

Innocent Killers!

► Page 3

Report **T**

Netanyahu's government is end of Zionism

Israel is a divided society racially and religiously. Since its establishment in 1948 or even many years earlier, the Jewish Agency sought to bring Jews from all over the world to the Palestinian territories in order to provide the necessary population for the formation of a so-called nation-state.

A cosmopolitan society may provide opportunities for individuals and society in Western democracy, but in West Asia, it can be a threat to that society with its special conditions.

The Jews gathered from different races and lands in Asia, Europe, Muslim, and Christian countries. They were expelled from European countries with all those historical humiliations. They are all gathered in a colony. They have no cultural identity in their newly adopted country and the common culture imposed on them by the political unit.

It is this disharmony in Israeli society that has created problems for it in the past few decades and caused people like Baruch Goldstein and Yigal Amir to commit terrorist acts in the occupied territories. ► Page 5

Parliament speakers of Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan hold talks

TEHRAN- Trilateral discussions between the parliament speakers of Iran, Turkey, and the Azerbaijan Republic took place on Monday in Antalya, Turkey.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf of Iran's meeting with Mustafa Sentop of Turkey, and Sahiba Gafarova of Azerbaijan took place on the sidelines of plenary session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA).

They talked about important regional concerns in an effort to improve political and economic ties.

The deputy speaker of the Iraqi parliament and the Iranian parliament speaker also met separately earlier on Monday.

Iran insists it won't tolerate change in geopolitical borders

Iran's senior lawmaker stated that his country will never tolerate any geopolitical changes to boundaries in the Caucasus region and opposes any extra-regional intervention in the region. ► Page 2

Opinion **T**

Expert Ghasempour hits out at FFIRI over delay in coach's appointment

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Ebrahim Gahsempour, a member of the Iran Football Federation's technical committee, criticized the federation over delay in appointment of senior and U23 Iran national teams head coaches.

Team Melli are without a head coach after the 2022 World Cup. Carlos Queiroz's contract with the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) is over, and his replacement is yet to be appointed.

The same, even worse, situation is for the U23 national team known as Omid Team.

Less than nine months into the 2024 AFC U23 Asian Cup qualification, ► Page 3

Book festival promotes reading among nomad children



© ISNA / Alireza Mohammadi

A man wearing a puppet costume plays with nomad children during the Taste of Book with Nomads Festival in the Shushtar region, Khuzestan Province, on January 9, 2023.

The festival has been launched by the Khuzestan Public Libraries Office to promote reading in the remote areas of the province. This festival held biweekly in each

region takes groups of reading promoters to meet with nomad children, presenting them with the latest offerings by Iranian publishers.

Iran opens 8 trade centers in Africa

TEHRAN - Aiming to develop trade with Africa, Iran has opened eight trade centers in the countries of the continent, IRNA reported on Tuesday, quoting a senior official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) as saying.

"A network of eight business centers have been activated across Africa to provide a wide range of services to manufacturing and

exporting companies that have a presence in the African market," Director-General of TPO's Africa Office Mohammad-Sadeq Qanadzadeh said.

Speaking at a conference on the trade capacities of Iran and North Africa, Qanadzadeh stated that these centers are located in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal, Nigeria, Algeria, and

South Africa and this network will be further expanded and completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Mentioning TPO's measures for the development of trade between Iran and Africa, the official said that attending four major exhibitions in Africa, exchange of more than 100 business delegations, holding a series of conferences to introduce African ► Page 4

Tehran hosts intl. conference on social entrepreneurship

TEHRAN - The First International Conference on "Social Entrepreneurship with Tourism Approach" (ICSET 2023) was held at the University of Tehran on Tuesday.

Social entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals, startups, and entrepreneurs develop and fund solutions that directly address social issues.

A social entrepreneur, therefore, is a person who explores business opportunities that have a positive impact on their community, society, or the world.

While sometimes confused with nonprofit organizations, social entrepreneurship is a for-profit endeavor, even though a greater emphasis is placed on creating social or environmental changes.

Representatives from the universities of England, Malaysia, Italy, and Iran, as well as Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, delivered speeches during the event. ► Page 7



© IRNA / Amin Jalali

Syrian deputy FM meets Amir Abdollahian

TEHRAN - Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Ayman Sosan met late on Monday with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and Ali Asghar Khaji, the senior advisor to Iranian foreign minister for Special Political Affairs.

Amir Abdollahian and Sosan discussed the expansion of bilateral ties and the latest developments in Syria and the region, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry. ► Page 3

Visit Sarab-e Qandil, a puzzling bas-relief of Sassanids

TEHRAN - Reliefs provide important testimony to important moments in both human history and art history. These rock carvings can be seen pretty much everywhere in Iran and even in the world. Who knows, perhaps some of their tales are still untold.

One of them is Sarab-e Qandil, which dates from the Sassanid era (224-651 CE) and is named after the Persian phrase for "ice cold

spring." In the southern province of Fars, close to modern Kazerun, is where the perplexing bas-relief can be found.

A queen is shown giving her husband a lotus flower in the bas-relief, who is generally thought to be the Iranian king Bahram II (r. 276-293). A prince holding a powerful ring is likely their son, the future king Bahram III, as the two characters exchange glances.

Like almost Iranian rock reliefs, this one is located near a source of water. The relief is contained in a quadrangular frame, carved on an isolated rock beside the bed of a river, without having been much eroded or damaged by the water.

Its isolation from frequented roads might explain its excellent state of conservation: it was not accessible to vandals. ► Page 6

From Inside **T**

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Tehran Papers **T**

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

An insult due to the failure of chaos project

Referring to the Charlie Hebdo case, Farhikhtegan wrote: Put yourself in the shoes of the architects of the chaos project. You've been trying for four months to say it's done, in a few hours, a few days, a few months, etc. ► Page 2

Iran apprehends 13 persons linked to Mossad

TEHRAN- Iranian Intelligence Ministry announced on Tuesday that it has detained 13 members of a network connected to the Israeli Mossad "spy and terrorist" service.

23 members of operational and logistical component of the terrorist network have been identified and as of this date 13 members of the network who were inside Iran have been detained in the provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Yazd, West Azarbaijan, and Golestan, the ministry stated.

It also said their different equipment have been seized.

The network's mastermind, under the moniker Sirous, resided in a European country and made touch with the operational agents in Iran using the social media platforms Instagram and WhatsApp, it said.

The terrorist network had plans to use the recent riots in some areas of Iran to assassinate a military official, carry out several acts of sabotage in major cities, and transfer massive amounts of explosives from the southern sea borders to Iran, the ministry explained.

The effective counter-espionage operation was termed by the ministry as the second significant blow dealt to the phony and fictitious Zionist regime in less than six months.

"Monster's Shadow" writer blends Iranian, Chinese legends in new book

TEHRAN - Young adult fiction writer Abbas Jahangirian has blended two Iranian legends from the Shahnameh and a Chinese myth in his new book.

The book entitled "Nian Hu and Sorcerer Scarecrow" will be published by Tuti Books, a major publisher of children's books in Tehran, according to what he told the Persian service of Honaronline.

The writer said that there are striking similarities between the love story of Bijan and Manijeh and the legend of Zahhak, the Serpent King from Ferdowsi's masterpiece Shahnameh and the Chinese myth "Zhinu and Niulang" ("The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl").

"Therefore, I blended the stories to create a new saga," he noted. ► Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

An insult due to the failure of chaos project

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

from page 1 ► What do you do when nothing happens and your reader is angry? In order to calm it down, to relieve the feeling of great failure, insult is the easiest thing.

The fact is that the Charlie Hebdo magazine project has no positive effect on the rioters inside Iran. The result of chaos in Iran is only to unite more people and Iran lovers. Like the effect of waving the separatist flag in Berlin.

Outside Iran's borders, irrationality and satire definitely have no positive effect on intellectuals, academics, and true freedom seekers.

The only function of such an action is to resuscitate the dying opponents outside the country. A minimal result and of course with a high cost for Macron's government.

Iran: Sanctions for defending the country

In response to Canada's sanctions, the Iran newspaper says: "Canada has placed Iran newspaper on the sanctions list, considering its crime defending the Islamic Republic, supporting the IRGC Quds Force and resistance groups such as Lebanon's Hezbollah.

There are a few things to say about it. First of all, Canada openly supported rioters in recent unrest and always tried to interfere in the chaos project against Iran.

Now that the great conspiracy against Iran has failed and the U.S. and European countries are stuck in a deadlock, Ottawa has once again been assigned to cover up the failure of the chaos project in Iran with sanctions, but propaganda is not able to prevent the failure of America, Europe, and Canada in the face of Iran.

Canada has declared another case of the newspaper supporting the Islamic Republic and Quds Force, while we and all our colleagues at the newspaper are proud of it.

A country like Canada, where terrorists have always grown, should be angry with strong Iran and the powerful Quds Force, which thwarted the U.S. project in West Asia.

Thirdly, the enemies of the Islamic Republic are confused and dizzy these days and they frustratingly are trying to give hope to a bunch of thugs like Reza Pahlavi, Masih Alinejad, and fake celebrities and run away from chaos out of frustration."

Etemaad: Do principlists change their attitude to social issues?

Etemaad addressed the approach of the fundamentalists towards the hijab and wrote: Gholam Ali Haddad Adel's "salutation" in a live television program to women "with incomplete hijab" who remained loyal to the Islamic Republic, is a unique act in the history of principlists and perhaps in the history of the Islamic Republic.

"Salam" (hello) to the attraction of women with incomplete hijab shows that for the first time that these women were officially recognized to be respected.

Also, "salaam" was a farewell to the views of principlists who either accepted women with "full hijab or considered them without hijab".

"Haddad Adel's salute has nothing to do with principlists in general, some of them think differently."

Arman-e Emrooz: Temporary nuclear agreement is possible

Arman-e Emrooz writes about the possibility of a temporary agreement between Iran and

the United States and quotes a foreign policy expert as saying: "Secret consultations have been conducted between Iran and the United States, and it seems that some countries are conveying the message between the two countries."

It seems that the revival of the JCPOA is still the first scenario that will be affected by the developments in the coming days.

The second scenario is a limited agreement between Iran and the United States; first, not to let tension between the parties escalate. Second, Iran does not develop its nuclear program, and the United States allows limited oil sales by Iran and reduces banking sanctions in return so that Iran receives the money from oil sales.

This limited agreement will probably be step by step so that the both sides can build trust. It should be noted that the death of the JCPOA will never be announced because President Biden will be at the Oval Office until 2024 and does not want to take the path of war and tension.

Keyhan: Hijab flag of the revolution

On Hijab, Keyhan wrote: "Women and girls who think that the enemy spends so much to persuade girls with no hijab in our society through hundreds of satellite channels and Instagram and other social media applications, should ask themselves why the enemy is worried about only their hijab?

They have to ask themselves why they, instead of concerning their education or strengthening the family and solving the marriage problem, insist only on not wearing hijab.

On the other hand, if they really believe in the freedom of dress, why is a girl with a hijab in France, which apparently sympathizes with Iranian girls and women, not allowed to study in universities and schools?

Is a girl with a hijab allowed to work in these anti-Iran satellite channels that believe in freedom of dress?

Therefore, the enemy and its media, want to destroy the Iranian Islamic culture and take revenge on the Islamic hijab as one of the most important symbols and flags of the Islamic Revolution.

Arman-e Melli: Reformists criticize government more

Arman-e Melli discusses the political approach of the reformers and advises them to critique the government more.

It says, "The reformists have to convey the difficulties that exist in the society to the statesmen", and "the current situation can create risks for the country."

Under the current situation, foreigners are trying to tighten the siege on Iran every day, it writes. Today, the situation is such that Iran's enemies seek to isolate it from the world, it adds.

The reformers should express their point of view frankly since they have performed well in domestic and foreign policy and have not allowed the enemies to achieve their goals.

From this point of view, they should help the government with their criticisms of the existing situation, so that the government will "rectify some of its approaches and the country will find clam," the paper writes.

erating with the hostile United States government against the Islamic Republic."

Vandecasteele received a sentence of 2.5 years in jail, 74 lashes, and a \$1 million fine for "professional smuggling of foreign cash" with the sum of \$500,000

Last but not least, the Tehran Revolution Court sentenced him to 12.5 years in jail after determining that he had been convicted of laundering the money he was charged with smuggling.

Parliament speakers of Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan hold talks

Qalibaf says misunderstandings with Azerbaijan cleared up



from page 1 ► Qalibaf made the comment during a separate meeting with his Azerbaijani counterpart.

"The neighboring country of Azerbaijan has special condition from the Islamic Republic of Iran's viewpoint... and the two countries seek to deepen their relations," the Iranian parliament speaker said

in reference to the significance of Tehran-Baku relations in various political, economic, and parliamentary fields.

He added, "We can have good relations at regional and global levels. The closer regional countries get to each other, the better it would be for the region and no extra-regional countries should be allowed to interfere in this regard."

"We do not tolerate any geopolitical alteration in regional borders," he noted.

The top Iranian lawmaker also

told his Azeri counterpart that parliamentary interactions can play a great role in developing relations between the two neighbors.

Gafarova, for her part, urged greater international collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azer-

baijan.

She said that in addition to geography and proximity at the borders, other aspects that bind "our two Muslim nations" together include the fact that many Iranians speak Azeri.

The Azeri official reiterated that his country desires regional sta-

bility and advocates peace and security.

The Asian Parliamentary Assembly is regarded as one of the most significant organizations in Asia which is set up to help advancement of multilateralism.

Turkey hosted the assembly between January 9 and 10, with seven countries participating at the level of speaker and four countries at the level of deputy speaker.

'Misunderstandings with Azerbaijan cleared up'

Qalibaf who returned to Tehran on Tuesday told reporters that the misunderstandings between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan have been cleared up, adding he plans to visit Baku in the future.

The Parliament speaker said also said the APA summit, which was held through video conference in the past three years, was attended by 44 parliamentary delegations at different levels from Asian countries.

Iran voices concerns over Brazil violence

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani has reacted to violent events in Brazil in the wake of the country's inauguration of a new president.

Kanaani has expressed concern about acts of violence, rioting, destruction of public property and attack on democratic and government institutions in Brazil, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Kanaani said the Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the necessity of maintaining stability and security and respect for the rule of law in Brazil under an administration resulting from the vote and will of people.

Supporters of far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro stormed government buildings, including the presidential palace on Sunday a



little more than a week after leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was inaugurated.

The new president called the assailants "fascists" and vowed to punish whoever ram-

paged.

"Whoever did this will be found and punished. Democracy guarantees the right to free expression, but it also requires people to respect institutions," he said on Twitter. "There is no precedent in the history of the country what they did today. For that they must be punished."

Bolsonaro, who had flown out of Brazil on the eve of Lula's inauguration, distanced himself from the Sunday events. "Peaceful demonstrations, within the law, form part of democracy," he tweeted, "However, depredations and invasions of public buildings like those that happened today, as well as those practiced by the left in 2013 and 2017, are exceptions to the rule."

Elite Scholars Center holds France accountable for Charlie Hebdo's indecent act

TEHRAN- In a statement released on Monday, the Elite Scholars Center blamed the French government for the sacrilegious action of the Charlie Hebdo magazine, pointing out that under the guise of free speech, the Paris government permits a "worthless magazine" to continually violate the sanctities of others.

The comment comes just a few days after the French magazine published caricatures insulting Iranian and Muslim beliefs.

The full text of the statement posted on IRNA website follows:

And they (the disbelievers) schemed, and Allah schemed (against them): and Allah is the best of schemers. (Surah Al-Imran Ayat 54)

The vulgar publication of Charlie Hebdo, which is known for dishonoring the values of different religions and even France's own culture, and recently in a shameless act, targeted holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH), this time has targeted hideously the religious Marji' of a significant part of the Muslims of the world, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and has raised the public anger of millions of Muslims and free people all over the world.



Grand Ayatollah Khamenei is the religious Marji' of a significant part of the Muslims all around the world and the leader of the Islamic Revolution, who has fought against the greedy and arrogant governments such as the United States and the fake Israeli regime for more than 40 years, and on the other hand, has stood against the deviant and deceived groups among Muslims like ISIS and this honest persistence has made his popularity increased day by day among the freedom seekers and justice seekers of the world. Also, his precise and sublime thoughts as a great religious Marji' in the field of freedom, women and family, peace and security, environment, religious sanctity (on banning/production and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and many other issues, have made

him more than ever as a cultured thinker, noticed by the elites and intellectuals of the world and the Islamic world. (Those interested can refer to the multilingual website of khamenei.ir to learn more about his thoughts.)

Since the recognition of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei has always been in conflict with the interests of the hated and murderous Zionists who are ruling the world, they have censored him in the international media to the maximum extent over these 40 years. But since the politics of censorship has failed today, the assassination of his personality has started and the attack of the Charlie Hebdo magazine is in the same direction.

Indeed, the main accused and culprit of these insolences is the French government, which, under the pretext of freedom of expression, allows a worthless publication to repeatedly insult the sanctities of others and hurt the feelings of a significant part of the world's population. Of course, this is not the first time that France hides its sinister intentions behind beautiful titles such as freedom of speech and human rights, but the historical experience of

the Iranian nation shows that France has used this trick several times to commit crimes and advance its wrong policies. Sheltering the executioners whose hands were stained with the blood of 17,000 innocent Iranians, arming Saddam's air force to bomb the oppressed people of Iran during the war imposed on this country, and the direct role of the French embassy in creating unrest in Iran in 1388 (2009) and 1401 (2022), are only a small part of the track record of France's shameful actions against the people and the Islamic revolution of Iran.

There is no doubt that Elite Scholars Center strongly condemns the disgraceful act and silence of the French government, and it will use the capacity of the elites to play a role in public diplomacy to enlighten the public opinion of the world, especially the elites and the educated. Also, this NGO wants from the Muslim and independent governments of the world to use all their capacities to end this kind of disrespect and insult to the sanctities of the nations and force the French government to respect the rights of the nations.

Iranian court sentences Belgian citizen to 40 years in jail

TEHRAN- A Belgian national has been found guilty of spying and other offenses, and a court in Iran has sentenced him to a total of 40 years in jail, several lashes, and financial fines, the Iranian Judiciary announced on Tuesday.

The Judiciary's official news site said preliminary verdict was issued against Olivier Vandecasteele on four accusations, which can be contested later.

He was sentenced to 25 years in jail on two major charges: 12.5 years for spying for foreign intelligence agencies and 12.5 years for "coop-

erating with the hostile United States government against the Islamic Republic."

Vandecasteele received a sentence of 2.5 years in jail, 74 lashes, and a \$1 million fine for "professional smuggling of foreign cash" with the sum of \$500,000

Last but not least, the Tehran Revolution Court sentenced him to 12.5 years in jail after determining that he had been convicted of laundering the money he was charged with smuggling.

Canada imposes fresh sanctions against Iran

TEHRAN- In response to alleged abuses of human rights, the Canadian government slapped fresh sanctions on Iran on Monday, focusing on two people and three entities.

The Iranians on the blacklist, according to a statement from the Canadian federal government, are Deputy Minister of Sports and Youth Vahid Yaminpour and member of Guardian Council Mohsen Qomi.

Qomi is also a member of Iran's Press Supervisory Board as well as the country's Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution.

The Press Supervisory Board, the 15 Khordad Foundation, and the Persian-language Iran

daily are the sanctioned entities.

The targeted people and organizations have been charged by Canada with "complicity" in the "repression" of riots that erupted following the death of young Mahsa Amini on September 16.

These demonstrations quickly descended into rioting that left dozens of security personnel dead across and resulted in destruction of public property.

Prior to the actions on Monday, Canada had put restrictions under the claims of human rights abuses against hundreds of Iranian people and organizations.

Iranian officials have already excoriated Canada and other Western states for their sanctions and double-standard approaches towards unrest in Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has asserted that its citizens have the right to peaceful demonstrations, but it has made it clear that anybody attempting to breach its red line—the security of its citizens— will face severe consequences.

Iranian officials have said the disturbances are a foreign-backed effort to destabilize the country and obstruct economic development.

Innocent killers!

By Faramarz Kuhpayeh

TEHRAN – The execution of two convicted of killing a Basij member in the recent wave of unrest has sparked huge Western criticism, which observers say has little to do with human rights.

Mohammad Mehdi Karami, 22, and Mohammad Hosseini, 39, were hanged early morning on Saturday. They were part of a group of defendants who were brought to court in the Ajamian murder case. Karami was the first-row defendant while Hosseini was the second-row one.

Basij member Ruhollah Ajamian was killed on November 3 in Karaj, 40 kilometers west of Tehran, during a violent riot. On the day of the incident, Ajamian was trying to open the Karaj-Qazvin highway, which had been blocked by rioters.

Tasnim said that the Basij member was beaten to death by rioters with stone, knife, machete, and brass knuckles.

A group of rioters, including those executed on Saturday, were later arrested and put to trial. During his trial, Karami said that a large number of rioters delivered blows to Ajamian. He also said that he hit Ajamian with a stone in the head. "After I hit him with a stone, I slapped him in the head three times," Karami said in the trial, according to confessions carried by Iranian media.

Hosseini also recounted how he hit Ajamian with a knife. He said he stabbed Ajamian three times. The court sessions were held



several times. After hearings, the jury sentenced five defendants to execution. The defendants objected to the ruling. Therefore, the Supreme Court overturned the earlier decision on the three defendants but it upheld the death penalty against Karami and Hosseini.

After their execution, speculations abounded that they had not had lawyers. But Iranian media reported that the reason Karami did not have an attorney was that he did not hire one and that the court appointed a lawyer for him. Unlike Karami, Hosseini had hired a lawyer who worked on his case.

Another issue with the execution of the two men was that they did not meet their relatives before their executions. According to media, Karami had met with his parents and brother last week. But Hosseini did not have relatives to visit him.

Karami and Hosseini were

charged with Moharebeh, which literally means waging war on God. It is applied to someone who takes up arms with the aim of killing, terrorizing, and harassing people in such a way that causes insecurity.

Observers believe that Karami and Hosseini fell victims to incitement from the West. They, along with millions of Iranians, were encouraged to take to the streets and wage riots. And they did so.

The West, observers say, is not in a position to criticize Iran. First, because its track record in violating human rights is glaring. Second, it was the West that destroyed the lives of some Iranian youth by encouraging them to commit violence.

However, European countries continue to shed crocodile tears over the executions in Iran. Over the last few days, the European Union and a number of European countries summoned Iranian ambassadors in protest over the executions.

"Secretary-General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) Stefano Sannino summoned today, on behalf of the High Representative, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the European Union Hossein Dehghani to reiterate the European Union's strong appraisal over the execution on 7 January of Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini arrested and sentenced to death in connection with the ongoing protests in Iran," the European Union said in a statement on Monday.

France, Germany, the UK, Denmark, and Belgium also followed suit. They summoned Iranian diplomats in protest over the executions.

"Together with like-minded EU member states, we will summon the Iranian ambassador. New EU-sanctions are on the table," Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib said on Twitter.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock went so far as calling for designation of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization. She described such a move as politically important and making sense. She also implied that Berlin is working with the European Union to list the IRGC, a move that will further complicate the relations between Iran and the West particularly in the field of nuclear talks over reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

characteristic and pharaonic spirit are hidden."

In another part of his speech, referring to his numerous meetings with the people, during provincial trips and public meetings, the president urged the officials and managers to put field visits and follow up on solving the problems and concerns of the people in their agenda, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

Commemorating the memory of the martyrs of Ukraine Flight 752 and emphasizing the full investigation of the case, as well as commemorating the anniversary of the January 9 uprising in Qom as the source of the rise of the Islamic movement, were among the other points of the president's remarks in Sunday's government meeting.

Amir Abdollahian urges recruitment of women diplomats in managerial posts

Amir Abdollahian has emphasized Iran's support for women diplomats holding administrative positions, ISNA reported.

The comments were delivered by Amir Abdollahian late on Monday during a ceremony at the Foreign Ministry commemorating the birth anniversary of Lady Fatima (SA). Women working at the ministry were present at the ceremony.

The Birth anniversary of Lady Fatima is marked as "Woman Day" in Iran.

The top diplomat hailed the Iranian women's movement following Lady Fatima's (SA) teachings, calling it a progressive movement equal to that of "Islamic Iran's female citizens.

He emphasized the importance of Iranian women diplomats in international forums and the need to make it easier for women diplomats to participate more effectively in managerial roles inside Iran and outside.

After quitting the agreement, Trump unleashed what he called the "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. Washington also reinstalled unilateral sanctions against Tehran, which had been lifted under the JCPOA. Tehran maintains that the policy has failed dismally.

Iran has cited Washington's indecisiveness as the reason behind the protraction of the talks, as a number of key issues remain unresolved, ranging from the removal of all post-JCPOA sanctions to the provision of guarantees by the American side that it will not leave the deal again.

IRAN IN FOCUS

JANUARY 11, 2023

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Iran to send freestylers to Yarygin tournament

TEHRAN – Iranian freestyle wrestlers will participate at the 2023 Ivan Yarygin Memorial International.

Russia wrestling coach Khadzhimurat Gatsalov has said that Iran will compete in the tournament as well as wrestlers from Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

"We will compete in the tournament with our best wrestlers. However, double Olympic champion Abdulrashid Sadulaev will miss the competition because he is not fit," Gatsalov said.

The competition will be held in Krasnoyarsk, Russia from January 26 to 29.

Rio Ferdinand urges Man Utd to sign Taremi

TEHRAN – Rio Ferdinand believes Manchester United should have explored a deal for Porto striker Mehdi Taremi ahead of Wout Weghorst.

United are in the market for a new striker this month and have held extensive talks to sign Weghorst, who is currently on loan at Besiktas from Burnley.

Erik ten Hag's side have already seen their first offer rejected as they attempt to persuade Besiktas to cancel Weghorst's season-long loan, metro.co.uk reported.

But Ferdinand feels United should make a move for Taremi, who has scored 14 goals in 20 appearances for Porto this season, while the 30-year-old impressed for Iran at the World Cup as he scored twice in the 6-2 defeat to England.

Taremi currently has a €60 million (£53m) release clause in his deal with Porto, which expires next year.

When United's move for Weghorst was raised on YouTube show Vibe with Five, Ferdinand said: 'I'd have gone and got Taremi in from Porto. Ferdinand also explained why United should prioritize a move for Tottenham striker Harry Kane in the summer window: 'Get Harry Kane in, Spurs fans I'm sorry, you're not going to win anything, he ain't going to win anything at Spurs,' Ferdinand said. 'They're in a bit of turmoil at the minute. Man United, in the summer, let's go and find a No.9 for the next three or four years to hang our hat on, to get you 20, 25 goals a season every year, where are you going?'

Iranian ice hockey teams to compete at Kazan Summit 2022

TEHRAN – Iranian men's and women's ice hockey teams will take part at the "Russia – the Islamic World: Kazan Summit 2022".

The international event will be held in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan from January 13 to 18.

The decision to hold the competition was made within the framework of the international summit "Russia – the Islamic World: Kazan Summit 2022".

More than 300 hockey players from 14 Islamic states will take part in the tournament. During the tournament, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan will be visited by the presidents of national federations of a number of states.

Persepolis beat Van Pars on penalties in Hazfi Cup Round of 32

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team earned a hard-fought win over first-tier Van Pars here in Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 32.

The match finished 2-2 after 120 minutes and the Reds defeated their plucky opponents 4-1 in penalty shootout at the Azadi Stadium.

Iman Kiani gave the visiting team the lead just 10 minutes into the match from the penalty spot and Persepolis' Georgian defender Giorgi Gvlesiani leveled the score on the hour mark from the spot.

Van Pars midfielder Abouzar Safarzadeh found the back of the net six minutes later but Morteza Pouraliganji equalized the match in the 77th minute.

Persepolis won the match on penalties, thanks to Alireza Beiranvand who saved two penalties.

Furthermore, Ario Eslamshahr lost to Aluminum Arak 3-2,

Havadar edged past Chadormalu 1-0, Be'sat Kermanshah lost to Navad Urmia 7-6 on penalties, Gol Gohar beat Mes Shahr Babak 2-1 and Foolad defeated Khoosheh Talaei 2-0.

Wednesday:

*Arman Gohar Sirjan v Esteghlal Mollasani

*Malavan v Naft Masjed Soleyman

*Pars Jonoubi Jam v Iman Sabz Shiraz

*Mes Rafsanjan v Zob Ahan

*Paykan v Esteghlal Khuzestan

*Nassaji Mazandaran v Fajr Sepasi Shiraz

*Sepahan v Saipa

*Shahrdari Hamedan v Darya Caspian Babol

Thursday:

*Esteghlal v Tractor

*Mes Kerman v Sanat Naft Abadan

Gareth Bale retires after trophy-laden career

TEHRAN – Five-time Champions League winner and Welsh football icon Gareth Bale has retired at the age of 33.

The forward announced his decision on social media Monday, saying the game had given him some of the "best moments of my life."

"After careful and thoughtful consideration, I announce my immediate retirement from club and international football," he wrote.

"I feel incredibly fortunate to have realized my dream of playing the sport I love."

Bale started his career in England with Southampton but made his name at Tottenham before signing for Real Madrid for a then-world record fee in 2013.

He won three La Liga titles in Spain in addition to the five trophies in the Champions League as he dovetailed a frightening forward line alongside Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema.

Expert Ghasempour hits out at FFIRI over delay in coach's appointment

Frome Page 1 ► which will act as the AFC qualifiers for the 2024 Paris Olympics men's football games, the U23 Iran national team are yet to know their head coach.

"It's not a new thing in Iranian football," Ebrahim Ghasempour said in his exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"The football federation officials have always performed poorly, especially in the junior teams such as the U23 team, and it has always been a big problem in Iranian football, and it still continues to be.

"I have no idea why the federation is losing time and don't decide in this regard. It's not a complicated process. They need to select some candidates, check their records and conditions and finally choose the best one. It should be decided in a technical committee or by consulting with some football experts," Ghasempour added.

Mehdi Mahdavia resigned from his post as head coach of the U23 team in early October. Under the guidance of Mahdavia, Iran showed a poor performance in the 2022 AFC U23 Asian Cup and failed to qualify for the next stage.

"Mahdavia was a great coach for the U23 team. Yes, he couldn't get good results in U23 Asian Cup, but his side had some problems then. He explained the problems in a football federation's technical committee meeting. In my opinion, his reasons were quite convincing, and he was right. But unfortunately, the FFIRI parted ways with him," said the former player of the Iran national team.

When asked if he is still a member of the technical committee of the Football Federation or not, Ghasempour said: "No, but the federation has not officially stopped cooperating with us. Still, practically there has been no contact with us for a long time, and this, in my opinion, means the end of the cooperation," he concluded.

French magazine's move proof of their failure in riots: Raisi

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi has said that the sacrilegious cartoons published by Charlie Hebdo are a proof that they failed in bringing the conspiracy of chaos in Iran to a fruition.

Speaking at a cabinet session on Sunday, Raisi condemned the brazen action of the French magazine in insulting the religious authority and human values of the Iranian people and clarified, "Resorting to insult under the pretext of freedom is a clear proof of the absurdity of the logic of the insulters and their despair in fruition of the conspiracy of chaos and insecurity in the country."

He also referred to the absurd words of the American president, who compared all the



countries of the world to a patch of America's jeans, and considered the words of American presidents in humiliating nations and governments as a precedent. "These words are a kind of return to the culture of the era of colonialism and a proof that behind America's deceptive gestures in defense of human rights and women's rights, the wild

outstanding mutual ties that are based on the strategic approach of the top officials of the two countries and briefed the Iranian foreign minister on the latest developments of the political process for resolution of the crisis in Syria.

Khaji and Sosan also discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations as well as Syria's political and international developments, according to the Foreign Ministry.

They underlined the need to strengthen bilateral ties and coordination more than ever before in the regional and international arenas.

Khaji welcomed the recent breakthroughs in foreign relations as well as stability and security of Syria. He stressed the Islamic Republic's resolve to continue supporting Syria just as Tehran did during the fight against terrorism, especially the reconstruction of Syria with the participation of Iranian technical and engineering companies including those from the private sector.

The Syrian deputy foreign minister

U.S. official lambasts Trump withdrawal from JCPOA as 'strategic blunder'

TEHRAN – U.S. State Department Spokesperson Ned Price has criticized former U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to pull Washington out of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal as a "great strategic blunder."

"This (Joe Biden) administration considers the decision on the part of the last administration to withdraw from the JCPOA, one of the greatest strategic blunders of American foreign policy in recent years," Price told reporters at his daily news conference on Monday, according to Tasnim.

He was referring to the Iran nuclear deal by its official name – the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The Iran deal was reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015, between Iran and the P5+1 together with the European Union.

The P5+1 include the five permanent members of the Security Council -- China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States -- plus Germany, which during the Barak Obama administration had entered into an agreement with Iran.

Commodities worth over \$680m traded at IME in a week



TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed the trade of 2,228,487 tons of commodities and 5,002 vehicles with a total trading value of more than \$680 million, posting growth of 18.85 percent in value of trades compared to the figures of the previous week.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1,777,503 tons of commodities valued at more than \$422 million.

On this floor the IME sold 1,130,388 tons of cement, 320,000 tons of iron ore, 276,541 tons of steel, 42,125 tons of aluminum, 35,400 tons of zinc, 8,250 tons of copper, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 4 kg of gold bars and 5,002 vehicles.

Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 411,948 tons of commodities valued at more than \$236 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 117,025 tons of bitumen, 101,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 100,832 tons of polymeric products, 48,500 tons of lube cut, 34,673 tons of chemicals, 2,000 tons of sulfur, 6,023 tons of base oil, 2,424 tons of petroleum products and 200 tons of insulation.

The IME also traded within the same week 38,613 tons of commodities on its side market.

As previously reported, 10,931,107 tons of commodities worth over \$3 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange during the past Iranian calendar month Azar (ended on December 21, 2022).

The exchange traded on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading

floor 1,791,743 tons of commodities valued at nearly \$991 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 526,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 491,023 tons of bitumen, 419,853 tons of polymeric products, 157,696 tons of chemicals, 120,500 tons of lube cut, 41,000 tons of sulfur, 23,788 tons of oil, 9,632 tons of petroleum products, 1,200 tons of insulation and 1,050 tons of feedstocks.

Furthermore, the exchange saw trade of 9,133,701 tons of commodities worth more than \$2 billion on its metals and minerals trading floor.

Items traded on this floor included 4,592,219 tons of cement, 2,199,000 tons of iron ore, 1,784,395 tons of steel, 340,000 tons of sponge iron, 131,650 tons of zinc, 31,175 tons of aluminum, 24,731 tons of copper, 2,000 tons of cast iron, 750 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 100 tons of lead, 36 tons of precious metals concentrate and 272 kg of gold bars.

It's worth noting that the IME also traded 13,686 vehicles on its automobile trading floor.

Last was the IME's side market on which the exchange traded 5,649 tons of commodities

The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange rose 102 percent, and the volume of trades at the exchange increased 128 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022), which was the highest level of growth in the history of the exchange since its establishment.

Statistical data show that in the past year, in addition to new records in the volume and value of trades of different products, 10 major records in total value and physical market trades were registered. In a way that besides the total value of trades, the volume and value of physical market trades, the volume and value of industrial products and petrochemicals trades, the value of oil products trades and the volume and value of side market trades all hit records.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

Over 6.7m tons of sugar beet produced since March 2022

TEHRAN – Iranian farmers have managed to produce 6.7 million tons of sugar beet in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21, 2022), an official with the Agriculture Ministry said.

According to Peyman Hesadi, the director of the ministry's high-sucrose plants program,

some 900,000 tons of sugar have been produced from the harvested sugar beets, IRNA reported.

Hesadi said considering the current crop year's sugar beet production, the country's total sugar output is expected to reach 1.4 million tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

CBI, parliament Economic Committee to co-op on managing forex market

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian parliament's Economic Committee has announced holding a meeting with the new Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Mohammadreza Farzin to discuss cooperation for managing the foreign currency exchange market, IRIB reported.

Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi made the remarks during a meeting of the mentioned committee on Tuesday, saying: "A joint meeting was held with Mohammadreza Farzin, the new governor of the central bank, and regarding

TEDPIX gains 21,200 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 21,284 points to 1.668 million on Tuesday.

As reported, over 17.78 billion securities worth 105.815 trillion rials (about \$278.4 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 20,892 points, and the second market's index climbed 26,483 points.

TEDPIX lost 68,000 points to 1.579 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index has risen 87,603 points (6.22 percent) to 1.496 million points in the previous Iranian

calendar month Azar (ended on December 21).

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

Iranian government has allocated 150 trillion rials (about \$394.7 million) to the country's Capital Market Stabilization and Development Fund (CMSDF) in the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1402 (begins on March 21) to support small shareholders, Tasnim news agency reported on January 1.

TEHRAN – Iran's petrochemical production in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2022) has risen seven percent compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to an official in the National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

Bijan Chegeni, the NPC's director for production control, put the nine-month petrochemical output at 53 million tons, noting that the petrochemical plants operated at 71 percent of their optimum capacity during this period, Shana reported.

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

According to NPC Head



Petchem output rises 7% in 9 months yr/yr

Morteza Shahmirzaei, the company plans to increase its annual petrochemical production capacity to 200 million tons over the next 10 years.

In this regard, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said that more than 100 petrochemical projects with a total investment of about \$70 billion have been defined and will be implemented across the country.

Oji noted that the country will also be completely self-sufficient in producing the catalysts used in the petrochemical industry by the end of the current government administration's incumbency (August 2025).

He put the country's current petrochemical production capacity at 90 to 95 million tons, saying that \$10.5 billion worth of petrochemical products have been exported in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21).

According to Oji, over \$12.5 billion was earned from the export of petrochemical products in the previous year.

Pomegranate export up 100% in 8 months on year



production of pomegranates will reach 1.2 million tons in the country in the current

year.

She considered the quality and taste of Iranian pomegranates unique in the world and said one of the characteristics of Iranian pomegranates is the health of the product and on the other hand its medicinal properties, which are welcomed by other countries.

The director-general of the tropical and semi-tropical fruits office of the Agriculture Ministry further said that the country's average yield of pomegranate production is 14 to 15 tons per hectare and added that last year the exemplary gardeners saw a yield of 80 to 100 tons per hectare.

Iran opens 8 trade centers in Africa



and air transportation.

"The agreement for the establishment of a direct airline between Iran and South Africa will also be concluded by the end of the year," he added.

He further pointed to the upward trend of trade with African nations, saying: "In the first quarter of this year, many African countries have been among Iran's top trade partners, which is a very good thing."

Earlier in June last year, TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak said the country is taking the necessary steps to increase annual trade exchanges with African countries to \$5 billion by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (begins in March 2025).

Peyman-Pak said the trade with the mentioned countries is expected to reach \$2.5 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

Referring to the preparation of the country's trade development roadmap at the beginning of the work of the 13th administration, the official said: "In this roadmap, major factors including exports and the share of different sectors are specified, and in the case of Africa, the priorities and targets for trade with different countries and the requirements for reaching these targets are determined."

Peyman-Pak put the share of African countries in Iran's export basket at \$1.2 billion, saying: "Africa's annual imports amount to about \$580 billion and our share of this figure is still small despite all the efforts. We have managed to export \$1.2 billion to this market."

As announced on Sunday by Vice President of Iran and Africa Merchants Club Ruhollah Latifi, Iran exported 2.209 million tons of non-oil products valued at \$1,093,875,996 to

the African countries during the period from the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022) up to December 31.

According to Latifi, Iran and Africa traded 2.29 million tons of commodities worth \$1.169 million in the mentioned period.

The official said 96.5 percent of the total weight of the traded goods was related to the Iranian exports to Africa, while 93.5 percent of the total value was also gained by Iranian exporters.

He named South Africa, Mozambique, Ghana, Sudan, and Nigeria as the main export destinations for Iranian products while Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, and Seychelles were the major sources of imports among the African countries in the period under review.

According to Latifi, following the 13th government's policy of multilateralism and attention to new markets, especially in Asia and Africa, Iran's business relations with African countries have been on the path of growth.

Tehran hosting national steel festival, exhibition

TEHRAN- The 4th National Iranian Steel Festival and Exhibition (N.I.S.F) was opened in a ceremony held at Olympic Hotel's conference salon in Tehran on Tuesday, IRIB reported.

Major steel and mining companies of the country including Mobarakeh Steel Company, Khuzestan Steel, Khorasan Steel, Golgozar Mining and Industrial Company, Midco Holding, Hormozgan Steel, and Kaveh South Steel are participating in this grand event.

Focusing on the knowledge-based companies and startups and those production units expediting the process of indigenizing new technologies for the country's steel industry is a major feature of this year's festival and exhibition.

In this national event, domestic producers and suppliers of the country's iron and steel chain, in addition to offering cooperation opportunities to knowledge-based companies and domestic manufacturers,



unveil their latest achievements and products.

As announced by the World Steel Association (WSA), production of crude steel in Iran rose 9.8 percent in the first nine months of 2022, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

The WSA data put the country's nine-month crude steel production at 22.2 million tons.

The report shows that Iran's crude steel

output has also increased by 26.7 percent in September compared to the same month in 2021, reaching 2.7 million tons.

The world's 64 steel producers managed to produce 1,405,200,000 tons of steel in January-September 2022, 4.3 percent less than the figure for the previous year's same period.

Iran has maintained its place as the world's 10th biggest steel producer during the mentioned nine months, according to the WSA data.

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

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

From page 1 ► Baruch Goldstein (Died: February 25, 1994, Hebron), was an American-born Israeli physician who perpetrated the 1994 Cave of the Patriarchs massacre in the city of Hebron, killing 29 Muslims at prayer in the Ebrahimi Mosque (within the Cave of the Patriarchs) and wounding another 150 in a shooting attack.

Yigal Amir (who is now in prison) is also an Israeli right-wing extremist and former law student at Bar-Ilan University who assassinated the former Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin.

And again, it is this inconsistency that prompted the Iraqi Rabbi Ovadia Yusuf (whose name means servant of God), called for wiping out all Palestinians from the earth and declared Falash Mura Ethiopia Jews as second citizens in Israel.

For example, Ovadia Youssef's hatred of Arabs was so great that the Times of Israel, after his death, introduced him as a man who "For Arabs, left bitter memories."

Today, Israeli society can be considered the most racist society not only in West Asia but in the world, and racism originates from distorted teachings of Judaism.

In Judaism, one can only be considered a Jew if he was born to a Jewish mother.

Based on Der Judenstaat, a pamphlet written by Theodor Herzl, the Palestinians living in the occupied territories are ignored. The leaders of this regime have also repeatedly proposed that Israel is a state only for the Jews.

It is on this basis that far-right security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said waving the Palestinian flag is an act in support of "terrorism".

On Monday, Ben-Gvir instructed the police to remove Palestinian flags from public spaces, calling the Palestinian national symbol an act of "terrorism".

Israeli law does not outlaw Palestinian flags, but police and soldiers have the right to remove them in cases where they deem there is a threat to public order.

Is Israel prone to civil war?
Considering the ethnic and racial problems in the occupied



Netanyahu's government is end of Zionism

territories, there are a lot of talks these days about the possibility of a civil war in Israel.

After the presentation of a new plan by Justice Minister Yariv Levin, a Netanyahu ally, regarding the "judicial reform plan", it was condemned by many. Benny Gantz, National Unity party leader and former Israeli defense minister, said the judicial reform plan will lead to "civil war".

"If you continue on the path you are following, you will be responsible for civil war in Israeli society," Gantz said at his National Unity party's Knesset faction meeting, just days after the government unveiled its four-point plan to increase parliamentary power over the judiciary.

The former defense minister adds that the judicial reform plan "will have a fatal impact on national security - both in the sense of the resilience of citizens from all parts of society and in the ability of

the High Court of Justice and

the legal system to be our legal iron dome vis-à-vis the world."

He says "liberal right-wingers, who love the state," should be "the first to go out and protest" for what they believe in — "not against Netanyahu or against the government, but against the demolition of democracy and this unbridled, destructive move."

Stressing that any and all such action must be within the law, he urges the wider public to take to the streets, saying, "This is the time to go out en masse and to demonstrate, the time to make the country tremble."

On Thursday, Justice Minister Yariv Levin set out the cabinet's plan to establish a legal mechanism for the Knesset to reinstate laws invalidated by the court, retool how judges are selected, eliminate the independence of government legal advisers, and curtail the court's ability to evaluate the "reasonableness" of government decisions.

Gantz says Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu's legal troubles, culminating in his ongoing corruption trials, have pushed his Likud party to pursue judicial reform that will lead the country to be "democratically disabled."

"If you believe that a legal injustice has been done to you -- do not correct it with injustice to the State of Israel and to Israeli society. This is an anti-patriotic and anti-Zionist act," Gantz added in an appeal to Netanyahu.

In this regard, on the evening of Saturday, January 7, tens of thousands of Netanyahu's opponents and his extreme cabinet demonstrated in Tel Aviv against the plan to reform the judicial system.

Last week, Avigdor Lieberman, the former Minister of Finance and head of Yisrael Beiteinu party, called Netanyahu's newly established cabinet "the end of Zionism" and said: "The establishment of Netanyahu's sixth government is not the end of the Israeli government, it is the end of Israel. It is Zionism."



infrastructure of the terrorist group it draws its strength from."

Domestic politics
* Erdogan's interests in Syria are linked to his domestic political and economic priorities. Turkey is holding elections in June, but the date could be sooner, because of difficult economic circumstances, as Andrew Wilks reports. Turkey hosts close to 4 million Syrian refugees, a strain on the economy. The leading Turkish opposition party, the People's Democratic Party (HDP), has said it would make peace with Syria. Inflation remains alarmingly high despite a drop in December, as Mustafa Sonmez explains.

Erdogan plays Putin's weak hand
Putin has long sought to reconcile Assad and Erdogan as a means to stabilize Syria and counter both U.S. and Iranian influence there. The escalation of Russian and Iranian support for Syria in 2015 saved the Assad government from collapse. Putin could point to Syria as a major military and diplomatic success, as many in the region questioned U.S. staying power. Since 2016, Putin has cultivated and prodded the so-called 'Astana Group' of Russia, Iran and Turkey to manage their disparate interests in Syria, over time supplanting Western influence and undercutting the UN-mediated political process. But with Putin, and Russia, now bogged down in Ukraine, Erdogan has seized the upper hand as a partner and mediator for Moscow, if a deal comes together.

WORLD HEADLINES

WhatsApp's Pegasus spyware lawsuit can go ahead: top court

The United States Supreme Court has allowed the WhatsApp messaging platform to pursue a lawsuit against Israel's NSO Group, which makes the Pegasus spyware linked to state surveillance of journalists, human rights advocates and dissidents around the world.

The top court's justices on Monday left in place lower court rulings against the Israeli company, which had argued it should be recognised as a foreign government agent and, therefore, be entitled to immunity under US law limiting lawsuits against foreign countries.

WhatsApp, which is owned by Meta and is among a number of tech companies and individuals pursuing legal action against the Israeli firm, has alleged that NSO Group surveilled about 1,400 people through the messaging platform.

The company's 2019 lawsuit seeks to block the NSO Group from Meta platforms and servers and recover unspecified damages.

Meta, which owns both WhatsApp and Facebook, on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to deny what it called a "baseless" appeal.

"NSO's spyware has enabled cyberattacks targeting human rights activists, journalists and government officials," Meta said in a statement. "We firmly believe that their operations violate US law and they must be held to account for their unlawful operations."

S. Arabia lifts restriction on Hajj pilgrim numbers

Saudi Arabia will not impose limits on the number of pilgrims for this year's Hajj, a Saudi minister said Monday, after three years of restrictions to curb the Covid pandemic.

"The number of pilgrims will return to what it was before the pandemic, without any age limit," Minister of Hajj and Umrah Tawfiq al-Rabiah told reporters in Riyadh.

The pilgrimage - one of five pillars of Islam, and which all able-bodied Muslims with the means are required to perform at least once - is scheduled for June 26. It is a significant government income source from worshippers' lodging, transport, fees, and gifts.

In 2019, about 2.5 million people took part in the rituals. For the next two years, numbers were drastically curtailed due to the pandemic. The kingdom allowed only limited numbers of its residents in 2020 and 2021 before it welcomed back one million foreign pilgrims in 2022.

In 2022, nearly 900,000 pilgrims, including some 780,000 from abroad, were welcomed to Islam's holiest cities of Mecca and Medina. At that time, they had to be between ages 18 and 65, as well as have a vaccination against Covid and present a negative test.

About 19 million also took part annually in the Umrah, another form of pilgrimage to Mecca which - unlike the Hajj - can be carried out at any time of the year, before the pandemic.

Erdogan says he may meet Syria's Assad for 'peace' in the region

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that he may sit down with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to foster peace and stability in Syria, a week after a meeting between the defense ministers of the two countries.

Russian, Turkish and Syrian defence chiefs and top intelligence officers held talks in Moscow on December 28 in the highest level of official contact between the archrivals in more than a decade.

"Turkey, Russia and Syria have launched a process in Moscow," the Turkish president said, speaking in the capital Ankara on Thursday, adding that the foreign ministers of the three countries are expected to gather in a trilateral format soon.

"After that we may meet as the Russian, Turkish, and Syrian leaders, depending on the developments. Our aim is to establish peace and stability in the region," Erdogan added.

Mensur Akgun, a professor of international relations, said Ankara's recent change of approach towards al-Assad stems from major shifts in dynamics in the region compared with 11 years ago when the ties between the two countries were officially cut at the height of the Arab Spring.

He also believes that Russia played a key role in starting the recent dialogue between the two arch-rivals.

"As a result of Turkey's developing special relationship with Russia, Moscow has pursued Ankara's interests more in its relations with Syria, pressuring the Assad government in this direction," Akgun told Al Jazeera.

Germany's capital, eastern regions face gasoline shortages, high fuel prices

Germany's capital Berlin and eastern regions are facing gasoline shortages and high fuel prices, as Russian oil has no longer been flowing to Europe since Jan. 1.

The PCK refinery in Schwedt, in the eastern German state of Brandenburg, which was previously supplied exclusively with Russian pipeline oil, is only running at around 50% capacity due to the drop in supply, according to the Business Insider website.

The reduced production is starting to show effects. This is already reflected in the markups on the national average of the gasoline price of the Seefeld gasoline depot, which is located northeast of Berlin.

This had already risen in the first two days of January compared to the previous week from €1.76 (\$1.89) per 100 liters to €4.40 per 100 liters.

In addition, price information service Argus Media reported that there is already a production shortage of gasoline in the region.

"PCK shareholders have been withholding gasoline since January 2," according to Argus Media.

At the oil company that operates PCK, many employees are even currently working short hours, according to Business Insider.

Larger alternative oil supplies from Poland and Kazakhstan, as announced by the German government, have yet to arrive, the news site adds.

President warns of 'difficult' times as inflation rises in Egypt

Egypt continues to battle surging inflation amid a dramatic slide of its currency as many Egyptians struggle with price hikes, the country's statistics bureau has said.

The state-run Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) released figures on Tuesday showing that the annual inflation was at 21.9 percent last month, up from 19.2 percent in November. That is compared with 6.5 percent in December 2021, before inflation ballooned in 2022, following the outbreak of Russia's war on Ukraine that rattled the world economy.

Prices in Egypt rose across many sectors, from food items and medical services to housing and furniture.

"Food and beverages were up 4.6 percent month-on-month (adding to the 4.5 percent in November), impacted mainly by bread and cereals, dairy, vegetables and meat," said Allen Sandeep of Naem Brokerage. This goes somewhat towards absorbing a 25 percent devaluation in late October but portends more inflation to come, Sandeep said.

"Now combined monthly inflation has risen by around 7 percent over three months. This is close to a 30 percent pass through to the urban CPI index. With the new round of devaluation ongoing, which we expect to be roughly 15 percent, we can expect annual CPI to touch 25 percent by February,"

The higher inflation has inflicted heavy burdens on consumers, especially lower-income households. Nearly 30 percent of Egyptians live in poverty, according to official figures.

Kurd horse gains national status



TEHRAN – Persian-Kurdish horse, also known as the Kurd horse and originated in Kermanshah province, has been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Moreover, five cultural items, practiced across the western province, were also inscribed on the prestigious list, Daryush Farmani explained on Tuesday.

The skill of cooking Samanu (sweet pudding made from wheat germ), the talent of making Vah Kol cradle, and the skill of making traditional locks were among the items added to the list, the official added.

Back in December, the provincial tourism chief Mohammadreza Soheili announced that Iran is developing a dossier for its Persian-Kurdish horse for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Despite the Kurd horse's origin going back to the western Iranian province of Kermanshah, it may be registered internationally because it is also bred in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, he said.

As part of the process to include Kurd horses on the intangible world heritage list, this dossier is being prepared under the title of knowledge and skill for breeding and keeping Kurd horses, he

noted.

Persian-Kurdish horse constitutes a group of horses traditionally bred and used by Kurdish People who have lived and occupied today's western provinces of Iran for several millennia.

The breed originates from western Iran, where the mountainous topography and moderately cold climate have sculpted a unique horse population resistant to harsh environmental conditions.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, including Taq-e Bostan and the UNESCO-registered Bisotun.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings to divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values in the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Kermanshah was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sassanid dynasty. Conquered by the Arabs in 640, it was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin). Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501-1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah's rule (1797-1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

Turkey looks to strengthen tourism ties with Iran

TEHRAN – Turkey is willing to forge a closer partnership with Iran in the tourism sector, the Turkish consul general in Tabriz has said.

Çetin Taner said that his country is interested in boosting relations in medical tourism with Iran, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

The Turkish official said that health tourism has been a sphere for preparing the ground for mutual ties.

He called for the expansion of health, medical, scientific, educational, and research cooperation between various medical universities in Turkey and Tabriz.

Cultural and religious commonalities between both sides play a role in bolstering bilateral relations, he stated.

Taner voiced hope that Turkish students who are studying in Iran would continue to cooperate

with the Islamic Republic after graduation and return to Turkey as a bridge for exchanging scientific information and expanding research and health activities.

Medical tourism in Iran, according to some experts, is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable foreign currency.

The Islamic Republic is known in the world as an affordable destination for health tourism, and the government is making a great effort to attract more medical tourists in the years to come.

Credible surgeons and physicians, cutting-edge medical technologies, high-tech medicine and diverse specializations, super affordable procedures, and finally its hospitable people, are considered Iran's trump card when it comes to medical tourism.

Nowadays, the tourism industry is seen as an important force behind economic and social development. In addition to eliminating societal problems, tourism entrepreneurship increases a country's fiscal growth and development, which increases its GDP.

Throughout the development process, employment has been a significant topic of discussion, and it is of vital importance to the success and viability of a country. Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries, so it is considered an indispensable contributor to job creation.

the official added.

One of the most important agricultural hubs in Tehran province, Pakdasht cultivates more than 17,000 hectares, of which 1,500 are greenhouses, the official said last month.

Back in September, Tehran's tourism chief Parham Janfeshan said that plans are underway to promote agritourism in Pakdasht county. Pakdasht has high potential to attract nature lovers and sightseers as it embraces numerous gardens and flowerbeds, he added.

Intl. conference discusses tourism's role in entrepreneurship

TEHRAN – Tehran University hosted an international conference on tourism's role in social entrepreneurship on Tuesday, ISNA reported.

The event explored topics on social entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism as well as entrepreneurial opportunities based on cultural and natural tourist attractions in Iran, the report added.

This event was organized to promote internationalization and create a discourse on entrepreneurship in society.

Museum of anthropology to be constructed in Pakdasht

TEHRAN – On Monday, Pakdasht's tourism chief urged the need for the construction of an anthropology museum to spotlight the diverse heritage of the ancient town.

"The construction of the anthropological museum helps to introduce the historical identity of the people of the region, which is mostly based on agriculture," Asadollah Tajik said.

"Location for the museum has been determined, and we hope to finish its construction by the end of the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2024),"

Visit Sarab-e Qandil, a puzzling bas-relief of Sassanids

From Page 1 ► Special attention has been paid to the clothes. The clothing has received special attention, with lovely and delicate details that evoke a sense of lightness and aerial movement. The crown with the wings and jewels of the king is visible. He is holding his sword in his left hand at the top. His right hand is extended and ready to accept the gift. The composition places the prince on his back and the queen to his left and right, with the royal figure in the middle of the panel.

Attitudes of the king and the queen express love and respect, according to livius.org, which is a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

"Such representations of love are very rare in Sasanian iconography, which generally consists of audience, victory, or inauguration scenes. An equivalent image of love was carved at Barm-e Dilak, where it is the king who offers the flower to the queen."

Some experts believe the lack of an inscription cast doubt over the relief's attribution to Bahram II.

Both the fact that Bahram II was the only Sasanian king to depict his queen on coins and



the possibility that the female figure may be dressed more like a queen than a goddess were major points in favor of identification with Bahram II. As a result, academics like Vanden Berghe and Aerinck believe that Bahram II is responsible for the relief. The goddess and Ardashir I are depicted in the relief, according to Lewitt-Tawill, with Shapur I serving as the prince.

Bahram II, the son, and heir apparent of Bahram I had to defend his throne against his brother Hormizd, the viceroy of the eastern provinces, not long

after he had been crowned.

As mentioned by the Encyclopedia Britannica, in 283, exploiting Bahram's preoccupations, the Roman emperor Carus invaded Mesopotamia unopposed and entered Ctesiphon, the Sasanian capital. Carus' sudden death, however, forced the Romans to withdraw, and soon thereafter, the overthrow of Hormizd made Bahram secure.

Numerous southern Persian rock sculptures depict Bahram wearing his winged crown, and several include his queen. Because female portraits

Air pollution may pose threat to Isfahan's historical monuments

TEHRAN – Air pollution has adverse effects on the historical monuments in the ancient city of Isfahan, a researcher, and an expert in traditional architecture has said.

By forming crystals from air pollution, historical monuments are covered with a spongy surface allowing acids and organic substances to penetrate, ISNA quoted Seyyed Masoud Musavizadeh as saying on Tuesday.

In addition, microorganisms deposit on this spongy surface, causing destruction, he explained.

In historical buildings, dust and dirt not only obscure the original color of the surface but also create a destructive platform, he added.

It is important to study and conduct research on how pollutants affect architectural heritage, he noted.

Therefore, universities need to engage in such discussions about historical monuments in different regions and conduct the appropriate and related monitoring and observational tasks, he mentioned.

Soaked in a rich history, Isfahan was once been a crossroads of international trade and



diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons.

It is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its amazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The ancient city is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility.

Isfahan has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-

Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see half the world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning "Image of the World"), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Constructed in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.

Modern Isfahan is home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts. However, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

The city is also home to a gigantic, professional, and state-of-the-art healthcare city, which is a major destination in the realm of medical tourism.

Iran sets up fund for tourism development

TEHRAN – Iran has set up a new fund dedicated to supporting private businesses and non-governmental enterprises that are active in the tourism industry.

"This fund has a non-governmental nature and was launched to increase the participation of the private sector," the tourism minister said on Sunday.

The formation of this tourism

development fund was the request of tourism activists for more than two decades, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian said.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has said that the private sector is at the forefront of Iran tourism "as it has enormous abilities to make significant contributions."

"There is no doubt that the

private sector, organizations, and associations are at the forefront of tourism and the arm of the ministry in this area."

Travel agencies are the link between Iran and other countries in the tourism sector and they need to organize tours and special packages for foreign tourists to encourage them to travel to Iran, the minister stated.

The Islamic Republic expects

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

Tourism projects worth \$125m underway in Kermanshah

TEHRAN – Tens of tourism-related projects worth 50 trillion rials (\$125 million) are currently underway across the western province of Kermanshah, the provincial tourism chief has said.

There was an investment in tourism of 200 billion rials (\$500,000) last year, while this year's investment has reached about 50 trillion rials across the province, Mohammadreza Soheili explained on Tuesday.

In the field of handicrafts, strengths and weaknesses have been identified in the sales and branding sector, with several local and national brands taking part in export, packaging, and special advertising campaigns, the official added.

In addition, some measures have been taken to enhance the market for handicrafts, he noted.

A number of significant measures have been taken in the area of cultural heritage,

particularly in the area of registering national and world heritage sites, he explained.

A total of six sites have been listed as national heritage, and Kurd Horse and Sassanid archeological landscape are being considered for UNESCO's World Heritage list, he mentioned.

Earlier this month, the official announced that Iran is completing an all-inclusive dossier for a Sassanid archeological landscape in Kermanshah province, to have it registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

With a high concentration on Taq-e Bostan, which embraces a magnificent series of large bas-relief carvings in Kermanshah, the archeological landscape is sought to be extended to Ctesiphon, an ancient city located 32 km southeast of modern Baghdad that served as the winter capital of the Parthian empire and later of the Sassanid empire, he added.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has decided to pursue a World Heritage listing for a Sassanid axis centered on Taq-e Bostan, the official said.

Taq-e Bostan embraces incredible Persian heritage on the base of a towering cliff, featuring extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings.

Taq-e Bostan was originally the site of a Parthian royal hunting garden, but the Sassanians later added their own regal stamp. Its biggest alcove features elephant-mounted hunting scenes on the sidewalks and highlights the coronation of Khosrow II (r 590–628), beneath which the king rides off in full armor and chain mail (half a millennium before the European Black Prince made it fashionable.).

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, including Taq-e Bostan and the UNESCO-registered Bisotun.

TEHRAN – The health minister of Nicaragua plans to sign agreements with her Iranian counterpart during a visit to Tehran, Ambassador to Tehran Isaac Lenin Bravo Jaen, has said.

The Nicaraguan envoy made the remarks in a meeting with Mohammad Hossein Nicknam, the deputy health minister for international affairs.

Referring to a comprehensive document signed by foreign ministers of the two countries in December 2022 to enhance cooperation, he termed bilateral relations very positive and important.

The ambassador announced that four ministers of the Nicaraguan cabinet will travel to Iran, aiming to become familiar with medical industries and sign agreements in the health sector.

Nicknam, for his part, said Iran is ready to provide Nicaragua with its experiences regarding the production of medicine and medical equipment.

On the sidelines of the 77th General Assembly of the UN, Colindres and Amir Abdollahian had a meeting in September in New York.

In a phone call with Daniel Ortega in September 2021, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi stressed the importance of tight coordination with Nicaragua and other Latin American governments on the international scene in order to thwart U.S. sanctions against independent nations.

In order to neutralize American sanctions and make it expensive for the U.S. administration to



Nicaragua plans to sign agreements with Iran in health sector

take action against independent states and nations, notably Iran and Nicaragua, close collaboration between the two countries on international scenes is essential, according to the Iranian president.

In August 2022, the Nicaraguan ambassador met Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), discussing areas of cooperation.

Measures taken by the IRCS are exemplary in the region and the world, Lenin said, referring to IRCS's great achievements in recent months.

He announced interest in using

the experiences of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Fortunately, there are good relations between the two countries, and the cooperation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent of the two countries can be a turning point, he explained.

Committees have been formed between Iran and Nicaragua to enhance cooperation, he noted, adding, "The IRCS's high capacities are clearly evident and we are interested in using the medical equipment made by the IRCS due to their high quality."

The Iranian Polyclinic in Nic-

aragua has provided valuable services to people, which shows the empathy between the two nations, and today the people of Iran and Nicaragua have good and brotherly relations with each other, which can be expanded, he emphasized.

Kolivand for his part said that the IRCS can also cooperate with the Nicaraguan Red Cross in the fields of medical equipment, textiles, pharmaceutical production, and food packages.

In June 2022, Nicaragua received 200,000 doses of vaccines against COVID-19 from Iran.

"Thank God, COVIRAN vaccines arrive from the Islamic Republic of Iran this afternoon. We are deeply grateful to continue vaccinating 200,000 people and protecting ourselves," Nicaraguan Vice President Rosario Murillo said.

Iran has one of the strongest health systems in the region and this opportunity should be used optimally in the field of health diplomacy, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said.

In June 2021, Ahmed al-Mandhari, the World Health Organization director for Eastern Mediterranean Region, said the Islamic Republic of Iran is a role model for primary health care.

For the past four decades, its PHC network has aimed to ensure that people have timely access to affordable, accessible, and acceptable essential health services, he explained.

nologies used in Sustainable Tourism in Iran; and Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Cultural, Natural (Ecotourism), Industrial, and Service Tourism Attractions in Iran were other topics of the conference.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism; the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines; the UNESCO-Chair in Entrepreneurship; the Iranian Scientific Association of Tourism; the Scientific Association of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Iran; the Foundation of Sustainable Tourism Development; the SDS (Sustainable Development Strategy) International Group; the SIIF (SWISS Iranian Investment Forum); the Iran Technical and Vocational Training Organization; and the Iranian Ecotourism Scientific Association sponsored the international event.

fairs, said in the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, that about 12,000 female heads of households underwent empowerment training and entered the traditional and virtual market.

Also, more than 1.1 million women heads of households are covered by the Relief Committee and more than 300,000 are covered by the Welfare Organization, benefiting from special support such as facilities, insurance, and livelihood services.

The National Headquarters for Women and Family Affairs has approved six plans to support families and empower women and improve their status in society.

Tehran hosts intl. conference on social entrepreneurship

From page 1 ► The ICSET 2023 followed the successful organization of "the First National Conference on Social Entrepreneurship with Tourism Approach" which was held on January 11, 2022.

The conference aimed to produce and manage science and knowledge, to benefit from the findings of national and global research and experiences towards progress, social justice, sustainability, environmental protection, and, in particular, tourism development in Iran as one of the main disciplines of the strategic platform.

It also sought to provide coordination towards the reinforcement of specialized policy-making, education, training, and promotion of new and strategic concepts, and to develop

and contribute to the platform for drafting the Seventh Socioeconomic Development Plan (2021-2026) in the country.

Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable and Intelligent (Smart) Society (National and International Report Samples and Templates-Benchmarking Reports); Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Tourism (job creation, poverty alleviation, empowerment and reduction of inequalities); and National and International Report Samples and Templates on Sustainable Development of Tourism Destinations, Environmental Protection and Optimal Consumption of Water were some topics of the conference.

Local and Global Experiences and Talents for Sharing Economy, Innovation and New Tech-

and using the best of all capacities and sources of energy.

Currently, women make up more than 32 percent of companies active in the domestic market, so 250 knowledge-based companies have been set up by women, and 735 women are running such companies as managing directors.

In addition, four thousand women manage 20 percent of entrepreneurship centers in the country.

According to statistics, out of a total of 203,000 community-oriented job creation projects launched in underdeveloped and rural areas across the country, 42 percent, equivalent to more than

85,000 projects, have been allocated to women entrepreneurs.

The Statistical Center of Iran has said out of twenty-two million families in Iran, over three million are women-headed households and most of them are in less-developed areas. The government has prioritized such families for targeting socio-economic support.

Meanwhile, Zahra Ershadi, Iran's ambassador and deputy representative to the United Nations, has said that Iran has made significant progress in empowering women, despite U.S. illegal and inhumane sanctions.

Ensieh Khazali, the vice president for women and family af-

A Look at Iranian Turkmen Clothing

Part 2

Headwear for Turkmen women

• 1) Hat (Yurik): The hat used by Turkmen women has different names.

• Its upper part, which is smooth and has spherical shape, is decorated with sequins and tinsels.

• After marriage, Turkmen women wear headbands decorated with silver and gold pendants.

• Turkmen women wear different kinds of hats which indicate to which clan and tribe they belong.

• Yurik's features: they are cylindrical lengthy hats with wider upper section. It has strong framework.

• The framework of Yurik is generally covered by scarves or silk threads. Over it, they wear a big silk or thread cloth as scarves.

2) Alindani (headband)

• Kind of hat worn by Yamut women

• A folded kerchief tied over the forehead and its angles are tied under the scarf.

• Jafarbay women: wear headbands made of red thread-made textiles. In order to make it stronger, they put cardboards inside it.

• Turkmen women wear scarves over their alindani.

Scarves of Turkmen women

• Their scarves are made of kerchiefs (like Kalaghis used by Lur women). This kerchief has an orange context and huge yellow-color designs.

• Over this headwear, they wear more extensive kerchiefs which have the same size as a scarf decorated with lengthy and



grand strings.

• Turkmen girls wear two kinds of scarves: 1) a relatively thick scarf covered with needlework named Kourkkeh; and 2) a textile made of thin silk named Qingach.

• Among members of Yamut clan, a kind of scarf is commonly used which is referred to as Chashou. There are different kinds of Chashou. They are made of silk.

• There are silk scarves which are called Yalaq.

Doun

• The dress that Turkmen women wear at different ages is samite textile. Its back is covered by something which is called "Doun". Its design is peculiar to Turkmen women.

• Samites sare of 4 types: summer samites (Gah Bim); winter samite (Doun); celebration samites Qezel Doun); and wool (Chakman).

• The color of samite textiles: they are mostly blue and black. For wedding ceremonies, however, they are called "Qermezi Doun".

• Chakmans are of two types of thin and thick.

To be continued

RAMSAR SITES IN IRAN

Part 39

There has been a considerable increase in fishing activities, and the widespread use of outboard motor boats instead of traditional reedboats has resulted in disturbance to the waterfowl populations.

Poaching remains a problem, as well as the accidental killing of waterfowl in fishing nets.

Eutrophication may be a problem in the future because of domestic sewage and fertilizers, and some control over the spread of Phragmites may be necessary.

At Dasht-e Arjan poaching is also a problem, as are two sets of high-tension power lines that cross the lake.

They are dangerous to the birds and are spoiling the beautiful scenery of the lake. One of the lines has not been in use since it was constructed in the late 1970s.

Conservation measures taken

A national park of 65,750 ha was established in 1972, but at the end of the 1970s after the revolution it was downgraded to a protected area of 52,800 ha.

The area of the original national park was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Re-

serve in June 1976.

There is a game guard station on a peninsula overlooking the western part of Lake Parishan. At both lakes hunting has been prohibited since 1973.

Conservation measures proposed

The Ramsar Monitoring Procedure Mission that visited the lakes in 1992 made several recommendations such as demarcating the borders of the site clearly with signs, upgrading the lakes and part of the Arjan reserve to wildlife refuge, prohibiting any further drainage activities at lake Parishan, studying the changes in aquatic vegetation of lake Parishan, creating a visitors centre at the game guard station of Lake Parishan and if possible re-routing the high-tension power lines across Dasht-e Arjan.

Current scientific research

The Ornithology Unit of the Department of the Environment has carried out annual mid-winter censuses since 1967, and many other surveys have been undertaken on other times of the year. Visiting researchers can be accommodated at the Game Guard Station.

Source: Ramsar.org

To be continued

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran working with Green Climate Fund

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) is working with the United Nations Green Climate Fund (GCF), under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to reduce the effects of climate change.

FAO and the Department of Environment as the National Designated Authority (NDA) of Green Climate Fund (GCF), partnered to bring together local, national, and international stakeholders in a three-day workshop, the last one in a series of iterative events held under the project "Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Program of Iran."

"Throughout the implementation of this Project, FAO as the delivery partner has always stayed committed to providing its technical expertise, data, and tools to support the country in its efforts to strengthen the national capacities to effectively access and efficiently manage, track and guide climate financing with particular attention to the requirements of the GCF," said Gerold Bödeker, FAO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

همکاری ایران با صندوق اقلیم سبز سازمان ملل

سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست به عنوان مرجع رسمی ایران در زمینه حفظ محیط زیست با صندوق اقلیم سبز سازمان ملل با محوریت سازمان خواربار و کشاورزی ملل متحد (فائو) در راستای کاهش تاثیرات تغییر اقلیم همکاری می‌کند.

فائو و سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست کشور به عنوان مرجع صلاحیت دار ملی ایران و صندوق اقلیم سبز با همکاری یکدیگر، این پروژه را پیش بردند و در قالب چند برگزاری چند کارگاه اقدامات را بررسی کردند. بر این اساس در آخرین کارگاه، ذینفعان محلی، ملی و بین المللی را به عنوان آخرین حلقه از زنجیره رویدادهای پروژه «برنامه آماده سازی جمهوری اسلامی ایران برای همکاری با صندوق اقلیم سبز» گرد هم آوردند.

گرولد بودکر نماینده فائو در جمهوری اسلامی ایران گفت: در طول اجرای این پروژه، فائو، به عنوان شریک اجرایی، همیشه متعهد به ارائه تخصص فنی، داده‌ها و ابزارهای سیاستی خود برای حمایت از کشور در تلاش‌های خود برای تقویت ظرفیت‌های ملی برای دسترسی موثر و مدیریت کارآمد، ردیابی و هدایت تأمین مالی اقدامات اقلیمی با در نظر گرفتن الزامات صندوق اقلیم سبز بوده است.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 10

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| New cases | 109 |
| New deaths | 7 |
| Total cases | 7,562,169 |
| Total deaths | 144,717 |
| New hospitalized patients | 109 |
| Patients in critical condition | 167 |
| Total recovered patients | 7,336,524 |
| Diagnostic tests conducted | 54,844,634 |
| Doses of vaccine injected | 155,266,155 |

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Lying would negatively influence your livelihood.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times» Noon:12:12 Evening: 17:30 Dawn: 5:45 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

Jami and Sufism

Part 3

Jami gathered some of the sayings of Khajeh Mohammad Parsa and supplemented them with commentary in a brief treatise, Sokhanan-e Khajeh Parsa, and he also prepared a précis of the main source for the life of Baha ad-Din Naqshband, the Anis al-Talebin wa Oddat al-Salekin of Salah ad-Din ibn Mobarak Bokhari; what appears to be an autograph copy of his version is to be found in the Khudabakhsh Library in Patna.

Finally, the title of Jami's longest masnavi, Selselat al-Zoahab ("The Golden Chain") may be an allusion to a secondary line of Naqshbandi initiatic descent so designated, that consisting of the first eight Imams of the Prophet's Household.

This diffuse work does, in any event, sometimes address itself to matters of distinctively Naqshbandi concern, such as the true nature of the silent zekr.

It also includes Kashghari's account of how his master, Nezam ad-Din Khamush, had swiftly freed himself from the love of a handsome young man.

More informative, however, than all the foregoing for Jami's understanding and personal practice of the Naqshbandi path are the dicta and anecdotes recorded by his biographers, especially Abd al-Ghafur Lari in his Takmela.

Although authorized by Kashghari to inculcate the distinctive zekr of the Naqshbandis in aspirants to the path and fulfill all the other tasks of formal spiritual guidance, Jami was notoriously averse to the tasks of preceptorship.

After the death of Kashghari, he customarily assigned those who sought training in the path to Mohammad Ruji, another of his khalifas, and similarly referred Son'-Allah Kuzakonani, who customarily led the prayer at the mosque where his circle would gather, to still another successor, Ala ad-Din Maktabdar.

News of this reached Ahrar in Samarqand, and he accordingly asked Fakhr ad-Din Kashefi, newly arrived from Herat, whether it was true that Jami did not accept morids, by contrast with Ruji.

Kashfi responded that this was the case, whereupon, with a mixture of regret and approval, Ahrar cited this dictum of Abd al-Khaleq Ghojdovani, an initiatic ancestor of the Naqshbandieh: dar-e shaykhi-ra beband, dar-e yari begoshay/ dar-e khalvat-ra beband, dar-e sohbat-ra goshay ("close the door of shaiikhhood, open the door of friendship/ close the door of retreat, open the door of companionship").

Nonetheless, again according to Fakhr ad-Din Kashefi, "if a sincere person should suddenly appear, he [i.e., Jami] would secretly enlighten him about this path," a case in point being his own father, Hossein Waez Kashefi.

The elder Kashefi had come to Herat in the hope of joining the following of Kashghari, but the shaiikh had expired not long before his arrival.

He therefore beseeched Jami to accept him as his disciple. Jami demurred, but "by way of allusion pointed him to a certain spiritual practice"; the wording seems to convey a high degree of reluctance.

Perhaps anxious to enhance his spiritual legacy, Jami changed course toward the end of his life and began to look actively for

authentic seekers (arbab-e talab), but he was disappointed, for, he said, "seekers are many, but what they seek is only the gratification of their own souls".

Despite all the foregoing, several persons are said to have been formally trained by Jami in the tariqa: Razi ad-Din Abd al-Ghafur Lari (d. 1506), renowned for a number of writings, especially the supplement (takmela) he wrote to Jami's Nafahat al-ons, an engaging and detailed portrayal of his master as a near-perfect embodiment of the Naqshbandi ideal; Mawlana Shahidi Qomi, who took refuge in Gujarat once the Safavids conquered Khorasan; and Khajeh Zia ad-Din Yusuf, Jami's third son (d. 1513).

Others include Ala ad-Din Savaji (d. 1559); Masud Shirvani (d. 1531); Hafez ad-Din Bayhaqi, whose son, Mohammad Hashem, having received the tariqa from him, passed it on to some five other persons, at least one of whom trained another generation of disciples.

As for Alishir Navai (d. 1501), minister to Mirza Hossein Bayqara and celebrated for his poetry in both Persian and Chaghatay Turkish, he openly proclaimed his loyalty to Jami in this unambiguous verse: Nevayi kim murid ve bendesidir/ iradet yolida efkendesidir.

In addition to these individuals, two relatively late sources, al-Entebah fi salasel awliya Allah by Shah Waliallah Dehlavi (d. 1762), and the Tebyan wasael al-haq'a'eq of Kamal ad-Din Haririzada (d. 1882) mention the Jamieh as a distinct branch of the Naqshbandieh, leading from Ala ad-Din Maktabdar through his son, Ghiyas ad-Din Ahmad, to Jami's nephew, Mawlana Mohammad Amin.

This account presupposes that Maktabdar had an initiatic relationship with Jami as well as with Kashghari, something not borne out by the sources. The Jamieh is said to have spread to the Hejaz, becoming entwined there with other lines of Sufi transmission and therefore losing its independent significance. What is certain is that Jami's posthumous influence on Sufism was exerted more by the broad literary corpus he carefully and deliberately assembled than by any Naqshbandi lineage descended from him.

Jami joined to his Naqshbandi affiliations an enthusiastic, even combative devotion to the teachings and textual legacy of Ebn al-Arabi.

Not only had he been preceded in this devotion by other Naqshbandis, notably Mohammad Parsa; he also saw a clear affinity between the two foci of his loyalty: "Uttering the zekr softly is the method of some shaiikhs, including the great master Mohyi ad-Din ibn al-Arabi...

The method of most shaiikhs is uttering the zekr loudly, whereas the method of imagining (takhayyol), i.e., the silent zekr, is the foundation of the path of the [Naqshbandi] masters".

Jami saw in him the supreme exponent of gnostic wisdom for the Arabs, just as Jalal ad-Din Rumi had been for the Persians; defended in public debate Ebn al-Arabi's view that the Pharaoh had died a believer; and rejected as misconceived the criticisms made of some of his teachings by the Kobrawi, Ala ad-Dawla Semnani (d. 1336).

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued.

“Monster’s Shadow” writer blends Iranian, Chinese legends in new book

From Page 1 ► He used classic Persian literature to write the story. “Although it is alleged that using this writing style would make it hard to read, the style has its own special fascination and is understandable to young adults,” the writer asserted.

“I really like this book and believe that it is one of the best works of my oeuvre; it is the final result of a one-year intensive research effort on legends and comparative study of Persian and Chinese literature,” he added.

He noted, “Such research is expandable to other stories and we may create more works by extracting similarities between two or more stories from different cultures.”

“In this story, I illustrate how evil thought would produce catastrophic events,” said Jahangirian, whose “Monster’s Shadow” was picked by the International Board on Books for Young People for the IBBY Honor List 2020.

Bijan was the son of Giv, a famous Iranian knight during the reign of Kay Khosrow, the Shah of Iran, and Banu Goshasp, the heroine daughter of Rustam. Bijan falls in love with Manijeh, the daughter of Afrasiab, Turan’s king and Iran’s greatest enemy. The tale of his suffering

Young adult fiction writer Abbas Jahangirian in an undated photo. (Honaronline/Farzan Qasemi)

and Manijeh’s constancy has been quoted by several other writers in classic Persian literature.

Zahhak is a misguided prince who is easily swayed by the devil to murder his father and usurp the throne. Cursed with monstrous snakes that grow out of the king’s shoulders, the Serpent King grows infamous throughout the land for his treachery and oppression. He

rules for one thousand years before a noble and valiant Fereidun gains the strength and army to defeat the unjust King.

“The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl” tells of the romance between Zhinu (the weaver girl, symbolizing the star Vega) and Niulang (the cowherd, symbolizing the star Altair).

Their love was not allowed,

and thus they were banished to opposite sides of the heavenly river. Once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, a flock of magpies would form a bridge to reunite the lovers for a single day.

Though there are many variations of the story, the earliest-known reference to this famous myth dates back to a poem from the Classic of Poetry from over 2600 years ago.

Russia’s PROFIT seeks Iran’s partnership into TV series

A logo for the Production Company of Igor Tolstunov – PROFIT.

TEHRAN – The Iranian Culture Center in Moscow said on Tuesday the Production Company of Igor Tolstunov – PROFIT in Russia is seeking to convince Iran to enter into a partnership with the company in a TV series project.

Tolstunov, director of the leading Russian companies producing full-length feature films and TV series, and the director and some managers of the project met with Iranian cultural attaché Masud Ahmadvand to discuss

issues about the series, the center said in a press release, without giving further details about the project.

During the meeting, Ahmadvand referred to a recent increase in the expansion of cooperation between Iran and Russia in the film industry and hoped that talks on several joint film projects between Iranian and Russian filmmakers would be finalized.

“The launch of the projects will open a new season of cultural relations between the two countries and will help improve mutual understanding between the Iranian and Russian people,” he said.

On his part, Tolstunov said that his company intends to film ten episodes of the series in Iran with the collaboration of Iranian cineastes.

PROFIT was founded in April 1995. The company made its debut with “Three stories” by Kira Muratova.

In October 1995, PROFIT entered into a partnership with NTV Channel and set up the film company NTV PROFIT. The partnership

Haiming’s “Chinese Philosophy” published in Persian

TEHRAN – Tehran-based company Qoqnus has recently published “Chinese Philosophy” by Wen Haiming in Persian.

The book originally published in 2010 was translated into Persian by Amin Bazrafshan, whose translation of “Chinese Publishing: Introductions to Chinese Culture” by Hu Yang and Yang Xiao was recently published by Qoqnus.

This book aims to explore Chinese philosophical characteristics of different philosophers in various periods, and distinguish “Chinese philosophical sensibility” motivating their thoughts.

In doing so, the author employs Western philosophical categories to describe different issues in the

Front cover of the Persian edition of Wen Haiming’s book “Chinese Philosophy.”

history of philosophy: Chinese political philosophy in pre-Qin era, Chinese metaphysics from Hanto Tang Dynasties, Chinese epistemology from Song to Ming Dynasties, and modern Chinese-

Western comparative philosophy.

The author provides readers with a clear conception of Chinese philosophical sensibility and its evolution throughout history.

Haiming received his Ph.D. in comparative philosophy from the University of Hawaii in 2006.

He is now a professor at the School of Philosophy, Renmin (People’s) University of China (RUC), the Beijing Center and Yeching Academy.

He has also published the books “Making One’s Intentions Concrete: Dimensions of Confucian Ethics” and “Confucian Pragmatism as the Art of Contextualizing Personal Experience and World”.

He has also published more

than 50 journal articles in both English and Chinese, including more than 10 articles in English peer-reviewed journals like Asian Philosophy and Journal of Chinese Philosophy.

He has been selected as one of the New Century Excellent Talents (NCET) by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2010, and one of the Ming De Scholars of RUC.

He is a member of the Advisory Editorial Board of the journal Asian Philosophy, and was the Associate Editor-in-Chief for the English Journal Frontiers of Philosophy in China, and editor-in-chief of the “International Studies on Chinese Philosophy” series for Peking University Press.

Iranian bookstores draw Persian readers into Maes’ “Conversations on Art and Aesthetics”

TEHRAN – “Conversations on Art and Aesthetics” by Hans Maes has been published in Persian by Cheshmeh.

Published by Oxford University Press in 2017, the book was translated into Persian by Abtin Radmanesh.

What is art? What counts as an aesthetic experience? Does art have to be beautiful? Can we reasonably dispute taste? What is the relation between aesthetic and moral evaluations? How do we interpret a work of art? Can we learn anything from literature, film or opera? What is sentimentality? What is irony? How do we think philosophically about architecture, dance, or sculpture? What makes something a great portrait? Is music representational or abstract? Why do we feel

terrified when we watch a horror movie even though we know it is fictional?

In “Conversations on Art and Aesthetics”, Maes discusses these and other key questions in aesthetics with ten world-leading philosophers of art: Noel Carroll, Gregory Currie, Arthur Danto, Cynthia Freeland, Paul Guyer, Carolyn Korsmeyer, Jerrold Levinson, Jenefer Robinson, Roger Scruton and Kendall Walton.

The exchanges are direct, open, and sharp, and give a clear account of these thinkers’ core ideas and intellectual development.

They also offer new insights into, and a deeper understanding of, contemporary issues in the philosophy of art.

Front cover of the Persian edition of Hans Maes’ book “Conversations on Art and Aesthetics.”