

Iran Moves Ahead with Regional Diplomacy

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Report Israel rules out criminal probe into killing of journalist amid global anger

The Israeli regime will not be holding a criminal investigation after its troops were widely accused of shooting to death the prominent Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh.

In a statement on Thursday, the Israeli military claimed since Abu Aqleh was killed in an “active combat situation”, it will not launch a criminal investigation despite demands by the international community.

According to reports, the head of an Israeli Brigade, Meni Liberty, identified six occasions during the regime’s military raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied territories when Israeli soldiers opened fire near Abu Aqleh and other journalists.

The regime’s military police are said to be satisfied with the assurances of Israeli troops that they were not aware the veteran reporter was in the camp when she was killed on May 11 during an Israeli military raid.

This comes despite the Israeli military acknowledging it has identified one of its soldier’s assault rifles that may have killed Abu Aqleh.

Palestinian officials, witnesses, and other journalists on the ground when Abu Aqleh was shot dead have blamed her death on Israeli troops.

The regime’s military initially claimed its troops shot back after coming under fire and that “there is a possibility, now being looked into, that reporters were hit.”

However, an Israeli military chief later backed down from those statements after footage of the incident circulated on the media which showed only Abu Aqleh (wearing a helmet and body armor clearly marked “press”) along with other journalists. ► Page 5

Indian FM invites Amir Abdollahian to New Delhi

TEHRAN — Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian spoke on the phone on Friday morning with Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, India’s Minister of External Affairs.

The two chief diplomats reportedly discussed the most important issues on the agenda of the two countries, as well as some issues of common concern at regional and international arena.

Referring to the good relations between Tehran and New Delhi, Iran’s foreign minister said that Tehran attaches special importance to relations with India.

Amir Abdollahian added, “Cooperation between the two countries in the direction of comprehensive development and expansion, as well as interactions and consultations on regional and international issues are indicators of growing relations.”

Jaishankar referred to the good level of relations and cooperation between the two countries and expressed hope that this cooperation would be enhanced in various fields.

The foreign minister also invited his Iranian counterpart to travel to visit India to consult with high-ranking Indian officials, a suggestion which was welcomed by Amir Abdollahian.



TEHRAN — Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on sanctions, visited Tehran on May 7. Douhan, who has previously studied the effects of sanctions in Qatar, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, came to Tehran to comprehensively investigate the effects of sanctions

on the daily lives of Iranians.

On Wednesday, May 17, she held a press conference to tell reporters about the results of her initial assessments.

Douhan said she met with government representatives and representatives of var-

ious civil society organizations, health and medical centers and university academics.

The Tehran Times has learned that Douhan had held more than 50 formal and informal visits in the 11 days of her mission in Iran. ► Page 2

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Iran, Azerbaijan stress expansion of energy ties

TEHRAN - Azerbaijan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development Shahin Mustafayev has visited Iran on top of a delegation to hold talks with the Islamic Republic’s energy officials and discuss expansion of ties.

During his stay in Tehran, Mustafayev met

with Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji as well as Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and discussed areas for cooperation in a variety of sectors.

After the meeting with the Azeri delegation on Thursday, Oji told the press that Iran and Azerbaijan are going to expand their coop-

eration in various energy sectors, Shana reported.

Later on, Mehrabian also stated that the two countries have discussed major joint electricity projects like synchronizing power grids and co-constructing power plants. ► Page 4

Iran unveils transport aircraft

TEHRAN – The Iranian Defense Ministry on Thursday unveiled domestically-manufactured transport aircraft named Simorq (Phoenix).

The unveiling ceremony was attended by Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani in Isfahan province. The aircraft has been produced by the specialists of the Iran Aviation Industries Organization.

“Given the developments in the region and the threats against the Islamic Republic, aircrafts play an important role in the transportation of cargo, personnel, and support for the armed forces on battlefields,” Ashtiani said.

Ashtiani said the ministry under his leadership has a great mission to increase the deterrent power of the Islamic Republic.

Meeting the needs of the armed forces in land, sea, air, and electronic warfare is a key priority of the ministry, Brigadier General Ashtiani stressed.

Simorq transport aircraft is a redesigned and advanced version of the same generation, which perfectly fits the needs of the country and Armed Forces, he said.

Tehran, Doha to facilitate tourism during World Cup

TEHRAN –The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami and Qatar’s Minister of Culture and Sports Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad Al-Thani met in Tehran on Wednesday, exchanging views on how to facilitate tourism during World Cup.

The two countries discussed ways to further deepen tourism, cultural heritage, and handicrafts ties by taking advantage of the

World Cup opportunity in Qatar, Mehr reported on Friday.

Zarghami suggested setting up a committee to plan and coordinate ideas and to make the most of the World Cup’s capacity.

Also, he described the World Cup as an opportunity for the world to learn more about Islam and the [West Asia] region.

In another part of his remarks, Zarghami

said that there are nearly 300 Iranian handicrafts fields and many of the items are culturally quite close to Qatar, and classes can be held to bring the Iranian artists’ experience to Qatari artists.

For his part, Al-Thani emphasized the importance of the relations between the two countries, as well as the special effort to expand these relations in all fields. ► Page 6

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Report

Organ donation: dead or alive?

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Making a decision for a brain-dead member is one of the toughest conditions for a family, but it would be easier if they feel to spare other families awaiting an organ transplant the pain of losing a child or to keep alive the memory of their loved ones.

The country celebrates “National Organ Donation Day” annually on May 21. The day commemorates the issuance of a decree by the late founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, on May 21, 1989, authorizing organ donation.

The history of organ and tissue transplantation in Iran dates back to 1935 when a patient’s cornea was transplanted in one of Tehran’s hospitals. Kidney transplantation first took place in 1968 and transplantation of other organs and tissues gradually took place in the 1970s and 1980s.

According to the Iranian Society of Organ Donation, there are two types of death in the medical world; Heart death (common death), which accounts for 99 percent of deaths worldwide, and brain death, which accounts for one percent of deaths.

Organ donation is an altruistic decision that can be made by the family members after brain death. Although many organizations and medical centers have implemented various interventions and training courses to increase satisfaction with organ donation, a lack of organs for donation still is a serious problem in the world.

As a result, thousands of patients on waiting lists for transplantation die every year. ► Page 7

Osman Mohammad-Parast, dotar virtuoso and top master of Khorasan maqami music, dies at 94

TEHRAN – Dotar virtuoso Osman Mohammad-Parast, who was a great master of Khorasan maqami music, passed away on Thursday at 94.

He was admitted to a hospital in his hometown of Khaf, Khorasan Razavi Province, for a lung infection, Persian media reported.

He was a self-taught musician who began learning dotar, a two-string instrument with a pear-shaped body, at ten in secret due to his father’s strong disagreement about music coming from a traditional opposition to music among certain people in Iran.

However, the disagreement was resolved after his father found Osman performing a song about the Prophet Muhammad (S).

In an interview with the Persian service of ISNA, Mohammad-Parast once said that he was working at his father’s farm at that time. ► Page 8

UN special rapporteur: Sanctions have negatively affected people, particularly the most vulnerable

TEHRAN — At the end of a 12-day trip to Iran, Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) on the enjoyment of human rights, issued a press release late on Wednesday about preliminary assessments of her visit to the sanctions-hit Iran.

The press release, which is published on the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights website, lists the consequences of unilateral coercive measures on Iran in different fields.

She gave “disturbing accounts from patients suffering from rare diseases and people with disabilities on the challenges they faced in accessing medicines and assistive equipment.”

She said, “The complex set of unilateral sanctions against Iran, coupled with secondary sanctions against third-parties, over-compliance and zero-risking policies by businesses and financial institutions, exacerbate existing humanitarian and economic challenges and negatively affect the lives of the people, in particular the most vulnerable.”

The rapporteur added, “I am gravely concerned about the life-threatening consequences of the high costs and in certain cases complete absence of specialized medicines and medical equipment due to sanctions-induced trade and financial restrictions, as well as due to reported foreign companies’ reluctance to supply these goods for fear of consequences, including possible criminal prosecution and financial penalties.

Douhan went on to say that sanctions imposed on Iran’s key economic sectors, and designation of its financial institutions, along with numerous national companies has led to severe drop of state revenues, rising inflation, growing poverty rates, and scarcity of resources to guarantee the basic needs of those most in need.

The Special Rapporteur highlighted several other areas impacted by the combination of unilateral sanctions and over-compliance.

Her statement includes but not limited to the preservation and further development of essential infrastructure; the difficulties to expand social support programs in the context of rising prices and unemployment rates, including in support of the growing population of Afghan refugees; impediments in the business and industrial development due to absence of raw materials, inability to process international payments, and restrictions in accessing new technologies; deterioration of environmental security; challenges regarding natural disaster prevention, response and recovery, due to the bans of imports of specialized equipment and humanitarian provisions; rising challenges in the operations of international and local non-governmental organizations and humanitarian actors; obstacles

to Iran’s engagement in international cooperation, including in the academia, arts and cultural heritage, sports, and its overall engagement with international organizations and associations due to travel bans and the inability to process payments of membership fees.

She expressed concerns that the existing unilateral sanctions as a punitive action violate, at the very least, obligations arising from universal and regional human rights instruments, many of which have a peremptory character, including procedural guarantees and presumption of innocence.

“States have an obligation under international human rights law to guarantee that any activity under their jurisdiction or control does not result in human rights violations, and in this regard I call on sanctioning States, in particular the United States, to observe the principles and norms of international law, including with regard to the peaceful settlement of international disputes and to lift all unilateral measures, in particular on those areas affecting the human rights and the lives of all the people in Iran,” Douhan insisted.

“Other recommendations addressed the issue of over-compliance by businesses and financial institutions; access to information and new technologies; enhanced engagement by international organizations for humanitarian purposes and for the continuous monitoring of the negative impact of UCMs on the enjoyment of human rights; unfreezing of the foreign assets of Iranian financial institutions; multi-stakeholder discussions towards the development of guiding principles on secondary sanctions, over-compliance and human rights, as well of possible mechanisms for redress, remedy and compensation.”

The UN Special Rapporteur also said, “Despite the government’s efforts and measures to mitigate the negative impact of UCMs in different sectors, especially for the most vulnerable population categories, sanctions-induced economic hardships coupled with the persistent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have multifaceted and cumulative effects in all walks of life.”

The UN rapporteur stressed that while Iran’s measures reduced the direct impact on human rights, “it shall not be used as a ground to legitimize and legalize the use of unilateral sanctions.”

During her stay in Iran, Douhan met representatives from national and local government institutions, non-governmental organizations, associations, humanitarian actors, businesses, UN entities, academia as well as the diplomatic community. In addition to the capital Tehran, she also visited Karaj and Isfahan.

The Special Rapporteur will present a comprehensive report to the UN Human Rights Council on the situation in Iran in September 2022.

World must stop inertia about Israel’s atrocities against Palestinians: diplomat

TEHRAN- Zahra Ershadi, Iran’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has condemned the international community’s passivity on Israel’s war crimes and ongoing terrorism against the Palestinian people, saying the UN Security Council must act quickly to hold the regime accountable for its incursions.

“Every day, we are witnessing the Israel regime’s crimes against the Palestinian people,” Ershadi noted.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran calls on the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, to take swift measures in support of the Palestinian people to end the Israeli aggression and impunity and to hold the regime accountable for the international crimes it has committed over the decades,” she added.

The Iranian diplomat said that Israeli forces brutally martyred Shireen Abu Akleh, a renowned Palestinian journalist, in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin, in an attempt to silence the Palestinian people’s resistance to the regime’s acts of aggression and occupation, “something that will never materialize.”

Abu Akleh, a veteran of the Al Jazeera Arabic service in Qatar, was shot in the head while reporting on an Israeli raid against Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp.

Her untimely assassination shocked the region and drew international attention. The United Nations and the European Union, among others, have demanded a thorough inquiry into what has been described as a “cold-blooded” murder.

New footage featured the Israeli forces



storming a hospital before the funeral procession of the assassinated Palestinian journalist, assaulting and forcing individuals inside, including patients, and firing from the medical facility’s grounds.

In a tweet on Sunday, Iran’s top human rights official stated that the Israeli regime will continue to commit “unspeakable crimes” with no end in sight due to Washington’s unwavering backing, implying the international community to take action to stop Tel Aviv’s crimes.

“Enjoying the United States’ unwavering support for decades, the regime’s unspeakable crimes will continue with no end in sight – unless the intl. community makes a stand!” Kazem Gharibabadi tweeted.

In a new puzzling move, Israel has announced it will not launch a criminal investigation into the killing of Abu Aqleh, the Guardian reported.

In a statement released on Thursday, the Israel Defense Forces claimed that because Abu Aqleh was killed in an “active combat situation”, an immediate criminal investigation would not be launched, although an “operational inquiry” would continue.

Intelligence minister: Two French citizens were not tourists

TEHRAN — Iran’s Intelligence Minister Seyyed Esmaeil Khatib says the two French citizens who have been detained were conspiring against Iran, refuting claims that they were tourists.

Referring to the media hype following the implementation of an economic reform plan for a fair distribution of subsidies, Khatib said on Wednesday, “The enemies used the media to create unrest and undermine the country’s security. The timely actions of the intelligence and security services and the coordination of the Judiciary, their conspiracies were thwarted, but creating unrest and threatening the security of the country is still part of the enemy’s combined war plans.”

Referring to the detention of the two French citizens, who were recently arrested by the Intelligence Ministry, the intelligence chief said, “The two French detainees were not tourists. We already had information about them and they were closely monitored from the moment they entered the country.”

He added that upon their



arrival, these French citizens held organized meetings with several illegal groups and associations.

“According to the available documents, the two French citizens sought to establish an organized connection between the illegal and riotous centers, which pursued the goals of these groups and the foreign intelligence services by adopting union coverings.”

He added that according to credible information, some elements of the illegal centers in question were linked to known terrorist groups and some identified expatriate spies, and more information on this case will

be published soon by the ministry under his leadership.

Ahmad Reza Jalali’s espionage for Mossad has been proven

Elsewhere in his remarks, Khatib discussed the issue of Ahmad Reza Jalali, an Iranian spy who has been under detention since 2017.

“Jalali’s espionage for the Zionist regime has been proven and his death sentence has gone through all judicial stages. The Swedish government, on behalf of the Zionist regime and the United States, illegally detained our citizen Mr. Hamid Nouri in Sweden shortly after his arrest and trial,

and took him hostage.”

He then expressed his astonishment regarding the behavior of the Swedish government, saying, “It was strange that the Swedish government granted this spy permanent residency after his arrest in Iran, and after his trial and death sentence, they granted him Swedish citizenship, and since then the Swedish government has supported him as a citizen of this country, and we know that Sweden is pursuing the issue of Jalali with the plan created by the Zionist regime and the United States.”

The intelligence minister reiterated that the Swedish government has taken Hamid Nouri hostage with the conspiracy and scenario of the MKO (Mojahedin-E-Khalgh Organization) terrorist group.

“We will publish more information about Jalali soon,” Khatib reiterated.

In this regard, Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian held a meeting with Khatib on Thursday. No information about the meeting has been provided until now.

Why is BBC trying to reverse reality?

From page 1 ► She met with almost all cabinet ministers, the vice president for women’s affairs, and the heads of many civil society organizations. Many of these meetings were independently coordinated by the special rapporteur herself.

Simultaneously with the announcement of Douhan’s visit to Iran, many fake social media users began their smear campaigns on this trip and the UN special rapporteur. It was initially stated that Iran would provide the special rapporteur with false information to prevent the publication of a documented and factual report. Then, it was rumored that Douhan had taken \$200,000 from China to reverse the report on the Uyghur massacre. But none of them were true.

According to information obtained by the Tehran Times correspondent, during these 12 days, the Iranian government and the international relations office of the Judiciary Human Rights Headquarters did not pay any expenses for the trip in order to avoid possible rumors. Douhan even mentioned in her press conference that she had brought cash with her so that she could pay for her hotel. This statement was in line with what the Tehran Times correspondent heard, that Douhan’s hotel was provided not by the international relations office of the Human Rights Headquarters, but by the United Nations Office in Tehran.

But now that the UN Special Rapporteur on



sanctions has spoken of the illegality of secondary U.S. and European sanctions against Iran, the Persian-language foreign media are trying to prevent her from revealing the facts by putting pressure on her, or at the very least, portray her as a reporter affiliated with the Iranian government. Note the first paragraph of the BBC Persian’s report from Douhan’s press conference.

“Ms. Dohan is the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures, and although she traveled to Iran on behalf of the UN Human Rights Council, she made no mention of the recent protests at her press conference on Wednesday. There were no reports of violent repression of protesters.”

The BBC’s claim comes at a time when Douhan’s mission is basically to study the effects of sanctions on the daily lives of the people “anywhere.” Meeting prisoners and protesters is not part of her mission, and if the special rapporteur would have spoken about it at her presser, it would have been outside

her mission. BBC reporters deliberately go over this issue in particular and try to get to the heart of the matter. Of course, they may not know that Douhan is a UN special rapporteur on one particular subject and only works in the field of sanctions, in which case, rest in peace media!

The Tehran Times would like to remind the BBC that special rapporteurs are divided into two categories: There are ones who focus on one subject, and there are others who focus on all aspects of one country, for the latter, Ahmad Javeed is an example focusing on Iran.

Other parts of Douhan’s report may be more interesting to the BBC Persian, but they deliberately turn a blind eye to these parts because it is not to the liking of their employers.

Douhan said, “The organizations’ aid packages have not had an effect due to the problems that exist in the field of banking transactions. People’s lives have been affected and the situation has worsened.”

She also stressed that unilateral sanctions have endangered the human rights situation in Iran, and have damaged the livelihoods of the people, mostly the vulnerable classes of the society. Issues such as children diagnosed with cancer, EB patients, thalassemia patients, and chemical warfare victims in Iran may be more interesting topics for BBC Persian. The Tehran Times advises BBC reporters to cover these areas, which Douhan also explored.

Iran renews call to mediate between Russia and Ukraine

TEHRAN- Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iran’s foreign minister, once against has said the Islamic Republic supports any attempt to find a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine conflict.

“Based on its excellent ties with Russia, the Islamic Republic of Iran supports any effort to settle the Ukraine conflict through diplomatic means and is ready to mediate and help resolve this crisis,” Iran’s foreign minister noted during a phone call with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Thursday.

During the talks, Amir Abdollahian emphasized Iran’s opposition to the use of war and sanctions, reiterating Tehran’s support for a truce in Ukraine and a return to negotiations.

On February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a special military operation in Ukraine.

The U.S. and its allies have increased military aid to Ukraine, delivering a slew of advanced weaponry designed to stave off Russia’s advances. The U.S. and its European allies have imposed extraordinary sanctions in response to the operation.

Moscow has frequently warned that allowing such a supply of weaponry into Ukraine would cause Russia’s actions to be prolonged.

During the phone call, Amir Abdollahian and Lavrov also discussed bilateral, regional, and international issues as well as the latest status of negotiations between Iran and other remaining signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal.

“If the Americans act reasonably, a nuclear deal will be within reach,” Amir Abdollahian reiterated.

Amir Abdollahian praised Russia’s favorable posture in backing a deal that is authorized by

Tehran, stressing Iran’s unwavering commitment to establish a good, robust, and long-lasting agreement that respects the country’s red lines.

Since April 2021, many rounds of talks between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries — the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, and Russia – have been conducted in the Austrian capital Vienna to revive the pact. The U.S. is not allowed to attend the talks directly since it quit the agreement in 2018.

The negotiations have been on hold since March because the U.S. refuses to make amends for previous wrongdoings, such as the removal of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) off its list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Iran asserts that the designation of the IRGC in 2019 was part of former President Donald Trump’s so-called “maximum pressure”

campaign against Tehran, and that it must be overturned immediately.

Lavrov underlined Russia’s ongoing support for the 2015 nuclear deal, as well as Moscow’s efforts to negotiate a fair accord that reflects Iran’s interests and objectives.

The Russian foreign minister also briefed his Iranian counterpart on the current events in Ukraine and supported any move that would drive Ukraine towards talks, slamming the unconstructive views of the U.S. and the West. In this context, he also viewed Iran’s position as beneficial.

Since late February, Ukraine and Russia have had sporadic peace talks, but there has been minimal communication in recent weeks.

Previous rounds of negotiations had failed to provide a resolution because both opposing parties refused to budge on their red lines.

Charges against Lafarge for ‘complicity in crimes against humanity’ in Syria confirmed

TEHRAN — On Wednesday, the Investigative Chamber of the Paris Court of Appeals decided that the cement giant Lafarge will face the charge of “complicity in crimes against humanity” in Syria.

Lafarge, via its subsidiary, has allegedly paid up to 13 million euro to several armed groups including Daesh in order to keep its Syrian cement factory running. ECCHR and Sherpa, the NGOs

which initiated this case, welcome this decisive ruling which confirms that a company alleged of knowingly paying several million dollars to a criminal organization, can face charges of complicity in the gravest crimes.

Wednesday’s ruling follows the September 7, 2021 groundbreaking decision of the Cour de cassation (Court of Cassation), France’s highest court, which had clarified the legal framework

under which a company may be charged with complicity in crimes against humanity.

Following a complaint submitted by NGOs ECCHR, Sherpa, and 11 former Syrian Lafarge employees in 2016, this is the first time worldwide that a company, as a legal entity, is being charged with complicity in crimes against humanity. Lafarge also remains charged with deliberately endangering the lives of its Syrian employees.

Iran moves ahead with regional diplomacy

TEHRAN – Less than a year into his presidency, President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahimi succeeded in revving up Iranian regional diplomacy in a way that is expected to lead to more breakthroughs.

The new policy came into effect right from the start. After taking office in August 2021, Ayatollah Raisi announced that he prioritizes what came to be known as “neighborhood policy,” one that rests on fostering good neighborly relations with all neighbors and boosting ties with Eastern powers along with Europe.

The first breakthrough in this regard came when Iran was granted full membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) after having long been on the sidelines of the regional economic bloc with an observer status.

Iran’s membership in the SCO were quickly translated into more trade. The value of Iran’s exports to the members of the SCO increased 41 percent in the first 11 months of the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 21, 2021-February 19, 2022) compared to the corresponding time in the year 1399.

The Raisi administration also closely followed the issue of signing long-term partnerships with Russia and China. President Raisi paid a visit to Russia, and Foreign Minister Amir Hossein Abdollahian travelled to China. Both visits were aimed at



strengthening ties and elevating them to a new level.

In addition, the Raisi administration remarkably improved ties with some of the Persian Gulf’s Arab states that have been at loggerheads with Iran over the last few years. After a lull of few months in the talks with Saudi Arabia, the Raisi administration resumed the talks and succeeded in moving them from the security level to the political one in the last round of talks held in Baghdad.

A senior Iranian lawmaker recently told Fars News that Amir Abdollahian will soon meet his Saudi counterpart in Baghdad to discuss bilateral issues, the exchange of embassies and regional issues, especially the Yemen crisis.

Some Arab media outlets even raised the possibility of a summit between Ayatollah Raisi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

Ayatollah Raisi is expected to pay a visit to Oman soon and according to the Arab press Raisi also has a visit to the United Arab Emirates on his agenda. The president and his foreign minister both sent letters of condolences to their Emirati counterparts on the death former UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed. Amir Abdollahian offered condolences in person to new President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed. After his trip to the UAE, Amir Abdollahian said a “new chapter” opened in Tehran-Abu Dhabi relations.

Ayatollah Raisi and Amir

Abdollahian continue to build on their eight-month efforts to improve relations with neighboring countries as part of the forgoing neighborhood policy.

On Thursday, Ayatollah Raisi received Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev. In the meeting, the Azeri official pointed to a previous meeting between Ayatollah Raisi and his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev in Ashgabat and said, “Your meeting with Mr. Aliyev in Ashgabat is historic and has opened new pages in the history of relations between the two countries.”

On Friday, Amir Abdollahian also spoke over the phone with his Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

“Among indexes of the growing relations are cooperation between the two countries to enhance ties in all fields as well as interactions and consultations on regional and international issues,” the Iranian foreign minister said in the call.

In turn, Jaishankar referred to the good level of cooperation and ties between the two states and expressed hope that the relations will be further enhanced in various spheres.

“Reaffirmed in our conversation the importance we both attach to advancing our relationship,” Jaishankar tweeted.

Iran affirms support for UN efforts to solve food insecurity

TEHRAN – Majid Takht Ravanchi, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, has expressed support for the United Nations’ efforts to address problems affecting food security.

The Iranian diplomat participated in the UN Security Council open debate on conflict and food security. The session was held on Thursday.

Takht Ravanchi, citing the Global Report on Food Crises for 2022, noted that acute food insecurity has increased significantly over the last six years.

He pointed out that conflict is still the leading cause of food insecurity for 139 million people in 24 countries who faced a crisis or worsening conditions in 2021. Food insecurity, climate change, COVID-19 and the negative effects of conflicts all affect many countries including Iran, which has also been suffering from the United States sanctions for more than four decades.

Hosting several million refugees has put a strain on the Iranian economy including food supply, he noted, calling for technical and financial assistance from the international community for refugees based there.

Turning to food situation in the region, he highlighted that there are 22 million people in Afghanistan who are food insecure and in desperate need of assistance.

In early 2022, acute food insecurity in Yemen worsened, with an 8 percent increase in the number of people in need compared to early 2021, he said, according to a readout of the session put out by the UN.

Takht Ravanchi stressed that the United Nations, the international community and international donors must fulfill their obligations and provide the necessary technical and financial assistance to foreign nationals residing in Iran.

The diplomat considered that food insecurity and conflict are closely related, and that conflict is the main cause of food insecurity.

He added, “The imbalance in the provision of food, the displacement of people, the increasing pressures on natural and economic resources, and the decrease in the resilience of the affected population and the diet, are all long-term effects of the conflicts.”

Referring to the Global Food Crisis Report for 2022, the Iranian ambassador said, “The level of global famine continues to rise at an alarming rate, and acute food insecurity has increased dramatically over the past six years.”

He referred to global statistics that indicated

that by 2021, nearly 193 million people in 53 countries were acutely food insecure and needed immediate assistance. This includes nearly 40 million people in 36 countries who were in a state of emergency or worse.

“According to the same reports, conflicts are still the main cause of food insecurity for 139 million people in 24 countries who faced crisis or deterioration in conditions in 2021, and these figures show the deteriorating humanitarian situation around the world.”

The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations added, “The whole world suffers from food shortages, but there is no doubt that Africa suffers greatly from food insecurity.”

Referring to the situations in countries experiencing food crisis, including Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and Palestine, Takht Ravanchi said, “In Afghanistan, 22 million people suffer from food insecurity and are in dire need of assistance.”

He went on to say that Iran is “cooperating with international organizations to address the special food security situation in Afghanistan in light of the challenges of the current difficult situation, and we hope that the international community will help the Afghan people to overcome their problems.”

The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations stressed that the humanitarian situation in Palestine is also no less important due to decades of occupation and the apartheid policies practiced by Israel, according to Al Alam.

He added, “The illegal blockade imposed on Gaza, which severely restricts the right of the Palestinian people to food, must be lifted as soon as possible.”

Regarding Syria, he said the continuation of occupation, terrorism and unilateral sanctions have led to the displacement of millions of people in the country, destroyed people’s livelihoods, disrupted trade and the provision of food and agriculture, and damaged infrastructure and access to vital resources.

Pointing to the repercussions of sanctions on food security, Takht Ravanchi noted that unilateral coercive measures violate basic human rights, including the right to food, and would lead to food insecurity.

Some countries still use these illegal measures, which are prohibited in accordance with international humanitarian laws, as a weapon to starve the peoples of the countries subject to sanctions, he noted.

He added, “We believe that the processes of providing foodstuffs and the food chain should not be disrupted in any way, even in times of



armed conflict. Full compliance with international laws, especially the Geneva Convention of 1949, is necessary in this regard.”

He underlined that Moreover, the embargo measures by the United Nations should not be imposed in a way that endangers global food security.

He stressed that all parties to the conflict must respect and protect medical and humanitarian personnel, and adhere to the principles of humanity, impartiality and independence when providing humanitarian aid.

In the UN Security Council session, Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, also addressed the food security situation around the world.

He noted that 60 percent of the world’s undernourished people live in areas affected by conflict, underscoring that “when war is waged, people go hungry”.

In April, the World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners distributed food and cash to more than 3 million Ukrainians, he said.

According to the secretary general, in 2021, most of the 140 million people suffering acute hunger globally lived in just 10 countries: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — with eight of those countries on the Security Council agenda.

“When this Council debates conflict, you debate hunger,” he pointed out. “And when you fail to reach consensus, hungry people pay a high price.”

Armed conflict creates hunger, as fighting destroys farms and factories, drives people away from their harvests, causes shortages and drives up prices, he continued, underlining that today the impact of conflict is amplified by the climate crisis and economic insecurity compounded by the pandemic.

Citing the example of Niger, which faces extremist armed groups and cross-border incursions from Nigeria, he noted only 6 percent of its population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

including a very meaningful presence in the Sacred Defense.”

Referring to the diverse capacities of West Azerbaijan province, Ayatollah Raisi said, “This province is one of the agricultural hubs in the country and has many capacities in the field of mining, and in addition it has professional universities and

scientific centers.”

The president said, “There are many issues to be followed up in the province, which have been discussed at expert meetings.”

At the beginning of his trip, the president visited the exhibition of the Air and Space Development Centre of Shahid Baba Saei in Urmia.

SPORTS

Iran edged by Australia in IWBF Asia Oceania Championships

TEHRAN – Iran were defeated by defending champions Australia 47-44 in International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) Asia Oceania Championships opening match on Friday.

Iran will play South Korea on Sunday.

Australia, Iran, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia and South Korea will compete in Pool A.

Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq and the Philippines have been placed into Pool B of the tournament.

The top two teams in Pool B will join the six Pool A sides in the quarter-finals of the competition.

The competition will be held in Phuket, Thailand from May 20 to 28.

Mes learn rivals at Asian Club League Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Mes Kerman of Iran learned their rivals at the 24th Asian Men’s Club League Handball Championship.

The Championship will take place from June 22 to 30, 2022 in Hyderabad, India.

The winners of the championship will directly qualify for the 15th IHF Men’s Super Globe to be held in Saudi Arabia from October 17 to 23, 2022.

The draw results are as follows:

Group A: T-Sports Club (India), Al-Noor Club (Saudi Arabia), Al-Arabi Club (Qatar), Al-Qadsia Club (Kuwait)

Group B: Al-Kuwait Club (Kuwait), Al-Safa Club (Saudi Arabia), Sanat Mes Kerman (Iran), Al-Najma Club (Bahrain), Al-Wakrah Club (Qatar)

Sayyadmanesh wins player of the month for April

TEHRAN – Striker Allahyar Sayyadmanesh was named the Player of the Month for April by the Hull City fans.

The Iranian player picked up 77.45% of the votes after starting five of our six league games.

Jacob Greaves, Keane Lewis-Potter and Richie Smallwood were also nominated for the award, and finished second, third and fourth respectively.

Having netted his first goal for the Tigers against Cardiff City, Sayyadmanesh’s composed finish against the Bluebirds has also seen him win Goal of the Month with over 54% of the vote.

Iran, Ecuador friendly match confirmed

TEHRAN – Iran national football team will meet Ecuador in a friendly match on June 11 in Toronto, Canada.

The Iranian team will meet Canada in Vancouver and play Ecuador five days later, sporting director of Iran Hamid Estili said.

Iran will play Ecuador as part of preparation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Dragan Skocic’s team are drawn in Group B along with England, the U.S., and winner of Scotland, Wales and Ukraine.

Ecuador have been pitted in Group A along with Qatar, Senegal and the Netherlands.

Gil Vicente complete signing of Ali Alipour

TEHRAN – Portuguese football club Gil Vicente completed the signing of Iranian forward Ali Alipour.

The 26-year-old forward has joined Gil Vicente from Marítimo on a two-year contract.

The former Persepolis striker played 65 games for Marítimo and scored 10 goals and provided two assists during his time in Madeira.

“Welcome to your new home, Ali Alipour. The ex-Marítimo striker signs for two seasons”, wrote Gil Vicente through his official page on the social network Facebook.

Alireza Faghani appointed to officiate at 2022 World Cup

TEHRAN – Iranian international referee Alireza Faghani has been appointed to officiate at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Iranian duo Mohammadreza Abolfazli and Mohammadreza Mansouri have been chosen as assistants in the competition.

The FIFA Referees Committee announced the lists with the names of the selected match officials for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

A total of 36 referees, 69 assistant referees and 24 video match officials (VMOs) have been chosen in close cooperation with the six confederations, based on their quality and the performances delivered at FIFA tournaments as well as at other international and domestic competitions in recent years.

For the first time in the history of the FIFA World Cup, the FIFA Referees Committee has also appointed three women’s referees and three women’s assistant referees.

Stéphanie Frappart from France, Salima Mukansanga from Rwanda and Yoshimi Yamashita from Japan, as well as assistant referees Neuza Back from Brazil, Karen Diaz Medina from Mexico and Kathryn Nesbitt from the U.S. will work in Qatar.

Tractor, Persepolis match halted due to throwing objects

TEHRAN – The match between Tractor and Persepolis football teams was halted after Tractor fans threw objects at the players.

The match was held in Tabriz’s Yadegar-e Emam Stadium Thursday night but the fans threw objects at the Persepolis players from the beginning of the match.

An object thrown from the stands hit a player and the match was abandoned for the minutes.

The referee finally halted the match in the 70th minute and the players retreated to the tunnel.

In Tehran, Esteghlal, who won Iran league title after nine years last week, were held to a goalless draw by Aluminum.

Paykan lost to Foolad 2-1 in Tehran, Gol Gohar defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-0, Fajr Sepasi lost to Zob Ahan 1-0, Mes beat Sanat Naft 2-0, and Sepahan defeated struggling Shahr Khodro 3-0.

Japan candidate to host 2023 Asian Cup

TEHRAN – The Japan Football Association (JFA) has been informally approached about the possibility of replacing China as hosts of next year’s Asian Cup, Chairman Kozo Tashima told Nikkan Sports.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced last Saturday that China had pulled out of hosting the 24-team continental championship, citing the COVID-19 situation in the country.

“We were sounded out,” Tashima told the newspaper, without giving further details.

“If Japan were able to host, there’s no question that it would be pretty exciting.”

The JFA was not immediately available for comment.

Japan has the stadium infrastructure in place to stage the tournament in June and July next year, having co-hosted the World Cup in 2002, rugby’s global showpiece in 2019 and the Olympic soccer tournament last year.

Other potential host such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Australia would need the tournament moved back to late 2023 or early 2024.

Qatar, which will host the World Cup later this year, and Saudi Arabia would be inhospitable in the middle of the year because of the summer heat, while Australia is co-hosting the women’s World Cup in July and August 2023.

Engineering studies started for Lavan Petro-refinery construction

TEHRAN- Engineering studies have been started for the construction of 150,000 barrel-capacity Lavan Petro-refinery, the managing director of Lavan Oil Refining Company (LORC) announced.

Elaborating on the latest status of constructing the mentioned petro-refinery, Mohammad-Ali Akhbari said the engineering studies have been started by National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company (NIOEC) and through negotiating with the banks for supplying required financial resources for the project.

He called for the help of Oil Ministry and National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in terms of land allocation, and said that some permits have been received, and preliminary measures have been taken in the field of providing technical knowledge for the construction of the petro-refinery and holding the tenders is being pursued.

Lavan was one of the first refining companies initiating construction of petro-refinery with the aim of completing the value chain, stable job creation, diversifying the refined products and petrochemicals in the country, the managing director further underlined.

Located in southern Iran in the Persian Gulf waters, Lavan is a small island that has now become a major point of focus for the country's oil and gas industry.

Having an area of 78 square kilometers, the island is one of the four major terminals for the export of crude oil in Iran alongside Kharg island. The island also sits on top of the Lavan gas field, which contains over 9.5 trillion cubic feet of gas.

The development of the Lavan gas field, which was discovered in 2003, started in 2008 in the form of four projects with some \$461 million of investment.

Although the island's gas field discovery is relatively new, the industrial development of the island dates back to the late-1950s.

Lavan Oil Refining Company (LORC) was founded in 1951 under the name Lavan Distillery Complex. Having a processing capacity of 20,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil, the refinery was a subsidiary of Shiraz Refinery at the time.

After the Islamic Revolution and with regard to the strategic situation and existing potential, the plans for the development and improvement of the refinery were put in place.

The importance of Lavan Refinery became more evident after the imposed war during which the damage to a number of refineries in the country, including Abadan Refinery, increased the demand for products like gas oil and gasoline significantly and this refinery became one of the major suppliers of the mentioned products to the country.

Lavan Refinery Complex was formed at this time with the aim of producing more quality products.

Currently, the refinery processes 35,000 barrels of crude that are transferred to the island through a 12-inch pipeline from the Lavan offshore company's tanks and it also refines 20,000 barrels of South Pars gas condensate which is shipped to the island.

Despite the significant development of the island's facilities since the industrial



development of the island began in the 1950s, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s development outlook for the island has not been achieved yet.

Over the past few years, the NIOC has been following a new strategy for establishing new petro-refinery complexes across the country and Lavan Island is the home to one of the mentioned complexes.

In late January, the managing director of Lavan Refinery announced the construction of a 150,000-barrel petro-refinery next to Lavan Refinery and noted that plans were also underway for increasing the refinery's gasoline production capacity by one million liters per day.

Akhbari said the project to build the mentioned petro-refinery is in line with the oil industry's approach for developing petro-refinery complexes across the country.

He said that major shareholders have welcomed the investment in the new petro-refinery project, negotiations have been held with the private sector, and a working group has been set up to expedite and facilitate the implementation of this project, which will be completed with continuous follow-up.

Akhbari earlier said that the refinery has used over 25,000 domestically-made equipment items in recent years which has saved the company over 8.98 trillion rials (about \$31.5 million).

According to the official, in recent years, Lavan Oil Refining Company has been able to benefit from the capacities of domestic knowledge-based companies and producers by forming a domestic manufacturing committee in the company.

"Domestic producers have managed to produce over 2,200 commodity groups including about 25,000 different items for the first time at the request of Lavan Oil Refining Company," Akhbari said.

He further announced that the refinery achieved the best performance in terms of profitability among the country's refining companies in the first six months of the past Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2021).

Based on comparative statistics for the mentioned first six months, the company's profits increased 225 percent compared to the same period of the preceding year, the official noted.

Akhbari also mentioned the social responsibilities of his company and said LORC has taken many steps in this regard so far, including the construction of new wharves, reconstruction of schools, reconstruction of asphalt of roads, and establishing medical clinics on the island.

as compared to its previous year.

Alireza Moqadasi put the country's non-oil trade at 162 million tons worth \$100 billion in the past year.

He said that Iran exported 122 million tons of non-oil products worth \$48 billion in the previous year, which was \$14 billion (41 percent) more than the figure for its preceding year.

The country's non-oil trade record in 1400 was reached while the toughest sanctions were imposed on Iran, but thanks to God and the efforts of entrepreneurs, producers and the cooperation of foreign trade-related organizations, a historical record was achieved in the past year which was unprecedented in recent decades, the official underlined.

Iran, Azerbaijan stress expansion of energy ties

From page 1 ► We discussed key issues for removing existing obstacles and expanding the relations between Iran and Azerbaijan in various fields including the joint development of hydropower plants, the Energy Ministry's new portal Paven quoted Mehrabian as saying on Friday.

"We also discussed the project for synchronization of electricity networks of Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan and the two sides called for the removal of obstacles and implement the project as soon as possible," the Iranian minister added.

Iran and Azerbaijan have been taking serious measures for the expansion of economic ties over the past few years.

Mustafayev had also visited Tehran back in November 2021, when he met with senior Iranian officials including Oji to seek expansion of energy ties.

Speaking to the press after the meeting, Oji said positive talks were held and constructive agreements were reached between the two sides.

According to the oil minister, the



two sides had agreed to cooperate in swapping gas from other countries in the region including Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan.

The development of oil and gas fields in the Caspian Sea was another subject discussed during the meeting with the Azerbaijani delegation, and according to Oji, initial talks were held in this regard and expert delegations of the two countries were continuing the negotiations.

He expressed hope that in the near future, good agreements would be signed with Azerbaijan

in the field of oil, gas, and development of Caspian oil and gas fields.

Mustafayev for his part told the media that the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran are friendly and neighboring countries and there is a historical connection between the people of the two countries.

He said that there is successful cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan in all areas, especially energy, adding: "Cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan in the oil and gas

sector has been fruitful."

"During the meeting with the Iranian Oil minister, the ways of expanding cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector were discussed," he said, adding: "We discussed a number of new projects in the energy sector and I believe new documents will be signed in the near future."

Mustafayev pointed to the presence of a group of Azerbaijani experts in his accompanying delegation and said: "This group is going to continue the talks between the two sides in detail."

Modern irrigation systems established in 2.6m hectares of farmlands



TEHRAN - The project manager of the Agriculture Ministry's smart irrigation systems development program has said so far 2.6 million hectares of the country's farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems, IRIB reported.

Fariborz Abbasi said completing semi-finished agriculture projects is the priority of his ministry in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) and expanding the modern irrigation network across the country is of significant importance in this regard.

The deputy agriculture minister noted that the project for implementing irrigation networks in the west and northwest of the country is about 70 percent completed and the ministry is pursuing to get the necessary funding for the remaining 30 percent.

The official expressed hope that

considering the budget allocation for the provinces at the beginning of the current Iranian year, the ministry would be able to develop the project in terms of both quantity and quality.

The purpose of implementing the plan of modern irrigation systems is to increase the productivity and sustainability of water and soil resources in the country to ensure the sustainable production of agricultural products.

Over the past three years, each year, an average of 150,000 hectares of farmlands have been equipped with modern irrigation systems, and we have witnessed a 300 percent jump.

The Agriculture Ministry is also taking the necessary measures for supporting the domestic manufacturing of equipment used in these systems.

Back in September 2021, Abbasi had said that 95 percent of the equipment used in such systems is manufactured inside the country.

The official said the ministry has comprehensive plans for indigenizing the knowledge for the production of the other five percent as well.

He pointed to the filters and drippers in

modern irrigation systems as the equipment whose domestic production is on the agenda and predicted: "In a two- or three-year plan, part of the imported equipment and supplies will be produced by domestic manufacturers."

Abbasi mentioned the quality improvement of modern irrigation systems as one of the main strategies of the Agriculture Ministry and said: "We believe that along with the quantitative development of new irrigation systems, quality improvement should also take place to improve productivity and ensure food security by increasing water efficiency in the best possible way."

He further underlined educating farmers, officials, and managers of companies active in the field of production and implementation of new irrigation systems as one of the programs that his ministry is pursuing in order to improve the quality and optimal use of these systems.

Referring to the activity of 2,400 private companies in the development of new irrigation systems in the agricultural sector, Abbasi said: "The private sector in this field includes 350 consulting companies, 1,600 contractors, 400 manufacturers and suppliers of equipment, and a number of monitoring firms."

CBI approves establishing offshore bank in free zones

TEHRAN - The secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council said that the necessary licenses for establishing an offshore bank in the country's free zones have been obtained from the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and international exchange will also be established in these zones, IRIB reported on Friday.

Speaking to the national TV, Saeed Mohammad noted that the secretariat of Iran's Free Zones High Council has managed to obtain the license for establishing the offshore bank from the CBI, adding that "The rules of administration for the mentioned bank are under



the supervision of the central bank and we are looking for qualified shareholders for the bank."

Offshore bank is a bank that is not affiliated with the CBI but it is supervised by the bank; so, given its independence the shareholders can be foreigners and international entities, the official added.

Regarding the international exchange, Mohammad stated that good meetings have been held with the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) and the two sides have reached an initial agreement.

Foreigners are interested in entering the Iranian stock market, and this encourages the companies that operate on the mainland today to upgrade themselves and provide good reports if they want to offer their shares on the international stock exchange, Mohammad said.

The official further mentioned the establishment of knowledge-based companies in the country's

free and special zones, saying: "We have also set up a large number of knowledge-based companies and innovation and technology centers in the country's free zones (about 446 units)."

Given the slogan of the year which is knowledge-based production and job creation, the activities that take place in the free zones should be within this framework, he added.

He put the total exports from the country's free and special zones in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) at \$15.7 billion, noting that about \$4.7 billion worth of goods were also imported through the mentioned zones.

Annual export from Qom province increases 92%

TEHRAN- Export from Qom province rose 92 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400(ended on March 20), from its previous year, a provincial official announced.

Mojtaba Farhadi, the head of Foreign Trade Office of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that commodities worth \$283 million were exported from the province in the past year.

He named metal products, rubber and plastic items, and foodstuffs as the main items exported from the province in the past year.

As previously announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 38 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400,

Private sector says proper pricing system is required for major goods

TEHRAN - The 16th meeting of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Business Environment Development Committee was held on Thursday, in which the attendees stressed the need for a proper pricing system for major commodity items.

In this meeting, the members of the mentioned committee underlined the need for adjusting the price of goods whose final production costs have increased due to the increase in the price of raw materials and input, the TCCIMA portal reported.

The meeting concluded that a proper pricing system must be used to modify the prices of the



mentioned items so that the producer won't face any dilemma in setting the prices themselves and following up on the prices in the market.

Speaking in this meeting, Mohammadreza Najafi-Manesh, the head of the committee, referred to the government's measures to eliminate subsidized pricing, and said: "There should be a mechanism and structure for pricing major commodities, so that when the price of inputs and raw materials changes, the final commodity prices also change systematically; so, the manufacturers won't have to worry about pursuing price adjustments."

Top Taliban leader makes more promises on women’s rights but quips ‘naughty women’ should stay home

A senior Taliban official has repeated the group’s as-yet-unfulfilled pledge to allow girls back into high school, saying there would be “good news soon,” but suggested that women who protested the regime’s restrictions on women rights should stay home.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, Afghanistan’s acting interior minister and the Taliban’s co-deputy leader since 2016, made the comments in an exclusive, first on-camera interview showing his face with CNN’s Christiane Amanpour in Kabul.

In March after many promises that girls would be able to attend secondary school, the Taliban reversed their decision, postponing the return indefinitely.

When asked about Afghan women who say they are afraid to leave their homes under Taliban rule, and those who have reported a chilling effect of the militant group’s leadership, Haqqani added with a laugh: “We keep naughty women at home.”

After being pressed to clarify his comment by Amanpour, he said: “By saying naughty women, it was a joke referring to those naughty women who are controlled by some other sides to bring the current government into question.”

Haqqani also set out some parameters for the future of women and work, which will be limited by the Taliban’s interpretation of Islamic law and “national, cultural and traditional principles.”

“They are allowed to work within their own framework,” he told Amanpour.

The Taliban minister was speaking in his first on-camera interview with a Western media outlet in years, just months after showing his face in public for the first time. The high-ranking and intensely secretive official is wanted by the FBI and has been classified by the US State Department as a “specially designated global terrorist.” He has a \$10 million bounty on his head.

His comments on girls’ education and the rights of women punctuated a series of claims that “there is no one opposed to (girls’) education” in the Afghan government.

“Already girls are allowed to go to school up to grade 6, and above that grade, the work is continuing on a mechanism,” Haqqani said. “Very soon, you will hear very good news about this issue, God willing,” he added, without specifying a timeframe.

Afterwards, Haqqani’s aides said the interview was an effort to open a new chapter in relations with the US and the world.

But the Taliban have repeatedly made assurances to the international community that it will protect the rights of women and girls since seizing Afghanistan last August, while simultaneously stripping away many of their freedoms and protections.

Many school-age girls and women have already lost hope.



“Their entire government [is] against girls’ education,” 19-year-old Maryam told CNN on Tuesday. “I don’t believe that the Taliban fulfil their promises ... they don’t understand our feelings.”

“Step by step they are taking all our freedoms,” added Fatima, 17. “The Taliban now and the Taliban of the 90s are the same — I don’t see any change on their policy and rules.

“Our only hope is the international community brings extreme pressure on the Taliban to allow girls to go to school. Nothing else [will] work.”

Maryam and Fatima, like the other women CNN spoke to, did not provide their last names due to concerns about their security.

Haqqani’s comments will likely do little to encourage observers that the Taliban are serious about their commitments. “Everyone from the Taliban leadership has zero credibility on this issue,” Heather Barr, associate director of the Women’s Rights Division at international watchdog Human Rights Watch, told CNN.

“They have made representations about their supposed respect for women and girls,” since taking power, Barr added. “Every day after that there was a new crackdown on women, and that’s continued to intensify over time.”

The G7 foreign ministers and the High Representative of the European Union last week expressed their “strongest opposition” against the growing restrictions imposed by the Taliban on women’s and girls’ rights. Haqqani told CNN the international community’s “judgements, research, and decision making are all one-sided,” adding: “We are still at the preliminary phase. It has barely been eight months since we took over the government ... we are yet to bring the situation back to normal.”

After taking power, the Taliban have warned women to stay home and their fighters have used whips and sticks against those protesting. In the subsequent months, they have been banned from large swathes of public life -- from appearing on television to taking long road trips alone. A new decree earlier this month said women must cover their faces in public.

When pressed by Amanpour on whether all women have to cover their faces, Haqqani responded: “We are not forcing women to wear [the] hijab, but we are advising them and preaching to them from time to time ... [the] hijab is not compulsory but it is an Islamic order that everyone should implement.”

On the streets of Kabul, the growing isolation of women from society has left many in economic peril. “I have to work,” a woman named Khotima told CNN. “They should let us work because we have to become the men of the family so we can find bread for the children.”

“When you don’t have money, when you don’t have [a] job, you don’t have income, would you be able to eat proper food when there is no work?” added another woman named Farishta.

US not ‘currently’ enemy, Haqqani says

Haqqani was speaking with CNN two months after the Taliban released rare photographs of the minister at a ceremony for police officers. Prior to that, he had rarely been seen in public; his FBI “Most Wanted” poster features only a grainy picture showing part of his face.

He is wanted by the agency for questioning in connection with a 2008 attack on a hotel in Kabul that killed six people including a US citizen; the US government says Haqqani admitted to planning the attack in a previous media interview. He is part of the family that forms the Haqqani network, the Islamist militant organization founded by his father Jalaluddin Haqqani, which was designated as a terrorist group by the United States in 2012.

Haqqani told CNN, “In the future, we would like to have good relations with the United States and the international community,” adding: “Currently we do not look at them as enemies.”

But he made repeated assurances about women’s rights and education for girls that were at odds with the observations of global watchdogs and governments.

“The international community is raising the issue of women’s rights a lot. Here in Afghanistan, there are Islamic, national, cultural, and traditional principles,” he said. “Within the limits of those

principles, we are working to provide them with opportunities to work and that is our goal.”

The Taliban released a so-called “decree on women’s rights” in December that failed to mention access to education or work and was immediately criticized by Afghan women and experts, who said it was proof that the militant group was uninterested in upholding basic freedoms for millions of women.

Afghan girls above grade 6 were due to go back to school in March for the first time since the Taliban’s takeover, but were told to stay home until an appropriate school uniform according to Sharia and Afghan customs and culture is designed, the Taliban-run Bakhtar News Agency reported at the time.

Haqqani told CNN the delay was necessary while leaders design the “mechanism” through which girls can return to education. “There were some shortcomings within the preparations that were ongoing. Work is ongoing on those issues,” he said.

But experts expressed skepticism that their motives are different than was the case between 1996 and 2001, when the first Taliban regime barred girls from studying.

“They always said the conditions aren’t right now, [but they would] figure it out,” Barr said. “In those five years, that moment never came. So very clearly to women and girls, that was always a lie, and that’s how it feels this time as well.”

Haqqani was also questioned on the status of Mark Frerichs, a US veteran and contractor who was kidnapped in Kabul in late January 2020 and is believed to be held by the Haqqani network.

A proof of life video, apparently filmed in November 2021, emerged in April, in which Frerichs said: “I’d like to ask the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, please, release me. Release me so that I may be reunited with my family.”

Haqqani told CNN: “That is what they think, that he is with us ... There is no obstacle from the Emirate side for his release. If the United States accepts the Islamic Emirate’s conditions, the issue of his release could be solved in a day.

“About the assumptions that he might be with us, I want to say that we are part of the Islamic Emirate, we are committed to obey the orders of Amirul Momineen, the Supreme Leader,” he added. “Efforts are ongoing at the government level, and a team is designated for negotiations with them.”

When reached for comment, a US State Department spokesperson told CNN: “The safe and immediate release of US citizen and Navy veteran Mark Frerichs is imperative. We have made that clear to the Taliban and called on them to release him immediately in practically every conversation over the past two years.”

by two-thirds by the end of the year.

However, EU countries are still struggling to agree sanctions on Russian oil, as Hungary and other landlocked countries oppose the move amid concerns about the costs of switching to alternative sources.

To reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels, Brussels is offering a three-pronged plan including a shift to importing more non-Russian gas, faster adoption of renewable energy, and greater energy-saving efforts.

“REPowerEU will help us to save more energy, accelerate the phasing-out of fossil fuels and kick-start investments on a new scale. This will be speed-charging for our European Green Deal,” von der Leyen said.



and 27% of its imported oil. Russia has already cut off EU member states Poland and Bulgaria after they refused to pay for natural gas in rubles.

An EU ban on coal from Russia is scheduled to come into effect in August, and the bloc has said it will try to cut demand for Russian gas

Israel rules out criminal probe into killing of journalist amid global anger

From page 1 ▶ A producer for Al Jazeera who was also shot in the back told the media there were no gunmen standing anywhere near the journalists when they were targeted.

Even Israel’s closest ally, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden, and the United Nations Security Council have called on the regime to conduct a transparent investigation.

Abu Aqleh was a household name across the Arab world, known for her 25 years of reporting on the suffering of Palestinians under Israeli military occupation. She spent that time working as a journalist for Al Jazeera news. Her murder has been met with widespread international coverage.

The U.S. had given assurances to her family that Washington would demand a proper investigation into the death of the duel American-Palestinian.

Washington has been denounced for not speaking out with the same tone as it did in the aftermath of the murder of dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The Israeli military had previously released an account that said it could not unequivocally determine the source of the bullet that killed Abu Aqleh.

Palestinian officials have refused to hand over the recovered bullet to Israeli authorities, saying they have no trust in the regime. They are conducting their own investigation and have called for an international probe.

The Palestinian public prosecutor says preliminary findings show Abu Aqleh was killed by deliberate fire from Israeli troops adding that the investigation is ongoing.

Bellingcat, an independent Dutch-based research firm, has conducted its own analysis from all the videos and material it has gathered. It said its initial findings support the Palestinian witnesses who say she was killed by Israeli fire.

The decision by the Israeli military advocate general, Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi, not to order an investigation is in line with Israel’s policy in which the entity has rarely criminally probed its murder of Palestinians.

Yesh Din an NGO in the occupied Palestinian territories also criticized the Israeli decision, saying that “the army law enforcement mechanisms no longer even bother to give the appearance of investigating.”

Dozens of U.S. lawmakers have signed a letter demanding the FBI investigate the killing of Abu Aqleh, congressman Andre Carson says after Israel’s military said it will not launch a criminal inquiry into the murder.

“As we all continue to mourn the loss of this great journalist, fellow American, who was tragically killed while on assignment, we want answers,” Carson, who is helping lead the congressional letter, told Al Jazeera.

“And we need to ensure that these answers are accurate, that they are transparent, and that they are timely.”

The letter, calls for the U.S. government to be directly involved in any probe into the fatal shooting of the journalist. “Given the tenuous situation in the region and the conflicting reports surrounding the death of Ms. Abu Aqleh, we request the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) launch an investigation into Ms. Abu Aqleh’s death.”

“We also request the U.S. Department of State determine whether any U.S. laws protecting Ms. Abu Aqleh, an American citizen, were violated,” it reads. “As an American, Ms.

Abu Aqleh was entitled to the full protections afforded to U.S. citizens living abroad.”

The statement is addressed to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and FBI Director Christopher Wray.

Carson has said the letter, which is still circulating on Capitol Hill for backing, has more than 55 co-signers already.

“The State Department called her killing an affront to media freedom. I couldn’t agree more,” Carson said.

A group of more than 125 artists, including American celebrities, acclaimed authors, and prominent musicians, have also signed a joint letter condemning Abu Aqleh’s killing.

The signatories to the letter published by Artists for Palestine UK has called for “full accountability for the perpetrators of this crime and everyone involved in authorizing it”.

However, their voices are more than likely to fall on dead ears.

The UN high commissioner for human rights, Michelle Bachelet, has complained about a lack of Israeli accountability for Palestinian murders in the occupied territories.

Commenting on Abu Aqleh’s killing and the subsequent Israeli attack at her funeral, Bachelet said “as I have called for many times before, there must be appropriate investigations into the actions of Israeli security forces.”

The decision not to probe the murder of Abu Aqleh comes a day after Israeli authorities said they have given the go-ahead for flag-waving Israeli settlers to march through the heart of the main Palestinian access route in the Old City of occupied al-Quds later this month, in a decision that threatens to re-ignite violence in the holy city.

The regime says the march, which has been highly provocative in the past, would take place on May 29 along its “customary route” through Damascus Gate, a Palestinian neighborhood.??The Old City area, located in occupied East al-Quds, has experienced weeks of violent attacks by the regime’s forces against Palestinian demonstrators, and the march threatens to trigger further unrest.

Just like over the past decades, the regime’s leadership has not faced any international repercussions for its actions in the occupied territories essentially giving Israel the green light to continue its atrocities against Palestinians knowing it can count on international inaction.

One of the many punitive measures Israel has taken against the Palestinians over the last year is to silence them. This included the closure of Palestinian society groups to the murder of the most renowned Palestinian journalist.

During Abu Aqleh’s funeral procession Israeli regime forces physically assaulted the mourners carrying her casket prompting even further condemnation of the regime.

The European Union expressed its shock at the “unnecessary” force, while the regime’s closest allies in the White House described footage of the scene as “deeply disturbing”.

Meanwhile, Israel’s shaky ruling coalition has become a minority after an Arab member quit in protest at the regime’s treatment of the Arab community.

The departure leaves the wide eight-party coalition with just 59 seats in Israel’s 120-seat Knesset and increases the chances of a fifth election in around a year.

Senate passes 40\$ billion Ukraine aid package

The U.S. Senate has approved more than \$40 billion in new “aid” for Ukraine, which has been the site of a Russian military operation since February, Press TV reported.

The legislative body gave its blessing to the monumental package on Thursday, with 86 votes in favor and 11 against, the Bloomberg news agency reported.

“The message this sends is that the United States is committed, that we are going to stand with any country that is a democracy when there is an autocracy that attempts to overrun it,” Idaho Republican Jim Risch alleged.

This comes after objections by Kentucky Senator Rand Paul had delayed passage of the bill for an entire week.

“If Congress really believed giving Ukraine \$40 bn was in our national interest, they could easily pay for it by taxing every income taxpayer \$500,” Paul tweeted on Thursday.

The bill cleared the House of Representatives last week on a 368 to 57 vote.

The package, which is significantly larger than the \$33 billion that Joe Biden had requested for Ukraine last month, now only awaits the president’s signature.

EU unveils €300 billion plan to reduce energy dependency on Russia

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced on Wednesday that the European Union intends to mobilize up to €300 billion (\$316 billion) by 2030 to become independent of Russian energy imports, DW reported.

“We must now reduce as rapidly as possible our reliance on Russia in energy. We can,” von der Leyen said in a speech in Brussels, presenting the EU’s plan to break away from Russian energy imports dubbed “REPowerEU.”

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia, Europe’s largest gas supplier, has prompted the European Union to reconsider its energy policy.

Russia supplies 40% of the EU’s gas

Tehran, Doha to facilitate tourism during World Cup



From page 1 ► The common history and the trade and intellectual exchanges between the two countries in the past could help the expansion of cultural relations, he noted.

Back in April, Iranian media reported that the government mulled over a visa simplification procedure at the suggestion of its Foreign Ministry to draw spectators from the neighboring Qatar which plays host to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 in November and December.

The Iranian government plans to grant a free visa to citizens whose national football teams qualify for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar for a one-time or a two-time period with a validity period of two months and a 30-day stay.

Additionally, nationals of all countries (except those from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Somalia, Sri Lanka) who are subject to tourist visa requirements as well as all nationals of the U.S., UK, and Canada can apply for a free visa once, twice or multiple times if they provide a ticket from Doha.

Free visas can encourage World Cup spectators to visit Iran during the event, some experts say.

Soltanieh holds festival of medicinal herbs, traditional beverages

TEHRAN – On Thursday, a special festival devoted to medicinal herbs and traditional beverages brought together hundreds of natives and travelers in the ancient city of Soltanieh, which is home to a UNESCO-registered monument of the same name.

“It was Soltanieh’s first festival of medicinal herbs that put the spotlight on ‘Sard’ and ‘Garm’ beverages as well,” the local tourism chief Parvaneh Asgari said.

The festival was aimed to mark the second day of the cultural heritage week that was concurrent with the International Museum Day, the official added.

There are many secrets to know about the Persian kitchen. An example of those very special characteristics is the medicinal aspects of Persian cuisine. Next time that you hear from an Iranian that some kind of food is Cold (Sard) or Warm (Garm) remember that they may be speaking about something other than the temperature of the food but with its influence on the body and soul - very comparable to some aspects of Chinese cuisine.

Rooted in traditional Persian medicine, these beliefs are still very popular even in educated Iranian families. The ancient theory states that only a balanced diet with proportions of both types of food keeps people physically and mentally healthy.

Children trained to restore historical monuments

TEHRAN –The UNESCO-designated Golestan Palace organized a two-day workshop for children on the restoration and preservation of the historical monuments, the director of the World Heritage site has said.

“These workshops provided families and their children with information and knowledge about protecting and restoring cultural heritage,” Afarin Emami explained on Friday.

“The two-day workshops, which came to an end on Friday, allowed participants to restore some tiles, while the methods of repairing and preserving tiles are taught,” the official added.

Moreover, the participants examined decorations of the tall buildings of the palace complex using special cameras, she noted.

A destination for domestic and international travelers, Golestan Palace is located in the heart

Back in February, Zarghami said that Iran must take an immense opportunity to be provided by the upcoming Qatar World Cup to properly introduce the county to the international spectators of the major event.

“A significant number of travelers, mostly young people, would arrive in Qatar to attend the World Cup... It provides an exceptional opportunity for us to properly introduce tourist attractions of the country,” he added.

“Over the past months, we have prepared some plans to attract attendees to the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup soccer championship.”

The minister said many people are interested to visit Iran for its historical attractions and ecotourism to name a few.

Furthermore, Zarghami’s deputy for tourism, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, has said the landmark event gives Iran a chance to dwindle the so-called anti-Iranian sentiments known as Iranophobia. “Qatar’s World Cup offers a unique opportunity to introduce destinations near the host country, and we should take advantage of this opportunity to confront Iranophobia.”

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

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

For instance, some types of food such as lamb meat, onion, wheat, dates, nuts, and grapes are Warm and others such as beef, yogurt, cheese, cucumber, fish, beans, and rice are Cold.

With its fabulous vibrant regional dishes featured in stews, rice dishes, kebabs, beverages, and desserts, Persian cuisine has always been and still is, rich in fresh herbs such as basil, parsley, chives, cress, and mint. In Iran, herbs are usually measured by the kilogram rather than the bunch!

When it comes to Iran, food is also a delightful vehicle for discovering the ancient land that has long been situated at the crossroads of history. A paradise for foodie travelers, Iran is where it’s not just food on the menu. Some believe the Iranian cuisine is itself a metaphor for the country: It’s savory, sweet, fragrant, and incredibly complex.

Iranian cuisine delicately combines characteristics and peculiarities of the Near and West Asia, India, and East Asia due to Iran’s checkered antiquity and the country’s location as a hub of trade between East and West on the historic Silk Roads. Similarly, the Persians have influenced many cuisines as part of their once policy of expansion.

Meaning “Town of the Sultans”, Soltanieh was briefly the capital of Persia’s Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century.

and historic core of Tehran. The palace complex is one of the oldest in the Iranian capital, originally built during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) in the historic walled city.

Following extensions and additions, it received its most characteristic features in the 19th century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family (1789-1925). At present, the Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates.

As mentioned by UNESCO, the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

Hoard of relics, donated by two Iranian families, on show at Tehran museum

TEHRAN – A hoard of relics, donated by two Iranian families, has been put on show at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran.

“The hoard comprises some 1,500 objects some of which date 7,000 years,” the museum director Jebrael Nokandeh told ISNA on Wednesday.

“Since the collection was handed over to the National Museum almost a week ago, during this time, the archaeological authenticity of about one thousand pieces has been confirmed,” Nokandeh said.

“Determining the authenticity of the other ones requires more detailed research and studies, however, up to the moment, some of which have been proved the lack originality.”

The collection includes objects resembling; Luristan (Lorestan) bronzes; Sassanid silver vessels excavated from northern Iran, and what has been excavated from Kerman’s Shahdad region, the official explained.

Moreover, the collation includes a variety of coins from the Achaemenid era onwards, bracelets, necklaces, crossbows, swords, and arches, the official noted.

The majority of the donated objects are made from iron, bronze, gold, and copper, Nokandeh added.

Luristan Bronzes comprise small cast objects decorated with bronze sculptures from the Early Iron Age, found in large numbers in Lorestan



and its neighboring Kermanshah province, in western Iran. Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

In many ways, Iran under Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that during the Sassanid era (224-651 CE), the art and architecture of

the nation experienced a general renaissance. In 2018, UNESCO added “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”, which is an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran, to its World Heritage list. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

In terms of coins and coinage, according to Encyclopedia Iranica, standardized units of metal used as a medium of exchange were first introduced into Persia during the reign of Achaemenid Darius I (521-486 BC).

The essential advantage of using metals for currency, apart from durability, is that they can

be shaped by melting and casting. Casting, therefore, has always been an integral part of the coin manufacturing process.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and India.

Chock-full of priceless objects showcasing the juicy history of the nation, the National Museum showcases ceramics, pottery, stone figures, and carvings, mostly taken from excavations at Persepolis, Ismail Abad (near Qazvin), Shush, Rey, and Turang Tappeh to name a few.

The main building of the National Museum, designed by French architect André Godard and completed in 1928, is one of the more attractive modern buildings in Tehran, blending Sassanian principles such as the grand iwan-style entrance with art deco-style brickwork.

Inside, among the finds from Shush, there’s a stone capital of a winged lion, some delightful pitchers and vessels in animal shapes, and colorful glazed bricks decorated with double-winged mythical creatures. A copy of the diorite stele detailing the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, found at Shush in 1901, is also displayed – the original being in Paris.

Sheikh Safi ensemble to host Turkish Alevists on Eid al-Ghadir

TEHRAN – The Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardebil, northwest Iran is scheduled to be hosting a delegation of Turkey’s Alevi community on Eid al-Ghadir, the day on which Imam Ali (AS) was appointed as the first Shia Imam as his successor and Muslims’ next leader.

The Eid al-Ghadir celebration, which falls on July 18, is planned to be held jointly in the World Heritage site, in response to a request made by the president of Turkey’s Alevi community Ali Yildirim on Thursday during his visit, Ardebil’s tourism chief has said.

In recent years, efforts have been made to facilitate the presence of Turkish Alevists in the province to develop foreign tourism and religious tourism, which are yielding positive results today, and after the coronavirus pandemic, Nader Fallahi explained on Friday.

It was also decided to establish a cultural and tourist complex and a hotel complex jointly and a direct flight from Ardabil to Turkey was proposed,

the official added.

Alevism is a local tradition of Islam, whose adherents follow Haji Bektash Veli’s mystical teachings, believed to have been passed down by Imam Ali (AS) and the Twelve Imams.

Alevists don’t have binding religious dogmas, and their teachings are handed down by a spiritual leader. Approximately 20 percent of Turkish people are adherents of Alevism, and it is commonly practiced in Turkey.

Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble is a microcosm of Sufism where arrays of harmonious sun-scorched domes, well-preserved and richly-ornamented facades and interiors, and, above all, an atmosphere of peace and tranquility have all made a must-see stopover while traversing northwest Iran.

The ensemble is named after Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardebili (1253-1334), who was a Sufi philosopher and leader of Islamic mystic practices. It embodies the essence of Sufi traditions by having a



microcosmic ‘city’, which embraces a mosque, a madrasa, a library, a cistern, a bathhouse, kitchens, and a hospital, as well as religious houses amongst others. The place also boasts a remarkable collection of antique artifacts.

Developed between the early 16th century and the end of the 18th century, this place of spiritual retreat enjoys principal elements of traditional Iranian architecture to make the best use of existing space for accommodating a variety of functions.

Neyshabur potential destination for intl. sightseers, Tajik tourism official says

TEHRAN – The ancient Iranian city of Neyshabur holds considerable potential to become a destination for international sightseers, a Tajik tourism official has said.

“Neyshabur can be a travel destination for foreign tourists,” Habibullah Amirbeikzadeh, the deputy chairman of the Tajik Tourism Development Committee said on Wednesday.

He made the remarks during a visit to the mausoleum of scientist-poet Omar Khayyam, which is located in the northeastern city.

“The people of Tajikistan love Iranians wholeheartedly, and we are proud to speak Persian as well,” the official explained.

“Neyshabur can be a travel



destination for foreign tourists to make their journey more memorable.”

Situated in a well-manicured garden, the mausoleum is where the 12th-century Persian polymath, mathematician, astronomer, historian, philosopher, and poet is laid to rest.

In ancient times, Neyshabur was home to many great men of science, art, and culture and today

it hosts tourists who go to visit the relics of that period.

Situated some 70 km west of Mashhad, Neyshabur was founded around the third century CE. Narratives say the town derived its name from its alleged founder, the Sasanian king Shapur I.

It grew to prominence in the eighth century and was ruined by invasions and earthquakes in the thirteenth century. After that time, a much smaller settlement was established just north of the ancient town, and the once-bustling metropolis lay underground—until a team of excavators from the Metropolitan Museum arrived in the mid-twentieth century.

The ancient city underwent

rounds of excavation as of 1935 by experts from the Department of Near Eastern Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, its affiliated archaeologists worked at Neyshabur between 1935 and 1940, returning for a final season in the winter of 1947–48.

The excavators had been drawn to the city due to its fame in the medieval period as a regional capital and it was home to many religious scholars. It was also known as an economic center.

Neyshabur was once situated on the famed Silk Roads, which ran from China to the Mediterranean Sea, crossing Central Asia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey along the way.

Masuleh holds workshop on handmade dolls

TEHRAN – On Thursday, the touristic village of Masuleh in northern Iran held a day-long workshop on indigenous dolls in a bid to commemorate International Museum Day.

The workshop was aimed to empower breadwinner women who are engaged in weaving traditional dolls and puppets, CHTN quoted a local official as saying on Thursday.

Handmade dolls have long been famed as one of the souvenirs of Masouleh estimated to date for a millennium. Experts believe that the existence of numerous graveyards inner and

outside of the village proves its old age.

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.

Last month, a selection of 46 Iranian puppets was added to the national heritage list. Being kept at the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), National Museum of Children’s Art and Literature in Tehran, the puppets date back to the late Qajar (1789-1925)

and early Pahlavi (1925-1979) eras.

Home to stunning landscapes, Masouleh is one of the many stepped villages that are quite common to find around the country, especially in Iranian Kurdistan and around Mashhad.

Masuleh is famed for its Lego-shaped earthen houses built on another’s rooftop. He added the discovery of archaeological remains at such high altitudes would help archaeologists to shed new light on the human adaptation to the high Alborz mountains from prehistoric times up to recent centuries.

Intl. meeting on SDS control to be held in Tehran

TEHRAN – Tehran will host an international meeting on controlling sand and dust storms (SDSs) in July, with the presence of the ministers of 12 countries that give rise to the highest amount of dust, IRNA reported.

It is therefore planned to implement a regional action plan for the Persian Gulf, especially for the countries with the highest dust emissions, Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, head of the national working group for SDS mitigation, stated.

“There are numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements with neighboring countries, including Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, but no operational action has been taken, so the agreement alone is not enough and this issue should be resolved with the help of international institutions.

Two sub-action plans have been developed for West Asia, including Iraq, Syria, Iran, and the Persian Gulf, and for Central Asia, including its eastern, northern, and north-eastern neighbors, including Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which should be implemented with the cooperation of the United Nations Economic and Social Organization for Asia and the Pacific (SCAP), the Asia-Pacific Center for Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), he explained.

Internal and external sources

The SDSs phenomenon has been plaguing the country for several years and has caused problems in many provinces. According to experts, natural and human factors are involved in the occurrence and severity of this phenomenon which is mainly caused by excessive con-



sumption of water and drying up reservoirs.

Over the past two years, the precipitation rate has been on a downward trend, as a result, sources of sand and dust storms (SDSs) have increased compared to a year before, Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management said.

The internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generating an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, about 1.460 million hectares are dried wetlands.

Some 4.23 million tons of dust are raised per year, which means the loss of soil fertility will hit the agricultural sector.

All the SDSs sources are not located in Iran, 300 million hectares in the neighboring countries are giving rise to SDSs, which transport dust into Iran. The total dust density is estimated at about 150 million tons.

In fact, the dust is raised from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in the northeast as well as Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan in the south, southwest, and west.

What are the consequences?

In 2021, APDIM published a report entitled “Sand and Dust Storms Risk Assessment in Asia and the Pacific” which found significant findings on the impact of dust storms on agriculture, energy, environment, aviation, human health, glacier melting, and cities.

The report reveals that sand and dust storms pose risks to both society and the environment and directly threaten the achievement of 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Mobilizing coordinated regional action is paramount to reducing risk and strengthening resilience to the negative transboundary impact of sand and dust storms.

Findings show that more than 6 million people in different cities in China, Iran, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan have been breathing unhealthy levels of air pollution caused by dust storms for at least 10 months in 2019.

In Central Asia, 80 percent of the total population is exposed to high levels of poor air quality caused by severe dust storms. In addition, large areas of agricultural land are affected by dust particles. In Turkmenistan, 71 percent, Pakistan 49

percent, and Uzbekistan 44 percent of agricultural lands are affected by dust particles.

Large amounts of SDSs, with high salt content, are toxic to plants and also reduce soil and water quality. Some crops are more sensitive to this phenomenon. For example, dust can dramatically reduce cotton production considerably.

SDSs also have a significant impact on the energy sector. The assessment shows that in only a small part of the energy sector (economic losses due to reduced efficiency of solar generators), dust storms incurred losses of more than \$107 million in India, \$46 million in China, and \$37 million in Pakistan.

The report identifies areas that are expected to see an increase or decrease in dust storms over the next decade, based on forecasts of drought and water stress, as well as the current situation.

Iran forerunner in fighting SDSs

Iran is a leading country in the knowledge and analysis of dust storms and has conducted some of the most important research in this field. Therefore, it is recommended to rely on this ability and make more assessments of the economic and social impact in different sectors.

The country has a history of leadership in the international community in dealing with dust storms as a cross-border disasters.

Addressing issues such as climate change and natural disasters, such as dust storms that occur in different regions and their influence extends beyond political boundaries, requires bilateral or multilateral negotiations between governments and through developed political frameworks or international organizations such as the United Nations.

Organ donation: dead or alive?

From page 1 ► In Iran, about 5,000 to 8,000 people die each year from brain death, half of whom, or about 3,000, have transplanted organs. Unfortunately, 1,000 families, or one-third, are satisfied with organ donation.

In Iran, there are over 25,000 patients in need of transplants on the waiting lists for various organs, but unfortunately, 7 to 10 of them die every day due to the lack of a transplanted organ, accounting for over 3,000 a year.

Considering that 7,000 transplant recipients are buried annually due to family dissatisfaction and 3,000 needy patients die, on the other hand, it can be considered that if only half of the buried organs could save the lives of all.

Organ donation in the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2021) has increased so far by 66 percent compared to the same period in the previous year, Katayoun Najafizadeh, director of the Iranian Organ Donation Association, has stated.

Shortly before the patient is pronounced dead, the family should agree to donate his/her organs,

which can save almost 10 lives and help others through tissue donation.

People who are on an organ waiting list typically have end-stage organ disease that significantly impacts their quality of life and maybe near the end of their life. Receiving an organ can become a life-changing event for these people.

It can also help a family work through the grieving process and deal with their loss by knowing their loved one is helping save the lives of others.

Organ donation is an act supported by almost all religions. This includes Catholics, Protestants, Islam, and most branches of Judaism who see it as the final act of love and generosity toward others.

Iran tops Asian countries in organ donation

Mehdi Shadnough, head of the Health Ministry's center for transplantation and disease management, announced in June 2020 that Iran is ranked first for organ donation among Asian countries.

“The country's organ donation rate is 14.34 per



A two-year-old girl who suffered brain death and donated two kidneys and a liver at Masih Daneshvari Hospital in Tehran, on January 18, 2014.

one million people,” he noted.

In February 2019, Shadnough said that the organ donation rate has increased by 60 times over the past 18 years. Although Iran ranks 26 in organ donation in the world.

Organ donation of brain death has reached up to 60 percent, he said, lamenting that the country ranks 21st regarding organ donation from brain dead patients in the world while ranking 14th regarding organ transplant from alive patients.

According to the figures revealed by the International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation (IRODaT), Spain leads the world in organ donation.

With the rate of 14.34 per one million people, Iran is ranked first for organ donation among Asian countries.

ENGLISH IN USE

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‘Climate change impact on Iran doubles world average’

The effects of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, while southern provinces of the country are more likely to bear the consequences, secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office has said.

“The Hoomand-Absard station in Damavand county in northeast of Tehran experienced a temperature increase of 2.7 °C over the past 50 years, while over the past 100 years, the temperature rise was about 0.76 °C,” ISNA quoted Mohammad Darvish as saying on Tuesday.

Climate change impact is increasing in southern part of the country, among which Yazd province's condition has raised concern, he said, adding, the industries operating in the province must reduce their dependency on water, otherwise water scarcity might worsen in the region.

تغییرات اقلیمی در ایران دو تاسه برابر جهان

محمد درویش، دبیر سیاست محیط‌زیست مرکز بررسی‌های استراتژیک نهاد ریاست جمهوری گفته، ایران با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تاسه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

محمد درویش، در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به گزارش‌های منتشر شده توسط سازمان هواشناسی، وزارت نیرو و سازمان آب، اظهار کرد: ایستگاه هومند آسرد در دامنه‌های کوه دماوند طی نیم‌قرن اخیر افزایش دمایی حدود ۲.۷ درجه سلیسیوس را نشان می‌دهد و این مسئله در حالی رخ داده است که در ۱۰۰ سال گذشته، حدود ۰.۷۶ درجه سلیسیوس افزایش دما داشته‌ایم.

وی اضافه کرد: هر چقدر به شهرهای جنوبی‌تر کشورمان نزدیک می‌شویم، تغییرات اقلیمی هم بیشتر می‌شود به طوری که از این میان یزد وضعیت نگران‌کننده‌ای دارد. باید میزان وابستگی صنایع در یزد نسبت به آب کاهش پیدا کند چرا که در غیر این صورت می‌تواند شتاب خشک‌سالی‌ها را افزایش دهد.

SOCIETY

MAY 21, 2022

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

7

Parvaneh Vossough, an epitome of humanitarian devotion

The late Prof. Parvaneh Vossough, pioneer of modern pediatric hematology and oncology in Iran, one of the foremost global authorities in pediatric oncology, devoted her entire life voluntarily to those in need of her knowledge, experience, and guidance.

Prof. Vossough studied medicine at Tehran University and completed her internship and pediatric residency at renowned medical centers in the USA. Afterward, she moved to Washington D.C. where she completed her fellowship program in pediatric hematology and oncology at Georgetown University medical center.

Thereafter, she was appointed as an attending pediatric oncologist at M.D. Anderson Medical Center in Houston, Texas. In spite of various opportunities outside the country, having decided to come back and serve in her country, Iran, she resigned from her position and rejected all other job offers. This was the beginning of a lifelong carrier filled with love and dedication realizing that “cancer is curable”.

The effort Prof. Vossough exerted in establishing the Pediatric Hematology and Oncology

ward in Ai-Asghar Hospital, which led to the establishment of comparable departments in various hospitals, was groundbreaking and among her greatest success stories in the field of cancer treatment, leaving behind a legacy of extremely difficult to match. Throughout her many years of service, Prof. Vossough functioned as a dedicated volunteer without ever collecting any compensation.

Prof. Vossough was the chairwoman of MA-HAK's Board of Trustees and an active member of various medical societies, including the International Society of Pediatric Oncology (INCTR) and the Middle East children with cancer with the most up-to-date, proper, and comprehensive treatment protocols.

Prof. Parvaneh Vossough, born in 1935 in Tafresh, passed away on May 19, 2013, at the age of 78. For us, there are no goodbyes, as she will always be in our hearts.

On May 19, we commemorated her efforts and commitment. May her memory and her fulfilling life of humanitarian devotion give us comfort and direction.

Tribes in Iran

Part 7

In the agricultural census of 1353/1974, the only families counted as tribal were those “not possessing permanent domiciles and dwellings constructed of hard materials . . . but living in black tents” (Markaz-e Amar-e Iran, 1353/1974, p. 1).

Since most tribes, even if wholly nomadic, live in houses built of unbaked bricks or mud and straw in their winter and summer quarters, the narrowness of these two definitions, particularly the last one, and the discrepancy between them and previously used definitions are self-evident.

With so much conceptual disagreement over and above the inherent difficulty of counting families on the move, it is not surprising that the estimates which have been made differ very considerably.

Estimates from the period 1335/1956-1355 /1976 are classified according to the criteria which were used in their compilation. By this means the discrepancies in the figures are to some extent explained.

As regards the figures of 1974, three points require explanation. (1) The figure of 297,000 is not fully comparable with the other figures because it excludes tribes-people who were actually on the move but owned houses made of mud or unbaked bricks in their winter or summer quarters.

(2) The figure of 877,000 is an estimate by the present writer based on the census figure of non-sedentary (as officially defined) and semi-sedentary families, namely 166,645 families, multiplied by the average family size, namely 5.26 persons.

(3) The distinction between “tribal” and “mobile” refers to membership and non-membership of an organized tribe.

All in all, the figures show that, even if the broadest definition is followed, the proportion of the tribal population to the total population has significantly declined, if only because of the more

rapid increase of the urban and sedentary village-dwelling population.

From about 25 percent at the start of the 20th century, the proportion fell to 14 percent at the most in 1976. If the definition “nomadic or potentially nomadic” is accepted as the soundest criterion of tribalism in modern conditions and the figures under that heading are used, the proportion fell to only 7 percent in 1976.

On the subject of the ethnic composition of the tribes of Iran, the available information is also scarce and more or less unreal. From the report of Mirza Mohammad-Hosayn Mostawfi (Daneshpajuh, op-cit., pp. 396-421), it can be inferred that in the early 12th/18th century the proportions of the ethnic groups in the total tribal population excluding the Baluch and the Brahuis were 54 percent Lor and Lak, 33 percent Kurdish, 11 percent Turkish, 9 percent Arab, and 2 percent Jalayer, Qarai, and Lolai.

The consistency of the figures from the late 19th century, apart from those of Zolotarev, is not surprising because the remaining four authors were influenced by each other's estimates.

For the period 1956-76 no reliable estimates are available. The published lists of the tribes are in general so defective that it would be misleading to use them as evidence of ethnic distribution. For example, the list in the encyclopedic volume Iran-shahr (Tehran, 1342/1963, pp. 116-26) provides no data on the number of families in Turkman tribes, the Arabs of Khuzestan, and the Baluch of Sistan and Baluchistan.

The figures given by C. S. Coon (Eliz II, p. 8, table II) seem very unbalanced; his estimate of 1,200,000 for the population of the Arab tribes of Iran is far removed from later estimates of a maximum of 200,000. A list published in 1360/1981 by the Markaz-e Ashayeri-e Iran is also open to question.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

COVID-19 UPDATES ON MAY 20

New cases	228
New deaths	9
Total cases	7,229,582
Total deaths	141,262
New hospitalized patients	47
Patients in critical condition	706
Total recovered patients	7,030,355
Diagnostic tests conducted	51,942,118
Doses of vaccine injected	149,627,521



MAY 21, 2022

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best form of devotion to the service of Allah is not to make a show of it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:13:01 Evening: 20:27 Dawn: 4:14 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:55 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



Sculpture

* Ehsan Garmsiri is currently showcasing sculptures from his series "Ax" in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery.

The exhibit runs until June 1 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



* An exhibition of sculptures by Kusha Musavi is currently underway at Aran Gallery.

The exhibition will run until June 3 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



Painting

* An exhibition entitled "Bohemia" is showcasing the latest paintings by Leila Eslami at Shirin Gallery

The exhibits will run until June 7 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



* Paintings by Shiva Nuran are currently on view in an exhibition at Aria Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until May 30 at the gallery located at No. 10 Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St., Vali-e Asr Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Ramin Rostamzadeh is currently underway at Atbin Gallery.

Entitled "Dystopia", the exhibit will run until May 30 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.

Photo

* Photos from Maryam Zandi's series "Revolution" are currently on view in an exhibition at Dena Gallery.

The exhibit name "A Narration" will run until June 10 at the gallery that can be found at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.



Sculpture/painting

* Golestan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Baraneh Raisi.

Entitled "Marionette", the exhibition will be running until June 1 at the gallery that can be found at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

* An exhibition displaying sculptures and paintings by Behnam Nurmohammadzadeh, Ahad Vatani, Mehran Yusefi, Parvaneh Razzaqi, Nushin Rezaei, Reza Alizadeh and dozens of other artists is currently underway at Ragadid Complex.

Behdad Najafi is the curator of the exhibit, which will run until June 10 at the gallery located at the Enqelab Cultural and Sports Complex.



Multimedia

* Artworks in various media by Negin Soleimani, Elnaz Asri-Nobar and Mohaddeseh Padar are currently on display in an exhibition at Hoom Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until May 28 at the gallery that can be found at No. 2, 4th Alley off Qaem-Maqam St.

* An exhibition of artworks in different media by Fatemeh Zendedel, Mahbubeh Alami, Shabnam Jahanbani, Hamidreza Alidusti, Sara Shahrudi, Majid Karimi and several other artists is underway at Shokuh Gallery.

Entitled "Khark Guys", the exhibit will continue until May 24 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. off Andarzgu Blvd.



Osman Mohammad-Parast, dotar virtuoso and top master of Khorasan maqami music, dies at 94

From Page 1 ► "My father told me, 'Don't panic anymore, I wasn't aware that you perform songs about the Prophet; you deserve all the money you've spent in this way an I'll give more money to improve your knowledge of music,'" Mohammad-Parast recounted.

Osman then set up a grocery on his own and purchased a bus working on a route between Khaf and Mashhad. He then joined charitable groups setting up schools in remote regions.

He made some modifications to dotar playing, which were common in Khorasan maqami music, and initiated his own style.

He made a major breakthrough in dotar playing, which was highly regarded by many top Iranian musicians such as vocalists Mohammadreza Shajarian, Sima Bina and Shahram Nazeri, and kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor and tar master Jalil Shahnaz, with whom he gave several performances.



This file photo shows Khorasan maqami music master Osman Mohammad-Parast performing on the dotar.

One of his smash hits is "Navai Navai", a mystic song composed by Tabib Esfahani, which has also been performed by Gholamali Puratai, Qorban Soleimani and several other singers of Khorasan maqami music.

He gave concerts in numerous countries, including Germany, the U.S., Russia, Japan and England.

"Many people don't believe that I have performed the pieces only with a dotar," he once said.

His home had been a favorite haunt of masters and learners of Khorasan maqami music over the past few decades.

The Khorasan Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts named him a Living Bearer of Intangible Heritage and honored him with an Eternal Tile, which was embedded on the wall of his house in 2017.

As a Sunni, Mohammad-Parast had said that he learned music from God, Whom he believed is a lover of music. He also believed that playing the dotar is a calling upon God.

He selected names of Shia saints such as Imam Reza (AS), Imam Javad (AS), Imam Hussein (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (S) for his children.

In 2017, he was decorated with a medal from the Islamic Culture Capital. Mashhad was selected as the Islamic Culture Capital for 2017 by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

Croatian scholar Yasmin Dar writes travelogue of Iran

TEHRAN – Croatian scholar Yasmin Dar (Yasmina Mehic) has written her travelogue of Iran in a book entitled "On the Roads of Persia".

The Croatian publishing house Cekape plans to release the book on June 15, 2022.

In a meeting with Dar on Thursday, Iranian ambassador to Zagreb, Parviz Esmaeili, praised her for writing the book.

Dar visited Iran in 2018. She wrote the book through a series of shorter units, based on her visit to the Iranian cities such as Tabriz, Isfahan and Shiraz.

However, what seems even more important is that travel through Persia leads to an inner journey that opens up many questions about appearance, identity, thinking about the meaning of life and the world in which we live, editor Darija Zilic wrote in a preface to the book.

In this dreamy-realistic prose, the author plunges into the depths of her own being through the spiritual character of the Persian poet Hafez, but her narrative is not solely mystical.

In a foreword, Ivana Pavelic, wrote: "On the Roads of Persia" is without a doubt an impressive work, one of the few of its kind in the Croatian literary sky."

"In this extraordinary time, when all travels for several years have become difficult to achieve and we can only reach the desired destination with our ideas, the author's book offers to transport us to new spaces and open new vistas.

"Experienced travelers will especially enjoy this book, which meticulously describes those things that the average casual traveler misses, and from which the passionate traveler, but also the talented author speaks," she added

Dar has also said, "When I was 14 years old, I stepped into that magnificent Istanbul, I never dreamed that it would be my journey without returning."

"By digging into the book 'Santhan' by Borne Bebek, new worlds opened up to me. With Darko Berljak, I stepped into the distant world of Tibet and with awe entered Potal, a once forbidden place for women.

"Since then, there have been numerous trips



A poster for Croatian writer Yasmin Dar's book "On the Roads of Persia".

in all directions of the world, sometimes in company and sometimes alone.

"And here, after so many years of walking around the world, I decided to write 'On the Roads of Persia', created between reality and dream. These events forced me to stop a little while in the tours, and I was inspired to write, and thus touch only a part of this wonderful Earth. But maybe some will offer this or another time, and maybe understand others in their personality."

Céspedes "Forbidden Notebook" available at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – Italian-Cuban feminist Alba de Céspedes's classic domestic novel "The Forbidden Notebook" ("Quaderno Proibito") has been published in Persian.

Published by Elmi-Farhangi, the book has been translated by Bahman Farzaneh.

"The Forbidden Notebook" centers the inner life of a dissatisfied housewife living in postwar Rome.

Valeria Cossati never suspected how unhappy she had become with the shabby gentility of her bourgeois life—until she begins to jot down her thoughts and feelings in a little black book she keeps hidden in a closet.

This new secret activity leads her to scrutinize herself and her life more closely, and she soon realizes that her individuality is being stifled by her devotion



Front cover of the Persian edition of Alba de Céspedes's novel "The Forbidden Notebook".

and sense of duty toward her husband, daughter, and son.

As the conflicts between parents and children, husband and wife, and friends and lovers intensify, what goes on behind the Cossatis' facade of middle-class respectability gradually comes to light, tearing the family's fragile fabric apart.

An exquisitely crafted

portrayal of domestic life, "The Forbidden Notebook" recognizes the universality of human aspirations.

De Céspedes (1911–1997) was a bestselling writer greatly influenced by the cultural developments that lead to and resulted from World War II.

In her writing, she instills her female characters with subjectivity. In her work, there

Arabic Influences in Persian literature

Part 3

Kay Kavus ibn Eskandar advised his son in the Qabus-nama (1082): "Adorn your own letters with quotations, proverbs, Quranic verses and traditions of the Prophet; and if a letter is to be in Persian, do not write it in pure Persian, because that would be unacceptable." (Kay Kavus Ibn Iskandar, A Mirror for Princes).

Nezami Aruzi, writing in the Chahar Maqala in 1155, advised the perfect secretary to be thoroughly familiar with both the Arabic and the Persian classics.

On the other hand, Nezam ul-Molk (d. 1092) quotes with approval in the Siasat-nama a saying attributed to Hasan of Basra (d. 728): "The man of learning is not he who knows a great deal of Arabic and has the ability to use Arabic words and constructions. Rather he is learned who is competent in any branch of scholarship, whatever his language."

However, he does add: "It is all the better if he does know Arabic; God having sent the Quran in

the Arabic tongue and the Prophet Muhammad (S) having been of Arabic speech" (R. Levy, The Persian Language).

Whatever the motive, the intermixture of Arabic with Persian continued apace, until by the 12th century some works contained as many as eighty percent of Arabic words.

The influence was not confined to the incorporation of new words (though the point was reached where any Arabic word was considered eligible for use, and dictionaries were scoured for fresh material to inflate the vocabulary of learned writers).

Arabic grammatical usage also found its way into Persian, though usually only with Arabic words. Thus agreement of adjectives became usual (sefat-e hamida, omur-e haqiqa); Arabic plurals are used side by side with Persian (olama and aleman); Arabic verbal nouns replace Arabic adjectives with Persian noun endings (bokhl for bakhili, ezzat for azizi); the Arabic dual makes its appearance in particular cases (tarafayn);

as does the tanwin in the accusative (sam'an wa ta'atan, nasyan mansiyan).

Later on complete Arabic phrases and even sentences could be incorporated (magbul al-qawl, ala ayyi hal). By the post-medieval period there seemed no longer to be any distinction in the mind of the writer between Arabic and Persian words, which were used interchangeably (though it should be stressed that this did not apply to syntax except marginally (be-zadand zadan-i sakht = zaraba zarban shadidan, and so on).

Persian words could even acquire Arabic suffixes (dehat) or forms (dahaqin) and vice-versa (talabidan, raqsidan).

Stylistically the influence was more noticeable in prose than in poetry. Foremost was the use of saj', rhymed prose, a feature of Arabic style from very early times, as indeed of related Semitic literatures.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued