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Ill-Advised Action of U.S. Casts Skepticism Over Vienna Talks

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Report **T** UN decries “disastrous” human rights for Palestinians

TEHRAN – The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has strongly condemned Israeli violations of Palestinian rights, describing their situation as disastrous, with severe infringements occurring that are affecting the lives of millions of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation.

Michelle Bachelet was briefing the UN Committee on the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Geneva. The Committee's recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly, to which the Committee reports annually. It was set up to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination without external interference, national independence and sovereignty; and to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced.

The UN rights expert expressed outrage over the regime's ongoing harassment of human rights activists in the occupied Palestinian Territories.

That outrage was also strongly directed towards Israel's recent designation of six civil society groups as “terrorist organizations.” Bachelet slammed Israel for designating groups based on “vague or unsubstantiated grounds.” She underscored how the groups have been working with the international community for decades, defending human rights and delivering humanitarian aid for thousands of people. Bachelet said, “without adequate substantive evidence, these decisions appear arbitrary, and further erode the civic and humanitarian space in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

Also at the committee briefing, Omar Shakir, Palestine Director at Human Rights Watch, condemned the ► Page 5

Smart restriction plan aims to contain pandemic

TEHRAN – A national plan on COVID-19 restrictions will be operational in five stages, the first phase will kick off on Sunday, Hossein Qasemi, member of the committee of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has said.

The plan is set on two types of measures, the first one is the general limitations once imposed to control the pandemic, which is done through an internet-based system (called Omid) newly designed and operated by the domestic knowledge-based companies.

“The plan in fact forms a link between the provision of services that citizens need, based on the vaccination status, whether they are sick or in quarantine status so that people who have been vaccinated and have a vaccination card can receive services.

The first phase of the project will be implemented on December 12 and will include executive agencies.

In this way, the employees of the executive agencies who provide services must be vaccinated, but those who do not get vaccinated whether for medical or other reasons, should have a PCR test every 15 days and report it to their workplace.

The second phase of the project starts one week after the first phase, which targets city transportation systems, including online taxis, in which the health status of the drivers is inquired so that they are allowed to operate. ► Page 7



TEHRAN— The Israeli regime and Hamas signed a ceasefire agreement in May 2021 after the violent clashes ignited by the Israeli forces in Al-Aqsa Mosque and Sheikh Jarrah. Since then, the Israelis have been seemingly quiet. But this is not the case. They have been violating the ceasefire in stunned silence by

the Western media outlets.

Israeli occupation forces left massive destruction behind after raiding and sabotaging a school in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem), arresting 5 female Palestinians under the pretext of an alleged stabbing attempt.

Israeli occupation forces detained the Palestinian ex-prisoner Shorouq Badan from the town of Tuqu, southeast of Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank, on Tuesday. Israeli settlers stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque courtyards under the protection of occupation forces and performed provocative tours on Wednesday. ► Page 2

Exports of steel products grow 14%

TEHRAN – Iran exported about \$4.5 billion worth of steel products including ingots, profiles, and sheets in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21–November 21), registering a 14-percent rise year on year.

According to the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Rohollah Latifi, steel products accounted for

14.5 percent of the country's total non-oil exports during the mentioned eight months.

Latifi noted that some 11.067 million tons of various iron and steel products worth \$3.735 billion were exported in the previous year, of which 2.23 million tons were iron ore and other related raw materials.

The exports of steel products in the first eight months of the current year have ex-

ceeded the total figure for the previous year by \$800 million, the official noted.

Iran exported over 5.912 million tons of steel during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21–October 22), which was also 30 percent more than the figure of the same period of time in the past year. ► Page 4

Papandrea sends message to Iranian women weightlifters

TEHRAN – Former International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) interim president Ursula Papandrea has sent an encouraging message to the Iranian women weightlifters.

Four women weightlifters, namely Elnaz Bajelani (76kg), Elham Hosseini (81kg), Yekta Jamali (87kg) and Fatemeh Yousefi (+87kg) will represent Iran at the 2021 World Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

“I want to wish them a strong performance. They are physically and mentally strong women who have risen more quickly than anyone could have predicted,” Papandrea said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

“I am no longer surprised by them and expect they will win medals. I am excited to see what the future holds for the women's team in Iran,” she added. ► Page 3



Saffron harvest in Khuzestan

A young girl in picking saffron flowers in a rural district in southwestern Khuzestan province, December 7. Iranian saffron is known as the “red gold”. Every year, the saffron harvest season begins in early November. Major saffron producers of Iran are located on the east side of the country. The country exported \$60 million of saffron during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21–October 22).

Tens of tourism farms to open to public in central Iran

TEHRAN – Tens of tourism farms are becoming ready to open doors to the public in Markazi province, the deputy tourism chief said on Wednesday.

“Nowadays, rural and farm tourism is becoming more and more popular due to an increasing tendency toward specialized forms of traveling that we see in the global scene,” Seyyed Hassan Hosseini said.

In this regard, tens of tourism farms are currently becoming prepared across the province in terms of essential infrastructure to host nature lovers in near future, the official said.

There are gardens and farms in the province that embrace special attractions such as special trees and vegetation, fishponds, atmospheric countryside, amongst others,

he said.

“By obtaining a certificate, agricultural operators and farmers can take tourist tours to their farms and gardens and earn money... Farmers may offer sightseers their fresh livestock and agricultural products at the harvest time.” ► Page 6

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Diplomat warns against ‘dangerous’ acts of piracy targeting Iranian oil at sea

TEHRAN – An Iranian diplomat to the UN issued a stern warning on Tuesday against acts of piracy targeting tankers carrying Iran's oil at sea, urging the international community to condemn such “unlawful acts” that endanger freedom of navigation.

Zahra Ershadi, the deputy permanent representative of Iran to the UN, made the remarks while addressing the UN General Assembly meeting on oceans and the law of the sea.

Following is the text of her statement:

While recalling the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 as a general legal framework for activities in the oceans and seas along with acknowledging the status of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a signatory state to the UNCLOS, we are of the view that this convention is not the only legal framework governing activities carried out in the oceans and seas. Therefore, we would expect any negotiations on related resolutions to oceans and seas consider the position of non-member parties to that convention and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner that encompasses the legitimate concerns of those countries. Such an inclusive vision could lead to constructive engagement among a wider number of countries in supporting those resolutions. Nevertheless, any constructive engagement by my delegation during the negotiations and joining of the consensus should not be construed as acceptance of this convention as ► Page 2

Qalibaf attends Islamic parliamentary union summit

TEHRAN – Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf arrived in Istanbul late on Wednesday to participate at the meeting of the OIC parliamentary union.

Qalibaf is set to hold bilateral meetings with the speakers of some Islamic countries present at the summit, the parliament presiding board spokesman Seyyed Nezamuddin Mousavi said on Wednesday.

The MP stated that parliamentary diplomacy and efforts to develop economic relations with OIC countries by supporting economic actors and the private sector are among the issues emphasized by the Parliament.

Supporting the private sectors of Iran and Turkey will be an important part of the parliamentary trip, Mousavi added.

The 16th meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) with the central theme of “Palestine, Immigration and Afghanistan” will be held on December 9–10 in Istanbul. It will be hosted by the Turkish Parliament.

Tensions in occupied Palestine may come back soon

From page 1 ▶ In another example, occupation forces raided the house of Palestinian martyr Fadi Abu Shukhedem in the neighborhood of Shuafat Camp in al-Quds on Tuesday, and took measurements inside the house in preparation for its punitive demolition.

For the past two months, Hamas has been silent due to a delay by Cairo to resolve the Gaza issue, particularly the reconstruction of areas damaged by Israeli attacks and trade through the Rafah crossing to give the Egyptian government an opportunity to mediate with Israel. But senior sources in interviews with Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed say Hamas officials are outraged by Egypt's procrastination and delay in implementing the agreements. Yet, Hamas has said Cairo has taken a tougher line on Israel on some issues, especially the reconstruction.

Despite Hamas' efforts to avoid media tensions with Egypt, the resistance movement now finds itself under more siege than in the past and feels that the Egyptian government has imposed the current situation on the movement without taking any concessions from Israel.

According to informed sources in the Hamas movement, the group has repeatedly given the Egyptian mediator several opportunities to advance understanding with Israel and begin rebuilding the damaged areas, which was funded by the UAE (\$500 million), but has done virtually nothing.

Hamas threatens to escalate tensions with Israel

On Nov. 29, Hamas's tone changed amid Cairo's delay in fulfilling its commitments, such as rebuilding devastated areas and facilitating Palestinians' travel through the Rafah crossing.

Al-Jazeera quoted informed sources in Hamas as saying that the group was considering options to escalate

tensions with Israel amid the continued siege of Gaza and delays in rebuilding the affected areas, and that Israeli aggression on Al-Aqsa Mosque and assault on Palestinian prisoners could set fire to the existing ashes.

The sources clarified, "Hamas will not allow the current situation to continue and the next step will prove the veracity of Hamas's claims."

Israel delays resolving Gaza Strip problems

On the other hand, Egyptian sources stated that Cairo is aware of the resentment and anger of Hamas leaders about the continuation of the current situation, but not because of Egypt's deliberate approach and behavior towards the Palestinians, but because of the Israeli side's delay in the talks.

One of the sources said that the Egyptian officials have stated that this approach of Israel has put Cairo in a tight spot due to delays in the negotiation process, because the Egyptian side seeks the opinion of the Israelis at every step, and therefore enters the negotiations with the Palestinian side.

"Palestinian groups, led by Hamas, believe that Egypt is pressuring them to make concessions and wants to reach an agreement under any circumstances, even to the detriment of the Palestinian side," the source said. The source, who is an Egyptian official, added, "The Egyptian side is outraged by the constant changes in Israel's position; this will lead to the suspension of Egypt's understanding with Hamas to implement the reconstruction and reopening of the Rafah crossing."

Israeli media outlets reported that Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid would travel to Cairo this week to discuss the Palestinian issue and the case of Israeli prisoners of war with Hamas.

Intensifying bans will fail to create leverage on Iran amid Vienna talks, Tehran tells U.S.

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Tuesday lambasted the U.S. for its fresh sanctions against a number of the Iranian officials and entities over allegations of human rights abuses, suggesting that intensifying anti-Iran measures will fail to create leverage over Tehran amid talks in Vienna to lift sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Khatibzadeh said such a move contravenes the anticipated "seriousness and goodwill" needed to advance the Vienna talks.

The response by the spokesman came shortly after the U.S. Treasury and State Department announced sanctions against a dozen Iranian government officials and organizations over allegations of human rights

abuses.

"Even amid Vienna talks, US cannot stop imposing sanctions against Iran," Khatibzadeh tweeted.

"Washington fails to understand that 'maximum failure' and a diplomatic breakthrough are mutually exclusive. Doubling down on sanctions won't create leverage — and is anything but seriousness and goodwill," he added.

The new sanctions on Tuesday targeted eight Iranian individuals and four organizations that the U.S. administration claimed without providing any evidence to be involved in the repression of protesters and political activists, Press TV reported.

MP presents strategies to overcome water shortage

TEHRAN - To overcome the water shortage in the country, a member of the Agriculture and Environment Committee of the Parliament has said it is necessary to transfer of water-intensive industries to water-rich areas, transfer seawater instead of transferring water from one region to another and to take water diplomacy seriously.

"There are at least two domestic and international solutions to overcome the water crisis in the country. The cultivation of water-intensive crops in arid and semi-arid regions must be halted immediately," Jalal Mahmoudzadeh said in an interview with ISNA on Monday when asked about water crisis in the country.

"For example," he said, "rice should not be cultivated in Isfahan or Khuzestan (provinces) because rice is a crop that needs flood irrigation, so cultivating this crop in areas with water shortage is 'irrational'."

Mahmoudzadeh also said, "We have to take industry to water-rich provinces."

The MP said industrial projects in areas which suffer from water shortage is harming farmers and citizens as well.

"We started a steel industry in Isfahan, which is very water-intensive. Starting industries in arid areas means allocating water needed for agriculture and drinking to industry. The provinces of East and West Azerbaijan and Ardabil are among the provinces that have the problem of excess water, i.e. sometimes excess groundwater causes damage to gardens and crops, while water-intensive industries are not established in these areas."

Mahmoudzadeh added, "I do not mean that the administration should move industries from hot and arid areas to waterlogged areas at once. As we speak now, most of the tendencies of state-owned and quasi-state-owned investment companies are to establish industrial projects in hot and arid areas. My point is to at least prevent these cases."

About water transfer between regions, the representative of Mahabad in the parliament said, "Water transfer requires basic studies. The mere decision to move water from one place to another without environmental and social studies creates a problem. Even the Arab countries desalinate the salt water of the sea and transfer it. We have to invest on this. Intrusion into the fresh water of rivers and groundwater makes our situation worse."

Insisting on the need for modern irrigation, the MP said according to the sixth development plan the administration should have used modern methods for irrigating 600,000 hectares of land during 7 years, but unfortunately only 20 to 25 percent of it has become operational.

He added the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad has done little in this regard, and one of the problems of Iran is traditional irrigation.

Regarding international water governance strategies, Mahmoudzadeh said, "Some neighboring countries, without considering environmental issues and without respecting the rights of other countries, built different dams. Turkey has built the Ilisu Dam, which has dried up 70 to 75 percent of Hur al-Azim, or the dam being built by Turkey in the Sari Qamish region to control the Aras River is four times the size of the Karkheh Dam, and reduces 55 percent of the Aras water inflow into East, West Azerbaijan and Ardabil. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs must enter into negotiations with Turkey and demand Iran's water rights."

The parliamentarian added, "The issue of water is scientific and not ethnic. We should raise this issue in the context of scientific issues and not regional and ethnic ones. This is a blow to national security. Officials must develop a specific solution for each region based on the specific characteristics of each region. Industrial, agricultural and drinking water must be managed scientifically."

Advisor to Leader: What Assad has done is unique in its kind

TEHRAN — Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad met on Tuesday with Ali Akbar Velayati, advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on International Affairs, to discuss bilateral relations as well as international and regional issues.

During the meeting, which was also attended by the Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Bashar al-Jaafari, Velayati stressed the strategic relations between the two countries, as well as the need for special focus to promote relations between Iran and Syria.

Syria has been at war with foreign-backed militant and terrorist groups since 2011.

"The confrontation with the enemies in Syria continues, and the alliance of the countries of the Resistance Front in recent years has made it possible to take effective, successful and unprecedented measures against the continued domination of foreigners in this very sensitive region, coveted by the United States and Britain in the past."

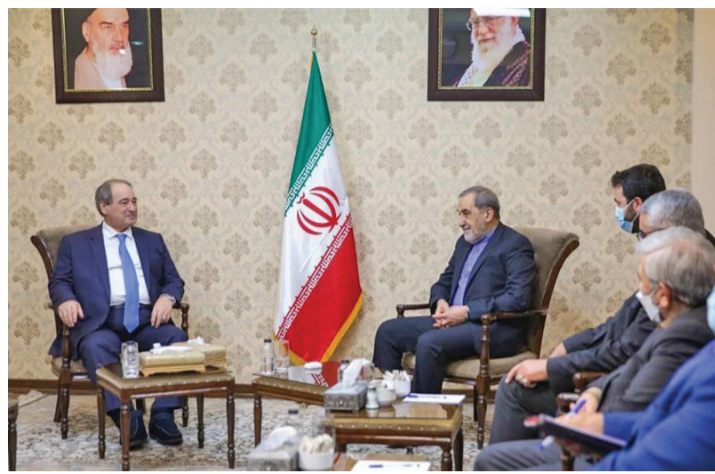
The veteran politician added that the formation of the resistance front which has achieved great successes has given the Islamic world hope that with the resistance the aggressors can be humiliated.

"What the Syrian president has done in recent years against the cowardly invasion of some countries in Syria with the leadership of the United States, the Zionists and some reactionary countries in the region, is unique in its kind," he noted.

He then reiterated that this couldn't be achieved without the support of Iran, Russia, Hezbollah and most importantly the resistance of the brave Syrian nation.

"The resistance front will undoubtedly achieve the final victory," the former foreign minister remarked.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the advisor to the Leader said, "The



Yemeni resistance has defeated the occupiers and will soon force them to retreat. We will soon be witnessing an independent, powerful country and a strong supporter of Islamic values."

Saudi Arabia which has been bombarding Yemen since March 2015 is pressing allies to supply additional missiles for its U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems as its conflict with Yemen's forces once again intensifies.

Riyadh has asked both the United States and certain European states to provide additional munitions for its Patriot systems, The Wall Street Journal reported on December 7.

The request comes as missile and drone attacks from Yemen into Saudi Arabia have spiked in recent months, with more than 20 drone strikes and 10 ballistic missile strikes landing in both October and November of this year, according to the report, which cited a Saudi government official.

'Regional states that cooperated with hegemony against Syria now seek get close to Damascus'

Velayati also said certain Arab states that colluded with the Western hegemony to topple the Syrian government now want to reestablish contacts with Syria.

This shows that the Islamic world has realized that reliance to aliens is a

thing of the past.

The advisor to the Leader was indirectly referring to a move by certain Arab countries to approach Syria. The recent visit by the UAE foreign minister to Damascus and his meeting with the Syrian president is an example.

There are even talks of readmitting Syria to the Arab League.

'Lebanon will overcome problems'

Velayati also predicted that Lebanon will leave behind these difficult days created by U.S. sanctions on Beirut.

"Undoubtedly, the Lebanese people also will overcome the problems created by the United States and its mercenaries in the region and will continue to resist as the flag bearer of Lebanon's independence and territorial integrity."

In late October, Saudi Arabia also cut economic and diplomatic ties with Lebanon under the pretext that Lebanese Information Minister George Kordahi had criticized the Saudi war on Yemen.

However, Kordahi resigned on Dec. 3, saying he was putting the country before his personal interest to help end a dispute with Saudi Arabia brought on by his comments.

Velayati reiterated that Lebanon is among the countries of the Resistance

Front that can be a model for the whole world with its positive effects in recent years, which is unique in contemporary history.

For his part, Mekdad thanked Tehran for its support to the Syrian people and government and pointed to the key importance of Damascus-Tehran relations, saying a meeting between the presidents of the two presidents can mark a turning point in relations.

"The relations between the two countries are very important and the meeting (between the two presidents) will take place after the necessary preparations are completed," Mekdad pointed out.

Syria's chief diplomat also said, "The interaction and cooperation between Iran and Syria is a message for future generations to understand the strategic dimensions of this strong relationship and not allowing foreigners and adventurers to interfere."

Explaining about the latest development in the region including Syria, Mekdad described the continuous aggression of the Zionist regime against his country and the illegal military presence of the U.S. in Syria coupled with Washington's sanctions on Damascus as a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country and the main source of insecurity and economic pressure.

The Syrian foreign minister stressed the need for the United States to withdraw from the region, saying that Washington has no future in the region and must leave the Syrian territory.

In a report on Oct. 26, Al Jazeera reported that the United States will not be withdrawing its roughly 900 troops from northeast Syria any time soon, despite mounting speculation it would do so following its much-maligned August pullout from Afghanistan, according to officials with knowledge of the Biden administration's plans.

Diplomat warns against 'dangerous' acts of piracy targeting Iranian oil at sea

'We urge the international community to condemn unlawful acts that threaten free trade at sea'

From page 1 ▶ a legally binding instrument by my government. Iran's activities in the marine environment strictly adhere to those international instruments that it has expressly accepted.

However, among others, a strong belief in protecting the sea and its resources as well as ensuring the safety and security of maritime activities have inspired us to cooperate with other countries in a constructive spirit on these parts of the planet.

As a coastal state of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to realizing the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in line with the agenda for sustainable development. In order to achieve those targets as well as Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, 2021 to 2030, we stress that much greater efforts should be undertaken by states and all other stake holders, including through international cooperation and coordination as well as by providing not only capacity building but also transfer of marine technology and know-how to the developing countries.

Iran highly values the efforts that have been made on sustainable fisheries management which have an outstanding role in supporting the economic activities of some developing countries, conservation of maritime resources, healthy maritime ecosystems and ensuring food security for all. With due attention to the decrease of marine resources in recent years planning for the responsible fisheries management, the use of selective fishing method and combating illegal unreported and unregulated fishing should be on the agenda of all countries, regional fisheries management organizations and relevant international institutions. In this regard, it is necessary for countries to take urgent action in the form of national programs and international cooperation to raise the knowledge and awareness of fishermen and exploiters of marine resources by building capacities.

Rapid population growth, industrialization, urbanization, increasing fishing demands, droughts and other natural disasters caused by climate change effects and ineffective development policies are degrading the natural resources at an alarmingly rapid rate and thus pose as serious threats to sustainable development in our region.

Sea level rise, loss of biodiversity and depletion of the population of fauna and flora are other issues that

we face in the region as well.

Taking into consideration the increasing damage and destruction of essential and economically important coastal ecosystems, such as mangrove forests, coral reefs and the livelihood of fisheries in the Persian Gulf and Oman sea, we strongly recommend taking the necessary action to protect such ecosystems through cooperation among coastal countries in the region.

In the area of marine life and its maintenance, the irresponsible construction of artificial islands in the Persian Gulf would unequivocally damage the habitats of rare marine species and would endanger the natural life of its unique maritime resources. Deployment and the heavy presence of military fleets from countries outside of the region in the Persian Gulf have exacerbated not only the safety and security of coastal states as well as the smooth navigation in this body of water, but also its maritime pollution and marine resource depletion. We urge all relevant states to cooperate in order to protect the environment of this shared body of water and refrain from unilateral acts that might endanger its marine environment.

Sea level rise is one of the most well-known consequences of global warming and climate change that my country as a coastal state is facing.

With regard to tackling it, developed countries must meet their commitments under the UNFCCC (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and Paris Agreement including to provide financial resources, capacity building and transferring technology. Taking into consideration that developed countries should take a lead in climate actions according to their historical responsibility in GHGs emission. Ambition in climate action and providing means of implementation for developing countries could pave the way to achieve sustainable development for all.

Acknowledging the importance of conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the maritime biological resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction, Iran supports the development of an effective, comprehensive and legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, consistent with the international law of the sea. Considering biodiversity in areas

beyond national jurisdiction as the common heritage of humankind, my delegation is looking forward to participating in the fourth session of the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference in 2022.

Iran reiterates its commitment to rule-based maritime order for securing maritime rights and interests for all as well as ensuring that maritime activities are undertaken smoothly, including based on the international law of the sea. Based on that commitment and sincere conviction wherein the protraction of conflicts and ever-escalating tensions among littoral states of Persian Gulf are prone to not only further destabilize the region but also severely endanger the development and prosperity of the peoples of the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed an initiative based on dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect at the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. Iran remains steadfast in its belief that regional cooperation based on the aforementioned proposal would ensure safety, security and international order at sea, especially in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. Our contribution to combat piracy at sea in the region and beyond, in cooperation with other countries, that has been reflected by the Secretary-General in his relevant consecutive reports and commended by the Security Council in a number of resolutions, emanates from the same sentiment and understanding.

Finally, Mr. President, as we expressed in our statement last year, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to unilateral coercive measures that were preexisting due to the U.S. maximum pressure policy on my country and the Iranian people, has exacerbated the daily life of ordinary Iranian people.

It has heavily affected the provision of the basic needs of people, including food, medicine, medical equipment and commodity supply chains due to the disruption of the freedom of navigation of Iran's shipping lines as a result of the vicious sanctions. In addition to the previous acts that have been outlawed, stolen Iranian oil and its drivers at sea have been a new development since last year. We strongly warn regarding the continuation of this dangerous policy that exacerbates an already highly intense situation due to such arrogant unilateral policies. We urge the international community to condemn these unlawful acts that threaten free trade at sea as well as freedom of seas and disregard the inhuman sanctions.

Iran FM meets members of Parliament national security committee

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has received a delegation from the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

The meeting was held at the foreign ministry on Tuesday.

In this cordial meeting, which was also attended by the Council of Deputies and a group of senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the chairman and members of the parliamentary committee first expressed their views on various foreign policy issues and then explained their expectations from the foreign ministry and the government.

Amir Abdollahian emphasized the high position of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament) in managing the affairs of the country, and emphasized the positive view of the ministry on brainstorming and using the views and capacity of the nation's representatives in the process of formulating and advancing foreign policy. He expressed hope that such meeting would continue.

Explaining the government's achievements in the field of foreign policy over the past 100 days, including providing the vaccine needed by the country, the Foreign Minister explained the programs and priorities of foreign policy and the diplomatic apparatus, including in the field of economic diplomacy. He stressed that there is a special focus on the leap of economic relations with different countries with the priority of neighbors, and that small statistics on the volume of relations during the short life of the current government confirm the success of programs and measures.

Underlining a balanced, dynamic and intelligent foreign policy in the 13th government, the Foreign Minister explained the various dimensions of the government's foreign policy in order to develop relations with neighbors within the framework of good neighborly policy.

He added, "The two visits of Dr. Raisi, the President, to Tajikistan and



Turkmenistan and the participation in the summit of the Shanghai and ECO organizations and dozens of side meetings and final and signed agreements and understandings, have had good achievements in expanding relations with neighbors."

Regarding the ongoing talks in Vienna, Amir Abdollahian stated, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is serious in these negotiations and expects the logical proposals it has presented to be carefully considered," according to a foreign ministry statement.

He stressed that the definitive effort of the negotiating team is to achieve the goal of the Iranian nation to lift sanctions in this process. Amir Abdollahian also emphasized facilitating the movement of Iranians to their homeland, referring to the 13th government's special attention to Iranians abroad.

The minister announced the second meeting of the secretaries of the specialized working groups of the Supreme Council of Iranians Abroad was scheduled to be held on Wednesday. Amir Abdollahian said the meeting was to be chaired by him as the deputy chairman of the council.

These meetings pave the way for a meeting of the council, chaired by President Raisi, he added.

In the meeting, the members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly also expressed their views on the Vienna talks, developments in the Caucasus, development of relations with neighbors, water diplomacy,

public and cultural diplomacy, strengthening economic diplomacy, pursuing the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, the need to pay attention to human resources, etc.

It should be noted that in the meeting, some foreign ministry directors presented reports from the areas under their responsibility.

Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani also plans to brief lawmakers sitting on the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on the outcome of the recent round of the Vienna talks.

The spokesman for the parliamentary committee, Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, said Bagheri Kani will attend a meeting this week of the committee to inform the lawmakers of the latest developments in the Vienna talks.

In remarks to Tasnim, Meshkini said, "In this meeting, Mr. Bagheri, the head of the Iranian negotiating team, will report on the details of the talks."

After a week of intensive negotiations, diplomats from Iran and major world powers finished the latest round of talks on Friday. The plan to start talks on Thursday.

The Joint Commission of the Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), convened a session on Friday afternoon at Vienna's Coburg Hotel.

Enrique Mora, the EU Deputy Director General for External Action Service, and Bagheri Kani presided

over the session.

At the meeting which was attended by the delegations of Iran and P4+1 group (Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany) as well as the European Union, the participants reviewed the results and progress made during this round of talks in light of the draft documents presented by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Some delegations asked for returning to their respective capitals for consultations and receiving new instructions. Hence, the negotiating teams agreed to a hiatus in the talks so that discussions will resume Thursday after delegations return to Vienna from their countries, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

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. In a bid to push the talks forward, Iran drafted the proposals in strict accordance with the terms of the JCPOA, according to Press TV.

Amir Abdollahian in a recent post on Instagram said that Iran is serious about reaching a good agreement. "We are serious about reaching a good deal. Any deal must be comprehensive so that people feel its results in a tangible way. What the Iranian negotiating team presented in writing is fully in keeping with the Iran nuclear deal, JCPOA, and there is nothing in the documents beyond the agreement nor does the text contain any demands beyond the JCPOA," he said.

He added, "I explicitly told Mr. Borrel that the report of 90% uranium enrichment in Iran is a sheer lie. The other parties are expected to come to Vienna for the continuation of talks with clear proposals and answers including the removal of sanctions and to stop their blame-game. In this case, a good deal is within reach. We will follow the path of diplomacy and talks in Vienna within the framework of the logic of negotiation and understanding."

Ill-advised Action of U.S. Casts Skepticism Over Vienna Talks

TEHRAN – Informal meetings in Vienna between Iran and world powers have already kicked off, with the formal get-go of the Vienna talks scheduled to take place on Thursday.

But a series of U.S. hostile measures against Iran has cast a long shadow of doubt over the talks even before they officially resume.

Iran and the European Union both announced that the Vienna talks would resume on Thursday after a week-long break. Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, announced the resumption date from Moscow while on a visit to Russia. Enrique Mora also did his part to dispel the short-lived uncertainty over the resumption date of the talks, saying Wednesday on Twitter that "The 7th round JCPOA talks will continue tomorrow Thursday in Vienna after consultations in and among capitals."

He added, "A Joint Commission and a number of bilateral and multilateral contacts will take place."

Notably, he didn't call the upcoming round the eighth. He rather said the next meeting will be the seventh round, signaling that the week-long hiatus was an interlude in the seventh round.

At any rate, the next round is likely to face a bumpy road considering recent U.S. measures against Iran ranging from alleged human rights-related sanctions to seizing Iranian oil shipments en route to Venezuela.

On Tuesday, in what appeared to be a concerted effort to ramp up pressure on Iran, the U.S. departments of Justice and Treasury announced new

measures against Iran.

The Department of Justice claimed that the U.S. seized "two large caches of Iranian arms, including 171 surface-to-air missiles and eight anti-tank missiles, as well as approximately 1.1 million barrels of Iranian petroleum products."

"The U.S. government similarly seized the Iranian petroleum products from four foreign-flagged tankers in or around the Arabian Sea while en route to Venezuela," it said in a statement. "These actions represent the government's largest-ever forfeitures of fuel and weapons shipments from Iran."

Concurrently, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has designated a number of Iranian individuals and institutions in connection with alleged "serious human rights abuse and repressive acts targeting innocent civilians, political opponents, and peaceful protesters."

The U.S. measures came two days before the official resumption of Vienna talks and while informal meetings were underway. Thus, many in Iran and beyond viewed the U.S. actions as an attempt to pressure Iran at a time when it is keen to show goodwill by presenting carefully drafted proposals to break the impasse over how to revive a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

This may be the reason why Iran established a clear link between the Vienna talks and the recent sanctions. "Even amid Vienna Talks, US cannot stop imposing sanctions against Iran.

Washington fails to understand that 'maximum failure' & a diplomatic breakthrough are mutually exclusive," Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry, said on Twitter.

He added, "Doubling down on sanctions won't create leverage—and is anything but seriousness & goodwill."

Over the past few months, the U.S. has been complaining about the lack of seriousness on the Iranian side to conclude the Vienna talks. The recent round of talks has only exacerbated the U.S. grumbling. On the other side, Iran strived to show its seriousness and goodwill by presenting innovative proposals.

On Friday, the Western negotiators received two Iranian draft proposals regarding the nuclear- and sanctions-related measures needed to be taken to bring the Vienna talks to a swift conclusion. Instead of studying the Iranian proposals and presenting its own proposals, the U.S. fell for calls from Iran hawks to resort to bullying and doubling down on sanctions pressure against Iran.

For months now, anti-Iran experts have been urging Biden to take a tougher line on Iran on the incorrect premise that Iran only responds to pressure, a proposition that had been employed by the Trump administration but miserably failed.

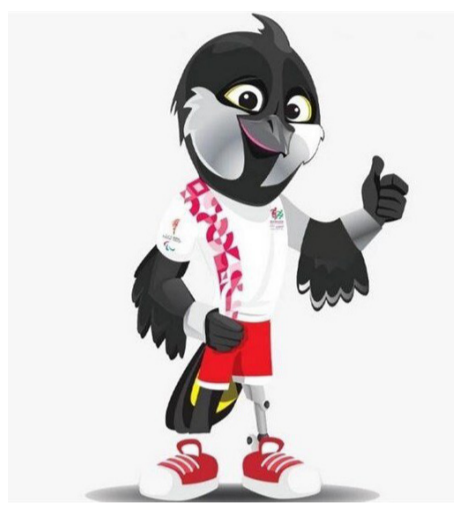
With the Vienna talks entering a new, complicated phase, the Biden administration should be careful not to fall into traps set by those who would predictably oppose any kind of agreement with Iran.

SPORTS

Iran tops medal table at Asian Youth Para Games

TEHRAN – Iran topped medal tally of the 2021 Asian Youth Para Games held in Bahrain.

The Iranian athletes claimed 44 gold medals, 53 silvers and 25 bronzes.



Thailand came second with 33 (gold), 25 (silver) and 17 (bronze) medals.

Iran sent 165 athletes to the fourth edition of the Games which were held in Manama, Bahrain from Dec. 2 to 6.

Iran finished in second place in the previous edition in the UAE behind Japan.

A total of 750 Para athletes from 29 countries are expected to participate in the competitions.

The first Asian Youth Para Games was held in Tokyo, Japan in 2009 and Kuala Lumpur hosted the second edition four years later.

At the closing ceremony, the flag was handed over to the next host city, Tashkent who will stage the games in 2025.

Geraei, Zare win UWW's Breakthrough Performance of the Year award

TEHRAN – Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Mohammadreza Geraei, Amir Zare and Aline Focken from Germany have been named United World Wrestling's Breakthrough Performance of the Year award winners.

Geraei came into 2021 without having a world or Olympic medal on his resume. The 25-year-old, known as 'The Iceman,' defied all expectations and claimed Olympic gold in Tokyo and closed out his improbable '21 campaign with a world-title run in Oslo.

Zare, at just 20-year-old, had a colossal year. He collected an Olympic bronze medal in Tokyo before upsetting three-time world champ Geno Petriashvili from Georgia and Olympic gold medalist Taha Akgul from Turkey en route to gaining heavyweight supremacy at the Oslo World Championships, UWW.org reported.

Aline Focken picked the perfect time to retire. After missing out on the '12 London Olympic Games and a ninth-place outing in Rio, the 12-year-veteran ended her career with an upset victory over five-time world champion Adeline Gray (USA) in the 76kg Olympic finals.

Taremi, Jahanbakhsh shortlisted for AFC International Player of Week

TEHRAN – Iranian football players Mehdi Taremi and Alireza Jahanbakhsh were nominated for the AFC International Player of the Week.

With droughts broken, trophies lifted and goal of the season contenders scored, it was

another exceptional week for Asia's footballers outside the continent.

The-afc.com whittled the list down for this week's top performers – based on matches from November 30 to December 6.

*Mehdi Taremi (FC Porto, Iran)
90 minutes, 1 assist, 86% pass accuracy (3-0 v Portimonense)

No goals this week, but an excellent overall display from Porto's Iranian striker, who was heavily involved as his side eased past Portimonense in league action, highlighted by his excellent assist for Otavio.

*Alireza Jahanbakhsh (Feyenoord, Iran)
89 minutes, 71% duels won, 4 interceptions (2-1 v Heracles)

66 minutes, 1 goal, 75% dribbles successful (5-0 v Fortuna Sittard)

It was two games and two wins in a busy week for Feyenoord, and Iranian star Jahanbakhsh put the icing on a pair of strong performances with a goal on Sunday.

The former Brighton man found the net from a corner kick late on against Fortuna Sittard, with Feyenoord sitting just one point behind Ajax at the top of the Eredivisie table.

Sada Cruzeiro beat Iran's Foolad in 2021 FIVB Volleyball Club World C'ship

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball team Foolad Sirjan suffered a 3-0 (25-20, 25-16, 25-16) against Brazilian club Sada Cruzeiro Wednesday morning in the 2021 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship.

Cuban outside hitter Miguel Angel Lopez led all scorers in the match with 20 points (15 kills, four blocks, one ace), while teammates Wallace de Souza, a Rio 2016 Olympic champion, and Otavio Pinto added 11 each.

Outside hitter Amirhossein Esfandiari was Foolad's most prolific player with nine points (seven kills and two aces).

The second day of the tournament will feature the debut of the defending champions, Italy's Cucine Lube Civitanova, who will play UPCN in Pool A. Fellow Italians Trentino Itas, who have won the tournament a record five times, play their first match in Pool B against Foolad.

Debutants Iran edged by Kazakhstan in 2021 World Women's Handball

TEHRAN – Iran suffered their third successive loss in the 2021 World Women's Handball Championship, losing to Kazakhstan 31-25 Tuesday night.

The Iranian team had lost to Romania 39-11 and Norway 41-9 in Group C.

Iran will meet Uzbekistan on Thursday in Group I in the competition's Presidents Cup.

Group II consists of Slovakia, Tunisia, Paraguay and China.

The debutants will also play Angola and Cameroon on Dec. 11 and 13.

Papandrea sends message to Iranian women weightlifters

From Page 1 ▶ Papandrea has been recently nominated by USA Weightlifting (USAW) to stand for International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) President.

The IWF will hold elections for its presidency, executive board and various commissions on Dec. 20 and 21 in Tashkent.

Iran, Indonesia hold human rights talks

TEHRAN – The seventh round of human rights talks between Iran and Indonesia hosted by the Islamic Republic was held virtually on Tuesday.

The Iranian delegation was chaired by Ms. Sharifi Sadr, Director General of the Human Rights and Women's Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, and the Indonesian delegation by the Director General of Human Rights Affairs of Indonesia's Foreign Ministry.

The purpose of these talks was to get acquainted with the human rights situation in the two countries, to create a better understanding of the existing realities and to exchange experiences between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Indonesia in the field of human rights, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

The two sides discussed issues and developments regarding human rights

in Iran and Indonesia, cooperation in areas of interest within the framework of human rights mechanisms of the United Nations and other international forums, cooperation on the promotion and protection of women's rights, the rights of the disabled and human rights measures adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Iranian side appreciated Indonesia's position to vote against

the resolution on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran and called for the expansion of assistance and cooperation between the two countries in international organizations.

At the end of the talks, the two sides agreed to continue their annual cooperation and hold the next round of their negotiations on human rights cooperation in 2022 in Jakarta.

Exports of steel products grow 14%



From page 1 ► Based on the data released by the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), of the mentioned figure 1.486 million tons was the share of steel profiles which also registered a 44-percent rise year on year.

According to ISPA, Iranian exports of steel during the previous Iranian calendar year declined 13.1 percent compared to the figure for the preceding year.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles

created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

The production capacity of the country's steel chain increased from 123 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 230 million tons in the previous year (ended on March 20).

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

The WSA's report put the crude steel output by the world's top 64 producers at 1.165 billion tons in the mentioned time span, registering an increase of 12.4 percent.

Iran, Ukraine stress expansion of trade ties

TEHRAN - Deputy Speaker of Iranian Parliament Ali Nikzad and the Head of Iran-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, Andrey Vladimirovich Bogdanets have emphasized the need to broaden mutual ties between the two countries in various fields including mining, energy, agricultural, and chemical products.

During a meeting on Tuesday, the officials exchanged views on the development of trade and economic ties between the two countries of Iran and Ukraine.

Speaking in the meeting, Nikzad pointed to the two countries' great potentials for enhancing bilateral trade ties, saying that the current volume of trade between the two countries is not commensurate with existing capacities and it is necessary for the two sides to improve the level of trade.

Parliaments of the two coun-



Deputy Speaker of Iranian Parliament Ali Nikzad (R) and the Head of Iran-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, Andrey Vladimirovich Bogdanets

tries have also a great capacity to develop ties, and parliamentary cooperation is Ukraine's priority for expanding bilateral ties, Nikzad stressed, adding that the Parliaments of the two countries can pave the way for developing cooperation in all other sectors.

Vladimirovich for his part confirmed Nikzad's remarks on the low level of trade and economic relations between Iran

and Ukraine and expressed hope that this shortcoming would be resolved through dialogue between political, parliamentary, and private sector representatives of the two sides.

He further called for the expansion of cooperation and said the Ukrainian parliament welcomes broadening bilateral ties with the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) and is interested in continuing the dialogue between

the representatives of the two countries in parliamentary friendship groups to facilitate cooperation.

Back in May, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) held an online specialized meeting in collaboration with the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) to explore ways of expanding trade ties between the two countries.

The virtual event was attended by the head of the two countries' chambers of commerce, the head of the Iran-Ukraine Joint Chamber of Commerce, as well as officials and private sector representatives from both sides.

Cooperation in the agriculture sector was the main focus of the mentioned event since most of the trade exchanges between the two countries in the previous year were related to agricultural products.

Iran eyes \$20b annual trade with Iraq: official

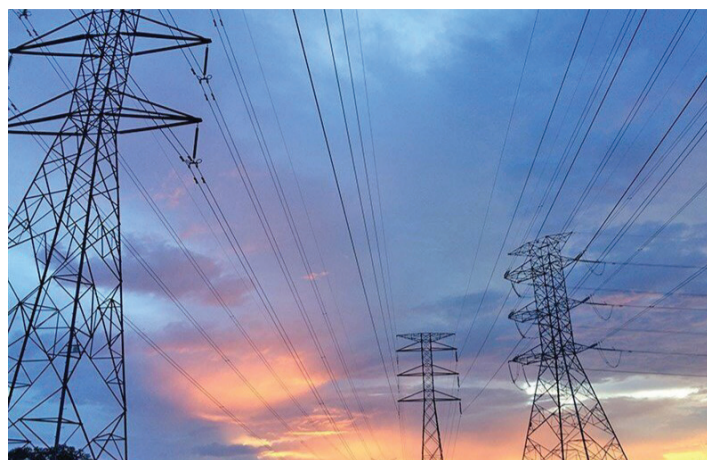
TEHRAN - Chairman of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce has said Iran is planning to boost its annual trade with neighboring Iraq to \$20 billion, Mehr News Agency reported.

Yahya Al-e Eshagh, made the remarks in a business forum between Iran and Iraq's Kirkuk province, saying that Iranian and Iraqi governments are determined to develop regional cooperation in all areas.

"Despite all events that are happening in the region, the relationship between the two countries of Iran and Iraq are on the upward trajectory," the official said.

The current administration of Iran under President Raeisi has shown great interest in broadening and enhancing trade and economic ties with neighboring states, he emphasized.

Turning to the significant place of Kirkuk province in Iraq, Al-e Eshagh pointed out this prov-



Azerbaijan in water and energy sectors, Mehrabian added: "Azerbaijan has had very good achievements in the energy sector in recent years, including gas extraction and electricity generation, which is admirable."

Mehrabian further emphasized the need to expand Tehran-Baku relations in various economic sectors, saying: "It is possible to increase the economic exchanges between the two countries; for instance, regarding Aras River, some joint

work has been done, which is necessary to be pursued and become operational in the form of joint cooperation."

As one of the major players in West Asia's energy market, Iran is now emerging as a major electricity hub in the region as the country is following a comprehensive plan for synchronizing its power grid with the neighboring countries.

Iraq was the first neighbor whose national electricity network was synchronized with the Islamic Republic's power

grid back in November 2019, and now the Energy Ministry is following a plan to connect the electricity networks of Russia and Azerbaijan with the Iranian grid.

Back in September, former Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian had announced that a research project for the synchronization of the electricity networks of Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia was underway by his ministry.

According to Ardakanian, there are two possible routes for the synchronization of Iran and Russia's power grids, one of which is through Armenia and Georgia and the other is through Azerbaijan.

The route through Azerbaijan is currently more plausible and Iran is more inclined toward this country since, in a meeting with Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev back in February 2019, Ardakanian had announced that the two countries electricity networks would become synchronized.

Last gas compressor of South Pars phases 22-24 goes online

TEHRAN - The operator of the development project of phases 22 to 24 of South Pars Gas Field said the last gas turbo-compressor of the phases' refinery has been successfully put into operation, the portal of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) announced.

"In order to make the necessary preparation for the stable supply of fuel in winter, the last turbo-compressor of the refinery of phases 22 to 24 was put into operation," Ali-Asghar Sadeghi said.

He noted that the gas transmission unit of the refinery of the mentioned phases includes six turbo-compressors for sending processed gas to the national network.

The official put the gas production capacity of the project at 56 million cubic meters (mcm) per day, and said: "With the injection of gas into the refining and gas processing lines, in addition to producing hydrocarbon products such as gas condensate, liquefied gas, ethane and sulfur, 50 mcm of sweet gas will also be sent through a 42-inch pipeline to the national gas transmission network on a daily basis."



South Pars phases 22-24 development plan produces 56 mcm of rich gas, 75,000 barrels of gas condensate, 1.5 million tons of liquid liquefied petroleum gas (propane and butane), and one million tons of ethane per day to feed petrochemical plants and has also a daily production capacity of 400 tons of sulfur.

POGC is in charge of developing the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. The field is currently divided into 24 standard phases on the Iranian side and is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

TEDPIX jumps over 11,340 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), jumped 11,349 points to 1.349 million on Wednesday.

As IRNA reported, over 4.8 billion securities worth 33.462 trillion rials (about \$796.7 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 11,856 points, and the second market's index gained 11,722 points.

Back in November, Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Majid Eshqi had said facilitation of the activities of stock market institutions like brokers will lead to the development of the capital market.

"Facilitating the establishment of brokerage firms and the ease of licensing issuance for financial institutions, as well as the strict supervision of the SEO over the activities of such financial institutions, are the basis for the development of the capital market," Eshqi stated.

Noting that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has put the support for the capital market on the agenda, Eshqi added: "In order to support the capital market, Economy Minister Ehsan Khandouzi has put issues such as the development of institutions, the removal of monopolies, the use of new tools, and the strengthening of the primary market on the agenda of this ministry."

"Elimination of monopolies and facilitating the issuance of licenses for the establishment of financial institutions is one of the most important missions of the Securities and Exchange Organization, however, this goal



has made the SEO more precise in performing its supervisory duties to prevent any possible problems for shareholders," the official explained.

Referring to the concerns of some capital market experts and shareholders about the increase in the number of financial institutions without paying attention to quality improvement, he stressed: "The capital market has the capacity for a large number of financial institutions to be active in, and it is not that the smaller the number of institutions, the easier the monitoring of their performance would be."

"Although the establishment licensing process has been facilitated, strict measures have been taken into account for reviewing the guidelines and standards, and the SEO's supervision will become more stringent once the institutions become operational," Eshqi noted.

As the market expands quantitatively, new ideas and tools enter the market which requires stronger supervision to prevent new risks. In this regard, the SEO will deal with violators very strongly, the official stressed.

PMO condemns U.S. restrictions on Iran's maritime activities

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has condemned the U.S. restrictions imposed on the Islamic Republic's maritime transportation activities, the PMO portal reported.

Ali-Akbar Safaei has made the remarks at the 32nd session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly which was held online on Tuesday.

"The foundation of the International Maritime Organization is laid based on the cooperation of its member states with the aim of maintaining and promoting maritime safety and security and preserving the environment and



increasing shipping efficiency," he stressed.

"Despite Iran's favorable role in IMO and the country's effective implementation of maritime treaties as a responsible member, we, unfortunately, continue to see a series of unfair and restrictive actions by the United

States against Iran's maritime transportation industry," Safaei added.

The deputy transport minister stated that the Iranian government strongly condemns these actions that threaten the safety and security of the country's maritime industry, and are contrary to the spirit of the international maritime treaties and the explicit text of Articles 1 and 2 of the IMO Convention.

"We call on the IMO member states to pay attention to the negative impacts and consequences of the U.S. actions and to hold the government accountable to the international maritime community and oblige them to

refrain from such actions," he said.

Further in the gathering, Safaei addressed the president, secretary-general, and other members of the IMO, saying: "The world will have security, stability and peace and sustainable development if there aren't any oppressive, unilateral sanctions, contrary to the UN Charter and the provisions of the IMO Convention."

If the parties to the maritime conventions fulfill their obligations properly, there will be no restrictions for Iran for the expansion of bilateral or multilateral cooperation with other IMO member states, in particular the country's neighbors, he stated.

UN decries “disastrous” human rights for Palestinians

From page 1 ► designations as a frontal assault on the international human rights movement. He says the escalating Israeli campaign against human rights advocates is aimed at maligning and attacking them as well as denying them access to Palestinian territory. Meanwhile,

Human rights lawyer Michael Sfard observed that Israel has a history of targeting the human rights community.

Saleh Hijazi, head of Amnesty International's Palestine office, described Israel's policies a “shrinking space”, as they restrict and punish groups aiming to expose Israel's human rights abuses and hold the regime to account. He says Israel has threatened and hindered his organization's work, imposing “bureaucratic obstacles or subjecting them to electronic surveillance”, while urging the international community to end Israel's era of impunity. Other speakers included a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; and Riyad Mansour, the Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

Some speakers called for an annual forum to be held, where they can express their concerns over atrocities such as Israeli actions that cripple civil society groups. Others said the international community must respond to Israel's actions on multiple levels, stressing the need to support the International Criminal Court's measures, as well as efforts to ban illegal settlements. Others at the committee said words of condemnation must immediately be translated into action, demanding Israel be pressured to either rescind its persecution of civil society groups or face consequences. Also addressing the committee were representatives from Cuba and Turkey, among others.

Bachelet's briefing also directed attention to Israel's tragic killing in the month of May this year of 261 Palestinians, including 67 children. She noted that in the aftermath of the atrocity, the UN Human Rights Council set up an international, independent commission of enquiry to inves-



tigate “all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up and since 13 April 2021.” She also highlighted the Gaza Strip's suffering; from a 15-year old land, sea and air blockade that has deeply damaged its human rights. She said, “humanitarian conditions remain deeply concerning.”

In remarks elsewhere, Bachelet's touched on other deepening concerns over the recent numerous killings and injuries of Palestinians across the occupied Palestinian territories by Israeli forces; as well as, increasingly, by armed settlers. She decried the use of excessive or entirely unwarranted force by Israeli forces, which “appears in many instances to be a measure of first – rather than last – resort, as required under international law.”

The UN rights chief raised particular alarm at “recurring incidents of excessive use of force leading to the death and injury of Palestinian children.” On 5 November, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was shot with live ammunition in the abdomen, and killed, by Israeli forces stationed about 50 meters away, during demonstrations in Deir Al-Hatab near the illegal Israeli settlement Elon Moreh. This year, Israeli forces have killed 16 children in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem al-Quds.

“These and all other killings, as well as all incidents of excessive and unwarranted use of lethal force by Israeli forces, must be

thoroughly and effectively investigated, and those responsible held to account. The chronic impunity in the occupied Palestinian territory for violations has been repeatedly raised in reports by the Secretary-General and myself.

Settler-related violence is also at alarmingly high levels, amid continued tensions over settlement expansion and the annual olive harvest season.”

In the past year, there have been 490 incidents resulting in deaths, injury and/or significant property damage, which is the highest incidence of settler violence ever recorded by the United Nations.

However, the actual figure is more than likely to be much higher as Israeli regime forces regularly restrict access to international and local monitors. Currently, according to the UN figures it represents an average of almost one incident of settler violence every day.

According to the UN rights chief, the severity of the violence has also intensified, with four Palestinians killed recently and 167 injured by settlers, including seven with live ammunition. In three additional cases, it was not possible for the UN to determine whether the victims were killed by Israeli occupation forces or by settlers.

“This lack of accountability for settler violence contributes to the increased number and severity of attacks.

I note also that the approval,

planning and construction of Israeli settlements continue unabated across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem [al-Quds]. In the past year, settlers have established 12 new outposts in the [occupied] West Bank. Most recently, on 24 October, Israeli authorities announced tenders for some 1,350 housing units in settlements. The announcement also included a re-issuance of tenders for some 80 units in the settlement of Givat Hamatos, and would further curtail access and links between East Jerusalem [al-Quds] and [holy] Bethlehem.”

During the end of Bachelet's briefing, she touched on the continued suffering of Palestinian children and the “disproportionate impact [incurred on children] from the recurring cycles of [Israeli] military escalation and associated deprivation. Reports by our UN partners indicate that 75 per cent of all children in [besieged] Gaza are in need of mental health and psycho-social support, as well as other community- and family-based services.”

Currently, 160 Palestinian children are detained by Israel, some of them without charge, under administrative detention, a violation of international law that stipulates “arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, and that children must benefit from a child-friendly justice system that minimizes the challenges they face in each aspect of a legal proceeding.” Bachelet added that “It should be clearly understood that under international law, administrative detention is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and must be subject to strict safeguards to prevent arbitrariness. This is not the case in the Occupied Palestinian Territory today.” We also continue to receive disturbing reports of the ill-treatment of children during their arrest, transfer, interrogation and detention by Israeli authorities.

Overall, the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories at present can easily be characterized as “disastrous.”

U.S. Senate rejects attempt to block Biden's \$650mn Saudi arms sale

The U.S. Senate has rejected a bipartisan effort to block President Joe Biden's \$650 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia amid the kingdom's brutal war on Yemen and its human rights record.

In a 67-30 vote on Tuesday, the Senate rejected a resolution aimed at prohibiting the sale of the weapons package, which was approved by the State Department as well as leaders of the Senate and House foreign affairs committees.

The package would include 280 AIM-120C-7/C-8 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM), 596 LAU-128 Missile Rail Launchers (MRL) along other equipment and support.

Earlier in the day, the Biden administration said it strongly opposed the resolution.

Passage “would undermine the president's commitment to aid in our partner's defenses at a time of increased missile and drone attacks against civilians in Saudi Arabia,” the White House Office of Management of Budget claimed in a statement.

The resolution was introduced by Republicans Rand Paul and Mike Lee, as well as Bernie



Sanders, who caucuses with Democrats.

“We could stop this war if we really had the will to do it,” Paul said on the Senate floor. “All of America should be appalled at the humanitarian disaster caused by the Saudi blockade of Yemen.”

“The United States must do everything in our power to bring this brutal and horrific war to an end,” Sanders said from the Senate floor. “Exporting more missiles to Saudi Arabia does nothing but further this conflict and pour more gasoline on already raging fire.”

Democratic senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Patty Murray of Washington were others who were seeking to stop the arms sale.

Backed by the U.S., the Saudi regime waged a bloody war on Yemen in early 2015 in order to reinstall the former Riyadh-friendly government in the Arab country.

The Saudi aggression has so far killed tens of thousands of Yemenis and dragged the entire Yemen close to the brink of outright famine in the process.

A new report meanwhile shows that the kingdom has fallen drastically short in the face of Yemen's determined retaliation campaign against the war, a report says.

“The number of attacks against the kingdom has grown significantly,” The Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, citing a Saudi government official.

“Drones struck Saudi territory 29 times last month and 25 times in October; the country was struck by 11 ballistic missile attacks last month and 10 in October,” the paper cited the official as saying.

“That is up significantly from February 2020, when Saudi Arabia was attacked six times, five by ballistic missiles and once by a drone,” noted the Saudi source.

What is Israel's word worth?

By Mark Muhammad Ayyash

On October 22, Israel issued a military order designating six prominent Palestinian human rights groups – Addameer, Al-Haq, Defense for Children International-Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, the Bisan Center for Research and Development, and the Union of?Palestinian? Women Committees – as “terrorist organizations”.

The Israeli Ministry of Defense said the decision was taken on the basis of “links” they established between these groups and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – a left-wing movement with a political party, as well as an armed wing that has carried out deadly attacks against Israel.

The Palestinian Authority, many international rights groups and the United Nations swiftly condemned the move. In interviews, comment pieces and statements, officials, analysts and experts expressed their belief that Israel “has gone too far this time”. The most prominent line of argument against the designation was that these six groups are clearly human rights organizations and they cannot be placed in the same “terror” category as groups like the PFLP that consider violence a legitimate means to achieve political ends. “The misuse of counter-terrorism measures in this way by the government of Israel undermines the security of all,” UN human rights experts said in a statement.

For its part, Israel defended its decision by claiming that these groups are “controlled by senior leaders” of the PFLP and that they employ its members, including some who had “participated in terror activity”. The Israeli Ministry of Defense also accused the groups of serving as a “central source” of financing for the PFLP.

In response to these claims, Michael Sfard, a prominent Israeli lawyer who often represents Palestinians, said that Israel's argument “amounts to absolutely nothing” and that its whole case against these organizations is built on “guilt by association”. “Even if it is true that people who work in certain organizations are PFLP operatives, it does not follow that the organization itself is part of the PFLP,” he told the AP news agency.

Sfard's point of view, shared by many others, helped raise some important questions: So what if people working in these organizations are also members of the PFLP? Does it mean anything that Israel considers the PFLP a “terrorist organization”? What is, after all, “Palestinian terror”?

Why the PFLP cannot be reduced to a mindless terror group

The PFLP lost its prominence in Palestinian politics some time ago, but it still has significant support among Palestinian leftists, and especially among Marxists and socialists.

It is a well-established political organization that provides Palestinians with social services, communal support and a world view that helps them make sense of their reality and find ways to change it.

The PFLP holds the position that armed resistance is a valid path towards liberation from Israeli settler colonialism, but not every member of the group participates, supports or agrees with armed resistance.

The overwhelming majority of the group's actions are, in fact, unarmed: it organizes strikes, demonstrations and educational activities, provides social services, collects donations, gives economic support to those in need, and so on.

Thus, the PFLP's complex history and contemporary dynamics, its ever-evolving status and positions, and the role it plays in Palestinian life cannot be reduced to “terror”. Israel's designation of the group as a “terrorist organization” and labelling of all its members, supporters and associates as mindless terrorists are nothing but political moves that aim to maintain Israeli power and dominance over Palestinian life.

What is ‘Palestinian terror’?

The PFLP carried out violent operations against the Israeli state and society. And some of its attacks harmed and killed Israeli civilians.

Palestinians are not denying this. In fact, many Palestinian activists, journalists, politicians, academics and artists, myself included, have critiqued

the group's path of armed resistance. I find the targeting of civilians in the name of resistance horrifying and I am categorically opposed to it. And I am not alone. There have always been, and continue to be, vibrant debates within the Palestinian society in Palestine and beyond about the use of violence as a means to achieve liberation.

But does the fact the PFLP engages in armed resistance give Israel – and its allies – the right to label the group as a “terrorist organization”? Who is Israel to determine the nature and the label of Palestinian violence?

Israel and its Euro-American backers have unleashed levels of violence and destruction on the globe that no Palestinian armed group can hold a candle to. How can states that established themselves on stolen land, states that engage in ethnic cleansing and states that bombed millions of civilians claim to have the moral authority to label the violence of the colonized and the oppressed against them as “terrorism”?

Why is Israeli, American or European violence not considered “terror”, but Palestinian violence is?

Are drone attacks that eradicate entire families in the blink of an eye not terror? Are Israel's military attacks on Palestine, that have left thousands of civilians, including many children maimed or dead, not terror? Is the brutal siege of Gaza, that left two million people living in an open-air prison, not a blatant act of terror? Do ethnic cleansing, arbitrary arrests, unlawful evictions not terrorize people?

For any objective observer, it should be clear that Israeli state violence is far more destructive in scale and scope and thus more “terrorizing” than Palestinian violence.

In this context, it is easy to see “terrorism” is merely a political concept for Israel. It arbitrarily designates Palestinian groups as terrorist organizations to add weight to the false narrative that Palestinian violence is somehow more terrifying, more destructive and objectionable than Israeli violence. Israel labels Palestinians as terrorists to conceal its own violence. It uses the legal designation of terror to continue inflicting violence on oppressed and colonized masses with impunity.

The power of Israel

So, what is Israel's word worth? The short answer is: everything and nothing.

It is worth everything because, by officially designating six prominent Palestinian rights groups as “terrorist organizations”, Israel made it easier for itself to control and destroy Palestinian lives. Now, these six groups that have long been providing important services to the Palestinian population will struggle to carry out their work. Simply put, by labelling these groups as “terrorist”, the Israeli state increased its already substantial ability to violate Palestinian rights without hindrance and accountability, and with little to no political, juridical, economic, or diplomatic consequence.

But, at the same time, Israel's word is worth nothing. It is worth nothing in the sense that a designation of “terror” made by Israel reveals nothing about the complex reality of violence.

Israel's word on violence, as it is the case for Euro-American imperial hegemony writ large, is completely shallow and empty, divorced from the reality on the ground. It is a word that is solely guided by the political impetus to conceal Israeli violence – the unspeakable brutality of their own violence.

This, and nothing else, is what the designation of “Palestinian terror” does for Israel. It teaches us nothing about reality, and instead actively conceals it. And therefore, I repeat the critical question that is being buried underneath this latest story from Palestine: So, what if members of the PFLP are also members of these six organizations? The reason why Palestinians join any group is simple: They are doing everything that they can in their desperate yet steadfast efforts to resist the Israeli state's settler-colonial project which kills, maims, dispossesses, and expels them.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

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Turquoise-coated arts on show at Tehran exhibit



TEHRAN – Sets of turquoise-coated arts have been put on show at the headquarters of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Tehran.

The week-long exhibition features 100 exquisite works handcrafted by the young Iranian artisan Seyyed Kamal Hosseini, who is a native of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, CHTN reported.

One of the most popular handicrafts of Iran, which is both decorative and applicable, is 'Firuzehkubi' or turquoise inlaying. To practice the craft, tiny pieces of turquoise are being inlaid, like mosaics, on a surface such as tools or utensils made of copper, silver, brass, or bronze.

Today, Firuzehkubi is one of the most cel-

ebrated souvenirs of Isfahan. The Firuzeh or turquoise gems that are used in this craft are supplied by the stone workshops and stone grinds that cannot be used for other purposes.

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 a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

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

Tens of tourism farms to open to public in central Iran

From page 1 ▶ Recreational activities such as hiking, horse and carriage rides, hot air balloon rides over farms, photography, painting, enjoying local cooking cuisine and souvenirs are among elements visitors could benefit from, the official explained.

In recent years, an increasing number of travelers are looking for something different such as spending a day in tranquil countryside, picking fresh fruits, watching rice grow, fishing by the seaside, eating traditional dishes, or even staying with locals. That is in contrast to traditional ways of travel which are made mostly through travel agencies. As tourists mature, more and more sorts of travel are welcomed by the ones who are in search of off-the-beaten routes.

In the realm of rural tourism, Iran has many pristine yet diverse natural settings to offer to nature lovers. Rural tourism as well as agritourism and farm-stays can be regarded as a win-win both for local communities, and post-modern travelers who are tracing unique experiences.

Dotted with tens of thousands of ancient villages, Iran perfectly suits the tastes of many inbound and even domestic vacationers who are seeking unique natural experiences, unspoiled landscapes, stay in authentic accommodation,



and feel local lifestyles. Sightseers may stay with a rural or nomadic family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

Furthermore, rural tourism, most of all, sets the ground for economic development in rural areas by creating additional income and employment especially for young people and women; the prosperity of handicrafts, and more entrepreneurship prospects. It can also improve the social well-being in rural areas, for instance by stimulating improvements in infrastructure, sanitation, and electricity networks.

scape dominated by agriculture and forestry, as well as traditional social structure and lifestyle.

The UN body aims to turn the spotlight on the "uniqueness" of each village to make tourism a means for further development in rural areas. "We want to recognize the uniqueness of each village and showcase the best initiatives to make tourism a means for a better future in rural areas. As we restart tourism, we work to ensure that we leave no one - and no village-behind," according to UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

Experts say the growth of the local economy is the ultimate goal of the rise and development of the rural tourism industry, but in the long run, to enable the long-term development of the rural tourism industry, the healthy maintenance and growth of environmental capacity is very important.

Iranian countryside areas have traditionally been a place of production, dominated by farming, but changes in farming practices, mechanization, and the influences of globalization have deeply affected the fabric of its rural communities, which have increasingly shifted from being production spaces to consumption spaces, in which tourism plays an important role.

Qajar-era caravanserai restored to hay-day state

TEHRAN – The second phase of a restoration project on the Qajar-era (1789-1925) Alborz Caravanserai in the central province of Qom, has come to an end, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

Parts of the caravanserai were destroyed due to heavy rain showers, so an urgent restoration of this historical monument seemed necessary, Ammar Kavusi said on Wednesday.

A budget of 3.2 billion rials (76,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the project, the official added.

The main building material for the Alborz caravanserai is brick, and stone has been used in the substructure, he noted.

Considering the popularity of traditional buildings, reviving these buildings into recreational and tourist centers while preserving their past identity will boost the prosperity of tourism, he explained.

Located in the central district of Qom province, the caravanserai was registered on the national heritage list in 2004.

Iran has put forward a selection of 56 caravansaries as a candidate for a collective inclusion in UNESCO's cultural heritage list.

Caravansary (also Caravanserai or Caravansaray) is a building that served as the inn of



the Orient, providing accommodation for commercial, pilgrim, postal, and especially official travelers.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, from the number of surviving caravansaries and their sizes, it is clear that in Safavid and Qajar times there was a state architectural department that was specifically concerned with the construction of caravansaries and stations on the overland routes. Furthermore, in the cities, several caravansaries were erected as lodging houses, depots, and commercial offices in the vicinity of the bazaars.

A typical caravansary consists of a square or rectangular plan centered around a courtyard with only one entrance and arrangements for defense if necessary. Whether fortified or not, it at least provided security against beasts of prey and attacks by brigands.

Iran's earliest caravansaries were built during the Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravansaries across the country.

Such roadside inns were originally built during various epochs along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world to shelter people, their goods, and animals. The former Silk Roads may be the most famous example dotted by caravansaries.

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 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.

Majestic Zanjan mosque to undergo partial restoration

TEHRAN – A new round of restoration work is scheduled to commence on Chehel Sotoun Mosque, which is a majestic Islamic monument in Zanjan, west-central Iran.

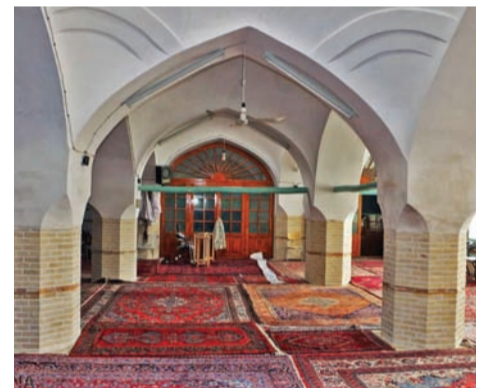
"The remaining parts of this historic mosque, which has not been restored to date, will undergo restoration during an upcoming project," Zanjan's tourism chief said on Monday.

Replacing worn-out brick with the same traditional ones and filling the gaps between the bricks are amongst works to be carried out in the coming project, Amir Arjmand added.

Previous projects concerned mosque's columns, walls, ceiling insulation, arches, and gutters as well as replacing worn-out materials and lightening roofs, the official added.

The Qajar-era (1789-1925) mosque is located in the historic bazaar of Zanjan. It is the second most prestigious seminary school in Zanjan after Jameh Mosque.

The main prayer hall of the mosque is



built in Chehel Sotoun (forty columns) style, which is mostly compared to the 17th-century Chehel Sotoun palace in Isfahan.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). It is also a gateway to wider explorations such as the ones to the UNESCO-tagged Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman, amongst others.

Nature lovers to mark daffodils in Semnan festival

TEHRAN – An open-air festival will bring together tens of nature lovers on Friday to mark daffodils, which symbolizes the eye in Iranian culture.

The festival aims to promote travels to the north-central province, traditional cultivation of the daffodils, and local rituals and attractions, a local tourism official said on Wednesday.

Moreover, there will be performances of traditional, local, and ritual music, handicraft stalls, organic products for sale, and a workshop on daffodils and maintaining them in the garden and apartment during the festival, Maryam Hashemi Motamedi said.

The ritual of traditional daffodils-planting in Semnan has been inscribed on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

In Persian culture and literature, the daffodil symbolizes the eye, usually the eye of the beloved. In poetry, the beloved is likened to the daffodil because of its leafless and green stem, which is

hollowed out, straw-like, and curved, which is associated with humility and dignity.

Flowers have also thrived into the Persian language. Many girls are named after flowers: Ra'na (Blanket Flowers), Shaghayegh (Anemone), Banafsheh (Violet), Yaasaman (Jasmine), Niloofar (Lotus flower), Nastaran (Eglantine), Laleh (Tulip), Narges (Daffodil), etc.

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

Sassanid silver bowl returned home after decades

TEHRAN – Centuries-old Silver Bowl of Rashi has recently been returned to Rasht Archaeological Museum Gilan province after almost three decades, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The silver bowl was discovered during the early 1990s excavations at the Rashi Rudbar archaeological site in the northern province, Masoud Hallajpur said on Wednesday.

The historical relic was featured in various foreign exhibitions since then, including a tour of an exhibition of Iranian art spanning over 7,000 years in a variety of European museums, before returning to Iran and being displayed at the National Museum in Tehran, he mentioned.

The item, however, was trans-



ferred to its permanent location in the Archaeological Museum of Rasht after almost 30 years under the diligent supervision of Gilan's cultural heritage department and after obtaining the necessary permits, the official added.

Dating back to the Sassanid period (224-651) and known as one of the cultural symbols of the

people of Gilan, this bowl with a unique appearance possesses a circular bottom and is decorated with artistic carvings on its surface, he noted.

Images on the bowl depict fishermen and legendary winged creatures, including rams, horses, lions, and mountain goats, which play upon Sassanid beliefs, and these marvelous motifs are evidence of the metalworking art of the time, he explained.

He also expressed hope that the Silver Bowl of Rashi would be displayed to the public after the restoration of the Archaeological Museum of Rasht is completed within a few months.

Gilan is well-known for its rich Iron Age cemeteries such as Marlik that have been excavated

over the past century. It was once within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Natural properties in Hamedan made national heritage

TEHRAN – A total of four natural properties across west-central Hamedan province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Mount Khorzaneh, which is home to several natural caves, two plane trees, and the protected area of Malusan were added to the prestigious list, Ali Malmir said on Wednesday.

Having an opulent tourist circuit with 26 UNESCO

World Heritage sites, of which the vast Hyrcanian Forest and Lut Desert are among the natural properties, Iran seeks to acquire a greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Piti-fully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently

a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

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

About 1220 Hamedan was destroyed by the Mon-

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

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

Elderly population in Iran snowballing

TEHRAN – The elderly population in Iran is increasing rapidly as there were 7.46 million senior citizens in the [Iranian calendar] year 1395 (March 2015–March 2016), which has now reached 8.4 million.

Seyed Hamed Barakati, director of the population and family health office of the Ministry of Health, said that from 1976 until today, Iran was a very young population with an average age of 22 years, while it has reached an average population of 32 years, which means that the country got 10 years older.

The United Nations forecast for 2050 shows that four regions of North America, Western Europe, Southeast Asia (Iran), and Oceania (New Zealand) will have older people over 30 percent, which is different from Western countries in this area.

In a period of 5 years, about 16 percent has been added to the country's elderly.

The country's population growth is less than 17 percent, while the growth of the elderly is 3 percent.

The aging population is 4 times the growth of the population. If the situation continues like this, we will reach a point where the proportion of the productive population, i.e. between 15 and 65 years old, will be very low.



The decline in the marriage rate, followed by a dramatic decrease in childbearing, has sounded the alarm of the aging population, an issue that has forced government officials to enact legislation to support the population growth and the youth.

By a decree issued by President Ebrahim Raisi, the "Law on Family and Youth Support" approved by the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) was notified to the Ministry of Health and the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs.

The Guardian Council approved the law on November 17 to implement a population growth and family support plan for 7 years to change the declining trend of childbearing.

The plan stipulates health insurance

for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutrition support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.

Aging population to triple

Over the last 5 decades, the elderly's population has increased from about 5 to 10 percent, and it is predicted that this rate will triple in the next 50 years so that it is vital to take the aging phenomenon seriously.

Iran is one of the countries with the highest pace of aging in the world.

Mohammad Esmaeil Akbari, a senior advisor to the minister of health,

has said that the world has grown about 5 years older over the past 70 years, but the population of Iran has unfortunately grown 10 years older in the past 60 years.

"Currently, the elderly constitute less than 10 percent of the population and we are considered a young country, but we are getting older every year so that in the next 20 years, we will be one of the oldest countries in the world and the oldest by the next 30 years," he explained.

In demography, the population under the age of 15 is called "young". In 1977, 46 percent of the people were young, while now 23 percent of the population are below 15 years of age.

Iran has achieved a demographic window of opportunity which in all other countries led to economic prosperity so that Iran must seize the opportunity now before its working-age population starts to shrink and get older in the 2050s.

Awareness of population age changes and political-economic planning based on it can be very important in the success of programs and policies. Comprehensive policy-making and planning should be tailored to the overall characteristics of this age group, he explained.

Japan holds webinars on arid land agriculture in Iran

TEHRAN – The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Iran office in collaboration with Tottori University Arid Land Research Center (ALRC), held 5 series of webinar with the theme of "Research and Development on Arid Land Agriculture in Iran and Japan" for the Ministry of Agriculture in Iran.

In Iran, where most of the land is in either arid or semi-arid areas, drought and water shortages are becoming serious problems as a result of climate change. Drying and desertification are beyond the framework of a country and must be considered as global issues that need to be addressed not just by Iran but also by its surrounding areas.

Tottori University Arid Land Research Center (ALRC) is the only arid land research institute in Japan. Japan is not an arid area. However, in order to address problems such as droughts, desertification, and so on, research on arid land had started by utilizing the experience that made agriculture possible through developing sand prevention technology using tree planting and still sand dunes in the Tottori Sand Dunes. Today, the center became a joint research basement of universities and research institutes around the world.

For this series webinar, 4 professors at the ALRC gave lectures on the following themes of "Introduction of the Research and Activities of Arid Land

Research Center (ALRC)"; Water Productivity and Optimized Irrigation, Wheat varieties Suitable for Arid Land Breeding, and Drought Management.

The total number of participants was nearly 364. The fifth one was a presentation by the Iranian side regarding the Arid Land Agriculture research and application as well as a discussion for the future possible cooperation.

For Tottori University, Iran was the first partner country when the center started its first overseas academic research in the late 1970s and has a lot of joint researches and joint dissertation writing on some specific themes.

Since both have the same mission and direction to solve global problems in arid areas beyond the framework of the country, it was found that there is potential to carry out joint research in many fields.

Climate change, a major problem in Iran

Climate change is one of the most important problems in Iran that can exacerbate drought and water stress, so it is necessary to make serious plans at the national level to address the phenomena.

Increasing consumption of fossil fuels by humans, especially after the Industrial Revolution, has led to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and ultimately climate change, and now tackling this phe-



nomenon has become one of the most important concerns worldwide.

Temperature change, sea-level rise, coastal degradation, destruction of agricultural and food products, deforestation, depletion of freshwater resources, regional climate change in the high and northern hemispheres, changes in rainfall and wind direction, rising natural disasters such as tornadoes and floods, intensifying droughts and developing desert areas, increasing air pollution due to rising hot winds and the potential impact on the spread of diseases such as malaria are some of the known consequences of climate change.

According to scientists, global warming due to climate change is one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century.

Smart restriction plan aims to contain pandemic

From page 1 ► The second phase of the project starts one week after the first phase, which targets city transportation systems, including online taxis, in which the health status of the drivers is inquired so that they are allowed to operate.

In the third stage, which covers general, commercial, and entertainment services, the continuation of activity depends on getting vaccinated and receiving a QR code.

The fourth phase includes suburban transportation, including airplanes, trains, buses, and the maritime transportation system and personal cars, which are allowed to operate based

on the required vaccinations and inquiries.

In the fifth phase, there are scientific, research, and educational units, including universities and seminars, and they will work in accordance with the vaccination card," he explained.

All these inquiries are implemented in the context of the Omid system by using the national code and mobile number that belongs to each citizen, they can also check their health status, evaluate and receive both a QR code and a vaccination card, he further highlighted.

By the emergence of a highly contagious Omicron variant, countries are

adopting new regulations to prevent the transmission of the variant, so that Iranian Health Ministry has taken measures in this regard.

Iran's National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control on November 27 banned arrivals from the African countries of Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Swatini reacting to the new variant.

Omicron, which has raised global fears of a surge in infections, was first detected in southern Africa earlier this month and has prompted governments across the globe to impose travel restrictions and take other measures to try and contain it.

There are no direct flights from Iran to South Africa and travelers are not allowed to enter Iran, Iranians who want to travel must also be quarantined at the border to have two negative PCR tests.

Foreign tourists must buy coronavirus insurance from authorized companies when entering the country, and if they suffer from the pandemic in Iran, they will be provided with a place and treatment for 14 days.

Inbound passengers must have coronavirus insurance, which differs from the routine insurance coverage purchased by all tourists before the coronavirus era.

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Clean air bill projected to create 10,000 green jobs

The clean air bill, proposed by the Department of Environment to curb air pollution, is projected to generate some 10,000 green jobs over the course of the sixth five-year national development plan (2016–2021), an environmental official said.

In line with the one of the articles of clean air bill units of Health, Safety, and the Environment (HSE), with regard to health and safety of the employees, customers, and contractors as well as the protection of the environment are bound to be established in all industrial and manufacturing enterprises, Shina Ansari told ISNA news agency.

"Accordingly, those graduates in the field of environment can apply for job opportunities in HSE units," Ansari added.

نشست منطقه‌ای مجمع جهانی سلامت در کیش ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی نتیجه اجرای لایحه هوای پاک

مدیر کل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ضمن اشاره به مواد قانون هوای پاک - که به پیشنهاد سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اخیراً به تصویب مجلس شورای اسلامی رسید- از ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی طی برنامه ششم توسعه از طریق اجرای مواد این قانون خبر داد.

شینا انصاری در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا افزود: در ماده ۱۶ لایحه هوای پاک، کلیه مراکز و واحدهای صنعتی و تولیدی، برای انجام امور مربوط به سلامت و ایمنی مشتریان و کارمندان و کارفرمایان مکلف به ایجاد واحدهای سلامت، بهداشت و محیط زیست (HSE) و به‌کارگیری نیروهای متخصص این حوزه هستند بنابراین تعداد زیادی از فارغ التحصیلان محیط زیست می‌توانند جذب هسته‌ها و بخش‌های زیست محیطی صنایع متوسط و بزرگ کشور به منظور پایش صنایع شوند.

Iran plans overseas cultivation in Brazil, Russia

TEHRAN – Iran plans to grow crops in Brazil and Russia to secure a stable supply amid sanctions and currency restrictions.

The country, which relies on imports for key staples such as rice, wheat, corn, and oilseeds, is seeking to boost supplies as surging global food costs and the harsh sanctions ever imposed by the U.S., fuel inflation.

In recent years, consecutive governments have spoken of plans to lease arable land or buy stakes in overseas ventures in countries such as Kazakhstan, Brazil, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Ghana, but it is not clear how many of those plans have been firmed up if any.

Former agriculture minister Mahmoud Hojjati had once said that contracts for cultivation on nearly 800,000 to one million hectares in a number of countries had been signed and approved by the government, Press TV reported.

"The overseas cultivation is on the agenda with Brazil and Russia, which could lead to the entry of virtual water into the country and the cultivation of water-intensive products such as livestock inputs in these countries," deputy agriculture minister for economy and planning Mohammad Qorbani said on Monday.

Amid the banking restrictions because of the sanctions, Iran has been experimenting with alternative ways such as barter to keep trade channels open with countries.

Qorbani said the first 100 days of the new administration have marked initial agreements reached with Brazil, Russia, Norway, and Pakistan to establish trade relations in the agriculture sector.

Last month, Iran and Pakistan signed their first barter trade agreement to exchange Pakistani rice with Iranian LPG, marking a watershed in a quest to overcome the biggest hurdle to business between the two big neighbors.

They also agreed on the construction of border markets, and the movement of trucks under the Convention on International Transport of Goods (TIR) cooperation for Pakistan to reach European and Caucasian markets and for Iran to access the Chinese market.

For years, Iran has been trying to modernize its



farm sector and rebalance output toward dry farming and value-added crops which are increasing in demand among its population of over 80 million.

Current farming methods include open-land agriculture and green-house production but more modern practices such as hydroponics, a soil-less culture technology that uses less water and land, have yet to be introduced.

Iran exported its first consignment of wheat after many years in 2017, with state officials cheering it as a sign that the country's plans to attain self-sufficiency in the production of the strategic staple had materialized.

However, the administration of former president Hassan Rouhani snapped the achievement last year when Iran imported more than 3 million tons of wheat at a cost of \$3.8 billion.

On Sunday, vice president of Research Institute for Agricultural Planning and Economics and Rural Development, Mojtaba Paluch, told a panel discussion on food security that Iran had to import 8 million tons of wheat this year "due to the former government's mismanagement".

Critics have said the former government's low prices for guaranteed purchases of wheat from Iranian farmers led to a sharp decline in domestic stocks of the strategic staple.

They say imports mean paying a huge amount of money to dealers and small traders, while the government could easily increase the offered price for domestic crops.

Food security is a key policy area for global state planners, and for Iran, it is additionally crucial in the face of a protracted drought where falling water tables are adversely affecting harvests and the basket of agricultural products is narrowing.

Real-time satellite observations reveal how wildfires devastated the planet in 2021

The spread of extreme and sustained wildfires across vast areas of the planet in 2021 has been captured by real-time satellite observations.

Wildfires caused an estimated total of 1,760 megatonnes (Mt) of carbon emissions to be pumped into the atmosphere this year - equating to nearly a third of total US annual emissions.

The observations of active fires were captured by the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS), allowing wildfire emissions to be estimated in near real-time, along with the impact on air quality.

Extreme heat and drought conditions driven by the climate crisis are fueling larger and more unpredictable wildfires, the Independent reported.

The summer of 2021 was particularly dire with fires erupting across large areas of North America, Siberia, eastern and central Mediterranean, and North Africa.

August's total estimated emissions were the highest of the year, with an estimated 378Mt of carbon released into the atmosphere globally. More than half of the emissions came from fires in North America and Siberia, two of the worst affected regions.

Wildfires in the Sakha Republic, northeastern Siberia, set the highest summer-time total from June to August, and was more than double previous years, according to the CAMS 19-year, Global Fire Assimilation System (GFAS) dataset.

Following an unprecedented level of blazes in 2020, this summer saw wildfires explode across western parts of North America.

The Canadian province of British Columbia was badly impacted following a deadly heatwave in the region at the beginning of summer. A fire on 30 June wiped out the small town of Lytton, BC, and caused two deaths.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 8

New cases	3,309
New deaths	90
Total cases	6,144,644
Total deaths	130,446
New hospitalized patients	534
Patients in critical condition	3,185
Total recovered patients	5,943,467
Diagnostic tests conducted	39,632,983
Doses of vaccine injected	108,990,935



If you cannot get things as much as you desire than be contented with what you have.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iran: Persian literature

Part 8

The qasida, an older and more developed form than the ghazal, resembles the latter in form and is also in mono-rhyme but can vary greatly in length and usually contains three distinct thematic parts.

It should be noted that the qasida, the ghazal, and the quatrain were the three forms on which Persian medieval manuals dealing with rhetoric, prosody and poetic imagery (and often echoing Arabic manuals) concentrated, and quotations from them were the main focus of analysis, giving them a privileged position vis-à-vis other important forms, most notably that of the masnavi and its varied subject matter, which received relatively less attention in the earlier works on poetry.

Between form and meaning: poetic figures and genres. For Raduyani in the 11th century, and Rashid ad-Din Watwat (d. 1182) in the 12th, the first writers of treatises on Persian poetry, meter and rhyme were such all-embracing characteristics of Persian poetry that they did not think it necessary to dwell upon them.

Their manuals (Watwat drew mainly on Raduyani) deal with important rhetorical figures of Persian poetry and show signs of indebtedness to earlier Arabic treatises concerned with Arabic poetry.

But although the terminology is derived from Arabic, the selection itself and the numerous Persian examples bear witness to a well-established and original practice.

Shams-e Qeys (13th century) was familiar with the works of his predecessors and built upon them. Like them, his point of departure was the practice of Persian poets.

His attempt at classification is so amply documented with citations that his treatise can also be regarded as a valuable anthology of poetry.

The finest work in this genre was written in the 15th century by Hosayn Waez-e Kashefi, friend and disciple of Jami, a man held in very high esteem in the Timurid court at Herat.

For Kashefi and the tradition before him, the perfection of a poem lies in the notion of tafwif; the word refers to the embroidering of a tapestry.

The poet should be able to weave seamlessly and bring together (as the word tafwif suggests) all the required elements in a poem, rhyme, rhythm, words, expression, and meaning, in such a manner that they form a unified entity.

In short, in its harmonious structure a poem should resemble a beautiful tapestry. To Shams-e Qeys' provisions, Kashefi adds the further stipulation that a poem can be said to be perfect if it is encrusted with precious stones (the literary figure of tarsi'), implying that the words of the poem should be in total harmony in terms of rhyme and their final letters.

This literary figure would be at its most perfect if the words contained the same letters and vowels, all the while differing in meaning (the poetical figure tajnis-e tamm).

In total, ninety-five rhetorical figures are there to be used on an accomplished poet's palette. In the inventory of elements

most valued by our theoreticians, we find, in order of priority in their treatises: letters, then words followed by phrases, and finally the poem viewed as a whole.

The other major consideration is the script itself. The crucial role of the calligraphy, including the shape of the letters, is evident throughout the manuals of poetry and much discussed.

The question of thematic genres in Persian poetry requires further study, given the wealth of the material and the frequent references in traditional manuals and anthologies.

Watwat and Kashefi, for example, refer to "an all-enveloping discourse" (kalam-e jame), a didactic summing up of the vicissitudes of life, "a poem comprised of exhortations, advice, complaint against fate and the tide of events, and a recital of remarkable happenings in different times".

Before him, Watwat had praised Masud-e Sad-e Salman for the way he had, in his poems from prison (habsiyat), excelled at kalam-e jame, a fusion of complaint and advice. One still speaks of bahariya (description of spring), fakhriya (poems of heroic boasting), shakwaiya (lament of separation from the beloved), marsiya (funereal ode).

The poet is judged by the way he handles a genre in a given set of circumstances; and his poetic craft is a social phenomenon: an oral form put into writing, a text to be declaimed in a culture in which the memory and the ear, as well as the eye nourished by the art of calligraphy, all play their parts.

Persian prose

Remnants of early prose have survived, mostly religious, including fragments of Manichean texts in Persian dating from the 10th century.

The most interesting examples of this ancient prose are the Judeo-Persian texts, Persian texts using the Hebrew alphabet. Inscriptions on tombs in Judeo-Persian date from 752, while a dated commercial letter survives, perhaps from the 8th century. Fragments of translations of the Pentateuch in Persian are also quite ancient.

Persian literary prose seems to have been born in the 10th century at the court of the Samanids (819-999) in Bukhara. Persian served as the language providing access to Islamic culture: commentaries on the Quran, jurisprudence, theology, ethics, science, and the already existing works of mystical spirituality.

Ever since the end of the 10th century, Persian prose has proved its potential of being capable of producing works of great range and quality in a highly original manner to suit different subjects, including history, geography, mathematics, astrology/astronomy, medicine, and the natural sciences.

Written Persian, as pointed above, made its literary debut in northeastern Persia, Khorasan, and Central Asia. At first it remained close to the spoken language, and one notices local vernacular expressions in the first Persian commentaries on the Quran that catered to the believers in the region.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Peter Schumann, Nina Malíková win Jalal Sattari Awards

TEHRAN – German-American puppet show director Peter Schumann, Czech writer Nina Malíková and Iranian writer Jamshid Malekpur were honored with the Jalal Sattari Awards in Tehran on Tuesday.

Due to the pandemic, Schumann and Malíková could not attend the awards ceremony organized on the sidelines of the 20th edition of the Traditional and Ritual Theater Festival. Their award will be sent to them in their countries.

The award was established in 2011 to honor scholars of different nationalities for their efforts in the promotion of ritual and folk artistic performances.

Speaking at the ceremony, the president of the festival, Hamidreza Ardalan, said that Schumann is originally a German. Following the end of World War II, he along with a number of his compatriots left their homeland by ship to begin a new life in the United States.

On the ship, the migrants baked bread, which was their sole food to continue their journey. Due to the lack of adequate bread, each family had a special seal on each loaf of bread to avoid any confusion about their shares.

This subject remained in

Schumann's memory, which led him to co-found the Bread and Puppet Theater in 1963 in New York City, receiving the audience of his puppet shows with free freshly baked bread, generally served with a dipping sauce.

Ardalan also pointed to Schumann's antiwar attitudes and elaborated on his giant puppets that first appeared in 1965 at political street parades in New York City and increasingly as part of the anti-Vietnam War movement. In addition, as an advocate of simple living, his troupe has been touring Europe over the past decade to promote the idea through their puppet shows.

The Bread and Puppet Theater visited Tehran in November 2004, performing their puppet show "The Violin Lecture" at the Farabi Hall of the Art University.

In his speech about Malíková, Ardalan gave a brief history about the establishment of UNIMA – Union Internationale de la Marionnette – International Puppetry Association.

He said that numerous children lost their families in World War I. Therefore, in a humanitarian movement, thespians attended orphanages and kindergartens



This combination photo shows puppet show director Peter Schumann and writer Nina Malíková.

to stage performances for the children. This movement was recognized by the United Nations and the UNIMA was established as a result.

"The seed of the current was beginning to emerge in Czech and journalist Nina Malíková who has studied theater philosophy is one of the few people still alive from that generation, which made contributions to the current," he added.

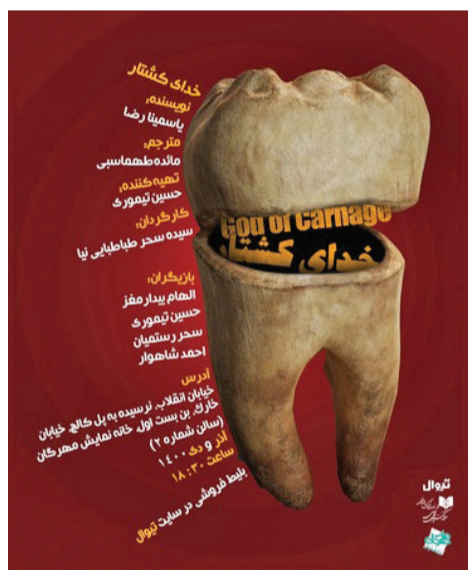
"She was really popular and reputable, and has provided much

support for the theater and written many articles and books in the field of dramatic arts," he noted.

Malekpur is the writer of many books, including "Eternal Curse in Legends", "Book Review: Dramatic Literature in Iran" and "Operetta Writing in Iran".

The award has been named after the Iranian scholar and mythologist Jalal Sattari, an Iranian scholar and mythologist who was the author of over 90 books on mythology, dramatic literature and cultural criticism. He died on July 31, 2021.

"God of Carnage" rules at Tehran theater



A poster for the play "God of Carnage", which is on stage at Tehran's Mehregan Theater.

Mehregan Theater.

Sahar Tabatabai is the director of the play starring Elham Bidarmaght, Hossein Teimuri, Sahar Rostamian and Ahmad Shahvar.

The play has been translated into Persian by Maedeh Tahmasbi. Another Persian rendition by Puya Valizadeh was directed Shaahin Chegini in June and July at Jamshid Mashayekhi Theater in Tehran.

Reza's "Bella Figura" was previously staged by Chegini at Jamshid Mashayekhi Hall.

"God of Carnage" first published in 2008 is about two sets of parents, one of whose child has hurt the other at a public park.

They agree to meet to discuss the matter in a civilized manner. However, as the evening goes on, the parents become increasingly childish, resulting in the evening devolving into chaos.

Two 11-year-old children, Ferdinand Reille and Bruno Vallon get involved in an argument because Bruno refuses to let Ferdinand join his "gang".

Ferdinand knocks out two of Bruno's teeth with a stick. That night, the parents of both children meet to discuss the matter. Ferdinand's father,

Alain, is a lawyer who is never off his mobile phone. Ferdinand's mother, Annette is in "wealth management", and consistently wears good shoes.

Bruno's father, Michel, is a self-made wholesaler with an ailing mother. Michel's wife, Veronique, is writing a book about Darfur. As the evening goes on, the meeting degenerates into the four getting into irrational arguments, and their discussion falls into the loaded topics of misogyny, racial prejudice and homophobia.

Originally written in French, the play was a success. It has since been translated into English by translator Christopher Hampton, and has enjoyed equal acclaim in productions in both London and New York.

Roman Polanski directed the 2011 film adaption of "God of Carnage", whose title was shortened to "Carnage". The film was shot in Paris, due to Polanski's outstanding criminal conviction in the United States, but the play's Brooklyn setting is retained in the film.

Jodie Foster and John C. Reilly play Penelope and Michael, while Christoph Waltz and Kate Winslet play Alain and Nancy.

Palm Springs festival 2022 picks films from Iran

TEHRAN – Three movies by Iranian filmmakers will be screened at the 33rd Palm Springs International Film Festival.

"A Hero" by Asghar Farhadi, "Ballad of a White Cow" by Behtash Sanaeiha and Maryam Moqaddam, and "Radiograph of a Family" by Firuzeh Khosravani will compete in the various categories of the festival, which take place from January 6 to 17, 2022 in Palm Springs, California.

"A Hero", the winner of the Grand Prix (ex aequo) at Cannes 2021, also made the list of eligible films for the 94th Academy Awards in the International Feature Film category.

The film follows Rahim, who is in prison because he was unable to pay a debt. During a two-day leave of absence from prison, he attempts to have his creditor withdraw his complaint over part of the sum owed. But things don't go as planned.

"Ballad of a White Cow", a co-production between Iran and France, Mina, a woman



Maryam Moqaddam acts in a scene from "Ballad of a White Cow" directed by Behtash Sanaeiha and her.

whose life is turned upside down when she learns that her husband Babak was innocent of the crime for which he was executed.

The authorities apologize for the mistake and offer the prospect of financial compensation. Mina starts a silent battle against a cynical system for her own and her daughter's sake. Just as her memory

is running out, a stranger named Reza knocks at her door, saying he has come to repay a debt he owed to Babak. Mina is guarded at first, but increasingly lets Reza into her life, unaware of the secret that ties them to one another.

The film has previously won awards at several festivals, including the Pilar

"Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – New York Times best-selling author Lori Gottlieb's book "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone: A Therapist, Her Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed" has recently been published in Persian.

Published by Qoqnu, the book has been rendered into Persian by Elham Slamani-Foroughi.

One day, Lori Gottlieb is a therapist who helps patients in her Los Angeles practice. The next, a crisis causes her world to come crashing down. Enter Wendell, the quirky but seasoned therapist in whose office she suddenly lands. With his balding head, cardigan, and khakis, he seems to have come straight from Therapist Central Casting. Yet he will turn out to be anything but.

As Gottlieb explores the inner chambers of her patients' lives -- a self-absorbed Hollywood producer, a young newlywed diagnosed with a terminal illness, a

senior citizen threatening to end her life on her birthday if nothing gets better, and a twenty-something who can't stop hooking up with the wrong guys -- she finds that the questions they are struggling with are the very ones she is now bringing to Wendell.

With startling wisdom and humor, Gottlieb invites us into her world as both clinician and patient, examining the truths and fictions we tell ourselves and others as we teeter on the tightrope between love and desire, meaning and mortality, guilt and redemption, terror and courage, hope and change.

"Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" is revolutionary in its candor, offering a deeply personal yet universal tour of our hearts and minds and providing the rarest of gifts: a boldly revealing portrait of what it means to be human, and a disarmingly funny and illuminating account of our own mysterious lives and our power to transform them.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Lori Gottlieb's book "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone".