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“Victory is certainly yours,” Velayati tells resistance leaders

TEHRAN- Ali Akbar Velayati, the top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has emphasized that the triumph belongs to the resistance forces as the Israeli regime is losing the battles.

Velayati, who counsels Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on foreign matters, congratulated top resistance figures on the occasion of the recent triumphs of the local resistance movement.

He made the comments on Wednesday during separate phone calls with Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Political Bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement of Hamas; Ziad al-Nakhala, secretary-general of the Palestinian resistance movement of Islamic Jihad; and Sheikh Naim Qassem, deputy secretary-general of the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah.

Velayati characterized the victory as the fruit of “unity and solidarity” between the Palestinian organizations and Lebanon’s Hezbollah.

“We are very pleased with your recent victories, and hope for these victories to continue,” he told Haniyeh, describing victories as a source of pride for the Muslim world. ▶ **Page 2**

Military attaches from 37 countries inspect Iran’s military achievements

TEHRAN – On Wednesday military attaches from 37 countries visited an exhibition held by Iran’s Ministry of Defense in Tehran, which was organized to commemorate the country’s Defense Industry Day.

The military officials viewed the latest Iranian ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones as well as other weapons and equipment. They held a meeting with Iran’s Defense Minister Amir Mohammadreza Ashtiani afterwards.

The exhibition was launched Tuesday with the presence of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and will be viewed by different groups throughout the week. On the inauguration day, Iran unveiled its latest high-technology drone, Mohajer 10, which analysts say is capable of successfully targeting Israel.

The visit by foreign military officials comes a day after defense minister Ashtiani said many countries are seeking Iranian drones.

During a televised interview, Ashtiani said Iran has now turned into a global drone power and many states including the U.S. have started to acknowledge that. “Drones play a significant role in combat, and in recent wars, they have proven to be very effective. Today, we have come a long way in terms of drone production, and many countries seek to possess this power. We possess this power, and even the United States acknowledges Iran’s capability in this regard.” ▶ **Page 3**

Tehran, Kuala Lumpur discuss expansion of agricultural ties

TEHRAN – Iranian Agriculture Minister Mohammad-Ali Nikbakht met and held talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Zambry Abdul Kadir in Tehran on Wednesday to explore avenues of cooperation between the two countries in the agricultural sector.

In this meeting, the two sides underlined the need for establishing a joint agricultural committee between Iran and Malaysia to follow up on the implementation of the agreements in this sector, Mehr News Agency reported.

“Malaysia is one of the important countries of Asia and the Islamic world and plays an important role in Iran’s strategic policy in the West Asian region,” Nikbakht said in the meeting. ▶ **Page 4**



Knock the Dollar

President Raisi of Iran attends BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. He plans to address the summiters.

Interview

BRICS does not want to be under U.S. thumb: American professor



By M.A Saki

TEHRAN – An American professor says BRICS does not to be “under the thumb of the U.S.” and believes that de-dollarization is a “crucial goal” that the BRICS countries are seeking.

Hossein Askari, the Iran professor emeritus of international business and international affairs, also tells the Tehran Times that the main motivation of certain countries that are seeking to join BRICS is to “escape from U.S. and European economic and financial hegemony.”

Following is the text of the interview:

Can BRICS emerge as a strong counterweight to the Western economy?

“Yes, but it will take enlightened economic and financial policies over many years if not a few decades, unparalleled political and economic cooperation, ▶ **Page 5**

Report

‘De-dollarization,’ expansion and ‘cold war’ dominate BRICS meeting

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- Russian President Vladimir Putin has told participants of the BRICS Business Forum that the de-dollarization process is irreversible across BRICS nations.

“A balanced, irreversible process of de-dollarization of our economic ties is gaining steam, with efforts undertaken to develop efficient mechanisms of mutual settlements, as well as monetary and financing control. As a result, the share of the dollar in export and import transactions within BRICS is declining as it only equaled 28.7% last year,” Putin said.

The Russian President said that the three-day summit in South Africa’s commercial capital Johannesburg would discuss in detail measures to switch trade between member states away from the U.S. dollar and into national currencies.

“The objective, irreversible process of de-dollarization of our economic ties is gaining momentum,” he said in a video address. ▶ **Page 5**

Op-ed

Release of Iran’s frozen funds is a rightful access not a favor

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN – The Washington Times on August 22 published an article titled “Biden’s dangerous oral nuclear agreement with Iran”.

The article, written by Jed Babbin, a national security and foreign affairs columnist, addresses the prisoner swap agreement between the U.S. and Iran that was reached on August 10 and poses a question about the silence of the White House about the issue.

Babbin added more details about the prisoner swap agreement according to which Iran will be paid a “ransom” of \$6 billion of its frozen funds; instead, Iran will dilute some of its 60-percent-enriched uranium. He labels the deal as a never-should-be-made deal since the diluted uranium can be enriched later. Relying on the European spy agencies, Babbin said, “Iran is increasing its covert acquisition of nuclear technology,” accusing Iran of “preparing the underground nuclear weapon test.”

West has kept its alarm-raising policy regarding Iran’s nuclear program. Western officials and media outlets keep raising concerns about Iran’s peaceful nuclear program. Moreover, the recent prisoner swap has also turned into a hot topic that in the eyes of Western media, especially the Washington Post’s August 22 article, is a great favor to release Iran’s frozen funds in South Korea, calling it a “ransom”.

The proper answer to the article will be provided from various aspects:

First, Babbin calls the release of Iran’s frozen funds “ransom,” which is Iran’s money that has been illegally blocked in other countries for several years due to the U.S. bullying policy. It is the right of every country to have access to its assets. Yet blocking the assets and their repayment under any agreement cannot be considered a ‘favor.’ ▶ **Page 2**



Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin killed in plane crash

A plane reportedly carrying Wagner mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin has crashed in the Tver region northwest of Moscow, Russia’s emergencies ministry said Wednesday.

According to the ministry’s preliminary information, all 10 people on board the private Embraer Legacy jet were killed in the crash, which landed near the village of Kuzhenkino.

Russia’s state aviation agency Rosaviatsia said an individual with Prigozhin’s name was one of the people on board, the state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported.

Iranian filmmaker, literary figure Ebrahim Golestan dies at 101

TEHRAN- UK-based Iranian filmmaker and literary figure Ebrahim Golestan passed away in his home in Sussex, the UK, on Tuesday. He was 101.

Born on October 19, 1922, in Shiraz, Golestan is widely regarded as one of the pioneers of Iranian cinema, having produced some of the most critically acclaimed films in the country’s history.

Golestan started his career in the 1940s as a journalist and later went on to write several plays and novels.

He started his film studio, Golestan Films, in 1957 and produced films such as “A Fire and Wave,” “Marjan and Khara.” He also produced “The House is Black” by the celebrated Iranian poet Forough Farrokhzad in 1962. ▶ **Page 8**

TEHRAN PAPERS

Pentagon's passive reaction to observation of carrier in Hormuz Strait

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

In a note, Kayhan discussed the observation of the American helicopter carrier by the IRGC Navy in the Strait of Hormuz. It wrote: The Pentagon deputy spokesman expressed ignorance about the latest observation of the American terrorist helicopter carrier in the Strait of Hormuz by the IRGC during which the American forces were forced to land their helicopters on the dock of the carrier. The deputy spokesman said that he had not seen the video broadcast by Iran.

"We have already witnessed such actions from Iran. I don't know if it is propaganda or not, but these statements are false and not accurate," Sabrina Singh said.

Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the IRGC Navy, told a gathering of IRGC commanders that "during this observation, the American helicopter carrier attempted to fly helicopters, but after the warning by the Zulfiqar brigade, which is responsible for the control system of the Strait of Hormuz, coupled with the presence of vessels of the IRGC Navy, they were forced to land helicopters on the ship."

Iran: Creating BRICS opportunities for Iran's acting

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper addressed the 15th BRICS summit in South Africa, which started work on Wednesday and will last until Thursday. It said: The biggest discussion that has taken place so far in BRICS is about devising a separate monetary system by sidelining the dollar in international transactions. One of the fundamental policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of foreign policy has been the "policy of negation of sovereignty". Iran has always tried to counter the domination system. Now BRICS is actually a kind of counteraction to this superiority-seeking approach of the West. Therefore, Iran's policy is compatible with BRICS. It can create opportunities for us to act more dynamically in this transition period. Iran's economy has been able to move forward despite sanctions. However, BRICS will create an opportunity to minimize the use of the dollar and pursue alternative currencies. The biggest economic opportunity for Iran lies with this.

Malaysian FM says lashes out at harsh U.S. bans on Iran

TEHRAN - Malaysian Foreign Minister Zambry Abdul Kadir has stated that his nation opposes U.S. sanctions against Iran and that his country will never recognize the repressive measures.

During a meeting with President Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday in Tehran, Zambry also called Iran Malaysia's "very important partner" in the region and the Muslim world.

Additionally, he praised his "positive" encounters with Iranian authorities when visiting Tehran from August 21-22.

In addition, Zambry called for expanding bilateral ties, particularly in the industries of agriculture, health, research, and technology.

For his part, Raisi maintained that creating a long-term framework for strategic collaboration between Iran and Malaysia will "open up new horizons" in the two countries' relations.

He also expressed expectation that the collaboration strategy will result in improved communications and trade.

The top Malaysian diplomat paid his first official visit to Iran since assuming office last December, upon an invitation by his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

In their meeting on Monday, Zambry and Amir Abdollahian stressed the need to strengthen connections between Iran and Malaysia and shared views on several important regional and global issues.

They also agreed to expedite the exchange of prisoners and extradite criminals.

The Iran-Malaysia Joint Economic Com-

Sharh: Saudi desire to start a new phase of relations with Iran

In a commentary, Sharh discussed the resumption of relations between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran and said: The Saudi Council of Cabinet reviewed the measures taken in line with the implementation of the agreement on the resumption of diplomatic relations with Iran, including the exchange of ambassadors between the two capitals. It declared that it is willing to start a new stage of relations with Iran based on common interests and mutual respect. The resumption of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Riyadh has been discussed by the Saudi cabinet, while Hossein Amir Abdollahian, traveled to Saudi Arabia on Thursday and Friday (August 17-18) at the head of a delegation and in response to the invitation of his Saudi counterpart. In the meeting, in addition to discussing regional and international developments and the efforts made in this regard, the two sides discussed relations between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic and future opportunities for cooperation between the two countries. Amir Abdollahian's trip to Saudi Arabia, due to the importance of the close relations between Iran and Riyadh, was widely reflected in the world media, and analysts described his meeting with the Saudi crown prince for the first time as an improvement in the level of relations between Tehran and Riyadh.

Hamshahri: America's top-secret documents for war with Iran on the couch

Mark Meadows, the former chief of staff of the U.S. president, wrote in a draft of his memoir that Trump, in a conversation with an anonymous biographer, left top-secret documents related to a plan for war against Iran on a couch at his golf residence in New Jersey, which contained a four-page report and he had suddenly shown it to other people. Trump admitted that the document was classified and he should not have revealed it. This contradicted his repeated claims to release all private documents. This unexpected issue shows that Trump has been even more careless than previously thought about this secret program; an issue that could be an indescribable importance to America's geopolitical enemies or rival allies of Iran such as Israel and especially Saudi Arabia. Meadows told the prosecutor's office that Trump never told him he had leaked a large number of classified documents.



mission will meet in Tehran soon, the Iranian foreign minister said, adding its subcommittees will also hold regular meetings to address consular, commercial, economic, and cultural matters.

According to Amir Abdollahian, diplomatic attempts were being made to arrange trips for the Malaysian prime minister to Tehran and President Raisi to Kuala Lumpur.

This is the second time the two diplomats had met as they had a word on the sidelines of the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement in Baku in early July.

Iran pushes Malaysia to strengthen financial, commercial relations

In a meeting with Zambry on Tuesday, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of the Iranian parliament, emphasized the need for Iran and Malaysia to strengthen their financial and commercial connections without heading to harsh and unlawful U.S. sanctions.

Ghalibaf expressed optimism that the newly elected Malaysian parliament will strengthen parliamentary connections with Iran more than it had in the past.

"Victory is certainly yours," Velayati tells resistance leaders

From page 1 ▶ "Whatever effort from the Zionist regime puts into preserving itself is met with defeat, and the regime will eventually be faced with more challenges and frustrations," the Iranian official asserted.

"Victory is undoubtedly yours," he told the Palestinian resistance leader.

When Israel launched its most recent attack on the Gaza Strip in August, it targeted the coastal strip where Hamas and the Islamic Jihad are based.

In a retaliatory move, the resistance front fired almost 1,100 missiles at the occupied territory, forcing the Israeli forces to flee.

Velayati thanked the Islamic Jihad for its soldiers' significant victories in resistance operations in the occupied West Bank while speaking to Nakhala.

"The outcome of the unity be-



tween the Palestinian groups and Hezbollah will be ultimate victory," he told the Islamic Jihad chief.

The Leader's adviser also complimented Qassem on the anniversary of the Hezbollah's defeat of the Israeli forces during Tel Aviv's 33-Day War against Lebanon in 2006.

Hezbollah, in Velayati's opinion,

is "the flag-bearer of struggle in Lebanon and the Muslim world."

The commanders of the resistance expressed appreciation to the Islamic Republic for its stand in favor of the resistance groups operating in the region.

"These victories have been realized on the back of unity and alignment with friendly countries

and nations, especially Iran," the Hamas official said.

"God willing, we will defeat the Zionist regime and what the resistance has done in the West Bank will continue," Haniyeh added.

Nakhala, meanwhile, asserted, "The resistance is making progress and realizing victories every day, and continues down its clear path each day stronger than before."

For his part, Qassem highlighted that the Islamic Republic's policies and the instances of support demonstrated by Ayatollah Khamenei "have undoubtedly had an important role in realizing these victories."

Referring to the Israeli occupation regime, the Lebanese deputy leader said, "God willing, we will be able to free the holy occupied city of al-Quds from this cancerous tumor through steadfastness and resistance."

No need for mediation to mend ties with Iran, Egyptian official says

TEHRAN - Chairman of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs has noted that Cairo does not require mediation to fully reestablish diplomatic ties with Iran.

Speaking with the Arab World Press (AWP) on Tuesday, Mohamed el-Orabi said that Cairo and Tehran are still in communication, but it is not necessary for them to be broadcast.

"It is very simple, it should not become complicated; Tehran-Cairo relations will be fully restored eventually, but Egypt has its reservations," Orabi noted.

The announcement comes amid rumors that the two regional powerhouses are holding behind-the-scenes talks and would soon reopen their respective embassies.

Orabi further noted that Egypt and Iran maintain ongoing diplomatic relations that have not been broken.

But when it comes to the re-establishment of re-

lationships, he said, "determining factors" that are "unique in essence" should be taken into account.

"Iran is an active country in the region, and rapprochement with it is linked to other issues like the status quo in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon," the senior Egyptian official stressed.

He emphasized that while it is challenging to set a specific timetable for the restoration of Egypt-Iran ties, progress might be made if any of the aforementioned concerns were to be resolved.

In late June, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian praised the restoration of diplomatic ties between Tehran and Riyadh and declared that his nation was ready for the same to happen with Egypt and Morocco.

Amir Abdollahian stressed that improving ties with Islamic and regional countries is Iran's top foreign policy aim.

In 1980, Egypt broke diplomatic ties with Tehran

after it welcomed the ousted Pahlavi king and normalized ties with the Israeli apartheid regime.

In June, an Iranian diplomat, Mohammad Hossein Soltanifar, who is the head of the office representing Iran's interests in Egypt, said that Iran is making efforts to raise the level of relations with Egypt to ambassador.

He also noted that improvement in Tehran-Cairo relations would leave a major impact on the region.

"If this convergence takes place and the relations between the two countries improve, we will see a very positive and important impact, firstly on the Iranian-Arab relationship and secondly on the developments in the region, especially Palestine," Soltanifar said.

He went on to add, "Considering the positions and points of view of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this field, we will witness commonalities that can be effective in solving the Palestinian issue."

Release of Iran's frozen funds is not a 'favor'

From page 1 ▶ Second, according to the announcement of the U.S. intelligence assessment published in the Associated Press on July 10, Iran was not developing nuclear weapons and was not pursuing them. Meanwhile, Iranian officials have repeatedly emphasized that the nature of Iran's nuclear program is purely peaceful.

Despite the U.S. intelligence assessment and the Iranian officials' emphasis on the peaceful nature of the country's nuclear program, the Western media outlets kept demonizing Iran's peaceful nuclear program. They have created an atmosphere that Iran may weaponize its nuclear program.

Third, the Westerners rely only on their analyses of Iran's nuclear pro-

gram and do not have any documents or evidence. But the fundamental question is, if Western and American officials are concerned about Iran's peaceful nuclear program, why did they withdraw from the JCPOA? The JCPOA was an agreement that limited Iran's nuclear program to a large extent. Donald Trump, former U.S. President, withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, and Europe did not adhere to its commitments.

After the U.S. pullout in 2018, Europe promised 11 commitments to Iran under INSTEX, which was not implemented. Inaction by the European side prompted former Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif to say "Iran will keep progressing with or without JCOPA."

INSTEX, the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, was a European special-purpose vehicle (SPV) established on January 31, 2019, to facilitate non-USD and non-SWIFT transactions with Iran to avoid breaking U.S. sanctions.

For the Europeans, INSTEX was a prerequisite for implementing their 11 commitments after the U.S. quit the JCPOA. It was supposed to become a mechanism independent of the U.S. sanctions and open the trade route to Iran and Europe, but it defined itself under the U.S. sanctions and practically did nothing.

Fourth, the claim that Iran has failed to comply with the JCPOA agreement directly contradicts the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports, which have proven Iran's adherence. The American officials have not made a claim that Iran is not complying with its JCOPA commitments. Even after Trump's exit from the JCOPA, Iran fully implemented its commitments for one entire year. After that, Iran reduced its commitments but remained adherent to the JCPOA.

In the end, Babbin, the article's author, claims that Biden has had an oral and unwritten agreement with Iran, and then he criticized this illusory agreement. First, such an agreement does not exist, at least for now. Secondly, if such an agreement exists, which U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran have been canceled so far?

Sweden regularly strip searches Hamid Nouri, monitors his calls

TEHRAN - Hamid Nouri's son has asserted that his father has weekly strip searches and is subject to limitations by Swedish officials.

Hamid Nouri is a former Iranian judicial official who has been unlawfully detained in Sweden.

After his father described his experience in a phone call with his family on Tuesday, Majid Nouri made the comments in a post on social media.

"Every once in a while, they give me permission to contact my family with great difficulty, and every time they threaten me not to tell anything to them," the son quoted the father as saying.

Nouri added that the Swedish government only permits him to communicate with his son and has thus far sent two warnings that the calls are monitored.

The 62-year-old Iranian citizen refuted allegations that he is in good condition, asking why legal institutions failed to come to see his situation.

"Let me be in solitary confinement and let

them be happy that I have facilities at my disposal," he said ironically.

He also condemned his 3 years, 9 months, and 20 days of continuous solitary confinement, highlighting the fact that he had no access to amenities. Every week in jail "they strip search me; every time I meet my family or anyone, two or three guards conduct a body search," according to the son.

In a tweet in June, Majid said that "by God's grace and thanks to our friends' prayers as well as political and media pressures, Sweden finally stopped one instance of its inhumane behaviors, and my father was allowed to call after a year."

Nouri was detained and imprisoned upon arriving at Stockholm Airport in November 2019.

He was accused by Swedish authorities of participating in the 1988 murder and torture of the MKO members who fought against Iran along with Saddam Hussein's army.

Officials pursuing release of Iranian journalist nabbed in Kabul

TEHRAN - Iranian officials have launched efforts for an early release of the Tasnim photojournalist, who has been detained by the Taliban.

Mohammad Hossein Velayati was nabbed at Kabul Airport while he was returning to Iran. The Taliban have provided no explanation about his arrest.

Velayati had spent 10 days in the

capital city of Afghanistan, where he had lawfully entered the country.

It is anticipated that the Taliban would move fast to release the photojournalist given the bitter memory that the Taliban killed an Iranian journalist and eight diplomats in Mazar-i-Sharif in August 1998.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the Iranian President's Special Envoy for

Afghanistan, has declared that his nation is committed to working to secure the freedom of the detained journalist.

Kazemi Qomi stated that he had previously spoken with the Iranian embassy in Kabul about bringing up the matter with the local authorities.

"A short while ago, I engaged in discussions with officials in Kabul



A Swedish court sentenced him to life in prison on July 14, 2022.

Nouri was found guilty of what the MKO said were war crimes and crimes against humanity by the court, which has been branded unlawful by Iranian officials.

Back in May, Nouri's lawyers had challenged his trial procedure and how he is being treated in jail, noting the time that the 62-year-old man is being held in solitary confinement is too long and is considered a "world record."

and their intelligence agencies. I was informed that they are actively pursuing this issue, and, God willing, a resolution will be achieved soon," Qomi stated.

Nasser Kanani, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, also emphasized the ministry's steadfast efforts to win the release of the Tasnim photojournalist.

Presence of foreigners causes tensions, Iran top general tells Baku

TEHRAN – General Mohammad Bagheri, the chief of joint staff of Iran's Armed Forces, spoke over the phone with Azerbaijani Defense Minister General Hasanov Zakir Asgar oglu.

In this call, General Bagheri stressed the need to expand bilateral relations and defense and military cooperation.

Referring to the valuable agreements signed between the armed forces of Iran and Azerbaijan in the past, General Bagheri said, "The level of cooperation, communication and interaction between the armed forces of the two countries is progressing in all areas. We believe that the armed forces can become a factor of strengthening, friendship and brotherhood between the two countries."

General Bagheri announced the full readiness of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran to participate in the Joint Military Commission in Baku.

"Creating security and peace in common borders is only possible with empathy and unity between neighboring countries," he said, according to Fars News, adding, "The presence of foreigners in the region will cause tension and conflict."

In this conversation, the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan announced the full readiness of the country's armed forces to improve the level of bilateral military and defense cooperation.



"We always consider the Islamic Republic of Iran as our friendly and close country. We welcome military cooperation in all fields and, God willing, we will be able to host the Iranian delegation at the Joint Military Commission in Baku in the near future," the Azerbaijani defense minister said.

At the end of the conversation, the Azerbaijani minister invited General Bagheri to pay a visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani defense ministry also put out a statement about the call, saying, "The sides exchanged views on the situation and security issues in the region."

"During the conversation, the prospects for the development of military cooperation between the two countries were also discussed," the statement added.

The call, which took place on Tuesday, comes amid tensions in the South Caucasus region between Baku and Yerevan. On Wednesday, the Azerbaijani defense ministry said its forces came under attack from Armenian forces. "On August 23, at about 02:10, the Armenian armed forces units from the positions in the direction of Yukhari Shorzha settlement of the Basarkechar region using small arms subjected to fire the Azerbaijan Army positions stationed in the direction of Zaylik settlement of the Kalbajar region. The Azerbaijan Army Units took retaliatory measures in the mentioned direction," the Azerbaijani defense ministry said in a separate statement.

Iran, Russia envoys meet in Baku
The ambassadors of Iran and Russia to the Republic of Azerbaijan

held a meeting in Baku on Tuesday to exchange views on a number of issues of mutual interest.

The newly-appointed Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan, Mikhail Yevdokimov, met his Iranian counterpart, Seyed Abbas Mousavi, in Baku.

In this meeting, the two sides discussed extensive bilateral relations, trilateral cooperation between Tehran, Baku, and Moscow, and the latest developments in the peace talks between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia, especially the situation of Karabakh.

They also discussed closer cooperation between the five coastal countries of the Caspian Sea in the economic and environmental fields, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

Iran and Russia enjoy close cooperation regarding the South Caucasus region, where tensions running high after the recent war between Baku and Yerevan over the disputed region of Karabakh.

Iran and Russia are also working to stabilize the region and prevent another escalation of tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which remains at loggerheads over border disputes.

In recent months, tensions escalated again between Baku and Yerevan over establishing a land corridor connecting mainland Azerbaijan to the exclave of Nakhchivan. Iran said it won't accept any change to the international borders of the region.

Military attaches from 37 countries inspect Iran's military achievements

Many states including U.S. have started to admit Iran's drone power: defense chief



From Page 1 ▶ "We have various types of drones; one of them is Mohajer 6 which has many capabilities. In drones, flight endurance, the ability to carry equipment and ammunition, operational duration, operational radius, and

maneuverability are very important which have all been taken into account in Iranian ones," added the defense chief.

He said many countries can benefit from Iranian drones as they are small in size and low in cost. They can act as kamikaze drones and hit their target with great precision.

The minister also touched on other Iranian weapons. As for missiles, Ashtiani said Iranian ones are being produced at different ranges in accordance to the different needs of the country's armed forces.

"Missiles are produced in various types and forms in the Ministry of Defense. Our strategic

ballistic missiles move in a semi-orbital trajectory and possess high power, capability, and range. Our cruise missiles can be fired from the ground, air or sea and possess different characteristics," explained the minister.

Ashtiani also listed Iran's defense systems and their capabilities, saying, "We have long-range air defense systems such as Bavar 373 and systems like Navab, Dezful, and Majid which work at lower altitudes."

The minister concluded his remarks by saying Iran will not back down from its goals and that the Defense Ministry will work day and night to improve Iran's armaments.

Iran FM briefs lawmakers on foreign relations

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian along with other foreign ministry officials attended a meeting with the members of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee to brief them on the latest in Iran's foreign policy developments.

Vahid Jalalzadeh, the chairman of the Committee, attended the meeting. Jalalzadeh and other members shared their view on some of the developments related to Iran's foreign relations.

In this meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs briefed the members of the Committee on some developments in foreign relations, including relations with Saudi Arabia, sanctions lifting negotiations, Iran's water share from Afghanistan, economic

diplomacy, relations with Europe and developments in Ukraine.

Ali Bagheri Kani, the deputy foreign minister for political affairs, presented a report on the sanctions removal talks and the unfreezing of Iran's funds, according to a statement by the Irania foreign ministry.

At the end of this meeting, Amir Abdollahian, while appreciating the opinions of the chairman and members of the Committee, emphasized the interaction and cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Parliament.

Iran serious about water rights

Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Committee, said the issue of Iran's water rights was also discussed in the meeting.

He said Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's presidential envoy for Afghanistan, presented a report on the discussions between Iran and Afghanistan about shared waters.

"Kazemi Qomi explained the latest situation of bilateral issues in the relations between the Islamic Republic and Afghanistan, including the follow-up of the Helmand River water share. He said that we are serious in pursuing this matter and the Iranian delegation's visit to Deh Ravod was the implementation of a part of the treaty by the ruling body of Kabul," Amouei quoted Qomi as saying in the meeting.

"Also, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his colleagues explained the actions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support Iranians abroad, holding the Arbaeen walking ceremony, as

well as countermeasures of this ministry to deal with insulting the Holy Quran in European countries," Amouei added, according to Mehr News.

He continued, "Ali Bagheri Kani, the political deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explained the release of Iranian prisoners in the United States and the release of Iran's blocked financial resources in South Korea and the pursuit of sanctions relief."

He concluded, "The members of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee also emphasized the cooperation of the Parliament with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the approval of the 'Bill for the Protection of Iranians Abroad' and appreciated the actions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in securing national interests."

Saudi Arabia looking forward to 'new phase' in ties with Iran: statement

TEHRAN – Saudi Arabia and Iran seem to be moving towards a fast all-out reconciliation as Riyadh expresses hope for a "new phase" of relations with Tehran.

The Saudi Council of Ministers issued a statement on Tuesday affirming their aspiration to improve relations based on shared interests and mutual respect.

"Saudi Arabia's aspiration to start a new phase of relations with Iran, based on common interests and mutual respect between the two countries, and on the steps taken towards implementing the agreement to resume relations between the two countries signed last March," said the statement.

Iran and Saudi Arabia decided to restore diplomatic relations after 7 years, under a China-

brokered deal in March. Saudi Arabia severed ties with Iran in 2016 after a group of Iranian protesters attacked Riyadh's embassy in Tehran in protest of the execution of a prominent Saudi Shiite cleric.

The statement comes after the Iranian foreign minister's trip to the Arab country earlier this month.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian called the trip "a prelude to the meeting of the heads of the two countries", pointing at the Iranian president's future visit to Saudi Arabia. Saudi officials have also been invited to Iran but no dates have yet been specified for the potential visits.

During a joint press conference with Amir Abdollahian, the Saudi foreign minister said the visit will act as "a pivotal platform in the history



of the two countries and the path of regional security."

During his stay, the top Iranian diplomat also met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah to discuss future cooperation opportunities and developments in the regional and international arenas.

SPORTS

Iran into 2023 Asian Volleyball Championship semis

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Pakistan 3-0 (25-18, 25-15, 25-13) in the 22nd Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship on Wednesday.

Iran advanced to the competition's semifinals underway in Urmia, Iran.

Team Melli had defeated Hong Kong 3-0 and Iraq 3-1 in Pool A.

Japan, who are the favorites to win the 2023 edition, are the most decorated team with nine titles.

South Korea and Iran have won the trophy four times each.

Japan are the best Asian team in the FIVB ranking sitting in the fifth place, while Iran are in the 10th place.

Iran blind football fail to advance to 2023 IBSA World Games semis

TEHRAN – Iran blind football team lost to Colombia 2-1 in the 2023 IBSA World Games quarterfinals Tuesday night.

Team Melli will meet Italy on Wednesday in the fifth-place match.

Iran lost to Brazil 1-0 in Group D and were heled to a 1-1 draw by Mexico.

The Persians beat Morocco 1-0 to book a place in the quarterfinals round.

The Games are being held in Birmingham, England from August 18 to 27.

Ghasempour to miss 2023 Worlds in Belgrade

TEHRAN – Kamran Ghasempour will miss the 2023 World Wrestling Championships due to foot injury.

The 92kg freestyler has sustained a groin injury during the training and will not be fit for the world championships.

Amirasli Azarpira will likely replace Ghasempour in the event.

The 2023 World Wrestling Championships, which serve as qualification for the 2024 Olympic Games, will be held from Sept. 16 to 24 in Belgrade, Serbia.

Tractor's hopes dashed by Sharjah: 2023/24 ACL Playoff

TEHRAN – Iran's Tractor lost to Sharjah FC of United Arab Emirates 3-1 in the 2023/24 AFC Champions League playoff on Tuesday.

It was the visitors who struck first in the 25th minute, former AS Roma and FC Barcelona man Miralem Pjanic showing his accuracy with a perfect delivery for Shaheen to thump home past Tractor goalkeeper Hossein Pourhamidi in Tabriz's Yadegar Emam Stadium.

Sharjah doubled their advantage through Osmane Camara in the 84th minute.

Tractor did pull one back two minutes later when Ricardo Alves produced a delightful cross that was headed in by substitute Mehdi Hashemnejad.

Desperate to find the equalizer, Tractor left gaps at the back which Sharjah exploited, earning a penalty kick that was converted by Caio Lucas in the 90th minute for the Emirati side to book their spot in Thursday's group stage draw for the AFC Champions League 2023/24 season.

Jemez praises display but rues missed chances

TEHRAN – Tractor Spanish coach Paco Jemez is pleased with his team's performance against Sharjah but said he is disappointed for missing the chances against the Emirati side.

Tractor suffered a 3-1 loss against Sharjah in Tabriz's Yadegar Emam Stadium and failed to book a place in the 2023-24 AFC Champions League group stage.

"I think we showed a good performance and created several chances against a big team. In my opinion, we lose because we award so many opportunities to our opponents," the Spanish coach said.

"It is regrettable that we lost the match because we played well.

"We will have to work to fix our mistakes. It was individual errors which cost us loss against Sharjah," Jemez added.

Iran's boxing crisis has passed

TEHRAN – Iranian boxing has started a new ear after the Federation elected its members on Tuesday.

Hossein Thori traveled to Spain last year and refused to return to Iran to continue his presidency and the sport suffered a setback.

Rouhollah Hosseini was elected unopposed as president of Iran boxing federation for a four-year term till 2027 in Mid-July and the federation's general assembly was held on Tuesday.

The Federation's general assembly was held and board of directors received the vote of confidence.

Ebrahim Mousavi was elected as vice-president and Golbou Janpour was chosen as the treasurer. Ahmad Mirzaei and Hossein Rahmati were also elected as the provinces' representative and expert, respectively.

Iran confident for 2023 Basketball World Cup: FIBA

TEHRAN – Iran national team are ready to compete at the 2023 FIBA World Cup, the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) reported.

Two wins during the training camp for Iran, one of them being an overtime triumph against Venezuela just before the World Cup, the other an eight-point win over Jordan back in Georgia.

Those two wins are good enough to make them confident when it comes to their duel with Ivory Coast, but they also have Spain and Brazil in Group G, meaning it's an uphill battle to get to the sweet 16.

This is its fourth consecutive World Cup, the closest Team Melli got to top 16 was in 2010, when they finished 19th.

Hakan Demir's side will play the first match against Brazil on August 26 and meet Ivory Coast on August 28 and Spain on August 30 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Disabled climber conquers Europe's highest peak

TEHRAN – Iran's disabled climber has made it to the summit of Elbrus—the highest peak in Europe.

Sajjad Salarvand could climb Mt. Elbrus, which is 5,650 meters high.

Despite being disabled, the 41-year-old athlete conquered the mountain.

Russian Mountaineering Federation has presented the Golden Axe award to the sportsman.

Tehran, Kuala Lumpur discuss expansion of agricultural ties



Iranian Agriculture Minister Mohammad-Ali Nikbakht (R) and Malaysian Foreign Minister Zambry Abdul Kadir

From page 1 ▶ The official pointed to the exchange of high-ranking economic delegations between the two countries as a positive step towards the expansion of mutual cooperation and said that the leader of the two countries have continuously emphasized the need for the expansion of relations between the two sides

especially in the agricultural sector.

Nikbakht further pointed to the 90 percent self-sufficiency of Iran in the food industry and stated: "Iran has been able to achieve good progress in the production of basic goods and important food products in recent years and the country is trying to exchange experiences and technical knowledge with friendly countries."

Mentioning the 34 percent increase in trade between Iran and Malaysia from 2022 onwards, the official said: "It is possible to develop the level of trade between the two countries even further by assessing the needs of the two sides and supplying them."

The Malaysia Foreign Minister for his art considered his trip to Iran as important and said: "meeting with Iranian officials is considered strategic for Malaysia and this trip can facilitate trade and economic relations between the two countries."

Abdul Kadir noted that the expansion of relations with Iran in political, economic and trade areas is a main policy of the Malaysian government, adding that: "Malaysia intends to use Iran's experiences in the food industry to make up for the backwardness in ensuring food security."

Iran's 5-month customs income up 87% y/y

TEHRAN - Iran's customs revenues increased by 87 percent in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) as compared to the same period last year, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Mohammad Rezvaniyar said on Tuesday that his organization's revenues amounted to 610 trillion rials (\$1.25 billion) in the mentioned five months, IRNA reported.

According to the official the surge in customs revenues came despite new import duty exemptions applied to some basic goods like medicine.

The IRICA head said Iran's customs income reached 1.58 quadrillion rials (about \$3.23 billion) in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), making it the third largest source of revenues for the government after oil export and tax.

He also pointed to some details about Iran's non-oil trade performance in the five months to late August, saying the country exported a total of \$18.7 billion worth of commodities over the period, down eight percent year on year.

Rezvaniyar said the main cause of the fall in export revenues this year is the decline in global prices of petrochemical products which account for a bulk of Iranian overseas shipments.



He said imports into Iran, however, increased by 8.7 percent year on year in the said five months to reach \$23.4 billion, adding that cargo transit via Iran had also risen by 2.7 percent in volume terms over the same period.

Iran has increasingly relied on trade income, including customs and transit revenues, as part of a policy introduced in recent years to diversify the economy away from oil.

Iran's foreign trade reached a total of \$113 billion last calendar year with exports hitting a milestone figure of \$53 billion, up 10% from the year before.

Maku Free Zone inks co-op MOU with Iraq's Kurdistan

TEHRAN - The Maku Free Zone in northwestern Iran has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for economic cooperation with Iraq's Kurdistan region, IRIB reported on Wednesday.

The MOU was signed in a meeting between officials from both sides on the sidelines of the Sulaymaniyah International Tourism Exhibition.

The meeting was attended by Hojatollah Abdolmaleki, the secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council and the officials of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah provinces in Kurdistan region.

TEDPIX gains over 8,000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 8,348 points to 1.946 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 6.014 billion securities worth 30.41 trillion rials (about \$6.218 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).

Iranian government has been taking new measures to restore shareholders' trust in the stock market and help the market thrive again.

As reported, the 13th government has always tried to move towards reforming the structure and foundation of the capital market in order to

promote economic justice, transparency, and the true sovereignty of the people over their capital.

In this regard, over the past two years, the government has been following 16 practical and important measures in order to reform the structure of the stock market.

Reducing inflation, changing the fluctuation range of the market to seven percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), helping the Securitas and Stock Exchange Organization (SEO) and the Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry to facilitate obtaining loans by pledging the person's stock portfolio, requiring the stock market companies to pay dividends through Sejam System, and helping investors in the housing market were among the mentioned measures.

Tax income rises over 50% in 5 months on year

TEHRAN - Iran's tax incomes during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) rose 50 percent compared to the same period of time in the previous year, IRNA reported citing the Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) data.

According to the mentioned data, INTA collected 2.16 quadrillion rials (about \$4.41 billion) of taxes during the five-month period of this year.

Based on the said data, over 4.72 quadrillion rials (about \$9.65 billion) of taxes were collected in the previous Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20) which was also 54 percent more than the figure for the preceding year when collected taxes amounted to 3.06 quadrillion (about \$6.25 billion).



As reported, the INTA managed to realize the goals set for the organization in the previous year by 104 percent.

The organization has managed to register more than 2.7 million new taxpayers across the country since the beginning of the current year. INTA had registered four

million new taxpayers in the previous Iranian calendar year.

Iran's tax incomes during the first month of the current Iranian calendar year 1402 (March 21-April 20) rose 49 percent compared to the same month of the previous year.

According to INTA Head Mohammad-Hadi Sobhanian, the organization collected 430 trillion rials (about \$695.3 million) of taxes during the mentioned month, while the figure was 290 trillion rials (about \$593 million) in the same time span of the past year.

Sobhanian noted that of the collected taxes, 190 trillion rials (about \$388 million) was related to direct taxes, and 240 trillion rials (about \$490.8 million) was the share of tax on goods and services.

Iran's steel output up over 4% in first 7 months: WSA

TEHRAN - The latest report by the World Steel Association (WSA) indicates that Iran's steel output rose by 4.1 percent in the first seven months of 2023 as compared to the same period in the previous year.

According to the WSA data, Iran produced 18.1 million tons of crude steel in the mentioned seven months.

Iran was ranked eighth among the world's top steel producers during the first half of 2023, while the country stood in 10th place among the world's biggest steel producers in the first six months of the previous year.

Production of crude steel in Iran reached 16.1 million tons during the mentioned six months, registering a 4.8 percent increase year on year.

The WSA put the crude steel output by the

world's top 64 producers at about 943.9 million tons in the mentioned time span, 1.1 percent less than the figure for the previous year's first half.

Iran's monthly crude steel output stood at 3.2 million tons in June, indicating an increase of 17.4 percent compared to the figure for June 2022. The world's producers managed to produce 158.8 million tons of steel in the said month to register a 0.1-percent drop year on year.

Iran maintained its place as the world's seventh steelmaker in June, according to the WSA report.

The country climbed to seventh place among the world's top steel-producing countries for the first time in May.

The previous report released by the WSA showed that Iran's crude steel output increased 8.8 percent in the mentioned month while the

global average growth rate stood at - 5.1 percent.

Based on the WSA data, Iran produced 3.3 million tons of crude steel in May 2023.

As reported, the Islamic Republic's steel production also registered a 2.2 percent growth in the first five months of 2023 compared to the same period in the previous year.

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

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

Iran names new national representatives to OPEC

TEHRAN - Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has appointed Afshin Javan as Iran's national representative to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Shana reported.

In his new post, Javan will also serve as the director general of the

department for OPEC affairs and relations with energy communities at the Iranian Oil Ministry.

Javan is also a member of the scientific board of the institute for International Energy Studies (IIES).

Afshin Javan was born in 1966 in Tehran and holds a PhD in Oil and Gas

Economics from Allameh Tabataba'i University. From 2015 to 2020, he served as the Chairman of the OPEC Scientific Committee in Vienna and since 2009 he has been a member of the faculty of the Institute for Energy Studies.

Besides, he has held posts the

International Affairs Department of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), the International Affairs Department of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and the Materials and Energy Research Institute affiliated to the University of Science and Technology.

Non-oil goods worth \$624m exported from Iran to India in 4 months

TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$624 million to India during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

As reported, India was the fifth top export destination of Iranian non-oil goods in the mentioned four-month period.

Based on the data previously released by the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the value of Iran's export to India increased by six percent during the first four months of 2023, as compared to the same period of time in 2022.

Iran's export to India stood at \$257 million in January-April 2023, while the figure was \$242 million in January-April 2022.

India's export to Iran fell 29 percent from \$631 million in the first four months of 2022 to \$445 million in the first four months of this year.

Based on the data previously released by the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the value of Iran's export to India increased by 60 percent in 2022 as compared to the preceding year.

The Indian ministry put the worth of Iran's exports to India at \$653 million in 2022, while the figure was \$409 million in 2021.

As reported, petroleum products have been the major goods imported by India from Iran in the said months.

According to the mentioned data, the value of trade between Iran and India reached \$2.5 billion in 2022, rising 48 percent from \$1.693 billion in 2021.

During January-December 2022, India's export to Iran also increased by 44 percent to stand at \$1.847 billion, while the figure was \$1.284 billion in 2021.

Rice was India's major product exported to Iran in the said period during which the country shipped \$1.098 billion worth of rice to the Islamic Republic.

On June 10, the agricultural officials of Iran

and India agreed to form a joint committee for agricultural cooperation between the two countries within the next three months.

As reported, the agreement was reached in a meeting between Iran's Deputy Agriculture Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Borumandi and Secretary of India's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry Manoj Ahuja in New Delhi.

Borumandi, who traveled to New Delhi to hold talks on the agricultural cooperation between Iran and India, met with his Indian counterpart to review the latest status of bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture.

The officials also agreed to hold the first joint working group on agricultural cooperation between the two countries in the near future.

In the meeting, Borumandi stressed Iran's readiness for cooperation in various fields including horticultural products, medicinal plants, combating plant pests, agricultural technologies, exchange of professors and experts, and cooperation between research institutions of the two countries.

He considered the removal of tariff barriers on agricultural trade as a necessity for the future expansion of relations.

Manoj Ahuja, for his part, highlighted the cultural and geographical affinities between the two nations and expressed his country's readiness to develop agricultural relations with Iran.

Welcoming the fields proposed by the Iranian side for cooperation, the Indian official announced that the ban on the exports of kiwi to India, which had been temporarily prohibited since last year due to quarantine considerations, has been lifted.

On June 20, Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) hosted a conference on introducing the opportunities and capacities of presence in the Indian market.

The conference was attended by officials from the two sides including the ambassadors of the two countries, board members of the chambers of commerce of Iran and India, and more than

300 businessmen from both sides, the TPO portal reported.

The TPO Acting Head Mehdi Zeyghami, Iranian Ambassador to India Iraj Elahi, and India's Ambassador to Tehran Rudra Gaurav Shresth were among the speakers at the conference.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the event, Zeyghami pointed out that India is one of the main trade priorities for Iran, saying: "Considering the huge volume of India's trade with the world, Iran has a small share, which should be increased."

"Holding such conferences and workshops along with exchanging trade delegations can lead to the strengthening of business relations between the two countries and ultimately lead to the prosperity of trade," he added.

Referring to the existing obstacles in the way of trade development with India, Zeyghami said: "Strict standards and high tariffs for Iranian agricultural products have caused these products to be smuggled to neighboring countries that have zero tariffs with India and then exported to India, which has caused damage to Iranian businessmen."

Referring to TPO's plan to revive idle trade agreements with other countries, the official said: "Free trade with Eurasia and preferential trade agreement with Indonesia have been concluded, and preferential trade agreements with other countries are being pursued, and we have the same seriousness regarding our preferential trade agreement with India."

Further in the conference, Shresth referred to the history of cultural, political, and commercial relations between Iran and India and said: "We hope that holding such programs will lead to the development of commercial relations between the two countries."

Pointing to the existing obstacles in the way of the expansion of trade relations between India and Iran, he said: "Solutions have been found to overcome the obstacles, especially in financial and banking issues."

'De-dollarization', expansion and 'cold war' dominate BRICS meeting

Putin tells BRICS de-dollarization is 'irreversible'

From page 1 ▶ There has been common ground during the talks to seek alternatives to trading in U.S. dollars; as well as drawing up a framework on Wednesday for admitting new members to the bloc during the plenary session of the BRICS leaders.

In his opening remarks at the BRICS plenary session on Wednesday, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said, "BRICS stands ready to collaborate with all countries that aspire to create a more inclusive international order."

He also pointed out, "The changes that have taken place in BRICS economies over the past decade have done much to transform the shape of the global economy. However, the new wave of protectionism and the subsequent impact of unilateral measures that are incompatible with WTO rules undermine global economic growth and development."

South Africa's foreign minister also said an agreement has been reached on the expansion of BRICS. "We have agreed on the matter of expansion," Naledi Pandor said on Ubuntu Radio, a station run by South Africa's foreign ministry.

"We have a document that we've adopted which sets out guidelines and principles, processes for considering countries that wish to become members of BRICS... That's very positive."

The move paves the way for dozens of interested nations to become members.

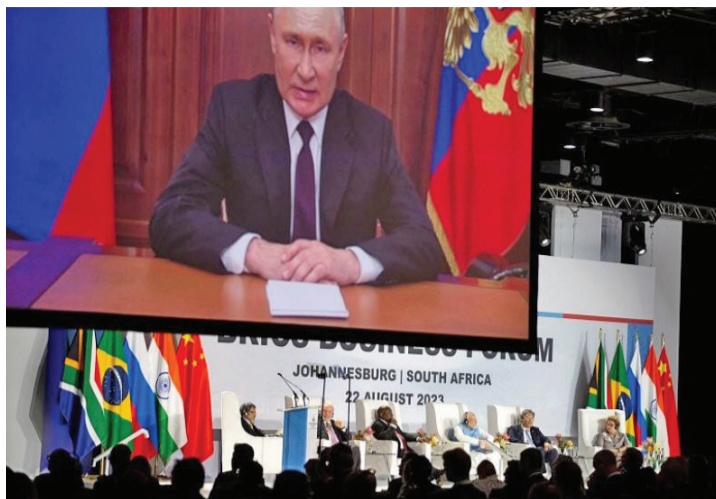
Pandor says the bloc's leaders would make a more detailed announcement on expansion before the summit concludes on Thursday.

Chinese President Xi Jinping also told the plenary meeting that "international rules must be written and upheld jointly by all countries based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter rather than dictated by those with strongest muscles or the loudest of voice...BRICS countries should practice true multilateralism, stick to solidarity and oppose division."

Xi also warned that "the Cold War mentality is still haunting our world, and the geo-political situation is getting tense."

"We should let more countries join the BRICS family to pool wisdom and efforts to make global governance more just and equitable," Xi added.

For his part, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "India fully supports the expansion of BRICS, we welcome moving forward with consensus on this." It was his strongest endorsement yet on BRICS enlargement.



BRICS has focused on boosting economic and trade cooperation between member countries Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa; and is now finalizing ways to expand its members. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva also noted that "it is very important for Argentina to be in BRICS."

Argentina is struggling with debt repayments as part of a \$44 billion loan deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that has resulted in historic inflation and dried-up foreign reserves.

Lula denounced the IMF loans as "suffocating" and raised the possibility of the BRICS bank increasing lending to other countries with a "different criteria" to improve their economies.

Critics of the IMF have echoed Lula's remarks on its loan bailouts to countries whose economies, societies and governments end up suffering from the terms attached to the loans, which force authorities to take austerity measures to meet the IMF's bailout conditions.

As a result of the IMF conditions, economic development slows down, poverty and inflation rise and societies end up more unequal.

President Lula also declared he was in favor of more countries joining the alliance as well as a common currency used by BRICS countries in commercial transactions that would reduce their vulnerabilities.

In his speech at the business forum, he added that new partners would help BRICS increase its relevance on an international scale.

"We want BRICS to be a multilateral institution, not an exclusive club," Lula pointed out.

South Africa said last month that more than 40 other nations had expressed interest in joining the organization. President Putin told the plenary meeting that Russia's special military operation pursued the goal of ending the war in Ukraine

unleashed by a number of Western countries and their satellites.

"Russia has decided to support the people who are fighting for their culture, for their traditions, for their language and for their future. Our actions in Ukraine have only one reason - to put an end to the war that was unleashed by the West and their satellites in Ukraine against the people living in Donbas," Putin said via video link.

Donbas is the eastern part of Ukraine where a deadly conflict between ethnic Russians and the Ukrainian military erupted in 2014.

"We should let more countries join the BRICS family to pool wisdom and efforts to make global governance more just and equitable," Chinese President Xi says.

Calling for "a multipolar world order," he stressed that it was the wish of a number of Western countries to preserve their hegemony in the world that "has led to the grave crisis in Ukraine."

On Tuesday, Xi told the BRICS business forum that China's economy was resilient and that the fundamentals for its long-term growth remained unchanged.

"The Chinese economy has strong resilience, tremendous potential, and great vitality," he said.

At a briefing on the sidelines of the summit, China's top diplomat for Africa highlighted how Beijing is tapping into the African market where there is great potential.

"African integration is already escalating, and many African countries have asked China to consider a shift of our focus,"

said Wu Peng, director-general of China's Department of African Affairs at the Foreign Ministry.

"No matter what happens about the global economy, or Chinese economy, the trend in the relatively midterm or long range, is that Chinese companies are willing to take some risk to go into Africa," Wu added.

All eyes are on this year's economic organization, which is meeting in person for the first time since the COVID outbreak.

Analysts say BRICS has already exceeded the G7 in terms of economic clout and with new members, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Nigeria, Indonesia, and many others expected to join.

Some believe that over the next five years, BRICS will potentially be the only global institution whose economy will matter because of the significance of the countries that are involved.

Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are already important economies. The addition of other countries would make the BRICS market a game changer globally, geo economically and geopolitically as well.

Reports suggest significant development has been achieved on the expansion of BRICS during the Wednesday meeting of the BRICS leaders. Experts believe there are a number of reasons why many countries have signaled their interest in joining the bloc.

Topping that list undoubtedly is the war in Ukraine, which has played a significant role in the shift it has created within geopolitics. Many countries have seen the bullying nature of the West, in particular the United States and other NATO members pressuring other countries to join the war and take sides. Something that is not very pleasing for the international community to watch.

The method and decline of U.S. hegemony over the past 30 years have attracted many states to seek alternative multilateral organizations for fair trade and market practice.

The fair economic practices of BRICS countries in their different respective regions, even if their political views do not see eye to eye on everything, have made the organization successful.

The bloc's annual rotating chair will see next year's BRICS summit hosted by Russia in the southwestern city of Kazan where the country will seek to strengthen the bloc's role and authority under its chairmanship.

The same can be said for other international blocs such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

WORLD HEADLINES

15th BRICS summit kicks off

The much-vaunted 15th BRICS Summit kicked off at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg on Tuesday.

The Summit is held under the theme: "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism" and is expected to last until Thursday.

The term BRIC was coined by Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill in 2001 to describe the startling rise of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

The BRICS powers had their first summit in 2009 in Russia. South Africa joined in 2010.

The Summit brings together heads of state and government from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Also, at least 30 other heads of state and government as well as senior officials from Africa and all across the world expected to attend.

Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the conference virtually.

Iran and Argentina applied to join the BRICS bloc after the summit in Ashgabat in June 2022.

Argentina's President Alberto Fernandez also said at a BRICS+ meeting in Ashgabat that his country wants to become a full member.

Following the approval of Iran as a full-fledged member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a political advisor to the Iranian President says that being a member of BRICS will be the next step.

"Based on the doctrine of neighborhood and convergence, active membership in regional and international organizations is an important part of President Raisi's foreign policy. Full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been successfully finalized. The next step is [being a member of] BRICS," Mohammad Jamshidi said in a tweet.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian told a press conference in Cape Town, South Africa, on June 2, 2023, that BRICS has welcomed Iran's membership.

"Given Iran's geopolitical situation and potential, the main members of BRICS welcomed our country's membership in this group," Amir Abdollahian said after the Friends of BRICS meeting was concluded.

Iran's membership is "seriously considered" by the five countries, he noted.

'Hegemonism not in China's DNA': Xi calls for BRICS expansion

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for an expansion of the BRICS grouping of emerging economies to build a more just and equitable international order, insisting "hegemonism is not in China's DNA".

In a speech delivered on his behalf at the start of BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa on Tuesday, Xi said China had no wish to engage in great power competition or create "bloc confrontation".

"China stands firmly on the right side of history and believes a just cause should be pursued for the common good," Xi said at a business forum, according to remarks delivered by Commerce Minister Wang Wentao.

Xi said BRICS would continue to grow "whatever resistance there may be."

"Right now, changes in the world, in our times, and in history are unfolding in ways like never before, bringing human society to a critical juncture," he said.

At least 26 killed as railway bridge collapses in India

A railway bridge being built in India collapsed on Wednesday killing at least 26 workers and injuring two, police said, as the state-run railway authority opened an investigation.

The accident happened in Sairang town in the northeastern state of Mizoram, its chief minister, Zoramthanga, said on messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Media reported that up to 40 workers were at the site when the bridge collapsed but police said 28 workers were present.

"Rescue workers have been able to recover 13 bodies so far. Efforts are on to recover the remaining bodies," said a state police official who declined to be identified.

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) said in a statement on the messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that the mishap occurred during work on the Bhairbi-Sairang New Line Railway Project.

The NRF said on its website the project will connect Mizoram to the rest of the country, boosting "tourism and socio-economic development".

A "high level enquiry committee" had been set up to investigate, the NRF said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a statement "all possible assistance" was being given to those affected.

BRICS does not want to be under U.S. thumb: American professor

'Countries want to join BRICS to escape from Western economic and financial hegemony'

From page 1 ▶ and as always some luck. Today, the GDP of Western economies, no matter how you measure it using market exchange rates or Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) rates, dwarf those of the BRICS and greatly exceed even an enlarged BRICS as currently envisaged. To catch up, sustained and sound policies are the key. Unfortunately, this has not been the case with the current members of BRICS nor in the proposed members, such as Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Iran. Yes, it is always good to have luck, resurgent and sustained energy prices, high prices for the mineral exports of BRICS, such as rare earth metals, and economic stagnation in Western economies. Also important for the eminence of the dollar is the deep U.S. financial markets and the political and financial stability of the U.S. And most important, cooperation among an enlarged BRICS membership to counter U.S. economic and financial sanctions by defying secondary U.S. sanctions and working together to undermine the international role of the dollar.

Simultaneously, I think that the BRICS should challenge the legality of U.S. economic sanctions in a number of international fora—IMF/IBRD, WTO, International Court of Justice."

Why do many countries, including Iran, Argentina and Saudi Arabia, want to join the bloc?

"Countries want to escape from U.S. and European economic and financial hegemony, whereby the U.S. determines the rules of the game and anyone who opposes it is slapped with debilitating sanctions, the stealth weapon of war in the post-WWII era, while the U.S. benefits from seigniorage associated with the dollar and uses it as the weapon to isolate countries from the international economic and financial system. The BRICS want to change the rules of the game and not be under the thumb of the U.S."

One of the main agendas of BRICS is "de-dollarization". How do you see this move?

"It is a crucial goal. It would topple the U.S. as the captain of international finance and trade and render the system fairer to all. With hoped-for economic and financial benefits to follow. But this will not be easy. The BRICS need to become more dominant in the international economic system—higher GDP, larger role in international trade and investment, a coordinated plan to substitute the renminbi for the dollar in their exports and imports, selling their holdings of U.S. Treasuries, buying each other's sovereign debt and even those of euro-zone countries and opposing U.S. secondary sanctions."

Do you agree with this view that steps



toward de-dollarization are a consequence of Washington's policy, which has been weaponizing its dollar?

"The weaponization of the dollar, supported by financial sanctions that include cutting off countries from SWIFT, is the important impetus for this. Over two decades ago, the euro was supposed to undermine the role of the dollar. It has not because of the size of EU economies, their performance and depth of their financial markets."

In fact, what issues are mostly involved in the de-dollarization move?

"I think we have covered much of this already. Namely, the weaponization of the dollar and the international financial system and primary and secondary economic sanctions. Secondly, is

the untold benefits that the U.S. derives from the international role of the dollar. I must also add that U.S. economic policies affecting the exchange rate of the dollar have significant implications for sovereign international debtors and creditors."

What is your opinion of the New Development Bank (NDB) established by BRICS, especially as it aims to launch an alternative to SWIFT?

"The proposed NDB has little to do with an alternative to SWIFT. NDB is a development bank. SWIFT is the main messaging network through which international payments are facilitated between institutions."

"De-dollarization would topple the U.S. as captain of international finance and trade and render the system fairer to all. But this will not be easy."

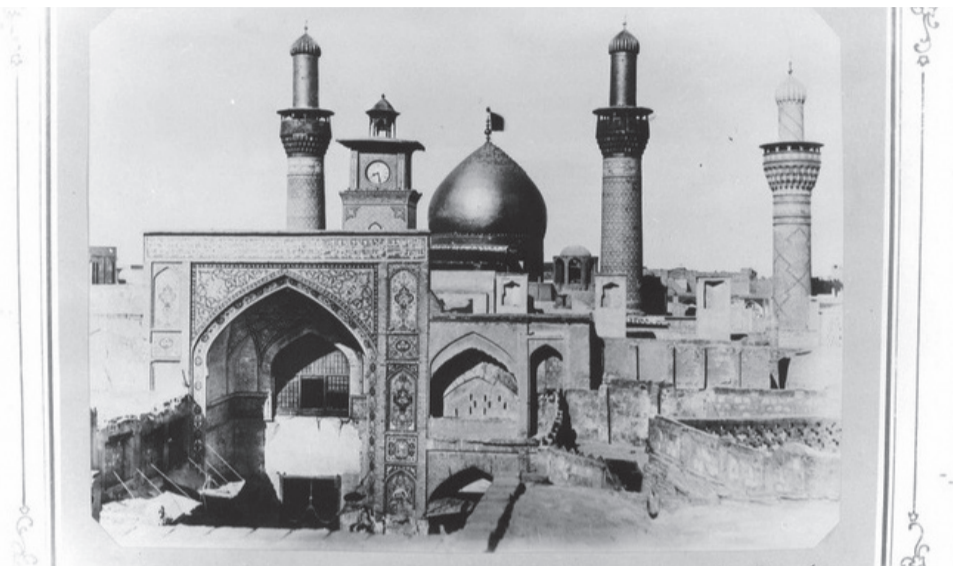
Can the NDB challenge the IMF and World Bank?

"Not for years, if not decades to come. The BRICS must be willing to pledge hundreds of billions of dollars, or dollar equivalent financing, if not trillions."

BRICS and some other countries like Mexico have refused to join the sanctions against Russia for its war on Ukraine. Does it suggest that the West is no longer the dominant economic and military power, or that the world is entering a new stage?

"No. The BRICS would have to refuse to adhere to all secondary U.S. sanctions on all countries. So take the case of Iran. They would have to buy Iranian oil and gas and pay Iran in a non-dollar currency to sidestep U.S. blocking payment to Iran. Invest in Iran. Protect their ships trading with Iran. And of course when they do this, the U.S. would sanction the BRICS country defying U.S. secondary sanctions. So the BRICS would threaten the dominance of the West if they can band together to oppose U.S. secondary sanctions, improve their economic performance, deepen their financial markets, enhance their economic, financial and political stability and expand their membership. But expanding BRICS will require time and debate. Some BRICS countries want to avoid NATO members and countries that are perceived as anti-Western, while others such as China and Russia are more open to including anti-Western countries."

Old photos of Iranian, Iraqi mosques on show at Golestan Palace



TEHRAN – Some old photographs depicting mosques and other religious places in Iran and Iraq have been put on view at the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran.

The exhibit opened to the public on August 22, depicting a selection of 15 photos taken by 19th-century Iranian photographers Aga Reza Akkasbashi and Abolqasem Mohammad-Taqi Nuri, CHTN reported.

According to organizers, the event has been arranged to mark World Mosque Day, commemorated on the anniversary of the arson attack against al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969.

A mosque, according to Islamic tradition, is any house or open area of prayer in Islam. The Arabic word masjid means “a place of prostration” to God, and the same word is used in Persian, Urdu, and Turkish. The first mosques were modeled on the place of worship of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); the courtyard of his house in Medina.

Iran is home to countless mosques and

holy shrines in the country, many of which represent a combination of symmetry, geometric designs, and vibrant colors, creating an astonishing view that no visitor can forget easily. The architecture of the mosques in the country varies from one region to another. However, they often boast very complex structures in which color variations, tiles, and symbolic designs are utilized.

Golestan Palace once served as the official residence of Qajar monarchs who ruled Persia (Iran) between 1789 and 1925. It exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar epoch, as well as an introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

The historical complex embodies a successful integration of earlier Persian crafts and architecture with Western influences. Over the past two centuries, it became a center of arts and architecture, a source of inspiration for Iranian artists and architects to this day.

Europe’s tourist numbers bounce back after Covid – for better or worse

Tourist numbers in Europe this summer have returned to almost pre-Covid levels, with especially high demand from North American travelers. But the summer season has been far from smooth, with holidaymakers encountering heatwaves, wildfires and the return of overcrowding at some of Europe’s most popular sights. Some of the troubles have also been caused by the tourists themselves, with several accused of vandalism and trespassing at the iconic sites they were visiting.

Ahead of the summer season the data looked promising. In the second quarter of 2023, Europe’s tourist numbers were at 95% of what they were in 2019 – the last year before widespread travel disruptions due to Covid-19.

By June, economists were predicting a “full recovery” for summer tourist numbers in countries throughout Europe.

July showed that one group, in particular, has been returning in even higher numbers than before the pandemic. In Paris (where recovery to pre-Covid numbers is not quite complete) visits from North Americans were up almost 3% on 2019.

“The tourism industry’s been really selling holidays pretty hard this year,” said Brian Garrod, a professor of marketing specializing in tourism at Swansea University. “There’s also been a lot of pent-up demand from people who couldn’t travel in 2021 and in 2022 were a little bit nervous – 2023 has been the big return.”

Heatwaves and wildfires

A thriving tourism industry provides economic relief in countries that rely heavily on summer tourism and have suffered three consecutive disappointing seasons.

But summer 2023 has been far from smooth sailing. In July a heatwave that was putting tourists’ health at risk led the Red Cross to set up emergency aid tents outside Athens’s Acropolis. As temperatures reached 44°C (111°F) the UNESCO-listed site was closed in the afternoons in mid-July “to protect workers and visitors”, the culture minister said.

In Italy, “red weather” alerts were announced in 20 of the country’s 27 major cities in July, with temperatures peaking at 47°C in Sicily – a particularly popular destination for visitors

this summer due to the success of the TV series “The White Lotus”, which was filmed on the island.

Emergency aid points were set up in 28 locations to help tourists handle the heat in ever-popular Rome.

“They’re handing out water but also wanting to be on hand if anyone feels unwell,” said FRANCE 24’s Seema Gupta, reporting from the Italian capital on July 18. “Heat code [an emergency measure to prioritize care] has been set up at the emergency rooms in hospitals throughout the city to help people deal with any heat-related ailments.”

By the end of the July, 30,000 people had been evacuated to safety on the Greek island of Rhodes after wildfires raged for days on end.

Visitors described “living a nightmare” as they escaped the flames in one of Greece’s leading tourist destinations.

“We’ve been lying here for two days,” said one Austrian tourist from the airport. “There are no blankets, nothing. There are children lying here who need milk.”

Along the Mediterranean coast, France, Spain, Italy and Croatia have all had to evacuate tourists affected by wildfires this summer.

Overcrowding, misbehavior

But the message from the Italian and Greek tourist boards remained that tourists should keep coming, despite the heat and the fires.

“At the end of the day, success in tourism is determined by numbers. It’s so competitive,” said Garrod. “[Post-Covid], the industry is trying to rebuild in the old way, which is big spending through big numbers. What it’s not doing [is] thinking necessarily about what is good for destinations.”

High tourist numbers in summer 2023 have brought the return of overcrowding. A survey from vacation home rental agency Holiday lists Dubrovnik as Europe’s most overcrowded city, with 36 tourists for each inhabitant. The old town has long grappled with how to accommodate large numbers of tourists within its 16th-century walls – historically meant to keep people out.

(Source: FRANCE24)

Ecbatana to host loan exhibition of treasured relics excavated from the ancient city

TEHRAN – The ancient city of Ecbatana will host a loan exhibition of magnificent relics previously excavated from ancient city, which partly overlaps with modern Hamedan in west-central Iran.

The five-day show, which begins today, features a selection of gold and silver objects that date from the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras, when Ecbatana was a Persia’s powerhouses, ISNA reported.

The Achaemenid objects comprise a gold bowl, gold dagger, gold bracelet, silver cup, bull-shaped column capital made of stone, and a silver utensil, while the Sassanid ones are a gilded silver plate and an engraved silver plate, all transferred from the National Museum of Iran.

The exhibition is organized to mark a possible UNESCO designation of Ecbatana as a World Heritage for which UN assessors are to visit the site within the coming days, the report said.

Hamedan’s governor-general has said the UNESCO designation of Ecbatana will be providing a great opportunity for Iran’s tourism sec-



Golden rhyton (drinking vessel) from Iran’s Achaemenid period, excavated at Ecbatana. Kept at the National Museum of Iran.

tor. “The UNESCO registration of the Hegmataneh (Persian name for Ecbatana) will provide an unparalleled opportunity not only for Hamedan but for the whole tourism sector of Iran,” Moslem Makhfi said earlier in May.

Once one of the world’s greatest cities of ancient times, Ecbatana

was once the capital of Medes and later the summer residence for Achaemenid kings. The ensemble is made up of a priceless archeological site and a singular collection of historical ruins.

It embraces artifacts from six different historical eras that are still extant, including an odd collection

that belonged to Iran’s Christians. It is well protected as a result of its significance to history and culture.

Ecbatana was first excavated in 1913 by the French Assyriologist Charles Fossey. In 2006, excavations in a limited area of Hegmataneh hill failed to uncover anything older than the Parthian period (247 BC). However, excavations have been limited due to the modern city covering most of the ancient sites.

Around 1220, Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386, it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkish conqueror, and the inhabitants were massacred. In the 17th century, it was partially restored and then frequently changed hands between the Iranian dynasties and the Ottomans.

Located on a high plain, Hamedan is pleasantly cool in the summer but can snow and freeze from December to March. Hamedan attractions include Ali Sadr Cave, Ganjnameh Inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh Hill, Alaviyan Dome, Jameh Mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church, among others.

Sassanid fortress to undergo rooftop restoration

TEHRAN – Rooftop restoration is to commence on Qale Falak-ol-Aflak, a Sassanid era (224–651) fortress, which stands tall in Khorramabad, western Iran.

The project is aimed to help safeguard the ancient fortress constructed of stone, brick, plaster, and lime, Lorestan province’s tourism chief said on Tuesday.

Iran is hoping to win UNESCO recognition for the fortress that measures approximately 300 by 400 meters, with a height of about 40 meters above the surrounding area.

The unmissable eight-towered fortress dominates Khorramabad as one of the most visited travel destinations in the region for both domestic and foreign sightseers.

The monument seems particularly imposing and dramatic when floodlit at night, offering picturesque views of its encircling crenelated battlements.

Experts believe that the fortress is comparable with similar works of the Sassanids located in Naqsh-e Rostam, Naqsh-e Rostam, Tape Chugan, and Firuzabad in Fars province.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”-- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble comprises eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. It reflects the optimized utilization of natu-

ral topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and Roman art, which latter had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan, which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble. Crafts such as metalwork and gem engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state.

Bangladesh envoy says delighted by Ardabil tour



TEHRAN—Dhaka’s ambassador to Tehran has expressed deep satisfaction over his recent visit to the ancient city of Ardabil in northwest Iran.

On Wednesday, H.E. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury paid visits to the UNESCO-designated Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, saying “This ensemble is full of artistic elegance and visiting this collection was a wonderful experience.”

The ambassador said Ardabil province boasts numerous historical attractions and natural beauties. “Ardabil is a must-see destination.”

“I feel really good that I was able to come to Ardabil and I will definitely invite my compatriots to visit this ensemble during their trip to Ardabil,” IRNA quot-

ed the ambassador as saying on Wednesday.

Ardabil has been selected as the 2023 ECO Tourism Capital by the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Sprawling on a high, wind-swept plateau, Ardabil is well known for having abundant natural beauty, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and the Shrine Ensemble. It is freezing in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year.

Canada excluded as China loosens group travel bans

Canada has been left out as China lifted a restrictions on group tours to multiple countries, including the US and the UK.

It suggests a deterioration of relations following Canada’s recent accusations that Beijing meddled in its politics.

Chinese officials said Canada was excluded over the foreign interference claims.

It could have a significant impact on Canada’s tourism industry.

Chinese tourists were estimated to have injected over C\$1bn (£580m; \$740m) into the Canadian economy annually in years prior to the Covid pandemic.

China’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism regulates which countries Chinese tour operators can visit, saying it’s done to safeguard citizens travelling abroad.

But it has also been viewed as a political tool to advance China’s political agenda overseas.

Last week, China added 78 countries to its list of approved destinations for group tours, excluding Canada while adding other major G20 countries like the U.S., Germany, Australia, and South Korea.

There are currently 138 countries on the list.

In a statement, China’s embassy in Ottawa

said it was concerned that “the Canadian side has repeatedly hyped up the so-called ‘Chinese interference’”.

Beijing is focused on “protecting the safety and legitimate rights of overseas Chinese citizens and wishes they can travel in a safe and friendly environment”, the statement said.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries deteriorated rapidly earlier this year. It happened amid a series of leaks to Canadian media of reports from domestic intelligence agencies that laid out accusations that China meddled in recent federal elections.

Canada has also accused Beijing of trying to intimidate Conservative member of parliament Michael Chong and waging a disinformation campaign against him on the popular Chinese messaging app WeChat.

Chinese diplomat Zhao Wei was expelled from Canada in May over some of the allegations. In a tit-for-tat move, China expelled Jennifer Lynn Lalonde, Canada’s diplomat in its Shanghai consulate.

The BBC has reached out to Global Affairs Canada for comment on the tourism snub.

Destination Canada, which promotes tourism in the country, told broadcaster CBC that China accounts for the largest source of tour-

ist arrivals from the Asia-Pacific region. It is also its second-largest long-haul market after the UK.

More than 700,000 Chinese tourists travelled to Canada in 2018, according to a 2021 report by the Canada China Business Council, with each visitor spending an average of C\$2,600.

At the time, the business group warned that bilateral tensions made the future of Chinese tourism to Canada “uncertain”, noting that “comments made by Chinese officials alluded to the contingency of Chinese tourism on positive relations”.

Group tours from China to Canada were first approved in 2010, and it boosted air travel and tourism between the two countries.

In 2018, bilateral relations suffered a setback when Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou was detained in Canada at the request of the US.

Two Canadians were arrested in China not long after, in a move viewed by Canada and its allies as “hostage diplomacy”.

The number of tourists to Canada from China fell in 2019, according to the Canada China Business Council.

(Source: BBC)

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN - Over the past two years, the Department of Environment has made a great effort to deal with the hazardous impacts of sand and dust storms (SDSs) on the health of people by adopting various measures.

To begin with, it has allocated some 8.15 trillion rials (about \$16.3 million) to mitigate the impacts of sand and dust storms.

Planting trees across sand and dust storms hotspots, protecting and managing pastures, dredging rivers and improving canals to supply water to wetlands that have become sources of sand and dust storms, conducting runoff water management projects to increase soil moisture, expanding vegetation, environmentally friendly mulching in five provinces of the country, are some other measures that have been taken.

Other actions include holding an environmental summit with the presence of international organizations including UNDP, UNEPT, ESCAP, APDIM, FAO, WMO, and UNESCO, as well as representatives of eleven countries.

In addition, a conference on SDSs was held on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting in July. Several countries and international organizations such as ESCAP, APDIM, and ECO participated in the meeting.

Mitigating actions also include signing five memorandums of understanding to cooperate with the UAE, Iraq, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Armenia to implement field operations to combat SDSs.

And following up on the agreements reached on dealing with sand and dust storms is another measure taken to minimize the impact of SDSs.

Intl. conference on combating SDSs

The Department of Environment has set up a secretariat for the international conference on combat-

Effective actions taken to tackle SDSs



ing sand and dust storms which is scheduled to be held in Tehran on September 9-10.

In February, DOE chief Ali Salajeqeh said that based on the successful experiences of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of combating sand and dust storms, the United Nations introduced Iran as the host of the international conference on combating sand and dust storms, IRIB reported.

Arrangements have been made with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in July, this meeting will be held in Tehran with the presence of the environment ministers of the world countries, Salajeqeh said.

One of the approvals of the regional meeting of environment ministers, which was held in Iran last summer, was the establishment of a regional dust organization, he highlighted.

"Environmental diplomacy is the main priority for the country's political diplomacy, so holding the con-

ference on combating sand and dust storms is important for us."

2022 conference in Tehran

In July 2022, Tehran played host to a conference of ministers and officials from 11 countries, aiming to boost cooperation for resolving extant environmental problems, especially sand and dust storms.

Environment ministers of Iraq, Armenia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Syria, and Qatar, as well as deputy ministers of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan along with delegations from Turkey and Uzbekistan, participated in the event which was held with the theme of "Environmental Cooperation for a Better Future."

Addressing the opening ceremony, President Ebrahim Raisi emphasized that the preservation of the environment is essential and an inevitable priority.

Raisi had earlier obliged the Department of Environment to dili-

gently pursue the solution of sand and dust storms through diplomacy and international forums, as well as interaction with neighboring countries.

"Conservation of the ecosystem and environment, which is a global concern, especially for countries of the region, is an inevitable priority today. If the environment is not safe and peaceful for people, the development will not be in its proper place and it will even become a threat to human health," Raisi stated.

SDS impacts

The SDSs phenomenon has been plaguing the country for several years and has caused problems in many provinces.

According to experts, natural and human factors are involved in the occurrence and severity of this phenomenon which is mainly caused by excessive consumption of water and drying up reservoirs.

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

Declining water levels in dams and lakes mean that water available to humans has been reduced and the dust-raising areas have been increased, he lamented, ISNA reported.

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

Letizia Rossano, the director of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), said in June that Iran is really at the forefront of understanding the problem of sand and dust storms as well as dealing with it.

Women from the Leader's point of view-29

Women's Rights in the West; Claim or Reality?



By Sara Atta

TEHRAN - While rape and widespread violence against women in Western societies is carried out on a large scale, Western governments as claimants of defending women's rights present their country as a model of an ideal society.

Sexual trade and slavery, the breaking of all moral and customary boundaries, and the legalization of issues such as homosexuality, which is forbidden in all divine religions, and other scandals, are the results of the West's viewpoint and culture with respect to women.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in one of his speeches pointed to the Western view of women, saying, "The Western view of

any dignified human embarrassed, but Westerners have no shame. The Western view of women is perverted, flawed, misleading, and simply wrong," Ayatollah Khamenei said on the same day.

If we look at the statistics of the violation of women's rights in the West, we will find that while Western countries claim to protect women and their media outlets pretend that they are the saviors of women in the world, a study of the status of women in Europe and the US reveals the falsity of their claims.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution in this regard noted, "The ultimate disgrace of the West is that despite the problems in their society such as sexual slavery and the female sex trade, they claim to be the flag bearers of women's rights. (January 4, 2023)

According to the statistics of George Mason University, it is estimated that 1 in 3 American women has been sexually assaulted in her lifetime.

The statistics of rape and destruction of women's dignity in Europe, which claims women's rights, are also significant, just like in the US.

The Government itself estimates that, in England and Wales alone, 85,000 women per year - equivalent to 233 per day - are raped and well over 400,000 are sexually assaulted.

One in five women in England and Wales has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16.

Ayatollah Khamenei during a meeting with hundreds of prominent Iranian women in the Imam Khomeini Hussainiyah on January 4, 2023, said that the West's claims to be the defenders of women's rights are disgraceful given what the West's official statistics and facts say about the status of women there.

According to the YWCA Canada, 460,000 sexual assaults happened in Canada every year. 33 out of every 1,000 sexual assault cases are reported to the police, and 29 are recorded as a crime.

According to the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Personal Safety Survey (PSS), almost 2 million Australian adults had experienced at least 1 sexual assault since the age of 15. Between 2010 and 2018, rates of sexual assault victimization recorded by police for Australians aged 15 and over rose by more than 30% (from 66.8 to 90.2 per 100,000) (based on ABS 2019).

"In the present time, the largest numbers of violent rape are being committed throughout the West--in the US and in Europe. Is this justice? Their statistical calculations [for violent sex crimes] are much larger than in other countries. That is the while, some women, apparently--according to their own statements--enjoy freedom there [in the West]! According to statistics, most instances of domestic violence--violence at home--by men against women are committed in Western countries. Moreover, these statistics reveal that many women will not dare file a complaint against their abuser. These statistics are related to only those who file a complaint; so, these statistics do not represent all victims. It is those countries [Western countries] that have problems--problems related to life, to culture, and to the management of that society. So, where is the justice? There is no justice! They speak about gender justice simply to pursue their own goals [elsewhere]," the leader said. (March 8, 2018)

It seems that human rights as an idealistic approach have become a political tool for some countries.

women is an insult to women: they call it "freedom", but it is not, in fact, representative freedom. Over the past two, or three decades, Westerners have chosen charming names for their crimes against humanity. Whenever they've committed murder; whenever they've plundered a country; whenever they've enslaved people; whenever they've confiscated other nations' sources of wealth; whenever they've imposed wars on nations or whenever they've committed other crimes, they chose deceptive and beautiful names for their actions: liberation, human rights, democracy and other such things. Describing the Western attitude towards women as "freedom" is a deception: it has nothing to do with freedom." (May 11, 2013)

It seems that human rights as an idealistic approach have become a political tool for some countries and the West has made the most political use of it. All the documents that exist in this regard show that the West is the biggest violator of human rights.

Among all examples of human rights violations in the West, the violation of women's rights and violence against them in all social, economic, racial, and geographical classes is prominent in the West.

"The cornerstone of Western culture is that women should be socially presented as a product, an object that men can benefit from; for instance, promoting immodest clothing is a step in this direction. Over the past 100 years, or more, violence against women in the West has been on the rise: there has been no decrease in violence in this regard. Sexual freedom and unprincipled sexual behaviors in the West have not curbed sexual desires, which are natural and instinctive. In the past, they used to promote the idea that men and women should be allowed to have free relationships with one another to diminish their sexual desires; later on, clearly, quite the opposite happened. The more that they allowed men and women to have free sexual relationships with one another, the more the resulting situation of sexual desires increased. Today, Westerners feel no shame in promoting homosexuality as a moral value: this makes

Algeria lauds Iran's medical, technological achievements



TEHRAN- Ibrahim Boughali, the speaker of the National Assembly of Algeria, has praised Iran's achievements in medical, agricultural, and technological fields, saying that Iran can help other Islamic countries make scientific progress.

Boughali visited Iran's House of Innovation and Technology (IHIT) in Tehran, as he was accompanied by Amir-Hossein Mirabadi, an official with the Iranian Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, IRNA reported.

"Tehran-Algeria interactions in knowl-

edge-based fields will benefit the two countries," the Algerian official highlighted.

"Algeria's new policy is to reduce its dependence on oil and gas and to make more diverse investments in other sectors."

He added the exchange of information and interactions between experts is essential, and the result will definitely benefit the two countries.

Mirabadi, for his part, said: "We are optimistic about strengthening the relations between the two countries and we hope to be able to estab-

lish bilateral cooperation in the fields such as agriculture, water, electricity, as well as oil and gas."

"We should try to develop economic ties between the two countries, especially between knowledge-based companies. Boosting cooperation with Algeria in the field of science and technology is one of our priorities."

He said Iran is ready and willing to support the expansion of science and technology sectors in Algeria.

IHIT in other countries

Over the few past years, with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, the Iranian house of innovation has been set up in several countries to develop the global market for knowledge-based products.

These centers have already been set up in countries such as Russia, Turkey, China, Syria, and Kenya, and Iraq will soon join them.

By supporting innovative ideas, and holding technological and innovative events, the centers will be a platform for the development and promotion of Iranian knowledge-based companies, startups, and creative industries.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran finds herbal medicines effective in COVID-19 treatment

The Food and Drug Administration has approved four domestically produced herbal medicine effective in the treatment of COVID-19 and has issued a production license for two of them.

The first herbal medicine in this collection is an oral spray containing six herbal essential oils, and according to the results of a clinical trial presented, if used, it helps to improve the pulmonary complications of coronavirus, including shortness of breath, cough, and arterial oxygenation.

The second drug is a syrup containing the extract of two herbs, which according to the clinical trial evidence provided if used, helps to improve the symptoms of fatigue and anorexia in patients with coronavirus.

تولید دو داروی گیاهی موثر در درمان کرونا در ایران

سازمان غذا و داروی ایران چهار فرآورده طبیعی تولید داخل با اجزای گیاهی برای بهبود علائم کووید ۱۹ را تایید کرده و مجوز تولید را برای دو مورد آنها صادر کرده است.

اولین داروی گیاهی از این مجموعه یک اسپری دهانی حاوی ۶ اسانس گیاهی است و با توجه به نتایج کارآزمایی بالینی ارائه شده در صورت مصرف به بهبود عوارض ریوی کووید ۱۹ شامل تنگی نفس، سرفه و اکسیژن رسانی شریانی کمک می کند.

داروی دوم یک شربت حاوی عصاره دو گیاه است که با توجه به مدارک کارآزمایی بالینی ارائه شده، در صورت مصرف به بهبود علائم خستگی و اشتهاهی در بیماران مبتلا به کووید ۱۹ کمک می کند.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who is greedy is disgraced; he who discloses his hardship will always be humiliated; he who has no control over his tongue will often have to face discomfort.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:06 Evening: 19:01 Dawn: 4:01 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:30 (tomorrow)

Iranian calligraphy (khattati, khoshnevisi)

Part 7

The popular nastaliq script has all the qualities required for fine handwriting, conforming to all the above-mentioned principles and rules of calligraphy.

It is easily legible and can be written quickly and very compactly, which enables more material to be contained in fewer lines and pages.

The rules for writing nastaliq include the following: The letters and words have prescribed dimensions. Roundness predominates, only 1/3 to 1/6 of the strokes being straight.

The round strokes have a downward slope from right to left. The pen is moved more freely and more easily than in naskh.

The semicircles in nastaliq can be slightly varied: the flourishes of final syn, saad, and nun are identical, those of final haa, ayn, and qaf are of similar shape, and those of final laam and yaa are drawn in a similar way.

The dimensions of the letters are determined by their point measures (made with the pen). The starts of most initial and detached letters are written with the right edge of the nib, for example the cogs (dandana) of syn, the top of ra, the beak (menqar) of jim, the top of an inverted final yaa, the start of a word such as bia, while in other scripts the starts of these letters are written with the full breadth of the nib.

Whereas in thulth and some other scripts with large letters the blank spaces between the written matter are so extensive that they have to be filled up with oversized pointings and harakat and with decorative frills, nastaliq is so compact that there is barely room for pointings and therefore no need for harakat and frills to fill voids.

However, there is no risk of confusion between similar-looking letters and words. The harakat are only used in nastaliq when necessary to remove ambiguity.

Words are not joined in nastaliq, except in inscriptions and calligraphy albums (moraqqa'at). In terms of regularity, clarity, and balance nastaliq equals naskh and in writing speed taliq, but in beauty and grace it is superior to both.

It is a popular belief that the letter shapes of nastaliq were inspired by nature or music: the vertical strokes by trees and flowers, the round strokes by the undulations of hills and meadows or of treble and bass in singing, the elongations by fields and plains or by musical pauses, the sinuities of letters and words by the bodily contours of animals, birds, and in particular humans, the sentence arrangement by flights of birds or clusters of flowers.

Human features and postures are most likely to have been a source of inspiration because in Persian poetry the beautiful features of the beloved are often likened to letters of the alphabet.

The beauty and strength of nastaliq lie in the balanced distribution of thick and thin, open and closed, and short and tall strokes, in the graceful shaping of the letter and letter combinations, and in the symmetry and consistency with which the letters and words are juxtaposed.

The letters and words may even seem to dance, sometimes holding hands, sometimes embracing. Integration of a fine piece of calligraphy, such as a familiar verse or proverb written in nastaliq, with a painted illustration

or an illuminated background can produce very beautiful works of art.

From the early 15th century onward Persians did most of their writing in nastaliq. The Muslim Indians, Ottoman Turks, Egyptians, and others also recognized the merits of nastaliq and adopted it to some extent.

The great age of nastaliq in Persia was the first half of the Safavid period, which witnessed the work of the great calligraphers Soltan-Ali Mashhadi (d. 1520) and Mir Emad Hasani Sayfi (killed 1615).

Most branches of art in Persia, including calligraphy, were set back by the troubles and wars of the 18th century, but they afterwards made some recovery.

Calligraphy, and therewith nastaliq, again received attention, particularly in the second half of the 19th century, when such masters as Mirza Mohammad-Reza Kalhor (1829-1892-93) produced excellent work.

In the 20th century the use of nastaliq declined. After World War II, however, interest in calligraphy and above all in nastaliq revived, and some outstandingly able masters of the art have since then emerged.

Large numbers of people now take lessons in it, mainly at classes run by the Anjoman-e Khoshnevisan-e Iran (Iranian Calligraphers Association), which has branches in all the chief towns.

Modern nastaliq is essentially the same as that which Mir Emad described in the 17th century, but the calligraphers of the 19th and 20th centuries have of course added their own artistic touches.

Shekasta-nastaliq and shekasta

The increasing use of nastaliq and consequent need to write it quickly exposed it to a process of gradual attrition.

The shekasta-nastaliq which emerged in the early 17th century and spread in the later Safavid period consequently differed from proper nastaliq only in so far as some of the letters were shrunk (shekasta, lit. "broken") and detached letters and words were sometimes joined.

Manuscripts from this phase show signs of the influence of shekasta-taliq; while having the appearance of a shrunken form of nastaliq, they also contain features of taliq due to their being written by scribes who had been trained in taliq.

The product of this mixture came to be known simply as shekasta, and being more easily legible than taliq it gradually replaced the latter as the script of decrees and documents and later also came into use for writing books, poems, albums, etc.

Certain features of shekasta can be traced back to experimental devices (tafannon) used by scribes of thulth, to ornamental letter shapes found in rayhan and mohaqaqa, and to decorative styles of secretarial (tarassoli) nastaliq used in official documents of the Safavid and Timurid periods.

Traces of some of the letter combinations of shekasta have been found in various styles of Ottoman divani calligraphy.

Two main styles of shekasta handwriting can be distinguished: one that is simple and clear, another complex. The latter is sometimes called "correspondence script" (khatt-e tarassol).

Source: *Encyclopedia Iranica*
To be continued.

Iranian filmmaker, literary figure Ebrahim Golestan dies at 101

From Page 1 ► He made his first film "Brick and Mirror" in 1964. The film received the Best Film award at the 2nd Iranian Film Festival in Tehran in 1966. It was also screened at the 16th Berlin International Film Festival, where it was nominated for the Golden Berlin Bear award. Although the film didn't win the award, it was praised by critics and audiences alike for its realistic portrayal of everyday life in Iran.

Later in 1974, he directed "The Ghost Valley's Treasure Mysteries". He is well-respected for his innovative storytelling and groundbreaking approach to filmmaking. His films often deal with existential themes, such as loneliness, alienation, and social injustice, and are characterized by their realistic style.

As a writer, Golestan authored such story collections as "Azar, The Last Month of Autumn" in 1948, "Shadow-Hunting" in 1955, "The Stream, the Wall and the Thirsty One" in 1967, "Tide and Mist" in 1969 and "Rooster" in 1995.



Iranian filmmaker Ebrahim Golestan in an undated photo.

In addition, Golestan is known for his translations of works of literature from English into Persian. Some of the books he translated include George Orwell's "Animal

Farm" and Herman Melville's "Moby Dick."

Golestan was married to his cousin, Fakhri Taghavi Shirazi, and was the father of the renowned

Iranian photojournalist Kaveh Golestan and the translator and owner of Golestan Gallery in Tehran, Lili Golestan. His grandson, Mani Haqiqi, is also a film director.

Mohammad Mehdi Asgarpour on 11th Film Festival Kitzbuhel jury



TEHRAN-Iranian film director and producer Mohammad Mehdi Asgarpour is one of the jury members of the 11th Film Festival Kitzbuhel, which kicked off on August 21 in Kitzbuhel, Austria.

Asgarpour is serving as a juror at the main

coemption section of the event along with eight other cineastes from Romania, Germany and Austria among others, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Asgarpour, 60, has participated in various international festivals as a juror or as the vice president of FIAPF (International Federation of Film Producers Associations) in recent years.

Graduated from the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting University, he started his career in 1987 by making several short films. He made his debut feature film 'Flying to the Limit' in 1990, in which he was the director, producer and screenwriter.

Since then, he has directed four other feature films, for two of which he has written the script as well, produced two films. He has also made eight series.

His last film 'We Have a Guest' (2014) was screened at Busan Film Festival in South Korea, Indonesian Balinale Filmfest and 7th Jaipur International Film Festival in India.

During his 33 years of activity in cinema,

Asgarpour has also served as the head of several organizations including House of Cinema, Farabi Cinema Foundation, Iranian Alliance of Motion Picture Guilds, and Iranian Artists Forum. He has also been the secretary of 20th and 21st Fajr Film Festival.

Founded in 2013, the FIAPF-accredited Film Festival Kitzbuhel is a young, creative and diverse festival with a focus on films by young directors.

The FFKB aims to support and promote national and international talents and to give them the opportunity to present their films to a large audience, but also to industry professionals and press representatives.

The Austrian event, which takes place in the last week of August each year, comprises competitive sections for national and international fiction and documentary feature films as well as short films and a group of out-of-competition sections.

This year's edition of the festival will continue until August 27.

Iran's national library participates in IFLA congress

TEHRAN- The National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) is attending the 88th General Conference and Assembly of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

The IFLA congress, which brings together librarians, professionals, and library managers from around the world, kicked off on August 21 and will run for five days in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Esmat Momeni, the Deputy Director of the National Library of Iran, is attending the event to represent the country and share professional experiences in the field of library science during this gathering.

Among the key events at this annual gathering are the meetings of National Library Presidents, which will tackle various concerns and challenges faced by national libraries worldwide, as well as

topics related to library science, management practices, and experiences.

The National Library of Iran has been an active participant in this conference over the past few decades and has participated in several specialized committees, including National Libraries, Asia & Oceania, Rare Books & Special Collections, as well as Information Technology, Children & Young Adults' Libraries, and Resource

Sharing.

During this session of the IFLA conference, a range of topics related to library and information science and management practices are being discussed, including digital libraries, library standards, information technology, green libraries, and the impact of artificial intelligence on library management and services.

"Smart Kid" mobile game to be unveiled during animation screening

TEHRAN-The mobile game "Smart Kid, Little Warrior" based on the characters of the Iranian animated feature film "Smart Kid" will be unveiled concurrent with the public screening of the animation across the country next month.

The game has been designed and produced by Anu Game Studio for children over seven years old, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

It is an action game in the endless runner genre, designed for the Android operating system in the first phase.

Endless runner or infinite runner is a subgenre of platform games in which the player character runs for an infinite amount of time while avoiding obstacles. The player's objective is to reach a high score by surviving for as long as possible.

It is currently ready for release in Iran, and an English version of the game is also being prepared to be published internationally.

The animation "Smart Kid", directed by Behnoud Nekouiee, Mohammad Javad Jannati and Hadi Mohammadian, had its national premier at the 41st Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February, where it won the Best Animation

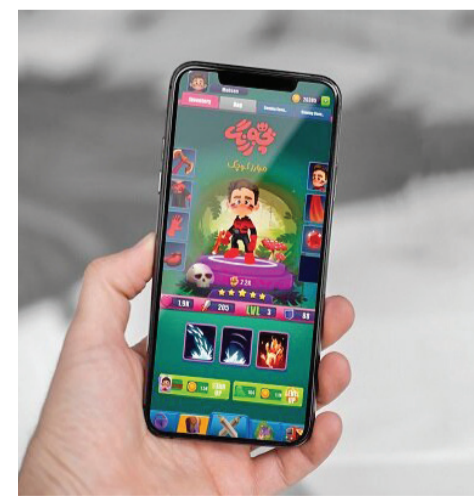
award.

It is a joint product of Honar Pooya Group and the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescent. Nearly 250 Iranian artists have been involved in the production of the animation.

"Smart Kid" tells the story of Mohsen, a little boy who loves superheroes in movies. He always tries to help anybody he comes across. Once he encounters an expired Iranian species and he decides to help the animal to get back to his homeland. However, a trip to the heart of the jungle, fighting the hunters and facing expired creature is the start of a complicated adventure for Mohsen.

Established in 2008, Anu Game Company has been involved in the production and publishing of computer and mobile games, the production of animated films and series, as well as organizing specialized workshops for video games in Iran.

Honar Pooya Group has already produced two animated feature films namely "Princess of Rome" (2015) and "the Elephant King" (2017), both being widely popular Iranian animations.



The Center for the Intellectual Development of Child and Adolescent is an Iranian institution with a wide range of cultural and artistic activities in the field of mental and cultural development for children and young adults.

Founded in 1965, it still operates as an important public institution to this day, continuing with its program in the fields of publishing, animation and film.