colonial nature and the particular illegality of Israel’s actions under international law.

Indeed, in much of the mainstream media, the killing was portrayed as a reaction to the stabbing attempt and within a context of the broader violence in East al-Quds.

News agencies provided headlines such as “Israeli wounded in East al-Quds stabbing, assailant killed”, or “Police kill Palestinian attacker after al-Quds stabbing”, oftentimes categorizing the story under the so-called “Israel-Palestine conflict” within Zionist terms. In an article by Al Jazeera English, based on reports from news agencies, the Palestinian victim is portrayed as an “attacker stabbing Jewish man”. The article states that Israeli “security” forces shot the Palestinian “after he stabbed an Israeli civilian and tried to attack the police.” The first source to be mentioned is “Israel’s Magen David Adom emergency service”. Similarly, the New York Times opposed the “Palestinian assailant” to the “Israeli civilian”.

This framing and the focus on religion and ethnicity makes it seem as if a dangerous Palestinian decided to kill an innocent Jewish civilian and thus had to be stopped by police. The incident is thus portrayed as a violent hate crime perpetrated by the Palestinian man.

Persepolis excavation yields glazed bricks bearing bull and dragon motifs



File photo depicts a mythical mushkhushshu dragon detail of Ishtar Gate at Pergamon Museum in Berlin, Germany.

From page 1 ▶ Narratives say that mushkhushshu is a mythological hybrid animal with hind legs resembling the talons of an eagle, lion-like forelimbs, a long neck and tail, a horned head, a snake-like tongue, and a crest.

The Mushkhushshu most famously appears on the reconstructed Ishtar Gate of the city of Babylon, dating to the sixth century BC. In ancient Babylon, mushkhushshu (pronounced "moosh-hoosh-shoo") was a divine creature associated with Marduk, the main god of the city.

Covering 13-ha majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies, Persepolis is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire. It was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City

of Athens around 150 years earlier.

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

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

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

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

Travel agents to tour Qom on fam tour

TEHRAN – Several Iranian travel marketers, tour operators, and media personnel have been invited to explore the central province of Qom on a familiarization tour, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

This fam tour is a way to advertise Qom as a travel destination and to introduce it to the tourism industry professionals, such as tour operators, travel agencies, bloggers, photographers, and filmmakers, Alireza Arjmandi said on Tuesday.

Several tourist attractions are located in Qom, and many of its historical and natural attractions are unique in Iran, the official added.

Situated adjacent to salt-covered deserts, golden dunes, running sands, and jagged

mountains, Qom is home to the shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage, it is also a top destination for Shia scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

One of the most visited natural spots of Qom is Hoz-e Soltan, an eye-catching salt lake is in the middle of the desert. The visitors could easily walk in the shallow parts and enjoy the shapes created by the salt, however, the center of the lake could be dangerous, as it is muddy and could easily trap people.

TEHRAN – The 2022 FIFA World Cup will be a significant opportunity to represent the true face of Iran by efforts to dwindle the so-called anti-Iranian sentiments, the deputy tourism minister has said.

"Qatar's World Cup offers a unique opportunity to introduce destinations near the host country, and we should take advantage of this opportunity to confront Iranophobia", ILNA quoted Ali-Asghar Shalbfasian as saying on Monday.

To make good use of this occasion, it is necessary to develop consensus among the relevant agencies, and if this does not occur, it will be detrimental to the country, the official added.

A key priority should be introducing Iran and its unique tourist attractions to World Cup spectators, he noted.

There is a need, however, for the country's tourism infrastructure to be developed, he added.

Back in October, the official announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran should benefit from the 2022 World Cup as a considerable opportunity to promote its distinctive travel attractions.

The geographical position of Iran and its unique tourist attractions make it a potential destination for the World Cup spectators,

Qatar World Cup a chance to dwindle Iranophobia, deputy minister says



the official added.

Therefore, proper policy-making and management in collaboration with the private sector can pave the way for the widespread use of this event, he noted.

Increasing the number of flights between Iran and Qatar during the event, which will be held from November 21 to December 18, 2022, as well as showcasing and introducing distinctive tourist attractions of the country to the spectators at this event are on the

agenda of the tourism ministry, he explained.

Earlier in November, the head of the Association of Kish Hoteliers also announced that the Iranian island of Kish in the Persian Gulf is ready to host Qatar World Cup spectators as well as participating teams.

The proximity of Kish to Qatar and the lower cost of staying on this island make it possible for spectators and teams to stay here during the World Cup, he added.

Some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, Iran's tourism was already grappling with some challenges, on top of those Western "media propaganda" aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic. Some experts believe Iran is still somehow "unknown" for many potential travelers due to such a "media war". They, however, consider bright prospects for the tourism sector of the country if it vigorously pursues comprehensive strategies to counter U.S.-led propaganda and strict sanctions, yet does its best to loosen tough travel regulations.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Zanjan seeks to export handmade rings to Oman, Bahrain

TEHRAN – The west-central Iranian province of Zanjan plans to export handmade rings and some semi-precious stones to Oman and Bahrain, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The province's handmade silver rings adorned with agate, turquoise, or semi-precious stones have been able to catch the attention of customers throughout the country and beyond, Amir Arjmand said on Monday.

Silver metal has a high resistance, but it is the perseverance and effort of the craftspeople to make the silver ornamental metal, which can make the art of ring-making in Zanjan province so admirable, the official added.

There is only one way out of the suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free, tax-free transfer) and that is to end the coronavirus crisis and to hold exhibitions in the candidate countries, he noted.

Such exhibitions can be held with the presence of local artists so that the province and the country can benefit, he explained.

He also mentioned that the province has the most handicraft artists working in ring making, with 171 craftsmen working in 150 workshops.

Last year the official announced that the province is planning to export handmade daggers, swords, and filigrees to Oman to escalate handicraft trade with the neighboring Sultanate.

Zanjan, which was designated as a "world city of filigree" in January, has excellent capacities in the production and export of hand-



made handicrafts to neighboring countries, Amir Arjmand said.

To prepare the ground, handicrafts showrooms and workshops should be held in Oman to promote the handmade products as well as expand the cultural ties, the official added.

In April 2020, the Arjmand announced that handicrafts exports from Zanjan province reached some \$1.2 million during the Iranian calendar year 1398 ((March 2019 to March 2020).

Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Azerbaijan, Oman, and some European countries were the main importers during the period, he explained.

"Zanjan's handicraft products are a source of income, employment, and development for the province, as well as a great opportunity to enter global markets," he added.

Knifemaking is one of the oldest handicrafts practiced for centuries in several Iranian cities, of which the northwestern city of Zanjan is the most famous.

Knives, swords, and daggers were produced

and a lot of knife-making workshops were active in these cities. But due to their design, cut, diversity, and durability, Zanjan knives have been the most successful.

Filigree consists of curling, twisting, or plaiting fine, pliable metal threads and soldering them at their points of contact with each other with metal groundwork.

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

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

Intl. experts to discuss archaeological achievements in southeast Iran

TEHRAN – A host of archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and cultural heritage experts from Iran and across the globe have been invited to attend a virtual conference to discuss arrays of archaeological achievements in southeast Iran.

Titled "The 3rd International Conference on Archaeology of Southeastern Iran", the event will be held from December 13 to 15 at the University of Zabol, which is located in the archaeologically-rich province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

According to organizers, the conference is set to address themes such as excavations and survey reports, regional and cross-regional interactions; history and arts; technology subsistence, and trade; archaeology through multidisciplinary sciences; as well as tourism, international interactions, and development.

Sistan-Baluchestan is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-



Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

Archaeological achievements in Burnt City, which is currently the subject of excavation by a joint team of experts from Iran, Italy, and Serbia, is expected to be the highlight of the conference.

Spanning an area of 280 hectares, the site had extensive commercial, political, and social relations with other important cities in the region. Founded around 3200 BC, the city was populated during four main periods up to

1800 BC, during which time there developed several distinct areas within the city. These include a monumental area, residential areas, industrial zones, and a graveyard.

Previous rounds of excavations showed that the residents of Burnt City had great skills in weaving, creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving, and pottery painting. Four civilizations have lived in the city which was burnt down three times and not rebuilt after the

last fire. The world's oldest animated picture, as well as the earliest-known dice, backgammon set, caraway seeds, and artificial eyeball, are among the most significant discoveries at the site.

According to UNESCO, diversions in watercourses and climate change led to the eventual abandonment of the city in the early second millennium. The structures, burial grounds, and a large number of significant artifacts unearthed there, and their well-preserved state due to the desert climate, make this site a rich source of information regarding the emergence of complex societies and contacts between them in the third millennium BC.

In ancient times, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, the Baluchistan region provided a land route to the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations. The armies of Alexander the Great marched through Baluchistan in 326 BC on their way to the Hindu Kush and their return march in 325 experienced great hardships in the region's barren wastes.

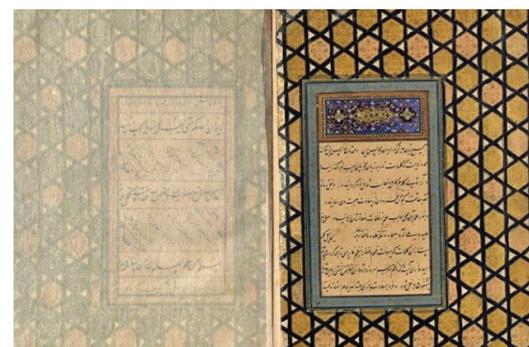
26,000 manuscripts digitalized in Tehran palace

TEHRAN – Over 26,000 historical manuscripts, dating back to the Qajar (1789-1925) and Pahlavi (1925-1979) eras, have been digitized at the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran, where the documents are being kept.

By digitizing such exquisite manuscripts, researchers will have easier access to them as authentic resources, Afarin Emami, the director of the World Heritage site, announced on Tuesday.

Moreover, she noted many objects being kept as the treasure troves of the palace have been either reorganized or restored over the past years.

A destination for domestic and international travelers, Golestan Palace is located in the heart and historic core of Tehran. The palace complex is one



of the oldest in the Iranian capital, originally built during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) in the historic walled city.

Following extensions and additions, it received its most characteristic features in the 19th century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family (1789-1925). At present, the Golestan Palace com-

plex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates.

UNESCO has it that the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

Iraq welcomes Iranian knowledge-based companies

TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies should be present in Iraq's Kirkuk province to develop trade relations, Saeed Al-Dhakerin, broker of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund in Iraq, has said.

He made the remarks in the 23rd "Sundays for Exports" event of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund (held to help expand the international market for the goods and services of domestic knowledge-based companies).

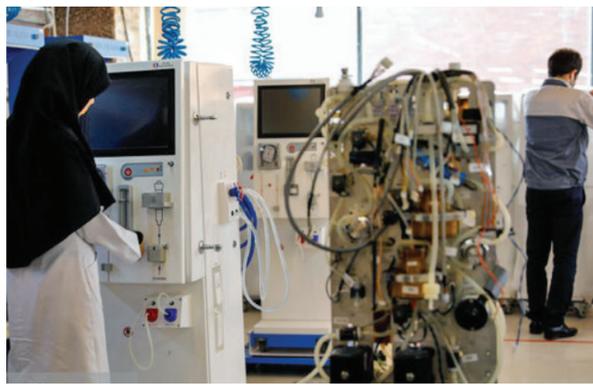
In this event, a business delegation from the target business markets will meet with these firms, will explain the possibilities and opportunities of their presence in the target country market.

One of the ways to develop trade relations between the two countries is to hold exhibitions, and we intend to open the first permanent Iranian exhibition in Kirkuk, he added.

Knowledge-based firms active in the fields of agriculture, oil, gas, and petrochemicals, machinery, etc. can be present in Kirkuk to develop their international market, he highlighted.

Referring to the establishment of a permanent Iranian exhibition in Sulaymaniyah city in January 2022, Al-Dhakerin stated that Iranian knowledge-based companies can participate in this exhibition to cooperate in various fields of technology.

Consul General of Iran in Iraq Mehdi Shoushtari considered Kirkuk province as one of the most important provinces in Iraq in terms of having huge gas



and oil resources and said that this province can create a privileged position in the relations between the two countries and create good opportunities for trade relations.

He further suggested that Iranian knowledge-based companies in the fields of energy, oil and gas, petrochemicals, agriculture, medicine and medical equipment, construction, and industry, can negotiate with the Iraqi parties and use the capacity of cooperation between the two sides.

Shoushtari also announced the presence of 30 knowledge-based firms in the permanent exhibition of Iran in Sulaymaniyah.

Iranian knowledge-based goods to be produced in 7 countries

Iran will launch production lines of knowledge-based products in seven

countries, namely Turkey, Armenia, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Syria, Iraq, and Kenya, Marzieh Shaverdi, the manager of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, said on December 4.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology will provide special support to facilitate export for knowledge-based companies with quality products over the next 6 months.

Exporting technological products of Iranian knowledge-based companies is one of the important and key programs of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, and in this regard, three houses of innovation and technology were inaugurated in Kenya, China and Syria.

And countries like Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are set to host innovation houses in the near future.

Ghalehmoei said in February that last year, knowledge-based companies gained about \$800 million in revenue from export, and this year it seems to reach up to \$2 billion.

"Africa, neighboring countries, Southeast Asia and Eurasia are our export target priorities, and we hope to create Iranian innovation and technology in all these areas," he added.

Iranian knowledge-based firms

The Innovation and Prosperity Fund affiliated with the Vice Presidency of Science and Technology has earmarked a sum of 170 trillion rials (nearly \$4 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to support knowledge-based companies over the past 4 years.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has paved the way for research and production of technological products by supporting 7,000 projects over the past 8 years.

There are currently 6,263 knowledge-based companies operating in the country, offering advanced products and services in various fields of technology to domestic and foreign markets, and some of them have entered international markets, Siavash Maleki, deputy head of the Fund stated.

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

Iran ready for co-op with WHO on traditional medicine, medicinal plants

TEHRAN – Iran has announced readiness to continue cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) in strengthening and expanding traditional medicine and medicinal plants at the international level, Arman Zargaran, an advisor to the traditional medicine office at the Ministry of Health, has said.

Zargaran described Iran's capabilities and capacities in the field of traditional medicine and medicinal plants and referred to the general health policies and the national document on medicinal plants and traditional medicine, existing infrastructure, scientific structures, and policies.

He made the remarks at the 13th Annual Meeting of International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH), held on November 25-27.

He considered Iran as one of the influential countries in the field of traditional medicine and spoke about the latest achievements of scientists in this field.

Stating that traditional Iranian medicine has a very high capacity in the treatment of Covid-19 disease, he announced Iran's readiness to continue joint cooperation with the WHO to develop traditional medicine at the international level.

International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines is a global network of regulatory author-

ities responsible for the regulation of herbal medicines, established in 2006. Its mission is to protect and promote public health and safety through improved regulation for herbal medicines.

Representatives of other countries including India, China, Germany, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Turkey, Namibia, Australia, and Japan also delivered speeches during the meeting.

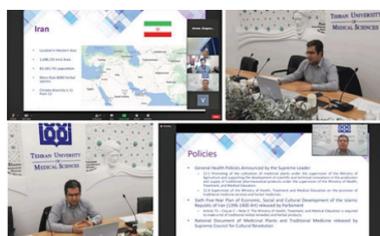
Medicinal plants in Iran

In October, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology registered 120 national standards for medicinal herbs and traditional medicine to improve the quality of products.

In September, ten national plans were defined to promote the culture of production and consumption of medicinal plants by the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

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

Iranian traditional medicine strongly focuses on prioritizing health maintenance and disease prevention over treatment.



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

Currently, about 2,300 species of medicinal plants have been identified in the country, accounting for one-third of the medicines used in human societies, the share of world trade in these products is about \$124 billion and Iran's share is \$570 million, which is only 0.5 percent of the total.

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

Takaful insurance to make debut in Iran

From page 1 ► Kardgar said that Dana's takaful services would specifically target Iran's Sunni population of less than 10 million.

He said that Sunni clerics in the country had approved the use of the insurance service by members of the community.

The announcement comes two

days after Khandouzi said that insurers in Iran should respond to a demand for takaful in the country's domestic market.

"A group of the customers of the insurance industry has an inclination to use takaful insurance. We are lagging behind some Muslim countries in this regard," said Khandouzi.



ENGLISH IN USE

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Kish to host World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2019

The 7th World Health Summit Regional Meeting will be held on April 29-30 in the Persian Gulf island of Kish, IRNA reported on Monday.

Ali Jafarian, international president of World Health Summit 2019, said that it is the first regional meeting in West Asia and North Africa to host 700 participants, including 150 foreign guests.

Pointing out that playing host to the event is an important opportunity for the country, he added that over 100 health experts from different countries have expressed readiness to attend the meeting.

نشست منطقه‌ای مجمع جهانی سلامت در کیش برگزار می‌شود

به گزارش روز دوشنبه ایرنا هفتمین نشست منطقه‌ای مجمع جهانی سلامت در روزهای ۹ و ۱۰ اردیبهشت ۹۸ در جزیره کیش برگزار می‌شود. علی جعفریان نماینده دانشگاه علوم پزشکی تهران در مجمع جهانی سلامت گفت: این نخستین نشست منطقه‌ای در غرب آسیا و شمال آفریقا است که قرار است ۷۰۰ شرکت کننده از جمله ۱۵۰ مهمان خارجی در آن حضور یابند. جعفریان، میزبانی از این نشست منطقه‌ای را برای جمهوری اسلامی ایران فرصتی مهم دانست و گفت: حدود ۱۰۰ نفر از افراد سرشناس حوزه سلامت کشورهای مختلف جهان به عنوان سخنران برای شرکت در این نشست اعلام آمادگی کرده‌اند.

Italy supports Afghan refugees in Iran



TEHRAN – Italy has contributed €1.5 million to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to support Afghans residing in Iran.

"It is important to be able to help the most vulnerable people in their moment of need when they flee a country which they find no longer safe", said Giuseppe Perrone, the Italian Ambassador in Tehran. "It is a tangible sign of the existing strong solidarity between Iran and Italy, in line with our deep historical bond."

"At this critical moment when the needs and vulnerabilities of Afghans in Iran are increasing, UNHCR greatly appreciates Italy for their generous contribution to our humanitarian efforts, helping us provide essential life-saving assistance to asylum-seekers, especially in key locations along the borders," Ivo Freijssen, the UNHCR Representative in Iran.

It is estimated that up to 300,000 Afghan asylum-seekers have fled to Iran this year alone in search of safety, while UNHCR has only been able to screen some 24,000 newly arrived Afghans for protection needs. The total number of Afghans who have entered the country is likely to be significantly higher, hence UNHCR's effort to further prepare and gear up its operation to be able to assist those in need.

The Afghan displacement situation is the most protracted and third largest in the world. Even prior to the recent events in Afghanistan driving renewed displacement, Iran was already hosting some 3.5 million Afghans and providing them with education and health services. The situation in Afghanistan remains volatile and sustained international support for UNHCR's programs will be needed in 2022 and beyond – both to ensure adequate emergency support for new arrivals and continue helping Afghan persons of concern who were already in Iran.

Italy's support to Iran exemplifies the spirit of international responsibility-sharing and solidarity outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). This international agreement aims to ensure that refugee-hosting countries, like Iran, get the support they need from the international community, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation.

WHO provides Iran with packs of intravenous solutions

TEHRAN – In response to a temporary shortage of intravenous (IV) fluids in the country, the World Health Organization has procured and delivered 260,000 packs of various types of IV fluids to the Ministry of Health.

The shipment containing \$156,000 worth of IV solutions was released from customs in Bandar Abbas in the southern province of Hormozgan last week and arrived in the capital city of Tehran on Monday.

"The supply of these life-saving IV solutions to the Ministry of Health at a time when health systems are under pressure due to COVID-19, will greatly assist the Ministry in providing timely health services to the Iranian community as well as Afghan refugees," said Syed Jaffar Hussain, WHO Representative and Head of Mission to Iran.

It contains 160,000 ringer's solution packs, 50,000 sugar solution packs, and 50,000 saline solution packs, all of which are essential to medical care and treatment of various inpatient and outpatient medical conditions.

The procurement is intended to help remedy the brief unavailability of IV fluids following a surge in hospitalized COVID-19 patients during what was called the fifth wave of the epidemic in the country in August- September.

The entire 166-ton shipment of 11 containers was delivered to the Ministry to be further distributed among public medical centers across the country.

IV solutions are used widely and regularly in intravenous therapy, which is a delivery method for fluids and medication, administered through the veins. The fluid that contains vitamins and minerals or medication is delivered via an IV drip or injection into the vein, which allows the therapy to move quickly through the bloodstream.



COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 7

New cases	3,514
New deaths	79
Total cases	6,141,335
Total deaths	130,356
New hospitalized patients	584
Patients in critical condition	3,213
Total recovered patients	5,936,975
Diagnostic tests conducted	39,523,748
Doses of vaccine injected	108,415,131



DECEMBER 8, 2021

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is no greater wealth than wisdom, no greater poverty than ignorance; no greater heritage than culture and no greater support than consultation.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon: 11:56 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:33 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:02 (tomorrow)

Iran: Persian literature

Part 7

In the 12th century an anthologist of considerable stature, Nezami Aruzi, gives the following account of Ferdowsi: "When Ferdowsi had completed the Shahnameh, it was transcribed by Ali Daylam and recited by Abu Dulaf... So Ali Daylam transcribed the Shahnameh in seven volumes, and Ferdowsi, taking with him Abu Dulaf, set forth for Ghazna".

This shows how a great poet performed his epic art at the beginning of the 11th century. As pointed out above, a division of labor was still at work: Poet, copyist, and declaimer/narrator were three different entities. Medieval troubadours and itinerant minstrels in the West followed similar patterns.

Arabic poetry originated before the advent of Islam (5th-6th centuries) and has been the subject of much debate and analysis from the first centuries after the rise of Islam.

The historic precedents of Persian poetry, however, are not similar or comparable. The Parthian gosans of the pre-Islamic era were minstrels who regularly appeared at ceremonial occasions and feasts, told epic tales, and recited lyrical poetry.

Their legacy provided material and inspiration for later works of classical Persian literature (Vis o Ramin). Some Zoroastrian and Buddhist texts have also survived from the early days of Persian literature.

Persian poetry and aesthetics

A Persian poem can be regarded as an objet d'art in itself: crafted to please the eye as well as the ear. But behind the art there are rules and techniques that already appear well-established in the works of Rudaki.

However, allusions made by Shams-e Qeys (13th century) suggest that there was a period of less sure-footed literary attempts before the advent of this accomplished poet.

At first, this hesitation was of a practical nature; theory was to follow. For example, Radu-yani's Tarjoman al-Balagha, dating back to the 11th century, is mostly an inventory of poetic figures and imagery.

In practice, in terms of rhythm, one shifted from pre-Islamic poetry relying on alternating stresses, periodically returning to the ictus (stress on a syllable in a line of verse), to a poetry based on the variation of long and short syllables, as in Arabic poetry.

We are better able to reconstitute these moments of transition and hesitation, in which the ancient rhythms were re-interpreted as new rhythms, and principles of Arabic rhyme prevailed once its alphabet was adopted.

In the poems of Rudaki, the new technique appears firmly ensconced. Assured and clear and yet flexible from this early period, it was only necessary to refine it slightly over the course of time.

It was not until the 20th century that this traditional prosody was called into question. By favoring different schools of poetry, the patronage of princes contributed to the establishment of longstanding traditions, e.g., Khorasani, Iraqi, Azerbaijani, and Hindi (Indian) to name the most significant.

Court poets ever since Rudaki, or poets reciting their verses on religious occasions

or in Sufi gatherings since at least the time of Abu Said Abil-Khayr in early 11th century, had to present themselves before an audience and prove their worth.

The listeners were able to judge the poet's art and technique instantly, and they especially appreciated his ability to improvise in public.

Improvisation (badihesorai) could spell immediate recognition and advancement for a great poet such as Farrokhi. Art, technique, and improvisation were venues through which the poet encountered the expectations of his audience and, drawing on his own erudition to exert his authority, ventured to play a part in reshaping the prevailing poetic traditions.

Technical elements and aspects of Persian poetry. The minimal unit of a Persian poem is a line of verse formed in two parts, each containing the same number of syllables and set to the same rhythm.

Indebted to Arabic poetry, this distich form is called a bayt, with the long and short syllables arranged according to codified schemes. The principles of these schemes are borrowed from Arabic, though it must also be borne in mind that the great Persian meters are not very common in Arabic and are most likely adapted from ancient Persian stress systems.

Such is the case of the quatrain, the rubai, so typical of Persian and known before Islam. It is also the case for the motaqareb, a reinterpretation of a stressed rhythm found in Middle Persian, and the meter used for many famous long narrative poems in Persian, including Ferdowsi's Shahnameh.

The specialized use of this meter and some others is in itself a clear indication of the way literary genres existed and were formally distinguished from each other through the use of specific meters.

Ultimately, however, the beauty of a Persian poem also lies in its public recitation and oral performance (a relatively new and important field of research), where many other factors intervene.

In turn, rhyme is essential for the poetic effect of a Persian poem. It was the imitation of Arabic poetry that let to its widespread use. A simple voiced refrain at first, it soon became more complex and codified.

In a Persian poem, the arrangement of rhymes defines its form. A form is considered classical when both parts of the first bayt rhyme.

The most common and simple poem consists of two bayts, the quatrain, whose second bayt must rhyme with the first bayt (a-a-b-a).

Normally the first bayt (or distich) of the entire poem carries the rhyme, its two hemistiches rhyming with each other. The masnavi is a poem with a special meter with each hemistich rhyming with its counterpart and with the rhyme changing with each line.

It is thus free from the constraints of mono-rhyme and malleable enough to be used in long poems. On the contrary, in the ghazal, also in a special meter, all the bayts rhyme, and ghazals are, in contrast to masnavis, relatively short.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

Cinéma Vérité announces Iranian lineup for international competition

From Page 1 ▶ he lets his cinephile dreams be his guide to the dusty desert landscapes, which are straight out of "A Fistful of Dollars" if only you didn't know better. But maybe Clint is actually out there? All the locals are on first-name terms with him anyway in Rasulinejad's deadpan satire of Hollywood's cultural dominance, not just in the West, but all the way out in the Iranian villages. But just like any journey is a goal in itself, his chance encounters and quaint ideas help shape Rasulinejad's playful but sincere film, which (self-)ironically stands in stark contrast to the masculine action star to whom it is so passionately dedicated.

"Makeup Artist", the winner of the Award of Excellence at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival in Japan, is about Mina, a makeup artist who is determined to realize her dreams.

She not only refuses to succumb to her husband and mother-in-law's fierce opposition, but also paves her own path and pushes forward along it. Gradually, it looks as if the people and world around her are starting to change.

"Children of the Dirty Ground" by Mikail Dayyani and "Gislu" by Mohammad-Sadeq Esmaeili will compete in the mid-length category and "Dear Bibi" by Narges Judaki and Iman Paknahad and "Water, Wind, Dust, Bread" by Mehdi Zamanpur will be screened in the short film category.

"Water, Wind, Dust, Bread" has previously been screened at several international festivals.

It tells the story of 11-year-old Abolfazl who lives with his family in an oasis in the Iranian desert. He picks dates, tends to his family's cows, does his homework, and has fun with his best friend Setayesh.



"Eastwood" directed by Alireza Rasulinejad.

The camera quietly observes their friendship as they swing between the date palms or climb the windswept rocks around the oasis. Abolfazl's mother bakes fresh bread, and tourists come to her guesthouse for the serene atmosphere.

But life in the oasis is not entirely idyllic. Although Abolfazl lives with a physical disability, it is Setayesh who faces an even bigger hurdle. She is one of the 40,000 children in Iran who don't have a birth certificate, and as a result, she can't go to school.

Persian story on wars' impacts on children published



Front cover of Iranian writer Parisa Shams's story "A Sad Snail Who Didn't Have a Shell".

TEHRAN – A story by Iranian children's writer Parisa Shams about the impacts of wars on children's lives has recently been published.

The book entitled "A Sad Snail Who Didn't Have a Shell" is from the series "Blue Children" that is published by the Blue Bird Publishing House for children with special needs.

The book tells the story of a little snail who is forced to migrate as a result of the war.

In this book, Shams illustrates how children's dreams for the future fade in the wake of wars and how humanitarian aid and support can help heal the wounds of the wars.

An introduction published on the back cover of the book reads, "People's life is colorful like a rainbow; Sometimes is white, sometimes is green, sometimes red, sometimes violet or indigo. It is amazing that our life is in these colors, however, we'd be better off to always be in blue; blue like the sky, which always remains blue with all the white

and dark clouds so that the birds who love it and it loves them can hold their hope for flying. Just like the blue children who with all their problems are never disappointed and give up."

The series "Blue Children" contains three other books all written by Shams with illustrations by Zahra Keiqobadi.

"A Little Cockroach Who Loved to Fly" and "The Little Doll Vendor Kangaroo" are other parts of the series. In the final part, Shams plans to focus on a sorcerer crow.

The Blue Bird Publishing House is the Elmi Farhangi Publishing Company's branch specializing in children's books.

Persian translations of numerous children's books from the world's literature have been published by the publishing house.

"Jonathan & Martha" by Petr Horacek and "Guess How Much I Love You" by Sam McBratney are the latest examples.

London Short Film Festival picks movies by Iranian filmmakers

TEHRAN – Three Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the London Short Film Festival.

"Barter" by Ziba Karamali and Emad Arad, "The Sea" by Sahra Ramezani and "I Have Sinned a Rapturous Sin" by Maryam Tafakory will be screened in different sections of the festival, which will take place in London from January 14 to 23.

"Barter" has been selected to be screened in the New Shorts: Disconnected Conversations category.

"Barter" is about Parsa, a 13-year-old boy who is trying to hide a secret from his father. The film depicts a dramatic situation in a family, and how people change when their interests are at stake.

"The Sea" will compete in the New Shorts: Lo-Budget Mayhem section.



"The Sea" directed by Sahra Ramezani. (Photo by Mojtaba Rohamian)

In this movie, some guys are planning to go on a trip but...

"I Have Sinned a Rapturous Sin" has been selected for the F(r)ictions section.

What cures women of sexual promiscuity? Eating lettuce, of course, at least according to one clergyman advising women on how to control

their lust, as seen in Tafakori's film.

Tafakori also competes in the UK Competition: Coloring Outside the Lines with "Irani Bag".

Using excerpts of films produced between 1990 and 2018, "Irani Bag" is a split-screen video essay questioning the innocence of bags in Iranian cinema.

Heda Margolius Kovaly's memoir "Under a Cruel Star" published in Persian

TEHRAN – Czech writer Heda Margolius Kovaly's memoir "Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague 1941-1968" has been published in Persian.

Mahi is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Razieh Khoshnud.

The memoir was originally written in Czech and published in Canada in 1973 under the title "Na vlastni kuzi" by 68 Publishers, a well-known publishing house for Czech expatriates in Toronto.

An English translation appeared the same year as the first part of the book The Victors and the Vanquished published by Horizon Press in New York.

A British edition of the book excluded the second treatise and was published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson under the title "I Do Not Want to Remember" in 1973.

The book is also available in Chinese, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Romanian, Spanish and the original Czech edition.

Kovaly was born in Prague. Of Jewish ancestry, she spent the years of the Second World War in the Lodz Ghetto and then in

concentration camps Auschwitz and Gross Rosen sub-camps including Christianstadt.

After her camp was evacuated, she escaped from a death march and made her way back to Prague, where many of her friends refused to take her in due to the Nazis' harsh punishments for those sheltering camp escapees.

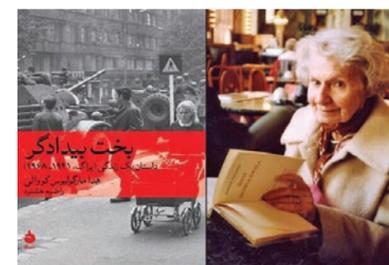
Kovaly took part in the Prague uprising against the Nazis in May 1945. The only member of her family to survive the war was her husband, Rudolf Margolius.

Kovaly's memoir describes in detail the continuing anti-Semitism that Jews returning from concentration camps faced.

It also depicts the growing interest in communism among many Czechoslovaks, including her husband, who later became Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade.

In January 1952, her husband was arrested and in November 1952, he was convicted in the Soviet-staged Slansky trial and executed on December 3, 1952.

In the wake of her husband's trial, Kovaly became a social pariah, barely able to



This combination photo shows Czech writer Heda Margolius Kovaly and the front cover of the Persian translation of her memoir "Under a Cruel Star".

survive and stay out of imprisonment as few would hire her for work, as at that time unemployment was illegal under the Czechoslovak constitution.

The book ends with the Warsaw Pact armies invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 as a response to the Prague Spring. After the invasion, Kovaly immigrated to the United States.