

# TEHRAN TIMES

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**Report**

## American soldier entered N. Korea because of 'discrimination in U.S. army'

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN- American soldier Travis King crossed the heavily fortified wall from South Korea and entered North Korea due to "inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination within the U.S. Army," the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) has reported.

King has also "expressed willingness" to seek refuge in North Korea after crossing the border wall on July 18, Pyongyang said in its first comments on the incident.

King was "disillusioned at the unequal American society," KCNA said.

So far, U.S. officials have said they are of the belief that King crossed into North Korea intentionally and have declined to classify him as a prisoner of war. ▶ Page 5

**Op-ed**

## U.S. imperialism remains very sticky and terribly tragic...

By Martin Love

The inimitable Chris Hedges, who for years was the New York Times bureau chief covering the Middle East, and who lost his job at the newspaper 20 years ago because he opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq, has lately written another masterful piece covering all the bases with regard to Apartheid Israel.

One need not re-describe what Hedges has on Palestine, but the only conclusion one can come to is that the current Israeli government intends to annex eventually all of the West Bank, give no relief to the two million plus Palestinians in Gaza, and eventually drive out the remaining Palestinians in the West Bank, some three million, one way or another. For anyone who has been involved with trying to understand the Palestinian plight in recent decades, what Hedges relates is one of the saddest stories among many unfolding now. Iranians know this, too.

The other hugely horrific story is in Ukraine, and a potential new story now involves Niger which in a coup installed new leaders fed up with French colonialism there and in West Africa. Note that some 70 percent or more Nigeriens don't even have electricity for light bulbs, but France depends to a significant degree for its own power needs on uranium extracted on the cheap by and from Niger's poor. Also, of late, we have the imprisonment of Pakistan's popular Imran Khan, this is largely a result of U.S. demands to effectively bury the popular Khan from leading Pakistan. ▶ Page 5

**Op-ed**

## Islam regards women as dignified humans

By Sara Atta

TEHRAN - Islam, as the women's rights-reviving religion, addressed the issue of women's rights thirteen centuries ago and has taken great steps in the direction of her human rights.

Before Islam and during the period of the Age of Ignorance (Jahiliyyah) [It is an Islamic concept referring to the period of time and state of affairs in Arabia before the advent of Islam in 610 CE], the woman was treated as a wretched element of the society and thrown in the darkness of ignorance. She was hopeless and cannot hope for her evolution. Women were caught in the most disgraceful misfortunes and suffered the most difficult calamities. ▶ Page 7

## Iran FM visit set to give new impetus to Tehran-Riyadh ties

# New Momentum in Iran-Saudi Relations

▶ Page 3



## West extravagance put Ukraine in big trouble: Iranian commander

*The SCO and BRICS enhance the capability of independent countries to challenge Western hegemony and establish new world order.*

TEHRAN- A top Iranian general told a military forum in Russia on Tuesday that those who ignited and keep exacerbating the Ukraine war should reconsider their approach and know that jeopardizing the security of others can lead to unpredictable reactions.

"Those who triggered the Ukraine war and those who are exacerbating it should reconsider their approaches," General Aziz Nasirzadeh, the deputy chief of the joint staff of Iran's armed forces, said at Army-2023.

General Nasirzadeh, who led an Iranian military delegation to Moscow to participate in the Army 2023, stated that independent countries that

respect territorial integrity should exchange views on how to deal with the crises and insecurities caused by the U.S. and its allies.

He said the Ukraine war would have long-term consequences for the region and the larger world, which was caused by the West's extravagance and insistence to maintain its hegemony.

The commander also said that fact that the Zionist regime was founded by Britain

and supported by the U.S. is another example of unilateralism and organized oppression against a nation.

"The unilateralism and totalitarianism of the United States have made the world more insecure," he said, pointing to the previous warnings issued by experts about the dangerous consequences of the U.S. policies.

**Remembering General Soleimani at Russian military forum**

General Nasirzadeh also re-

ferred to the U.S. crimes in the world, citing the use of nuclear weapons on Japan in 1945 as an example.

He went on to call the United States' claims of human rights "absurd," saying Americans assassinated General Qassem Soleimani, who led the fight against ISIS as the most dangerous terrorist group in history.

**SCO and BRICS enhance capability of independent countries against Western hegemony**

Elsewhere in his remarks, General Nasirzadeh said that the emergence of new independent powers could challenge the Western hegemony. ▶ Page 2

## West funds terrorist groups like MKO, Daesh: Judiciary chief

TEHRAN- - The head of Iran's Judiciary, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei, has said that the West has sponsored terrorist groups, including Daesh and the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO).

In an exclusive interview with Al Mayadeen on Tuesday, Ejei stated that "MKO members are hypocrites, for they proclaimed to bear the banner of anti-imperialism, but today they are embraced by imperialists."

"They used to say that their priority was to fight imperialism, but they secretly were in contact with foreign intelligence agencies," he added.

The Judiciary chief also said, "It was only a year and a half since the triumph of the revolution, and the hypocrites (MKO), instead of standing with their people, swiftly joined the ranks of the enemy that invaded their land and killed their people with the weapons supplied by the West."

The MKO joined Saddam Hussein's army in the war against Iran in the 1980s. Saddam also used them against his opponents, Shias in the south and Kurds in the north.

Ejei went on to say that the West has to understand that they are supporting traitors who have already betrayed their own people and nation and would do so again in the future. ▶ Page 2

## India seeks to strengthen economic ties with Iran: envoy

TEHRAN - Indian Ambassador to Iran Rudra Gaurav Shresth has underlined New Delhi's readiness for boosting economic relations with Tehran amid an improvement in geopolitical conditions.

Speaking at India's Independence Day event in Tehran, Shresth said, "We are preparing for the meeting of the joint commission of the two countries at the ministerial level. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is looking forward to meeting the Iranian President on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in South Africa next week. Also, Mr. Modi hopes to host Mr. Raisi in India soon."

He stated, "New Delhi seeks to diversify its economic relations with Iran and hopes for the improvement of the geopolitical conditions that impose external pressure on the economic cooperation of the two countries."

The Indian ambassador considered cooperation in the field of transit and crossings to be one of the most important aspects in the relations between Iran and India, according to IRNA. "India wants to benefit from the strategic region and the territory of the friendly country Iran to reach the markets of Eurasia and Central Asia. For this reason, India is a partner in both the North-South trade corridor and the Chabahar port project," he continued. ▶ Page 3



## Farewell to victims of terror attack on Shah Cheragh

TEHRAN- Thousands of people on Wednesday said goodbye to the victims of the terrorist attack at the Shah Cheragh shrine in Shiraz, capital of the southcentral province of Fars.

People carried the bodies of Gholm Abbas Abbasi, a servant of the sacred site, and Mohammad Jahnagiri, a security guard, from Shohada Square to the courtyard of the Shah Cheragh shrine as part of a funeral rite.

The mourners held signs denouncing the tragic terrorist attacks committed by Takfiri terrorists and their Western backers. ▶ Page 2

## Iran-Japan Love and Peace Film Festival held in Hiroshima

TEHRAN - The 10th edition of the Iran-Japan Love and Peace Film Festival was held in the presence of a number of Iranian war veterans and artists of the Tehran Peace Museum in Hiroshima.

During the festival, the Iranian films 'Yadu' by Mehdi Jafari, 'Walnut Tree' by Mohammad Hossein Mahdavian, 'The Situation of Mehdi' by Hadi Hejazifar, and 'The Miracle of Bonasan' by Habib Ahmadzadeh were screened in Tokyo and Hiroshima.

'Yadu' is about the first months of the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran. At a time when families in different cities of Khuzestan were forced to leave their homes and all their attachments and took refuge in other cities to save their lives. ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

Meaning of terrorist from the West's perspective

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

In a note, Siasat-e-Rooz discussed the reaction of the West to the ISIS terrorist attack in Shah Cheragh and wrote: The authorities in Western countries either avoid condemning the terrorist acts that are done in Iran, or only express sympathy, or remain silent and ignore it. Their media also follow such a policy and avoid using the word "terrorism" because these groups, that commit terrorist acts against Iran, are supported by America, England, and other Western countries. If they call described their actions as terrorism in their media outlets, they confirm that they are terrorists. ISIS as a manifestation of Wahhabi ideology is the protegee of America, Zionists, England, and other Western countries. They are supporters of this terrorist group and work hard to keep the region insecure.

Sharh: The grand strategy of American foreign policy

In its editorial, Sharh discussed America's strategy in regard to Iran, Russia, and China, saying: Considering the fateful elections of 2024, America's grand strategy is to harness China and defeat Russia in Ukraine, control energy prices, avoid tension in the Persian Gulf, and be less strict in applying oil sanctions against Iran. If the discussions about the "unwritten understanding" are correct and the exchange of prisoners is carried out, in exchange for de-escalation, the U.S. will show less strictness in the implementation of sanctions. In this way, Iran's access to its assets will increase to buy non-sanctioned goods and will allow Iran to have more access to its oil income until October 2025. On that date, the West will have two options: 1- The end of the validity of Resolution 2231 and the withdrawal of Iran's nuclear issue from the agenda of the Security Council according to paragraph 8 of the resolution. 2- Return of seven previous sanctions resolutions against Iran according to paragraph 11 of the resolution. It is unlikely that the West would choose the first way if the current situation continues.

Kayhan: Israeli authorities angry about release of Iranian funds

In a commentary, Kayhan discussed Israel's reaction and anger and quoted a Zionist regime's newspaper as saying: "While Iran is

not in a hurry to reach an agreement, the recent agreement between the United States and Iran is a sign of the reduction of Israel's traditional influence on the White House." The U.S.-Iran deal does not mean a full nuclear deal in the next step, but it does define Israel's boundaries. Iran does not have any reason to rush to a new deal now, but last week's agreement shows that the Netanyahu government's influence over Washington's Iran policy is at its minimum level. Israeli officials did not seem too happy about the agreement, according to which Tehran will release five American prisoners in exchange for the release of billions of dollars in frozen assets. In a statement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "Agreements that do not destroy Iran's nuclear infrastructure will not stop its nuclear program and will only provide it with money that will go into the pockets of terrorist elements supported by Iran."

Arman-e-Melli: Achievements of the trip to the Far East

Arman-e-Melli wrote in an analysis: The foreign policy of the 13th government is based on strengthening foreign relations, and the recent visit of the Foreign Minister of our country to Japan in recent days is a sign of Iran's pragmatic step in expanding relations with neighboring and Asian countries. The importance of this trip simultaneously with the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was an opportunity for Iran to say that it is always seriously opposed to the use of unconventional nuclear weapons and is a messenger of peace and friendship in the world. Also, Japan, which is one of the advanced and great economies, needs crude oil. On the other hand, Iran has always considered Japan as a major market for its oil and buying industrial and technological goods from it. Moreover, the fact that Iran's enemies are always trying to present Iran to public opinion in the world as a supporter of Russia in the Ukraine war, the Foreign Minister of our country intelligently became the true narrator of Iran's regional policies and clearly stated in the press conference in Tokyo that "the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been a messenger of peace and stability and is not on the side of any country in any war."

West funds terrorist groups like MKO, Daesh: Judiciary chief

From page 1 ▶ "More than 10,000 people were martyred at the hands of this organization, and Iran is still granting them the right to trial and an attorney," he maintained during the interview.

"We must confront this organization and try its key members," he declared.

He added, "There are some entities (in the MKO) who do not deny receiving aid from the U.S. aid."

The Judiciary chief also said Israel and the U.S. were complicit in the crimes committed by the MKO.

"The United States and some Western countries were giving them airlifts, providing them with arms, and giving them strategic support while Daesh elements were being besieged," he argued.

Ejei also emphasized the importance of Iran's move in forging ties with all Islamic nations, saying, "Iran does not only support the resistance front in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq, but also seeks the dignity of all Muslims and freedom from the hegemony of colonizers, whether in Asia, Africa, or even the United States."

"We are opposed to the expressions used by the former American president toward Saudi Arabia and its senior officials," the senior judge said in an indirect reference to Donald Trump who likened Saudi Arabia to a milk cow.

"We need to be cautious, as the enemies are undoubtedly disturbed by this rapprochement," he said.

Ejei went on to add that "the United States is not in a position to impose conditions on Iran, and today, we remember the words of martyr Solei-



mani when he addressed America, saying 'come and fight me. There is no need to fight Iran, nor a need to confront the Axis of Resistance.'

He also highlighted the significance of the Palestinians' struggle against Israeli invaders and praised the leadership of the Hezbollah resistance movement.

"Why are figures like Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and martyr Sayyed Abbas Al-Mousawi, along with other martyrs of the Resistance, deeply entrenched in the hearts of many youths today? Why are they held in such high regard?" he noted.

Additionally, he explained that Lt. General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis are revered by the younger generation and all Muslims since they, among others, made the ultimate sacrifice for Allah and the sake of human respect and dignity.

General Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force who was internationally famous as a legendary military commander, and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, the deputy leader of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were assassinated in a U.S. drone attack near Baghdad's international airport on January 3, 2020.

FM slams EU persistent 'ineffective' sanctions on Iran

TEHRAN- Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Iranian Foreign Minister, has lambasted the European Union for continuing its "ineffective" sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Amir Abdollahian made the comments during a phone conversation late on Tuesday with Josep Borrell, the EU foreign policy chief.

"Sanctions are an unfriendly measure in the relations between the Islamic Republic and Europe," Amir Abdollahian stressed.

He continued, "Know this that Europe does not stand to benefit from the continuation of this situation (implementation of the sanction policy towards Iran)."

Since Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in May 2018, the EU has been toeing the U.S. line on sanctions against Iran.

The Trump administration exited the multilateral nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018 in violation of UN Security Council resolution 2231 that endorsed the deal.

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

The agreement was signed between Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (Britain, France, China, Russia, and the U.S.) Germany, and the European Union.

Amir Abdollahian also praised Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for being on "the right track of cooperation."

He also addressed the allegations by the West against the Islamic Republic that Iran sold drones to Russia for use in the Ukraine war.

The foreign minister insisted that "Ukraine has not presented us any reliable evidence for this claim either." He added that "the accusation of application of Iranian drones against



Ukraine is completely without foundation."

Amir Abdollahian went on to say "that the Islamic Republic does not stand on ceremony when it comes to its foreign policy positions."

Iran's chief diplomat drew a comparison between the Palestinian issue and the Ukraine war from the perspective of the Islamic Republic, saying, "In the same way that the Islamic Republic has clearly announced that it backs Palestine, it similarly clarifies that it supports a political approach concerning the war in Ukraine."

'Misunderstandings between Iran, EU can be resolved through dialog'

For his part, Borrell said that some of the current misunderstandings between Iran and the EU could be "resolved through dialog."

The senior European diplomat added that he would do every effort to bring back all parties to the JCPOA and emphasized the need for collaboration between Iran and the IAEA.

Iran insists on forming inclusive government in Afghanistan

In a meeting on Tuesday with Tariq Ali Bakheet, the OIC special representative for Afghanistan, Amir Abdollahian also reiterated Iran's appeal for establishing an inclusive government in Afghanistan on the second anniversary of the Taliban's takeover of power in the Central Asian country.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, which enjoys 900 kilometers (559 miles) of common border with Af-

ghanistan, addresses the Central Asian country's developments with diligence and sensitivity," Amir Abdollahian noted.

Tehran views the formation of an inclusive government with the involvement of all ethnic and religious groups as a remedy for Afghanistan's current problems, Iran's chief diplomat noted.

After making significant gains across the country, the Taliban swept back to power in August 2021.

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 following the September 11 attacks in the United States. The United States attacked Afghanistan after the Taliban, which was ruling Afghanistan at the time, refused to surrender al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden to the U.S.

The attacks on Afghanistan took place though no Afghan nationals were implicated in the September 11 assaults.

However, after 20 years the U.S. was forced to leave Afghanistan in a chaotic manner which its scenes are still fresh in the eyes of the people in the world. As the U.S. was exiting the country the Afghanistan government ruled by President Ashraf Ghani was toppled as Taliban forces captured the presidential palace.

Iran has linked the recognition of the Taliban government to the formation of an inclusive government in the country.

In his meeting with the OIC representative, Amir Abdollahian called for stepping up efforts to address the humanitarian prob-

lems that the Afghan people are facing.

Additionally, he demanded that millions of Afghan refugees living in Iran get international help.

According to the UNHCR, Iran is home to over 800,000 registered refugees and some 2.6 million undocumented Afghans. The flow of Afghans to Iran expedited after the Taliban took power in the country two years ago.

For his part, the OIC official viewed the Islamic Republic's contribution to stabilizing Afghanistan as crucial and beneficial.

He also filed a report outlining his activities while serving as the OIC representative for Afghanistan.

There are some issues between Iran and the Taliban that need to be resolved.

On Sunday, Iranian Ambassador to Kabul Hassan Kazemi Qomi said that Iranian experts had visited Afghanistan's Deh Ravod for the first time amid ongoing efforts by Tehran to settle a water dispute with Kabul.

Qomi, who is also a presidential envoy for Afghanistan, said the visit was aimed at finding a solution to the Iran-Afghanistan water dispute.

"Our technical delegation is currently in Kabul, the visit has been done and we will receive its report soon," he said.

Based on the 1973 treaty, Afghanistan is legally obligated to allocate 820 million cubic meters of water from the Helmand River to Iran.

Farewell to victims of terror attack on Shah Cheragh

From page 1 ▶ With chants like "Down with the U.S." and "Down with Israel," they demanded an immediate and regretful response from all those responsible for the fatal atrocity.

Wednesday was declared a day of general mourning in Fars province.

Late on Sunday, two terrorists attacked the Shah Cheragh shrine. One of the terrorists, who opened fire on the people, was arrested alive and another fled. However, he and some accomplices were later detained.



The assailant who was detained at the scene is a national of Tajikistan.

The Daesh Takfiri terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the deadly assault.

In a similar attack on October 26, 2022, armed militants also stormed the Shah Cheragh shrine murdering 15 pilgrims, including women and children. They also wounded scores of pilgrims before being shot dead by security forces.

The assailants of the October attack were also foreign nationals.

Armenia calls Iran special partner for peace

TEHRAN - Armenian National Assembly (NA) speaker Alen Simonyan received the newly appointed Iranian ambassador to Yerevan Mehdi Sobhani on Tuesday, congratulating him on assuming the mission and wishing him a fruitful activity, NEWS.am reported.

Also, Simonyan extended his condolences to the families and friends of the casualties of the recent terrorism in the city of Shiraz, Iran, and to the entire Iranian people, stressing that the joint fight against terrorism should be one of the primary goals.

In response, Sobhani noted that terrorism has no nationality

and borders, and the basis of the friendship between Armenia and Iran is a strong condemnation of terrorist acts.

The Iranian diplomat added that has great hope that his mission in friendly Armenia will be crowned with success.

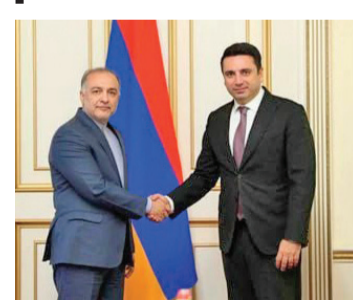
Simonyan, in turn, expressed his belief that the ambassador will invest his efforts in deepening friendly relations between the two countries.

The parties discussed the importance of interparliamentary relations, emphasizing the importance of legislative interaction to provide prompt solutions to the

arising issues. Armenian-Iranian friendly parliamentary cooperation was particularly highlighted in the meeting.

The NA speaker noted that Iran has been and still remains a special partner for Armenia, as it contributes—with its balanced policy—to the establishment of peace and strengthening stability in the region.

In addition, Alen Simonyan drew the Iranian ambassador's attention to the ongoing blockade of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan and the resultant severe humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh,



stressing the need to immediately lift this blockade.

The efforts of the Armenian side are aimed at establishing stable peace in the South Caucasus, which will be beneficial for all the peoples of the region, the senior legislator emphasized.

West extravagance put Ukraine in big trouble: Iranian commander

From page 1 ▶ The SCO and BRICS as two blocs have helped the emergence of the new world order to establish real security, the military official remarked.

Effect of Islamic Revolution on discourse of new world order

The general noted that the discourse of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was influential in establishing the new world order, citing the addition of religion and spirituality in politics and security in the

modern world as part of the so-called discourse.

The international military-technical forum Army-2023 opened Monday at the Patriot Congress and Exhibition Center in Moscow, TASS reported.

About 1,500 prominent Russian companies of the military-industrial complex presented their products, and 85 foreign companies and organizations from seven countries participated in the forum.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, nearly 60 countries confirmed their participation in this year's forum. Meetings between the leadership of the Russian Armed Forces and foreign partners were planned. Foreign delegations also took part in a robust scientific and business program.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, contracts worth more than 433 billion rubles (\$4.34 b) would be signed at the forum, TASS reported.

# New momentum in Iran-Saudi relations

By Mehran Shamsuddin

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian is expected to arrive in Saudi Arabia soon as part of Iranian-Saudi efforts to upgrade their relations.

Iran confirmed that Amir Abdollahian will pay a visit to Saudi Arabia soon, with press reports saying that the visit could take place on Thursday.

The upcoming visit by the Iranian foreign minister comes after Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan visited Iran in June when he met with Amir Abdollahian and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. Therefore, the Iranian foreign minister could also meet with the leaders of Saudi Arabia. So far, no official statement has been made as to whom the Iranian foreign minister will meet in Riyadh other than Prince Faisal. But it's likely that he will also meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman given the positive atmosphere that currently exists in Iran-Saudi relations.

Since March, Iran and Saudi Arabia have been accelerating steps to move their bilateral relations to the next level. They signed a landmark agreement in Beijing in March which ushered in a series of confidence-



building steps.

In his June meeting with bin Farhan, the Iranian foreign minister welcomed any move to strengthen economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, calling for launching a joint economic commission to this end and for holding a meeting of the commission in the near future, according to a statement by the Iranian foreign ministry.

The foreign minister of Iran also proposed the formation of joint consultation committees and exchange of expert views in order to bolster political and consular ties as well as relations in such areas as tourism, transit, land, sea and air transportation, energy, environment, fisheries

and fighting drug trafficking.

Iran's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Alireza Enayati, further underlined the need for strengthening economic cooperation between Tehran and Riyadh. He said security is no longer solely based on militarism and is now intertwined with economy, trade, and development, highlighting the commitment to sustainable development based on a mindset of sustainable security.

Pointing to the expansion of Tehran-Riyadh relations from merely bilateral to multilateral areas, Alireza Enayati said on Wednesday that through multilateral relations, capacities, and facilities of the countries would be available to each other,

enlisting transportation, and transit as areas that multilateral relations can strengthen.

Enayati labeled the establishment of the joint commission as a 'roadmap for the relations between the two countries,' which can boost the ongoing limited trade, and said: "On the part of Iran, the Ministry of Petroleum is responsible for the establishment of the Iranian commission."

He stated that introducing the ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Iran is also on the agenda of the Saudi side.

The Iranian ambassador made the remarks in an interview with the Iranian Donyaye Eghtesad daily.

He further said that there are agreements for air and sea transport between the two countries, expressing hope that these agreements will lead to the resumption of flights and the reopening of communication between the ports of the two countries.

High-level documents can facilitate and promote economic cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, where the private sectors of both sides will find areas for further cooperation, according to the Iranian ambassador.

## Iran, Iraq explore ways to hold Arbaeen pilgrimage with closer coordination

TEHRAN- Senior Iranian and Iraqi officials have convened in Baghdad to talk about improving communication in preparation for the upcoming Arbaeen pilgrimage.

They talked about how to make it easier for pilgrims to get to Karbala, the city in central Iraq where the shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located.

The 40th day since the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein is marked by the mourning ceremony known as Arbaeen. This year the ritual, which is practiced by Shia Muslims worldwide, falls on September 6.

Imam Hussein, the third Shia Imam and the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), was martyred in the Battle of Karbala on October 10, 680.

On Arbaeen Day millions of Shia Muslims travel tens of kilometers on foot to Karbala to pay respect to the Imam Hussein shrine.

The third international congress on "Health in Arbaeen" was held in Tehran from August 2-4.

The congress aimed at reviewing the



weaknesses and shortcomings of the health sector in the Arbaeen march in previous years and providing the necessary solutions.

Guests from some 40 countries, including Iraq, Lebanon, the United States, England, Pakistan, and Bahrain, attended the congress, IRNA quoted Abdorreza Pazoki, the chairman of the congress, as saying.

The congress also aimed to strengthen inter-departmental coordination and synergy of service providers in the Arbaeen trek to reduce the obstacles in providing health services to the pilgrims.

The event was held by the Iranian Red Crescent Society in cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and the Emergency Organization.

## India seeks to strengthen economic ties with Iran: envoy

**'Mr. Modi hopes to host Mr. Raisi in India soon'**

From Page 1 ▶ Regarding security cooperation, Shresth said, "Tehran and New Delhi have exchanged views on important regional issues that are common concerns of both countries, such

as the situation in Afghanistan or security and stability in the Persian Gulf."

Referring to the historical roots of relations between Iran

and India, he noted, "Our people and leaders look at each other with friendship, trust and mutual respect, and there is absolutely no point of friction between Iran and India."

The ambassador of India also addressed the development of his country in various fields, including in the digital sector and information technology.

## Iran calls on UN Security Council to condemn Shiraz terror attack

TEHRAN - The Iranian mission to the United Nations in New York has condemned the terrorist attack on a shrine in the south-central city of Shiraz on August 13, criticizing the UN Security Council for not condemning the terrorist attacks in Iran.

In a letter to the president of the UN Security Council, Iranian Ambassador to the UN Amir Saeid Iravani informed the UN body of the attack.

"With deep sadness and sorrow, I would like to inform you of yet another tragic terrorist attack on my Country. This recent act of terrorism, the second in tenth months, targeted innocent civilians and pilgrims visiting the revered Shah-e-Cheragh shrine in Shiraz. On 13 August 2023, one assailant launched a malevolent assault at the Bab al-Mahdi Gate, a hallowed entryway to the sacred shrine. The perpetrator coldheartedly unleashed a barrage of gunfire upon the innocent people within the sanctuary's precincts, resulting in the martyrdom and injury of eight innocent Iranian people, some of whom remain in critical health condition," he said in the letter.

Iravani said, "Immediately after this deadly assault, Daesh, an international terrorist organization, claimed responsibility for this reprehensible act. The Iranian security forces intervened quickly and decisively, resulting in the immediate arrest of the main assailant responsible for the indiscriminate gunfire inside the shrine,



who, according to preliminary information, is a Tajik national named 'Rahmatollah Norozov'. Subsequently, a preliminary investigation and a comprehensive search operation carried out by Iran's Intelligence Ministry have led to the apprehension of ten people connected to this grave act of terror. All ten of these apprehended suspects are foreign nationals."

He continued, "Tragically, the Shah Cheragh shrine has been a target of such horrifying violence before. A mere year ago, on October 26, 2022, armed terrorists from the very same Daesh organization stormed the sanctuary, resulting in the heartrending martyrdom of 15 pilgrims, including women and children, and the injury of 30 others."

Iravani stated, "In a letter dated 4 November 2022, addressed to Your Excellency and the President of the Security Council (A/77/581-S/2022/831), Iran strongly

condemned the tragic terrorist attacks in Shiraz and called on the Security Council for condemnation. However, it is disheartening that the Security Council has chosen to remain silent in the face of this grievous incident. This silence is both disappointing and unacceptable, particularly considering the Security Council's consistent recognition and reaffirmation of terrorism as a grave threat to international peace and security through its resolutions."

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns such abhorrent and atrocious acts of terrorism and underscores its unwavering commitment to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice and held accountable. In the meantime, the Islamic Republic of Iran calls on the Security Council to condemn this heinous act unequivocally and in the strongest possible terms, in line with its commitment to combatting terrorism and upholding international peace and security."

The Iranian ambassador concluded, "The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has directly suffered the catastrophic consequences of terrorism, remains steadfast in its unwavering commitment to spearheading the fight against this scourge. Our resolve is to protect the illustrious and noble people of Iran and to safeguard the security of neighboring nations from the perils posed by such malevolent terrorist groups."

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Straight Truth  
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## SPORTS

### Tractor to play Sharjah at ACL play-off round

TEHRAN - Tractor football team of Iran will play Sharjah of the UAE in the play-off round of the 2023-24 AFC Champions League.

Sharjah qualified for the play-off after defeating Bangladesh's Bashundhara Kings 2-0, with goals from Luan Pereiran in the 45th and 71st minutes.

The win means Sharjah will meet Tractor next week for a spot in the group stage.

Tractor will host the Emirati football team at the Yadegar-e Emam Stadium in Tabriz on August 22.

### Iran to play Kazakhstan at FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2023 Qualification SF

TEHRAN - Iran will play Kazakhstan at the FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2023 Division B Qualification to Semi-Finals on Thursday.

The Indonesian team clinched a direct ticket to the Semi-Finals on Friday as the top team in Group A after beating Iran 65-56.

Iran is at second place in the group and will face third-place team from Group B Kazakhstan.

The winner of the match will meet the winner of Thailand and Malaysia match for the Semi-Finals spot.

### 2023 U20 World Wrestling: Mohammad Aghaei seizes silver

TEHRAN - Hossein Abbas Mohammad Aghaei claimed a silver medal at the U20 World Wrestling Championships 2023 on Wednesday.

The Iranian freestyler lost to Mitchell Mesenbrink from the US 15-5 in the final bout of 74kg.

The 2023 U20 World Wrestling Championships started in Amman, Jordan on August 14 and will run until August 20.

The event had originally been scheduled to be held in Warsaw, Poland from August 14-20. Due to Poland's refusal to issue visas to Russian and Belarusian wrestlers, United World Wrestling moved the tournament from Poland to Jordan.

### Iran look like solid unit: FIBA

TEHRAN - Iran basketball team have stolen the show at the FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2023 Division B.

Any coach will tell you that preparation is key heading into any competition, and it seems early on that Iran has proven that right. They won 0 games in 2021 and they won 0 games in their tune-up games right before coming into Bangkok, but once the real games began Iran have looked ready.

The players have continuously praised the impact of having Greek coach Eleni Kapogianni at the head of the bench and it's been well deserved.

Iran have their flaws and can be rattled by pressure at times, but they've looked like a solid unit, FIBA reported.

### E-Painters beat Iran B at 2023 William Jones Cup

TEHRAN - The Philippines' Rain or Shine Elasto Painters defeated Iran B basketball team 98-90 in the 2023 William Jones Cup at the Taipei Heping Gymnasium in Chinese Taipei on Wednesday.

E-Painters' Ange Kouame scored 20 points, 9 rebounds, 4 blocks, and 4 assists, while Andrei Caracut finished with 19 points.

Iran's Amirhossein Azari put up 16 points, 4 rebounds, and 4 assists, while Alireza Sharifi and Amirhossein Yazarloo added 15 points apiece.

Iran B defeated Qatar 69-63 in their opening match and fell short to Korean team Anyang KGC 84-72 and Chine Taipei's Republic of China Blue 80-63.

Iran B are scheduled to meet Japan U22, UC Irvine Anteaters, the UAE and Republic of China White in the following days.

### Woman basketball player Yazdian says they were no lucky against Indonesia

TEHRAN - The women's national basketball team's star, Kimia Yazdian, believes that Iran was not lucky against Indonesia during the Asia Cup, Division B's third game in the group stage.

She also believes that the outcome could have been different if the team's shots had been scored.

The Iranian basketball team were defeated 65-56 by Indonesia at the FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2023 Division B on Tuesday.

"We are pleased to have won two victories and dedicate them to the people of Iran. However, we made mistakes during the game against Indonesia, which resulted in losing top of the table," said Yazdian in his interview with Tehran Times.

Iran had won against Malaysia and Mongolia during the preliminary round prior to losing to Indonesia.

"Iran's women's basketball team's two wins not only showcased their potential but also created empathy among the players and improved the national basketball team's unity and morale," she added.

In addition, Yazdian spoke about the fantastic support from the Iranian fans during the Thailand tournament.

"Seeing Iranian spectators in the venue is surprising and encouraging for us. I am hopeful that our achievements will bring happiness to both those who are in the venues and the Iranian people in our country," she said.

After finishing second in their group, Iran will play Kazakhstan in the Qualification to the Semi-Finals round on Thursday.

### Khorrandel wins bronze at U20 Worlds

TEHRAN - Ali Mahmoud Khorrandel of Iran claimed a bronze medal at the U20 World Wrestling Championships 2023 on Wednesday.

The freestyler defeated Georgian Tamazi Sulamanidze 10-0 in the bronze medal match.

The 2023 U20 World Wrestling Championships started in Amman, Jordan on August 14 and will run until August 20.

The event had originally been scheduled to be held in Warsaw, Poland from August 14-20. Due to Poland's refusal to issue visas to Russian and Belarusian wrestlers, United World Wrestling moved the tournament from Poland to Jordan.

## ICCIMA hosts Iran-Serbia business meeting



Acting Head of ICCIMA International Affairs Department Niloufar Asadi (C), and Serbian Ambassador to Iran Dragan Todorovic (L)

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Tuesday hosted a gathering of Iran and Serbia's private sector representatives in which the two sides explored trade opportunities between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by the acting Head of the ICCIMA International Affairs Department Niloufar Asadi, and Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Islamic Republic of Iran Dragan Todorovic, the ICCIMA news portal reported.

Speaking at the meeting, Asadi pointed out that one of the most important problems for Iranian businessmen in the Serbian market is the country's high customs tariffs for Iranians.

She expressed hope that the negotiations between the governments of Iran and Serbia for a free trade agreement will come to a conclusion and the mentioned problems will be resolved.

"Iranian private sector wants to follow up on the signing and implementation of the free trade agreement between the two countries, and the ICCIMA, on behalf of the private sector, wants to participate in these negotiations," she stressed.

Asadi further noted that the ICCIMA is trying to provide the opportunity for the businessmen of the two countries to become more familiar with each other through holding conferences and exchanging delegations.

"The fields of tourism, especially health tourism and sports tourism, and also the agriculture sector are potential areas for cooperation between the two countries. Considering the lack of water in Iran and our desire for trans-territorial cultivation, Serbia has a very good potential for cooperation in this sector," she said.

Emphasizing that monetary and banking issues are also among the main obstacles to Iran-Serbia trade cooperation, she said: "We ask the embassies and related institutions of the two countries to take the necessary measures to facilitate banking transactions between the two sides."

"Barter trade can replace the monetary exchange between the two countries. Also, bilateral monetary agreements can facilitate this path," the official added.

According to Asadi, Iran, and Serbia can develop their relations through joint investment, implementation of joint projects, production of joint products, and export to Europe or West Asia.

Referring to the good political relations between the two countries, Todorovic said: "In the past month, three important Serbian political delegations came to Iran and there is a lot of potential for cooperation."

Todorovic also announced that the 16th joint economic committee meeting of the two countries will be held in Tehran at the end of October.

## Khuzestan province's 4-month non-oil exports exceed \$1.7b

TEHRAN- Non-oil commodities worth \$1.738 billion were exported from Khuzestan province, in the southwest of Iran, during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), an official with the customs department of the province announced.

Behrouz Qareh-Beygi put the weight of exported commodities at 6.572 million tons, with a 25-percent growth year on year, while the export fell 31 percent in terms of value.

He named petrochemicals, agricultural products, steel, construction materials, mechanical and electronic devices, food and fishery as the main exported items, and the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, China, Southeast Asia, Turkey, Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

The official further announced that 4.499 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$2.698 billion were imported to the province in the first four months of this year, falling 51 percent from the past year.

As previously announced by the official, non-oil commodities worth \$6.584 billion were exported from Khuzestan province during the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), an official with the customs department of the province announced.

Qareh-Beygi put the weight of exported commodities at 17.55 million tons, with a seven-percent growth year on year.

He named petrochemicals, agricultural

products, steel, construction materials, mechanical and electronic devices, food and fishery as the main exported items, and the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, China, Southeast Asia, Turkey, Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

The official further announced that 18.021 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$10.677 billion were imported to the province in the previous year, with a 12-percent drop in weight, while a five-percent rise in value, as compared to the preceding year.

According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade reached \$35.445 billion in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year.

Based on the mentioned data, Iran exported 45.758 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$15.906 billion in the mentioned four months, IRIB reported.

The exports of non-oil commodities in the mentioned four months increased by 28.56 percent in terms of weight.

Meanwhile, some 11.842 million tons of goods valued at \$19.539 billion were imported into the country in the said period, indicating a 10.82-percent rise in terms of value compared to the last year's same time span.

The average value of each ton of exported goods in the first four months of the current year was \$348 and the average value of each ton of imported goods was \$1,650.

## TEDPIX loses 4,400 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 4,496 points to 1.973 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 9.116 billion securities worth 75.752 trillion rials (about \$154.5 million) were traded at the TSE.

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

# China's Iranian oil imports hit 10-year record high: report

TEHRAN – China's oil imports from Iran have been soaring in August so that the shipments are expected to reach 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd), the highest since 2013, Bloomberg reported citing estimates from data intelligence firm Kpler.

Based on the Kpler data, China shipped in 917,000 bpd of Iranian oil on average during the January-July 2023 period.

Iran has been ramping up oil exports this year as it becomes more geopolitically assertive, with most of the shipments heading to China, Bloomberg said.

As reported, Iran's two main grades are currently trading at a discount of more than \$10 a barrel compared to Brent, which is cheaper than the Russian variety.

In late July, Kpler said that Iran's oil shipments to China have more than tripled over the past three years despite the U.S. sanctions on the country and the increase in Russia's shipments to the Asian country.

According to the data analyzing firm, Iranian crude exports to its major trade partner have been hovering around one million bpd in 2023, while the figure was roughly 325,000 bpd in 2020.

Also, the International Energy Agency (IEA) in a recent report titled "Oil 2023" confirmed Iran's daily export of one million barrels of oil



to China, saying: "Despite severe financial restrictions, Iran managed to increase its crude oil production by about 140,000 barrels per day in 2022 to an average of 2.5 million barrels per day. It seems that Tehran has maintained its crude sales to China, which has been around one million barrels per day since the third quarter of last year."

According to official data, Iranian oil production also increased in the current year so that in May the country's oil output reached 2.9 bpd, 350,000 bpd more than in 2022.

Earlier in April, Bloomberg reported that "Chinese private refineries are buying more Iranian oil despite the rising competition for supplies from Russia."

"So-called teapots are prioritizing the flows, with Russian supplies getting pricier as mainstream buyers such as state-owned Chinese refiners and Indian processors take a greater share," the report read.

In March, China's imports of Iranian crude and condensate jumped 20 percent month-on-month to 800,000 barrels a day,

and are on track to extend gains in coming months, Emma Li, an analyst with data intelligence firm Vortexa Ltd told Bloomberg that month.

While Iranian oil has long been sanctioned by the U.S., refiners in China have proved to be a consistent outlet.

Most Iranian oil used to go to state-owned refineries but "the private refiners in Shandong especially are now running the show," said Homayoun Falakshahi, senior crude oil analyst at Kpler.

## Iran extends gas-for-electricity swap deal with Armenia

TEHRAN – The National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has renewed and revised a contract with Armenia to increase the volume of natural gas exports to the landlocked neighboring country until 2030, Shana reported.

The terms of the contract, under which Iran exports natural gas to Armenia in exchange for electricity, have been revised so that the energy

exchange ratio is significantly improved in favor of the NIGC.

The contract was finalized this week during a ceremony in Yerevan attended by senior officials from both countries, including NIGC Head Majid Chegeni, Iran's ambassador to Armenia Mehdi Sobhani, and Aram Ghazaryan, the CEO of the Yerevan Thermal Power Plant.

The preliminary agreement to extend the gas-for-electricity swap deal was worked out during Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's visit to Tehran in November last year.

Officials say the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline has the capacity to transfer over one billion cubic meters of natural gas to Armenia every year.

## Iran, Indonesia discuss forming fund for barter trade



TEHRAN – In a meeting between board members of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and Iran's new Ambassador to Jakarta Mohammad Boroujerdi the two sides discussed ways of increasing the level of trade between the two countries.

During the meeting, the ICCIMA proposed establishing a joint fund for facilitating barter trade between the private sectors of the two countries, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Speaking at the meeting, ICCIMA Head Hossein Selahvarzi stated that the development of trade and economic relations with other countries is one of the main priorities

of the ICCIMA, saying: "We must accept the sanctions and restrictions and formulate strategic plans for trade with Indonesia in cooperation with the country's embassy."

He announced sending a business delegation to Indonesia by the Iran Chamber in cooperation with the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and added: "One of the strategies of the ICCIMA is to support small and medium-sized enterprises and send and receive business delegations and attend exhibitions."

Further in the meeting, Boroujerdi proposed establishing an Iranian trade center or permanent exhibition in Jakarta to facilitate trade between the

private sectors of the two countries.

Stating that Indonesia is the economic hub of East Asia, the envoy said: "Indonesia has a market of 300 million and is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and can be the gateway for Iran's strong presence in this region."

Referring to the targeting of \$20 billion trade with Indonesia, Boroujerdi said: "To reach this target, we need the cooperation of the private sector and ICCIMA with the Iranian Embassy in Indonesia."

Welcoming the proposal to set up a permanent exhibition of Iranian products in Indonesia, Selahvarzi said: "This requires the development of a mechanism and long-term evaluation by the related institutions and the necessary arrangements should be made by these institutions."

Sending a congratulatory message to Selahvarzi on his election as the new head of the ICCIMA, Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro expressed his country's readiness to strengthen economic ties with Iran.

"I am confident that your experiences in this important position will be a valuable asset to achieve the goals and aspirations of your government and will help to develop cooperation with friendly countries," Yuliantoro said in his message in late July.

During a meeting with Mehdi Zeyghami, the acting head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), at the place of the organization in early July, the envoy had said that a preferential trade agreement (PTA) is important for the development of trade between Iran and Indonesia.

He said that his country is examining the package proposed by Iran, and expressed hope that the PTA between the two countries will be finalized soon, because this agreement is of particular importance for the parties' access to each other's markets.

In this meeting, the ambassador of Indonesia invited Iranian businessmen to attend international exhibitions of this country and said: "The largest trade exhibition in Indonesia will be held in October and we are ready to welcome Iranian businessmen as participants and visitors."

## Over 5.6m tons of basic goods transported from major ports in 4 months

TEHRAN- More than 5.6 million tons of basic commodities were transported from Iran's major ports to the designated destinations throughout the country during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar

year (March 21-July 22), an official with Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) announced.

Mehrdad Hamdollahi had previously announced that about five million tons of

basic goods were transported from the major ports to the designated destinations throughout the country during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21).

## Iran's free zones investment capacities to be introduced in Sulaymaniyah tourism expo

TEHRAN- Historical and tourism attractions of Iran's free zones and investment capacities in the field of tourism in these areas will be introduced at the International Exhibition of Tourism and Handicrafts of Sulaymaniyah.

The international expo will run in Sulaymaniyah City of Iraqi Kurdistan during

August 17-20, the news portal of Iran's Free Trade and Special Economic Zones reported.

Iran's Free Zones High Council will have an active presence in this exhibit, which is one of the biggest and most important tourism and handicraft events in West Asia.

With the presence of Iran's seven active free zones (Maku, Aras, Arvand, Qeshm, Anzali, Kish, and Chabahar), the pavilion of Iran's Free Zones High Council welcomes tourists and investors in this exhibition by introducing investment opportunities in Iran's free zones.

# American soldier entered N. Korea because of 'discrimination in U.S. army'

From page 1 ▶ North Korean investigators have also reached a similar conclusion that he crossed from South Korea deliberately and illegally, intending to stay in the North or in a third country, but added that the investigation was still active.

"During the investigation, Travis King confessed that he had decided to come over to the DPRK as he harbored ill feeling against inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination within the U.S. Army," KCNA said.

"He also expressed his willingness to seek refugee in the DPRK or a third country, saying that he was disillusioned at the unequal American society."

King was being "kept under control by soldiers of the Korean People's Army" after his crossing, the agency said.

U.S. officials have said the North had not provided substantive responses to requests for information on King.

How to classify the 23-year-old has been an open question for the U.S. military.

Despite the fact that he is an active-duty soldier and the United States and Korea technically remain at war, issues such as King's decision to cross into North Korea of his own free will, in civilian clothing, appear to have disqualified him from POW status, U.S. officials have said.

King, who joined the U.S. Army in January 2021 is a cavalry scout with the Korean Rotational Force, which is part of Washington's security agreement with Seoul.

He had finished serving his service and had been transported by the U.S. military to the airport to return to his home unit in the United States.

Instead, King left the airport and joined a civilian tour of the area separating the North from the South, where he then ran across despite attempts by South Korean and U.S. military guards to catch him.

The Pentagon said it could not verify King's comments as reported by KCNA and remains focused on his return to the United States. It did not address whether it had heard



more details from North Korea.

What the Pentagon can verify is that nearly a third of Black U.S. military service members have reported experiencing racial discrimination, harassment or both during a 12-month period.

That's according to the results of a long-withheld U.S. Defense Department survey that highlighted the grave concerns about racism across the military ranks and was only leaked by American news outlets in 2021.

Whilst the U.S. military is diverse in its lower ranks, it is largely white men at the top.

Human rights advocates say discrimination goes unpunished, and racial harassment has played a major role in pushing out minority groups.

Racism and discrimination against black American service members and other minority groups have been cited in a number of studies and surveys as a disturbing factor and ongoing occurrence in the U.S. military.

In 2021, the same year that King joined the U.S. Army, a survey organized by "Blue Star Families" found that 42 percent of service members from minority groups have turned down a military assignment or permanent change of station order because of concerns about racism and discrimination, even when they were aware that doing so can negatively affect their career because of perceptions of racism in the local community.

A Blue Star Family is the

immediate family of a U.S. military member who is serving during war.

The survey found that more than 40 percent of active-duty family respondents also factored in concerns about racial discrimination or safety when listing where they prefer to be based.

About 33 percent of active-duty families and 34 percent of veterans in the survey also reported that concerns about racial and ethnic discrimination were a factor in conversations with family members about whether to continue serving in the U.S. military.

The findings were part of the Blue Star Families' "Social Impact Research 2021: The Diverse Experiences of Military & Veteran Families of Color," that asked 2,731 people, including 622 active-duty spouses, 303 active-duty service members and 306 veterans.

Blue Star Families argued that the survey represents an important starting point for an area of research that has been lacking attention.

"Around the George Floyd murder and the unrest that summer, we started to recognize that one thing we hadn't been paying as much attention to as we should have is, what are the experiences of military families of color," Kathy Roth-Douquet, CEO of Blue Star Families, said at a virtual event launching the report.

"What we came to understand is, actually no one had ever asked these questions before... There's sort of a culture of silence about this because it's not what we

aspire to be or what we aspire to experience."

Many also reported safety concerns, racial profiling by police, racial slurs, and other forms of discrimination.

57 percent of active-duty family respondents reported hearing military-connected peers make racist remarks or jokes and about 46 percent said they have been the subject of slurs or jokes in their military community at least once since January 2020, according to the report.

About 41 percent of active-duty family respondents said they feared for their personal safety in their military community due to their ethnicity or race at least once since January 2020, with some citing displays of the Confederate flag or discussions about politics "in ways they viewed to be coded racism" as factors that made them feel unsafe.

And about 33 percent of Black active-duty family respondents reported being racially profiled by military law enforcement at least once since January 2020, compared with about 36 percent who said they were profiled by civilian law enforcement.

Finally, about 39 percent of active-duty service member respondents said their race or ethnicity "significantly" or "slightly" hurt their ability to get ahead at work, including about 48 percent of Black respondents.

"This is just the beginning of the work ahead," the co-chairs of Blue Star Families' racial equity and inclusion committee wrote in the 189-page report. "It is our hope that findings from this report will serve as a framework for policy and program recommendations that will help improve the service experiences of military families of color, strengthening our military overall."

Since 2021, it appears that no reforms have been made, despite widespread research about racism in the military and a black U.S. soldier fleeing to North Korea because of reported racism and discrimination.

## U.S. imperialism remains very sticky and terribly tragic...

From page 1 ▶ And this is because he objected to the U.S. proxy war on Russia in Ukraine. One also witnesses efforts by the U.S. to corral China both economically and politically with the focal point on Taiwan to ensure that it remains a U.S. vassal and does not re-join China even while the U.S. allegedly recognizes that Taiwan is in fact "Chinese".

The U.S. is even sending "cookie monster" Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland to Vietnam soon to try to convince the Communist government in Vietnam to support the Biden Administration. Nuland failed in her recent mission to Niger in her opposition to that country's new government. She is likely to fail in Vietnam, too, whatever her precise demands may be. And there are other so-called diplomatic efforts in other countries to try to keep the U.S. "empire" intact, where compromise is not in the U.S. cards but simply arm twisting, threats, bribes and demands. It's obvious that ANY important country that does not obey the U.S. is a potential target for political and military turmoil. But the big enchilada nowadays remains Ukraine, with China, in the growing recognition of U.S. failure in Ukraine, the next target.

There is no question, regarding Ukraine, that the Zelensky regime has all but lost the much heralded "offensive" against the Russian forces in Ukraine this summer. This suggests the war in Ukraine could end by late autumn in some fashion but on Russia's terms. Even a few U.S. mainstream media outlets such as CNN have admitted to the U.S.-NATO proxy war's military failures.

No one can kill an obvious truth forever, not even CNN or other parts of the U.S. mainstream media, so the question is, what does a country do with truths that are staring it in the face? In the case of people like Nuland and Antony Blinken, Nuland's boss, and Jake Sullivan, a "national security" advisor to senile Joe Biden, they don't modify policies at all and carry on

as if truths don't matter. They simply cannot conceive of supporting a geopolitical strategy where cooperation might prevail even now when it becomes a necessity because tensions could explode in a nuclear war.

Biden just this month authorized or suggested another \$40 billion to push the bloody war further, according to James Rickards, an American lawyer, financial expert and author. The U.S. may already have committed some \$200 billion into the overall effort to castrate Putin's Russia, Rickards says, and will brook no competition economic or military to U.S. dominance. And this is a financial environment where the U.S. is \$33 trillion in debt and the annual interest on the debt is well over \$730 billion. This expense will surpass a trillion

Note that some 70 percent or more Nigeriens don't even have electricity for light bulbs, but France depends to a significant degree for its own power needs on uranium extracted on the cheap by and from Niger's poor.

dollars in another year, more than the entire U.S. "defense" budget which itself is insane. It's totally unsustainable but there you have it, another failure to recognize a truth.

Even Muammar Ghaddafi, who was sodomized with a bayonet and murdered in Libya, the most prosperous African country in his day, said this way back in 2005: "NATO is expanding towards Russia to reach and capture the gas, oil, coal and iron owned by Russia." Ghaddafi went on in his long-ago speech vaguely foreshadowing his demise and the NATO/U.S. destruction of prosperous Libya, adding that the U.S. is in effect killing itself,

claiming that the hour will come when the U.S. will collapse like the Soviet Union did just over three decades ago.

But none should make the mistake of failing to recognize that the U.S. has not seriously been about promoting "freedom and democracy" and especially goodwill, but about resource theft, dominance, control and rapine, all at bottom to try to make sure that the "empire" survives and thrives with little regard even for the longer term well-being its NATO allies in a de-industrializing Europe that has lost its independence and become dependent on the U.S. for table scraps of economic support.

# Multilateralism in a changing world needs more Global South power

By Professor ZHANG Yuan

Faced with the increasing uncertainty of the world, the comparison of national strength has changed rapidly, and a new world order is being brewing. As unilateralism and hegemonism are increasingly unable to be popular, the development direction of multilateralism is being increasingly discussed.

**Firstly, good multilateralism should be equal, open and inclusive.**

The universal multilateralism established after the Cold War was progressive for the times, but it did not prevent the resurgence of exclusivism and protectionism. Especially for emerging market economies and developing countries, a multilateral mechanism that continuously explores the breadth and depth of win-win cooperation should adhere to the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and equality. Equality in multilateralism is beyond ideology, social system, and development paths differences.

For the purpose of global prosperity and universal security, our world needs multilateralism. Key demand of Multilateralism is practitioners of activism. When a country's development strategy is aligned with regional cooperation initiatives, it can lead to more effective identification of shared interests and concerns between countries. An example is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Currently, the SCO contains 9 member states, 3 observer states and 14 dialogue partner states. 2023 is the 22nd year of the establishment of the SCO. As an important comprehensive regional organization, the SCO is playing a positive role in bringing peace, prosperity and development to the world. The "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation,

respect for diverse civilizations and the pursuit of common development is exuding vigorous vitality.

The BRICS mechanism, which is attracting active participation of more Western Asian countries, is also an important force for emerging economies and developing countries to uphold multilateralism. The economic rise and development potential of the BRICS has demonstrated that the Global South countries have a strong capacity to influence the world.

**Secondly, good multilateralism should be wary of hegemonic countries using the platform of international mechanisms to create confrontation.**

Multilateralism needs to be premised on safeguarding the sovereignty and security of States, should respect national dignity, and should prevent hegemonic countries from weaponizing their leading economic, scientific and technological power.

People throughout the world are looking forward to an effective international mechanism that can truly maintain world peace and stability. Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has reshaped a set of international relationship and world order. International politics has been constantly debugging and oscillating between the realism that pursuing interests and the idealism that revering faith and morality.

NATO, for example, is a very typical military-security alliance with the characteristics of the time. NATO experienced reorientation after the Cold War. Critics of NATO, motivated by an abhorrence of the memory of the Kosovo war, see NATO as the party responsible for the collapse of the post-Cold War European security structures. However, as the Ukrainian



crisis continues, views that affirming NATO see it as a key force in reducing turmoil in Europe, and also as an important tool for the Western world to continue to dominate the future world order. The willingness of some Asia-Pacific countries that do not have geopolitical affinities with the North Atlantic to partner with NATO is driven by a very high expectation of NATO's role in influencing the pattern and order of the world. However, it is important to be cautious about vengefulness and, in particular, to be wary of unilateral hegemony hidden behind the international organizations.

The xenophobia of security-oriented multilateral mechanisms is only one side of the coin. In fact, even the international mechanisms that, in an economic and social sense, have welcomed the advancement of trade and investment globalization are in recession. When more and more international powers go against the original intent of the

organization's establishment and rashly expand the coverage of its security concerns in accordance with confrontational logic, it will lead to a more severe political polarization of the world, which is actually a betrayal of the ideal of benign international cooperation.

**Thirdly, the Global South needs to be united and self-reliant on issues of core interests and major concerns.**

The countries of the Global South are determined to follow their own path, in which it is vital to develop their economies and improve people's livelihoods through modernization in line with their national conditions.

In the turbulent international environment, a friendly partnership of mutual support and win-win cooperation can promote the goals of economic recovery and maintaining peace and stability. In the process of transforming the global governance system, advocating

multilateralism and consistently supporting the United Nations to play an active role in international affairs is conducive to expanding the voice of Global South and promoting international justice.

The call for unity does not mean shaping new allied blocs, but rather bypassing the stereotypical Western notions of blocs and alliances, refraining from subjugation to the big powers, and maintaining a sober neutrality while creating a multipolar environment. It means enhancing the credibility and recognition of international organizations that are independent of the hegemonic powers through solidarity and self-strengthening; expanding the maximum common denominator within the organization by regulating organizational behavior and increasing the effectiveness of cooperation among members; reducing uncertainty while reducing external misperceptions of the organization and reinforcing its own cohesion with pragmatic and collaborative outcomes. China is an ex-officio member of the Global South and has always stood with the emerging economies and developing countries of the world in upholding independence, development and revitalization, and fairness and justice.

A peaceful, stable, prosperous and beautiful homeland for mankind is both a dream and a goal for human to build together. The world is at a crossroads of historical development. The practice of true multilateralism in a changing world order requires more countries from the Global South and more sustainable and innovative forces that they can bring to bear in order to reach a new and more equitable future of global governance.

Dr. ZHANG Yuan, Professor, The Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, China

## Appetite awaits: Rasht and Kermanshah heavens for gastronomy enthusiasts

TEHRAN – When it comes to food tourism, Iran may not be the first destination that comes to mind for many travelers worldwide.

However, the cities of Rasht and Kermanshah, located in the north and west of the country, respectively, offer an authentic culinary experience that is sure to delight any food enthusiast.

From mouthwatering local specialties to vibrant food markets and street foods, these cities have a rich gastronomic heritage waiting to be explored.

Rasht and Kermanshah, which are members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), have been selected as the entity's Creative Cities of Gastronomy, Mehr reported on Wednesday.



a humid climate and fertile soil, the city is blessed with an abundance of fresh produce. As a result, Rasht's cuisine is heavily centered around vibrant vegetables, fragrant herbs, and succulent meats.

Being situated at the crossroads of trade routes, Kermanshah is a city known for its diverse and influential gastronomic culture. Kermanshah's culinary scene is a delightful fusion of Persian, Kurdish, and Iraqi flavors.

Experts believe that food tourism has become one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism and, at the same time, has naturally positioned itself as an element of diversification of tourism with a high impact on the promotion of sustainable development at the regional and local levels.

In 2020, Iran joined an online campaign launched by the World Tourism Organization to promote gastronomy as an essential part of tourism. Iranian cuisine, usually dominated by fragrant herbs, varies from region to region. It principally accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

It was the rise of budget air travel in the 1990s that introduced the idea of quick, cheap trips that could fit into a weekend and wiped out Europe's night trains, which were largely considered unprofitable.

In the interim, air travel has become more onerous. The 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 dramatically increased the demands of airport security around the world, along with wait times in airports for travelers.

"Former head of SNCF Guillaume Pepy said that in the years after 9/11 the magic three hours, which is the journey time by rail at which you can compete head-to-head with air, had become four or even five hours," Smith says.

An hour-and-a-half flight between Paris and Nice, for example, was no longer much quicker or more convenient than a five-and-a-half-hour journey by rail, especially factoring in the city-central location of train stations and generous luggage allowance on trains.

Twenty years on, Smith says, "trains can now have power sockets and Wi-Fi so you can work on them for business travel, and if you're looking at leisure travelers who are not rushed, they're willing to travel even further".

That's not to say long-distance train travel in Europe is always straightforward. Crossing one or more international borders by train can mean booking via multiple different national rail providers, and accepting that individual insurance coverage applies to each leg of the journey.

Routes and pricing are often defined by local markets, says Jon Worth, who runs the Cross Border Rail project investigating train links between European countries.

"The railway industry in Europe is still heavily national, and they think predominantly about the services they will run in their own national markets," he says.

(Source: France24)



From Rasht's herb-infused stews and vibrant food markets to Kermanshah's fusion of Persian, Kurdish, and Iraqi flavors, these cities epitomize the rich culinary heritage of Iran.

Nestled in the heart of the picturesque Gilan province, Rasht is renowned as an ultimate gastronomic destination in Iran. Boasting

## 'Fed up with airports': long-distance trains take on air travel in Europe

New long-distance train connections are providing an alternative to air travel between European countries, and demand for this environmentally friendly mode of transport is soaring. But there is still plenty of room for improvement on the tracks.

The Paris-Vienna night train has sold 70 percent of all available tickets since it launched in December 2021 – practically a full house for each of its three weekly return runs.

The Nightjet service, run by Austrian national provider OBB, pulls out from Paris' Gare de l'Est at 7:30 pm and arrives in the Austrian capital Vienna at 10 am the following morning, with the cheapest tickets starting at just €29.90.

It is one of many new lines that have opened across Europe reconnecting major cities with direct train routes – and more are on the horizon.

Italian provider Trenitalia hopes to launch a direct Paris-Madrid line by the end of 2024, following what it describes as the "incredible" success of its lines connecting Paris, Lyon, Turin and Milan that were launched in 2021.

A sleeper train between Paris and Berlin is scheduled to start running at the end of 2023, along with a new high-speed connection between the two capitals launching in 2024 that will reduce the current 10-hour journey time down to seven.

Interest in long-distance rail travel has been growing steadily for the past eight years, says rail expert Mark Smith, the owner of the train travel website seat61.com. Now, he says, growing numbers of train travelers have two main motivations.

"They're fed up with the airport and airline experience, and they want to cut their carbon footprint," Smith says.

The environmental arguments for train travel are compelling. A two-hour flight from Paris to Vienna results in 419.6kg of carbon emissions, compared with 41.5kg when traveling on the Nightjet, according to OBB calculations.

But there is a lack of political action to prioritize the eco-friendly mode of transport. Although a French law introduced in May banned short-haul flights on environmental grounds if there was a rail alternative that took less than two hours, the law had so many loopholes that only three routes

# Iran is hoping to win UNESCO recognition for Tus

TEHRAN – Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry is hoping to win UNESCO recognition for Tus, an ancient city in northeast Iran where the illustrious Persian poet Ferdowsi is laid to rest.

"The global registration of Tus [on UNESCO World Heritage list] is one of our priorities in the tourism ministry," the deputy tourism minister said on August 13.

In that regard, the ministry in close collaboration with local entities will form a special council to pursue the implementation of urban plans in Tus and its [possible] registration as a World Heritage, Ali Darabi said.

Last year, the official publicized efforts were underway to formulate comprehensive plans to help revive the previous spender of the ancient town through the close collaboration of local officials and experts. "We will take a big step for the global registration of the historical city of Tus and Ferdowsi's mausoleum... Of course, some preparations have been made, and we must carry out field measures," Darabi stated.

"We are determined to take a big step for the global registration of



Tus," Darabi underlined.

Located near the provincial capital of Mashhad, which is one of the top tourist attractions of the country, Tus has been the birthplace of some important cultural and scientific Iranian figures in the past centuries.

The city was captured by Alexander the Great in c. 330 BC and it was destroyed once during

the Mongol invasion, and again by the Timurids, and many of its people were killed.

Tus is famed as a cultural hub and is home to many national figures. Ferdowsi is a world-renowned poet whose mythical poems are translated into various languages. Many Iranians regard Ferdowsi as the greatest of their poets. Down through the centuries, they have continued to

read and listen to recitations from his masterwork, the Shahnameh.

Al-Ghazali was another figure who emerged from that area. He was a theologian, jurist, philosopher, and mystic. Other notable residents of Tus include the early polymath Jabir ibn Hayyan, poet Asadi Tusi; polymath Nasser al-Din Tusi and the prominent Islamic scholar Abu Jafar Tusi.

## Unlock healing power of water: Sarein emerges as Iran's premier mineral spa destination

TEHRAN – Health tourism, which includes many forms of alternative treatment, has grown in popularity in recent years.

If you are a devoted fan of natural hot springs, Sarein may be your next destination.

There are more than ten mineral spas in and around the city which has become one of the fastest-growing attractions today.

Situated in Ardabil province, northwestern Iran, the mountainous town stands out as a remarkable destination for health tourism, specifically for those seeking water therapy through natural mineral hot springs.

These springs have been formed by geothermal activities, resulting in hot water enriched with various minerals such as sulfur, calcium, and magnesium.

Travelers can immerse themselves in the therapeutic benefits of water therapy while simultaneously indulging in the rich cultural heritage of Iran.

Here is some of the most famed spas situated in Sarein county:

Sabalan Hydrotherapy Complex, which is said to be the largest hot water complex in Iran and West Asia. It offers many facilities and has two separate floors for men and women, providing services at the same time.

Sarein hot springs, all of which are of mineral origin, are the highlight of the ancient town.

Dareh Lar Soui hydrotherapy complex is recommended for the treatment of diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, symptoms of neurological diseases, lumbar disc, skin diseases, and discomfort associated with going to this hot water.

Gamish-goli mineral hot water pool that is believed to be one of the oldest of its kind in Iran.

Traveling to Sarein would be quite different in each season, yet the best time to travel to Sarein and see its attractions is in the last days

of spring and summer. If you do not have a problem with the cold weather, you can travel to this area during autumn or early winter and enjoy hot springs in this season.

Sarein is located 621 km away from Tehran, which takes between seven to eight and a half hours of driving. However, it should be noted that the distance from Sarein to Ardabil is 31 km.

Apart from the spa experience, Ardabil offers several additional attractions to enhance the visitors' experience. These include exploring historical sites such as the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, visiting the beautiful Shorabil Lake, and enjoying delicious local cuisine.

Practiced for millennia, water therapy occupies a prominent place, providing therapeutic benefits through natural mineral hot springs. It is believed that the mineral content in these springs offers significant health advantages, including pain relief, improved circulation, and skin rejuvenation.

## Qom Tazieh performances honor legacy of third Shia Imam

TEHRAN—Every evening during the lunar month of Muharram, local communities in Qom organize Tazieh theatrical performances to cherish the memory of the Imam Hussain (AS) through that UNESCO-registered cultural heritage.

The passion plays start at 8:30 pm in Pardisan neighborhood of the central Iranian city to remind timeless lessons of courage, and sacrifice from the third Shia Imam, a grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was martyred in the tragic Battle of Karbala in 680 CE, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

Registered on UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2010, Tazieh



is a kind of drama that recounts the brave war and martyrdom of the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and other incidents that occurred on the Day of Ashura.

Each performance typically has the four components of poetry, music, song, and motion. Performers are always male, and female roles are played by men. Tazieh is usually accompanied by radifs of Iranian music such as Mahur, Chargah, and Shur.

Iran's second holiest city after Mashhad, Qom, is home to the holy shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA), several major seminaries, madrasas and other destinations for sightseers and nature lovers.

## Jakarta air pollution may cast a shadow over sports tourism

As Greater Jakarta struggles to curb its perennial air pollution, the Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry has called for a swift solution to combat the risk that upcoming sports events in the capital will face a slump in interest, particularly as the FIBA Basketball World Cup draws near.

Over the past few weeks, residents of the capital and its satellite cities have bemoaned the worsening air quality, as Jakarta, notorious for its traffic congestion and overly packed neighborhoods, has topped Swiss company IQAir's ranking of the world's most polluted major cities for almost a week since Aug. 7.

To this end, Tourism Minister Sandiaga Uno warned that Jakarta's pollution, aside from posing obvious health risks to local residents, could also threaten the success of upcoming sports events.

"In terms of tourism, there have already been a couple of events that have been impacted by [Jakarta's air pollution]," Sandiaga said at the Presidential Palace after a meeting convened by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo on Monday to discuss strategies to tackle pollution, Kompas.com reported.

Sandiaga cited a recent international marathon held in the Greater Jakarta area, whose organizers had complained of the poor air quality, as one example of how Jakarta's abysmal pollution is affecting sports tourism. He did not specify the name of the event or its organizer.

A potential slump in sports tourism is a particular concern for the budding sector, particularly as Jakarta will soon co-host world basketball's premier tournament, the FIBA basketball championship, alongside the Philippines and Japan.

Jakarta is set to host some of the group stage matches at the newly-built Indonesia Arena at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium from Aug. 25 until Sept. 3.

Sandiaga's office has been preparing vacation packages for those wanting to watch the two upcoming championships in Indonesia, in a bid to lure domestic and foreign tourists to the tournaments.

Sandiaga went on to say on Monday that if authorities fail to address Jakarta's pollution in a timely manner, more sports event organizers might start to reconsider holding their events in Jakarta.

"This will ultimately lead to a decrease in interest in traveling [to Indonesia], especially [to] the Greater Jakarta area," he added.

(Source: Asia News Network)

# Dena biosphere reserve, a significant ecosystem



TEHRAN – Dena biosphere reserve, located in the Central Zagros Mountains of Iran, is home to a vast range of plant species and several endangered and endemic mammal species.

Dena Biosphere Reserve with a general slope of more than 60 percent, where changes in temperature are most common, a fall of temperature by -25 C in winter is not far from reality. Snow is common throughout the ranges in that season and some higher peaks remain snow-covered throughout the year.

Mount Dena, with an 80 km length and 15 km average width, is situated on the boundary of the Isfahan, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari provinces of Iran.

Mount Dena has more than 40 peaks higher than 4,000 meters. With an elevation of 4,409 meters above sea level, Qash-Mastan is the highest peak in the Dena Range and in the Zagros Mountains in general. Another known peak in this range is Hose-Daal close to the city of Sisakht, 30 km to the north of Yasuj.

The region contains a globally significant ecosystem, species, and genetic biodiversity. The area is characterized by extreme topographical and climatic conditions, which have led to an eye-catching diversity of ecosystems and habitats over a small geographical area, according to the UNESCO website.

Dena is home to a vast range of plant species and several endangered and endemic mammal

species. Oak species dominate the highlands, while pistachio and almond are common at lower elevations. Also, hackberry, walnut, and pear trees are scattered throughout this eco-region.

A variety of animal life, such as brown bears, eagles, wolves, various wild cats including caracals, lynxes, and leopards, and wild goat have long made their homes in the region. On the other hand, many large rivers, including the Karun, Dez, and Karkheh originate from the area, flowing into the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea. Scenic waterfalls, pools, and lakes add beauty to the mountainous landscape.

Dena is situated on the boundary of three different provinces in the west of Iran and in 2006 the number of residents was estimat-

ed as 27,197 individuals, among which 4,070 individuals live in the northern part and 23,127 in the southern part of the reserve. Dena is under the supervision of Kohkeloyeh-Boyerahmad province.

Three different zones (Core, Buffer, Transition zone) are situated at the periphery of Sisakht (Pataveh portion), Boyerahmad (Central portion), and Semirum (Padena portion) townships. Notably, the Dena Biosphere Reserve also served as one of the world's earliest cultural habitats for both plant and livestock domestication as of 10,000 years ago. Till now the vast majority of people practice a nomadic lifestyle.

The region contains a globally significant ecosystem, species, and genetic biodiversity.

The cultural diversity of the local communities, including the nomad communities are manifested by their languages, traditional production activities, including herding and hunting, food products, dresses, festivals, dances and weaving, and other crafts including their knowledge about seasonal and long routes of migration for their livestock.

## Normal rainfall, above-normal temperature forecast for autumn

TEHRAN – The meteorological organization has predicted normal rainfall and more-than-normal temperature for the country in the autumn of this year.

Normal and even more than normal rainfall is predicted for the autumn, Sahar Tajbakhsh, the head of the organization, said.

"Taking into account the trend of greenhouse gas production in the world, we can expect an increase in temperature compared to the normal level," she added, ISNA reported.

The rise in temperature also occurred during the past year, but due to the natural heat in the summer, the heat was felt more, the official noted.

The national center for drought and crisis management has predicted precipitation in the autumn of this year will be at normal levels.

The changes that are happening in the large-scale atmospheric indicators forecast

that precipitations in autumn will start on time and will be normal with a high probability, ISNA quoted Ahad Vazifeh, the head of the national center for drought and crisis management, as saying on June 11.

In summer, there will be not much rainfall in the country and less than 10 percent of the annual rainfall occur in this season, he added.

Iran has a dry and semi-arid climate and has an annual rainfall of 250 mm, which is about one-third of the global average.

The average rainfall of the country has been decreasing over time so the average rainfall of the country for 53 years was about 250 mm, but the average of the last 13 years has decreased to 232 mm.

In May, the national center for drought and crisis management forecasted the summer this year will be warmer than normal in the country.

In the northern and eastern provinces of



the country, the rainfall is insufficient, and even the relatively normal rainfall of the remaining days of the current water year cannot compensate for the lack of rainfall.

The month of Ordibehesht (April 21-May 21) is the most important period in the spring season to receive rainfall in the country and is very important.

"For example, in the month of Farvardin (March 21-April 20), usually 35 millimeters of rain is recorded in the country, but in Ordibehesht, the rainfall amounts to about 20 mm. So, the rainfall in Ordibehesht is almost twice as much as in Farvardin."

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## \$22m earmarked for equipping technical vocational schools

A total budget of 900 billion rials (nearly \$22 million) has been requested to develop and equip technical-vocational high schools across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2019), Mohsen Hosseini, an official with the Ministry of Education has announced.

Describing some of the programs and priorities of the technical and vocational training organization affiliated to the Ministry, Hosseini pointed to improvement of technical and vocational training plans as the Ministry's main priority.

Competency-based education and assessment is among the most important programs of the technical and vocational organization, which must be well implemented in all career and technical education high school, he added, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

## تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور

مدیرکل فنی و حرفه‌ای دفتر متوسطه وزارت آموزش و پرورش از تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور در سال جاری خبر داد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، سیدمحسن حسینی مقدم در دیدار با مدیران هنرستان‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای شهر شیراز و برخی از مناطق استان فارس با تشریح برخی از برنامه‌ها و اولویت‌های وزارت آموزش و پرورش در بخش فنی و حرفه‌ای، گفت: کیفیت‌بخشی برنامه‌های دفتر فنی و حرفه‌ای اولویت اصلی آموزش و پرورش است.

حسینی مقدم اظهار کرد: آموزش و ارزشیابی مبتنی بر شایستگی از مهمترین برنامه‌هایی است که در آموزش‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای دنبال می‌شود و باید این شیوه آموزش به خوبی مراقبت شده و در همه هنرستان‌ها اجرا شود.

## Women from the Leader's point of view-27

### Islam regards women as dignified humans



From Page 1 ▶ Considering the fact that before the advent of Islam the pagan Arabs used to bury their female children alive, make women dance naked in the vicinity of the Ka'ba during their annual fairs, and treat women as mere chattels and objects of sexual pleasure possessing no rights or position whatsoever, these teachings of the Noble Qur'an were revolutionary.

With the advent of Islam, the human dignity of women was restored and the issues of women as half of the society population were paid attention. Islam forbade burying female children alive and included respect for women among its teachings.

Regarding the Islamic view of women, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in one of his speeches said, "Islam regards women as dignified humans. Men and women share the same characteristic of being human. A human is a human before being a man or a woman. People are equal as far as human nature is concerned: this is the Islamic view. Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed certain physical traits on men and women. Both men and women play a role in creation, in the growth and transcendence of humanity, and in the course of history, but the role of women is more important than that of men." (May 11, 2013)

Islam, as the revivalist of women's rights, addressed the issue of women's rights thirteen centuries ago and has taken great steps in the direction of her human rights.

Islam raised awareness and protested against this cruel attitude and taught that the whole life revolves around both man and woman. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provided guidance and teachings regarding the most ignored gender [the woman] as no champion of woman's rights can promote this cause with such zeal and zest. The woman is respectable whether she is in Western or Islamic civilization.

"The Islamic view of women brings about dignity, honor, growth and an independent identity for women: this is our assertion, and we can prove it with extremely compelling evidence. In an Islamic environment, a woman achieves scholarly growth; she achieves personal growth; she achieves ethical growth; she achieves political growth; she

becomes a pioneer of the most essential social issues: yet, she remains a woman. Being a woman is an advantage for any human: a source of pride. Isolating women from much-needed feminine environments and characteristics will not bring about a feeling of honor for most women," Ayatollah Khamenei said. (Jul 11, 2012)

Unlike other religions, which regarded women as being possessed of inherent sin and wickedness and men as being possessed of inherent virtue and nobility, Islam regards men and women as being of the same essence created from a single soul.

With the advent of Islam, the human dignity of women was restored.

The Prophet of Islam said, "Women are the twin halves of men." The Qur'an emphasizes the essential unity of men and women in a most beautiful simile: They (your wives) are your garment and you are a garment for them. (Quran 2:187)

"In the Islamic discourse, respect towards women and the characteristics, dignity and delicacy of women should be highlighted. By delicacy, I do not only mean physical delicacy. As well as physical delicacy, I mean the delicacy of women's psychological and intellectual structure and also the delicacy of their responsibilities. It is only the delicate and gentle fingers of the mother which can separate the extremely thin nerve fibers of a child's nervous system from one another so that he will not have any emotional complexes or problems. Nobody else can do this. That is to say, nobody else except for a woman can do this. This is a feminine task. A number of tasks require such delicacy that one wonders how the divine will has bestowed such a great capability and such delicacy on women," the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said. (May 11, 2013)



## Bakhtiari nomads in Lorestan

The Bakhtiari nomads, in the southwestern Lorestan province, migrate in the spring from winter quarters (qeshlaq) to summer quarters (yaylaq). They settle in the highlands of Zagros Mountain.



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## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Most of those who lose their wisdom, do so because of being dazzled by greed, and shutting their eyes against fact.*

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:08 Evening: 19:11 Dawn: 3:53 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:25 (tomorrow)

## Iranian calligraphy (khattati, khoshnevisi)

### Part 1

#### Introduction

The writing system in use in Persia since early Islamic times grew out of the Arabic alphabet.

Comparison of some of the scripts that developed on Persian ground, particularly Persian-style Kufic, with the Pahlavi and Avestan scripts reveals a number of similarities between them, and this has led certain modern researchers to surmise that the Persians, when they adopted the Arabic writing system, may have made changes in the letter shapes and style of writing under the influence of their old national scripts and inherited tastes.

Distinctive Persian features appear mainly in the taliq, shekasta-taliq, nastaliq, and shekasta nastaliq scripts.

#### I. The beginnings

The Arabic script was derived from the Nabatean and Syriac scripts current in the Hawran district of Syria and the Mesopotamian city of Hira respectively; from the former derived the Arabic naskhi script and from the latter the Kufic (also called Hiri) script.

After the establishment of Islam Arabic naskh was used mainly for correspondence and documents and Kufic for copies of the Koran and later also for inscriptions on stone and on coins.

The development of the Arabic alphabet resulted in a number of identically shaped letters, which at first there was no means of distinguishing, but in the second half of the 7th century distinguishing points and other marks (pointings) began to be commonly used.

At the same time the short vowel signs called haraka (plur. harakat: fatha for short a, zamma for short u, and kasra for short i) and other diacritical marks were invented. Almost a century passed before these devices were perfected.

Ebn Moqla (Abu Ali Mohammad ibn Ali Farsi, 885-86 to 940): During the late Omayyad and early Abbasid periods the use of written Arabic spread to Egypt, North Africa, and Persia, and new styles of writing were developed from naskh and Kufic; however, around the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries, Ebn Moqla, a vizier in the service of the caliph al-Moqtader, and his brother Abu Abdullah Hasan (d. 949-50) put a stop to the proliferation of different styles.

They selected fourteen styles and by improving the pens used, by defining the geometric shapes of the letters, and by setting down the 12 essential rules of calligraphy they brought the art under a measure of discipline.

In their system the basic components of handwriting were straightness (sat'h) and roundness (dawr).

Ebn Moqla's rules of calligraphy, set forth in his Resalat al-khatt wal-qalam, fell into two categories: the first category was good shaping (hosn-e tashkil, which concerned relative sizes, roundness and straightness, and tallness and shortness of letters,

thinness or thickness of strokes, vertical, horizontal, and oblique straightness, etc., the two basic principles being respect for the elements (osul) and the proportions (nesba).

The second category was good layout (hosn-e waz'), which concerned ligatures of joinable letters, positions of detached letters, gaps between words tarz-e mojavarat), spaces between lines (nezam), elongations (madd) to equalize margins, etc., the two basic principles being composition (tarkib) and seating (korsi).

After Ebn Moqla other calligraphers gradually elaborated these principles and formulated them in eight, twelve, or more rules.

Ebn al-Bawwab (Abul-Hasan Ali ibn Helal Baghdadi, d. 1022-23): After Ebn Moqla, Ebn al-Bawwab added some new rules to the twelve traditional ones, paying special attention to nib cutting and ink selection; improved the thulth (thuluth), naskh, and reqa' scripts; and initiated the practice of measuring letters in points to set standards for the heights of tall letters (e.g., alef, laam), the length of an elongation in a particular context, or the size of a semicircle (e.g., of cf. qaf, laam, nun).

Today calligraphy teachers usually make these points hollow to avoid confusion with the pointings, but "half-points" are written as an Arabic zero (= a European full stop).

Yaqut Mosta'semi (Jamal ad-Din Abul-Majid; d. 1296-97 or 1298-99). Ebn al-Bawwab trained a large number of pupils, and during the next two centuries calligraphy flourished.

The next great master to appear was Yaqut Mosta'semi, who picked six scripts (thulth, naskh, rayhan, mohaqqaq, tawqi', reqa') to improve and make more beautiful.

These six, known as the setta-ye yaquti and as the khotut-e osul gradually supplanted all the others except Kufic.

#### II. Scripts

Since an adequate discussion of scripts and calligraphy is impossible without some knowledge of the rules established by Ebn Moqla and his followers, they are briefly summarized here in the form of general guidelines derived from Ebn Moqla's four basic principles of respect for the elements (osul), proportions (nesbat), composition (tarkib), and seating (korsi).

1. "Respect for the elements" means giving all the letters of the alphabet proper degrees of "boldness" (quwa/qowwa) or "faintness" (za'f) and proper shape.

Boldness is obtained by pressing the whole of the tip of the nib as hard as possible on the paper; it is required in the middle and end parts of elongations, in the middle parts of semicircular final flourishes, and on the tops of daal, faa, qaf, waw, etc.

Faintness is obtained by using the corner or part of the tip of the nib. It is required in the starts and middle parts of most letters and in the end parts of certain letters which ought to be made thin.

Source: *Encyclopedia Iranica*  
To be continued

# 25th International Storytelling Festival to be held in December

TEHRAN – The 25th International Storytelling Festival will be held in December in the Iranian capital of Tehran.

According to Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults – Kanoon, the festival will be held in four sections including "Modern and Classic", "Traditional and Ritual", "Sign Language" and "90 Seconds" in order to promote the capacity of storytelling in society as a comprehensive educational approach.

The Classic section includes ancient times, traditional, religious, and heroic stories, which are performed by the storyteller in the usual storytelling manner.

The Modern section includes stories that are creatively performed and written by the storyteller using images and other creative tools.

In the Traditional and Ritual section, the traditional and religious stories will be narrated through Naqqali [Iranian dramatic story-telling] and Pardeh khani (literally means reading off the screen/curtain).



In Sign Language section, the storyteller tells the story in Persian sign language.

In 90 Seconds section, storytellers narrate a part of their life and family through a 90-second video.

The special awards of the festival include the Special Award for the Best Story with the theme of General Qassem Soleimani and the Special Award for the Best Story with theme of smile.

Also, in this edition of the festival, the "Unique Prize" of the festival will be awarded to Iranian and international participants chosen by the judges.

Ten narrators from across the world and fifteen Iranian narrators attended the 24th edition of the International Storytelling Festival.

In the last edition of the festival, Colombian narrator Mauricio Patino Acevedo took first place for recounting the fairy tale "The Wise Prince".

Susan Hayati for "Karim and Master Karim" and Shadi Pakzad for "Very, Very Seriously", both from Iran, won the award for second and third places respectively.

Malaysian storyteller Nor Azhar Ishak, a major competitor of the previous editions of the festival, won an honorable mention for his story "A Pangolin Story".

## Iran-Japan Love and Peace Film Festival held in Hiroshima



From Page 1 ▶ 'Walnut Tree' is a 2020 Iranian biographical war drama film. It revolves around the Chemical bombing of Sardasht in 1987. The film screened for the first time at the 38th Fajr Film Festival and received 11 nominations. Mahdavian won a Crystal Simorgh for Best Director and Maadi won the Crystal Simorgh for Best Actor for his performance.

'The Miracle of Bonasan' is the story of a genie that has to compose a melody with help from four

humans. The idea is to create a human miracle and symphony, or he would be expelled from the Solar System for eternity.

'The Situation of Mehdi' is a 2022 Iranian biographical war drama film about Mehdi Bakery, an Iranian war hero in the Iran-Iraq war. The film screened for the first time at the 40th Fajr Film Festival where it won five awards and earned nine nominations.

Parviz Parastui (actor), Mohammad Hossein Mahdavian (director and actor), Hadi Hejazifar (director and actor), Malek Siraj (actor), Ahmad Yousefzadeh (war veteran and writer), Mehrdad Afrasyabi (cinematographer), Adel Memarnia (cinematographer), Mohsen Sharifian (musician) Habib Ahmadzadeh (writer and director), Mohammad Mahdi Dadman (cultural manager), Zeinab Ahmadzadeh (writer) and Bijan Abdulkarimi (writer and university philosophy professor) were Iranian artists who were present in the festival.

On the sidelines of the festival, Iranian artists and war veterans met with the mayor of Hiroshima on the occasion of the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and presented the statue of Iranian martyr Daryagholi Sourani to the mayor.

Mohsen Sharifian, as a musician, also performed some pieces of Iranian music at the event.

The event was held by Hiroshima MOCT and Tehran Peace Museum in collaboration Iranian embassy in Tokyo.

## Meeting to pay tribute to Hushang Ebtehaj on his first death anniversary

TEHRAN – On the occasion of the first anniversary of Hushang Ebtehaj's passing, a meeting will be held in his birthplace, Rasht, on Thursday.

In the session entitled "Sayeh Night", writer and researcher Kamyar Abedi will deliver a speech on "A Look at Hushang Ebtehaj's Situation in Contemporary Poetry" and expert and performer of traditional music Ali Jahandar will talk about Hushang Ebtehaj's place in Iranian traditional music while performing several compositions.

Furthermore, the short film, "A Year without Sayeh" by Iranian documentarian Seifollah Samadian, will be shown at the event.

Last year, Ebtehaj, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Sayeh", died from complications related to old age in his home in Cologne, Germany. He was 94.

Iranian literati consider him the last summit of the few top poets of contemporary Persian literature. He composed in ghazal, the most important Persian lyrical form influenced by the classical Persian tradition. He also produced collections in blank verse, for which

poet Nima Yushij is known.

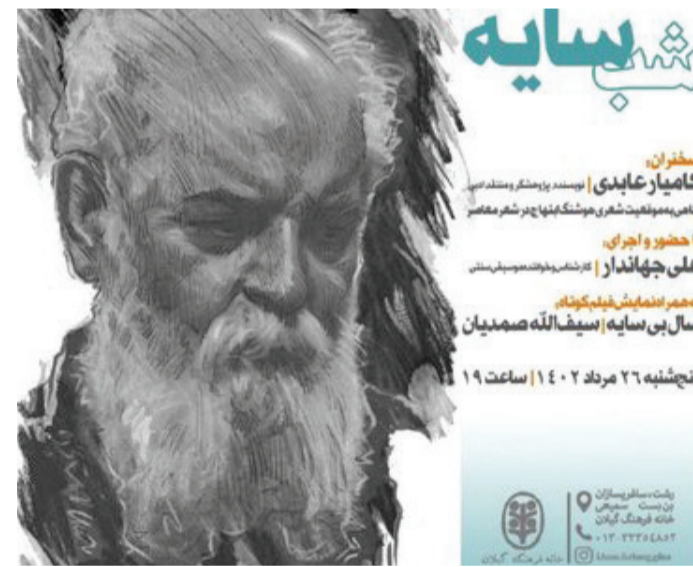
Born in the northern Iranian city of Rasht, Ebtehaj received his primary and high school education in his hometown. Besides pursuing his interest in literature, Ebtehaj also tried his hand at painting, sculpture, music and tailoring, yet only poetry remained his favorite.

He created his debut collection, "Early Songs", when he was at 19. However, he was not satisfied with the collection, which failed to bring him fame as well.

The collection was followed by "Mirage", "Siah Mashq" and several other books, including "Mirror in the Mirror" and "Hafez by Sayeh's Exertion", which presented Ebtehaj as a poet that Persian literature had to take seriously.

In his youth, Ebtehaj joined the communist Tudeh Party, although his ideal was human freedom.

In 1971, his love of poetry and music drew him to Tehran Radio, where he was selected as the director of Golha, a professional program of traditional Persian music. With contributions from vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian and top musicians such



as Mohammadreza Lotfi, Parviz Meshkatian and Hossein Alizadeh, he recorded numerous albums, which are considered a great treasure of Iranian music.

In protest of the killing of peaceful demonstrators in Tehran's Jaleh Square in September 1978 by the Shah's military, Ebtehaj and musicians terminated their collaboration with Golha.

However, they teamed up to

produce some protest songs, which then turned out to become the anthems chanted by the revolutionaries.

"Sepideh" ("Dawn") was one of the songs composed by Lotfi with a poem by Ebtehaj. The song is also known as "O Iran, the House of Hope".

"Hafez by Sayeh's Exertion" represents one of the best editions of the Divan of Hafez corrected by Sayeh in 1993.

## Tehran cinematheque to screen "The Silence of Others"

TEHRAN – The Cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) will screen Spain's 2019 documentary "The Silence of Others", co-directed by Robert Bahar and Almudena Carracedo, on Sunday.

Iranian critic Ehsan Ajarlu will attend the review session, which will be organized after a screening in the Shahnaz Hall of the forum at 5 pm.

"The Silence of Others" reveals the epic struggle of victims of Spain's 40-year dictatorship under General Franco, who continue to seek justice to this day as they organize a groundbreaking international lawsuit and fight a "pact of forgetting" around the crimes they suffered.

Filed over six years, the film offers a cautionary tale about fascism and the dangers of forgetting the past, and speaks powerfully to issues of transitional justice and universal jurisdiction, and explores a country still divided four decades into democracy.

"The Silence of Others" is the second documentary feature by Emmy-winning filmmakers Carracedo and Bahar. It was Executive Produced by Pedro Almodovar, Agustin Almodovar, and Esther Garcia.

The film has won over 40 international prizes, including the 2019 Goya for Best Feature Documentary (Spain's Academy Award), two Emmy Awards (Emmy for Best Documentary

and Outstanding Politics and Government Documentary), Peabody Award, Panorama Audience Award and Peace Film Prize at the Berlinale (Berlin International Film Festival), Grand Jury Award at Sheffield Doc/Fest (UK), Hamptons International Film Festival Social Justice Award (US), Thessaloniki Audience Award (Greece), Encounters Film Festival Documentary Audience Award (South Africa) and #2 Audience Favorite at IDFA (The Netherlands), among many others.

It was nominated for Best European Documentary at the 2018 European Film Awards and was shortlisted for Best Feature Documentary for the 2019 Academy Awards.