

Iran Launches Diplomatic Push Amid Anti-Islam Provocations

► Page 3

Leader names Ahmadreza Radan as Iran's police chief



TEHRAN – In a decree issued on Saturday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei appointed Brigadier General Ahmadreza Radan as Iran's police chief.

Radan replaced Hossein Ashtari, who had been serving in the post since 2014.

"With the end of the mission of Brigadier General Ashtari and with expressing thanks and satisfaction over his services, I appoint you as the chief of the Law Enforcement Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran," the Leader said in his decree to Radan.

The Leader recommended Radan to win the "satisfaction of the dear people in guarding security and protecting public clam."

Respecting the dignity of police forces and training specialized police forces for different sectors were also insisted by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Radan, a native of Isfahan, was born in 1963. He was the police chief of Greater Tehran from 2006 to 2008.

He had previously served as police chief of the provinces of Kurdistan, Sistan-Balouchestan, and Khorasan.

Report

Ukraine is NATO war contractor against Russia

Russia has been engaged in a war with Ukraine for months. Perhaps in the early days of the war, no one imagined that it would take so long, but if we look at its nature, we will realize that Russia is engaged not only with Ukraine, but with NATO, and Ukraine conducted a proxy war with Russia on the behalf of the military alliance.

The recent statements of the Minister of Defense of Ukraine show that the country is not only fighting against Russia on behalf of the West but it does not shy away from expressing itself as a NATO puppet.

In an interview with a Ukrainian TV channel, Oleksii Reznikov admitted that Ukraine's army is fighting for NATO's mission. ► Page 5

Iran to protest FIFA for using 'Arabian Gulf Cup' name

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Football Federation (IRIFF) will protest FIFA for using the 'Arabian Gulf Cup' for the tournament.

The competition kicked off in Basra, Iraq Friday night.

The 25th edition of the biennial football tournament, which runs from Jan. 6 to 19, has brought teams from Iraq, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Yemen together.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino attended the ceremony at the Basra International Stadium.

"It was great to have attended the opening ceremony and the opening game of the 2023 Arabian Gulf Cup in Basra, Iraq between Iraq and Oman," said the FIFA President. ► Page 3

Iranian Armenians celebrate Christmas



© ISNA / Peyman Shahsanaei

TEHRAN – Unlike all other Christians who consider January 1 as the beginning of the new year, Iranian Armenians follow the Oriental Orthodox denomination of Christianity and accordingly, celebrate Christmas on January 6.

In fact, Christmas decorations and celebrations take place throughout the country, spe-

cifically in major cities such as Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, and even religious cities such as Mashhad.

Around 300,000 to 370,000 Christians live in Iran, most of them are Armenians who have lived here for centuries. Assyrians, Catholics, Protestants, and Evangelical Christians consti-

tute the rest of the Christians in Iran.

The Assyrians of ancient Iran converted to Christianity since its onset, particularly in the first to third centuries AD. Like most Christians around the world, Assyrians in Iran celebrate December 25 as the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ.

Iran among world's top agro-food exporters in 2021: FAO

TEHRAN – Based on the data released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Iran has been among the top exporters of agricultural products in the world during 2021, IRNA reported.

Iran was the world's top exporter of figs in the mentioned year, exporting 8,763 tons of

the product in 2021. Austria and Spain occupied the second and third places, respectively.

The Islamic Republic was also the world's second-biggest pistachio exporter in the year under review after the U.S. The country exported 136,000 tons of pistachios to foreign destinations in the mentioned year.

Iran was also ranked second in terms of the export of raisins and eggplant, according to the FAO statistics. The country ranks third in the world in the export of watermelon and gooseberry.

In 2021, Iranian farmers exported more than 245,000 tons of dates. ► Page 4

Over 670 national standards set for soil protection

TEHRAN – The Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran has set 671 standards for soil protection and is setting 26 other standards in this regard.

A total of 220 standards have been set regarding soil, 89 standards regarding fertilizers, 18 standards regarding composts, 322 standards regarding pesticides, 19 standards regarding growth improvers, and 3 standards regarding toxic substances, Ladan Razi, an official with the Department of Environment said on Saturday.

According to the Soil Protection Law, the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research, the Department of Environment, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Agriculture were obliged to carry out the standardization jointly, he explained.

Soil quality in Iran needs special attention, especially fertile soils in the field of ► Page 7



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Commemorative ceremony held for victims of flight 752

TEHRAN – A commemorative ceremony was held in Qom on the occasion of the anniversary of the crash of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 which took place three years ago. The ceremony was attended by members of the families of the victims and others.

Taq-e Bostan marks 91 years on national heritage list

TEHRAN – On Thursday, Taq-e Bostan, a magnificent Sassanid site in western Iran that embraces extraordinary bas-relief carvings, marked the 91st anniversary of its registration on the national list for cultural heritage.

Taq-e Bostan is home to incredible Persian heritage on the base of a towering cliff, featuring extraordinary reliefs of ancient victorious kings.

Last month, Kermanshah's tourism chief said his directory was preparing to apply to UNESCO for listing a Sassanid archeological landscape on the 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, Mohammadreza Soheili said.

Originally, Taq-e Bostan was the site of a Parthian royal hunting garden, but the Sassanians later added their own regal touch. Its biggest alcove features elephant-mounted hunting scenes on the sidewalls and highlights ► Page 6

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Tehran Papers

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

French magazine's insult to Iranian women

Farhikhtegan wrote about the insult of the French magazine Charlie Hebdo against Iranian women.

"The special edition of Charlie Hebdo, which was published on the anniversary of the attack on the office of the magazine in 2015, ► Page 2

Murderers of Ruhollah Ajamian are executed

TEHRAN – Mohammad Mehdi Karami, 22, and Mohammad Hosseini, 39, who were the main culprits in martyring Ruhollah Ajamian were hanged on Saturday morning (January 7).

"Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, main perpetrators of the crime that led to the unjust martyrdom of Ruhollah Ajamian were hanged this morning," the Judiciary said in a statement, IRNA reported.

The hanging of had been confirmed by the Supreme Court. The two men had been convicted of killing Ajamian, a member of the Basiji (volunteer forces) on 3 November in Karaj, a city 40 kilometers west of Tehran.

The murder took place on Karaj-Qazvin highway, where the rioters had blocked the road.

Ajamian, 28, was voluntarily trying to help open the highway that was suddenly attacked by group of rioters because he was wearing the Basiji uniform. He was attacked by stone, knife, machete, and brass knuckles, Tasnim reported.

Ajamian was unarmed when he was attacked.

Iranian minister attends event naming Nouakchott 2023 Islamic Culture Capital

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, attended a meeting on Friday in Nouakchott, Mauritania to celebrate the city as the Culture Capital of the Islamic World for 2023.

In a meeting with Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, Esmaeili relayed a message to him of congratulations on behalf of President Ebrahim Raisi, and said that Iran recognizes the potential in the Islamic, Arab and African nations and welcomes any new plan to expand relations with the countries.

"There has been a great surge in interactions with the Islamic world and African nations in Iran's new government," Esmaeili said.

"We held meetings with the culture ministers of the Islamic countries on the sidelines of the celebration for the Culture Capital of Islamic World to improve ties with the nations," he added. ► Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

French magazine's insult to Iranian women

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

from page 1 ► was the best opportunity to disgrace the fascist and racist nature of the magazine," the newspaper, that is run by the Islamic Azad University, wrote.

On the cover of the magazine, there was such a shameful insult to Iranian women that it could be a shame to the Western fascists forever, but the unprofessional response by the Iranian Foreign Ministry has turned the opportunity into a threat. Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned caricatures as an insult to the Leader and follows the case up through official and diplomatic channels which allows Paris to repeat its daily bullshit about freedom of speech and say that "Unlike Iran, there is freedom of speech in France."

Iran should have emphasized the magazine was "insulting Iranian women".

An ugly and naked picture of a purported Iranian woman, painted in the shape of a gorilla, is printed in the middle of the frame and is so sexually offensive and shameful that ethically it is not advisable to describe it.

Apparently, the French racists were seeking for an excuse to praise the struggles of Iranian women in these few months in order to put pressure on the Iranian government.

Now they want to withdraw from their performance. The female hero should only belong to the white and blue-eyed culture, and the rest are ultimately good barbarians against bad barbarians. Iran's government and its Foreign Ministry should not have interfered in the matter and it was not necessary to attribute the indecent cartoons to the Leader of the revolution.

Iranian women, both religious and non-religious, should be aware of the magazine's insults and start to sue the magazine. In that situation the ministry will be tasked to follow up on their case at the international level.

Charlie Hebdo's insult to Iranian women was beyond a specific social group; it even insulted protesters because of their Iranian roots.

On the other hand, instead of shutting down the French institute for Iranian studies, the government and the Foreign Ministry could have assigned the matter to the media to question France regarding racial and gender insults against Iranian women.

Certainly, the French orientalists would either have to condemn Charlie Hebdo or say something that would be detrimental to them in terms of publicity.

Jam-e- Jam: Enmity against Iran goes nonstop

The Jam-e Jam newspaper reports about the recent movements of European troika (Britain, France, and Germany) against Iran.

In recent months, the Europeans have played well their role in hostility against the Iranian nation. It is normal for Westerners to make any kind of insults against the respected values of nations in a colorful paper in the name of freedom of speech and the feed them to the public opinion in the world. But when it comes their interests, they use international institutions as a tool against independent nations to provide grounds for issuing sanctions

Iran praises Syria's cooperative relationship with OPCW

TEHRAN- Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York on Thursday expressed Tehran's gratitude for Syria's cooperative relationship with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Applauding Syria's constructive engagement with the OPCW, Ambassador Amir Saeed Iravani highlighted that it is also important to pay attention to the Syrian government's reasonable concerns in that regard.

Delivering speech at the UN Security Council about the Syrian chemical weapons case, Iravani remarked, "Since the previous UNSC session in this respect no new event, or development has occurred. The OPCW representative office at the UN, too, has not presented any new point in this

resolutions, the publication wrote.

The report mentioned the Europeans' support for the recent moves against Iran, saying that from the very beginning of the nuclear dispute the Europeans, who have been at the side of America in the enmity with Iran, have thought of changing the tactics of the game.

The European troika tried to force the Islamic Republic to implement its JCPOA commitments with colorful but empty promises such as INSTEX and solving some of Iran's economic problems, but they showed complete unwillingness in this regard, and the reason for this inaction was the dependence of these countries on the United States.

Arman-e Melli: Unprecedented international pressure on Iran

Arman-e Melli's author argued that from the beginning of the revolution until today, Iran has never been under international pressure to this extent. The Europeans use the human rights tactics because they cannot directly interfere in Iran's internal issues. This tactic is very annoying.

The paper mentioned the removal of Iran from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as an example.

Shargh: Three plans of the West against Iran

Pointing to the nuclear dispute between the West and Iran, Shargh wrote: The representative of Russia in Vienna, while criticizing the United States and its European partners towards Iran's nuclear program, expressed concern about Plan B. Mikhail Ulyanov wrote on his Twitter page: "Allegations that Iran has sold drones to Russia are an unprofessional excuse to stop (if not end) the Vienna negotiations on the JCPOA."

The Russian envoy added: "It seems that the United States and the E3 are trying to implement Plan B, but this is a big mistake and is probably doomed to fail."

Ulyanov refers to the willingness of the United States and the European trio (E3) that are still signatory to the 2015 nuclear agreement to use Plan B, a coercive approach that may include economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and even the military attack (a case that the US has been talking about for years) to solve Iran's nuclear issue.

Kayhan: Close the Strait of Hormuz

Hossein Sharyatmadari, the Kayhan chief editor, called for closing the Strait of Hormuz in response to the hostile policies of some Western countries toward Iran.

"Now this serious and of course this logical question is being asked (not just from Iranian diplomats in the Foreign Ministry but) of the Iranian authorities, why don't they use this legal right to make the hostile countries remorse?" he wrote.

If Iran had closed the Strait of Hormuz to oil tankers and commercial vessels with the first hostile action of the enemies and had confiscated the cargoes of some of them, the criminal enemy would not have dared to continue its crimes, the veteran journalist added.

respect"

"Today's session once again confirms the view that holding regular monthly meetings in this regard is essentially a waste of UN resources and time of the UNSC members, notwithstanding the lack of any progress or development in this file," Iran's ambassador reaffirmed.

Iravani also made it clear that Iran supports the OPCW's technical approach to addressing the remaining concerns in the Syrian chemical weapons file.

He emphasized that "unbiased, competent, authentic, and concrete investigations are essential to achieve that aim and that they must fulfill the criteria and procedures of the Chemical Weapons Convention."

Kadkhodaei calls for founding joint Iran-Iraq court to investigate Soleimani assassination

Iranian, Iraqi legal teams to meet in Tehran on Monday

TEHRAN – Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei, head of a special legal committee tasked to investigate the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, has called for formation of a joint Iran-Iraq court to follow the issue at international courts with greater speed.

General Soleimani and his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, were assassinated in a U.S. drone strike near Iraq's international airport on January 3, 2020.

"The crime that the regime of the U.S. committed in the assassination of Hajj Qassem and his companions was an open violation of international law," Kadkhodaei asserted.

The assassination was also a "violation of Iraq's sovereignty and violation of the (political) immunity of other countries' officials," he added.

He went on to say that "this crime is so obvious that most international lawyers insist on its illegality."

Kadkhodaei, a law expert, confirmed that so far Iran has demanded punishment for about 90 persons involved in the assassination, including those who aided and abetted in the terrorist act.

Among top figures who are subject to penalty are former U.S. president Donald Trump, his foreign secretary of state Mike Pompeo and national security advisor John Bolton.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed



Shia' al-Sudani on Thursday paid tribute to General Qassem Soleimani and al-Muhandis, saying that their targeted killings were actually "a brazen attack" on Iraq's sovereignty.

"The crime of assassinating the 'Commanders of Victory' and their companions represented a flagrant violation of Iraq's territorial integrity and national sovereignty. The targeted killings of the commanders, who had a leading role in elimination of the scourge of terrorism, is an utter disrespect to bilateral agreements [signed between Baghdad and Washington]," Sudani said at a ceremony in Baghdad in commemoration of the two legendary commanders, Press TV reported.

General Soleimani was a gust of then Iraq's prime minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi who was assassinated by

the U.S.

"...while enroute to meet with Iraqi prime minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi al-Muntafiki, Hajj Qassem was assassinated outside of Baghdad International Airport by order of the criminal occupant of the Oval Office of the White House in Washington," American analyst Yuram Abdullah Weiler says.

Prime Minister Sudani said, "We woke up on January 3, 2020 to hear the terrible news about assassination of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and General Qassem Soleimani, who was on an official visit to Iraq."

The Iraqi leader went on to denounce the Trump administration over its brazen attack on Iraq's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Moreover, Chairman of the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council Faiq Zidane decried the assassination of Muhandis and Gen. Soleimani as "a vile and cowardly act."

He underscored that the Iraqi Judiciary bears the responsibility to shed light on all circumstances surrounding the assassination, calling on the country's security institutions to provide judicial authorities with all necessary documents and findings in this regard.

Zidan went on to note that Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council has issued an arrest warrant for Trump over the assassination.

The council's president said that Trump has confessed to his "crime" in relation to the assassination of the "Leaders of Victory."

He called upon all Iraqi officials involved in investigations over the targeted killings to try their utmost, and identify all related architects, organizers and culprits.

Meanwhile, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's human rights chief and deputy judiciary chief for international affairs, announced on Saturday that Iran and Iraq will hold the fourth joint legal investigation committee on the Soleimani assassination in Tehran on Monday.

In this session new documents will be exchanged between Iranian and Iraqi legal delegations and the two sides also share new information on the issue.

Parliament speaker to visit Turkey for APA meeting

TEHRAN – Iranian Parliament Speaker Qalibaf will travel to Turkey to Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA).

Ali Alizadeh, head of the Iranian parliamentary team in the APA, told reporters that parliament speakers from seven Asian countries will attend the meeting.

"The Asian Parliamentary Assembly is one of the most important international institutions in Asia, which is highly effective, and in this year's summit, which is hosted by Turkey, seven countries at the level speakers of the parliament and four countries at the level of

the deputy speakers will participate in the meeting, which shows the importance of the meeting," Alizadeh said, the English service of Mehr reported.

The formation of the APA was somehow the result of Iran's initiative, he said. "Therefore, the Islamic Republic must be present in this meeting at the level of the speaker of the parliament to exercise its influence."

The APA plays a role in promoting multilateralism, and Iran announces cooperation with its counterparts in the region with its presence, Alizadeh highlighted.



Gen. Soleimani's martyrdom reenergized Axis of Resistance: American writer

TEHRAN - The assassination of senior Iranian anti-terror commander General Hajj Qassem Soleimani as an act of U.S. state terrorism ignited much of the world with anti-American anger, according to an American writer and journalist.

Yuram Abdullah Weiler, a relentless critic of U.S. global hegemonic aspirations, also says the assassination of General Soleimani strengthened the resistance front.

"Hajj Qassem's martyrdom served to reenergize the Axis of Resistance, and reaffirm its goal of expelling the U.S. occupying forces from the region," Weiler says in an interview with Press TV.

Last week Iran, Iraq, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip marked the third year that General Soleimani and Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) deputy chief Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were martyred in a U.S. drone strike near Baghdad's international airport.

General Soleimani was considered a legendary commander in the fight against terrorism. He also played a significant role in empowering the Hezbollah resistance movement that shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Israeli army in the 33-day war in 2006.

"His skills as a military strategist are legendary; in particular, his ability to form powerful resistance movements, combining seasoned combat fighters with political activists, as was the case with Hezbollah in Lebanon," the engineer-turned writer and political critic notes.

Following is the text of the interview with Weiler.

It's been three years since the



terror assassination by the US of General Hajj Qassem Soleimani near Baghdad International Airport. What shifts in the West Asian geopolitical scene have resulted as a consequence of his martyrdom at the hands of the U.S.?

First of all, my deepest condolences to the family of General Soleimani, his associates in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and all the Iranian people on this solemn occasion. Hajj Qassem was a remarkable man, rising from a construction worker as a youth to the top commander of the IRGC in an amazingly short time. His skills as a military strategist are legendary; in particular, his ability to form powerful resistance movements, combining seasoned combat fighters with political activists, as was the case with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The immediate effect of the assassination of General Soleimani was to induce shock throughout the region that the arrogant power would actually carry out a drone strike within a sovereign state targeting not only

Hajj Qassem, but also Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the Iraqi government official who headed the Popular Mobilization Front. Predictably, the Iraqi parliament voted to expel U.S. troops, and subsequently moved to strengthen its ties to its neighbor, Iran. Likewise, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen were also led in that direction. Widespread protests against the assassination broke out in over 100 countries around the world including Iraq, Lebanon, Kashmir, India, Philippines and Pakistan, which refused to allow the U.S. to launch any attack on Iran from within its borders. There were even protests in 80 cities within the United States. In short, the assassination unleashed a firestorm of anti-U.S. sentiment around the world.

The long-term effect of the killing of General Soleimani was to elevate Iran's regional status, strengthen its ties with both state and non-state actors in West Asia, and expand the reach of the Islamic Republic's soft power worldwide. Hajj Qassem's martyrdom served to reenergize the Axis of Resistance, and reaffirm its goal of expelling the U.S. occupying forces from the region.

How do these geopolitical events contrast with Washington's expectations in carrying out this illegal, sanguinary act? What did U.S. leaders hope to gain by this act of state terrorism?

Donald Trump pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018 and re-instituted all sanctions and then added to them as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign, which was intended to secure a more stringent and restricting agreement with Iran.

By December 2019, it was clear that this ill-conceived effort had failed to achieve any results and, in fact, had pushed Iran eastward into stronger relations with China, so the pathetic U.S. potentate jumped at the scheme to assassinate Soleimani that was presented by then-U.S. secretary of state Mike Pompeo and national security adviser John Bolton. Pompeo was so delusional that he claimed the tens of thousands of Iraqis mourning the killing of Hajj Qassem and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were actually "dancing in the streets" in celebration. So as mentioned above instead of forcing Iran into further concessions, the act of US state terrorism simply ignited much of the world with anti-American anger.

Is there a connection between the terror assassination of General Hajj

Qassem and the Islamic Republic of Iran's ever-increasing significance as a regional power to be reckoned with?

The connection appears most strongly in the manner the initial retaliation was carried out by Tehran. The missile strike on Ain al-Assad air base was a carefully calculated response, painstakingly calculated to demonstrate the capability of Iran's missile defenses and, at the same time, to show regional powers that Iran—not the US—is the country that can be depended on to maintain stability and security in the Persian Gulf area. Iran's missiles struck Ain al-Assad with such pinpoint accuracy that U.S. officials were aghast. One Iraqi source claimed that some aircraft stored there were literally split in two by the missiles.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran launches diplomatic push amid anti-Islam provocations

By Mehran Shamsuddin

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has launched a diplomatic campaign with the purpose of countering sacrilege to Islamic sanctities.

Over the last few days, two blasphemous incidents took place that struck a raw nerve. Itamar Ben Gvir, a leader in Israel's far-right Jewish Power party, stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque last week immediately after taking over as the minister of national security in the new Israeli government. A longtime extremist, Ben Gvir did so under the protection of occupation forces.

The provocative move sparked widespread uproar in the Muslim world given the lofty status of the Mosque as the first Qiblah. The Ben Gvir controversy came simultaneously with outrageous cartoons published by French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. The obscene cartoons were widely considered sacrilege as they depicted Iranian religious and political officials in a very improper way.

Iran was quick to respond to both provocative moves. Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani has strongly condemned the desecration of al-Aqsa Mosque by Ben Gvir and described it as “a violation of international law and an affront to the values and sanctities of the world Muslims.”

Iran's response to the French magazine was multi-layered. First, Amir Abdollahian condemned it on



Twitter. Then, French Ambassador to Tehran Nicolas Roche was summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday.

Kanaani said France has no right to justify insult to the sanctities of other nations and Islamic countries under the pretext of freedom of speech.

The Iranian foreign minister spoke with a number of foreign officials to discuss the provocations of Ben Gvir and Charlie Hebdo, among other things.

First of all, Amir Abdollahian spoke to Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Hissein Ibrahim Taha about the two issues. He appreciated the stance of the OIC chief and his immediate condemnation of the defiling of al-Aqsa Mosque by the Zionists, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

He also thanked Ibrahim Taha

for condemning Charlie Hebdo's publication of insulting cartoons.

Condemning Charlie Hebdo's insulting move, Taha said, “We are looking into the issue to give an appropriate response.”

The issues of Charlie Hebdo and Al-Aqsa Mosque also featured high in the phone conversations Amir Abdollahian had with Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al Sabah.

The recent cases of desecration of Islamic sanctities once again highlighted the need to set up mechanisms for standing up to insults given that such cases are not the first ones. Iran appears to be pushing for such mechanisms within the Muslim world.

In his conversation with the Kuwaiti counterpart, Amir Abdollahian

condemned the recent desecration of al-Aqsa Mosque by the Zionists and called for a coordinated and joint action by Muslim countries in order to preserve the historical and legal status of the mosque. He also underscored the need to put a legal mechanism in place to stop insults to Islamic sanctities, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

Al Sabah, for his part, welcomed Iran's proposal and initiative that the OIC take action in concert to stop the sacrilegious acts of the Israeli regime that disrupt regional peace and stability.

He then pointed to the dark record of French magazine Charlie Hebdo in insulting the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and deplored its recent insulting cartoons. Al Sabah said insulting religious authorities and leaders is an affront to all Muslims.

The Pakistani foreign minister also voiced concern over the continuation of the Zionist regime's aggressive policies and condemned its moves to desecrate al-Aqsa Mosque. He added that the silence of world countries toward injustice in Palestine must end.

He referred to the bad record of French magazine Charlie Hebdo and its insult to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), religious values and the Marjaiya. The Pakistani foreign minister said Islamabad is prepared to work with other Muslim countries and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to fight Islamophobia and the desecration of Islamic sanctities.

repeated the same hostile tone and claimed, ‘No Israeli Government will allow a nuclear Iran. If it is necessary to act, we will act’. Furthermore, on 27 December 2022, Aviv Kohavi, Chief of Staff of the Israeli regime, remarked, ‘The level of preparedness for an operation in Iran has dramatically improved’. These inflammatory and belligerent statements threatening to use force against Iran's peaceful nuclear programs, which have been under the most stringent and intrusive nuclear verification, monitoring and transparency measures ever implemented in a country in the IAEA's history, are a flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter, specifically Article 2(4) of the Charter.”

Iravani continued, “This is not the first time the Israeli regime has threatened to use force against Iran. As emphasized in Iran's letter dated 27 July 2022 (S/2022/581), this regime has already blatantly and openly admitted its responsibility for the terrorist and destructive operations committed against Iranian officials, scientists, civilians, and its peaceful nuclear infrastructure by this illegitimate regime inside Iranian territory in recent years. Indeed, such warmongering statements demonstrate that the Israeli regime is responsible for all criminal and terrorist acts committed against Iran and must bear the consequences.”

The ambassador noted, “While warning against the Israeli regime's military adventurism against Iran in order to pursue its malign policies in the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its legitimate right, in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter, to respond to any threat posed by the Israeli regime and protect its people as well as national security interests at any time it deems appropriate.”

and the Marjiyya. The Pakistani foreign minister said Islamabad is prepared to work with other Muslim countries and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to fight Islamophobia and the desecration of Islamic sanctities.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also underlined the necessity of continuing the education of women in Afghanistan. He also stressed the need to form an inclusive government in Afghanistan and fight terrorism in the country.

The Pakistani foreign minister said on Twitter that he discussed the situation in Palestine with his Iranian counterpart. “Pleased to discuss with Iran FM @Amirabdollahian today the Palestine situation after recent visit of Nat Sec Minister of Israel to Al-Aqsa Mosque. Pakistan condemns provocative visit; reiterates support for viable, independent & contiguous Palestinian State with pre-1967 borders & Al-Quds as capital according to resolution [by the] UN & OIC Resolution,” he said.

IRAN IN FOCUS

JANUARY 8, 2023

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Haddadi undergoes successful foot surgery



TEHRAN – Iran basketball team captain Hamed Haddadi underwent successful foot surgery.

He underwent successful surgery on Saturday and will need several months to recuperate and return to full fitness.

Sichuan Blue Whales defeated the Jilin Northeast Tigers 114-110 Wednesday night in the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) league but their center Haddadi fell down in the game and was carried off on a stretcher.

The 37-year-old was later diagnosed with an Achilles tendon rupture.

Haddadi has missed Team Melli match in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 from the Asian Qualifiers against Japan and China in late February.

Team Melli are scheduled to play Japan in an away match on Feb. 23 and will face China three days later.

Haddadi's absence is a big blow to Iran since the Persians sit third in Group F.

Iran edge Morocco at Poland handball tournament

TEHRAN – Iran handball team edged past Morocco 29-28 at the 4 Nations Cup in Krakow, Poland Friday night.

Iran had previously lost to Poland (32-27) and Belgium (35-31) in the tournament.

Veselin Vujovic's team will also play a friendly match with South Korea on January 8.

Team Melli compete in the tournament as part of preparation for the 2023 IHF Men's World Championship, which will be held in Poland and Sweden from Jan. 11 to 29.

Iran have been drawn along with Chile, Spain and Montenegro in Group A.

The Persians will meet Chile on Jan. 12 in their opener.

Hossein Nohroudi named Iran boxing coach

TEHRAN – Hossein Nohroudi was named as new head coach of Iran national boxing team.

He replaced Alireza Estaki in the position on Saturday.

The boxing federation is going to hire a Cuban coach within the next couple of months.

Nohroudi will have to prepare the Iranian boxing team for the 2022 Asian Games which will be held in Hangzhou, China.

Iran commemorates 55th death anniversary of Takhti

TEHRAN – Iran commemorated the 55th death anniversary of Iranian legendary wrestler Gholamreza Takhti.

The memorial was held on Saturday at Ibn-e Babouyeh Cemetery in southern Tehran, near Shahr-e Ray, where he is commemorated every year by the Iranians.

Takhti was born in Tehran on August 27, 1930 and was found dead in a hotel room on January 7, 1968.

He won the gold medal in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, defeating Boris Kulayev from Soviet Union in the final match.

Takhti also claimed two Olympics silver medals in 1952 Helsinki and 1960 Rome.

He won two World Championships gold medals in 1959 Tehran and 1961 Yokohama.

The freestyle wrestler also seized a gold medal in the 1958 Asian Games held in Tokyo, Japan.

Takhti is the most famous wrestler in Iranian history. The legend was known for his chivalry and sportsmanship and continues to symbolize the essence of sports to the Iranian people.

In 1961, a terrible earthquake occurred in Boein Zahra in western Iran, killing 45,000. Takhti was deeply touched by the suffering. Already one of Iran's biggest stars, he began to walk one of the main avenues of Tehran, asking for assistance for the victims. He inspired other champions to follow in his footsteps, and thousands gave donations to alleviate the suffering.

Another example of his character comes from a match in Moscow. After defeating the then-world champion Anatoli Albul, Takhti saw the sorrow on the face of Albul's mother. Takhti went to her and said, “I'm sorry about the result, but your son is a great wrestler.” She smiled and kissed him.

There is another memory that sheds more light on his character. Once he had a match with Russian wrestler Alexander Medved, who had an injured right knee. When Takhti found out that he was injured, he never attacked that leg. Instead, he tried to attack the other leg. Takhti finally lost the match.

Alexander Medved has come to Iran many times over the years to pay respect to the champion at his grave.

Iran beat UAE at Asian WTTC Continental Stage

TEHRAN – Iran table tennis double team defeated the UAE 4-1 at the Asian WTTC Continental Stage on Saturday. Iran's Amirhossein Hodaei and Amin Ahmadian defeated Emirati team Abdulla Al Balooshi and Jassem Mohammed 4-1 (11-4, 9-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-9).

Iran is scheduled to meet India in Round of 16 on Monday.

The competition is being held at the Lusail Sports Complex in Doha, Qatar, from Jan. 7 to 13.

Perry Petty praises Shahrdari's performance against Al Naft

TEHRAN – American player of Shahrdari Gorgan Perry Petty has praised his team's performance against Al Naft.

Shahrdari defeated the Iraqi side 110-69 in Group in Group B. Mohammad Jamshidi led the Iranian team with 31 points and Antwaine Wiggins scored 29 points for Al Naft. Shahrdari Gorgan had lost to Lebanese team Al Riyadi 81-74 in Beirut in its opening match and defeated Syrian basketball team Al Karamah 83-78 in the second match.

“It was a great game. Our captain, our leader, he started us off the right way on the offensive end making shots, and we all followed suit. More importantly, just defense,” Perry Petty said.

“Everybody was locked in on the strategy and the gameplan Coach had for us. We worked extremely hard these last couple of days to be prepared for this team. We executed the gameplan perfectly, in my opinion, on defense.

“Our offense strived off our defense. We played good defense and it allowed us to get in transition, get some easy baskets, and make some good shots,” Petty concluded.

Iran to protest FIFA for using ‘Arabian Gulf Cup’ name

From Page 1 ▶ IRIFF has criticized FIFA for using the name of ‘Arabian Gulf Cup’ for the tournament via a post published on the federation's website.

“The Persian Gulf is a historical name, which has been applied in all languages and various atlases, including ancient and historical maps,” the statement reads.

The unchallengeable documents regarding the issue will be handed over to FIFA to pursue the overhaul of the inappropriate methods of using names, which are in contradiction to international customs.

TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Amir Saeid Iravani sent a letter to the president of the UN Security Council dismissing allegations by Israel against Iran in the UN body.

“I am writing to you in reference to the UN Security Council's emergency meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, which was held on 5 January 2023 (S/PV.9236). During the meeting, the Security Council was presented with unjustified references and unfounded accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran levelled by a representative of the Israeli regime,” Iravani wrote in the letter.

He added, “The representative of the Israeli regime has feverishly attempted to exploit the Security Council platform once more by resorting to lies and fabrications accusing Iran of malicious activities that this regime itself has committed and continues to commit against regional countries.”

Iravani continued, “While Iran categorically denies these unjustified accusations, it believes that the purpose of such baseless accusations is to divert the international community's attention away from the ongoing atrocities and serious violations of international law committed by the Israeli Apartheid regime against the Palestinian people, especially its recent incursion into the Al-Aqsa Mosque on 3 January 2023 which violated not only the sanctity and worship rites of the Mosque but also constituted a brazen provocation of the emotional state of the Muslim Ummah.”

The Iranian ambassador also expressed regret that Israel continues to violate human rights. “It is regrettable that, due to a lack of accountability, the Israeli regime continues to commit serious violations of human rights and international

humanitarian law in Palestine-occupied territory, including systematic and flagrant acts of sacrilege as well as the desecration of Al-Quds Al-Sharif holy sites, in full view of the international community while also being fully aware that it will not face any consequences. If the international community, particularly the Security Council, remains deafeningly silent regarding the Israeli regime's ongoing aggressions, the regime will be emboldened to carry on with more atrocities and aggression. Any sacrilege and desecration of Muslim holy sites that also results in the distress and disturbance of Muslims around the world is repulsive and should not be tolerated,” Iravani said.

He concluded, “We urge the Security Council to condemn the Israeli regime's ongoing violations and atrocities in Palestinian-occupied territory, as well as to compel this lawless regime to strictly adhere to international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions.”

In early January, Iravani had sent a similar letter to the president of the UN Security Council. “I would like to draw your attention to Israel's ongoing breaches of international law and the UN Charter against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Israeli regime continues to threaten to use force against Iran, the most recent of which are statements made by regime authorities openly threatening to use force against Iran's peaceful nuclear programs,” he said in this letter, dated January 3.

He added, “On 28 December 2022, Benny Gantz, outgoing Defense Minister of the Israeli regime, declared, ‘Israel has significantly increased its preparedness in recent years and is preparing for the possibility of an attack on Iran’. Similarly, Yair Lapid, departing Prime Minister of the Israeli regime,

inclusive government in the country.

The Pakistani foreign minister for his part underlined the need for military and security cooperation between Iran and Pakistan to fight terrorist activities.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also thanked Iran for giving humanitarian aid to flood-hit people in Pakistan and said it is necessary that Tehran and Islamabad implement the agreements reached during the recent meeting of the joint commission as soon as possible in order to expand their good and constructive ties.

The Pakistani foreign minister also voiced concern over the continuation of the Zionist regime's aggressive policies and condemned its moves to desecrate al-Aqsa Mosque. He added that the silence of world countries toward injustice in Palestine must end.

He referred to the bad record of French magazine Charlie Hebdo and its insult to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), religious values

TEHRAN – The top diplomats of Iran and Pakistan spoke over the phone on Friday to discuss a range of issues, including the recent insulting cartoons published by French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.

In their conversation, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held talks over the latest developments in bilateral ties and some regional and international issues, the Iranian foreign ministry said.

Amirabdollahian said he was pleased with the growing trend of bilateral ties, especially the holding of the joint economic commission of the two countries in Pakistan. He also underlined the importance of implementing the agreements concluded at the commission.

The Iranian foreign minister added that Iran is ready for opening the Pishin-Mand border market.

Meanwhile, Amirabdollahian

pointed to the acts of the Zionist regime to promote Islamophobia and strongly condemned the fake regime's latest move to desecrate al-Asa Mosque.

He further highlighted the French government's responsibility in this regard, saying the Zionist lobby in France is behind French magazine Charlie Hebdo's publication of cartoons that insulted Islamic sanctities and the Marjiyya. Amirabdollahian said the French government is equally responsible in this respect.

The top Iranian diplomat further underlined that Muslim countries must not let some Western governments put the defiling of sanctities and hate-mongering on their agenda under the guise of freedom.

At the end, Amirabdollahian expressed concern about the worrisome situation in Afghanistan. He voiced regret over the move to deprive girls of education in Afghanistan and stressed the necessity of forming an

Iran's exports to U.S. rise 10 folds in 11 months on year



TEHRAN - The value of Iran's exports to the United States registered a 10-fold increase in the first 11 months of 2022 from the same period in 2021, based on the data released by the United States Census Bureau.

As IRNA reported, the U.S. imported commodities worth \$11 million from Iran in the first 11 months of this year, while the figure was only \$1.1 million in the same period of time in the past year.

According to the mentioned data, the two countries traded \$51.3 million worth of goods during January-November which was 38 percent

more than the figure in the first 11 months of 2021 when the trade between the two sides amounted to \$37.2 million.

The United States Census Bureau's data shows that the value of U.S. export to Iran also increased 11 percent to \$40.3 million in the 11-month period of this year, from \$36.8 million in the same time span of the previous year.

As previously reported by this bureau, the value of Iran's exports to the United States increased by 11 folds in the first 10 months of 2022 from the same period in 2021.

The U.S. imported commodities worth \$10.9 million from Iran in the first 10 months of this year, while the figure was only \$1 million in the same period of time in the past year.

The two countries traded \$46.5 million worth of goods during January-October which was 41 percent more than the figure in the first 10 months of 2021 when the trade between the two sides amounted to \$33.8 million.

The United States Census Bureau's data shows that the value of U.S. export to Iran increased eight percent to \$35.6 million in the 10-month period of this year, from \$32.8 million in the same time span of the previous year.

Oil projects worth \$8b to be inaugurated by late March

TEHRAN - Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has said several semi-finished oil industry projects worth \$8 billion in total are scheduled to go operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), Shana reported.

The projects are in a variety of fields including enhancing oil and gas production, boosting gas refining capacity, gas transmission pipelines, petrochemical complexes and gathering associated gases, Oji said in a live televised interview on Friday.

Referring to the president's emphasis on the completion of semi-finished projects and the need to determine their fate as soon as possible, he said that since the beginning of



the current government administration, the Oil Ministry has taken serious measures for completing prioritized semi-finished projects across the country.

Iraq eyes more gas, electricity imports from Iran



TEHRAN - Iraqi government has decided to import more gas or electricity from Iran to

meet the increasing electricity demand and manage problems in the country's power grid, Fars News Agency reported citing the Iraqi press.

Iraq relies on Iran for natural gas which generates as much as 45 percent of its 14,000 megawatts of electricity consumed daily. Iran transmits another 1,000 MW directly, making itself an indispensable energy source for its Arab neighbor.

In late July 2022, Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian said the Islamic Republic has signed a long-term strategic electricity contract with Iraq to provide the country with sustainable energy supplies.

TEDPIX gains 18,900 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 18,939 points to 1.598 million on Saturday.

As reported, over 22,383 billion securities worth 109,755 trillion rials (about \$288.8 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 17,342 points, and the second market's index climbed 27,423 points.

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

As reported, 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).

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.

As reported, the government has decided



to supply the mentioned fund from the shares of state-owned companies to protect small shareholders against the risks of the capital market.

Also, in order to strengthen the companies active in the market, a part of their profit which is allocated to increasing their capital is going to be exempted from tax; this will encourage such companies to increase capital and expand their activities.

from page 1 ► which was less than the exports of only three countries. Saudi Arabia ranked first in terms of the export of dates with 318,000 tons, followed by Iraq and the United Arab Emirates.

Over 166,000 tons of cucumbers were also exported from Iran in 2021, which was less than the exports of only four countries. Mexico stood in first place in the world with the export of 840,000 tons of the mentioned product.

As for the exports of kiwis and onions, the Islamic Republic was ranked sixth among the top exporters of the mentioned products. Iran exported more than 69,000 tons of kiwis in 2021 when New Zealand was the top exporter of the mentioned fruit, exporting 85,000 tons.

FAO statistics show that Iran also stands among the world's top producers of many agricultural products.

Based on the FAO data, the Islamic Republic is the third-largest producer of dates, honey, pistachios, and walnuts in the world.

Iranian farmers produce 1.28 million tons of dates annually, making the country the third-largest producer of this product in the world after Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Honey production in Iran is 80,000 tons per year, which is



Iran among world's top agro-food exporters in 2021: FAO

the highest honey production in a country after China and Turkey. China's honey production is estimated at 458,000 tons per year.

The FAO has put Iran's pistachio production at 190,000 tons in 2020, placing the country in third place among the world's top producers of the mentioned products after the United States and Turkey.

Iran has been usually ranked first or second in the world in

terms of pistachio production, but due to the drought in 2020, production fell sharply. The U.S. pistachio production this year was 474,000 tons.

The Islamic Republic is also ranked third in the world in the production of walnuts with 356,000 tons of annual output. China stands in first place with 1.1 million tons of production and the United States is in second place.

Iran is also ranked fourth in terms of almond and watermelon

production. The country's almond production is reported to be 164,000 tons per year. The United States is in first place with 2.37 million tons of almonds, followed by Spain and Australia in second and third places.

In terms of kiwi output, the country is the world's fifth major producer of the product with 289,000 tons per year. China, New Zealand, and Italy are the first to third-largest producers of kiwifruit in the world. China's kiwi production is 2.23 million tons per year.

Iran also ranks sixth in eggplant production, seventh in onion and tomato production, eighth in spinach output, ninth in terms of orange production, and 11th in grapes and sugar.

According to the FAO, Iran is the 12th largest producer of wheat in the world. The country's wheat production in 2020 amounted to 15 million tons. China is the world's largest producer of strategic grain with 134 million tons, followed by India and Russia.

In the production of tea, Iran is ranked 12th as well with a production of more than 84,000 tons. China topped the list with 2.97 million tons of tea output, followed by India and Kenya.

The Islamic republic is also ranked 13th in barley production, 18th in terms of olive production, and finally 19th in the production of pears and tomatoes.

650 workshops opened in country in 9 months

TEHRAN- Head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) Ali Rasoulman announced the opening of 650 workshops in the country in the past nine months and said: "Today, if we want people to be prosperous, we must provide the necessary hardware and software infrastructure for production, and the determination of the government is to ensure that a balanced investment is formed in the country."

The official also said, "We have created more than 100 industrial zones in deprived areas of the country, although the construction of these zones is mainly implemented from the organization's internal resources."

Unfortunately, most of the investments have taken place in big cities and these investments have not been made in different regions of the country, he criticized, adding that small cities and regions that have investment capacity have been given less attention.

Last month, Rasoulman said that over 40 trillion rials (about \$105.2 million) has been invested for implementing infrastructure development projects in the country's industrial parks and zones since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022).

"With more than 2,200 development projects being implemented in industrial parks and zones, we hope that nearly eight trillion rials (about \$21 million) will be invested in these projects by the end of the year," he added.

Mentioning his organization's plan for



establishing 1,000 workshops units in industrial parks across the country, the official expressed hope that some of these units will become operational by the end of the year.

He further underlined reviving idle units as another priority plan of ISIPO, saying: "Since the beginning of the 13th government administration (August 2021), 2,200 stagnant production units have returned to the production cycle."

In line with the current Iranian year's motto, which is "Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating Production", the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has been implementing new programs to support productive units across the country.

Providing infrastructure and incentives to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are among the major programs that the ministry has been following in relation to industrial parks.

Rasoulman had earlier said that over 2,023 projects related to providing infrastructure for

industrial parks, including water, electricity, and gas supply, with 60 trillion rials (more than \$157.8 million) of credit were underway in different parts of the country.

According to Rasoulman, 2,067 idle industrial units were revived in the country's industrial parks and zones during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022).

The official noted that with the reviving of the mentioned units job opportunities were created for over 39,000 people.

"ISIPO had put it on the agenda to revive 2,000 stagnant units inside and outside industrial parks and zones in the previous year and by the end of the year 2,067 idle units returned to the production cycle, which provided employment for more than 39,000 people," Rasoulman said.

The official noted that 1,433 small workshop units were also established in the mentioned year most of which were productive and knowledge-based units with high technology.

The necessary licenses were also obtained for establishing 26 new industrial parks and zones across the country in the previous year, he added.

He stressed that reviving idle production units is the main approach that the government is currently following in the industry sector.

The government is seriously pursuing its programs to resolve production units' problems in collaboration with the private sector; Very good planning has been done in this regard, Rasoulman said.

Over 22,000 tons of agricultural products exported from Alborz province in 7 months

TEHRAN- As announced by an official with the Agriculture Department of Alborz province, over 22,000 tons of agricultural products were exported from this province in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22, 2022).

Alireza Badri, the director of plant protection of the province's Agriculture Department, said that 1,725 containers of export cargo containing 22,126 tons of agricultural products such as lettuce, cabbage, bell pepper, celery, eggplant, nectarine, watermelon, cherry, sour cherry, dates, dried fruits, etc. were exported to Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Germany, Canada,



Australia, Sweden, Britain, Belgium, United Arab Emirates, and Belarus in the mentioned time span.

As announced on Tuesday by the head of Iran's Plant Protection Organization, all agricultural products of the country will be

exported with a QR tracking code from the next Iranian calendar year (begins on March 21), and said that the process of certifying eight products has already started.

Shahpour Alaei-Moqaddam said: "Last year, some of Iran's products were returned from Russia and Eurasian countries, which made us create a certificate and a tracking system for our products to determine the place of production."

"Now, it has become mandatory for four agricultural products and four garden products to be registered, and from next year, agricultural products with a QR tracking code and according to

the standards of the destination countries must be exported", the official reiterated.

He further said that Iran has 4.2 million farmers whose per capita production is calculated at 30 tons per hectare. In fact, every Iranian has 1,500 kilograms of food security.

He put the total under-cultivation area in the country at 14 million hectares and Iran's total agricultural production at 125 million tons.

"In the agricultural sector, we enjoy climate and plant diversity, and have 8,000 plant species in the country", Alaei-Moqaddam stated.

'Government fully supports Iran-Qatar saffron trade deal'

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said the government is going to take all the necessary measures to facilitate the implementation of the world's biggest saffron trade deal signed between Iran and Qatar.

Alireza Peyman-Pak said the contract has been signed between one of the most famous Iranian brands with a prominent Qatari businessman, the TPO portal reported.

According to the official, as the world's

biggest contract for saffron trade, the deal was signed in the presence of Iran's Ambassador in Doha Hamidreza Dehqani-Poudeh, and Qatar's Finance Minister Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari on September 18.

As per the contract, 200 tons of saffron worth \$300 million will be exported to Qatar to be processed and then exported to global markets.

The TPO head said the first Iranian saffron consignment worth \$15 million is ready to

be shipped to the Arab neighbor under the framework of the mentioned contract.

This contract is one of a kind and can have a positive impact on Iran's domestic saffron market and help export processed saffron, creating value added for the precious Iranian spice, according to Peyman-Pak.

Kuwari had said in the signing ceremony of the contract that Qatar is ready to cooperate with Iran in processing saffron on par with global standards.

From page 1 ▶ “Ukraine is alive with the help of Western countries and fights on behalf of the West. NATO members are obliged to provide weapons to Ukraine because it is the Ukrainians sacrifice their blood,” Reznikov remarked.

War; when and how

The war in Ukraine started with carelessness by the western-backed government of the country.

On February 21, 2022, Russia recognized the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, two self-proclaimed breakaway quasi-states in the Donbas. The next day, the Federation Council of Russia authorized the use of military force and Russian soldiers entered both territories.

Although racial problems in Ukraine and Russians living in the Donbas region were considered to be the Kremlin's concerns, what causes such a huge war must be a much bigger issue.

In the past years, Ukraine has repeatedly expressed its interest in becoming a member of NATO, or in a better way, expanding NATO to the east, but Russia has repeatedly announced that the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to its borders as Moscow's red-line.

Kyiv's indifference for Russia's request caused the country to start "Special Military Operation" against Ukraine in order to confront NATO on its borders.

Russia called the start of its war a special operation because it had declared that its initial goal was nothing but to push NATO away from its eastern borders.

It seems that Russian President Vladimir Putin wanted to announce to the West and the international community that he was not about to enter into an all-out war, and as soon as the threat of NATO and its expansion to Russia's borders ended, the operation will end.

But Ukraine and its president's disregard for the legitimate demands of a neighboring country caused Russia to launch its attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Interestingly, at the time of the beginning of Russia's special operations in Ukraine Western intelligence agencies were reporting the exact time and the way that the war would start.

Such detailed information showed that the West is not just a mere supporter but the main contractor of the war. They knew what they wanted from Ukraine, and of course, they also knew that Russia would not back down from the red lines it had drawn for itself. They considered war inevitable. But the West's promise to Ukraine, namely its membership in NATO, was a miscalculation.

Signals about possible Ukraine's accession to NATO were a mistake

Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger believes that "it was a mistake for NATO to signal to Ukraine that it might eventually



Ukraine is NATO war contractor against Russia

join the alliance" and that Putin's security concerns should be taken seriously.

"I thought that Poland - all the traditional Western countries that have been part of Western history - were logical members of NATO," he said. "I was in favor of the full independence of Ukraine, but I thought its best role was something like Finland," Kissinger added in an interview with the Wall Street Journal.

In Kissinger's view, Ukraine "is a collection of territories once appended to Russia, which Russians see as their own, even though 'some Ukrainians' do not. Stability would be better served by its acting as a buffer between Russia and the West."

Sergey Karaganov, a prominent Russian political scientist, says in a conversation with the New York Times:

Ukraine is an important but small part of the engulfing process of the collapse of the former world order of global liberal imperialism imposed by the United States and movement towards a much fairer and freer world of multipolarity and multiplicity of civilizations and cultures.

As the months passed, it seemed that Russia did not change its initial goals in the war and announced once again that it was looking for the liberation of Donbass and other Russian regions of Ukraine, and in the end it only asked Kyiv to accept its terms, including civilian ones. To accept the regions under the rule of Kyiv and to stay away from NATO.

"Brain death of NATO"

The Ukraine crisis has deep geopolitical implications and many believe that it is disrupting the world order established after World War II.

The foundation of the order was to resolve issues related to great powers without resorting to force, but Russia's attack on Ukraine has disrupted this order.

Issues of this nature make the war in Ukraine different from other crises.

One of the issues that cause this war to disturb the world order is its effect on the nature of NATO. Before the start of the crisis and after the end of the Cold War, NATO had lost its reason for existence, and we saw that two years ago, Emmanuel Macron, the French president, had warned European countries that they can no longer rely on America to defend NATO allies. "What we are currently experiencing is the brain death of NATO."

Now we see that NATO is revived and some countries are looking to join it. Even countries such as Finland and Sweden, which have adopted a policy of neutrality in conflicts for all these years, are revising their policies. Now they are post-neutral or pre-allied condition.

The reason for focusing on the Ukraine crisis, in different dimensions, in addition to Western media propaganda, is its geopolitical effects, which makes even a country like Japan in East Asia worried about the disruption of the current international order. A country like Germany approves a military budget of 100 billion euros for the first time as a result of the Ukraine crisis. The fact that a crisis in the heart of Europe affects Japan's security thinking in East Asia shows how wide the impact of the crisis has been.

3 possible scenarios for the end of the war

Although it seems difficult to imagine an end to the war, it is possible. And three scenarios are possible for this end.

There are three scenarios for how the conflict ends, and each would have enormous geopolitical consequences. If the Kremlin were to lose decisively in this epic standoff, we would probably see a re-emergence of the unipolar moment—the remaining opposition to this arrangement by Beijing notwithstanding.

Although Ukraine might be unfinished business for Putin, Russia's status is itself unfinished business for many in the West. Triumph for Ukraine might lead to a tamed and domesticated Russia. A quiet Russia would allow the West to cope more easily with China, which would be the only major obstacle to liberal hegemony and the long-awaited "end of history".

If the conflict results with an imperfect but mutually acceptable settlement, the final outcome of the collision between the Russian and the Ukrainian models will be postponed. Fierce competition between the two models of social organization will continue, but, I hope, in a less brutal mode. A less-than-perfect compromise between the West and Russia might be followed by a more important, and more fundamental, compromise between the West and China. If a deal with Putin is possible, a deal with Xi Jinping would be a logical continuation. A rapprochement between China and the West would require more time, energy, and political flexibility from the West, however. That would lead to a reformation of the global order, with major changes to the UN system, archaic norms of international public law, and recalibrations at the IMF, the WTO, and other bodies.

If there is no agreement on Ukraine and the conflict endures through cycles of shaky ceasefires followed by new rounds of escalation, expect decay in global and regional bodies. Inefficient international institutions may collapse amid an accelerating arms race, nuclear proliferation, and the multiplication of regional conflicts. Such change would lead only to more chaos in the years ahead.

Assessing the probability of any of the three scenarios is extremely difficult—too many independent variables could influence the outcome of the conflict. I consider the reformation scenario, in which an agreement is made to end the conflict, to be the best option for all. The others either will introduce change too quickly or block badly-needed change; in both cases, political risks will multiply. If the conflict triggers a gradual, orderly, and non-violent transition in which the global order becomes more stable, it would mean that humankind has not let Ukraine's sacrifices go to waste.

Crisis in Ukraine Cui bono

Although the war has caused a lot of damage to Ukraine and Russia, it has created economic opportunities for certain countries.

The Unite States and Europe have created a big market for themselves by selling their weapons.

Turkey's unmanned aircraft called Bayraktar still occupy the main market of the war and the Zionist regime has diverted attention from its policies by approaching both sides of the war and by using the Jews living in the two countries to achieve its goals.

WORLD HEADLINES

Kevin McCarthy elected Republican U.S. House speaker

Republican Kevin McCarthy was elected speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives early on Saturday, after making extensive concessions to a group of right-wing hardliners that raised questions about the party's ability to govern.

The 57-year-old Californian suffered one final humiliation when Representative Matt Gaetz withheld his vote on the 14th ballot as midnight approached, prompting a scuffle in which fellow Republican Mike Rogers had to be physically pulled away.

McCarthy's victory in the 15th ballot brought an end to the deepest congressional dysfunction in 160 years. But it sharply illustrated the difficulties that he will face in leading a narrow and deeply polarized majority.

He won at last on a margin of 216-211.

He was able to be elected with the votes of fewer than half the House members only because five in his own party withheld their votes - not backing McCarthy as leader, but also not voting for another contender.

Putin in Christmas greetings notes church's role in backing special operation fighters

Russian President Vladimir Putin has extended Christmas greetings to Russians and Orthodox believers, noting the role of church organizations in supporting the participants of the special military operation.

"I'm extending my hearty Christmas greetings to you! This bright holiday that's loved by everyone inspires people for kind deeds and intentions, serves to establish in the society such enduring spiritual values and moral guidelines as mercy, compassion, goodness and justice," he said.

The president noted the constructive contribution that's made by the Russian Orthodox Church and other Orthodox denominations in Russia in the unity of the society, preservation of our historical memory, the rearing of the youth and the strengthening of the institution of the family.

"Church organizations pay priority attention to interethnic and inter-religious peace and accord in our country, take care of those who need help, support our fighters that participate in the special military operation. That large, multifaceted, truly self-sacrificing work is worthy of the sincerest respect," he said.

Taliban leader accuses Prince Harry of killing innocent Afghans

The Taliban administration has denounced Britain's Prince Harry for his admission of killing 25 people while on military duty in Afghanistan, and a senior Afghan official has

accused the royal of killing innocent civilians.

"We checked and found that the days on which Prince Harry is mentioning the killing of 25 mujaheddin, we did not have any casualties in Helmand," Taliban leader Anas Haqqani told Al Jazeera on Friday. "It is clear that civilians and ordinary people were targeted."

"This story is a part of the many war crimes of the 20 years of Western military presence in Afghanistan," he said. "It is not the whole picture of the crimes committed by them."

The Taliban leader earlier accused the British royal of committing "war crimes".

"Mr Harry! The ones you killed were not chess pieces, they were humans," Haqqani tweeted, referring to Prince Harry's description that eliminating people who he said were "enemy combatants" was like removing "chess pieces" from a board.

"The truth is what you've said; our innocent people were chess pieces to your soldiers, military and political leaders. Still, you were defeated in that 'game'."

Erdogan to Greece: Don't mess with Turkiye in Aegean

Ankara has no problem with Greece as long as it "does not mess" with Turkiye in the Aegean Sea, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday.

"We fired the Tayfun (Typhoon). How far is Tayfun's range? 561 kilometers. What did the Greeks do? They got into flap. Newspapers immediately made headlines: 'They will hit Athens.' We don't have such problem as long as you don't mess with us in the Aegean.

"As long as you do not mess with us in the Aegean, we won't mess with you," Erdogan told a ceremony in the southern Antalya province.

Turkiye test-fired its domestically produced short-range ballistic missile Tayfun (Typhoon) in October. The missile can hit a target at a distance of 561 kilometers (349 miles) in 456 seconds.

Erdogan hailed Turkiye's growing domestic defense industry, saying every country "envies" on combat drone Bayraktar TB2 and unmanned fighter jet, Kizilelma.

Turkiye, a NATO member for over 70 years, has complained of repeated provocative actions and rhetoric by Greece in the region in recent months, including arming islands near Turkish shores that are demilitarized under treaty obligations. It says that such moves frustrate its good faith efforts towards peace.

Palestinians to firmly confront Israeli violations: Abbas

The Palestinian leadership will firmly confront the Israeli serious violations against the Palestinians, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Friday.

Abbas made the remarks during a dinner held in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on the occasion of Christmas according to the eastern calendar, the official Palestinian news agency WAFA reported.

UAE's envoy to UN decries politicization of Syrian chemical weapons issue

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations has deplored attempts by certain states to politicize the Syrian chemical weapons file, stating that all parties must adhere to the fundamental principles of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Lana Zaki Nusseibeh made the remarks at a Security Council session on the situation of chemical weapons in Syria on Friday, stating that the issue has turned out to be one of the most politicized files of the UN organ.

She highlighted that all sides must respect the OPCW's basic principles, including consensus and avoiding politicization.

"On January 13, 1993, then UN Secretary-General [Boutros Boutros-Ghali] opened the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) for signature in Paris, and 130 countries signed the treaty. This is a proof of the international consensus about the accord, and the treaty is viewed as one of the most

important historical achievements in the field of disarmament," Nusseibeh said.

"Nevertheless, the Syrian chemical weapons file is one of the Council's most politicized files," she pointed out.

"The United Arab Emirates has repeatedly condemned the use of chemical weapons in any place and time, by anyone and under any circumstance, because the use of such munitions is a blatant violation of the CWC provisions and international principles," Nusseibeh highlighted.

The top UAE diplomat pointed to the remarkable progress on the path of resolving the Syrian chemical weapons issue, calling on all involved parties to have a constructive dialogue.

On April 14, 2018, the United States, the UK, and France carried out a string of airstrikes against Syria over a suspected chemical weapons attack on the city of Douma, located about 10 kilometers northeast of the capital Damascus.

That alleged attack was reported by the White

Helmets group, which published videos showing them purportedly treating survivors.

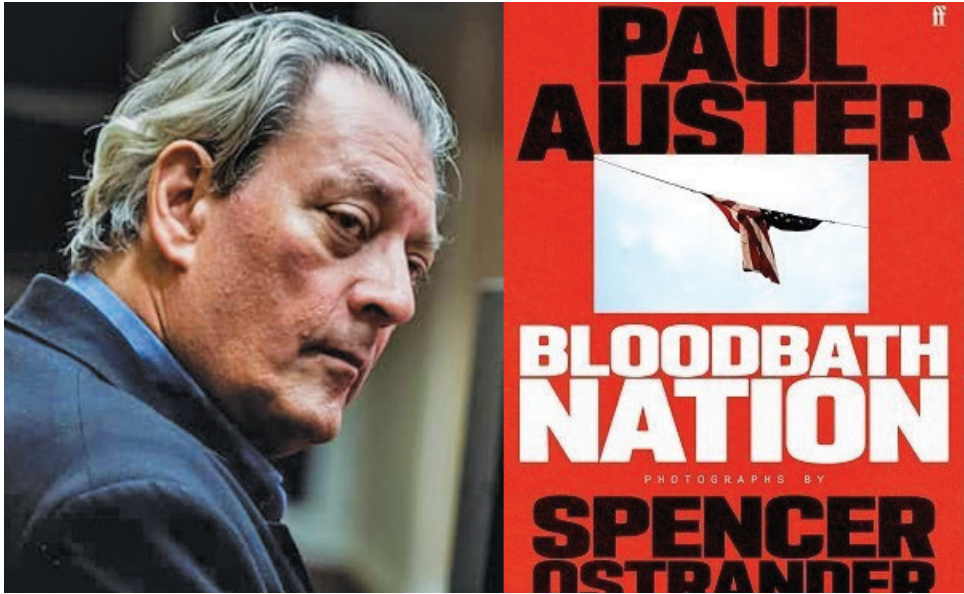
Leaked OPCW documents later showed that the investigators of the Douma incident had found "no evidence" of a chemical weapons attack.

However, the organization censored the findings under pressure from the US and its allies to conceal evidence undermining the pretext of the US-led bombing of Syria days after the alleged attack.

The Western media and governments have repeatedly accused the Syrian government of using chemical weapons against its own citizens in the war against terrorists.

It comes as Syria surrendered its stockpile of chemical weapons in 2014 to a joint mission led by the United States and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which oversaw the destruction of the weaponry. It has also consistently denied using chemical weapons.

(Source: Press TV)



Bloodbath Nation in America

In his latest book which is slated to hit bookshelves, renowned American author Paul Auster spoke of an epidemic, but not Covid-19. Instead, he spoke of the epidemic of violence and murder in his country.

Reservoir may submerge Elamite, Achaemenid, and Islamic relics



TEHRAN – Some archaeologists have warned against the planned inauguration of a dam in southwestern Iran because it may flood ruins and relics from the Elamite, Achaemenid, and early Islamic eras.

“143 ancient spots, estimated to date from the prehistoric times to the present era, have been identified during the investigations carried out in the reservoir area of the Chamshir Dam,” ILNA quoted archaeologist Mohammad-Taqi Atai as saying on Saturday.

The area includes works and settlements from prehistoric times to modern times, and among them, there are the remains of important settlements from the Elamite, Achaemenid, post-Achaemenid, Sassanid, and a significant number of works related to the Islamic period, the archaeologist explained.

Ataei recommended administration officials to avoid haste in the inauguration of the dam as a possible threat to ancient antiquities.

He disagreed with those saying 12 years of research had not proved the existence of historical relics across the dam reservoir, the report said.

Bethlehem Church in Isfahan hosts Christmas celebrations

TEHRAN – On Friday, Christmas and Epiphany (baptism ritual) were celebrated in the Safavid-era (1501-1736) church of Bethlehem in New Jolfa, the central province of Isfahan.

As well as the Iranian Armenians, who follow the Oriental Orthodox denomination of Christianity and celebrate Christmas concurrently with Epiphany on January 6, the ceremony was attended by Bishop Sipan Kashjian, who serves as the religious leader for Armenians in southern Iran and Isfahan, ISNA reported on Saturday.

There were special prayers recited for blessing the water, healing the sick, and washing away sin during the ceremony, the report added.

In addition to performing religious rites, mass, and water blessing, a cross was thrown into the water as a symbol of Christ's baptism.

The Bethlehem Church is most likely the most magnificent in Isfahan because it boasts the largest dome among Isfahan's Jolfa churches.

Khajeh Petros Velijanian, a famous Safavid merchant, built the church during the time of Shah Abbas. It stands next to two other historical churches.

UNESCO sites at a glance

Bryggen

Bryggen is a historic harbour district in Bergen, one of North Europe's oldest port cities on the west coast of Norway which was established as a centre for trade by the 12th century.

In 1350 the Hanseatic League established a “Hanseatic Office” in Bergen. They gradually acquired ownership of Bryggen and controlled the trade in stockfish from Northern Norway through privileges granted by the Crown.

The Hanseatic League established a total of four overseas Hanseatic Offices, Bryggen being the only one preserved today.



Bryggen has been damaged by a number of fires through the centuries and has been rebuilt after every fire, closely following the previous property structure and plan as well as building techniques.

Iran set to drop visa requirements for 50 countries

TEHRAN –Iran is expected to waive visa requirements for tourists from about 50 countries as it aims to benefit from a rebound in global tourism.

“We have prepared a comprehensive plan aimed at waiving visa requirements [for certain travelers]. And according to a proposal given to the government, we are considering about 50 countries for the scheme,” deputy tourism chief Ali-Asghar Shalbafian said on Saturday.

In this regard, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for consideration and the possibility of implementation, the official said.

The list of 50 countries includes some neighboring countries and ones deemed as growing tourism markets for the Islamic Republic, Shalbafian said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official reminded a previously inked visa waiver program for certain tourist groups to be implicated between Iran and Russia. The agreement was



initially signed by former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in 2017.

The Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association Ebrahim Pourfaraj believes the majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of the vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. “The fact is that Iran's political and economic

relations with Russia are considered as good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination.”

Long shunned by Western travelers, the Islamic Republic has steadily stepped-up efforts to use tourism, over the past couple

of years, to help promote its international image battered by endless opposition mostly from the U.S.

Before the COVID pandemic, Iran's tourism had constantly been growing, reaching more than eight million visitors in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (started March 21, 2019). That surge, however, helped prejudices to become thick and thin.

Some experts believe even before the pandemic, Iran's tourism was already grappling with some challenges, on top of those Western “media propaganda” aimed at scaring potential travelers away from the Islamic Republic. They say Iran is still somehow “unknown” for many potential travelers due to such a “media war.”

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.

Taq-e Bostan marks 91 years on national heritage list

From Page 1 ►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.).

The second niche shows King Shapur III and his Roman-stomping grandfather Shapur II. To the right of the niches, is a fine tableau again showing Shapur II (r 379–383), in which he is depicted trampling over the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate (whom he defeated in 363) and receiving a crown of blessings from the Zoroastrian god Mithras.

The cliff is said to turn a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then poetically dies on the other side of the duck pond, making late afternoon the best time to visit. The nearby outdoor eateries stay busy well into the night, and warm floodlights illuminate the carvings. The site is located 10 km north of Kermanshah's downtown.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance



in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian architecture and arts experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan, which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble.

Generally, a Sassanid archaeological landscape represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography

in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

In 2018, an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran, titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”, was named a UNESCO site. The ensemble comprises eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan.

The World Heritage reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which latter had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

In addition to architecture, highly sophisticated crafts like metalwork and gem engraving also developed, but the state still supported scholarship. During those years, texts from the East and the West were translated into Pahlavi, the Sassanian language.

Birthplace of Cyrus the Great undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – The ancient castle of Qaleh Bardi, where Cyrus the Great, the founder of the mighty Achaemenid Empire (ca. 550 – 330 BC) was born, has undergone some rehabilitation work.

Project goals are to organize, strengthen, and continuously protect the historical structure, which is located in Andika, southwestern Khuzestan province, ISNA reported on Saturday.

It is estimated that Qaleh Bardi was built around 2,700 years ago during the Achaemenid period.

Cyrus the Great was born in the castle, which was the first permanent residence of the Pars people.

Roman Ghirshman, a Russian-born French archaeologist specializing in ancient Persia, conducted the first archaeological surveys of the castle years ago. According to him, this castle is a unique and significant work in the region.

While Qaleh Bardi is a unique structure, its boundaries have not been defined yet, so residents have been using it as agricultural land,

resulting in significant damage to its structure.

Located at the edge of the valley, Qaleh Bardi is made of large stones without mortar and even its walls sustain some damage, but with a little repair, they can be restored to their former strength.

Khuzestan is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, yet it is a region of raw beauty where its visitors could spend weeks exploring. The province is also a

cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.

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

Media persons explore Tabriz on fam tour

TEHRAN – A number of journalists from different news organizations have visited Tabriz, the capital of East Azarbaijan province, on a familiarization tour, CHTN reported on Saturday.

The three-day tour, which came to an end on Friday, aimed at promoting the city's top tourist attractions and showcasing it as a travel destination, the report added.

Aside from cultural and historical attractions, the tour also included visits to modern tourist facilities and hotels that had been renovated.

Soaked in history and culture for millennia, Tabriz embraces several historical and religious sites, including the Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, to name a few. The city became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295–1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later, the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital. It was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

Restoration completed on Qajar-era mosque

TEHRAN – A restoration project on a Qajar-era (1789-1925) mosque in the village of Fath-Abad, the central province of Yazd, has come to an end, a local tourism official has said.

The project involved strengthening the structure, repairing the cracks, and restoring the rooftop, Abbas Qadirian explained on Saturday.

The structure has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was

named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a “don't miss” destination by almost all of its visitors. It teems with mud-brick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers),

atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

It is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center.

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs through the

construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

Partially covered alleyways, together with streets, public squares, and courtyards, contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that destroyed many traditional earthen cities.

TEHRAN – Some 1.7 million Iranians donated blood over the first nine months of the current [Iranian calendar] year which started on March 21, 2022, the Blood Transfusion Organization spokesman has said.

A total of 2.1 million people referred to the blood donation centers nationwide over the nine-month period, IRNA quoted Abbas Sedaqat saying on Saturday.

In the aforementioned period, blood donation has increased by 10.25 percent compared to the same period last year, he added.

He went on to say that the highest blood donation growth was recorded in North Khorasan province at 35.66 percent, Kordestan province at 24.68 percent, and Kohgiluyeh-Boyer-ahmad province at 22.22 percent growth, respectively.

Also, people in Tehran donated 16.88 percent more blood in the first nine months of this year compared to the same period last year, he added.

Donors who successfully donate blood twice or more within 12 months are considered continuous donors.

Blood storage at acceptable levels

The average level of blood reserves in the country is 9.6 days, which is an acceptable level, a spokesman for the Blood Transfusion Organization, has said.

It should be noted that the need for blood and blood products is constant and blood donation should be done continuously, IRNA quoted Abbas Sedaqat as saying on Wednesday.

With the establishment of the national blood network, we have been able to meet all the needs of medical centers, including more than 900 hospitals that have blood banks, he explained.

Also, we have raised the standards, before this definition, the average level of blood storage included four to five days, but the level doubled as much as 8 to 9 days, in order to man-



More than 1.7m Iranians donate blood in 9 months

age blood supply better, he noted.

Donating blood is not related to a specific season and time, and blood donors should keep in mind to donate blood regularly and save the lives of patients in need, he highlighted.

Every year, with the onset of the cold season and air pollution, the blood donation rate decreases, while the need for blood is constant and those who need blood should not be forgotten.

According to the reports provided by the World Health Organization, Iran competes with Europe and the U.S. in blood donation indices, even outpacing them in one or two cases.

Iran is among the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean region as a reference in the field of blood

donation activities.

While blood donation in 70 countries still depends on replacement or paid donors, Iran is the first country in the region that has enjoyed voluntary blood donation by 100 percent since 2007.

More than 85 percent of all donated blood worldwide is used to produce blood products, while the rate is 65 percent in Eastern Mediterranean countries. Iran ranks among the highest-income countries in terms of converting more than 97 percent of the blood donated by people to plasma-derived medicinal products (PDMP).

Only 55 of 171 countries produce PDMP through the fractionation of plasma collected in the reporting country. A total of 90 countries re-

ported that all PDMPs are imported, 16 countries reported that no PDMP was used during the reporting period, and 10 countries did not respond to the question, according to WHO.

Iran currently has the highest blood donation rate in the Eastern Mediterranean region, so out of 9.9 million blood donation units in this region, more than two million belongs to Iran.

Also, the index of blood donation is 25 per 1,000 populations, while in the member states of the Eastern Mediterranean region, this number is 14.9 per 1000.

There are currently 178 blood donation centers in the country, with Fars, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Tehran, and Mazandaran provinces having the largest number of blood donation centers, he stated.

Over 670 national standards set for soil protection

From page 1 ► agriculture and natural resources, which must be protected against any destruction and pollution, Razi stressed.

“Therefore, in order not to have problems with food security in the future, we must protect the soil seriously, she said, adding, If we protect the soil from pollution and destruction such as erosion and salinity, we can maintain our food security and have a healthy society.”

Annual loss of 2 billion tons

According to the statistics, Iran loses 2 billion tons of soil annually, according to the 2018 report of the United Nations Development Program, the total amount of global soil erosion is 24 billion tons, so one-twelfth of all global soil erosion occurs in Iran.

This is while, Iran has about one percent of the world’s land area, which means that its erosion rate is eight times higher than the global average, so Iran is suffering from severe degradation and soil erosion.

In Iran, due to the severe erosion, it takes an estimated 800 years to produce a centimeter of soil, so the attention of the people and the government should be on average twice the global average.

Each ton of soil is valued at \$28 in terms of metal ores, so the loss of two billion tons of soil annually means an annual loss of \$56



billion, which is more than revenues from the sale of oil and agricultural products, gardens, livestock, poultry, and fisheries.

Over 25% of biodiversity

This natural resource hosts over 25 percent of biodiversity and about 90 percent of living organisms spend part of their life cycle in the soil; it also plays an important role in supporting animal biodiversity above ground, including wildlife and domesticated livestock.

The most widely recognized function of the soil is its support for food production. It is estimated that 95% of our food is directly or indirectly produced on the soil. Healthy soil supplies the essential nutrients, water, and oxygen that our food-producing plants need to grow and flourish.

Soil is also crucial for ensuring the continued growth and maintenance of natural and managed vegetation, including diverse forests and grasslands and the huge breadth of species and varieties that are cultivated or managed for their food, feed, fuel, fiber, and medicinal products.

Agriculture minister Javad Sadati-Nejad said in December 2022 that special importance will be placed on the soil and watershed sector in the seventh National Development Plan (2022-2026).

The official noted that there are good laws in the country regarding soil protection, saying: “Protecting soil is the duty of all institutions and people, so over the last 10 years, FAO has come to the conclusion that people’s capacities are the most valuable factor in soil protection.”

“Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization is responsible for the protection of soil and prevention of erosion, and in the seventh National Development Plan, we will dedicate an important chapter to the protection and preservation of the soil,” Sadati-Nejad added.

Soil protection is a public duty and it is necessary to teach future generations about the value of soil and the protection and preservation of this intergenerational heritage, he stressed.

Iranians pay \$45m in zakat over 9 months

TEHRAN - Benevolent people across Iran donated 18 trillion rials (about \$45 million) in zakat (alms) during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year which began on March 21, ILNA reported on Saturday.

Zakat is the third of the Five Pillars of Islam and refers to giving a fixed portion of one's wealth to the needy and poor.

It enjoins every adult, mentally stable, free, and financially able Muslim, male and female, to pay a certain amount of money to support specific categories of people.

The profession of Faith (shahada) - the belief that “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God” - is the first pillar of Islam. Prayer (salat), alms (zakat), fasting (sawm), and pilgrimage (hajj) are the other four.

As much as 80 percent of the collected zakat is spent to provide basic foods for the needy and the rest is allocated for development projects in underprivileged areas, Habibollah Asoudeh, the deputy director of the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, has said.



Iran has been named the 32nd most generous country among 114 countries by the World Giving Index 2021.

The ranking is done based on the three indices of ‘helping a stranger’, ‘donating money’, and ‘volunteering time’.

Iran is 38th in helping a stranger, 23rd in donating money, and 92nd in volunteering time.

Reports suggest that Zakat payments globally were particularly high in 2020 as a response to the coronavirus pandemic.

RAMSAR SITES IN IRAN

Part 36

Lake Parishan and Dasht-e Arjan

Lake Parishan and Dasht-e Arjan biosphere reserve and protected area are two widely separated wetlands located at high altitude in a closed drainage basin.

Both are permanent freshwater lakes subject to seasonal fluctuations in level, fed by springs and seasonal streams.

Parishan is subject to fluctuating salinity depending on precipitation. Both lakes are fringed by marshes dominated by reeds, and are important staging and wintering areas for numerous species of migratory waterbirds.

The area also supports a variety of nesting waterbirds including pelicans, Ardeidae (herons, bitterns, etc.), and ibises.

Overview

Dasht-e Arjan is a largely seasonal freshwater lake and marsh at 2,000 m elevation in the Zagros mountains, and Lake Parishan is a permanent brackish to saline lake at 853 m elevation in the Zagros foothills.

Both are extremely important for breeding and wintering waterfowl of a wide variety of species, including some threatened waterfowl species. Both lakes are protected within the Arjan Protected Area.

The wetlands of Dasht-e Arjan and Lake Parishan are outstanding examples of freshwater and brackish to saline wetlands characteristic of the highlands of western Iran.

Five species of threatened birds occur in appreciable numbers: the *Pelecanus crispus*, *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, *Aythya nyroca*, *Oxyura leucocephala* and *Aquila heliaca*.

The wetlands support a very diverse flora and fauna, and thus maintain the genetic and ecological diversity of the region.

Both wetlands support large breeding colonies of herons (Ardeidae) and ibises (Threskiornithidae).

The lakes regularly hold over 20,000 waterfowl in winter.

The wetland supports over 1% of the regional breeding populations of the waterbirds *Plegadis falcinellus* and *Platalea leucorodia*, and of the regional wintering populations of *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, *Phoenicopterus ruber*, 11 species of ducks (Anatidae), *Fulica atra*, *Grus grus* and *Larus ridibundus*.

General location

Lake Parishan and Dasht-e Arjan are situated in the Province of Fars, in the Zagros mountains, 40-80 km west of Shiraz and 15-25 km south of Kazerun. There are several small settlements in the area.

Physical features

Dasht-e Arjan and Lake Parishan are two very different wetlands situated only 15 km apart within the Arjan Protected Area.

Dasht-e Arjan is a shallow freshwater lake with extensive reedbeds. The lake lies enclosed in a basin, and is fed by two large springs on the western side and local run-off from winter rainfall and snow melt.

It is unusual in that it drains out through a group of swallow-holes at its southeast corner. The bottom consists of alluvial mud. The wetland varies widely in size from year to year depending on rainfall, reaching about 2,400 ha after wet winters and decreasing to only a few hundred ha in years of drought.

Most of the basin dries out in summer, but two large springs on the western side maintain some permanent marsh throughout the year.

Much of the wetland freezes over in winter, and deep snow cover is not unusual. Good rainfall in recent years has resulted in a considerable expansion in the area covered by tall reeds.

Lake Parishan is a shallow, brackish to saline lake surrounded by marshes with halophytic vegetation.

Source: Ramsar.org

To be continued

ENGLISH IN USE

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Rainfall increases Lake Urmia level

Recent rainfall has increased the level of Lake Urmia to 1,271 meters, a step closer to its ecological level of 1,274 meters.

The lake is expected to reach its ecological level within 10 years by completing the restoration plans which started four years ago.

Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province, said that the Lake's level is now 58 cm higher than it was last year.

According to the latest monitoring, the lake's water volume is estimated at more than 3.6 billion cubic meters.

He added that the lake surface area has reached 2,883 square kilometers, adding that the figure is increased by 538 square kilometers compared to the same period last year.

Although the ecological level of the lake is defined as 1,274 meters, the lake will also have favorable conditions at 1,272 meters and more than 95 percent of sand and dust storm hotspots will be eliminated.

افزایش سطح تراز دریاچه ارومیه بر اثر بارش

بارش های اخیر تراز فعلی دریاچه ارومیه را به یک هزار و ۲۷۱ متر و ۳۸ سانتی متر رسانده است که در حال رسیدن به تراز اکولوژیک یک هزار و ۲۷۴ متر است.

به گزارش ایرنا، فرهاد سرخوش رئیس دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه گفت سطح دریاچه ارومیه اکنون ۵۸ سانتی متر بیشتر از زمان مشابه سال گذشته است. طبق آخرین پایش صورت گرفته حجم آب این دریاچه بیش از سه میلیارد و ۶۷۰ میلیون مترمکعب برآورد شده است. وی با بیان اینکه وسعت دریاچه ارومیه در حال حاضر به بیش از ۲ هزار و ۸۸۳ کیلومتر مربع رسیده، اضافه کرد: وسعت این دریاچه نیز نسبت به سال گذشته ۵۳۸ کیلومتر مربع افزایش دارد.

هرچند تراز یک هزار و ۲۷۴ متر به عنوان ارتفاع اکولوژیک دریاچه ارومیه اعلام شده ولی این دریاچه در تراز یک هزار و ۲۷۲ متر هم شرایط مطلوب خواهد داشت و بیش از ۹۵ درصد کانون های ریزگرد آن رفع خواهد شد.

COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 7

New cases	107
New deaths	2
Total cases	7,561,808
Total deaths	144,706
New hospitalized patients	65
Patients in critical condition	153
Total recovered patients	7,336,407
Diagnostic tests conducted	54,818,192
Doses of vaccine injected	155,190,091

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Whoever delights his/her parents, has delighted Allah and the one who displeases them has displeased Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times» Noon:12:11

Evening: 17:27

Dawn: 5:45 (tomorrow)

Sunrise: 7:15 (tomorrow)

Persian art: Aineh-kari



Aineh-kari in the Chehel Sotun Palace, Isfahan.

Part 1

Aineh-kari is the practice of covering an architectural surface with a mosaic of mirror-glass.

It is often dismissed as a gaudy and decadent kind of Persian architectural decoration, and there is no study of its forms and techniques, or survey of buildings decorated with it (or formerly so decorated, for many have disappeared).

Yet in many ways it is a typically Persian mode of architectural decoration (verbal parallels for its reflecting and refracting of light may be found in Persian Sufi literature).

Aineh-kari should be interpreted as the turning of an intrinsically valuable substance to an intense, decorative purpose by reduction of the physical material—reflecting glass—to simple but flexible elements, from which were recomposed decorative ensembles on large surfaces.

These equal in complexity and surpass in dazzling effect the earlier Persian mural coverings of glazed ceramic mosaic or luster-glazed tile.

Venetian glassmakers were producing small mirrors in the 15th century by cutting open blown glass cylinders, which were then polished and “silvered.”

By 1507, they had perfected an amalgam of tin and mercury to use in coating sheets of glass. The production of plate glass followed in the late 17th century.

Persian glassmaking, on the other hand, had declined to the state of resmelting old glass to produce a distinctly inferior product. Shah Abbas I is said to have revived the industry (as he did ceramics and textile weaving), inviting Venetian glassmakers to Iran.

Chardin and other observers provide valuable information concerning the import of European mirror-glass and its use for architectural decoration.

Sir Thomas Herbert, in 1628, saw three arched and richly furnished rooms in the palace of Shah Abbas I at Farahabad, on the Caspian coast, with looking-glasses that illuminated the ceiling and the curving upper surfaces with reflected light.

Adam Olearius and his party were entertained in November, 1637 in a hall in Isfahan whose walls “were set about with looking-glasses, to the number of above two hundred of all sizes . . . a man in the midst of the Hall . . . might see himself of all sides”.

Father Raphaël du Mans, writing about

1675, says that looking-glasses, as well as colored glass for windows, were brought from Venice by the Armenian silk-traders who traveled by caravan via Smyrna and Aleppo.

Chardin, too, mentions Venetian looking-glasses, and also sash-glass (casements) and snuff-bottles. In an audience granted to Europeans in September, 1666, Shah Abbas II received from the Russians, among other gifts, nine small looking-glasses with painted frames; a week later, the French envoy offered the shah crystal lusters (chandeliers) and four mirrors, each five feet in height and one with a glass frame as well.

Finally, Ambrogio Bembo includes in his own manuscript of his travels in Persia in 1674–75 a drawing by G. G. Grélot (no longer extant), probably of the Aineh-khaneh on the far side of the Zayandeh-rud in Isfahan where Shah Sultan Hossein was crowned on 14 Dul-hejja 1105/6 August 1694.

From the drawing it can be seen that already at that time aineh-kari—seemingly so typical of the Qajar epoch—was being used in several distinctively Persian ways.

Imported European mirrors, rectangular with curvilinear, decorated glass frames were used either as costly focal points resembling immense gems, or as a complete revetment of mirrors, on facades that were usually exterior or at least marked the passage from outside to inside.

Such early aineh-kari can still be seen on the entrance ayvan of the Chehel Sotun. The present facade may, however, represent restoration of 1706–07, done after the fire of the previous year; it was seen by the Carmelite bishop of Isfahan in an audience in 1721.

Grélot’s drawing of the Aineh-khaneh also indicates that myriad small pieces of specially cut and shaped mirror-glass were used to cover the convex surfaces of the moqarnas of the dome which was partly visible over the circular fountain within the Aineh-khaneh.

That Grélot’s drawing is in some respects fanciful may be seen by comparing the three views of the same pavilion published by Coste and Flandin in 1851 and 1867; yet the mirror-mosaic sheathing the enormous moqarnas units of the Chehel Sotun ayvan and catching and dispersing light from all angles suggests that Grélot’s drawing is truer in detail than in overall conception.

Such mosaics of small pieces may be explained by the fragility of the decorated sheets of glass. Some undoubtedly broke in the caravan-transit to Persia; and once broken, their unimpaired light-refracting and vision-diffusing qualities—not to speak of their great intrinsic value—must have dictated their reuse in a traditional Persian manner.

The semi-domed ayvans so characteristic of Persian architecture, opening onto talar, courtyards, gardens, or reflecting pools, were the preferred surfaces for aineh-kari.

In the Zand and Qajar periods, mirror-decoration gained wide popularity for portals, overdoors, window-frames, walls, ceilings, and columns in pavilions and private houses, tea-houses and zurkhanehs, as well as royal buildings and shrines.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued.

Iranian minister attends event naming Nouakchott 2023 Islamic Culture Capital

From Page 1 ▶ “We learn from such meetings that our culture may provide a great opportunity for us to broaden our public diplomacy,” he noted.

On his part, Ghazouani expressed his thanks to Iran for its strong stance toward the Islamic world’s issues, and noted that the expansion of political, economic and cultural relations between Mauritania and Iran would be strategic in the Middle East and North Africa.

Esmaeili also exchanged views with the culture ministers of some other Islamic counties in his sojourn in Nouakchott.

The Third Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers in Doha in 2001 issued a resolution whereby it adopted the draft program of the Islamic world culture capitals submitted by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO).

The organization invited the OIC member states to nominate cities of which ICESCO shall select three



Culture minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili (L) and guests from across the world attend a meeting in Nouakchott, Mauritania on January 6, 2023 to celebrate the city as the Culture Capital of the Islamic World for 2023.

Islamic world culture capitals each year from the Arab, Asian and African regions.	Mecca was the first city named the Culture Capital of the Islamic World in 2005.	The Iranian cities of Isfahan and Mashhad won the title in 2006 and 2017 respectively.
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“World War III” wins FIPRESCI Prize at Palm Springs Intl. Film Festival



A scene from “World War III”.

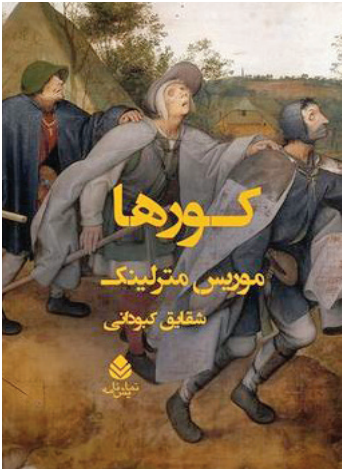
New translation of “The Blind” comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – A new Persian translation of Maurice Maeterlinck’s play “The Blind” by Shaqayeq Kabudani has come to Iranian bookstores.

Written in 1890, the book was published by the major Tehran-based publisher Qatreh.

“The Blind” is an intense one-act play, which was one of the pieces mentioned in a list of Maeterlinck’s most characteristic plays. This list was highlighted in the speech to honor Maeterlinck with the Nobel Prize in 1911.

The play was originally written in French, and later was translated into several different



Front cover of the Persian edition of Maurice Maeterlinck’s play “The Blind”.

The story of a well-known author from Tabriz

An interview with Faezeh Ghafar Haddadi

Faezeh Ghafar Haddadi has two well-known books, “The Frontline” and “A Man with Long-Range Dreams” that have made her famous and successful, despite numerous distribution and promotion issues.

These two books’ success demonstrates this woman’s sincerity of purpose and inner purity as well as her ability to successfully raise her children, create sentences, and win over the reader’s mind.

*** What led you to lately decide to create a book about Mohsen Vezvaei?**

They offered me the chance to write the book about him from the moment his name was mentioned at the Art Bureau. I was captivated by Martyr Vezvaei’s personality, but I wasn’t sure whether to accept the offer because there was already a book on his life. Finally, I agreed to take on the task, but only after promising to perform it in greater

depth and thoroughness.

*** What new information did you find out about him during this process?**

His sister, who moved to America before the Islamic revolution, recently returned to Tehran, and I discovered that he had written a series of letters to his sister in America, and they have not been discussed.

Apart from his sister’s letters, I also discovered two great 90-minute tapes, one of which is the audio of an interrogation session.

*** How many pages does the book have? What are the topics covered in its chapters?**

It is about 600 pages or more. Beginning with the day of admission to Sharif University, the book moves chronologically until the martyrdom. There are also flashbacks from his childhood and adolescence.

*** This book has some funny moments.**

languages, including English and German.

The piece is not only a study of the human condition in general but it appears to confront its reader with the effect of hope on the latter.

Unlike most other theatrical pieces, “The Blind” does not introduce its readers to readily shaped characters, but twelve de-personalized beings.

These beings were not provided with names but titles describing their general condition, for instance, the eldest blind man.

This method of writing gives an audience or theater

professional an opportunity to read between the lines and interpret the piece according to personal desire. Maeterlinck has since been considered as the founder of a new type of dramatic writing known as Symbolism.

Parallels have often been drawn with Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot”, which was produced in the mid-20th century and appears to construct a similar world of waiting and hoping, which is evident in “The Blind”.

At least two other Persian translations by Akram Rezai-Bayandor and Mojtaba Ashrafi have previously been published.



Was your style of writing it humorous on purpose?

I had no idea that my book contained any humorous parts. These passages were written entirely seriously, and it was later realized that they were funny.