

CIA Malign Activities in China Revealed

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Report



Iran, Russia eyeing \$10b trade target

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said on Friday that the Islamic Republic and Russia have reached an agreement to boost the trade between the two countries up to \$10 billion, IRNA reported.

“We agreed to remove trade barriers and boost the economic exchanges between the two countries. Currently, the level of mutual trade is not acceptable, so the two countries agreed to increase trade to \$10 billion a year,” Raisi said upon arrival to Tehran after a two-day visit to Moscow.

The president also noted that the two sides have also discussed monetary and banking issues during his talks with Russian officials.

“The two countries can take steps to break the dominance of the dollar over monetary and banking relations and trade with the national currency,” Raisi stressed.

The two countries also agreed to identify mutual agricultural capacities as well as suitable areas for the exchange of agricultural products in order to increase the level of trade in the agricultural sector, according to the official.

He went on to say that the Islamic Republic of Iran has very good capacities in the field of transit and transportation, saying: “During this visit, it was agreed to activate the north-south corridor. This transit route will make the time and distance of transiting goods from Russia and different northern countries to the southern regions much shorter.”

Important energy cooperation MOUs signed

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji who accompanied President Raisi in his visit to Russia also announced the signing ► Page 4

Raisi address Russian Duma, says Iran seeks ‘maximum interaction’ with the world

TEHRAN — During his visit to Moscow, Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi on Thursday gave a speech at the Russian State Duma, saying the Islamic Republic seeks “maximum interaction” with the world.

Raisi also said NATO is trying to infiltrate various geographical areas culturally by confronting independent democracies.

The following is the full text of his speech.

His Excellency Mr. Volodin,

Honorable Chairman of the State Duma of Russia,

Dear representatives,

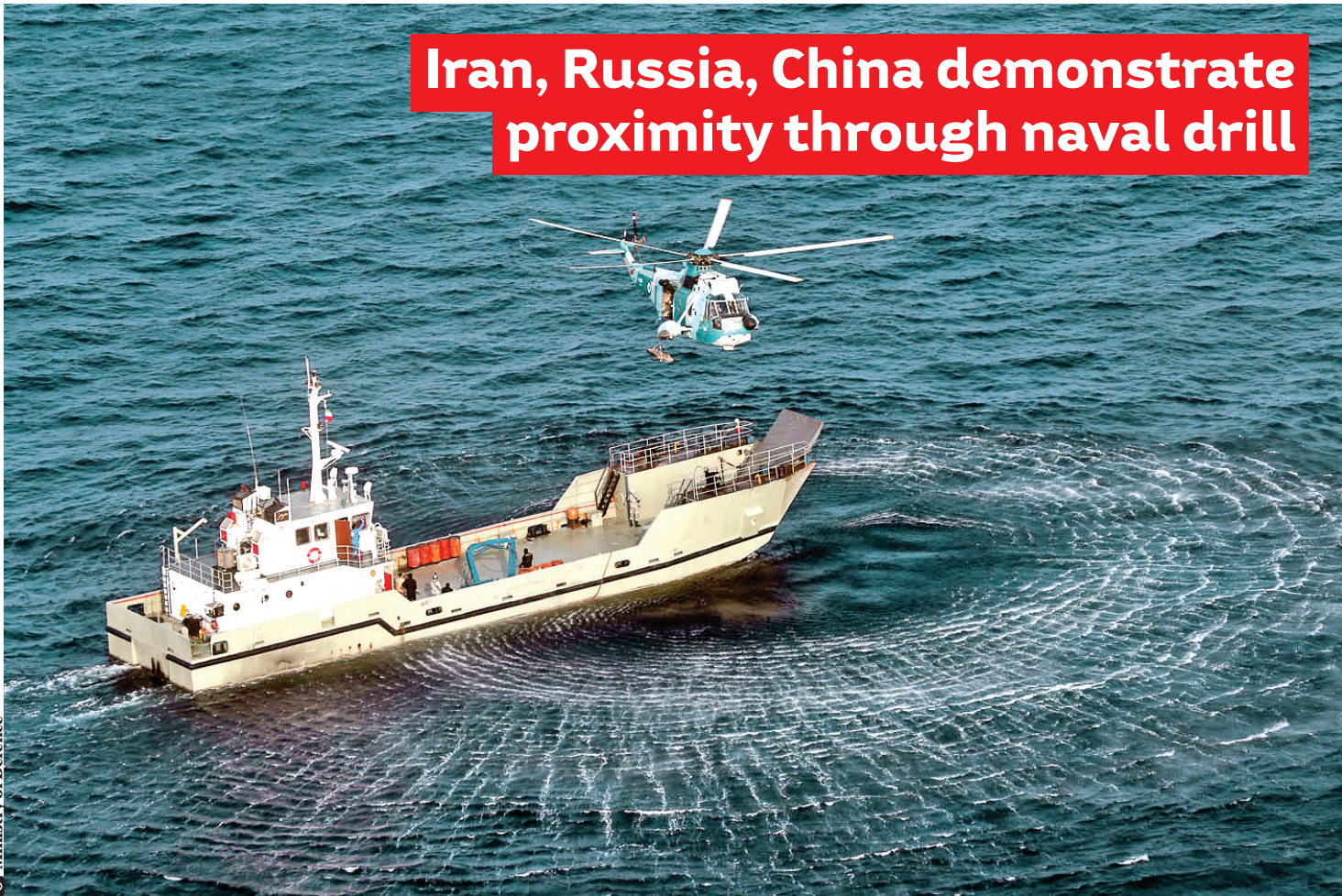
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the beginning, I would like to express my satisfaction with the friendly government and nation of the Russian Federation for the warm welcome and hospitality of me and my accompanying delegation in the beautiful city of Moscow.

I seize the opportunity to congratulate the Russian nation and government on the birthday of Jesus Christ and the New Year. Worshipping God always takes its meaning from avoiding obedience and worshipping any entity other than God.

I am very glad that on the agenda of this trip, there was an opportunity to attend the State Duma and meet with you, the representatives of the people with the ancient culture and civilization of Russia. In this regard, I would like to thank Mr. Volodin, the honorable Chairman of the State Duma of Russia, ► Page 2

Iran, Russia, China demonstrate proximity through naval drill



© Ministry of Defence

TEHRAN — On Friday morning, the bell rang for one of the biggest maritime drills in the history of the powerful triangle of Iran, Russia, and China.

The joint drill, which is called “naval security

belt combined war game 2022,” covers an area of 17,000 square kilometers.

The drill involves marine and airborne units of the Iranian Navy, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy, and flotillas from

the Russian Pacific Fleet and the Chinese Navy.

“Together for peace and security,” is the motto of the drill, Admiral Mostafa Tajeddini, the drill spokesman, announced on Thursday. ► Page 2

Biden’s first year in office at a glance

One year into his four-year term, U.S. President Joe Biden’s public approval rating has fallen to the lowest level so far, as Americans appear to be exhausted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic toll it has taken on their livelihoods. That is according to a new Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll.

In what will be unwelcome news for the White House, the national poll which was

conducted on January 19-20, found that 52% of U.S. adults disapproved of Biden’s achievements in office, while 43% approved while the rest said they were not sure.

Just a week earlier, a separate poll put the American President at a 45% approval rating and 50% disapproval.

In his first months in office, Biden’s pop-

ularity was above 50%. It began dropping in mid-August as COVID-19 deaths surged across the states and the U.S.-backed Afghan government collapsed, with the latest survey dropping to 43% that’s more than seven percentage points.

The latest findings caps off what analysts say has been a difficult first year in office both on the domestic international front. ► Page 5

Iran makes progress among talent-competitive countries

TEHRAN – Iran has ranked 100th in Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2021, improving two steps compared to 2020.

The Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) is an innovative, annual benchmarking study organized by the Business School for the World, INSEAD, encompassing more than 130 countries.

The GTCI introduces the dimension of talent (human capital) and its connection to competitiveness. The variables are grouped into talent enablers, attraction, growth, retention as well as output in terms of vocational and global knowledge skills. It aims to give governments and businesses the distilled data from more than 130 countries needed to inform their decisions about talent policies and strategies.

Since 2013, more countries have been added to the ranking of the ► Page 7

Iran launches first IranGeo fair

TEHRAN — The IranGeo International Exhibition is the first geographical positioning system information of its kind that was opened on Thursday at the presence of Defense Ministry officials, the Vice President for Science and Technology and related agencies at the Persian Gulf Hall of the permanent Tehran International Exhibitions. The exhibition is open to the public from December 25 to January 23.

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New round of restoration begins on Semnan’s Shah Abbasi caravanserai

TEHRAN – A new round of restoration work has been commenced on Safavid era (1501-1736) Shah Abbasi caravanserai in the north-central province of Semnan, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The project involves replacing worn-out materials, cleaning the brick walls, and removing the layers of paint and grease from

the stone and brick surfaces as well as removing extensions of the last few years, Hamidreza Dustmohammadi said on Thursday.

Strengthening the walls and repairing the historical inn’s façade are also parts of the project, the official added, ISNA reported.

The project is being carried out under the supervision of cultural heritage experts

and by the order of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami, he noted.

Back in February, the historical inn was finally handed over to Semnan’s municipality after being used as a prison for over 40 years.

The Shah Abbasi caravanserai, which was inscribed on the National Heritage ► Page 6

From Inside



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Interview



Cinematic history of America rooted in particular legacies of racialized violence: cinema researcher

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – A cinema researcher, who explores racism, class politics, internationalism in world literature, architecture, music, and global cinema, says that American cinema represents a racialized history of the country.

“The cinematic history of America, it must be said, is rooted in particular legacies of racialized violence,” Anthony Ballas tells the Tehran Times.

“I can confirm that violence is central to American cinematic representation in particular ways and through particular genres and styles, and there are a handful of factors that we might look into as to why this has been the case historically, and why it continues to be the case today,” notes Ballas, who teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado at Denver.

Below is the text of an interview with Ballas about the role of discrimination and violence against minorities and what is called “others” in American cinema:

There is a stereotype that American cinema represents violence while its European counterpart represents sex. To what extent can you confirm this? And what are the roots of this phenomenon?

Although I have not heard it put in quite these terms, I can certainly say that, yes, the stereotype of American ► Page 5

Iran beat Uzbekistan at CAFA Women’s Futsal Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Uzbekistan 5-2 in their opening match of the CAFA Women’s Futsal Championship 2022.

Sahar Zamanifard, Fatemeh Papi, Sara Shirbeigi, Fereshteh Karimi and Nesa Ahmadi scored for the Iranian team.

The four-team competition is being held at the Dushanbe Multi-functional Sports Complex from Jan. 21 to 28.

Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan compete in the tournament.

The teams will play each other twice.

The Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) is an association of the football playing nations in Central Asia.

In June 2014, the association was in principle approved by the Asian Football Confederation and approved at the Extraordinary Congress in January 2015 during the 2015 AFC Asian Cup.

As a result, CAFA will in the future be able to have member(s) on the AFC executive committee.

The formation of CAFA was spearheaded by the Iranian Football Federation following disputes with West Asian Football Federation members.

Iranian and Russian FM's stress the need to implement agreements made by Raisi and Putin



TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, who had travelled to Russia along with President Ebrahim Raisi, held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Thursday with an emphasis on implementing agreements made by the Iranian and Russian presidents as soon as possible.

Amir Abdollahian and Lavrov exchanged views over issues of mutual interest as well as bilateral, regional and international issues.

President Raisi made a two-day visit to Moscow. He held high profile talks with Russian President on Wednesday and presented a speech at the Russian Duma on Thursday.

In their meeting, Amir Abdollahian and Lavrov referred to expanding ties between Iran and Russia, saying the meeting between the presidents of the two countries shows Tehran and Moscow's seriousness about developing relations.

They expressed hope that relevant bodies in Iran and Russia will implement the agreements reached at the level of presidents.

Amir Abdollahian also spoke of problems faced by some Iranian passengers at Moscow's airport and asked his Russian counterpart to take immediate and serious action to resolve problems.

Lavrov described Raisi's visit to Russia as an important development in bilateral ties and underlined that the way has been paved for expanding Tehran-Moscow relations.

Lavrov expressed hope that economic projects that are currently being implemented by Russian companies in Iran would be completed as soon as possible.

The Russian foreign minister also called for joint efforts to resolve consular problems facing passengers. He underlined the need to resolve the existing problems by relevant bodies. Lavrov said that the key problem is that some Iranian citizens do not complete the visa application forms properly and fail to accurately declare the purpose of their visit to Russia at Moscow's airport.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Russia also discussed the latest regional and international developments including the Vienna talks. Amir Abdollahian and Lavrov underlined the necessity of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this regard.

The Vienna talks, which Russia is also party, is aimed at removing the anti-Iran sanctions.

Iran, Russia, China demonstrate proximity through naval drill

From page 1 ► Tajeddini added the drill is aimed at improving security of international maritime trade, countering piracy and maritime terrorism, exchange of information in naval rescue and relief operations, and exchange of operational and tactical experiences.

This is the third joint naval drill between Iran, Russia, and China.

After Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Moscow on Wednesday, media outlets reported that a joint naval drill will soon be held between Iran, Russia, and China.

Interestingly, the three countries involved in the drill are enjoying close political relationship. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian visited China on January 13. He held extensive talks with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

The outcome of the visit was the implementation of the strategic 25-year cooperation document between Iran and China.

In the meeting, Amir Abdollahian reaffirmed Iran's support for the One China Policy and announced Iran's readiness to expand all-out ties with China.

For his part, Wang said that the 25-year partnership is "highly important" and said Tehran and Beijing's agreement to start implementing the deal is a significant development that will pave the way to fundamentally transform bilateral ties.

Similarly, Iran's president went to Russia and had a lengthy meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. He also addressed the Russian State

Amir Abdollahian, Lavrov asked to work on 20-year cooperation roadmap

Elsewhere in their discussions, the two chief diplomats underlined the need to finalize the roadmap of relations between Iran and Russian that was put forth during the meeting between presidents of two countries.

They also exchanged views over the latest developments in Afghanistan and Yemen.

In an interview with Iran's state TV on Wednesday, Amir Abdollahian said the Iranian and Russian presidents have tasked the top diplomats of the two countries to work out a roadmap for cooperation over the next two decades.

Amir Abdollahian also elaborated on a three-hour meeting between Raisi and Putin earlier in the day.

"Mr. Raeisi and Mr. Putin instructed the two countries' foreign ministers to prepare a 20-year roadmap for long-term cooperation," he said, according to Press TV.

Earlier, Amir Abdollahian had said in an article for Russia's Sputnik news agency that Iran and Russia are determined to update the 20-year cooperation treaty they had signed in 2001. The agreement was originally meant to last four 10 years, but it has twice been extended for five years.

Insistence on inclusive government in Afghanistan

In their Thursday meeting the two foreign ministers also reiterated that the only solution to the situation in Afghanistan is to form an inclusive government with the involvement of all ethnic groups in the country.

As for Yemen, Amir Abdollahian and Lavrov also underlined that the country's crisis can only be resolved politically by stopping guns, removing the siege on Yemeni people and establishing dialogue between warring Yemeni factions.

Also, in his interview with the Iranian TV, Amir-Abdollahian said the meeting between Raisi and Putin was held in a "friendly" and serious" climate in accordance with all the health protocols in place in Russia, which is currently grappling with the deadly wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two presidents, he said, "reviewed almost once all the issues of bilateral relations in the fields of politics and strategy, economy, trade, culture, science and technology, private sector trade, and all other topics of common interest."

They also held detailed discussions about regional issues, including the developments in Yemen, and stressed the need to end the war in the impoverished country through political channels, he added.

He said Raisi and Putin exchanged views on the roles and capacities of Iran and Russia in promoting peace in different regional states.

The Iranian foreign minister also said the two presidents explored ways to step up the fight against unilateralism and promote multilateralism.

From page 1 ► the deputy chairman of the Duma, the chairman of the foreign relations committee and other members of the State Duma for organizing this program and giving me the opportunity to speak.

As I mentioned in a cordial meeting and constructive conversation with Mr. Volodin when the Russian political delegation attended my inauguration, the Islamic Republic of Iran has the necessary will and readiness to develop and expand relations with the Russian Federation.

Today, fortunately, there are very clear horizons for cooperation between the two countries at bilateral, regional and international levels. Strengthening Iran-Russia relations in bilateral and multilateral forms will boost the economies of the two nations and strengthen regional and international security. The abundant, yet balancing economic and trade capacities of the two countries, along with the power and influence of each of our two countries in their geographical areas, can strengthen the convergence between the regions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks "maximum interaction" with all countries around the world, especially its neighbors and allies. The purpose and basis of this cooperation and interaction is the mutual interests of nations and the increasing formation of a "civilized global community". This path can be achieved through the cooperation of independent countries with high cultures and attention to the principles of "justice, morality and spirituality". Undoubtedly, the root of what human society suffers from today is the separation of politics from morality and spirituality. Violence, terrorism, the collapse of the family institution, and the spread of drugs do not come from a spiritualist mindset. Any structure created on the basis of this segregation intensifies the suffering of humanity and, instead of promoting justice, structures oppression and creates the roots causes of domination.

Distinguished representatives,

The experience of an international system based on domination shows that its output was nothing but war, violence, insecurity and division among nations. The failure of the policy of military occupation and forcing the United States to flee Iraq and Afghanistan stems from one concept: resistance of nations. The idea of resistance serves the independence of countries. In modern times, the concept of resistance plays a central role in deterrence equations. The successful model of cooperation between Iran and Russia in Syria has also ensured the independence of the countries and the consolidation of regional security in the continuation of the resistance of the Syrian people and government. In this regard, we have enjoyed the cooperation of the Russian Federation with the intelligent leadership of Mr. Putin, which is commendable and can be considered an effective model for the development of cooperation in

Raisi address Russian Duma, says Iran seeks 'maximum interaction' with the world



various fields.

However, the war against terrorism has been part of the war against hegemony, because terrorism is one of the by-products of hegemony. The strategy of domination has now failed, and the United States is in its weakest position, and the power of independent nations is experiencing its historic growth. The important thing in this age, which requires vigilance, is that the desires for domination have not disappeared and new forms of domination are on the agenda. The most important goal of this agenda is to weaken independent governments from within, which is pursued through economic sanctions, destabilization, the promotion of insecurity, and false narratives of events in such a way that they try to change the place of the oppressor and the oppressed in public opinion.

The "evil alliance" of the United States with terrorists is clear to the world, especially to the nations of West Asia, from Syria to Afghanistan. There are now complex plans to send Takfiri terrorists on new missions from the Caucasus to Central Asia. Experience has shown that it is pure Islamic thought that can prevent the formation of extremism and Takfiri terrorism.

NATO, on the other hand, seeks to infiltrate various geographical areas with new alibis that threaten the common interests of independent states. Promoting pro-Western governments and confronting

independent democracies based on national identities and traditions is part of NATO's cultural projects that reflect the hypocrisy of this diminishing pattern of behavior.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sanctioning nations is a common form of new domination, and countering it requires the cooperation of independent states and a collective response. Otherwise, sanctions will affect all countries, even U.S. allies, under various pretexts. The United States claims that the sanctions are due to the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear activities. Everyone knows that these activities are legal and under the constant supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. But the reality is that in different historical periods of Iran's development, whenever our nation has raised the flag of nationalism, independence, or scientific development, it has faced sanctions and pressures of the Iranian nation's enemies.

Dear representatives, The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the fatwa of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, is that we are not looking for a nuclear weapon, and such weapons have no place in our defense strategy.

Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the fatwa of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, is that we are not looking for a nuclear weapon, and such weapons have no place in our defense strategy. America seeks to oppose the rights of our nation. Our philosophy is also clear. We do not relinquish the rights of our nation. Those chanting, "America is back" have not yet fulfilled their obligations under the nuclear deal. We are not satisfied with anything less than our rights. The Islamic Republic

of Iran is serious about reaching an agreement if the other parties are serious about lifting the sanctions effectively and operationally.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The policy of maximum interaction of the Islamic Republic of Iran with independent governments is noble and will continue regardless of the developments in the international environment. The Islamic Republic of Iran is the winner of two battlefields against terrorism and the campaign of maximum economic pressure. At the same time, Iran has extensive economic potential, especially in the fields of energy, trade, agriculture, industry and technology, which pave the way for beneficial cooperation for any bilateral or multilateral interaction with different countries. In this regard, agreements were reached between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, which will cause a significant leap in bilateral economic relations for the benefit of the two nations, and effective regional cooperation for the benefit of peace and stability of nations in different regions. The privileged geographical location of Iran, especially the North-South corridor, can make trade from India to Russia and Europe less expensive and more prosperous. Stabilizing and benefiting the relations between the two countries requires the expansion of cooperation in the fields of science, society, culture and media, and we are ready for the maximum development of stable and long-term relations. To this end, we believe that the relations between the two countries should be designed in such a way that, while providing mutual benefits, they are also safe from the interference of third parties.

Distinguished representatives

Fortunately, there are good relations between the parliaments of the two countries, and the interactions that exist in the form of the High Parliamentary Commission, between various commissions and committees, as well as parliamentary friendship groups, helps a lot to develop friendly relations between the two countries, especially in the economic field, in addition to promoting parliamentary relations. We consider the role of parliaments to be very important for the development of relations between the two countries, and we welcome it, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers and supports Russia's initiative to hold a meeting of the Speakers of the Parliaments of Iran, Russia, Turkey, Pakistan and China in the fight against terrorism.

We hope to see the promotion of relations and the benefit of the people of the two countries from the benefits of these relations and the establishment of peace and stability in the region by making the most from the capacities and continuing cooperation between the two countries in regional and international issues.

I sincerely appreciate your attention.

How the U.S. Forges Radicalization

1 America has spent more than 2 trillion dollars of money its people need back home. But instead, it has led to destroying other people's homes in Afghanistan.

2 Amra Sabic-El-Rayess, a professor at Columbia University, believes the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan led to the growth of radicalism.

3 The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan left the country in the same broken state it was before.

4 Approximately a hundred thousand people were dead or maimed during that time, including 33,000 children.

5 These numbers are just the surface. The war has caused more people to be radicalized.

6 Each death is a scar on the Afghans' hearts. It is why the Taliban could take over the country.

7 It occupied Afghanistan for 20 years.

President meets senior Russian cleric, business actors

TEHRAN – During his visit to Russia, Iranian President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi met on Thursday with Rawil Gaynutdin, Chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia, and Russian economic actors.

During the meeting with Gaynutdin, Ayatollah Raisi referred to the good relations between Iran and Russia and said, “This trip will be a turning point in economic, political and especially cultural relations between the two countries.”

The president added, “Relations with the Muslims of Russia are of special importance for the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Ayatollah Raisi pointed out that “one of the characteristics of Russia is that the followers of the divine and Abrahamic religions live together” peacefully.

He emphasized the high position of mosque in Islam, noting, “Mosques are the center of communication between Muslims, the center of worship of God, a place to inform people about issues and a place to create hope.”

President Raisi stated, “What we should be worried about today along with atheism is the issue of extremism. Extremism and takfirism are detrimental to Muslims.”

The president went on to say that “some people have damaged the religion of God in the name of Islam, and we must be sensitive to the Takfiri movement.”

Pointing to joint campaigns by Iran and Russia against terrorism in Syria, Ayatollah Raisi added, “Our

position and that of Russia in Syria was not against the infidels, but against the agent of the Arrogance and the Zionist Regime.”

Raisi also accepted the invitation of the Chairman of the Russian Mufti Council to visit the Moscow Grand Mosque and stressed the need to prevent discord among Muslims, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

“We understand how important your meeting with the president of Russia is, and this meeting is very important for the Muslims of Russia as well,” said Rawil Gaynutdin.

While on visit to Russia, President Raisi prayed at the Kremlin on Wednesday.

“Your prayer in the Kremlin was very symbolic and significant, and they wrote to me from Finland that the blessing came into the Kremlin,” Gaynutdin remarked.

The Iranian president also held a meeting with a number of Russia economic operators in a bid to strengthen economic relations between Tehran and Moscow.

During this meeting, the president described acquaintance with the views of economic actors in Russia as very important and said, “Familiarity of the leaders and officials of the two countries with the views of actors in the field of trade and economy can be effective in macro and strategic decisions for bilateral cooperation.”

Ayatollah Raisi stated, “Russia has a valuable civilization and culture and there are many capacities in Iran



and Russia to develop cooperation.”

Ayatollah Raisi mentioned neighborliness, common interests and enemies as reasons for the need to increase cooperation between Iran and Russia.

“In addition to common interests, we also have common enemies who do not want growth and development in the region, but we must increase growth and development to such an extent that others cannot infiltrate this region to achieve their political and cultural goals.”

Emphasizing the need to review the trade situation due to the low volume of trade between the two countries, the president said, “We must identify and eliminate problems and obstacles with a pathological view.”

Referring to the meeting with his Russian counterpart, Raisi said, “In that meeting, we discussed bilateral, regional and international issues, and Mr. Putin and I agreed that the capacities of cooperation between Iran and Russia should be better used, the North-South corridor should be activated to solve the problems facing economic actors.”

Emphasizing the need for change in the monetary and banking system between Iran and Russia, the president said, “To solve this problem, the central banks of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia can agree to activate the banks of Iran and Russia in both countries so that economic actors can easily exchange money.”

Referring to the proposal of one of the participants to create a platform for recognizing the capacities of the provinces of Iran and Russia, Raisi said, “Introducing these capacities is important and by solving customs problems, economic actors should not face an obstacle in customs affairs.”

Raisi described the positions of the presidents of Iran and Russia as close, saying, “Preparations have been made for the finalization of the comprehensive document on Iran-Russia cooperation.”

At the same meeting, Igor Morozov, chairman of the Iran-Russia Friendship Group at the Russian Federation Council, said, “Your visit to Russia and meeting with Vladimir Putin will stimulate economic relations between the two countries, but our provinces have little information about Iran and action should be taken in this regard.”

During his two-day visit to Russia, Ayatollah Raisi met with President Vladimir Putin and addressed the State Duma of Russia.

Addressing the Russian State Duma, President Raisi, “The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks ‘maximum interaction’ with all countries around the world, especially its neighbors and allies. The purpose and basis of this cooperation and interaction is the mutual interests of nations and the increasing formation of a ‘civilized global community.’”

SPORTS

Plucky Iran held India in AFC Women’s Asian Cup 2022

TEHRAN – Plucky Iran held India to a 0-0 draw in their AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 Group A clash at the D.Y. Patil Stadium on Thursday.

India had the better chances but determined defending by Iran kept the hosts at bay as both teams now set their sights on their Matchday Two ties.

Iran, making their first AFC Women's Asian Cup appearance, found themselves on the backfoot as India started aggressively with their attacks coming from the flanks.

Iran goalkeeper Zohreh Koudaei was chosen the best player of the match.

“We all know that the first match is going to be tough,” said Irandoost. “Even though we didn't play any international friendlies prior to the tournament, I think we performed well today.

“We did our best to keep a clean sheet and it was an important result,” she added.

Among the players to earn praise was Zohreh Koudaei as Irandoost singled out the goalkeeper for pulling out all the stops to keep Iran in the game.

“Zohreh, our goalkeeper, and Hajar Dabbaghi were among the best players. Zohreh did well to stop India from scoring. Dabbaghi is a creative midfielder and because she is experienced, we told her to press the opponents.

“In the end, the plan worked in our favor and we are happy with our performance.”

Playing in the AFC Women's Asian Cup for the first time is a huge step for Iran and Irandoost said the moment had plenty of significance, especially with the overwhelming support from fans.

“With this being our first match, we came here to win but India was a tough opponent. That's why we had players playing behind in defense and I'm glad we walked away with a point.

“It was special because of the positive vibes from the fans. We were really motivated and came out with a good result,” Irandoost stated.

India will be aiming to claim their first win when they face Chinese Taipei on Sunday, while Iran face eight-time champions China.



India’s Dennerby disappointed after stalemate with Iran

TEHRAN - India head coach Thomas Dennerby expressed his disappointment with the stalemate with Iran in Group A of the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 on Thursday.

The host was held to a goalless draw.

“I'm disappointed with the result,” said Dennerby. “We had enough chances to score, but it is what it is. It is all down to technical skills. You are not given goals, you have to score them, otherwise you are not good enough.

“But still we get a point, so when you have a point from the first match you stay alive for the rest of the group games. It's a good thing, but when we summaries this, we should have won the game,” the Swedish coach added.

India, who came into the tie as favorites, were taken aback by Iran's fearless approach and Dennerby admitted that he was initially a bit surprised.

“We were defending well. I was a little bit surprised in the beginning with the way Iran was playing. Of course, you can't never know how your opponent will play, as every game is a new game, but Iran started better than expected. We also then started taking over the game after we saw the team trying to gain more possession.”

India will be aiming to make up for the missed opportunity when they face Chinese Taipei on Sunday, while Iran meet eight-time winners China PR in Group A's other fixture.

Iran beat Saudi Arabia at 2022 Asian Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Saudi Arabia 24-20 in Group B of the 2022 Asian Men's Handball Championship on Thursday.

It was Iran's third win in the group. The Persians had defeated Australia and India in their past two matches.

Iran will play Iraq on Saturday in Group II.

Competition started on Jan. 18 and will run until Jan. 31.

All the matches take place at the Ministry of Sports Hall in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

The top five teams from the Championship will directly qualify for the 2023 World Men's Handball Championship, to be held jointly by Poland and Sweden.

Saudi Arabia was awarded the tournament after the Championship was moved in September by the Asian Handball Federation due to the spread of COVID-19 in the initial host country, Iran.

Al Gharafa complete signing of Iran international Ezatolah

TEHRAN – Iran international midfielder Saeid Ezatolah joined Qatari football club Al Gharafa on loan from Danish football club Vejle Boldklub.

The 27-year-old midfielder has joined the Qatari side for the rest of the season.

Ezatolah started his playing career in Malavan in 2012 and joined Atlético Madrid C two years.

He has also played in Russian team Rostov, Anzhi Makhachkala and Amkar Perm.

Ezatolah was a member of Championships side Reading and Eupen of Belgium as well.

He will wear No. 66 jersey in Al Gharafa.

The Iranian international made 41 caps for the 'Persian Leopards' and represented the country at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

IPL: Fekri takes charge of Naft Masjed Soleyman

TEHRAN – Mahmoud Fekri was appointed as new head coach Naft Masjed Solyman football club on Thursday.

Fekri was head coach of Naft Masjed Soleyman team in 2017/18 and has returned to the team after four years.

The 52-year-old coach replaced Faraz Kamalvand in the Iranian football team.

Naft Masjed Soleyman sit 15th in the 16-team league with 11 points from 15 matches.

CIA malign activities in China revealed

TEHRAN – China has been in the crosshairs of the United States ever since it achieved a rarely seen economic growth in modern times, something that Washington is working its butt off to stop, or at least slow down.

Just recently, former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo wrote a lengthy article accusing Chinese President Xi Jinping of pursuing an “unbridled ambition” to “mold the existing world order into a system of global governance controlled by Communist China through its prophesied future supremacy in all forms of international power.”

In the article for National Interest, Pompeo warned that “China, therefore, represents the greatest threat that America has faced in the modern era, for no other nation that has contested the United States has possessed China's relative economic power or population.”

The U.S. has sought to use everything in its power to counter China. But little is known about the many ways Washington is using to “create chaos and havoc” across China.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has resorted to a multilayered, multi-pronged scheme to destabilize China and derail its One Road One Belt initiative, the Tehran Times can reveal.

In a January 11 article, the Tehran Times briefly pointed to Imad Zuberi, an American spy who used his business cover to approach world leaders and the international business elite in a bid to spy for the U.S.

After more than a decade of spying for U.S. intelligence agencies, Zuberi was sentenced in February last year to 12 years in prison for alleged offenses ranging from tax evasion to foreign-influence peddling and campaign-finance violations.

The Tehran Times has learned that Zuberi was deeply implicated in spying for the CIA in China. He was operating under the supervision of a high-ranking CIA officer called Rob Kee, who is the former Station Chief of Afghanistan, Head of Near East Desk and the Western Region Station Chief in Long Beach.

The CIA instructed Zuberi to undertake a variety



of activities ranging from approaching some powerful people on Capitol Hill to establishing contacts with Muslim leaders of the Chinese Muslim minority as well as the members of the China Communist Party (CCP).

Under directions from Kee, Zuberi got close to a number of Congressmen, including Senator Lindsey Graham. The main reason for this was to use these people for “media propaganda purposes.” He succeeded in using Graham for such purposes.

Another reason was to push for a Congressional mandate to go against China as a country and its One Road One Belt initiative.

Zuberi's mission against China also included incitement against Chinese living in Muslim Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, North Africa, and Afghanistan.

The CIA figured that one way to derail the One Road One Belt initiative is to use propaganda to exploit the Chinese internment of Muslims using media outlets in America and beyond. The underlying reason for that was because the Chinese BRI project is running through several of the 59 Muslim countries.

Zuberi played a pivotal role in executing this strategy. On instructions from Kee, he traveled to China to visit mosques in several cities in China in order to find Muslim leaders.

Using his connections in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) and Turkish halal food companies supplying Chinese Muslims with that kind of food, Zuberi socialized well with Chinese Muslims.

He collected locations, photos, and names of leaders of Uyghur Muslims, Hui Muslims,

Reuters.

“My concern, more than in the substance, is about the timing. There I have a feeling that we are going too slow. It would be an incredible mistake if, because of

timing, we would not get a good solution,” the official said without elaborating. “Still, I think that we will have an agreement...and I think that it will be rather sooner than later.”

Iran, Russia eyeing \$10b trade target



From page 1 ► of important documents on energy cooperation between Iran and Russia during the mentioned trip.

Speaking to the press after returning to Tehran, Oji said: "During the visit to Russia, numerous meetings were held with Russia's deputy prime minister, minister of energy, and senior private sector executives in the field of oil and gas in order to expand joint cooperation."

"Important decisions were made in these negotiations and important documents were signed by the parties," he stated.

***Russia to finalize \$5b credit line for Iran

Another outcome of the visit of the Iranian president to Russia has been the finalization

of the previously agreed \$5 billion credit line for the completion of several development projects in Iran.

In this regard, Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi noted that the mentioned credit line is going to be mainly allocated to the North-South Corridor projects.

Completion of the North-South Corridor via rail transit that could connect southern Iran and the Persian Gulf to Central Asia and Europe was one of the pillars of the agreement, under which good decisions were made for the Rasht-Astara and Incheh Boroun-Garmsar railways, Khandouzi said.

It was decided to finance the Rasht-Astara Railway through the credit line that had previously been agreed between the two countries; Therefore, this project will be financed by Russia in the form of the mentioned credit line, he added.

In addition to financing the Rasht-Astara railway section and possibly the purchase of 200 locomotives, the mentioned credit line will also be used to finance the Sirik Power plant whose construction has already been started.

Kenya welcomes Iranian investment in various sectors

TEHRAN – The Commercial Attaché of the Kenyan Embassy to Tehran has said his country welcomes Iranian companies' investment in various sectors.

Making the remarks in a conference on the development of Iran-East Africa trade on Thursday, David Karanja said a workshop has been formed to explore the mutual economic potentials of the two sides and the two countries will establish interaction in oil, pharmaceutical, and medical fields.

He said Kenya is keen on attracting investment opportunities in Iran and vice versa.

"Iran and East Africa are both producers and consumers, and East Africa has good opportunities in labor, raw materials, and produced items," Karanja added.

According to the official, Iran has established an innovation and technology center in Kenya, which is one of Iran's first initiatives in Africa.

"This center will be a platform for Kenyan start-ups and Iranian companies," he stressed.

As reported, Iran-East Africa Trade Development Conference was organized by the International Institute of Iran Industries Research (MPSIran).

According to MPSIran Head Sina Sanjari, the purpose of the mentioned conference was to examine the challenges and opportunities for investment and export to the East African region.

"In recent years, the value of Iran's exports to Africa has been between 700 to 800 million dollars annually, which shows the high potential for increasing trade between Iran and East African countries," Sanjari said at the conference.

According to the official, East African countries are good markets for the presence of Iranian technical and engineering service companies, exporters, and investors in this regard.

Further in the conference, Former Iranian Ambassador to Kenya Hossein Givzadeh mentioned the geopolitical significance of East African countries for Iran and said: "East African countries are Iran's primary point of contact with Africa and our trade relations with them are at the highest level."

"Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, and Uganda are among Iran's main trade partners in Africa," Givzadeh said.

Shipping line established between Iran's Chabahar Port, 2 Indian ports

TEHRAN – Deputy Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Jalil Eslami has said direct container shipping lines have been established between Iran's southeastern port of Chabahar and two Western Indian ports of Nhava Sheva, and Kandla.

According to Eslami, regular container service with a traffic schedule of 10 to 15 days is performed by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) through these lines, the PMO portal reported.

The official noted that PMO is going to offer the necessary tariff

incentives and facilities on tolls and transportation costs to support the traders that use the lines.

He pointed out that according to the schedule, the first container service through the mentioned route will enter Iran's Shahid Beheshti port on February 16.

Iran and India had previously launched shipping lines between Chabahar and the Indian ports of Mumbai, and Mundra.

The first shipping route between the two countries was put into operation in 2017 between Iran's Chabahar port and Mumbai.



In January 2019, Iran and India inaugurated the second direct shipping route which passes through Mumbai, Mundra, Kandla, Chabahar, and finally Bandar Abbas in southern Iran.

India is using the mentioned shipping routes to transit goods to Afghanistan and Persian Gulf nations as well as the countries in Central Asia.

Through Chabahar port India can bypass Pakistan and transport goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia, while Afghanistan can get linked to India via sea.

Iran has awarded India the project for installing and operating modern loading and unloading equipment including mobile harbor cranes in Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

The strategic Chabahar port in southeastern Iran is the only ocean port on the Makran coast and it has a special place in the country's economic affairs.

Back in September 2021, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called on Central Asian countries to benefit from Chabahar Port capacities for expanding their trade in the region.

Over 16m tons of steel ingots produced in 9 months



TEHRAN – Iran's major steel producers have managed to produce over 16.232 million tons of steel ingots in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2021).

As reported, the nine-month steel ingot output indicates a five-percent drop year on year.

Major Iranian steel producers had produced over 22.54 million tons of steel ingots in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2021), registering an eight percent rise year on year.

The said companies produced over 2.04 million tons of steel ingots in the last month of the previous year (February 19-March 20, 2021), 17 percent more than the figure for the same month in the preceding year.

Mobarakeh Steel Company had the best performance in the previous calendar year with a production of 9.8 million tons of the mentioned product while the highest production growth was registered by Sirjan Steel World Company with 141 percent growth.

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

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

In January 2021, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) added twelve Iranian producers of steel and other metal products to the list of sanctions.

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

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

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

"Iran's ranking among the top 10 steel producers in the world shows that the decline of Iran's position among steel producing countries will not be easy", Bahador Eghramian noted.

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

Based on the Iranian Steel Producers Association's data, Iranian steel companies managed to produce 30.2 million tons of steel in the previous Iranian calendar year,

registering a three-percent annual growth.

And according to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran has maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer during January-October, 2021.

Production of crude steel in Iran reached 22.4 million tons during the mentioned time span to register a 5.7-percent decline year on year, the report said.

The rising trend is also witnessed in the export of Iran's steel, as according to the latest report released in this due, Iranian major steel producers, including Mobarakeh Steel Company, Khuzestan Steel Company, Esfahan Steel Company, and Hormozgan Steel Company and some others, exported over 5.912 million tons of steel during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22, 2021), which was 30 percent more than the figure of the same period of time in the past year.

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

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

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

ICCIMA head emphasizes constructive co-op between private sector, parliament

TEHRAN- The head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) emphasized the necessity of constructive cooperation and interaction between the private sector and Majlis (Iranian parliament).

Referring to the special situation of the country, Gholam-Hossein Shafei said: "What needs to be considered today is the country's economy, and this is possible through proper planning, cooperation and efforts of the three major branches, the private sector and cooperatives, and of

course synergy and unity."

The main and heavy mission of the private sector, based on the task assigned to it by the law, is to try to express its expert opinions in all various economic fields by using the views of real economic actors as a consultant aware of current issues and developments, honest, compassionate and fair, the ICCIMA head stressed.

In the new conditions of the country, the chambers emphasize this task diligently and committedly, and find themselves with the government and parliament to



help the national economy, he added.

The ICCIMA head went on to say that the heads of chambers of commerce, industries, mines and agriculture across the country, heads of unions and

associations, chairmen of the ICCIMA committees, and head of joint chambers of commerce have always had a favorable and constructive relationship with MPs, which has resulted in effective actions in the country's economy.

Some of these measures include the General Policy Law of Article 44, the Law on Continuous Improvement of the Business Environment, the Law on the Elimination of Barriers to Production, etc., all of which have been fundamental measures, he stated.



cool global oil prices which hit a seven-year high this week.

TSE's main index down 4.3% in a week

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 55,000 points (4.3 percent) to 1.279 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported, during the past week, the indices of Mobarakeh Steel Company, Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, Isfahan Oil Refinery, Tehran Oil Refining Company, Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, and National Iranian Copper Company were the most widely followed ones.

The government has applied several new changes in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21, 2022) which according to experts and analysts will ensure the stock market's

stability and growth in the coming years, IRNA reported.

Reducing taxes on production units active in the stock market, strengthening the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund, eliminating subsidized foreign currency allocations, and stabilizing the ownership interest of the mines are some of the measures considered in the budget bill to support the capital market.

Allocating a 20-percent tax on legal entities is considered in next year's budget bill which is less than the previous years. Reducing the taxes imposed on production units will make them more profitable and therefore their performance in the stock market will improve.

An official with the Iranian Oil Ministry has also told Reuters the same thing, stressing that "We do not disclose to which countries because of the U.S. sanctions, but China is one of the countries that buy Iran's oil. It shows that the sanctions have become ineffective."

"Our policy is to improve our trade, including oil, with non-Western countries," said a second Iranian official.

China ships in 1.9m barrels of Iranian oil in December 2021: official data

TEHRAN – China shipped in 260,312 tons (1.9 million barrels) of Iranian crude oil in December 2021, according to data from the General Administration of Chinese Customs, Reuters reported.

This is China's first official customs report on the import of Iranian crude in a year despite ongoing sanctions.

China has previously been importing Iranian oil, but the shipments have not been reflected in official customs data as buyers fear invoking U.S. sanctions.

The mentioned cargo has been offloaded into a state reserve site in Zhanjiang in late December, according to a senior trade source with knowledge of the shipment.

As reported, China has offloaded nearly four million barrels of Iranian crude oil into state reserve tanks in the southern port city of Zhanjiang over the past few weeks.

The refilling of China's strategic petroleum reserves comes ahead of a plan to release oil from its emergency stockpile in a rare coordination with the United States to help

Cinematic history of America rooted in particular legacies of racialized violence: cinema researcher



From page 1 ► cinematic violence is pretty readily accepted, and perhaps even represents a cliché at this point. American cinema does seem to have a predilection for violence, though I think this is more nuanced than it is a monolithic appraisal of all American cinemas. I can confirm that violence is central to American cinematic representation in particular ways and through particular genres and styles, and there are a handful of factors that we might look into as to why this has been the case historically, and why it continues to be the case today.

The cinematic history of America, it must be said, is rooted in particular legacies of racialized violence. The first full-length, major motion picture, for instance, was DW. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which is a white supremacist fantasy that valorized the Ku Klux Klan as cultural heroes while depicting Blacks as inarticulate, violent, lecherous, and rapacious brutes. The film was extraordinarily popular and was famously even endorsed by President Woodrow Wilson, who held a screening of it at the White House. Wilson even commented on the film, saying that "it's like writing history with lightning," and that his "only regret is that it is all so terribly true." What Wilson perhaps ironically gets right about the truth of the film, however, is the historical truth of the violent white supremacist legacy which itself birthed the film, and its racist, confederate ideology. Some even might say, and I think they're right, that the inaugural gesture of American cinema was white supremacist and therefore bound to racist violence from the outset.

I recall that while a student in an undergraduate course on film history, a professor instructed us to try and look past the racist iconography of the film, and instead to try and understand what Griffith was doing as a filmmaker, at the purely aesthetic level. There is no such thing as a "purely" aesthetic level. Every form of representation is entangled with the political, social, and ideological. Aesthetic representation is itself historical, and therefore material history is part of the representations that arise historically in cinema and elsewhere. Cinematic representation is historical, and cannot easily be separated from the historical legacies which produce it, which are often violent. This is not to say that there isn't something universal to be drawn from cinema or representation as such, but there is a way in which history unfolds in artistic creation, which we must pay attention to if we want to unpack these kinds of violent legacies to which I'm referring.

Although it might sound shocking, similar attitudes as that of my former professor should not at all come as a surprise given the pervasive legacy of white disavowal of the brutality of American slavery and indigenous genocide in this country. The current attack on Critical Race Theory in American education, for instance, is an echo, if not a direct branch, of this same attitude.

This attitude is part of a long white supremacist lineage of representing Blacks as brutes, and ideological practice which rooted in the violent enslavement and criminalization of Blacks in America. So-called "mandingo fighting," for instance, which was depicted in Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*, refers to the form of



entertainment wherein white slave-owners would hold fights and battle royales between their enslaved, typically male, property. This history is continued through the cinematic depiction of Black Americans as animalized or sub-human "creatures," who labor for free and provide a brutal source of free entertainment for whites. Boots Riley's film from a few years ago, *Sorry to Bother You*, for instance, comments on this kind of representation, in a satirical, though trenchant, manner. In the film, there is a population of "horse people" (called 'equisapiens' in the film) who have been genetically modified to form a strong and obedient labor force. Certainly, there is a commentary on classed and racialized violence to be drawn from this kind of representation.

Although these examples are abhorrent, it wouldn't be accurate to simply consider all cinematic representations of violence as universally or inherently negative. Films depicting revolutionary violence, for instance, should be interpreted with the nuance they deserve. I don't want it to seem that I am chastising all instances of violence on screen as a lump sum. Although I think it is difficult to disentangle the violent legacy of American democracy, slavery, indigenous dispossession, and genocide, from its aesthetic and representational legacies, in many ways, cinematic violence is a way of dealing with the brutal realities of real-world violence; by wrapping them in a fantasmatic shell, by giving a cinematic representation to what might be too traumatic or too unrepresentable to confront directly, on screen violence, we might say, can be a useful ideological tool, even a critical weapon of sorts. We therefore must be careful and understand that not all of American cinema is simply violent, or that violence itself is always to be shunned as negative. Counter-hegemonic depictions might indeed be violent, but this violence is of a different sort, perhaps even belonging to a different ethical order altogether.

One of the historic woes the U.S. is beset by racism and discrimination against Blacks, Chinese-Americans, and Muslims. How could the mainstream media and cinema inculcate stereotypes against these "others" into the American public?

I'm thinking, first of all, of the radical Black filmmaker Melvin Van Peebles, the inventor of the Blaxploitation genre, who passed away last year. Van Peebles's films are radical depictions of what is often called

"Black badassery," namely a kind of blackness that goes up and directly confronts "whiteness" and therefore against the racist ideology of white supremacy in America. However, it must be said, Van Peebles was not a mainstream director, and so his work never really reached mass audiences. This might not be a bad thing, however, as the mainstreaming of radical ideas such as those found in his films runs the risk of diluting their ideological potency.

The question of "how" mainstream media might accomplish this is a difficult one. On the one hand, attempting to popularize radical counter-depictions to combat negative stereotypes can open up the masses to novel ways of witnessing and critiquing the kinds of discrimination that you make reference to, while on the other hand, this kind of mainstreaming inevitably runs the risk of becoming vacuous. I remember a former professor of mine and film scholar, Andy Scahill, insisted on this paradox: when radical counter-hegemonic forms become too mainstream, too widely adopted, they may, in a profound sense, become deflated, and even ineffectual. We must confront this representational paradox when we examine mainstream and popular culture.

However, there have been, and still are, radical aesthetic movements that attempt to produce counter-hegemonic forms of representation from within mainstream cinema, and these are of course worth examining. I know that Black Panther, starring the late Chadwick Boseman, was a big mainstream hit here in America, and probably worldwide. I think what is most intriguing about Black Panther was not only its representation of a black superhero, as important as this was for many, but rather the sympathetic portrayal of the film's villain, Erik Killmonger, played by Michael B. Jordan. Killmonger, though the villain, was not simply an "other" in the usual sense that white cinema, as I've already discussed, tends to depict racial or ethnic, or even religious otherness. Rather, and perhaps this is due in no small part to the fact that the film was directed by a Black filmmaker, Ryan Coogler, Eric Killmonger is portrayed as a villain for a justifiable reason, which the film links with the legacy of racial and economic violence perpetrated against his community. This sort of depiction is important, I'd say, as it leaves room for identification with the villain in a way that is more thoughtful, more intriguing even than the typical "sympathy for the devil" kinds of representation we've grown accustomed to here in America. Erik

Killmonger is not really a standard villain. He is really more of a revolutionary figure with an origin story that resonated with audiences.

Some of Coogler's other films are important for similar reasons. His debut film, *Fruitvale Station*, followed the narrative of Oscar Grant III (again, played by Michael B. Jordan), who was brutally murdered by a transit police officer in San Francisco in 2009. Coogler depicts Grant as a sympathetic character, a loving father, trying to get his life together, going through emotional, relationship, and financial troubles. What is interesting in this depiction is that Coogler does not simply lionize Grant, nor vilify him, but rather represents both his successes and hardships alongside one another, offering perhaps one of the more sympathetic, and indeed one might say realistic, characterizations in recent memory. The deftness with which Coogler crafts his character is striking, as it grates up against the standard ideological images which proliferate in America of Black men as criminals, "brutes," as I've already mentioned, and so forth. The film really is special for these reasons and others.

I remember back around 9/11 there were some particularly egregious depictions of Muslims and other various stereotypical "Middle Eastern" villains. Films like Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*, and Paul Greengrass's *Flight 93*, for instance, were feverishly jingoistic cinematic responses to 9/11, echoing George Bush's "us versus them" war on terror rhetoric. This "us/them" dichotomy is often found in American genre film, and has been used against all manner of stereotypical representations: Blacks as sexual predators; Chinese characters and nondescript, generic "Asian" characters who are sexually deviant, inarticulate, perpetuating the so-called "yellow peril" mythos; and, of course, depictions of Muslims as "terrorists," as violent religious extremists, desert-roaming savages, etc. These representations saturate the cinematic landscape of American film and television, and the racist root system of American ideology, of course, can be difficult to disentangle from popular consciousness.

Today there seems to be a renewed push for inclusion in Hollywood and other mainstream outlets. But these campaigns must be examined in tandem with the political and social grounds out of which they arise, and/or arise in response to, and so let's be sure we understand the violence committed against these groups and the phenomenon of the contemporaneous push to represent them more charitably in cinematic form, and in other mediums. We must be willing to ask why the question of "proper" aesthetic representation arises, again and again, through the protracted, and in the case of American history, unbroken, the legacy of white supremacy? We should perhaps never forget why the struggle for proper representation accompanies the struggle for economic security, the struggle for safety from state violence, the end of mass incarceration, policing, and so forth that affect these communities.

The notion of "other" enjoys a very important position. This "other" is reflected in aliens, zombies, etc. Who is this other? Is it other cultures or political foes who challenge U.S. hegemony? Don't you see a subliminal ideology in the American cinema industry?

Very often this "other" emerges in cinema, yes, to represent the fears and anxieties of an external enemy that threatens the existence of America. The "Muslim" threat for instance, or the "communist plot," and so forth. Much of this is traceable back through to the old "cowboys and Indians" binary of the American western genre, which itself has a long violent and ideological history in the United States. The "other" is normally represented as some "savage" population that provokes or terrorizes the internal consistency of (generally white) civil society, which then must be destroyed to maintain law and order and to reinscribe the protective boundaries of state, security, legality, and moral law (sexual mores, racial norms, and alike). Think the Rambo Franchise in the 1980s fighting against the Vietnamese and the Soviets and so forth. Rambo fights these "others" because they were considered to be an existential threat to American democracy, and so the ideology of these films is pretty apparent.

As I already mentioned, the logic of Blackness in *The Birth of a Nation* exhibits this kind of ideological "otherness," but, you're correct, this "other" is often depicted as an alien, a monster, or a zombie, of some kind. I tend to think that when one takes even a cursory glance at the narrative structure of most mainstream genre films (horror, westerns, science fiction, action films, and others), this logic is presented explicitly, with little to disguise or conceal it. I am almost tempted to say that the ideology of American cinema isn't subliminal at all, but rather it is offered up to audiences in an explicit, or topical manner, and is therefore generally undisguised. In other words, it doesn't take much demystification to see what ideological currents and "others" are front and center in American film.

However, we might say that the logic is so pervasive and that it saturates the mainstream so thoroughly, that it is, in a way, too big to see, or perhaps so all-consuming that it gives off an appearance as though it were portraying the natural state of things. This is perhaps a good definition of what ideology itself is: a point of saturation which gives the appearance of being "subliminal" as you mention, but is really right on the surface, unburied. By giving off the appearance of being veiled, ideology erects its own disguise: it presents itself as though there is some deeper mystery, some internal dynamic that requires us to sift through and find its truth when really this truth is front and center for all to see.

The films of John Wayne famously depict this explicit kind of "cowboys and Indians," "us/them" ideology, but there are contemporary films that do so as well, sometimes in surprising ways. Hostiles, for instance, starring Christian Bale, is one western from recent history that I can recall. Though it is a more or less classical western, we get some variation in how the Native "other" is depicted, with a bit more sympathy than perhaps American audiences are used to, but ultimately the "us/them" dichotomy is reproduced in the narrative.

There are a couple of other contemporary westerns which depict otherness from a different direction. I'm thinking here of Tyler Sheridan's *Hell or High Water* which comments on the financial crisis of 2008 through its depiction of a pair of bank-robbing, "outlaw" brothers. In this film, systemic economic violence, debt,

the 2008 recession and housing crisis, are indicted through a depiction of counter-hegemonic violence, i.e. bank robbing. The viewer roots for the outlaws like we used to root for the "great criminal" in the old gangster films (and there is perhaps a shared legacy between the two that I can't get into now). Remember Bertolt Brecht's famous phrase, "what is the robbing of a bank to the founding of a new one?" Well, this film dramatizes this phrase to indict the failure of contemporary American capitalism: "what is the violence of robbing a bank compared to the economic violence of the great recession?" it seems to ask. The violence of the latter affects the population universally, and with much more gravity, than the robbing of a particular bank. We might even say that in films like *Hell or High Water*, capitalism itself becomes the villainous "other," which I would certainly call a progressive step forward as far as cinematic representations of otherness are concerned.

I'm glad you brought up zombies, which are particularly interesting for a variety of reasons. The historical roots of this form of representation can actually be traced back to Haitian voodoo and folkloric magic, and so there's a link between the historical legacy of American imperialism against Haiti and cinematic representation that needs to be examined further. In fact, there was a book published last year, *Slave Revolt on Screen: The Haitian Revolution in Film and Video Games* by Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall that deals with the Haitian Revolution and cinema. Although I'll admit that I have yet to read it (I have read several reviews), the book focuses on the absence of representations of the Haitian Revolution in cinema and elsewhere. This, of course, should not surprise us, given that the importance of the Haitian Revolution has so often been neglected by western, principally American, intellectuals, politicians, scholars, and so on. Aimé Césaire, the Martinican politician, poet, and author once wrote that to study the Haitian Revolution "is to study one of the origins, the sources of Western civilization." So, the prevalence of zombie films and television in the west draws a direct line from Hollywood to Haiti, and therefore we must acknowledge the fraught international dimension between American imperialism against Haiti and the representation of zombies in popular film and television here in America.

Zombies, somewhat famously, were employed to critique whiteness and American anti-Black violence in the late 1960s, for instance, in George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*. Zombies also often have an ecological dimension, and thus the violence behind contemporary zombie films may be a reflection of the ecological violence that capitalism and fossil fuels have wreaked on the globe, and the production of surplus populations and climate refugees who have been displaced and will continue to be at an exponential rate as long as climate change persists unabated. The ideology of zombie films and television might be such that zombies always represent some other monstrous agency other than ourselves, always pointing to some other entity who we can blame for ecological catastrophe, climate breakdown, and alike.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Biden's first year in office at a glance

On the domestic side, the slump in the American President's popularity will be ringing alarm bells for his Democratic Party, amid deep concerns it may cost them their Congressional majorities in the 2022 midterm elections.

Should the Republicans take control of either the U.S. House of Representatives or the Senate, Biden's legislative agenda will be all but finished.

To mark his first anniversary in office, Biden held a rare White House news conference where he acknowledged the public's frustration but vowed to make progress by battling some major challenges such as the pandemic and record inflation levels that hit an almost 40-year high last month.

Critics however say the news conference didn't help Biden, with some calling it a total disaster.

Analysts say with an opposition that is determined to change the political landscape to ensure he falls, Biden lacks the political leadership, capacity, and energy to influence all members of his own party to stand firmly behind their President.

Biden is now heading into his second year having not made any significant progress on his key campaign pledges, including voting rights, police and immigration reform, the economy, the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change. This is despite the fact that his own Democratic Party controls all branches of the legislature.

His agenda for the most part is stalled in Congress; again mostly because of his inability to unify

his own party.

Biden promised to protect voting rights during his campaign, but his voting rights bill failed in the Senate because of Democrats who are opposed to abolishing the filibuster precedent.

Democrats also got in the way of Biden passing his "Build Back Better Act", which contains \$555 billion in proposed climate action. The landmark bill named after his 2020 campaign slogan is all but dead amid infighting within his own party.

Biden pledged to immediately deliver "criminal justice reform" for racial equality, following months of protests in the aftermath of George Floyd's daylight public murder by a white police officer; but in March last year, he backed away from the plan.

Instead he decided to back "the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act", which passed the House without any Republican support. But the bill did not advance in the Senate, and it all fell apart in September.

On the campaign trail, Biden spoke of his immediate priority to contain the COVID-19 crisis, yet he has been widely criticized for his handling of the pandemic as the omicron variant surges across the country with record numbers.

Another immediate priority Biden pledged to address was to "reform our long-broken and chaotic immigration system."

The Biden administration has come under heavy criticism for its handling of asylum seekers on the

southern border, with analysts accusing the administration of having maintained Trump-era policies that were introduced in 2019 and were subject to international outcry amid images of children separated from their parents and kept in cages.

On the international front, the U.S. President used his first address before a global audience to declare that "America is back". A vow to reset the United States' standing in the world and repair ties with its allies after its disorderly Trump era.

Biden's first year in office has been rocked by multiple foreign-policy crises from Kabul to Kiev that have heavily set back the president's "America is back" agenda.

Attempts to tackle climate change, a top Biden campaign promise, have hit hurdles in Washington thanks to partisan gridlock.

Biden has tried to repair relations with U.S. allies in Europe, but those efforts have been overshadowed by the European Union's humiliation over AUKUS, the Australia-U.K.-U.S. submarine deal. Quite the blunder that would only widen a diplomatic rift between Washington and Brussels; with European Union leaders rallying around France which claims the U.S. secretly went behind its back to strike a deal that Australia had already agreed to with Paris.

The French foreign minister said "this brutal, unilateral and unpredictable decision reminds me a lot of what Mr. Trump used to do. I am angry and

bitter. This isn't done between allies. It's really a stab in the back."

Those words were echoed by France's top allies in Europe as well as senior EU leaders.

The way Biden's decision to pull the plug on the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan, ending a 20-year war, erupted in nothing short of absolute chaos and led to a massive new humanitarian crisis as the Taliban re-took control of the country.

The disastrous pullout and abandonment of the former Afghan government has left strong question marks among U.S. allies (around the world) about just how much they can continue to rely on Washington for their own security.

Critics also argue that by continuing Washington's foreign policy agenda towards the east in particular China, Russia and Iran is just a continuation of attempts to destabilize the regions that will end up in failure.

Nothing has been done to end the ongoing war on Yemen. The Biden White House continues to support the war. It is silent when Yemeni women and children are killed in almost daily airstrikes using Western-made bombs but is very quick to issue statements of condemnation should Yemen retaliate against the ongoing bombardment and all-out blockade that has killed hundreds of thousands of people and left millions of others on the brink of starvation.

When it comes to the Iran nuclear deal, also

known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the U.S. President vowed to return to the 2015 international treaty that his predecessor withdrew from. However, Joe Biden has maintained Donald Trump's so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran which has, in essence, killed and affected ordinary people, including cancer patients, children with rare diseases and prevented Iran from purchasing much needed vital medical equipment during a pandemic, leaving the country with the highest death toll from the pandemic in West Asia.

The illegal U.S. occupation of Iraq and Syria continues, which analysts say is allowing terrorists to regroup and destabilize both countries. The U.S. military is also accused of stealing Syria's oil to prevent the country from using the revenue to provide vital services to its people after ten years of foreign-backed militancy.

Analysts say the first year can be summed up by a lack of strong leadership, and promises that failed to materialize into anything substantial. With the November mid-term election on the horizon, time is not on Biden's side.

He could lose control of power he had during his first year to make effective changes. Essentially, as his popularity continues to take a hit; heading into his second year in office, Biden now needs to act and act fast to save his position.

Historical mansion in Astarabad to turn into tourism complex



TEHRAN – The historical mansion of Fatemi in the historical texture of Gorgan, the capital of northern Golestan province, previously known as Astarabad, is planned to be turned into a tourism complex, a local tourism official has announced.

The mansion is to be transformed into a tourism complex after being fully restored, Alieh Malek Shahkui said on Friday.

The restoration project is currently underway in collaboration with the private sector, the official added.

A budget of 15 billion rials (\$53,000) has been allocated to the project, she noted.

The complex is expected to generate some 13 job opportunities upon its inauguration, she explained.

The Qajar-era (1789-1925) mansion has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

Astarabad is situated along a small tributary of the Qareh River, 37 kilometers from the Caspian Sea. The city, which was prosperous during the Achaemenid era (c. 550 – 330 BC), for long suffered from inroads of the Turkmen tribes who occupied the plain north of the Qareh River and were subjected to incessant Qajar-Turkmen tribal conflicts in the 19th century according to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

It was renamed Gorgan in the 1930s after being devastated by a massive earthquake. In modern times the plain around Gorgan has become a flourishing granary.

Golestan is reportedly embracing some 2,500 historical and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst its most famous.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. The UNESCO comments that the tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Castle, traditional ice storage in Tehran being restored

TEHRAN – A historical castle and a traditional Yakhchal (mudbrick ice storage) in the city of Ahmabad-e Mostofi, Tehran province, have undergone some rehabilitation works, a local tourism official has announced.

A budget of four billion rials (\$14,000) has been allocated to the projects, which are being carried out under the supervision of cultural heritage experts, CHTN quoted Hamid Karimi as saying on Friday.

The project, which is being implemented in collaboration with the private sector, is scheduled to come to an end by the next summer, the official added.

When there was no electricity, no refrigerators, and no appliances, people kept a huge amount of water next to the high walls of Yakhchal, which cast a shadow that kept the water cool.

The water turned into ice during the wintertime. Then people cut the ice into many portable parts put them in the ice house and covered the surface of the ice with special local grass.

This structure is built high to minimize the contact of warm air with the ice surface as the warm air floats upwards. The feature of the ice storage was essential to its functioning.



There were also wells behind the ice storage with a connective canal at the bottom of the ice storage to the wells with a slight slope.

When people piled up the ice, a little amount of water remained under the heap of ice. If the water was not removed it would make the rest of the ice melt. By channeling the water into the well, not only did they prevent the ice stored in the ice house from melting, but also they had cold and tasty water during summer months when the weather went up to 40 degrees Celsius.

From very early history to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortifications in antiquity were designed

New round of restoration begins on Semnan's Shah Abbasi caravanserai

From page 1 ► list in 1973, is planned to be repurposed to a cultural center after being fully restored.

The monument was set free after the demolition of the surrounding fences and high walls, which was took place after obtaining the necessary permits and transferring inmates to a new prison.

The mud-brick structure is named after Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588 – 1629), who ordered the construction of such roadside inns across the country.

In August 2021, former Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced that Semnan municipality was ready to purchase the historical monument and turn it into a tourist complex.

“Using a historical structure as a prison is not that interesting and turning it into a cultural center could boost tourism in the region and attract more travelers.”

The main population centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad). While few



visitors spend much time in the area, driving through you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat), and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating). The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan, and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.

UNESCO tag

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

In 2020, the tourism

ministry announced that Iran is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravanserais for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In this regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.

Caravansary (also Caravansarai or Caravansaray) is a building that served as the inn of the Orient, providing accommodation for commercial, pilgrim, postal, and especially official travelers.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, from the number of

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

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

Iran's earliest caravanserais 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.

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

Police arrest armed illegal diggers in southwest Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian police have recently arrested two armed illegal excavators and antique smugglers in Andika, southwestern Khuzestan province, CHTN reported on Friday.

The accused people were traced and finally arrested after police received reports from cultural heritage aficionados about their misdeeds, said Ramin Maknavi, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage.

A metal detector, some excavation tools, and a pistol have been seized from the culprits who were surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

Khuzestan is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System yet it is a region of raw beauty where its visitors could spend weeks exploring. The province is also a cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.



Lying at the head of the Persian Gulf and bordering Iraq on the west, Khuzestan was settled about 6000 BC by a people with affinities to the Sumerians, who came from the Zagros Mountains region. Urban centers appeared there nearly contemporaneously with the first cities in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium. Khuzestan, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, came to constitute the heart of the Elamite kingdom, with Susa as its capital.

Five cultural elements added to national heritage list



TEHRAN – A total of five cultural elements, which are practiced in North Khorasan, have recently been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Thursday announced the inscriptions in an official document it submitted to the governor-general of the northeastern province, CHTN reported.

The skills of making local food of Qormeh Shur and the skill of baking Torta bread as well as the talent of Chuli-bafi, a kind of traditional wickerwork were among the elements added to the significant list.

Though North Khorasan province may not be the first choice of travelers, its tourism is getting momentum.

According to Lonely Planet, most foreign tourists pass straight through North Khorasan in transit between Mashhad and Gorgan, but if you have time to explore, it's worth diverting south from the capital, Bojnurd, towards Esfarayen, famed for its wrestling tournaments, the remarkable citadel of Belqays and the partly preserved stepped village of Roein some 20km north. Although a lot of new buildings spoils the effect in parts of the village, Roein is considered Khorasan's answer to the well-known Masuleh and is a possible starting point for hikes to little-visited mountain villages.

78 Iranian handicrafts receive National Seal of Excellence

TEHRAN – The National Seal of Excellence has been granted to 78 high-quality works handcrafted by artisans of central Yazd province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Handicrafts with the National Seal of Excellence have characteristics such as originality, creativity, recyclability, supply in the international market, reasonable pricing, respect for human rights, progress in everyday life, and product innovation, Seyyed Alireza Salar Hosseini said on Friday.

The National Seal of Excellence is given to high-quality, selected works to support craftspeople, improve the quality of their works preserve the originality of this industry, and create sustainable employment.



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

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC-Asia Pacific Region, putting

Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

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

months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

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

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

Selasal Castle, Iran's 10th cultural heritage site registered on UN list

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Selasal Castle is a huge fortified building in Iran's Khuzestan province dating back to the Sassanid era.

The castle, located in the city of Shushtar, includes multiple big yards, barracks, stables, bathrooms, shabestans (underground spaces),

towers, gardens, qourkhanehs (places of weapons), naqarehkhanehs (places of musical instruments), harems, kitchens, big ponds, a fence and a moat.

Salasel Castle was registered on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites in 2009 and is Iran's 10th cultural heritage site to be registered under

number 1315 on the United Nations' list together with the 12 other monuments as Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System.

Shushtar is an ancient Iranian city, approximately 61 kilometers away from Dezful, Khuzestan province. The city dates back to the Achaemenid era.



13,000 orphans supported by Iranian charities abroad

TEHRAN – Iranian charities abroad supported 13,000 needy orphans in various provinces during the first six months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21- September 22, 2021), according to the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation.

Also, during this period, 550 new sponsors living abroad provided assistance to orphans across the country.

Currently, 3,000 philanthropists living abroad are cooperating with the relief committee and providing financial assistance to needy families and orphans inside the country.

The Foundation currently covers 147,000 orphaned children and 260,000 children with families who cannot afford to bring



them up on their own.

In May 2020, Seyyed Morteza Bakhtiari, head of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, said there were 710,265 active philanthropists in the country who support orphans.

Iranian benefactors have made cash contributions amounting to 15 trillion rials (about \$54.5 million) to orphaned children over the last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020 – March 2021), an increase of 71 percent year on year.

Adoption for orphans

There is a basic slogan in the country that children must grow in the family so that the priority is to foster the orphans.

Since [the Iranian calendar year] 1392, the number of adoption cases has increased and 2,000 children are placed for adoption annually, some of whom are placed under temporary custody because a temporary trustee is better than care centers, Masoudi-Farid said in May 2020.

Montazer Shabar, the Welfare Organization's director for children affairs, said in July 2019 that there are 10 applicants for fostering each child in the country.

Currently, some 2,800 applicants are waiting for the adoption, most of whom are parents not having children or intending to foster a child, he added.

According to the Welfare Organization, the country's adoption and foster laws that dated back to some 44 years ago was revised and modified in 2013. Within the

Anti-smuggling plan confiscates goods worth \$4m

TEHRAN – The 14th phase of the anti-smuggling national plan seized smuggled goods worth 1.1 trillion rials (nearly \$4 million) across the country, police chief Mohammad Reza Moghimi, said on Friday.

In order to help domestic production, the fight against smuggling is underway continuously through monitoring of goods (origin and destination), implementation of plans, periodic and intermittent inspections of roads, etc. are on the agenda by the anti-trafficking police throughout the country, he explained.

“In this phase of the plan, which was implemented during two weeks, the provinces of Kordestan, Golestan, Alborz, Fars, Lorestan, and Isfahan had the most discoveries.

which, if stopped, will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, Hassan Norouzi, a member of the Parliament, said.

In the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), \$12 billion was smuggled into Iran and \$900 million out of the country, according to the Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Exchange.

According to some reports, over ten million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran on a daily basis, adding up to 3.65 billion liters every year. Other reports put the number higher. On December 19, 2018, a government spokesman said every day 11.5 million liters of gasoline are smuggled out of Iran. Ali Adyani, a member of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee has quoted



More than 1,521 tons of all kinds of basic goods, agricultural products, and other items were discovered.

During the operations, 377 vehicles were seized and 565 smugglers were arrested and handed over to the judicial authorities,” he explained, IRNA reported.

The smuggled usually goods include basic goods, home appliances, electronic and medical equipment, car, and mobile phone accessories, cosmetics, clothes, coins, and currencies along with all kinds of smuggled fuels and petroleum products.

\$20-25 billion of smuggled goods annually

Every year, \$20-25 billion worth of goods are smuggled in and out of the country,

various sources as putting the figure at 10, 15, and even 20 million liters a day.

Mohammad Hassan Nejad, another member of the committee, says the smuggled fuel amounts to 22 million liters per day. With a 50 cent per liter profit, the total daily income adds up to 400 trillion rials annually or \$3.3 billion, nearly the same as the country's annual development budget.

In addition to gasoline smuggling, other fuels such as kerosene and diesel are also smuggled; not in lesser quantities.

In June 2020, the first phase of the national anti-smuggling plan was implemented with the priority of customs, tobacco, and transit goods nationwide.

Iran makes progress among talent-competitive countries

From page 1 ► Global Talent Competitiveness Index, and Iran's score has been accompanied by an improvement despite new countries.

With a score of 34.38, Iran breaks into the top 100 in GTCI 2021.

In terms of region, Iran is ranked sixth among the top 10 countries in the Central and Southern Asia regions in 2021.

The GTCI 2021 report shows Switzerland, Singapore, and the United States continue their lead in talent competitiveness.

Kazakhstan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan are the regional countries that surpass Iran, respectively.

Also, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh are the talent-competitive countries following Iran in the region.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 21

New cases	5,276
New deaths	20
Total cases	6,241,843
Total deaths	132,172
New hospitalized patients	383
Patients in critical condition	1,228
Total recovered patients	6,075,730
Diagnostic tests conducted	43,865,395
Doses of vaccine injected	127,923,065

Additional COVID-19 vaccines from Poland, Sweden to arrive

TEHRAN – Additional COVID-19 vaccines from Poland and Sweden are scheduled to arrive in the country over the following days to mark over 6.2 million vaccine doses for the country in total.

So far, Spain has delivered over 2.2 million doses to ensure the protection of Afghan refugees residing in Iran.

Following a request for assistance from Iranian authorities, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has ensured the safe delivery of the vaccines from Spain. The European Commission has coordinated the delivery and finances 75 percent of the costs for transporting the assistance.

On this occasion, Janez Lenarcic, Commissioner for Crisis Management, said



“The EU continues to support countries worldwide in their COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Today's delivery of over 2.2 million vaccines from Spain to Iran has been facilitated via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and is another solid example of European solidarity. Sharing vaccines globally is the most effective way to end this pandemic and to save lives and I thank Spain

for answering this appeal.”

Additional COVID-19 vaccines from Poland and Sweden are scheduled to arrive in the country over the following days to mark over 6.2 million vaccine doses for the country in total.

Iran has been among the region's most COVID-19 affected countries and also hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations, including around 4 million Afghans.

In response to international requests for assistance, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has coordinated and financed the delivery of more than 37 million COVID-19 vaccine doses from the Member States to countries worldwide.

Expanding national parks not enough to protect nature, say scientists



Expanding national parks and protected areas will not be enough to halt the destruction of nature, warn leading scientists, who say urgent action on over-consumption, harmful subsidies and the climate crisis is also required to halt biodiversity loss.

Governments are expected to commit to a Paris-style agreement for nature at Cop15 in Kunming, China, later this year, with targets that include protecting at least 30% of the oceans and land by 2030.

An analysis of the draft UN Convention on Biological Diversity

(CBD) agreement by more than 50 leading scientists has found that, while expanding protected areas will, if done well, help slow the destruction of the natural world, much more is needed to stop it.

Prof Paul Leadley, an ecologist at Paris-Saclay University and co-author of the report, said: “The target of protecting 30% of all land and seas is important and attracting a lot of attention. And expanding protected areas is a good start if done well, but far short of what is needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss – called ‘bending the curve’ for biodiversity.

“There is very good evidence that we will fail again to meet ambitious international biodiversity objectives if there's too much focus on protected areas at the expense of other urgent actions

addressing the threats to biodiversity.”

A “massive” reduction in harmful agricultural and fishing subsidies, holding global heating to 1.5C and tackling human overconsumption, including of meat, is necessary, the scientists said, as part of coordinated action across a diverse, interconnected set of “transformative” changes.

The 21 draft targets to be negotiated at Kunming include proposals to eliminate plastic pollution, reduce pesticide use by two-thirds and half the rate of invasive species introduction. The agreement aims to stop what some scientists have called the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth, driven by human behavior, which threatens ecosystems vital to human civilization.

The analysis of the proposed agreement, conducted by the

scientific bodies BioDiscovery and the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (Geo Bon), has been sent to governments, who will give their feedback later this month.

The assessment looked at the impact of three scenarios on halting and reversing biodiversity loss: business as usual, improved quality and quantity of conservation, and transformative change of society. It found that only the last scenario will have the desired effect, assuming global heating is limited to 1.5C.

“What we're doing is trying to take the best science and explain why the global biodiversity framework looks like it does. A lot of countries are saying it's so complicated. We're trying to explain why you need all the pieces and how each piece fits together,” Leadley said.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Excessive use of renewable water in southeastern Iran worrisome

Excessive withdrawal of renewable water, equaling 123 percent of the current volume, in the southeastern province of Kerman, has raised great concerns while posing a serious threat to the life of residents and region's biodiversity.

“Currently, there are 5.5 billion cubic meters of renewable water in Kerman province, but 6.8 billion cubic meters equivalent to 123 percent of renewable water resources is being used,” IRNA quoted Reza Jazinizadeh, the head of Kerman province's department of environment, as saying on Thursday.

In the [13]40s (falling on 1960s), concurrent with the establishment of the Ministry of Energy, renewable water resources measured at 90 million cubic meters, and some 50 million cubic meters out of this amount was withdrawn, Jazinizadeh explained.

Depletion of vegetation and pollutants derived by the proliferation of agricultural pesticides, waste water and minerals leads to soil erosion, he said, regretting that Iran loses 6 million tons of soil annually.

برداشت ۱۲۳ درصد آبهای تجدیدپذیر در کرمان نگران کننده است

مدیرکل حفاظت محیط زیست استان کرمان گفت: برداشت ۱۲۳ درصد از آبهای تجدیدپذیر در این استان که حیات انسانی و جانوری را با تهدید جدی مواجه کرده، نگران کننده است. وی تصریح کرد: در حال حاضر در استان کرمان ۵.۵ میلیارد متر مکعب آب تجدیدپذیر داریم که ۶.۸ میلیارد مترمکعب معادل ۱۲۳ درصد آبهای تجدید پذیر برداشت و مورد استفاده قرار می گیرد.

رضا جزینی زاده روز پنجشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: در دهه ۱۳۴۰ با تشکیل وزارت نیرو در کشور میزان برداشت آب از سفره های زیرزمینی مورد بررسی قرار گرفت و مشخص شد که در کشور ۹۰ میلیون مترمکعب آب تجدید پذیر وجود دارد و از این میزان ۵۰ میلیون مترمکعب برداشت می شود.

جزینی زاده بیان کرد: از بین رفتن پوشش گیاهی موجب فرسایش خاک می شود و آلوده هایی از طریق انتشار بی رویه سموم کشاورزی، پسماندهای آب، مواد معدنی و صنعت وارد محیط زیست شده و فرسایش خاک را به دنبال دارد، طوریکه سالانه در ایران ۶ میلیون تن خاک از دست می دهیم.

