Straight Truth

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Israel declines at highest ever pace: **IRGC spokesman**

TEHRAN - Spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) General Ramezan Sharif has said that the pace of Israel's decline has reached its highest ever pace, noting that Iran is approaching the final summit.

Speaking at a commemoration ceremony on Tuesday, General Sharif pointed out that "we are close to conquering the final summit and that we should not heed the enemy's words."

The process of downfall of the Zionist regime has reached its most intense part over the past 70 years, General Ramezan Sharif said, according to Tasnim.

He said the global arrogance and the Zionists have become so frightened of the power of resistance axis that they assassinated senior Iranian commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani.

The spokesman also noted that the blood of martyrs and the resistance of people have frustrated the Zionists and the enemies of Islam

In remarks in May 2020, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei highlighted the intense hatred among many world people for the US because of its support for terrorism, saying the Americans will have to face eviction from Iraq and Syria.

Iran has underlined that it will never forget the US assassination of Lt. General Oassem Soleimani and his comrades in Iraq and "will definitely deal the reciprocal blow to Americans.'

In January 2020, a US drone strike near Baghdad International Airport assassinated General Soleimani, former commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. The attack — that also killed Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) anti-terror group, along with several others— came while General Soleimani was on an official visit to the Iraqi capital. > Page 3

Setting Deadlines Won't Work Interview

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Israel: Worse than South African Apartheid

TEHRAN - Tisetso Magama, an activist and a former member of South African parliament, says that the emergence of a UAE, Saudi-led axis, has spread within North Africa.

"These countries in particular are playing a negative role in the normalization of relations with Israel." Said the senior board member and spokesperson of "Africa for Palestine.

"South Africans have very strong relations with different Palestinian liberation movements since the 1970s, to help bring about an end to the occupation." He added.

Following is the text of the interview about normalization of relations with the Israeli regime

Firstly, as a South African, how do you relate to the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation and apartheid?

A: There are many similarities between the south African struggle and the Palestinians struggle first. The struggle against the set of colonial regimes, in our case, it became what was then termed in an apartheid state. In the case of Israel is also the same with any analogy. But we clearly identify very much with the experiences of the Palestinian people, and that is said like colonial and the apartheid regime. In many ways worse than what we experienced in South Africa.

Secondly, we as South Africans have very strong relations with different Palestinian liberation movements since the 1970s, to help bring about an end to the occupation. The struggle of the Palestinian people is our own struggle in many ways. South African regime (then apartheid regime) and the Israeli apartheid regime have been working,

handling club for many years. You 🔳 know, these are declassified information that they have cooperated with South African > Page 5

Taremi becomes most-nominated **AFC International Player of Week**



Secrets of the occupied Golan

TEHRAN - News of Israeli plans to double the number of settlers squatting on Syria's occupied Golan Heights has been met with strong condemnation.

Damascus says the territory, which Israel annexed in 1981 having militarily capturing the area in 1967 is both "Dangerous" and "Unprecedented"

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced a multimillion-dollar plan to increase the number of settler units by nearly 7,300. There are already about 25 thousand Israeli ► Page 5

Over \$383m paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in 8 months

TEHRAN - Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade's data show that 113.922 trillion rials (about \$383.57 million) has been paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21).

The mentioned facilities, which are provid-

ed for renewing machinery, equipping production units, or completing semi-finished projects, have been paid in the form of bank loans to 3,039 projects and production units in 31 provinces, IRNA reported.

The program for offering bank facilities to the SMEs and semi-finished projects was kicked off in February 2019 by the Industry Ministry in collaboration with the Central

Bank of Iran (CBI), and since then over 12,124 production units and SMEs have registered for receiving the mentioned loans.

Based on the said program, 201.299 trillion rials of facilities (about \$745.5 million) were paid to SMEs and semi-finished projects to support domestic production and maintain or create job opportunities in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20). ► Page 4

Iran ready to send specialized labor

TEHRAN – Iranian striker Mehdi Taremi has become the most-nominated AFC International Player of the Week.

Over the last 12 months, the-AFC.com has published a total of 35 AFC International Player of the Week polls, with the top 10 Asian performers plying their trade outside the continent over the previous seven days highlighted, and fans from around the world casting their weekly votes.

In total, 115 players from 17 AFC nations were featured at least once in the weekly list, shining on a light of Asian footballers male and female - based everywhere from Europe's biggest leagues to competitions in Africa and North America.

As 2021 draws to a close, the-afc.com has crunched the numbers in order to highlight the players who were among Asia's weekly top 10 more often than anyone else, and whose exemplary consistency deserves recognition.

The player who appeared the most consistently in the polls this year was FC Porto's Iranian forward Taremi, who was among Asia's top 10 performers a staggering 20 times throughout the year.

Taremi began 2021 in blistering touch, scoring six times in January, and earning nominations for seven weeks in > Page 3



Women players donate dolls

TEHRAN - Iranian women football players shared their joy with the children in need. They brought their toys to the training camp underway in Tehran and donated them to the children.

Iran's women's football team are preparing for the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup in India, which starts on January 20.

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

Grave hunters: cemetery tourism in Iran

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing phe-TEHRAN - Having nearly all kinds of historical tombs, museums such as tomb townomena that always makes new changes to ers, and rack-hewn tombs, Iran is heaven for have unforgettable experiences, create new travel motivators, and reach new markets. cemetery enthusiasts and grave hunters; Such a trend results in new tourist spots individuals who have passion for and enjoywhich were unthinkable only a few years ago! ment of cemeteries, epitaphs, gravestone rubbing, photography, art, and history of fa-In cemetery tourism, contrary to popular bemous deaths. lief, it is you who will be the protagonist of a hot

force to Serbia

TEHRAN - The Iranian deputy labor minister for international affairs, Hamed Forouzan, in a meeting with Serbian Ambassador to Iran, Dragan Todorovic, announced readiness to send skilled workforce to Serbia.

During the meeting on Monday, the two officials discussed further cooperation in different fields, IRNA reported.

A memorandum of understanding on employment, technology, and professions has been drafted, and another memorandum on social security is being prepared, which we hope will be signed soon, Forouzan stated.

The purpose of this meeting is to facilitate relations between the economic and trade complexes of Iran and Serbia, he highlighted.

Todorovic, also for his part said that the purpose of this joint meeting is to assess the current situation for the expansion of trade cooperation in various fields such as agriculture and tourism. ► Page 7

dialogue of past and present during visits to centuries-old tombs or cemeteries instead of listening to a curator of an exhibition!

Photo exhibition explores General Soleimani's national popularity

TEHRAN – An exhibition opened on Monday in Tehran showcasing a collection of photos reflecting on aspects of General Qassem Soleimani's national popularity.

Entitled "Sarve Ravan", the exhibition has been organized at the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Soleimani who was killed in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

Based on a call for photos published by the Iranian Photographers Center (IPC) of the Art Bureau, the exhibit was scheduled to be organized in the first martyrdom anniversary of Soleimani, however, it was canceled due to the pandemic, IPC director Ehsan Bageri said in a press release published on Tuesday.

Over 1,000 photos were submitted to the center, about 130 out of which were selected for the exhibition that will be running until January 19, 2022.

The photos have been showcased in three categories, Professionals, Mobile Photos by People, and Photos by Young Adults. > Page 8

It might seem odd but cemeteries as bridges between the present and the past, and the living and the dead, have been drawing their own fans both in groups or individuals each having specific interests. > Page 6

POLITICS

DECEMBER 30, 2021 Straight Truth **TEHRAN TIMES**

Foreign Ministry promises to legally pursue cyberwar against Iran



TEHRAN - The Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that it will legally pursue cyberattacks against the Islamic Republic at international bodies.

The promise by the Foreign Ministry to sue those behind cyberwar was made during a meeting between Foreign Hossein Amir Abdollahian and General Gholamreza Jalali, the chief of Iran's Civil Defense Organization.

The two officials also exchanged views on developing ties with other countries in areas of civil defense, including providing a basis for scientific and civil defense relations and interactions.

Amir Abdollahian also enumerated Iran's scientific capabilities and the need of certain countries, including neighbors, to such abilities in areas of civil defense, saying the Foreign Ministry will tap all legal and political tools for developing and updating this homegrown technology.

For his part, General Jalali said the main important goal of his organization is to monitor, thwart threats and lessen vulnerabilities in the face of foreign threats. He also pointed to new form of threats in the world, insisting on the need to take proper legal and political measures in this regard.

He added that today the enemies have put launching cyberattacks against Iran's key infrastructure on their agenda and it is necessary to adopt a common defense against such threats.

Nobody did more than Gen. Soleimani in defeating **ISIL: EU lawmaker**

TEHRAN – A member of the European Parliament has acknowledged that nobody did more to defeat ISIL terrorists in Iraq than the legendary Iranian commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani

"While the U.S. and Allies were responsible for the rise of ISIL and the arming of Jihadists Groups, nobody did more to defeat ISIL in Iraq than General Soleimani," Mick Wallace said in a post on his Twitter account.

Wallace made the remarks in reply to a tweet by the Iranian embassy in the Kingdom of Belgium which said, "We invite you to watch a short video we put together at the Embassy in commemoration of the second anniversary of the martyrdom of General Soleimani, the hero strove to bring about peace in the region & was a sturdy bulwark against the spread of extremism and terrorism."

Wallace also condemned the international community for not taking any action about the assassination of the top Iranian general, saying, "Where was the condemnation from the International Community when he was murdered by the US...?"

Lt. Gen. Oassem Soleimani, commander of Iran's IRGC Quds Force, and Iraq's Second-in-Command of Popular Mobilization Unit (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were assassinated in a U.S. drone attack near Baghdad International Airport on Jan. 3, 2020. The attack was ordered by former U.S. President Donald Trump.

In retaliation to the terrorist attack Iran showered a U.S airbase in western Iraq with ballistic missiles. The airbase, called The Ayn al-Asad, was used for drone strike against Gen. Soleimani.



The missile attack on the U.S. airbase was the first of its kind on U.S. since the Second World War.

Iran has prepared a legal text to sue U.S. at international courts for the terrorist attack.

Iran has intelligence supremacy in Persian Gulf: IRGC Navy chief

TEHRAN - The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy said on Wednesday that Iran has intelligence supremacy in the Persian Gulf and regional waters, noting IRGC and Army forces have demonstrated the military capability of the Islamic Republic.

Admiral Alireza Tangsiri made the remarks while attending the cemetery of martyrs in Kerman, where the body of General Qassem Soleimani is buried.

The admiral said today whenever the American warships enter the Persian Gulf they seek refuge in the southern waters of the Persian Gulf near the coasts of Arab countries

"We as the disciples of Haj Qassem who have been spirited by this great martyr stood against the enemies" and of its examples is aborting a move by the American forces who in early November were trying to steal a tanker that was carrying the Iranian oil, he clarified.

Iran is marking the second anniversary of Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the IRGC Quds Force, who was assassinated in a U.S. drone strike on January 2, 2020 near Baghdad International Airport. Gen. Soleimani, who is commonly known as "Haj Qassem", was assassinated upon direct order by former U.S. president Donald Trump.

Admiral Tangsiri said he and other IRGC Navy officials had a chance to attend on the "graveyard of our dear commander" Gen. Soleimani on the second anniversary of his martyrdom and "make commitment to continue his path" which was "supporting people and the rule of jurisprudence".

Pointing to the personality of Gen. Soleimani, he said, "As the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said Haj Qassem was a school of thought... and a great and exemplary commander."

Noting that the Qassem Soleimani school should be kept alive, Tangsiri insisted that "the school of Haj Qassem was allegiance to rule of jurisprudence and keeping resistance movement alive."

The admiral said he had been knowing Gen. Soleimani since the Kheibar operation in 1984, during Iraq's war against Iran.

Noting that Gen. Soleimani was so humble that one could not recognize that he was a commander, he said, "This spirit of Haj Qassem did not even change a little even after the end of the war (in 1988) and even when he was promoted to the rank of major general and awarded the Medal of Zolfagar."

Tangsiri went on to say that before Soleimani was martyred he inspired the spirit of bravery among the IRGC Navy servicemen and after his assassination this spirit was strengthened.

Gen. Soleimani was a legendary commander in the war against terrorist groups including Daesh (ISIS). Daesh celebrated his assassination by the U.S.

JCPOA negotiators agree on 'common understanding' on nuclear steps, lifting sanctions: China

TEHRAN – Representatives from China, France, Germany, Russia, Britain and Iran are negotiating in Vienna to bring back the 2015 nuclear, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, back to life.

The United States is involved in the talks indirectly.

It is the eighth round of talks in Vienna, the Austrian capital, which started in April. Six rounds were held during the administration of Hassan Rouhani and two round in the new Ebrahim Raisi administration

Wang Qun, the Chinese envoy to the Viennabased international organizations, said the parties have forged a new "common text" on nuclear issues and a "common understanding" on lifting sanctions, CGTN reported on Tuesday.

"Lifting sanctions is one of the most important topics in the negotiations. Actually, there are two topics. The first one is how Iran will restrict its nuclear program. The second one is about lifting sanctions," Wang explained.

"The biggest problem lies with the United States because the United States quit the nuclear agreement and we had to renegotiate on how the United States and Iran would resume implementation of the deal. So sanction is still a key issue," he added.

"More consensus building"

Wang said the negotiators agreed to keep negotiating thoroughly with a focus on these key points during this round of talks.

All these consensuses laid a solid foundation

under his "maximum pressure" campaign against the Islamic Republic. Iran waited for a full year to see the European parties to the JCPOA compensate the country for the sanctions, however, seeing no action, Iran gradually started to remove limits on its nuclear program in May 2019.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

"The United States has imposed countless sanctions, ranging from primary sanctions to secondary sanctions. So we emphasized at the beginning of the talks that one should have a sense of right and wrong," the Chinese diplomat said.

On Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian expressed optimism about the ongoing talks in the Austrian capital, saying the negotiations are moving "in a good direction" and an agreement is possible if other parties show "goodwill" and "seriousness."

"We believe that if the other sides continue the talks, which have just started in this phase, with goodwill, it will be possible for all parties to reach a good agreement for all parties and we can realize this goal," Amir Abdollahian told reporters, according to Press TV.

"If the opposite parties show seriousness along with good faith, reaching a good agreement in the near future is conceivable," he added.

The important point, the foreign minister added, is that the negotiating sides have reached a "unified, joint text," which is currently the focus of the Iranian team

Now is not the time to threaten Iran with greater pressure: Ulyanov "Let's not set up artificial deadlines"



TEHRAN - Stating that now is not the time to threaten Iran with greater pressure, Russian representative to the Vienna talks Mikhail Ulyanov said all countries, including Iran and the United States, look for the restoration of the deal.

Rejecting setting some deadlines at the Vienna talks, Ulyanov said in an interview with Foreign Policy, "This sense of urgency is a little bit exaggerated. Yes, it's urgent, but let's be prudent; let's [not] set up artificial deadlines."

"Frankly, I'm rather optimistic at

this stage. I see no objective reasons talks went on to say that now is for being skeptical," Ulyanov noted. "I cannot guarantee that an

agreement will be reached, but I believe that chances are very,

restoration of the nuclear deal." Ulvanov said China and Russia Iranian government.

not the time to threaten Iran with greater pressure, saying, "Even if they produce a significant amount of nuclear material, so what. It cannot be used without a warhead, and the Iranians do not have warheads.'

Iran and the five remaining signatories to the JCOA have started a new round of talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna with a focus on the removal of all sanctions imposed on Tehran after Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the agreement and the nuclear steps by Iran.

Representatives of Iran and the P4+1 group of countries began the eighth round of the talks on Monday. The first round of talks under Iran's new President Ebrahim

Raeisi ended 10 days ago.

The Vienna talks were resumed on November 29 after a fivemonth hiatus, marking the first round of negotiations under Raisi's

Iran and the P4+1 group of countries sat down for talks in the Austrian capital on December 9 after the talks were adjourned on December 3. The participants returned to their capitals for additional consultation on the two draft proposals put forward by Tehran.

During the 7th round, the new Iranian administration presented two separate proposals on the removal of U.S. sanctions and Iran's return to its nuclear commitments under the JCPOA.

very high as the main prerequisite for success is already there," the Russian envoy added. "All countries, all participants, including Iran and the United States, look for the

persuaded Iran to back away from some of its maximalist positions, including its insistence that the talks focus only on sanctions, not the nuclear issue. In the end, he said, the Iranians agreed to begin negotiations on the basis of a draft hammered out by the previous

The Russian envoy at the Vienna

administration.

for this round of talks and all parties concerned should focus on them, especially the existing ones, and work hard to expand to new areas while "properly" handling the differences, the Chinese diplomat added.

"We hope that all parties can take practical measures to jointly safeguard the current momentum and atmosphere of the negotiations and push for an early conclusion of a package solution," Wang said.

China will continue to firmly support the resumption of negotiations between the United States and Iran on implementing the agreement, participate constructively in the follow-up negotiations, and work with all parties to push for results, said the Chinese envoy.

The U.S. government under Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement in May 2018 and unilaterally re-imposed sanctions on Iran. Trump also added new sanctions on Iran

He said the two sides were busy discussing and trying to reach an agreement over the outstanding issues mentioned between parentheses in the text, adding the teams "are working intensively."

The Chinese diplomat also said sanctions must not be imposed on Iran during the negotiations and warned against "double standards" and pursuing "selfish interests".

"Sanctions should also not be used for threatening casually and new sanctions should not be introduced against Iran during the negotiations," Wang remarked.The Joe Biden administration imposed fresh sanctions on two Iranian government agencies and several officials on December 7 during the previous round of talks.

The eighth round of negotiations during the Christmas and New Year holidays reflected the sense of urgency on all parties to resume negotiations, Wang said.

Iran condemns Israeli strike on Latakia as brazen violation of Syrian sovereignty

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday condemned the Israeli aerial strike on Syria's port of Latakia on Tuesday morning, saying the attack is a brazen violation of Syria's sovereignty, an act of aggression, and a clear example of the Tel Aviv's objectives to create crisis and chaos in the region.

The attack is also an "inhumane and immoral action" and amounts to aggression against a UN member state, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

Khatibzadeh went on to say that Israel sees its security in creating instability in the region.

"The leaders of that regime (Israel), who can't stand stability, security and calm in the region and have defined their security in the region as being unsafe and as unstable as possible, have violated and mocked all international rules, regulations and

norms by launching successive attacks on the Syrian soil under bogus and baseless pretexts," Khatibzadeh said, according to the Tasnim news agency.

He stressed that the Syrian government and nation have the legitimate right to defend themselves against the aggressors.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also urged the international community to take the necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of such strikes which threaten regional peace and security, warning that "silence on such aggressive actions by the Zionist regime will encourage and give the green light to the regime to continue acts of aggression."

According to Syrian state media, the Israeli air raid on the Mediterranean port cause "significant material damage".

It was the second attack of Latakia in the current

month.

"At around 3:21am (05:21 GMT), the Israeli enemy carried out an aerial aggression with several missiles from the direction of the Mediterranean ... targeting the container yard in Latakia port," SANA state news agency cited a military source as saying on Tuesday.

Live footage aired by the Syrian television showed flames and smoke in the container terminal. Later on Tuesday, the Syrian government's media office said emergency services brought under control fires that had broken out in the port's container storage area.

The missile attack also wrecked the facades of a hospital, some residential buildings and shops, according to SANA.

Latakia is Syria's main commercial port.

China to open consulate office in **Bandar Abbas**

TEHRAN – The Iranian cabinet of ministers voted on Wednesday to allow China the permission to open a consulate general in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas, Tasnim reported.

The cabinet approved the move upon by a proposal from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Bandar Abbas is the capital of Iran's coastal province of Hormozgan.

The permission has been conditional on reciprocal measures and conformity to the

relevant rules and regulations.

China became Iran's top trading partner in the previous Iranian year which ended on March 20.

The value of non-oil trade exchanges with China in Iranian year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021) stood at \$18,715 million.

In March 2021, the foreign ministers of Iran and China signed a 25-year agreement to develop cooperation between the two countries in various fields

Russian diplomat says optimistic about success of Vienna talks

TEHRAN – Expressing optimism about revitalization of the JCPOA, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations has said all necessary conditions have been provided for achieving success at the Vienna talks.

Speaking in an interview with RIA Novosti on Wednesday, Dmitry Polyanskiy said that he sincerely believes that the negotiating parties will succeed in achieving positive results in Vienna over Iran's nuclear deal

At first, the participants at the talks waited for the Biden government, it was a long process, about five months. Then, elections were held in Iran and a new Iranian team was formed.

Polyanskiy said Russia has a very good team of specialists in Vienna, led by Mikhail Ulyanov, the country's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international

organizations, adding that he is very confident about their diplomatic skills.

The Russian diplomat added he is very optimistic about the Vienna talks. All the necessary conditions for the expected success are prepared

to announce that the JCPOA has been operationalized again, he remarked.

The new round of the Vienna talks on JCPOA Joint Commission was held in the Austrian capital of Vienna on Monday, Dec. 27. It was co-chaired by Iran's top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani and Deputy EU foreign policy chief Enrique Mora.

The JCPOA Joint Commission meeting was held at the Coburg Hotel with the participation of delegations from Iran. the P4+1 group and the European Union. The trend of negotiations was evaluated in the joint commission.

In the meeting, it was emphasized that most of Iran's proposals have been included in the text.

Setting deadlines won't work

TEHRAN - As the Vienna talks moved on in the waning days of the year 2021, European and American negotiators toned down their hostile rhetoric against Iran but failed to come up with a constructive initiative to get the talks moving ahead.

The talks, however, made progress that the Russian lead negotiator "indisputable." described as Commenting on Tuesday's negotiations over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Russia envoy to the talks said, "Today in the course of Vienna Talks on JCPOA the working group on nuclear issues held a useful meeting. We observe indisputable progress. Sanctions lifting is being actively discussed in informal settings."

The purported progress at the talks was made thanks to the Iranian initiative. Iran constructively engaged in the nuclear part of the talks in a bid to pave the way for result-oriented talks. During the past rounds of talks, Iran presented at least two main draft proposals each pertaining to specific subjects.

The Europeans presented nothing but grumbling and blame-game. Of course, their behavior during the current round was less hostile at the media level compared to the past rounds, though they sought to create a sense of urgency regarding the talks by unofficially setting self-imposed deadlines for concluding the talks.

European diplomatic sources told some regional media outlets that



there is an unannounced deadline of four weeks for the talks ending in early February. Officially, the Europeans and Americans have not set such a deadline. But they, on several occasions, made remarks signaling that there are only a few weeks remaining to salvage the JCPOA. Chief EU negotiator Enrique Mora said at the beginning of this round that the negotiators have a timespan of weeks, not months, to reach a final deal. The E3 negotiators also echoed the same thing in a statement to Western reporters. "We have some weeks and not months to reach an agreement," the statement said, noting that they won't

set "artificial deadlines." Aside from the Europeans' paradoxical behavior, the issue of setting a deadline does not have the potential of forcing a change in Iran's calculus. Because Tehran, while not opposing a deal at the shortest time possible, has made it clear that it will not sign a deal at any cost. In other words,

it won't cross its red lines in order to expedite the process of negotiations. Therefore, any European move to play the game of deadlines would produce no results for the West.

Instead of playing on the issue of time, the Europeans should abandon their diplomatic inertia by presenting serious initiatives to move the talks forward. One point of note is the Europeans' position in the past negotiations. During the past rounds, the E3 negotiators were largely reduced to playing the role of courier between Iran and the U.S. with no direct European impact on state of things.

If the E3 really wants to address the urgency of the situation then they must first relinquish their past role and proactively engage in substantive discussions regarding verification details and guarantees Iran has demanded as part of reviving the original JCPOA.

The issue of verification and

guarantees bring us to another point of contention at the Vienna talks. Taking note of the U.S. track record in non-complying with the terms of the JCPOA ever since its signing, Iran has demanded that the U.S. provide it with guarantees that Washington won't renege on its commitments under a revived JCPOA again. Besides, Iran said it wants an agreed period of time to verify the lifting of U.S. sanctions before starting to fully implement its commitments under the JCPOA.

No progress has been reported vet on these two issues despite the fact that Iran has every reason to demand them. The underlying reason for Iran to demand a kind of insurance measure derives from a number of facts known to everyone around the world: First, U.S. foreign policy is no longer a predictable, stable issue. And in some such cases as Trump's withdrawal spree from almost all U.S. global commitments, U.S. foreign policy was contrary to common sense, too.

Second, even under Barak Obama, the architect of the deal, the U.S. failed to fully honor its JCPOA obligations. Third, the European did nothing to compensate Iran when the U.S., in complete disregard for European objection, withdrew from the JCPOA. Fourth, the hostile atmosphere in the U.S. Congress against Iran, which makes it guite possible that a number of Iran hawks on Capitol Hill would push for legislation and bills violating the terms of the JCPOA even if the White House

decided to remain committed to it.



SPORTS

Taremi becomes most-nominated **AFC International Player of Week**

Frome Page **1** > arow from January 9 to February 24, helping him feature our weekly list no less than 13 times before the end of May.

His 27 goals in the calendar year included strikes against Juventus, Liverpool and Chelsea, the latter being voted the UEFA Champions League Goal of the Season, and the 29-year-old now sits comfortably among Asia's very finest players.

In 2022, Taremi can likely look forward to a FIFA World Cup, which may yet be the crowning moment of what has become a superb career.

Iranian forwards Allahyar Sayyadmanesh and Sardar Azmoun and are also in the 10-player list with 11 and nine times, respectively.

To carry Iran's flag by Nikkhah **Bahrami in Tokyo** among top moments from 2021

TEHRAN - To carry Iran's flag by Iran basketball center Samad Nikkhah Bahrami was chosen by fiba. basketball among memorable moments in Asia & Oceania basketball

Another calendar year gone by with 12 months jammed with exciting action in Asia & Oceania basketball. To look back at what was yet another eventful year, FIBA has listed some of the most impressive moments in 2021.



Being an Olympian is already one of the highest achievements ever for an athlete. But being an Olympian and being your country's flag bearer for the Opening Ceremony?

Newcastle and Everton boost: Lyon agree Azmoun terms

TEHRAN - Newcastle, and Everton have received a boost in their reported pursuit of Zenit St. Petersburg striker Sardar Azmoun. Lyon has agreed to personal terms, but the French club is unwilling to pay more than £2.5million.

Azmoun, 26, has continued his stunning form since his move to the Russian giants in February 2019. The 60-time Iran international has scored 62 goals in 104 Zenit outings - 10 of which have come this season.

However, Azmoun is out of contract at the end of the season. A move is expected and could occur as early as January - with Foot Mercato saying Lyon and Newcastle are keen. 90Min says Everton is keen on Azmoun.

The latest reports state that Azmoun has agreed to a contract at Lyon until June 2026. However, Lyon is struggling to meet Champions League star Zenit's asking price to get him in January - and not on a free in the summer.

Lyon is only willing to pay £2.5million, and while they could get him on a free - it opens up the possibility of other clubs chancing their arm. Everton and Newcastle can certainly pay more than the aforementioned figure.

Everton desperately needs an addition in the final third. Salomon Rondon has struggled since reuniting with Rafa Benitez at the Toffees, while Dom Calvert-Lewin remains injured and on the sidelines.

The Toon need firepower to get themselves out of the drop zone. At a bargain fee of slightly more than Lyon's offering of £2.5million, he is easily worth it, regardless of Everton or Newcastle's current options.

Tractor must pay more than one million USD to Kevin Fortune

TEHRAN - Tractor football club must pay

Israel declines at highest ever pace: IRGC spokesman

TEHRAN – Spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) General Ramezan Sharif has said that the pace of Israel's decline has reached its highest ever pace, noting that Iran is approaching the final summit.

Speaking at a commemoration ceremony on Tuesday, General Sharif pointed out that "we are close to conquering the final summit and that we should not heed the enemy's words."

The process of downfall of the Zionist regime has reached its most intense part over the past 70 years, General Ramezan Sharif said, according to Tasnim.

He said the global arrogance and the Zionists have become so frightened of the power of resistance axis that they assassinated senior Iranian commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani.

The spokesman also noted that the blood of martyrs and the resistance of people have frustrated the Zionists and the enemies of Islam.

In remarks in May 2020, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei highlighted the intense hatred among many world people for the US because of its support for terrorism, saying the Americans will have to face eviction from Iraq and Syria.

Iran has underlined that it will never forget the US assassination of Lt. General Qassem Soleimani and his comrades in Irag and "will definitely deal the reciprocal blow to Americans.'

in the Vienna talks could reinforce Israel's motivation to make "malicious moves."

Many believe that Israeli threats against Iran are primarily meant to force Iran into making more concessions in Vienna. In reality, observers say, Israel is unable and incapable of mounting an effective military strike to take out Iran's sparse and heavily-fortified nuclear plants.

Iran's latest military drill showed what Israel would face if it dared to attack Iran. The drill also was indicative of the gravity of the situation. Iran has said Israel won't dare to attack. But at the same time, Iranian military leaders highlighted their combat readiness to respond to any hostile move by Israel.

Last week, the IRGC held a massive military drill during which it practiced how to target Israel's Dimona nuclear plant.

The IRGC simultaneously launched 16 ballistic missiles of various types that hit a mock sensitive target with 100-percent precision. Perhaps, this was the most remarkable part of the drill as Iran's state-run TV showed the missiles roaring up into the sky and then raining down on a mock target very much resembling Israel's Dimona nuclear plant which is thought to harbor Israeli nukes. The target was totally razed to the ground after it was hit with the missiles, possibly creating a scene of how the real Dimona would look like in case there

will have to suffer a strategic defeat if they dare to test the Islamic Republic's power, according to Tasnim.

In comments at a military gathering on Tuesday, Major General Rashid advised the enemies not to test Iran's power and determination "because they definitely could not afford the costs of extensive and comprehensive confrontation (with Iran)."

Therefore, the enemy had better confirm the Islamic Republic's power in order to incur lower costs, he added.

He also hailed the IRGC for its recent war game in southern Iran, saying the Armed Forces hold annual drills, monitor the enemies constantly, and are prepared to impose costs on the enemy heavier than it what it may achieve.

Iran will turn the enemy's minor and tactical success into a strategic defeat by choosing the right time and place and adopting the appropriate tools and unexpected methods, the general noted.

In comments in April, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Bageri said all Iranian military forces are ready to give a decisive and crushing response to any threat at any level in such a way that the enemies of Iran would regret taking a hostile action against the Islamic establishment.

General Bagheri and IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami also said that the lates drill was meant to send a message to Israel.

In January 2020, a US drone strike near Baghdad International Airport assassinated General Soleimani, former commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. The attack — that also killed Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) anti-terror group, along with several others— came while General Soleimani was on an official visit to the Iraqi capital.

The remarks came amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel. Israeli officials have unleashed a campaign of military threats against Iran in recent weeks. Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz has said that he ordered the Israeli army to prepare for a military attack on Iran. Other Israeli intelligence, political and military officials have echoed the same threat. An Iranian security official has told Nour News, a media outlet close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, that relative progress made

was an Israeli attack against Iran.

The Great Prophet 17 drill began along the southern coastlines of the country last week with the participation of various forces of the IRGC such as the aerospace force and the cyberelectronic division.

The drill featured real-time firing of smart bombs, ballistic and cruise missiles targeting fixed and mobile targets. In addition, combat drones dropped bombs with pinpoint accuracy and Su-22 warplanes bombarded mock enemy targets in close air support (CAS) operation.

The IRGC's Ground Force also put a new upgraded combat tank dubbed Karrar into service on the third day of the war game. The Karrar tank was operationalized during the exercise. It is an upgraded version of the T-72m tanks that come into service for the first time.

Commander of the Khatam al-Anbia Headquarters Major General Gholam Ali Rashid said on Tuesday that the enemies cannot afford to take military action against Iran because they

Underlining that the missile part of the drill is carrying "very clear and obvious messages," General Salami said. "The message of this drill is a serious, real, and field warning to threats by the Zionist regime's officials that they should take care not to make mistakes and faults and if they make mistakes, we will cut off their hands."

The IRGC Commander-in-Chief said that the difference between the actual operation and the IRGC's missile drill was only in changing the angles of launching the missile. "Therefore, enemies must watch their words," the general said.

General Bagheri further amplified the warning by hinting that Iran expedited the timing of the drill due to Israel's bluster against Iran. "This exercise was planned in advance, but the many yet empty threats by the leaders of the Zionist regime [Israel] caused this exercise to take place at this time, and thank God, it was one of the most successful missile exercises of the Islamic Republic of Iran so far," he said.

The average person can only imagine how that would feel.

This was an honor that was bestowed to four of Asia's basketball stars for the Tokyo Olympics this past year.

Rui Hachimura waved the flag of the host nation proudly while Samad Nikkah Bahrami (Iran) and Patty Mills (Australia) also did the honor for their nations as players the men's basketball national teams. Khulan Onolbaatar was also the flag bearer for Mongolia as a member of the women's 3x3 basketball team.

Persepolis edge Sepahan, Esteghlal defeat Foolad

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team earned a 1-0 vital win against Sepahan to leapfrog them in Iran Professional League (IPL) table.

On Wednesday, Kamal Kamyabinia scored a goal in the 33rd minute in Arak's Imam Khomeini Stadium.

In Tehran, Esteghlal defeated Foolad 1-0. Mehdi Mehdipour scored a long-range goal before the hour mark.

Nassaji Mazandaran shared the spoils with Naft Masjed Soleyman in a 1-1 draw, Paykan drew 1-1 with Padideh, Tractor suffered a 1-0 home loss against Zob Ahan, Gol Gohar were held to a 2-2 draw by Mes, Fajr Sepasi played out a goalless draw against Havadar and Sanat Naft defeated Aluminum 3-1.

Esteghlal lead the table with 28 points, three clear of Persepolis.

Sepahan remain third with 22 points.

1,100,000 U.S. dollars to their former forward Kevin Fortune.

The French player joined Tractor in August 2019 but just played 10 matches for the Iranian top-flight club.

He left Tractor in May next year to join French club AJ Auxerre.

FIFA has already banned Tractor from signing in the January transfer window after the Tabriz-based club failed to pay its Algerian forward Okacha Hamzaoui.

Zorya ready to sign Sayyadmanesh on permanent deal

TEHRAN – Ukraine's Zorya Luhansk are looking to sign Iranian winger Allahyar Sayyadmanesh on permanent deal, sport.24tv reported.

Sayyadmanesh returned to his parent club Fenerbahce two weeks ago but Zorya are ready to sign him once again.

Belgian top-flight football club Anderlecht have also set their sight on signing Sayyadmanesh.

According to Belgian website voetbalbelgie. be, Anderlecht will sign Sayyadmanesh in the winter transfer window.

Sayyadmanesh played 35 matches for Zorya and scored 12 goals for the team.

Iran Parliament thanks Army for responding to Taliban aggression

TEHRAN – A group of Iranian lawmakers has issued a statement appreciating the Iranian Army for responding to a recent Taliban aggression against Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province.

Ali Karimi Firouzjaei has read the joint statement during a session on Wednesday. "During the recent transgression by the Taliban against some of the border bases and turrets in the Sistan and Baluchistan region, the army's ground forces with full strength, full authority and operational surveillance immediately appeared and pushed the group back to the depths of Afghanistan," the statement said, according to IRNA.

The lawmakers added, "We, the members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, on behalf of the nation, have

always appreciated the around-theclock efforts of this powerful force, and we ask God Almighty for the success of the army and other military and border forces. We would like to thank the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Commander of the Ground Forces and other senior commanders, officers, and happened due to a misunderstanding.

soldiers."

In early December, following the border clashes between the Iranian and Afghan border guards, a Taliban spokesman while announcing control of the conflict on the common border said that the necessary orders had been issued to prevent similar incidents. Zabihullah Mujahid said the clashes

ECONOMY



Over \$383m paid to SMEs, semifinished projects in 8 months

From page 1 > In early May 2019, Former CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

According to CBI data, Iranian banking system has paid a total of 17.274 quadrillion rials (over \$58.1 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar, registering a 59.2-percent rise from the same period in the previous year.

Banks paid 11.481 quadrillion rials (about \$38.65 billion) of facilities to various economic sectors in the previous year's first eight months.



Back in November, the CBI had announced that 14.828 quadrillion rials (over \$49.92 billion) of facilities were paid to domestic economic sectors in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar vear (March 21-October 22), to register a 58.5-percent rise from the same period in the previous year.

TCCIMA Industry, Mining Committee holds meeting to discuss petchem issues



TEHRAN – The ninth meeting of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA)'s Industry and Mining Committee was held on Wednesday to discuss the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's new directive for managing the market of petrochemical products.

The meeting was attended by senior officials including Mohsen Safdari, head of the Industry Ministry's Chemical and Polymer Industries Office and the representatives of some of Tehran Province's major petrochemical companies, the TCCIMA portal reported.

During the gathering the attendees criticized the Industry Ministry's approach in releasing the new directive and noted that the details of this directive had not been systematically communicated to companies and businessmen active in this field.

Speaking at the meeting, Morteza Nik-

Seresht, the secretary of the Association of Plastic Industries noted that the Industry Ministry has not released any information about the new directive and people active in this industry have been kept in the dark.

Nik-Seresht further mentioned some of the problems of the petrochemical industry's downstream sector including the unwillingness of production units to buy raw materials from Iran Merchandise Exchanges (IME), lack of proper pricing of polymer products based on Southeast Asian markets, additional costs, having old production lines and not importing machinery.

Further in the meeting, Safdari noted that the Industry Ministry's new directive has been discussed twice at the ministry's market regulation working group and the opinions of the private sector have been received and applied in preparing the directive.

He said the directive has not yet been implemented and private sector representatives can submit their opinions about the directive to be considered.

The petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as the export of such products is the second-largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

Iran, Iraq now more serious to complete Shalamcheh-Basra railway

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The connection of the railway from Iran's southwestern Shalamcheh town to Basra city in Iraq has been among the issues pursued by the governments of the two countries for many years.

The railway project has been faced several problems for many years, but it seems that with the changes that have taken place since last year it has entered a more serious phase.

For the first time in the Iranian calendar year 1390 (March 2011-March 2012), Iran and Iraq signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the construction of the Shalamcheh-Basra railway, which was not implemented.

In 1393, another MOU was signed between Tehran and Baghdad for the construction of this railway, according to which,

Iran undertook to design and build a bridge over Arvand River, and the Iragi side undertook to build a 32-kilometer railway from the Shalamcheh border to the Basra railway station on Iraqi soil.

Implementation of this project was followed up by the Iranian government, and in order to complete the Shalamcheh-Basra railway, the 17-kilometer Khorramshahr-Shalamcheh railroad project was completed in 2011 to connect the Iranian railway to Iraq, and it was decided to join the city of Basra.

However, due to some reasons, economic problems and a shortage of funds in Iraq, as well as legal problems in that country for granting land to Iran to construct the railway, the project was halted for ten years.

But now the current governments of the two countries seem more serious to construct this



railroad, which will be a strategic event in the West Asia region.

During a visit of Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development Rostam Oasemi to Iraq, the two sides signed a deal on Monday for completing the Shalamcheh-Basra railway.

Elaborating on the details of the deal, Qasemi said: "The agreement has a clear timetable, and one of its clauses is that implementation of the project will actually begin within the next month."

"For almost 20 years, we have had numerous negotiations with the Iragi side to implement Shalamcheh-Basra railway, and there were even many memorandums signed in different periods, which never reached the desired result." Oasemi said.

"We agreed to start the primary study and implementation of this project within the next month, which is practically a big step for

Iran and Iraq to expand trade, and increase freight and passenger exchanges, which is important for both countries," he added.

Oasemi noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) and the Iraqi Republic Railways will implement the project together and a joint venture will be established within two months.

By linking railways with Iran, Iraq is going to also access Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and the northern regions, including the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East.

Iran and Iraq have been taking significant steps for boosting economic relations in the past few years. The two countries are following up plans for increasing their bilateral economic trade to over \$20 billion.

Shalamcheh-Basra railway can be very effective in the expansion of trade between the two sides.

More than 60% of idle industrial units revivable: ISIPO head

TEHRAN - The head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has said over 60 percent of the idle industrial units across the country have the potential to be revived and resume operation, IRNA reported.

"Currently, some production units are struggling with banking, legal, or tax problems, and we want to identify such units to solve their problems so that they remain active and provide employment," Ali Rasoulian told the national TV on Tuesday.

"If idle units return to the production cycle, the employment and business process of the production units will flourish," he added.

Back in September, Rasoulian had announced that 499 idle industrial units were revived in the country during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22).

According to the official, the mentioned units created job opportunities for over



12,478 people.

Rasoulian said that reviving 1,600 idle and semi-active industrial units in the industrial parks and zones, as well as 400 units outside of such parks, is targeted for the current fiscal year (ends on March 20, 2022).

The official mentioned Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's programs for developing the country's productive sectors in the current year and said: "Industry Ministry has defined 36 new programs for improving the productivity of the country's major strategic industries in the current year among which ISIPO is in charge of two programs.

The mentioned programs include providing infrastructure for industrial parks and zones and reviving idle and semi-active industrial units, he explained.

Last year, 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with the financing of 35 trillion rials (over \$117.8 million), providing employment for 27,000 people, the ISIPO head further said.

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

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

TPO taking new steps to facilitate maritime transportation of export goods

Commodities worth over \$870m exported from Khorasan Razavi in 8 months

TEHRAN – As announced by a pro- od, the official added. vincial official, commodities worth \$874 million were exported from Khorasan Razavi in northeast of Iran, during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21). Omid Jahankhah, an official with the customs department of Khorasan Razavi, also announced that commodities valued at \$333 million were imported to the province in the eight-month period.

As announced by the former head



weight year on year. The United Arab Emirates was the

the official added.

worth \$38.5 billion in the past year,

He named fresh apples, metal sections, fresh or dried pistachios, flooring and building materials as the main exported items and Iraq, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan as the major export destinations.

Electronic equipment, cotton, raw materials and machinery for production units were the major imported products, and United Arab Emirates, Tajikistan, Oman and China were the main sources of import during the nine-month peri-

TEDPIX drops

Wednesday

2,500 points on

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of

Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped

of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 40 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi has said that Iran traded over 110.3 million tons of non-oil products worth \$63.1 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

According to the IRICA head, the weight of trade in the mentioned period also grew by 43.5 percent in comparison to the figure for the previous fiscal year.

The official put the eight-month non-oil exports at 83.7 million tons valued at \$31.1 billion, with a 42-percent rise in value and 10.5-percent growth in weight.

Mir-Ashrafi noted that petro-

chemical products accounted for 43 percent of the total value of the exports in the said time span, with 39.8 million tons worth \$13.3 billion of the said products being exported to foreign markets.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China, Irag, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Afghanistan

The official further announced that the Islamic Republic imported 26.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$32 billion in the first eight months of the present year, with a 38-percent growth in value and a 21-percent rise in

top exporter to Iran in the said period, followed by China, Turkey, Germany, and Switzerland, he stated.

According to the IRICA head, out of the total non-oil goods imported into the country in the first eight months of this year, 20.3 million tons worth \$12.4 billion were basic goods, which accounted for 38 percent of the total value of the imports.

Mir-Ashrafi has announced that the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

He has put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons, and said that the figure shows a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the result of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, and that of import was 34.4 million tons

Among the country's non-oil export destinations, China was the first, with importing \$8.9 billion worth of products, Iraq was the second with importing \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates the third with importing \$4.6 billion, Turkey the fourth with importing \$2.5 billion, and Afghanistan the fifth with importing \$2.2 billion, Mir-Ashrafi announced, and named gasoline, natural gas, polyethylene, propane, and pistachio as Iran's major exported products during the past year.

He further named Iran's top sources of non-oil imports in the said time, as China with exporting \$9.7 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic, the UAE with \$9.6 billion, Turkey with \$4.3 billion, India with \$2.1 billion, and Germany with \$1.8 billion, respectively, and mentioned corn, cellphone, rice, oil meal and oil seeds, wheat, and raw oil as the major imported items.



TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak has said his organization is seriously pursuing the removal of barriers in the way of maritime transportation of export commodities, the TPO portal reported on Wednesday.

Speaking in a meeting with the representatives of the country's major shipping companies, Peyman-Pak said Trade Promotion Organization of Iran is taking all the necessary measures for solving the problems in the field of maritime transport of export goods.

According to the official, TPO has held various meetings with the representatives of the country's major export entities, as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) to discuss the problems of this sector and to offer practical solutions to resolve the issues and develop the country's maritime export transportation.

"Considering the differences in the structure of export transportation in the south and north of the country, it is necessary to study the problems and bottlenecks regionally, and while trying to strengthen the shipping line of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a national fleet, the capabilities of the private sector should also be used optimally," Peyman-Pak said.

2,553 points on Wednesday.

The index closed at 1.397 million points, while over 6.563 billion securities worth 45.09 trillion rials (about \$155.48 million) were traded.

The first market's index dropped 1,887 points and the second market's index lost 5,087 points.

TEDPIX rose 66,000 points (5.1 percent)



to 1.359 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday)

During the past week, the indices of Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, Social Security Investment Company, National Copper Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed ones



From page **1** > apartheid on a nuclear bomb, of course, that corporation went further. they exchanged the, policemen and soldiers, they've exchanged technologies. South Africa, then bought arms from Israeli apartheid regime to help repress and suppress the African population in south Africa. There's been deep cooperation between those two apartheid regimes. I mean, the struggle of the people of Palestine is our own struggle, and South Africa will never be free, until Palestine is free. Essentially what we said was that the freedom of south Africa is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinian people. For us the Palestinian issue, is a domestic South African issue.

Many Africans had their own experience of living under a colonial rule. How do you think the people of Africa in general feel towards the Palestinians fighting back against a settlercolonial occupation of their land?

Africa in many ways had experienced settler colonialism, also experienced classical forms of colonialism. Also, there are other countries, like Kenya, Namibia. Amongst the African people, the question of Palestine is unequivocally an issue that Africans have taken a principal position on hand.

As you know, since its establishment in 1963, the then Organization of African Unity had a very strong position on the Palestinian question and has

remained consistent. In that regard, we've had a major setback recently by the actions of the Commission chair of the African Union, and it must be clear that these were the actions of the AU Commission Chair master who decided to accept the credentials and the Israeli ambassador to the African Union, without consultation with the member states who would have clearly rejected such an application as they have done in the past. They have called on a reversal of that decision by the AU Commission chairs.

Why do you think the Moroccan government decided to normalize ties with the Israeli regime, something that the Moroccan public strongly oppose?

Well, it is a trend across the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa, when these regimes have taken a position, they have aligned themselves with the U.S. On the other hand, there are geostrategic considerations, that I think we must be clear what we see is the emergence of a UAE, Saudi Arabia led axis, and this has spread, within North Africa, especially in Morocco, Sudan, and Egypt. So these countries in particular are playing a negative role in that regard, the normalization of relations with Israel. It is quite clearly a sellout position that the ordinary people in Morocco and Sudan, simply do not agree with.

In fact, it's a sellout of the historic struggle and heroic struggle of those people, and Morocco and

Israel: Worse | INTERNATIONAL than South African Apartheid

Sudan, -especially the Sudan led by the military, which has tight links with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Clearly on a path of undermining the Palestinian struggle and essentially defining themselves outside of the African consensus on the question of Palestine.

They are clearly the only two countries that agree with normalization, in that sense in the context of the so-called Abraham accord.

As you mentioned, it was not a representative government in Sudan who normalized relations with the regime in Tel Aviv. Can you please elaborate more on what you think prompted them to do that?

No, this happened during the time of the interim government of Sudan. now it is important to understand that the civilian portion of that government did not agree. We're not in favor of normalization. However, it became clear that the military had taken a resolution that they would go ahead with the normalization. but there was the other factor as well, which played into it. Which was the so-called carrot and stick. The American government was dangling in front of the Sudanese. Sudan had been under sanctions for a very long time since the 1990s, sanctions that had strangled the country's economy for years. And of course, that had been intensified during the 2000s, in the height of the war on terror. So, having gone

through these difficulties uh, when they were told by the Americans, that we can lift the sanctions and normalize relations with you and reintegrate into the international community, and provided that they normalized relations with Sudan.

Citizens in Sudan, the very same people, the revolutionaries who toppled the government of Omar al-Bashir, protested against the normalization of relations with Israel. But then the government was under so much pressure, from both the (Persian) Gulf states, and the Americans themselves.

From the normalization deals and the observer status at the African Union to the military equipment and spyware deals, it seems that the Zionist regime is seeking a stronger foothold in Africa. Why do you think that is and what should be done to change course?

This is typical of these types of regimes who have no approval for their projects. I mean, Israel has been and remains an apartheid state, in spite of its cohesive measures that it uses through the United States for the so-called normalization.

They seek approval from the international community to reintegrate themselves to enjoy some measure of legitimacy within the community of nations. This is no different from what the apartheid government did when it did its best to host World Cup games. This is exactly what the Israeli regime is trying to do.



From page **1** > settlers squatting in the occupied Golan. Nevertheless, Bennet, who is a staunch supporter of expanding Israeli settlements is going ahead with the expansionist project.

In a statement, the Syrian foreign ministry said "Syria strongly condemns the dangerous and unprecedented escalation from the Israeli occupation forces in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and its persistence in settlement policies and grave and methodological violations that rise to the level of war crimes."

The statement adds that Damascus is committed to "resistance to the Israeli occupation and rejection of the decision to annex the Golan." For now, the ministry says it will exhaust all the legally available routes to recapture the territory.

Speaking to Syrian media, foreign minister Faisal al-Mekdad called Israel's actions against Syria "criminal" and says they violated the 1981 U.N. Resolution 497 declaring Israel's effective annexation of the Golan as "null and void."

The Arab League's head says the Israeli plan amounted to a "flagrant violation" of international law, which recognizes the Golan Heights as Syrian territory. Aboul Gheit added the fact that a few countries recognize "Israeli sovereignty" over the Golan does not change the reality that it is an occupied territory.

The Gaza based Palestinian group Hamas also spoke out noting the "settlement projects expose once again the arrogant behavior of the occupation and its expansionist policy in the region, disregarding all international laws and resolutions." Spokesman, Hazem Qassem says the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab land "requires an escalation by the masses of our Arab and Islamic nation and all its forces to resist this Zionist project and to put an end to its arrogance in the region."

Bennet says the time is ripe to expand Israeli occupation in the Golan as he believes Syria is pre-occupied with a decade long war. A war that has been inflicted on the Arab country by foreign sponsored terror organizations, chief among them Israel itself.

Before the Syrian army liberated areas around the Golan from terror groups, experts say the

on-one meetings with Israeli officials.

TEHRAN TIMES

Secrets of the occupied Golan

DECEMBER 30, 2021 Straight Truth

Polak arranged for Patel (who nobody had heard of before) to secretly travel to the occupied Golan and inspect Israeli military field hospitals treating al-Qaeda affiliated terrorists like the Nusra Front and others terror groups fighting the Syrian army, which was closing in on them at the time.

What was Israel trying to gain from Patel who breached all British diplomatic protocols by making the visit secret. According to most analysts, to direct British aid money to the Israeli emergency field hospitals treating the terrorists and reports suggest these field hospitals were being overwhelmed at the time with militants.

What slipped some minds at the time was Britain law, which states that aid money cannot be spent in developed countries. The Israeli regime's per capita GDP the year before the Petal's visit was \$33,000, which means it rules out direct UK expenditure.

Other British government rules stipulate that ministers should not travel to the occupied territories with Israeli assistance. Yet Patel took up the invitation to inspect the operations in the occupied Golan from the Israeli military.

Some experts and reports have hinted that other top government figures, including then Prime Minister, Theresa May, were fully aware of Patel's visit to the occupied Golan, but did not want the trip to be made public, this would perhaps explain why Patel resigned and was not sacked.

News of the British government sending aid money to field hospitals operated by Israel and treating al-Qaeda affiliated terrorists would unleash unprecedented public outrage in Britain and around the world. In addition, the UK's "official" position is that it does not recognize Israel's occupation of the Golan. Furthermore, it would also confirm a direct link of collusion between the British government and terror groups in Syria.

"Settlement projects expose once again the arrogant behavior of the occupation and its expansionist policy in the region."

As reports leaked that Patel, was not on "a family holiday" but privately meeting Israeli officials seeking British funds for the occupied Golan, she handed in her resignation letter after changing and twisting the narrative of the trip.

However, under the current government of Boris Johnson and with the help of the still powerful Israeli lobby, Patel has been given one of the highest-ranking jobs in the government, the post of Home Secretary.

Israel and the terrorists were not just cooperating, they had a common interest. Both were opposed to the Syrian army getting closer to the Israeli occupied Golan. The terrorists were afraid of losing more territory and Israel was afraid that the Syrian army may this time be coming back accompanied by Special Hezbollah Commandos.

Even if the administration of former President

Palestinian Authority's Abbas visits Israel's Gantz in rare trip

TEHRAN - Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas has held talks with Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz during a rare visit to Israel.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Israeli defense ministry said "the two men discussed security and civil matters" during the meeting, which Israeli media reported took place at Gantz's home in Rosh Ha'ayin in central Israel.

Gantz told Abbas he intended to "continue to promote actions to strengthen confidence in the economic and civilian fields, as agreed during their last meeting", the statement added.



hours, included the head of the Israeli military branch responsible for civil affairs in the Palestinian territories, Ghasan Alyan, senior PA official Hussein Al Sheikh and Palestinian intelligence chief Majid Faraj.

dangerous for Israel's security were only a matter of time".

"The Israeli-Palestinian government has put the Palestinians and Abbas back on the agenda ... it is dangerous for Israel," the party added in a statement.

Relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority have deteriorated substantially over the years.

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu sidelined the issue during his 2009 to 2021 tenure as prime minister, which also saw the collapse of peace talks. Meanwhile, he oversaw a steady expansion of illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem. Settlements and outposts are regarded as illegal under international law.

In late August, Gantz visited the PA's headquarters in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah for talks with Abbas. It was the first official meeting at such a level in several vears.

But after those talks, Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said there was no peace process ongoing with the Palestinians, "and there won't be one".

On Wednesday, Israel's defense ministry announced "confidence-building measures" with the PA. They included a \$32m advance payment to the PA in taxes collected on its behalf by Israel and the granting of 600 extra permits allowing Palestinian businessmen to cross into Israel.

Earlier in the day, Palestinian Civil Affairs Minister Hussein Al Sheikh tweeted that Abbas's latest meeting with Gantz "dealt with the importance of creating a political horizon that leads to a political solution in accordance with international resolutions". The last round of peace talks, brokered by the United States, collapsed in 2014.

The pair also discussed "the tense conditions on the ground due to the practices of settlers, and the meeting dealt with many security, economic and humanitarian issues", according to Al Sheikh.

For his part, Gantz tweeted: "We discussed the implementation of economic and civilian measures, and emphasized the importance of deepening security coordination and preventing terror and violence - for the wellbeing of both Israelis and Palestinians."

The meeting, which lasted for two and a half

'American pressure'

Al Jazeera's Harry Fawcett, reporting from West Jerusalem, said observers believe that U.S. pressure "to see progress or at least some indication of willingness to talk by the Israelis with the Palestinians" is likely what prompted the meeting.

"Bennett is still rejecting that the U.S. reopen its Palestinianfocused consulate in Jerusalem," Fawcett noted, referring to Washington's announcement in May that it planned to restore ties with Palestinians, which had been downgraded by the administration of former President Donald Trump.

Also, the "security situation in the occupied West Bank and inside East Jerusalem in recent weeks has deteriorated", possibly playing a part in prompting the latest meeting, Fawcett added.

Meanwhile, Hamas, the group that governs the besieged Gaza Strip, condemned the talks between Gantz and Abbas, saying the meeting departs from the "national spirit of the Palestinian people".

Spokesman Hazem Qassem added the behavior of the PA's leadership will "deepen the Palestinian political division and complicates the Palestinian situation".

Israeli opposition party Likud also criticized the meeting, saying that "concessions

His successor, Bennett, is a hardline nationalist who opposes Palestinian statehood and previously led a powerful settler lobbying council.

Although he says he wants to reduce friction with the PA, the West Bank has seen a surge in violence by settlers against Bennett, is Palestinian civilians.

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Abbas's Ramallah-based government has limited autonomy in the areas it administers across the occupied West Bank. It seeks an independent state that includes all of the West Bank, occupied East Jerusalem and the besieged Gaza Strip.

Israel seized all three areas in 1967 and maintains control over them.

The PA has also come under mounting global criticism over a crackdown on key rights and activists.

With his government widely viewed as corrupt and authoritarian, a recent poll in June showed that support for Abbas, who took power in 2005 ostensibly for a four-year term, has plummeted.

Many have also criticized the PA's close security coordination with Israel, seen by many Palestinians as a significant betrayal.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Israeli military would attack the Syrian army every time it made territorial advancements against the terrorists.

One thing appeared odd as the war on Syria entered its second and third and fourth years. A pattern emerged.

The terror groups affiliated with al-Qaeda for instance, like the al-Nusra Front, had occupied areas near the Golan. But they never attacked Israeli forces; and Israeli forces never attacked the terrorists.

Israeli forces used the Golan to attack the Syrian army but it did not use its [illegal] presence in the Golan to strike at terrorists who at one point surrounded the Golan. Even when a stray terrorist shell landed near Israel army positions, Israeli forces would respond by striking the Syrian army.

In other words, the numerous terrorist groups, who used barbaric acts of torture and executions against Syrian civilians, did not pose any threat to Israel and Israel posed absolutely no threat to the same barbaric terrorist groups who surrounded areas around the Israeli occupied Golan such as Quneitra province and south of Quneitra province.

Were Israeli forces in the Golan and the terrorist groups secretly working in tandem? Did Israel secretly fund and support these groups wreaking havoc in Syria.

Syria accuses Israel of this, as do other countries. But we don't need to look too far.

What was the now former UK International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, secretly doing in the Israeli occupied Golan Heights in 2017? Stuart Polak aka Lord Polak, the face of the ruling Conservative party's Israel lobby, the most powerful Israeli lobby groups in Westminster, arranged oneDonald Trump signed a proclamation recognizing "Israel's sovereignty" over the Golan Heights, reversing more than a half-century of U.S. policy in the West Asia. The international community opposes the annexation and the occupation, even Washington's closest allies.

According to the human rights organization al-Marsad, which is based in the occupied Golan, Israeli authorities have established at least 34 settlements there in violation of international law. the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights noted: "Syrian residents of the occupied Syrian Golan continued to face challenges due to discriminatory planning and zoning policies that favor illegal Israeli settlements. These policies make it nearly impossible for Syrian residents to build, plan or expand their homes and village infrastructure."

This year, the United Nation Human Rights Council in Geneva voted in favor of several resolutions targeting Israel. Three resolutions came under were title "Israeli settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Occupied Syrian Golan."

One way or the other, observers say the days of Israel capturing, occupying and annexing the land of other countries will soon end, even if means (as Syrian and Palestinian officials say) by force.

5 things you need to know about "annexation" 1. Is a flagrant violation of international law

2. Exacerbates decades of human rights violations

3. Entrenches institutionalized discrimination

4. Amounts to war crimes

5. legal obligations as an occupying entity

TOURISM

DECEMBER 30, 2021 Straight Truth **TEHRAN TIMES**

First selfie museum to be established in Mashhad



TEHRAN -A museum, dedicated to selfportrait photographs and the history of photography, is planned to be established in Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province, a local tourism official has announced.

The museum, which would be the first of its kind in the country, is scheduled to be inaugurated in the near future, Mohammadreza Pahlevan said on Wednesday.

Visitors can learn about the history of photography through a variety of old photographic devices and cameras, which will be displayed in this museum, the official added.

There is also a special area for selfie photography that highlights the topic of pilgrimage and pilgrimage photography, in which visitors will have the opportunity to take selfie pictures, make memories, and tour the museum, he noted.

The museum also features a gallery dedicated to photo exhibitions that will showcase the works of contemporary artists,

he mentioned.

As the name implies, a 'selfie' refers to a self-portrait photo taken with the camera held at arm's length. Selfies may include multiple subjects, but as long as they were taken by one of the subjects featured, they are considered selfies.

In Iran, selfie photos date back to the Qajar era, when the famed Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah (1821-1896), with the best cameras of the time brought from Europe, took photos from almost anything and anyone. The king had a knack for taking photographs, and he enjoyed photographing himself the most.

As part of his obsession with picturing himself, something these days called a 'selfie', he took many pictures of himself, noting where and how he took each photo with pithy comments and in cursive handwriting, under each of them.

Before the coronavirus puts almost everything on lockdown, the provincial capital of Mashhad played host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe to visit the imposing, massive holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted around the holy shrine. The city has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded.

Grave hunters: cemetery tourism in Iran

From page **1** > A cradle of civilization, Iran is well soaked in history and culture, never disappoints cultural travelers with almost every taste even ones interested in cemetery tourism.

Consider Shahr-e Yeri, known as the "city of the mouthless"! It is a unique archaeological site and cemetery in northwest Iran, embracing an Iron-Age fortress, three prehistorical temples, and tens of carved stones on which mouthless faces are depicted, all stretched across 400 hectares of several small hills.

The country is also home to a great number of brick tomb towers. Top on the list may be ones dedicated to the Prophet Habakkuk in Hamedan province. Kharagan twin tomb towers in Qazvin province and the UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus in Golestan province are amongst others to name a few.

A variety of spectacular massive rock-hewn tombs and bas-relief carvings at Naqsh-e Rostam has turned the ancient site into a must-see for



A view of the Seliuk-era Kharagan tomb towers in Oazvin province.

holidaymakers traversing Iran. The Achaemenid necropolis is situated near Persepolis, itself a bustling UNESCO World Heritage site near the southern

Naqsh-e Rostam, meaning "Picture of Rostam" is named after a mythical Iranian hero which is most celebrated in Shahnameh and Persian mythology. Back in time, natives of the region had erroneously supposed that the carvings below the tombs represent depictions of the mythical hero.

city of Shiraz.

One of the wonders of the ancient world, Nagsh-e Rostam embraces four tombs are where Persian Achaemenid kings are laid to rest, believed to be those of Darius II, Artaxerxes I, Darius I, and Xerxes I (from left to right facing the cliff), although some historians are still debating this.

There are gorgeous basrelief carvings above the tomb chambers that are similar to those at Persepolis, with the kings standing on thrones supported by figures representing the subject

nations below. There also two similar graves situated on the premises of Persepolis probably belong to Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III.

Beneath the funerary chambers are dotted with seven Sassanian era (224-651) bas-reliefs cut into the cliff depict vivid scenes of imperial conquests and royal ceremonies; signboards below each relief give a detailed description in English.

Over the past couple decades, of countless archaeological surveys have been yielding ancient tombs, cemeteries many of which bear fresh evidence of ancient burial rituals and entombed objects dedicated to the afterlife.

Years ago, the remains of 13 ancient skeletons, 11 of which human remains, were discovered at olden water ducts of Persepolis, shedding new light on the way of life in the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire.

In another amazing discovery, made in 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine of Zanjan Province, accidentally came across a mummified head that was very well preserved to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot. In the flowing years, another "salt man" was also discovered one after another at the ancient salt mine. Based on academic studies, their textiles belong to the Achaemenid era (550-330 BC) and the Sassanid period (224 CE-651).

Moreover, a few years ago, the discovery of the skeletons of two Parthian ladies at the ancient Tepe Ashraf in Isfahan cemented a hypothesis that another ancient cemetery is being found within the city, offering valuable clues to uncover the obscure history of pre-Islamic Isfahan.

This way, travel marketers and tour operators contribute to such novel ideas in response to the soaring request of clients for new excitements and knowledge in the search of strange and unique memories.

Discover Iran's 'oldest' bas-relief carvings

TEHRAN – Iran is somehow an open-air museum of ancient and prehistoric heritage, which testify to the colorful past of the nation yet many of them are nearly lost in time. However, Anubanini bas-reliefs are widely believed to be the oldest rock reliefs in the country.

They are four reliefs that are associated with the Lullubi civilization due to depicting Lullubian kings as conquerors. They can be found on the northeastern edge of the modern Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermanshah province, about twenty kilometers east of the border between Irag and Iran. They are linked with the people known as Lullubi and nurrums, who lived in the Zagros Mountain range almost 5000 years ago.



the valley of the Diyala river, is mentioned several times in the cuneiform texts from ancient Iraq; the first references date to the third millennium BC (Naram-Sin's famous Victory Stela in the Louvre), while the most recent texts belong to the Neo-Assyrian age, according to Livius.org; a website on ancient history 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

inscription that explains that the victorious ruler is called Anubanini, and this man is also known from sources from the Isin-Larsa period. The other three reliefs probably date back to about the same age. All reliefs show the king, facing right and holding a bow and a battle-ax, standing on a defeated enemy; in the sky, symbols of the celestial deities can be seen.

Except for relief four, the king faces a goddess, who can probably be identified with Inanna/Ishtar.

On the Anubanini relief, the goddess holds two naked captives, which are tied written and maintained since to each other with ropes. Below the king and the deity, six other prisoners of war and having Neolithic sites The heavily damaged can be can be seen. This relief is that have been yielded rich dated to c.2000 BC because the most interesting of the collections of stone tools and quartet: not only because it fossil bones.

is well-preserved, but also because it was the model of the Achaemenid king Darius' Behistun relief, which is about fifteen centuries younger.

Below the Anubanini relief, a fifth monument can be discerned: it dates back to the Parthian age and shows a king named Gotarzes, seated on a horse, and a man - perhaps a governor or a satrap - who appears to be saluting him. There were two Parthian kings with this name: Gotarzes I was a rebel who controlled large parts of the empire from 91 to 87 BC, while Gotarzes II ruled from 39 to 51 CE.

It is worth saying that Kermanshah is a cradle of civilization due to its antiquity

290 Sassanid coins recovered in Kermanshah

TEHRAN – Iranian authorities have seized 290 ancient coins from a gang of antique dealers in Kermanshah, western Iran.

In that regard, forces in charge of cultural heritage protection, under cover of buyers, entered into a deal with the gang, the report said.

The police operation yielded the seizure of 290 coins, which are estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224 CE-651), as well as a metal detector.

In addition, four suspects were detained for further investigation and facing trial on the charges of illegal excavation and keeping of historical relics.

In about 220 CE the Sasanian dynasty of Iran introduced the concept of thin flan necessary to make it flow into the recesses of the die's design, the depth of relief on such coins was of necessity much shallower than with earlier currency. Such techniques spread by way of Byzantium to northern Europe, where the emperor Charlemagne struck thin flan deniers (small silver coins), or pennies, which became characteristic of both his own and neighboring kingdoms.

In many ways, Iran under the Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance during Sassanid rule. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from

The kingdom of Lullubi, in

one of the reliefs has an

coins, issues that were struck in relief intolerable stresses in the dies, since the thinner the material the more force

Qajar caravanserais demarcated in Tabas

wide experience; they have an

opportunity to feel the past, a time

Such roadside inns were once

constructed 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

Cozy chambers that are

meticulously laid out around a

vast courtyard may easily evoke

spirits of the past. It's not hard

to fancy the hustle and bustle of

merchants bargaining on prices,

recounting their arduous journeys

to one another while their camels

chewing hay! You can also conceive

the idea of local architectural style

dotted by caravanserais.

travel back into a forgotten age.

both the East and West were translated on both sides. In order not to produce into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Inherited relics donated to Iranian museum

TEHRAN – A total of 25 relics, dating back to different historical eras, have recently been donated to Tehran's Reza Abbasi Museum, the director of the museum has announced.

The relics, which the donor has inherited from ancestors, include glazed and unglazed earthenware bowls, glass and stone utensils, and bronze utensils and blades, Sedigeh Qodratabadi said on Wednesday.

The objects are estimated to date back to the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras, the official added.

It is one of the most celebrated deeds for those who cherish cultural heritage to donate historical objects to museums, she noted.

Named after one of the greatest artists of the Safavid era, Reza Abbasi Museum embraces several permanent exhibition halls, each dedicated to an epoch of Iranian arts and history.

The museum's treasure trove contains artifacts made of baked clay, metal, and stone from prehistoric times to pottery and metal objects, textile and lacquer paintings, manuscripts, and jewelry belonging to the Islamic period. The displays are set according to the time interval from the 7th millennium BC to the early 20th century.

Currently, some 800 cultural heritage museums are active across Iran and some three million

historical objects are being kept at museums affiliated with the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and handicrafts Ministry.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It also hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 26 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (ca. 550 - 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa, and Tchogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province, and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224-651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

TEHRAN -New boundaries have recently been defined for three Qajar-era (1789-1925) caravanserais in Tabas, eastern South Khorasan province, a local tourism official has announced.

Khan, Chehel Paveh, and Deh-e Mohammad caravanserais, which are among the candidates for a collective inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list, have recently been demarcated in a bid to receive better protection and preservation, Parisa Jamshidi said on Wednesday.

The demarcation projects are also aimed to prevent further destruction and damage to the mud-brick structures, the official added.

The deserted inns have undergone several restoration projects and rehabilitation works over past years, he noted.

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,

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 caravanserais across the country. For many travelers, staving in or even visiting a centuriesold caravanserai, can be a

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.

The earliest caravanserais in Iran

and material in its heyday.

It is not hard to fancy the hustle and bustle of merchants bargaining on prices, recounting their arduous journeys to one another while their camels chewing hay!

Passing major roads in the country, one may see crumbling caravanserais many of which were abandoned for ages. In the Information Age, such guest houses have largely lost their actual usage.

However, a couple of years ago, the Iran tourism ministry introduced a scheme to keep them alive and profitable; tens of caravanserais are ceded to the private investors for better maintenance. Now, some are exclusively renovated, repurposed into boutique hotels and tourist lodgings.

They often had massive portals supported by elevated loadbearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

from the number of surviving

Two main enclosed water **bodies shrinking**

TEHRAN - Gorgan Bay and Lake Urmia, the two main enclosed water bodies in the country, are declining to the extent that they will possibly dry up, Ali Soltanpour, director of hydrography and tidal affairs of the National Cartographic Center, has said.

Referring to the level of enclosed waters such as Lake Urmia and the Caspian Sea, he stated that in open waters, periodic changes (decrease and increase of water volume) are low and about 2 mm, which is due to rising water that is caused by global warming and the melting of ice.

But lakes that are not connected to open waters are affected by local climate change; therefore, if the rainfall in their catchment area decreases and drought and uncontrolled water withdrawal increases, the lake will dry up, the main example of which is Lake Urmia and Gorgan Bay.

The level of the lake has increased significantly in the early 1990s so that in 1995, it reached 1278.5 meters and many urban and coastal infrastructures were threatened.

After this time, the water level of Lake Urmia gradually dropped due to reduced rainfall and water entering the lake, so that during 3 years, the lake level decreases by about one meter, he added.

According to Soltanpour, since 1998, the lake continued to shrink more rapidly and for 4 consecutive years, the level reduced by another 3.5 meters reaching 1274 meters in 2002.



In 2017, the level even declined to 1271 meters. However, increased rainfall caused the lake level to rise by more than one meter in only several months and exceed 1272 meters.

In the summer and the first two months of autumn this year, the lake's level faced a decrease of 30 to 35 cm compared to the same time last year. "Part of this sit-

uation is due to climate change, in addition to low rainfall, but the excessive withdrawal of water is sometimes

> irreversible. An example is the uncontrolled abstraction of water from underground aguifers. The groundwater is removed from these reservoirs in such a way that even if it rains, the res-

ervoir loses its original capacity and will not be sufficiently filled," he explained. Emphasizing that the Caspian Sea water level has been decreasing for 16 years, he noted that some 80 percent of its water is supplied through the Volga River and

In recent years, it

Studies when the Caspian conducted in water inflow decreases, the Caspian 2020 and 2021 Sea level also drops. show that the Caspian Sea has been said that the decrease in rainlost 25 cm of fall in the Volga has water level. reduced the Caspian Sea water level, but it is possible that

> water withdrawal in the northern Caspian Sea has been effective in reducing the sea level. Studies conducted in 2020 and 2021

> show that the Caspian Sea loses 25 cm of water level

In addition, the Gulf of Gorgan is also affected by these conditions, because this bay is connected to the Caspian Sea by a strait, and will soon dry up if the trend continues, he lamented.

Valuable ecological complex

Over 27 percent of the 400 square kilometers of Gorgan Bay - the largest gulf in the Caspian Sea - has dried up in recent years, according to the National Cartographic Center.

Covering an area of about 400 square kilometers, the Gulf of Gorgan also known as Gorgan Bay is located at the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea near the cities of Behshahr, Gorgan, and Sari and is separated from the main water body by the Miankaleh peninsula and extends until the Ashuradeh peninsula

Gorgan Bay was designated as a Ramsar site (defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value) along with Miankaleh Wetland.

The bay and its surrounding area are recognized as a valuable ecological complex in the world which had a direct impact on the livelihood of local communities in addition to conserving the marine life cycle.

Ashuradeh Island, which hosts a variety of native and migratory birds throughout the year, was also introduced and registered as one of the world's first biosphere zones in 1975.

Iran closes Afghan border as Omicron surges



TEHRAN - With the outbreak of Omicron, Afghan travelers are not allowed to enter Iran through the Dogarun border for 15 days, according to the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

Restrictions will not apply to passengers traveling for health, study or trade purposes or people having permanent residency permits; freight travel through land borders will continue in the meantime.

On December 25, the Interior Ministry issued

a 15-day travel ban from eight African and four European countries.

Passengers from eight African countries, including Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa, Eswatini, Lesotho, and Botswana, are banned from entering directly and indirectly for 15 days from the date of notification.

Iranians entering from these 8 countries, in addition to having a certificate of receiving two doses of vaccine and performing a negative PCR test with a validity of 48 to 72 hours, if they have a disease, will be quarantined at personal expense.

Direct and indirect passengers from the UK, Norway, Denmark, and France must have a certificate of two doses of the vaccine, a negative test valid for 48 to 72 hours from the date of notification. In case of any symptoms or test positive, they will be quarantined for 14 days at personal expense.

Iran ready to send specialized labor force to Serbia

Iran's health minister Bahram Einollahi said

Center.

The jobless rate among of the

Meanwhile, the unemployment

Last year, the unemployment

rate of people aged 18 to 35 was

estimated at 16.7 percent, with

27.9 percent related to women and

rate for young men rose from 12.9

percent to 14.6 percent.

on Saturday that the rapid spread of Omicron may pose serious threats to the country although he insisted that authorities had identified few cases infected with the variant.

Einollahi said that Iran has two "golden weeks" to expand booster vaccination coverage to more people in order to prevent a potential explosion in the number of infections with Omicron in early January.

Health ministry figures published on Saturday showed that booster vaccine shots delivered across Iran had reached nearly 5.5 million doses.

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.

So far, 34 cases of omicrons have been identified in the country and 8 suspected cases are being investigated.

Charity Foundation to supply water to 1400 villages nationwide

TEHRAN - Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated with the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, has so far provided drinking water to 1,115 villages across the country and the number will reach 1,400 by the end of this year (March 20, 2022).

So far, 2,100 villages have been covered by the foundation's water supply activities, Ali Asgari, deputy head of the Headquarters for Executing the

calendar year, 1386 (March 2017-March 2018) Barekat Charity Foundation- the social arm of the organization- with the aim of promoting social justice was established.



SOCIET

TEHRAN TIMES

DECEMBER 30, 2021 Straight Truth

roads, constructing schools and increasing educational spaces, promoting health for all, granting non-repayable loans and insurance especially in less developed areas and regions most affected by 1980s war and natural disasters are of the priorities of the charity foundation.

The Foundation plans to open up 300,000 job opportunities for those residing in rural and deprived areas over the next [Iranian calendar] year.

Labour demands stricter air pollution limits after child poverty link revealed

The Labour party has demanded stricter limits on air pollution after analysis showed the close correlation between children living in poverty and dirty air in the UK.

Five London boroughs rank worst for child poverty and worst for dirty air, according to government data collated by Labour, mapping areas of high poverty against statistics on air pollution. The analysis showed that the higher the rate of child poverty in a given area, the dirtier the air there was on average, with most of the 50 most polluted areas in the UK also showing the highest rates of child poverty.

Boroughs in Birmingham, Southampton, Portsmouth, Sandwell and Walsall also showed high correlations between child poverty and air pollution, the Guardian reported.

In the 11 local authorities that exceed the WHO's recommended guideline limit of an annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms per cubic metre of air (µg/m3), an average of 39.5% of children are living in poverty – much higher than the national average of 31%.

Altogether, about 6.7 million children are living in areas of the UK where air pollution has breached legal limits, of whom about 2 million are also living in poverty, according to the research.

The announcement by the Labour party follows a meeting in December with Keir Starmer, Ed Miliband, and campaign group Choked Up, a group of young black and brown teenagers living in areas affected by air pollution, who are calling for a right to clean air.

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The announcement by the Labour party follows a meeting in December with Keir Starmer, Ed Miliband, and campaign group Choked Up, a group of young black and brown teenagers living in areas affected by air pollution, who are calling for a right to clean air.

Jim McMahon, the shadow secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs, said: "Everyone should have the right to breathe clean, safe air, no matter where you live. If the pandemic has shown us anything, it's that public health has to be at the very top of the political agenda, and that has to start with the air we breathe."

He pointed to Labour proposals for a Clean Air Act, which would establish a legal right to breathe clean air, and legal requirements for air quality based on the advice of the World Health Organization. The government rejected amendments to the environment bill that would have set pollution limits in line with WHO advice.

He added: "The Conservative government refused to protect the health of British children, voting against tougher limits on pollution. Our children should be able to take clean, safe air for granted. Only a Clean Air Act is going to guarantee that."

Under the new environment legislation, the government will set new pollution targets from late next year. The government was repeatedly found to be in breach of EU air pollution rules, when they applied to the UK. before Brexit.

Order of the Imam, said, YJC reported.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam was founded in 1989. In the Iranian

Socio-economic empowerment of communities by encouraging entrepreneurship prioritizing breadwinner women, developing infrastructures such as water supply and power grids, building

From page **1** > The most important obstacles to the development of trade relations are the financial and banking transfers, which we hope will be facilitated and accelerated by resolving political issues, he added.

Iran has had successful experiences in sending labor to various countries, including private labor to Australia through the private sector, and this experience will be

repeated for Finland, as lately announced by Forouzan in a meeting

with Pasi Tuominen, director-gensame age group reached 31 pereral of consular services at the cent in summer from 27.8 percent Finnish Ministry for Foreign Afin spring, the report added. fairs.

Youth unemployment rate rises

The unemployment rate for Iranian people aged 18 to 35 has risen from 15.6 percent in spring to 17.6 percent in summer, according to a report released by the Statistical

14.1 percent related to men.

The latest employment report released by the Statistical Center reflects the growing trend of unemployment in Iran.

Iran's unemployment rate has been above 10 percent for the last 10 years, and this rate is estimated to have peaked in 2014, when estimates reached 14 percent, according to Statista website.

Boroughs in Birmingham, Southampton, Portsmouth, Sandwell and Walsall also showed high correlations between child poverty and air pollution.

In the 11 local authorities that exceed the WHO's recommended guideline limit of an annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms per cubic metre of air (µg/m3), an average of 39.5% of children are living in poverty - much higher than the national average of 31%.

Altogether, about 6.7 million children are living in

A government spokesperson said: "Air pollution has reduced significantly since 2010 - at a national level, emissions of fine particulate matter have fallen by 11%, while emissions of nitrogen oxides are at their lowest levels since records began. But we know there is still more to do. To continue to drive forward tangible and long-lasting improvements to air quality, we are committed to setting stretching and ambitious targets on air guality through our Environment Act."

COVID-19 UPDATES ON DECEMBER 29

New cases	1,905
New deaths	53
Total cases	6,190,762
Total deaths	131,527
New hospitalized patients	348
Patients in critical condition	2,732
Total recovered patients	6,032,615
Diagnostic tests conducted	41,791,485
Doses of vaccine injected	118,535,064

ENGLISH IN USE

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All-Iranian COVID-19 diagnostic kits to be released within month

Iran will commercialize domestically-made COVID-19 diagnostic kits by the Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 22), secretary of biotechnology development of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology announced.

Following a call by the headquarters for the production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits, a contract was signed with five knowledge-based companies and manufacturing process began, ISNA quoted Mostafa Qane'ei as saying on Monday.

Diagnosis is the most important part of coronavirus treatment, he highlighted.

Patients suspected to coronavirus are currently being identified by diagnostic kits that have entered Iran in the form of assistance and purchases by the World Health Organization, China and UNICEF, he said.

So, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology decided to manufacture the kits domestically, he noted.

کیتهای ایرانی تشخیص کووید ۱۹ ماه آینده روانه بازار می شوند

دبیر ستاد توسعه زیستفناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت: کیتهای تشخیصی كوويد ۱۹، فروردين ماه وارد بازار ميشوند.

مصطفی قانعی، دبیر ستاد توسعه زیستفناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، اظهار داشت: به دنبال فراخوان این ستاد برای ساخت کیتهای آزمایشگاهی تشخیص کووید ۱۹، با پنج شرکت دانشبنیان برای ساخت این کیتها قرارداد منعقد شده است.

تشخيص، مهمترين راه ورود به درمان بيماري كرونا است.

در حال حاضر بیماران مبتلا به کرونا به وسیله کیتهای تشخیصی که در قالب مساعدت و خرید از طریق سازمان بهداشت جهانی، کشور چین و یونیسف وارد ایران شدهاند شناسایی میشوند؛ اما ستاد توسعه زیستفناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری با انتشار فراخوانی از دانشبنیان های توانمند دعوت كرد تا به حوزه ساخت این كیتها ورود كنند.

EFRANCION



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Generosity is to help a deserving person without his request, and if you help him after his request, then it is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:07 Evening: 17:20 Dawn: 5:44 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

Iran: Persian literature

Part 26

A central theme of the poem is fidelity in love, typified in a very complex plot. Story lines running parallel to the main love story and involving both protagonists exhibit a variety of relationships: on the part of Khosrow, his diplomatic marriage to the Byzantine princess Maryam and the sensual affair with Shakar; on the part of Shirin, the Platonic love of the mason Farhad, which developed into a subject in its own right.

The poem also gives an idealized picture of the court of this late Sassanid ruler, which in the Muslim period stood as the prime example of royal splendor.

In Haft paykar (The seven images), the life-story of Bahram Gur (421-39) is told as the paragon of ideal kingship. Like Layli o Majnun, this poem was based on a corpus of disconnected anecdotes about Bahram's adventures as a fabulous hunter and a lover.

In this instance, one of the devices Nezami resorted to was the application of an astrological design. The poem centers on a set of seven fairy tales told to Bahram by seven princesses from the seven parts of the world.

Each day of the week he visits one of the princesses, for whom he has built a pavilion decorated in the color of the planet governing that day as well as the part of the world from which she comes.

In this construction all the correspondences recognized by the medieval Persian world-view are woven together with exquisite artistry.

The seven tales are also remarkable for the use of folkloristic material. They include the story of Turandokht, or Turandot, which inspired Western works of literature and music such as plays by Carlo Gozzi and Friedrich Schiller and the opera Turandot by Giacomo Puccini. The life of the king, which in a way serves as a frame story, also contains interesting narrative elements, of which the huntingstory of Bahram and Azadeh, his slavegirl and harpist, has become particularly famous.

was an attractive form to enhance the glory of the founder of a reigning dynasty or a contemporary monarch.

The Zafar-nama, written in 1335 by the historian Hamdollah Mostawfi, provides a continuation of the Shahnameh up to the time of the Mongol rulers of Persia.

Another very influential example was Hatefi's poem on Timur Lang, the Timurnama, written during the final days of the Timurids

It became a model for poets of the 16th and 17th centuries who, from the time of Esmail I onwards, made use of the same formula to celebrate the exploits of the Safavid shahs.

The genre survived, not only in Saba's ShahanShah-nama, written in the early 19th century in praise of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar, but also in a number of historical epics dedicated to Reza Shah Pahlavi.

The style of the epic lent itself also to the poetic treatment of religious stories. In the Khawaran-nama, this style was adopted by Mohammad bin Hosam (d. 1470) to describe the heroic deeds of Ali as a champion of Islam.

The anonymous Sahebgeran-nama, dated 1662-63, celebrates the fictitious adventures of the Prophet's uncle Hamza in India.

The lives of Mohammad, Ali, and their descendants were treated by the Indo-Persian poet Mohammad-Rafi Badel (d. 1711-12 or 1712-13) in the Hamla-ye haydari, by the Qajar court poet Fath-Ali Khan Saba (d. 1822-23) in his Khodavandnama, and by many others.

This genre exerted an influence on

Photo exhibition explores General Soleimani's national popularity

Frome Page **1** • "This exhibition illustrates people's affection for General Soleimani, creating a special ambiance for visitors," Masud Shojaei Tabatabai, director of the Art Bureau's Visual Arts Office, said in a visit to the showcase.

He noted that photos have a special power to convey a message that other art media lack the potential and added that the exhibition can provide an opportunity for every visitor to get rid of the hustle and bustle of ordinary life, creating a good mood.

"One of the topics that can be noticed in the exhibition is General Soleimani's presence in all parts of people's lives; for example, his presence in the occasional Islamic rituals, everyday life of ordinary people, meetings with firemen, people's houses, and Haft Seen table parties. His national popularity has been represented in all parts of society," a visitor told the organizers.



A man visits the Sarve Ravan exhibition displaying photos on General Qassem Soleimani's national popularity at the Art Bureau on December 27, 2021. (SNN/Mehrdad Esfahani)

"People's affection for General

Mehri Ezzati, a Photographer from Mashhad whose two works are on view at the exhibition, said, "Thousands of mourners bid

his funeral in Mashhad."

farewell to General Soleimani at Soleimani was very amazing for me and I attended his funeral to learn more about his political and military character," she added.

Iranian children win awards at World Storytelling Championship



Iranian children Raha Taheri and Nura Mohkamkar won awards at the World Storytelling Championship in Chennai, India.

TEHRAN - Iranian children Raha Taheri and Nura Mohkamkar have won awards at the World Storytelling Championship in Chennai, India.

The final session of the event, which was organized online in 2020 and also this year, was held on Sunday and Monday.

Taheri was selected as World Champion in the Senior Category 1 for children between 13 and 15.

In the semifinal, she gave her performance

narrating "On Simorgh's Wings" written by Paizeh Taheri and in the final, she narrated "Size of the World" written by Shokuh Qasemnia.

"Size of the World" is about Sara, a little girl who is offended by her mother's words. She embarks on a journey with a big bird to discover how large the world is.

Raha Taheri also won an award in the 90-Second Story Competition of the 23rd edition of Iran's International Storytelling Festival organized two weeks ago by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA - Kanoon), where she has been trained.

Mohkamkar was selected as 1st runner-up in the Junior Category 3 for children between

She performed "First Adventure of the Shahnameh" from Persian poet Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece the Shahnameh in the semifinal.

In final, Mohkamkar presented "The Word Collector" written by the world-renowned writer and illustrator, Sonja Wimmer.

A poetic tale about the magic of words, this



delightful story invites readers of all ages to enjoy the power that positive words can have.

The story is about Luna, who is passionate about words. She loves their light and becomes tickled with laughter from them. But one day, she realizes that, little by little, the beautiful, gorgeous and fun words are disappearing from the world, so she decides it's time to act.

Iranian boy Mohammad-Amin Yusefi was one of the finalists in the Junior Category 3, but he failed to win an award. Vaidehi Parikh from Nigeria was named World Champion in this section.

In the Junior I category for children between 3 and 4, Aiden Jithin from India was picked as World Champion, while Liam Tae Min Eom from South Korea won the title in the Junior II category for children aged between 5 and 7.

The prize for the World Champion in the Senior II section for children aged between 16 and 18 went to Mishaal Manoj KC from India, and the World Champion in the Open Category for people aged 19 and above was Chen Minghsiang from Taiwan.

> added, "We are eager to establish centers for Chinese studies in a number of Iran's cultural centers."

For his part, Chang who was accompanied by Chinese cultural attaché Zhozy Haw, pointed to the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Iran, and said 2022 is a special year, during which the two countries should initiate many programs for the expansion of cultural relations.

TEHRAN – Chinese ambassador to Tehran Chang Hua and director of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) Hojjatoleslam Mohammad-Mehdi Imanipur have met to discuss expansion of cultural relations.

"China and Iran have many things new to present to the world.

Chinese envoy, ICRO CEO meet

8 and 12.

In the best known imitation of this poem, Amir Khosrow's Hasht behesht (The eight paradises), the tale of the slave-girl, named Delaram, is an eighth story added to the seven fairy tales which differ from those told by Nezami.

One of the new tales is that of the princes of Sarandib (Sri Lanka) who find the truth through making fortuitous observations.

This story reached Europe by way of an Italian adaptation (Cristoforo Armeno, Peregrinaggio di tre giovani figliuoli del re di Serendippo, Venice, 1557), and eventually gave rise to the word "serendipity" in the English language.

Khaju Kermani (Homa o Homayun) and Jami (Salaman o Absal; Yusof o Zolaykha), as well as many other later writers, added to the repertoire of stories as it was inherited from Nezami.

Historical epics dealt with real events but presented them in the style of the epic of the kings and the Eskandar-nama. This popular literature, which deals mostly with the tragedy of Karbala.

Outside the sphere of Muslim culture, the life of the prophet of the Zoroastrians was described in the Zaratosht-nama, shortly before 978 according to Christian Rempis. If this dating is correct, it would make this poem the oldest narrative in masnavi that has come down to us in its complete form.

It is also the earliest of a small corpus of Zoroastrian works originally composed in Persian, to which an adaptation of the Pahlavi book Arda Wiraz-namag also belongs (Arda viraf-namaye manzum-e Zartosht Bahram Pajdu).

Judeo-Persian In literature the masnawi form and the epic style were adopted and used to write epic versions of biblical narratives, in particular by two Jewish poets from Shiraz: Shahin, in the first half of the 13th century, and Emrani, who lived in the 16th century.

Equally susceptible to the impact of the heroic epics were the picaresque novels in prose, though they should properly be classified with anonymous folk literature since they are related to the art of the oral storyteller rather than to high literature.

The most important works handed down in writing are the extensive novels Samak-e ayyar and Darabnama, the latter being an extension of the Eskandar-nama.

> Source: Encyclopedia Iranica To be continued

We should give a proper image of the two countries and present their views in form of documentary films," Imanipur said in a press release published on Tuesday.

He also announced ICRO's readiness to boost cooperation on cultural studies, exhibitions and meetings, and added that the organization welcomes an agreement on the translation of Persian and Chinese books in both countries.

"Universities of the two



countries have great potentials to play a key role in the expansion of cultural relations, and I hope we can exploit those potentials," said Imanipur, which took the helm at the ICRO in November.

He also proposed that the two countries should employ their cultural and academic elites in a

joint effort to organize meetings to refute Iranophobia and anti-Chinese sentiment.

Imanipur also emphasized the need to facilitate collaboration on joint film projects.

He said that the expansion of cultural relations with China is now a high priority for Iran, and

He proposed that both countries resume sessions of the Iran-China Cultural Commission, whose first meeting was held with the ICRO director's visit to China in 2012.

He asked ICRO's collaboration to establish a joint study center in the capitals of Iran and China to pursue the expansion of cultural cooperation between the two countries.

"Is There No Place on Earth for Me?" comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – "Is There No Place on Earth for Me?" by the Austrian-born American writer, Susan Sheehan, has been published in Persian.

Nilufar Sadegi is the translator of the book published by Saless.

This renowned journalist's classic Pulitzer Prize-winning investigation of schizophrenia, now reissued with a new postscript, follows a flamboyant and fiercely intelligent young woman as she struggles in the throes of mental illness.

Sylvia Frumkin was born in 1948 and began showing signs of schizophrenia in her teens. She spent the next seventeen years in and out of mental institutions.

In 1978, reporter Susan Sheehan took an interest in her and, for more than two years,

became immersed in her life: talking with her, listening to her monologues, sitting in on consultations with doctors, even, for a period, sleeping in the bed next to her in a psychiatric center.

With Sheehan, we become witnesses to Sylvia's plight: her psychotic episodes, the medical struggle to control her symptoms, and the overburdened hospitals that, more often than not, she was obliged to call home.

The resulting book, first published in 1982, was hailed as an extraordinary achievement: harrowing, humanizing, moving and bitingly funny.

Now, some two decades later, "Is There No Place on Earth for Me?" continues to set the standard for accounts of mental illness.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Susan Sheehan's "Is There No Place on Earth for Me?"