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Offering of Iranian refineries' shares through 2nd ETF begins

TEHRAN – The underwriting process for the shares of four major refineries that are going to be offered through Iran's second exchange-traded fund (ETF) started on Wednesday and will continue until September 9, IRNA reported. As reported, the government shares in Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Bandar-Abbas refineries will be offered through this ETF, at the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)

which is the main stock exchange of Iran. The offering of the second ETF had been postponed several times due to some technical problems so that rumors of its cancellation were being heard, however in late June Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand announced August 26 as the date for the offering of the second ETF and put an end to those rumors. → 4

Assad meets with Hashd al-Shaabi authority

By staff & agencies
An official government source revealed on Wednesday, that the head of Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi authority, Faleh Al-Fayyad, had paid an official visit to Syria. The source told Shafaq News agency that during his visit, Al-Fayad met the Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, adding that Al-Fayad delivered Al-Assad a message from the Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi.

The source did not reveal the content of the message. This message comes after Al-Kadhimi visited the United States of America, where he met with U.S. President Donald Trump, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as well as other officials. It is noteworthy that Al-Kadhimi visited Amman, on Tuesday, and attended a tripartite summit along with the Jordanian King Abdullah II and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

Love of Imam Hussein (AS) has no limit: director Majid Majidi

TEHRAN – Oscar-nominated director Majid Majidi said that non-Muslim people across the world also have a deep affection for Imam Hussein (AS) and the love of the Imam has no limit. Majidi made the remarks on Wednesday during a press conference organized to brief the media about the Mourning at Home Short Film Festival. He has been selected as president of the festival, which will put its spotlight

on short films covering rituals Iranian families will practice in their homes to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS) this year. The festival has been launched by the Rahe Iman Charity Organization this year to encourage people to stay at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic and organize the rituals for their family members. "I saw in India how much affection people have for Imam Hussein (AS). → 12

M.A.Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

U.S. isolated more; Trump and Pompeo humiliated

The U.S. became more isolated in the world as the president of the UN Security Council said on Tuesday that it was "not in the position to take further action" on a U.S. bid to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran because there is no consensus in the 15-member body.

After Indonesia's UN Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani made such a statement, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft lost her temper and said, "Let me just make it really, really clear: the Trump administration has no fear in standing in limited company on this matter."

She also said the countries sitting on the Security Council have "lost their way" and indirectly accused them of supporting terrorism for rejecting the U.S. illegal move against Iran.

"I only regret that other members of this council have lost their way and now find themselves standing in the company of terrorists," Craft said.

In fact, Ambassador Craft should be reminded that it is the U.S. that has lost its way and is pushing for lawlessness in the world. Examples that the White House has lost its way are many. Leaving the JCPOA, the World Health Organization the Paris climate agreement, recognizing the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights, moving its embassy to Jerusalem are concrete examples. These moves are in addition to irresponsible and ridiculous remarks and dangerous behaviors.

Trump and his inner circle are resorting to every possible illegal means and bullying tactics to kill the 2105 nuclear deal (JCPOA) before the presidential elections. These unlawful and irrational moves against the nuclear deal have even made Washington's European allies disappointed. This was made clear when the EU foreign policy chief and the foreign ministers of the three European states signatory to the JCPOA issued statements clearly stating that since the U.S. has quit the JCPOA it has no right to demand a restoration of UN sanctions on Iran. → 3

Nonzero: only 74 international travelers visit Iran during spring

TEHRAN – The number of foreign travelers to Iran has drastically plunged due to the global coronavirus pandemic as the Islamic Republic registered only 74 visits during the spring season. "Iran's [inbound] tourism came to almost zero and the country had 74 foreign tourists in the first three months of this [Iranian calendar] year (started on March 20), due to corona outbreak," Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan in a televised interview late on Tuesday.

Tourism [industry of Iran] was growing before corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, nearing the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent, the minister explained.

He said 8.7 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the past [Iranian] year (1398), adding that Iran was ranked as the second fast-

est-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization.

"On the onset of coronavirus, tourism faced a sharp decline in the world including our country. So that in the first three months of the current [Iranian] year the number of foreign tourists dropped to 74 --- it was reached almost zero!"

The minister reminded that some 2.3 million foreign nationals visited the Islamic Republic during spring last year that showed a 40.66 percent increase year on year. The country hosted 1,443,551 million travelers during the same period a year earlier.

Talking about losses to the travel and hospitality industry of the country, the minister said that the virus decrease has caused damage to many countries around the world, and our country's travel sector has so far suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials). → 10

U.S. protests: Two shot dead in third night of Wisconsin unrest

Two people have been killed and one injured during a third night of unrest in the U.S. city of Kenosha, sparked by the police shooting of a black man. Police said three people had been shot, but gave no details about who was involved.

Local media reports earlier said the violence was believed to have stemmed from a conflict between protesters and armed men guarding a petrol station.

Unrest broke out after Jacob Blake was shot and injured by police on Sunday.

Video footage showed the 29-year-old being shot a number of times as he leaned into a car. His lawyers said it would take "a miracle" for him to walk again. People have since defied emergency curfews in the city to join protests, which at times have turned violent.

In their statement, Kenosha Police said officials responded to "reports of shots being fired and multiple gunshot victims" in the city at about

23:45 on Tuesday (04:45 Wednesday GMT).

"The shooting resulted in two fatalities and a third gunshot victim was transported to a hospital with serious, but non-life threatening injuries," the statement said.

It added that the identities of the victims were still being determined and that no further details would be given at this time. An investigation has been opened.

Kenosha County Sheriff David Beth earlier told the New York Times that an investigation into the shootings would be focused on a group of men armed with guns outside a petrol station.

According to BBC, footage shared online showed a man with a rifle being chased by a crowd before he fell to the ground and appeared to fire multiple rounds at them. Other video shows armed civilians, many dressed in military fatigues, congregating outside businesses they said they were protecting.

Iran ranks second worldwide for scientific growth

TEHRAN – With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent.

According to the Web of Science website, Iran ranked 21 in the world for the highest scientific productivity in 2012. In 2015, the country placed 19 and ranked 18 in 2016, and since 2017, for three consecutive years, it remained 16th in the world.

In 2000, Iran's share of scientific productivity was about 0.1 percent, which reached about 2

percent with a 20-fold increase in both Scopus and WoS citation databases.

According to statistics released by the International Web of Science Database, Iran's citation rank has always been on the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

Iran ranks first in terms of the number of universities in the region and among Islamic countries, according to Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2020. Two Iranian universities have been ranked

among the top 100 universities in Asia, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities for July 2020.

Moreover, 7 Iranian universities have been listed among best 1000 worldwide; including, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, Tarbiat Modares University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology. → 11



Tehran shrine delivers food products to the needy

A man arranges food products to be handed out to the mourners and the needy people during the lunar month of Muharram amid the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the courtyard of Imamzadeh Saleh shrine in northern Tehran, August 25, 2020.

West Asian states should unite against U.S.-Israel-Saudi-UAE axis: Turkish party leader

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN – Utku Reyhan, the secretary general of the nationalist Patriotic Party in Turkey, is of the opinion that West Asian countries including Iran and Turkey can form an alliance to confront common threats posed by the U.S. and its allies in the region. "West Asian countries should come together against the USA-Israel-Saudi-UAE axis, because we are facing common threats," Reyhan tells the Tehran Times.

Turkey and some Arab states in Persian Gulf region are caught in a diplomatic row over a range of issues including the recent move by the Emirates to normalize ties with Israel.

On August 13, the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, announced the UAE's agreement to normalize relations with Israel which sparked anger among Islamic nations and some Muslim states like Iran and Turkey.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he may sever ties with the UAE in opposition to its normalization agreement with Israel.

Reyhan also says it is a "necessity" that both Turkey and Egypt settle their disputes. → 9

Dear readers,
The next issue of the Tehran Times will be published on Monday, August 31.

SPORTS

Karim Ansarifard joins AEK Athens

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran international forward Karim Ansarifard signed a deal with Greek football team AEK Athens.

The 30-year-old forward has joined AEK on a three-year contract.



Ansarifard penned a three-year deal with Al Salihiya last year but parted company with the Qatari club by mutual consent.

The former Nottingham Forest striker will wear No. 11 at AEK. He has opted for a return to Europe, where he'll earn a 600,000 euro bonus.

Ansarifard has already played in Greek football teams Panionios and Olympiacos from 2015 to 2018.

He represented Iran in two 2014 and 2018 FIFA World Cups.

Tractor into Hazfi Cup final

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Tractor football team edged Naft Masjed Soleyman to book a place at the Iran's Hazfi Cup final.

On Tuesday, Tractor defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 1-0 thanks to 47th minute's Saeid Mehri goal in Tabriz's Yadegar-e Emam Stadium.

Tractor went down to 10 men in the 76th minute after Reza Asadi received his second yellow card.

On Wednesday, Persepolis and Esteghlal played in another semifinal in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Esteghlal are the most decorated football team winning Hazfi Cup title seven times.

Wrestling must start training as soon as possible; Gholamreza Mohammadi

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran's freestyle wrestling head coach, Gholamreza Mohammadi, believes that the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics can provide a unique opportunity for the Iranian wrestling only when "we work out the best way to use the time for preparing the national team."

Due to the outbreak of the pandemic coronavirus in Iran, practicing of all close-contact sports such as wrestling was canceled. However, last week the Iranian authorities allowed wrestling teams to restart their training.

"It seems to be good for us to start training, but we should take it into account that our rivals are preparing themselves by following safety and health protocols," Mohammadi said in a ceremony in Tehran on Wednesday.

"If we start the national team training camp late, the one-year postponement of the Olympics will not be an opportunity but a threat, and that makes the situation difficult for the national freestyle wrestling team. Now that practice and competition in wrestling have been allowed, we must start the national team training camp as soon as possible," he concluded.

Rezaeian signs two-year deal with Al Duhail

Al Duhail received a boost ahead of their defence of the Qatar Stars League title after signing Islamic Republic of Iran's Ramin Rezaeian. Rezaeian penned a two-year contract with head coach Walid Regragui's Red Knights after spending two seasons with league rivals Al Shahania SC where he scored 17 goals.

Earlier in his career, Rezaeian played for Iranian clubs Saba Qom FC, Rah Ahan SC and Persepolis as well as having a one-year stint with Belgian outfit KV Oostende.

The 30-year-old winger was one of Team Melli's standout performers at the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 and AFC Asian Cup 2019, making a total of 35 appearances for Team Melli and scoring two goals.

Al Duhail, who clinched their seventh Qatar Stars League last Friday, open the defence of their title against Umm Salal on September 3.

They will also resume their AFC Champions League quest next month when they play UAE side Sharjah FC on Matchday Three.

After two Matchdays, the Qatar club are second in Group C with three points ahead of Persepolis and Sharjah — both on one point, while Saudi Arabia's Al Taawoun FC top the table with six points.

(Source: AFC)

Mehrdad Mohammadi may leave Portugal for Qatar's Al-Arabi

PLDC — Iranian winger Mehرداد Mohammadi has been linked with a transfer to Qatar's Al-Arabi SC.

Qatari Stad Al Doha news outlet claims that Mohammadi and Al-Arabi are on the verge of finalizing the contract without pointing to any further details.

Mohammadi joined Desportivo das Aves in May 2019 and scored eight goals in 28 appearances in the Primeira Liga but his goals did not prevent the team's relegation at the end of the season.

Mohammadi refused to take part in Aves' training sessions from two weeks to the end of the league reportedly due to the club's failure in paying his salary. Rumors were circulating that he has terminated his contract as the 'TransferMarket' also has put "without club" in Mohammadi's profile.

Meanwhile, Iranian defender Morteza Pouraliganji terminated his contract with the Al-Arabi to depart for a Chinese team. Now, the Qatari team has one vacant position to hire an Asian player and they seem to have chosen 26-year-old Mohammadi.

U.S. suffered 'historic defeat' at UN, Iran says

P O L I T I C A L TEHRAN — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said on Wednesday that the U.S. has suffered a "historic defeat" at the UN Security Council, a day after the Council president, Indonesia, refused to take action in line with the U.S. demand for the restoration of international sanctions on Iran.

"Last night, the U.S. once again suffered another historic defeat at the UN Security Council's meeting," the spokesman told the IRIB news agency on Wednesday.

His remarks come after Indonesia's UN ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani, council president for August, dismissed the U.S. request for a return of all UN sanctions on Iran.

According to a Sputnik report, Djani said, "There is no consensus in the Council. Thus, the president is not in the position to take further action."

The Indonesian ambassador was responding to a question from Russian and Chinese ambassadors to the UN on the U.S. measure regarding what came to be known as the "snapback process", a mechanism built into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to allow parties to the deal



to snapback all UN sanctions on Iran in case it failed to uphold its obligations under the nuclear deal.

On August 14, the U.S. put forward a resolution calling for the extension of a UN arms embargo on Iran. The resolution was resoundingly rejected by the Security Council. Thirteen of the 15-member body abstained from voting. Only the Dominican Republic

joined the U.S. in voting yes. Russia and China opposed.

Nearly a week after its resolution was rejected, the U.S. submitted a "notification" to the Security Council in a bid to restore the international sanctions on Iran, a move that was met with firm opposition from countries on the Security Council. They rejected with one voice the U.S. move, saying the U.S. had

no legal authority to trigger the snapback process because it has withdrawn from the JCPOA.

"The U.S.'s request on August 14 for the extension of the arms embargo on the Islamic Republic of Iran was met with the opposition from the Security Council's members. And on August 20, the U.S. effort to circulate a declaration on Iran was also met opposition from the Council's members," Khatibzadeh said.

He added, "Perhaps, it marks the first time in the history of the Security Council that, in less than 10 days, a permanent member of the Council hears a 'big no'."

The spokesman went further to say, "The Security Council president formally declared for the first time that the U.S. had basically no authority to circulate such a declaration among the members. The Security Council president's statement that the U.S. request is null and void will have many legal consequences."

"Since last night, the U.S. is so angry and furious that its ambassador to the UN has attacked even the U.S. European allies and called them partners of Iran. What happened last night marks the eighth or ninth U.S. defeat over the past few months," the spokesman asserted.

U.S. attempt to present itself as JCPOA participant is like common sense mockery: SCMP

P O L I T I C A L TEHRAN — In an article published on Wednesday, South China Morning Post said the United States' attempt to present itself as a participant to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, has no future and is like a common sense mockery.

"The U.S. attempts to present itself as 'JCPOA participant' have no future. It is like common sense mockery. Those who invented this idea gave a bad advice to U.S. authorities. Cyclical approaches must have their own limits in order not to compromise national policy to the worst extent," said the article written by Will Saetren.

An excerpt of the article, titled "Global outcry against U.S. call for sanctions 'snapback' on Iran was a long time coming", reads as follows:

August 20, 2020. That was the day the U.S. Secretary of state Michael R. Pompeo swaggered up to a podium at the United Nations, proclaimed that up was down, unicorns were real, and that he could really go for some curry fish balls right about now.

I am, of course, exaggerating. But not by much. What Pompeo did was argue that the United States is legally entitled to enforce the technical provisions of an international agreement that it abandoned more than two years ago.

If that sounds confusing to you, it should. It is the political equivalent of quitting a job, not showing up to work for two years and insisting that you are entitled to your full salary because a contract once existed that listed you as an employee.

Signed in 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is a deal between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany on one side, and Iran on the other. This agreement includes strict monitoring and verification provisions that permanently cut off Iran's ability to clandestinely develop nuclear weapons.

In exchange, all sanctions on Iran's nuclear weapons-related activities were lifted, and Tehran received a pathway to rejoin the international community.

The deal received widespread international support and was considered a major foreign policy victory for the Obama administration. When Donald Trump took office in 2017, he set out to unravel his predecessor's legacy, which included, against the advice of his own advisers and the pleas of the international community, the Iran nuclear deal.

On May 8, 2018, the Trump administration announced that it was "ceasing U.S. participation" in the agreement and reimposing sanctions against Iran. Trump insisted that he would negotiate "a better deal", but two years later, no such deal has emerged.

Despite U.S. withdrawal, the deal has remained alive. The remaining signatories have upheld the vast majority of their commitments and the parameters remain intact.

On October 18, the arms embargo on Iran is set to expire, a key provision of the agreement that is intended to reward Tehran for five years of compliance.

With no better deal in sight, and pressure on Iran evaporating before its eyes, the Trump administration finds itself face to face with the failures of its policymaking and no credible options for bringing Iran back to the negotiating table.

That brings us to today's desperate attempt at nonsensical diplomacy. Under UN Security Resolution 2231, which underpins the nuclear deal, participant states are entitled to implement a "snapback" mechanism, which reimposes all UN sanctions if Iran is in breach of the deal. It is a powerful tool, and it is the mechanism that the U.S. is attempting to leverage.

The U.S. attempts to present itself as "JCPOA participant" have no future. It is like common sense mockery. Those who invented this idea gave a bad advice to U.S. authorities. Cyclical

approaches must have their own limits in order not to compromise national policy to the worst extent.

There is only one problem. The U.S. is no longer a legal participant to the agreement. The Trump administration correctly pointed out that article 10 of resolution 2231 lists the U.S. as a participant of the agreement. This was true when the agreement went into effect, but it is not true now. By the Trump administration's own admission, it has fully ended its participation in the agreement.

Within hours of Pompeo's appearance at the UN, some of America's longest standing allies issued a joint statement rebuffing the attempt to activate the snapback mechanism. France, Germany and the UK noted that the U.S. had ceased to be a participant to the agreement following its withdrawal from it on May 8. "We cannot therefore support this action," the statement said.

Russia also rejected the U.S. plans, calling them "non-existent" and "common sense mockery".

China pushed back even harder, saying the U.S. demand "has no legal ground and common sense". It noted the U.S. violated resolution 2231 by unilaterally withdrawing from the agreement and reinstating "illegal unilateral sanctions" against Iran. Having quit the agreement, the U.S. has "no right to demand the Security Council invoke a snapback".

The voting outcome at the UNSC reveals that the U.S. unilateral positions go against the international consensus and that its attempt to sabotage the JCPOA is doomed to fail. We urge the U.S. not to act arbitrarily against the world's will. Otherwise, it will meet further opposition.

Within 24 hours, 13 of the Security Council's 15 members had rejected Washington's bid to reimpose the international sanctions regime on Iran, a stunning defeat that the U.S. rarely experiences at the UN.

Deputy foreign minister says Iran's top priority is good neighborly ties

P O L I T I C A L TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said on Wednesday that good neighborly ties are top priority of Iran's foreign policy.

Baharvand made the remarks during a ceremony in Zahedan, capital of Sistan-Baluchestan, to inaugurate the provincial branch of the Foreign Ministry.

He said that the borders with the neighboring states should not be regarded as a line for separation but a point for connection and economic development.

Underlining the role of border provinces, such as Sistan-Baluchestan, in creating connection and interaction with neighboring countries, the official said that ways to boost further cooperation with neighbors have to be explored.

Baharvand noted that Iran has good relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan, adding that security is key to bilateral relations that has to be boosted at the joint borders.

He also referred to the issue of water resources and said that Iran expects neighboring countries, Afghanistan in particular, to pay due attention to Iranian rights to the shared water supplies.

Trump can't have his cake and eat it too on Iran sanctions

"Washington has no right to impose snapback sanctions on Tehran because it is no longer a participant in the Iran nuclear deal"

On Thursday, the United States delivered notification to the UN Security Council demanding a so-called snapback of all the previous UN sanctions against Iran under Resolution 2231. The Trump administration cited significant violations of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, from which the United States withdrew in May 2018. All Security Council sanctions against the country were lifted under Resolution 2231, which endorsed the nuclear deal.

Less than 24 hours after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo submitted the notice to the Security Council, 13 of the council's 15 permanent and nonpermanent members expressed opposition to U.S. efforts to reimpose the international sanctions against Tehran. They stressed in their letters that because the Trump administration had withdrawn from the agreement, it had no right to invoke the deal to return the sanctions.

In a recent contribution to Foreign Policy, Richard Goldberg cited Resolution 2231 to justify the U.S. call for snapback sanctions despite Washington's withdrawal from the deal. In Goldberg's opinion, the U.S. government retains a permanent right to invoke the resolution and use the snapback mechanism because the resolution does not say that a state that was once a participant

in the nuclear deal cannot use the dispute mechanism.

It is hard to believe that the U.S. administration has based its intention to trigger the mechanism on such a shallow and legally tenuous argument.

Without explaining the rights and duties of a participant, Goldberg cites the resolution and wrongly argues that the United States is still a participant in the nuclear deal.

As a critical vote approaches, the fate of Iran nuclear sanctions—and decades of multilateralism—lies in the hands of Britain and France.

After a humiliating defeat at the UN Security Council, Washington will seek snapback sanctions to sabotage what's left of the nuclear deal. Britain, France, and Germany can still keep it alive until after the U.S. election.

The term "participant" is not a simple honorific title. Participation in the nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), includes participation in an agreement that started in 2015 and will continue until 2025. By no means is it acceptable for a country that withdrew from this participation in 2018 to remain a participant state. The United States is either a participant in the deal and will remain in it until 2025 or it is not a participant and has

withdrawn. It is as simple as that.

The fact that the United States is no longer a participant has been admitted by key U.S. leaders and officials.

The fact that the United States is no longer a participant has been admitted by key U.S. leaders and officials.

Indeed, upon the official announcement of the U.S. withdrawal from the deal on May 8, 2018, under an executive order issued by President Donald Trump dubbed "Ceasing U.S. Participation in the JCPOA," the country officially announced that it had terminated its participation in the nuclear deal. Trump mentioned ceasing U.S. participation in JCPOA four times in his executive order.

On May 11, 2018, the U.S. government—in a formal communication—officially informed all JCPOA participants that the United States would no longer participate in JCPOA-related meetings and activities.

Furthermore, Pompeo stated at the time that "President Trump terminated the United States' participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action."

The fact that the United States was described as a "JCPOA participant" in a paragraph of Resolution 2231 is purely descriptive; it lists as a factual matter the participants at the time of the resolution's

adoption in 2015.

Even assuming that the United States is still a participant state, which it is not, Goldberg makes a second misleading argument related to the process of using the snapback mechanism. He says the sanctions will automatically come back into force within 30 days after the U.S. government presents the UN Security Council with a notification.

A look at the text of the original resolution sheds light on this issue. Paragraph 10 of Resolution 2231 explains how the countries participating in the JCPOA could use dispute resolution mechanisms (discussed in paragraphs 36 and 37 of the deal) if Iran's noncompliance were found to constitute "significant non-performance."

In fact, resorting to the snapback mechanism is the final stage of the JCPOA dispute resolution mechanism, which can restore previous UN resolutions that were suspended under Resolution 2231.

A third flaw in Goldberg's argument is his claim regarding a substantial breach of the international accord by Iran. His argument is premised on the claim that Iran started breaching the accord before other parties; he neglects to mention that the United States violated the agreement first.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ashura uprising is epitome of sacrifice and solidarity

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) has played a major role in strengthening the solidarity and the spirit of making sacrifices in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a religion expert told the Tehran Times.

"The great epic of Ashura has a lot of messages and lessons that affect various dimensions of our political, social, and individual life. It played a major role in terms of making sacrifices and promoting altruism," Hassan Qaemi, a religion expert, told the Tehran Times.

The expert further explained, "The philosophy and the goal of the genesis of humankind are to worship God. The Holy Quran states, 'I have not created mankind and jinn except to worship me.' If we want to worship God, and if we want to achieve the goal of the genesis of humankind, then we should take into account two very important factors: paying attention to God and Akhirah (the afterlife). And if we strengthen our belief in God and Akhirah, we will be able to be a friend of God, which is the goal of the genesis. To this end, we need to follow in an imam's footsteps. The imam plays a major role in leading us to God and Akhirah. Paying attention to God and Akhirah was on full display on the day of Ashura."

Imam Hussein (AS) is the third imam of the Twelve Imams, who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala on October 10, 680 (Muharram 10, 61 AH). His uprising against the Umayyad Caliph, Yazid ibn Mu'awiya, is widely seen as a revolution against cor-



ruption and oppression. The imam was the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad and his heartbreaking martyrdom sent shock waves through the Muslim world. The outcry over the martyrdom of Imam Hussein was so widespread that even Yazid, the killer of the imam, sought to whitewash his crime by blaming his commanders for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS).

"In Karbala, Imam Hussein (AS) was an epitome of worshiping God. If it had not been for the uprising of Imam Hussein, the issue of worshiping God would have been ended. Moreover, the imam fully demonstrated the spirit of altruism and making sacrifices," Qaemi said, adding that Imam Hussein has

endured a lot of sufferings for the sake of God, which immortalized him in the eyes of millions of people around the world.

According to the expert, Iran has learned many lessons from the Ashura uprising especially during Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s, which is also known as the Holy Defense, and the war against ISIS in recent years.

"The spirit of making sacrifices and altruism was strikingly remarkable in the fight against ISIS and Takfiri groups. The Iranian fighters were truly ready to make sacrifices to fight against ISIS. And this martyrdom-seeking spirit of devotion is not instilled in the traditional classes at universities or schools,

rather it is being instilled into them at the mourning ceremonies for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS)," Qaemi asserted.

He also said all the sacrifices General Qassem Soleimani and other Iranian martyrs made were inspired by Imam Hussein's uprising.

"Our martyrs and their families have learned lessons from [the Battle of] Karbala," Qaemi pointed out.

Qaemi elaborated on how the Ashura uprising contributed to the promotion of altruism and devotion during the 8-year war between Iran and Iraq. However, he said that Ashura continued to impact the daily life in Iran even after the war ended.

In Qaemi's view, Ashura's impact on Iran is reflected in the people's solidarity with each other in hard times. According to the expert, the Ashura uprising can be a pattern of giving a helping hand in times of difficulties.

Social solidarity has become an utmost necessity in Iran, given the U.S. economic pressures on the country. The U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on May 8, 2018, re-imposing sweeping economic sanctions on Iran, a move that exacerbated economic woes and created hardships for the ordinary people.

"Today, our Jihad is economic and self-reliance Jihad. Today's Jihad means that we should pursue the resistance economy, and help the poor, who have fallen on hard times due to the sanctions. This requires an Ashura spirit," Qaemi said.

UNSC president dismisses U.S. anti-Iran move

Pompeo's 'lawless bullying' leaves U.S. isolated again, says Zarif

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The president of the UN Security Council, Indonesia, announced on Tuesday that it was "not in the position to take further action" on a U.S. bid to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran because there is no consensus in the 15-member body.

Indonesia's Ambassador to the UN Dian Triansyah Djani, council president for August, was responding to a question from Russia and China on the issue during a meeting on the Middle East.

After the meeting, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif lambasted the United States for its unlawful move against Iran, saying such bullying has left U.S. isolated again.

"@SecPompeo's lawless bullying leaves US isolated again," Zarif tweeted on Tuesday, referring to Washington's failure at the Security Council to trigger the return of UN sanctions on Iran.

"While US prevented a Sec. Council debate about its unlawful notification on Friday, members in today's meeting on ME refuted U.S.' attempt as null and void," he wrote.

"Time for @realDonaldTrump to stop listening to novice bullies," he added.

On Friday, thirteen council members out of the fifteen-member body expressed their opposition to return of UN sanctions, arguing that Washington's move is void given it is using a process agreed under a 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers that it withdrew from two years ago.

U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft hit back after Djani spoke. "Let me just make it really, really clear: the Trump administration has no fear in standing in limited company on this matter. I only regret that other members of this council



have lost their way and now find themselves standing in the company of terrorists," she dictated to the council.

Iran's permanent mission to the UN said in a statement that Washington's objective is to destroy UNSC Resolution 2231 and the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Today, the overwhelming majority of the Security Council members rejected once again the admissibility of the recent letter by the United States to purportedly initiate a process to re-impose Security Council sanctions on Iran," the mission said, according to IRNA.

According to the statement, the UN Security Council members have made it clear that the U.S., following its withdrawal from the JCPOA, is not a "JCPOA participant" anymore and as such has no right to trigger a process to re-impose Security Council sanctions on Iran as this right has been reserved only for "the JCPOA participant states".

The mission said Iran's position on the U.S. attempt is

also quite clear. "That letter, including all references therein, are null and void, have no legal standing and effect and are thus completely inadmissible."

"Today's deliberations in the Security Council showed once more the U.S. isolation on the JCPOA and Resolution 2231," it added.

The mission responded to Washington's "unfounded accusations" against Iran at the meeting, underlining that almost all problems in West Asia stem from the continued occupation of Palestine by the Israeli regime and its expansionist policies supported by the U.S., as well as "the meddling, destabilizing policies and destructive practices of the United States, which cannot be covered up by no amount of smear campaign."

Last week, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he triggered a 30-day process to reimpose all international sanctions on Iran by lodging a complaint with the council accusing Iran of breaching the nuclear deal.

It came after the Security Council resoundingly rejected a U.S. bid on August 14 to extend an arms embargo on Iran which will otherwise expire in October. Only the Dominican Republic joined Washington in voting yes.

Observers say the Dominican Republic and Niger, president of the council for September, are likely to face U.S. pressure to proceed with the sanctions snapback process.

Russia's Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia said at the Tuesday meeting he hoped the U.S. would now drop its bid to snapback Iran sanctions.

He said the move to reimpose sanctions on Iran is not only illegal, but simply will not lead to achieving the result that was envisaged by Washington.

Iran, Russia, Turkey slam Israeli attacks on Syria

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran, Russia and Turkey, as the three guarantors of a Syrian peace initiative, have denounced the Israeli military's strikes on Syria as a violation of international law, undermining the sovereignty and security in the region.

Delegations of the three countries made the remarks in a joint statement on Tuesday after consultations on the sidelines of the third meeting of Syria's Constitutional Committee in Geneva.

Israel frequently attacks military targets inside Syria in what is considered by observers as an attempt to prop up terrorist groups that have been suffering heavy defeats against Syrian government forces.

The Zionist regime seized the Golan Heights from Syria after the 1967 war and later annexed it. The Israeli move has never been recognized by the international community.

The trio said they condemned "the continu-

ing Israeli military attacks in Syria in violation of international law and international humanitarian law and undermining the sovereignty of Syria and neighboring countries as well as endangering the stability and security in the region."

They also reaffirmed their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

The statement said that Iran, Russia and Turkey were determined to fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stand against separatist agendas aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

The Astana guarantors agreed to continue cooperation in order to ultimately eliminate Daesh (ISIL), al-Nusra Front and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with al-Qaeda or Daesh, and other terrorist groups, as designated by the UN Security Council, while ensuring the protection



of the civilians and civilian infrastructure in accordance with the international humanitarian law.

Another topic highlighted in the statement was Syria's oil revenue, on which the three countries voiced their opposition to the illegal seizure and transfer of Syria's oil revenues, and "condemned the illegal oil deal between a U.S. licensed company and the illegitimate entity as part of its separatist agenda."

The statement concluded that Turkey, Russia and Iran were determined to hold the next

international meeting on Syria in the Astana format as soon as possible.

Iran, Russia and Turkey have been leading a peace initiative to bring the Syrian crisis to an end. The initiative is known as the Astana process, because Kazakhstan's capital, Nur-Sultan, formerly called Astana, originally hosted the meetings.

The Astana process has so far resulted in two agreements. The first deal was signed in Nur-Sultan, arranging for the creation of de-escalation zones across Syria, including in parts of Idlib.

The second deal was signed in the Russian resort city of Sochi, allowing Ankara to bring in a small number of forces to man the observation posts to reinforce de-escalation.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. However, the conflict has been winding down as the Syrian government reasserts control over parts formerly held by terrorist groups.

Leader condoles demise of cleric Hosseinian

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has expressed his condolences over the death of Hojatoleslam Ruhollah Hosseinian.

In a message on Wednesday, the Leader lauded the cleric's resistance, honesty and tirelessness in adopting revolutionary stances, IRNA reported.



Ayatollah Khamenei condoled the family, friends and colleagues of Hojatoleslam Hosseinian over his demise.

Ruhollah Hosseinian, head of the Islamic Revolution Document Center, passed away on Tuesday. He was laid to rest on Wednesday in Tehran.

Hosseinian had a history of heart problems and was hospitalized in Khatam-ol Anbia hospital on Monday.

He had served in the Judiciary in Tehran, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Mashhad while also representing the Islamic Revolutionary Court in the Intelligence Ministry.

He also represented Tehran in the 8th term of the parliament.

The cleric has also written several books on the history of Shia Muslims in Iran, Islamic issues and Iranian contemporary history.

Tehran Times, Mehr director calls on Rouhani to restore public trust

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The managing director of the Tehran Times and the Mehr News Agency on Tuesday wrote in a series of tweets about what he would have talked about had he been given the chance at President Hassan Rouhani's question and answer session with a number of media chiefs.

"In the session with the president, I wanted to talk about one concern; the establishment's main concern, which is people's trust," Mohammad Shojaeian wrote.

He underlined that although the people's trust in the system were strengthened by the sacrifices made by thousands of martyrs, including Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, but at the same time, different administration's performances have affected the people's trust in different ways.

Shojaeian went on to criticize the Rouhani administration for its mismanagements in the last few years, including the scandal of giving out governmentally subsidized dollars to specific individuals, the ill-advised approach toward implementing of the gas price hike policy, the coronavirus headquarters' contradictory decisions with regard to holding university entrance exams and the Muharram rituals, etc.

"You spoke of your concern about the rising public expectations, I should say that the administration's officials have caused such rising expectation, and unfortunately, the inability to act on them has led to a loss of trust," Shojaeian said, addressing Rouhani.

"Mr. Rouhani, invest your last year [as president] in increasing public trust," he advised. "Our people are the nation of Imam Hussein (AS). They will resist in the face of difficulties, provided that... they trust their leader."

U.S. isolated more; Trump and Pompeo humiliated

→ "... the U.S. ceased to be a participant to the JCPOA following their withdrawal from the deal on May 8, 2018. Our position regarding the effectiveness of the U.S. notification pursuant to resolution 2231 has consequently been very clearly expressed to the Presidency and all UNSC members," the E3 foreign ministers said in their joint statement on August 20.

The rejection of the UN sanctions on Iran came just a few days after the Security Council resoundingly rejected a U.S. bid to extend an arms embargo on Iran.

The U.S. illegal moves against Iran have no buyers in the world. Only extremists in Israel and a few rulers in Arab sheikhdoms are happy with the measures of Trump and Mike Pompeo against Iran.

No person or official with an ounce of common sense can agree with the current behavior of the Trump administration. If only the Dominican Republic voted in favor of the U.S. draft resolution to extend arms embargo against Iran, it was not because the officials of that country are content with the unlawful behaviors of the U.S., rather it was just because of the country's geographical size and location.

What happened at the UN Security Council was a legal victory for Iran and the international community at large. It was a victory for multilateralism and repudiation of Trump's mockery of international law.

It is still not far from the mind that Trump and Pompeo, whom Zarif rightly called the "secretary of hate", would blackmail the Dominican Republic to proceed with the sanctions snapback process.

Even if the Dominican Republic gives in to the U.S. bullying at a time, the return of sanctions will be void.

It is perhaps unprecedented that the U.S. become so humiliated and isolated at the UN Security Council in less than 10 days. In fact Trump and Pompeo mocked themselves by claiming that the U.S. has right to seek return of UN sanctions against Iran. Just by claiming that since the U.S. name is mentioned in the Resolution 2231 that confirmed the JCPOA, the U.S. has right to invoke the return of sanctions is an insult to the wisdom of the people in the world. It was true if the U.S. was still a party to the JCPOA.

The U.S., under Trump, is now a pariah state, and Trumpism and Pompeoism, as a new kind of fascism, will live in the memory of the world.

Zarif lambasts Pompeo for Israeli 'criteria' in U.S. foreign policy

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In tweet on Wednesday afternoon, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif criticized his American counterpart for reportedly insisting on a normalization deal between Israel and Sudan in exchange for removing the latter from a U.S. state sponsors of terrorism list.

"Thanks to @SecPompeo, we now know criteria for a country to be removed from—or included in—State Dept's terror list: Relations with Israel. World's No.1 nuclear threat, rights violator, illegal occupier & terror entity. How can the world STILL take US foreign policy seriously?" tweeted Iran's Chief diplomat.

Zarif was referring to a Reuters report suggesting that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had asked Sudan to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel in exchange for the U.S. removing it from its terrorism list.

Pompeo arrived in the Sudanese capital city of Khartoum on 25 August directly from Israel on what he said was the first official non-stop flight between Sudan and Israel. He met with high-ranking Sudanese officials including Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and Sovereign Council Chair General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

"Pleased to meet with Sudanese Prime Minister @SudanPMHamdok today in Khartoum to underscore U.S. sup-

port for Sudan's democratic transition and discuss Sudan's commitment to deepening the Sudan-Israel relationship," Pompeo tweeted after he met with Hamdok.

Citing Sudanese government spokesman Faisal Salih, Reuters reported that Hamdok told Pompeo that his transitional government "does not have a mandate... to decide on normalization with Israel", and the matter would be decided after all Sudan's interim bodies had been established.

"The Prime Minister called on the U.S. administration to separate the process of removing Sudan from the list of states sponsoring terrorism and the issue of normalization with Israel," Saleh said.

Dredging project to give 30,000-ton vessels access to Bushehr port

ECONOMY TEHRAN — A project for dredging the internal and external canals of Bushehr port was inaugurated on Wednesday in a ceremony on the occasion of Government Week (August 23-29) to provide traffic and mooring for 30,000-ton vessels in this port.

According to the Head of Iran Port and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad who attended the inauguration ceremony, with a total cost of 1.9 trillion rials (about \$45.23 million) the project is going to be completed over a 20-month period, IRNA reported.

The total volume of dredging that is going to be done in this project is estimated at 5.75 million cubic meters, Rastad said.

The official noted that currently with 387,336 cubic meters of dredging operations carried out, the length of the port's rotation pond has reached 666 meters and the average width is 330 meters.

The external canal of Bushehr port is currently 10,030 meters long and 150 meters wide in which 5.42 million cubic meters of dredging will be carried out and the final level of the canal will reach -10.8 meters.

He also referred to the inauguration of a project for the reorganization of offshore facilities at Bushehr port's Valfajr Terminal and said: "This project has been implemented with a credit of 450 billion Rials (about \$10.7 million) in 15 months."

Construction of new dolphins for mooring of passenger ferries, repairing and reconstruction of the existing ro-ro wharf, organization of a sea passenger terminal, construction of a floating wharf for Kharg Island passenger vessels were mentioned by the official as the goals of this project.

Vessel carrying Indian sugar for Afghanistan arrives in Chabahar

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The first cargo ship carrying Indian sugar arrived in Iran's southeastern Chabahar Port, a provincial official told IRNA on Wednesday.

The vessel carrying 1,890 tons of Indian private sector's sugar in 70 containers docked at Shahid Beheshti port in Chabahar, Behrouz Aqaei, the director-general of Ports and Maritime Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, where the strategic Chabahar Port lies, stated.

Last week, the seventh cargo ship carrying Indian donated wheat for Afghanistan with 352 containers had also arrived at Shahid Beheshti Port, Aqaei announced at the time.

He said that the consignment weighs about 8,800 tons, adding that some 1,700 containers weighing 43,000 tons of India's wheat for Afghanistan have so far arrived in Chabahar Port.

The shipment has been sent to Afghanistan through the Milak border in the southern part of Sistan-Baluchestan.

India aims to donate some 75,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan via the Iranian port city of Chabahar.

Referring to the arrival of other humanitarian wheat from India to Afghanistan in the upcoming months of the current year, Aqaei said, "While the world economy is affected by the coronavirus pandemic, we observe the development of exports and imports in Shahid Beheshti port."

Offering of Iranian refineries' shares through 2nd ETF begins

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The offering of this EFT comes as the value of shares offered via the first exchange-traded fund has also increased significantly.

On May 2, the TSE listed the first exchange-traded fund from a series of three ETFs, through which shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

Iranian steel industry outshining the world against the odds

By Ebrahim Fallahi

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

Production of crude steel in Iran increased 14.4 percent in July from the figure for the same month in the past year, while the average global production for this commodity has fallen 2.5 percent in the mentioned month, a report recently released by the World Steel Association (WSA) said.

According to the WSA, Iranian steel producers produced 2.339 million tons of crude steel during July, rising from 2.045 million tons produced in the same time span of 2019, Shata reported.

The Iranian steel industry has outshined the world producers in this sector during the first seven months of 2020 altogether, as based on the WSA report Iran produced 16.335 million tons of the mentioned commodity during January-July period of 2020, 10.8 percent more than the figure in the same seven months of 2019.

The world's 64 top steel producers managed to produce 1.27 billion tons of crude steel in the said period, 5.3 percent less than the output for the last year's same seven months.

Iran's crude steel production had also increased by 30 percent in 2019 while the average global growth in this sector stood at 3.5 percent.

The country managed to produce 31.9 million tons of crude steel during 2019, while the figure was 24 million tons in 2018.

According to the World Steel Association, Iran became the world's tenth-largest steel producer in 2018.



Iran which stood at the 13th place in 2017 could lag behind three major steel producers in the world, namely Italy, Taiwan, and Ukraine to stand at the 10th place in 2018, despite the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.

Last month, a board member of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) told IRNA that Iran has the capacity to export 15 million tons of steel per annum.

Saying that the country's annual steel production has reached 30 million tons, Reza Shahrestani stated that of this figure 15 million tons can be exported and bring \$7 billion of revenue for the country.

"Iran is now among the world's top ten steel producers and

in order to prove our capabilities in this due, we should have a strong presence in the international markets", he stressed.

As previously reported, Iran's export of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

The country's major steel producers managed to export about 7.33 million tons of the products in the previous year.

According to the data released by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, in the mentioned period over 20.226 million tons of steel ingots were produced by the country's 10 major companies to register a five-percent rise year on year.

The country has also defined 16 development projects in the steel sector to boost the output of steel products by 17.3 million tons in five years.

These projects are for constructing production units each with the capacity of 600,000 tons, while some other projects have been also defined to set up some units with under 500,000-ton capacity that together with the 600,000-ton capacity units will add 19.1 million tons to the country's annual steel products output.

In its outlook plan for the Iranian calendar year 1404 (2025-2026) Iran has envisaged production of 55 million tons of steel per annum, and to achieve this target the country requires to produce 160 million tons of iron ore concentrates.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has announced that production of iron ore concentrate in Iran also reached 47.306 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, registering a four-percent rise compared to the preceding year.

The country has extracted 64.274 million tons of iron ore during the past year, according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization.

94% of POGC annual goals realized, says managing director

ENERGY TEHRAN — Managing director of Iran's Pars Oil and Gas Company, which is in charge of developing the country's giant South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf, has said that 94 percent of the company's development plans for the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) has been realized, Shana reported.

Speaking to the press on the occasion of the Government Week (August 23-29), Mohammad Meshkinfam said on Tuesday that the development programs are still ongoing in the current year and great achievements are also on the horizon for the current Iranian calendar year.

Underlining some of the major achievements of the company, Meshkinfam said in the previous year drilling and complementary operations for 37 wells were carried out while the development of phases 13, 14, 22-24 has been ongoing, some of which will be completed in the current year.

Development of South Pars Phase 13

Noting that the delay in the completion of some of the development projects had been due to the limitations created by the coronavirus pandemic, the official said the Platform 13C, the third platform of phase 13 of South

Pars gas field's development project, officially started sending gas to the refinery last week and hopefully Platform 13A will also go operational this year.

Meshkinfam put the current capacity of phase 13 offshore platforms at 43 million cubic meters (mcm) per day and said that 28.5 mcm of this figure is related to the two platforms of 13B and 13D from the first phase of this project which started operating two years ago.

Mentioning the 13A platform, which is the last platform of phase 13, the official said: "This platform is the last link in completing the production chain in the South Pars Phase 13 development project, and after completing its development the gas extraction capacity of this phase will reach 56 million cubic meters."

Completion of SP complex remaining refineries

Meshkinfam further announced the completion of a number of remaining units of the refineries of phases 13 and 22-24 this year and said: "Despite all the problems and obstacles we were able to complete some very difficult development projects at the refinery of phases 13, 22-24 and 19, which is a unique action."

He stated that among the refineries of the

South Pars onshore complex only the refinery of Phase 14 has remained, for which the contractor has been selected and is currently working on the project.

According to the official, the first train of this refinery will go operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2021).

Phase 11 development on the right path

Referring to the development of phase 11 of South Pars, as the only remaining offshore phase of the field's development project, Meshkinfam said following the signing of the contract for the development of phase 11 with Petropars Company and the installation of the first jacket of this phase, drilling of wells will begin soon and the signing of ancillary contracts is also underway.

The wellhead jacket of phase 11 was loaded from the yard of Naft Sazeh Qeshm (NSQ) and was installed on its designated offshore spot in the Persian Gulf in early May.

Petropars is developing the project after its partners, Total and CNPC, pulled out of the project due to the U.S. sanctions.

The project aims to generate 2 billion cubic feet of rich gas, and transfer it to existing



South Pars refineries and use the refinery's processing capacity.

South Pars is the world's largest gas field, covering an area of 3,700 square kilometers of Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.

The giant field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate. The field is divided into 24 standard phases.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue the implementation of important oil projects including the development of joint oil and gas fields in the current Iranian year.

Being among the world's top four countries that have the largest proven deposits of crude oil and natural gas, Iran shares the broad offshore field with Qatar in the southern Iranian region of the Persian Gulf.

ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER
SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

55/99/13374
27/08/2020

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 4×400005± MTS of Granular Triple Super Phosphate (GTSP) in bulk through one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Wednesday dated 26/8/2020 until Monday dated 7/9/2020 (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000006.

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Saturday dated 10/10/2020 (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on Sunday dated 11/10/2020 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bid bond value should be € 153345 or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on NIMA exchange rate of CBI on 25/8/2020 for each lot of 40000 MT ± 5% in bank guarantee.

– The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 40000 MT ± 5% will be IR 36552439000, which must be only submitted by the bidders.

- After approval of ASSC 's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)

ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER
SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

55/99/13374
27/08/2020

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 2×35000±5% MTS of Granular Potassium Sulphate (GSOP) in bulk and/or bagged through one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Wednesday dated 26/8/2020 until Monday dated 7/9/2020 (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000006.

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Monday dated 12/10/2020 (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on Tuesday dated 13/10/2020 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bid bond value should be € 216940 or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on NIMA exchange rate of CBI on 25/8/2020 for each lot of 35000 MT ± 5% in bank guarantee.

– The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 35000 MT ± 5% will be IR 51,710,534,000, which must be only submitted by the bidders.

- After approval of ASSC 's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)

A Glance at Performance of Health Minister at 12th Government in Health Reform System

Dealing with Corruption of Confronting Coronavirus, COVID-19

In first half of Iranian month of Bahman in the last Iranian calendar year in 1397 (Feb. 2019) after the resignation of the then Minister of Health and Medical Education Dr. Seyyed Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi, the new Health Minister as proposed by President Rouhani won vote of confidence from the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iranian Parliament also called Majlis).

Given the above issue, Dr. Saeed Namaki replaced Dr. Seyyed Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi as the new health minister in the 12th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence".

Unlike the procedure and routine of the previous governments, President Rouhani assigned and delegated helm of the Ministry of Health to a pharmacist and immunologist. Of course, three decades ago, Dr. Saeed Namaki was appointed as the deputy Ministry of Health and Medical Education, so that all government officials were informed of expertise of Dr. Namaki in the field of prevention and treatment of the disease. However, brilliant experience and history of Dr. Namaki at the Plan and Budget Organization showed that he knows well about the problems facing health sector of the country and also is fully familiar with the statistics and budget rates. Also, during his tenure at the Plan and Budget Organization of the country, he (Dr. Saeed Namaki) was continuously following up the implementation of family physician, electronic record of Health Reform System as well as compilation of clinical guidelines.

When he took office as the Minister of Health and Medical Education, this ministry was facing nearly 20,000 billion tomans worth of debt to the companies and demands of health staff and personnel of Health Reform System.

But Dr. Namaki's return to the health sector of the country was accompanied by a key message, "Cost Management and Transparency in the Field of Medicines and Medical Equipment."

Supporting domestic production and saving in reducing costs without reduction of offering services, dissolving companies affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and abolishing the management of economic enterprise by the Ministry of Health can be considered as salient characteristics of Dr. Saeed Namaki in management of resources.

Revising Health Reform System Plan Packages

At the threshold of the Government Week, although suitable opportunity was not provided to interview with him (Dr. Saeed Namaki), his salient measures taken over the past two years cannot be ignored. Dr. Saeed Namaki took the helm of the Ministry of Health at a very complicated and sensitive situation of the country.

At the first step, he (Dr. Saeed Namaki) supported the Health Reform Plan as one of the largest and most successful social plan at the initiative taken during Rouhani Administration.

He is of the opinion that this comprehensive plan i.e. "Health Reform Plan" was followed up seriously especially in faraway and disadvantaged areas of the country and valuable activities were conducted during the 11th and 12th governments dubbed "Hope and Prudence".

Another important point that should be taken into consideration in "Health Reform Plan" is related to sending medical staff and physicians to faraway, disadvantaged and underprivileged areas of the country which was performed successfully.

Caring and nursing patients suffering from serious diseases (hard-to-cure patients) and also patients with special diseases was one of the other salient advantages behind launch of "Health Reform Plan" whether in the field of prevention, treatment of disease or provision of drugs and medicines for these patients.

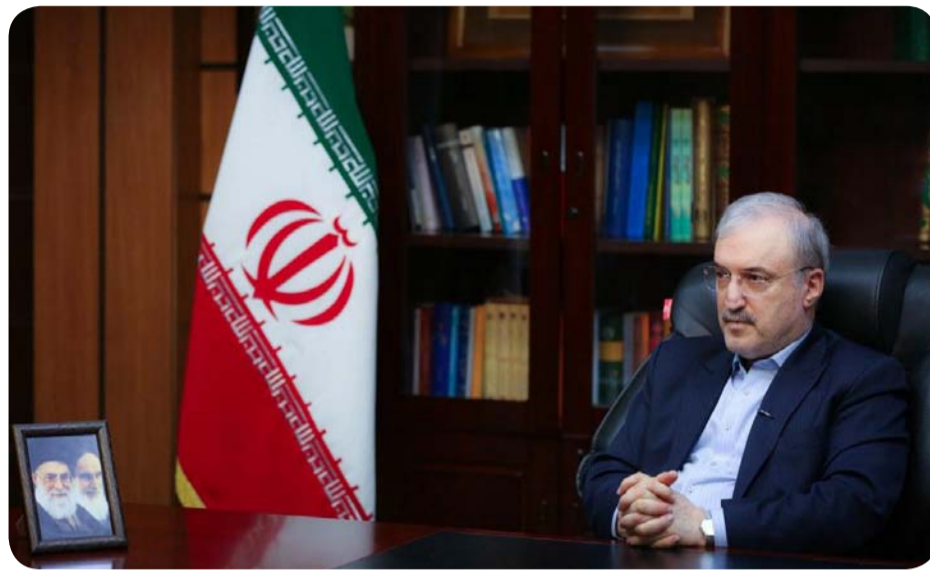
Correction of hoteling of hospitals and various other packages such as facilities for free-of-charge natural delivery at the state-owned healthcare and treatment centers was one of the other salient features of "Health Reform Plan".

In spite of salient advantages of Health Reform Plan, Dr. Saeed Namaki was critical of some packages offered in this comprehensive Plan. For this reason, he revised and corrected some packages defined for Health Reform Plan from the beginning of his tenure at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

With his support of domestic production Dr. Saeed Namaki prevented capital outflow, valued at \$700 million currency, from the country in the field of medical equipment and medicines.

When asked about his version for continuation of Health Reform Plan, he said, "giving priority to healthcare system or prevention over treatment was of the first activity that was taken into consideration in the second phase of implementation of Health Reform Plan."

For this reason, "We focused on treating patients instantly at the hospital instead of hospitalizing them at hospital and medical centers," he said.



He is of the opinion that if a person is diagnosed with high blood pressure, if his or her disease was diagnosed at the first stage, it is better to treat them at the first step and should not let the high blood pressure be diagnosed at the progressing stage of the disease which is followed by stroke and kidney failure.

Therefore, Dr. Namaki decided to add ICU (Intensive Care Unit), CCU (Coronary Care Unit) and Dialysis Ward at hospitals for fast treatment of the disease.

He said, "we studied the main factors of death and mortality and found that 380,000 people died in the country in 2017, 313,000 of whom died due to non-communicable diseases, 97,000 of whom had died due to high blood pressure and 25,000 of whom had lost their lives due to the communicable diseases."

Dr. Namaki then pointed to the support of Health Reform Plan's packages and added, "we support three packages in Health Reform Plan."

Reducing payment from people's pocket, supporting patients with special diseases and durability of physicians in deprived and underdeveloped regions of the country, he emphasized.

Implementation of National Mobilization Plan of Blood Pressure Control

Elsewhere in his remarks, the health minister, who is staunch supporter of prevention over treatment, said, "for this purpose, pathogenicity and monitoring patients are of the first priority of the Health Ministry in the current administration."

With the commissioning of National Mobilization Plan of Blood Pressure, 2.5 million people, suffering from high blood pressure, were identified in the country who were unaware of

their illness.

In this comprehensive plan, more than 70 percent of population of the country, aged between 30 and 70 years old, i.e. more than 30 million people were measured in terms of blood pressure.

Comprehensive Plan of "Every House with One Health Base"

The pilot plan of "Each House with One Health Base" had been kicked off before the spread of the coronavirus global pandemic in the country. Turning a house into a health base and training 22 million ambassador of health indicate high attention of Dr. Namaki to the healthcare and treatment sector.

This pilot project was launched in four provinces of the country on Khordad 12, 1399 at the direct order of the Health Minister Dr. Namaki.

In implementation of this plan, Dr. Namaki said that we could contain the coronavirus, COVID-19, in the country to some extent in cooperation with people and now, with the implementation of the plan entitled "Every House with One Health Base", he said, "if we have the second wave of this disease concurrent with the incidence of influenza in the country in autumn, the disease will certainly be contained in cooperation with 20 million people chosen as ambassador of health."

Access of Nomads and Tribesmen to Health Services

Accessing nomads and tribesmen of the country to the quality healthcare services was one of the major concerns of the Minister of Health Dr. Namaki.

For this purpose, Dr. Namaki put the commissioning of 400 health houses for nomads of the country atop agenda, saying that all nomads of the country would be equipped with health houses.

Plan Entitled "School Children Free from Dental Cavity"

Paying due attention to the dental health of schoolchildren, which had been ignored in the country for many years, was put atop agenda of the Minister of Health and Medical Education.

Generally speaking, the 12th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence" has paid due attention to the dental health and sanitation of schoolchildren and students.

The statistics of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education show that indicators of dental health is not satisfactory in the underprivileged and deprived areas of the country. Health Minister Dr. Namaki initiated the pilot project of a plan entitled Schools without Dental Cavity in Ardebil province and promised to launch this plan in various parts of the country using 3,200 physicians in Dental Health.

Dealing with Corruption in Field of Medicine and Medical Equipment

When Dr. Namaki was appointed as Health Minister, whispers of corruption in the field of medicines and medical equipment hit the headlines of media.

Making transparency and fighting against corruption in the Iranian Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was the main objective of Dr. Namaki.

Generally speaking, giant steps have been taken in the 12th government in the field of monitoring health and hygienic parameters in the field of dental cavity of schoolchildren and this issue is considered as salient characteristic of the 12th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence".

When Dr. Namaki was appointed as Health Minister, whispers of corruption in the field of medicines and medical equipment hit the headlines of newspapers.

Making transparency and fighting corruption in the Iranian Food and Drug Administration (IFDA) was the main objectives of Dr. Namaki.

He acknowledged, "with the coordination and collaboration made, we could alleviate the corruption in the fields of medicines and medical equipment appropriately."

From the beginning when Dr. Namaki assumed office in the Health Ministry, he focused on supporting domestic production. For this reason, when he went to the Iranian Parliament, he revealed the import of electricity cable instead of cardiant stent and criticized it harshly.

In this session, Dr. Namaki ordered to make all approvals of the Commission in the field of

and medicines decreased in the country last year in 1398 (ended March 20, 2020). Concurrently, 30 percent of domestic production has also been increased.

Presently, 97 percent of medicines and drugs required in the country is produced in the country and about three percent of medicines and drugs is imported into the country.

But the three percent of imported medicines and drugs account for over 70 percent of pharmaceutical resources in the country.

As mentioned in above, giant steps have been taken in this regard at the 12th government, one of these salient measures can be referred to fighting corruption overshadowing health and medical sector of the country.

Dealing with Corruption in Medical Training

Three months after dealing with disruptors in the field of medicine, the health minister on his twitter account revealed the existence of mafia in medical university entrance examination as well as selling seats at the universities of medical sciences.

In this regard, necessary measures were taken in cooperation with the judiciary officials in line with dealing with disruptors.

83mn Iranians Own Electronic Health Files



producing and importing food and drug transparent, saying that the results should be made transparent in the shortest time possible.

For this purpose, Dr. Namaki ordered to set up a taskforce for the provision of medicines and medical equipment as well as monitoring offences at Food and Drug Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

After the elapse of one year since the establishment of such a headquarters and at the time that tough sanctions had been imposed against the country, people much concerned about accessing medicines and medical equipment.

According to him, the country experienced the toughest economic year in last Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2020).

Preventing Imports of Medicines into Country Which Can Be Produced Domestically

Elsewhere in his remarks, Dr. Namaki pointed to the medicines and drugs with similar domestic production and added, "with the coordination made, we will prevent entry of any medicine and drug which its similarity is produced in the country."

He seized this opportunity to express his thanks to the Leader of Islamic Revolution in throwing his weight behind the objectives of the Ministry of Health.

With the implementation of the National Mobilization Plan to control blood pressure, influenza, HIV and coronavirus, considerable foreign currency, valued at more than \$600 million, has been saved in the country in a way that 25 percent of import of medical equipment

One of the main and salient measures taken in the field of Health Reform System during 5th Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan was made during tenure of Dr. Namaki in a way that objectives of Health Reform System were followed up strictly during the 12th government.

Setting up Health System File electronically for 83 million Iranians is considered as one of the salient achievements under Dr. Rouhani administration.

Experts in the field of health sector consider setting up electronic health file, family physicians as a giant step taken by the 12th government in the field of Health Reform System.

Launching Health Reform System prevents many unnecessary costs.

According to Health Minister Dr. Namaki, a suitable infrastructure was set up for the establishment of health record electronically, based on which, it caused the novel coronavirus to be handled and contained appropriately in the country.

Dr. Saeed Namaki is considered as one of the successful health ministers after the Islamic Revolution who managed to create a considerable change in the ministry from all aspect.

Two years have passed since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, in the country and this issue has created many problems for the Ministry of Health.

Under the wise management of Dr. Namaki, this deadly disease has been contained in the country suitably.



Morteza Bank Expounds on Launching Intl. Stock & Exchange Market in the Free & Special Economic Zones

Adviser to the President and Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones, Mr. Morteza Bank, announced the establishment of Exchange Market in the Free and Special Economic Zones.

To learn more about the details, our correspondent has made an interview with him, as follows:

■ Would you mind explaining about the setting up of the international exchange market in the free and special economic zones?

A: Planning to establish the international exchange market in the free and special economic zones has been underway since 2017, with the aim of expanding and developing capital market in the free zones and facilitating presence of foreign investors in the Zones. However, great steps have been taken since 2017 in establishing the international exchange market in the free and special economic zones. Undoubtedly, setting up such an exchange market in the free and special economic zone may be considered as an outstanding step toward internationalization of the Iranian capital market which would contribute to unification of pertinent rules and standards as well as simultaneous admission of bonds, securities and goods to a significant extent. In addition, launching of an international exchange market will fresh up and motivate Iranian capital market actively, justly and transparently. In general, setting up an international exchange market in the free and special economic zones will promote the competitive levels and could also lead to creation of a constructive competition among existing stock exchange markets.

As mentioned above, effective steps have been taken in this regard.

■ Would you please tell us what measures have been taken for launching the international stock exchange in the Free Zones?

A: The issue of launching of an



international financial center on the Kish Island have been running since years ago and various measures have been taken in this respect. The current project of commissioning international stock market will be established on the Kish Free Zone. Feasibility studies have been conducted with setting up Founding Board and conclusion of contract with a consulting engineering company. Accordingly, all feasibility studies and documents provided, including a business plan, the operational program, set of executive instructions and regulations, proposed articles of association, studies related to the platform of proposed transactions as well as other complementary components, which were approved by the Steering Committee of International Stock Market of the Free Zones. In this respect, various meetings were held in the presence of the Founding Board, the Steering Committee and the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), the Chamber of Commerce, represented by the private sector and activists of capital market. In those meetings, various aspects of the issue were discussed.

Concurrently, with carrying out various talks, and with participation

of different governmental and private sector financial and monetary institutions, the composition of domestic shareholders, were proposed and approved by the Founding Board. In order to issue the "Agreement in Principle for Setting Up an International Exchange Market", the package was presented to the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) as the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Exchange and Securities.

In this line, approval of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) was recently issued on 3 Au-

gust, 2020 to the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones. Accordingly, talks got underway with foreign investors for finalizing the composition of domestic and foreign shareholders in the Exchange Market.

■ Could you tell us about the performance of the Free Zones in development of economic indicators.

A: At present, more than 1300 production-industrial units are operating in the free zones and 599 in special economic zones. This number is not small and during the tenure of the government of prudence and hope, with the creation of 186 thousand jobs, the total of stable employment in the free and special zones, currently, amounts to 510 thousand people. It should be kept in mind that the total number of the population residing in the free and special economic zones stands at less than one million. Promotion of export has been one of the important discussions that we followed up in the free and special economic zones. I believe we have experienced considerable growth in the free and special economic zones, to the extent that exports value of productions in the free zones and special economic zone exceeded \$134 billion during seven years of the current government.

In this period, \$39 billion worth of domestic products has been exported from the free and special economic zones to the mainland.

That is to say that more than \$160 billion worth of products exported from the free and special economic zones to other countries and mainland has doubled during the 11th and 12th governments of "Hope and Prudence". In contrast, only \$45 billion worth of products have been imported into the free and special economic zones.

This is while \$192 million worth of products has been exported from the free and special economic zones in 2013.

The issue of investment is another issue that should be very seriously taken into consideration. More than 41,000 billion tomans worth of domestic investment has been made in the free zones from 2013 to 2019 while \$1,700 million worth of foreign investment has been made in the free zones.

In addition, more than 50,000 billion tomans worth of domestic investment has been made in the special economic zones while more than \$25 billion worth of domestic investment has been made in the special economic zones. Furthermore, around \$4 billion worth of

foreign investment, in the framework of Direct Foreign Investment has been made in the special economic zones. One should notice that this number is only for the realized investments and if we want to mention the number of the issued licenses, it will be a much higher figure; and it should also be noted that the participation of the domestic private sector in this performance has been very considerable and indicates that our Zones have been trusted by investors. We have been able to attract about 7 billion Tomans of domestic investment by the private sector in contrast to each 1 billion Tomans of investment by the free zones organizations in development projects. This fact should be taken into consideration by experienced economic experts.

The participation of private sector in the free and special economic zones has been considerable in a way that private sector has played a key role in development and investment both at free and special economic zones.

We could attract about 7 billion tomans worth of domestic investment by the private sector in each one billion tomans investment made by Free Zones Organization and this should be taken into consideration by experts.



Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Co. Makes 75,000 Billion Rials Investment in Country's Mining and Steel Sector

As one of the largest mining and mineral companies, Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company intends to carry out widespread measures for the development of its activities in the year named after "Surge in Production".

To learn more about the details, our reporter has conducted an interview with Eng. Naser Taghizadeh Managing Director of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company which comes as follows.

To begin with his interview, he pointed to the program of the company in the current year (started March 21, 2020) and added, "the company has predicted to extraction of 15 million tons of iron ore and produce 9.5 million tons of iron concentrate, 500,000 tons of granulated and graded iron ore, 3.7 million tons of conglomerate (pellet), 1.5 million tons of sponge iron and also one million tons of steel ingot in this year."

According to statistics, this industrial and production company has so far invested the amount of 48,500 billion rials directly in implementation of development projects and also 26,513 billion rials for purchasing stocks and shares of other production companies as joint venture, he said, adding, "totally, the company has made huge investment, valued at 75,000 billion rials, in mining and steel sector of the country."

With regards to the financing development projects of the company, he said, "all projects of the company have been developed using internal resources which includes the capital invested by its shareholders as well as the loans and facilities which have been received from banking system of the country."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the correction of taxes for exporting iron ore and a clear definition of crude-selling of products in the country and added, "from perspectives of producers of iron ore, crude selling means export of raw (crude) iron ore which is extracted from mines in the country and exporting the raw materials to other countries without carrying out any processing on them."

Given the above issue, produc-

ers of iron ore have not focused on crude selling of their products and all products have been exported after carrying out processing operations on them, he emphasized.

Iron ore is mainly produced in steel industries and hit the consumer markets in the form of blast furnace and direct reduction system (DRI) in the granulated and graded form, ranging from 0-10 millimeter (Fine Ore) size to 10-25 millimeter (Lump Ore) size with high purity in the form of iron ore concentrate convertible into the Pellet Feed, he continued.

CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company added, "in Iran, more than 85 percent of steel industries produce their products in the form of Direct Reduction System, so that consumer of iron ore concentrate with the purity of iron (Fe) stands at more than 67 percent."

Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) is the sole consumer of granulated and graded iron ore, he added.

On the other hand, 10 large companies in the country are producers of iron ore concentrate and these companies account for 85 percent production share of iron ore concentrate in the country, he said, adding, "iron ore concentrate is not exported due to the dire need of steel industries of the country to this product."

He then pointed to the export of



raw materials of the company and added, "principally, we do not agree with export of raw materials in raw form, rather, we are of the opinion that raw materials should first be processed for export."

Surplus products which can meet the domestic demand is better to be exported, he said, adding, "in this way, it is better to export surplus products without tax."

If products are exported without any tax levied on them, in addition to yielding foreign currency, it can

prevent closure of industrial units, he said, adding, "under such circumstances, unemployment problem will be prevented in the country."

Turning to the future of iron ore industry of the country, production, supply, demand and provision of raw materials and domestic consumption of iron ore, he added, "according to the statistics announced, 80 million tons of iron ore concentrate is needed in order to materialize objectives of production of 55 million tons of steel in 2025 Outlook Plan."

He put the production capacity of the company by the end of last year in 1398 (ended March 20, 2020) at 59 million tons.

With the estimates made in this regard, about 162 million tons of raw iron ore should be extracted in 2025 Outlook Plan, he emphasized.

He also put the amount of iron ore extracted in 2018 and 2019 at 87 and about 93 million tons respectively.

Taghizadeh added, "the geological reserves of iron ore in Iran stands at about 5 billion tons while the proven reserve of the iron ore reserves stands at between 2.5 and 3.3 billion tons."

If the new iron ore reserves are not discovered, it will last two decades for the provision of iron ore needed for steel industries after 2025 Vision Plan, he stated.

If it is assumed that 80 percent of 55 million tons of steel is produced by 2025 Outlook Plan the country will face no problem in the field of provision of iron ore in coming years, he added.

In any case, paying due attention to the exploration of mines and continuation of exploration activities with the support of both public and private sectors should be put atop agenda of government, he said, adding, "since iron ore is considered as the main raw materials of steel production chain in the country and considering the



vastness of steel production plants in the country as well as rail transport problems, the country should not focus on importing ore into the country."

Of course, construction of new steel manufacturing units at southern coastal areas of the country should be put atop agenda of large companies such as Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company, he said, adding, "one of these steel projects will be constructed at Chabahar Port and its needed iron ore would be provided from Australia."

In the end, Chief Executive of the company said, "producers of iron ore proposed that the government should not interfere in the issues related to the activities of private companies tasked with producing iron ore."

In addition, the government should not interfere in the activities of producers of small-scale mines especially in the field of pricing, rationing and levying tax on export of these products, he added.

In the end, he called on the government officials to cooperate with the private sector to remove barriers facing ahead of these companies.



Oil Minister Expounds on Delay in Construction Operation of Refinery in Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field



During the coronavirus global pandemic which has incurred irreparable damage to all countries in the world, this issue has brought about negative economic growth as well. The challenges facing ahead of the country are related to various factors such as confronting economic sanctions imposed by the United States against the country, problems caused by the currency transfer, fighting against coronavirus, COVID-19 and also economic pressures governing the country especially in the field of energy, oil, gas and petrochemical industries.

Generally speaking, spread of coronavirus pandemic has brought about serious problems for various economic sectors significantly. Emergence of developments in strategic sectors of this industry has faced the trend of country's attaining to the expected status in the global oil and gas arena with serious problem in a way that all activities in this sector are moving forwards slowly.

In the meantime, the development of the remaining phases in the largest gas field in the world i.e. South Pars Gas Field is not exception to this rule.

It should be kept in mind that major phases of South Pars Gas Field were put into operation in sanctions condition, benefited from high capabilities and potentials of domestic experts over the past years.

Despite all problems caused by the international restrictions ahead of the development of South Pars Gas Field, the current government at the outset of its activities was determined to pave suitable ways for the development and operation of mega gas projects at South Pars Gas Field using high capabilities of domestic engineers and experts in technical and engineering field. However, the government dubbed "Hope and Prudence" could inject financial resources timely and strengthen the contracting system and management of project optimally in line with implementation of phases in this world's giant gas reserve field.

This national determination continued in coming years which led to the

increased extraction of gas from world's largest gas reserve.

According to the latest statistics presented by the Iranian Oil Minister, 419 million cubic meter of gas has been added to the daily production of gas in South Pars Gas Field since 2013.

Generally speaking, the 11th and 12th government dubbed "Hope and Prudence" managed to increase gas reserves in South Pars Gas Field, showing a considerable hike as compared to the previous government.

■ Path of Development in Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field
Consortium of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field is composed of eight members under the strict supervision of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) which was set up in June 2019 for the completion of construction operation of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field.

Since then, the Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field has managed to attain about 88.33 percent physical progress.

Due to the limitation of financial resources of the country, it was decided to prioritize the various phases of South Pars Gas Field based on maximal extraction from joint field especially in border blocs. For this purpose, Phase 14 of the Field was determined due to its location at the northernmost part of the bloc in the vicinity of the Field and its nearness to the domestic borders of the country without any joint foreign border.

Also, in order to optimize the financial resources and given the restriction of executive infrastructures of the country in the process of simultaneous development of seven refinery projects and construction, installing and commissioning 24 offshore platforms from 2010 to 2019, it was decided that development of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field should be prioritized after the completion of construction operation of phases 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24.

■ Physical progress of Phase 14 Refinery of South Pars Gas Field in June 2013

One of the questions raised by law-



makers from the oil minister on the main reason behind the delay in construction operation of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field is based on this argument that this refinery has attained 59.88 percent physical progress in the first three years of project i.e. from June 2010 to 2013. Now, after the elapse of seven years, this project has achieved 84 percent physical progress.

The most important point is this that the Breakdown Structure of the refinery in Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field has not been considered as balanced in such a way that more focus has been made on the preliminary activities such as leveling and excavation operations, etc.

Given the above issue, earthen and construction operations accounted for about 30 percent of total construction operation of the refinery while the similar projects have had about 12 percent volume.

Also, according to the then minister of oil in Iranian month of Mordad 2012, depositing the 50 percent of prepayment to the project's goods has been put at the top agenda of employers of projects against the presentation of purchase order by contractors of projects in South Pars Gas Field.

■ Appointment of nine managing directors in a decade and repetitive warnings of project's employer

Instability of management and appointment of nine managing directors on one of the state-owned companies as member of the consortium of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field since 2010 helped

slowness of the development process of this giant project in such a way that this issue created serious problem ahead of activities of the project.

The officials of Pars Oil and Gas Company, as employer of the project, have warned officials of the company for many times and have called for presenting a suitable strategy for compensating delays caused by the stability of management of this company.

In Iranian month of July 2019 and concurrent with the implementation of installation operations in one of the gas platforms of this project in the Persian Gulf, commissioner of project in a news conference with reporters dispatched to the South Pars Gas Field and in response to this question that whether management changes have had a leading role in implementation of offshore sector of the field, had said, "as employer of this project, we are following up and pursuing this issue meticulously."

Tavasolipour pointed to the delay in implementation of this project by one of contractors has created serious problems for other contractors and added, "this issue has faced activities of the company with serious problem."

■ Re-Ordering of Vital Equipment and Machinery Needed for Commissioning Refinery

The project commissioner in Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field pointed to the sanctions imposed against the country as one of the main reasons behind delay in the construction operation of Phase 14 of the field.

Given the above issue, imposition of tough sanctions against the country created serious problems for the provision of equipment and machinery needed.

Lack of accessing to the vital parts and equipment such as compressors, instrumentation and control systems and turbo condensers, etc. has been cited as one of the main problems which caused this project to be delayed.

Despite ordering these items, European manufacturers avoided delivering these equipment and parts in order to complete construction operation of the phase.

■ Lack of Necessary Agility Due to Rules Governing State-Owned Companies

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mohammad Mehdi Tavasolipour pointed to the presence of some state-owned companies as members of the Consortium in development of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field and emphasized, "these companies are duty bound to receive banking certificates and guarantee letter for observing requirements of the regulations in state-owned tenders. Considering the terms and conditions governing the country in the international arena, the foreign contract-party companies are not able to submit these guarantee letters. Therefore, solutions for bypassing sanctions will cause delay in the process of provision of goods and finally, prolongation of timespan for the completion of construction operation of project."

He also pointed to the governmental structure governing the state-owned com-

panies present in the consortium of this project as the main reason behind lack of agility and prolongation of process of provision of pertinent parts and equipment.

The governmental structure of some members of the consortium and obliging to observe governmental rules and regulations caused reduction of necessary agility among members and steering team of the project.

■ Completion of Offshore Part and Attaining Main Objective of Project

Then, he expounded on the measures taken up to the present time and timing for remaining payment activities and pointed to the allocation of satellite platforms of C and D of this project to the Phases 17 and 18, he said, "given the significance of extraction of Iran's share from the joint fields and restricted financial resources, it was decided to focus on offshore part of the project in the development of Phase 14 of this project."

Therefore, at the unsparing and nonstop effort of contractors and employer of this project in offshore sector, the operation of drilling gas wells at sea was performed with the aim of attaining the nominal rich gas extraction capacity (56 million cubic meter daily) from four offshore platforms.

Presently, the offshore part of this project, totally with the daily extraction capacity of 2 billion cubic feet meters of sour gas (equal to 56 million cubic meter) was put into operation, implementation of which has realized the most important objective of this project.

■ Measures Done in Refinery of Phase 14 of SPGF

The project commissioner for the development of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field pointed to strengthening strategic structure of consortium, correcting the management structure in contracting section, ordering all goods which lack order, re-ordering of some main goods and parts, using the capacities of each member of the consortium to deal with the international restrictions in goods procurement parts as the most measures taken in this regard.

Managing Director of Hormozgan Steel Co.:

Hormozgan Steel Co., on Development with More Added-Value Track



It was planned that country's total steel production capacity will reach 55 million tons according to 2025 Outlook Plan. Accordingly, Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Company (EMSCO), which currently accounts for about half of the country's steel production share, has planned in its roadmap that with the implementation of development projects, which will be implemented mainly in the southern region of the country, it will maintain its 50% share in production of steel.

To realize this goal, in addition to the measures taken at EMSCO, Saba Steel Complex and Sefiddasht 800,000-ton Steel Unit, it was decided that the steel production capacity of Hormozgan Steel Company will increase from 1.5 million to 2 million tons. Meanwhile, construction of a wide-plate rolling line as well as construction of a direct reduction unit with a capacity of 900,000 tons in Hormozgan Steel Company has been put atop agenda of Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Working Group and it is expected that it will be implemented and put into operation in the near future.

With the establishment of a wide rolling line in Hormozgan Steel Company, with the annual production capacity of 1.2 million tons per year, this company will no longer be just a producer of slabs. This increase in the production capacity will be operational by making improvements to the steel and foundry unit and some of the company's infrastructure. In this regard, several projects are underway and some of them will start working in the near future.

The construction of this line will provide the ground for achieving more added value. In other words, steel ingot at Hormozgan Steel Company will be turned into wide sheets in another unit of the factory.

The sheets produced in this rolling line will be used in shipbuilding, oil and gas, petrochemical and many other industries and will create significant added value for the company and Mobarakeh Steel Group according to the needs of domestic and foreign markets.

The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company said, "Currently Hormozgan Steel Company produces 1,065,000 tons of sponge iron using two direct reduction units."

"Considering that the production capacity of Hormozgan Steel Company, it is decided to increase steel production capacity up to 2 million tons which is required to more sponge iron. However, for increasing steel production capacity up to 2 million tons, the company needs more sponge iron," he added.

For this reason, construction of a direct reduction module with a capacity of 900,000 tons per year has been considered in these developments, the CEO of company highlighted.



To learn more about the details, we have conducted an interview with Farzad Arzani Chief Executive of Hormozgan Steel Company which comes as follows:

Let's review the interview in questions and answers.

■ Which companies in the country own a wide steel sheet production line (plate mill)?

A: Due to the use of advanced and sophisticated technology in production of wide sheets (plate mill) as well as special applications of this category of steel sheets in the industry, only unique factories in the world are able to develop and invest in this field.

For the first time in Iran in 1984, with the establishment of Khuzestan OXIN Steel Company and in cooperation with the Italian Company named "Danieli", this industrial and production company was able to produce wide steel sheets (plate mill) up to a maximum width of 4.5 meters. Therefore, after Khuzestan OXIN Steel Company, Hormozgan Steel Company will be the second factory in the country in the field of producing wide steel sheet by implementing and launching a production line of wide sheets with a capacity of 1.2 million tons per year.

A very important point that can be mentioned in the development plan of Hormozgan Steel Company is that this unit will be constructed with the approach of localization of technology and equipment.

■ How much amount of this type of steel sheet is used in the country?

A: Hot-rolled sheets are one of the most important and strategic products in the steel industry, which are mainly used in special ac-

tivities such as oil, gas, petrochemical industries as well as manufacturing of machinery, offshore structures, shipbuilding, power plant equipment, steel structures in buildings, etc.

The use of wide sheets in the oil and gas industries for the construction of fluid transfer pipes (oil and gas) with a focus on the production of special grades of API steel resistant to sour and sweet gas environments has differentiated use of wide steel sheets in the country with the neighboring states.

Therefore, considering the implementation of oil and gas projects in the country and the capacity of newly discovered reserves and development plans for oil and gas transmission to the neighboring country and other regions of the country, a clear prospect can be imagined for the consumption of API sheets for the coming years in the country.

According to studies made in this regard, it is estimated that there is a demand for about 700,000 tons of API grades in the country annually. With considering consumption of other industries to this sheet in the offshore, heavy machinery, tanks, petrochemical and construction sectors, it is estimated, in the case of infrastructure investments by 2025 Outlook Plan, there is a need for about 2 million tons of thick sheets (plate) in the country.

■ If there is a shortage of this type of sheet in the country, how much import is needed annually?

A: The significant part of import of wide sheets into the domestic market depends on the amount of projects being implemented by the oil and gas industry in the country. In previous years, due to the implementation of oil and gas projects in the

country by the Ministry of Oil and the lack of supply of this type of products in the country, supply of wide sheets was often done through imports.

At present, with the increase of Khuzestan OXIN Steel Company's capacity in the field of rolling API X70 sheet and supplying the required slabs through Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Company, imports have been prevented. It is predicted that in the next five years, the country's steel industry will completely eliminate the need to import wide sheets by launching production of wide sheets in Hormozgan Steel Company.

■ If Hormozgan Steel Company launches this production line, what percentage of the market share will your company provide?

A: Based on studies made in this regard on the market demand, construction of plate mill line, based on the design and production of distinctive product in terms of specific dimensions and qualities, is considered as the best strategy to develop the product portfolio of Mobarakeh Steel Group which guarantees the sustainable presence of company at domestic and export markets in coming years. Most importantly, construction of plate mill will increase the power of competition and market share of Mobarakeh Steel Company.

On the other hand, due to the development of production capacity of piping, petrochemical, construction industries, etc. in the coming years, the need for these steel sheets in the country will increase significantly and Hormozgan Steel Company's share in meeting the market demands will be decisive.

■ What measures have been taken in the field of exporting this product?

A: The company's sales and marketing roadmap in the export sector focuses on attractive markets. Therefore, considering the oil and gas resources

in the Persian Gulf countries and implementation of oil and gas field development projects in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), export of API wide steel sheets to export target markets of the region has been targeted due to enjoying oil and gas resources.

Also, it is estimated that European countries and parts of Asian regions will need to thick and wide steel sheets of the company with special grades, applicable in sectors of infrastructure, power plant equipment, boilers and pressure vessels and heavy machinery. However, European and Asian markets will be very suitable markets for the company's new products.

■ If this type of sheet is launched, how much currency will be prevented from being exited the country?

A: As mentioned in above, according to the development plans of oil and gas industries in the country, annual needs of the domestic market, based on studies, to various types of API steel sheets will be about 700,000 tons, so that a significant part of which includes wide sheets which will be used in the construction of fluid pipes with 56-inch and 48-inch diameters.

Considering that the wide steel sheets with API X80 and API X70 grades (with normal and special dimensions) should be calculated at least \$ 700 according to their type of use. If this amount is provided in the country, a considerable outflow of foreign currency from the country will be prevented.

Also in other sectors of industries that need special sheets with high quality and have special applications in the field of activities of offshore structures and steel structures, power plants, petrochemicals, etc., a significant amount of currency is prevented from being exited the country if they are produced by the company.



Highlights of Developmental / Production Achievements of National Iranian Oil Company (NICO) Since 2019 Up to the Present Time

Developmental activities on the path of attaining increased oil production capacity (West Karun District)

- 1- Fulfilling construction operation of Goureh-Jask oil pipeline as long as 1,000 km
- 2- Construction operation of export terminal at Makran Area in line with turning Jask into country's important export terminal
- 3- Planning to attain the production capacity of 400,000 barrels of oil in West Karun region by yearend (to end March 20, 2021)
- 4- Starting construction operation of flare gases processing and collecting plant
- 5- Deploying the first mobile separator at South Yaran Joint Gas Field

Highlights of Development Activities on Path of Attaining to Increase Gas Production Capacity (South Pars Gas Field)

- 1- Operation of the first change of phases 13, from 22 to 24 of South Pars Gas Fields
- 2- Fulfilling the operation of installing the last offshore platform in phases 13 and 14 as well as final operation from phase 29 of the production platform up to the end of the last year in 1398 (ended March 20, 2020)
- 3- Development of 28 phases of South Pars Gas Field at the final station
- 4- Attaining to the daily production capacity of 1,000 million cubic meters of gas in the country by yearend

Highlights of Exploratory Activities on the Past of Development of Oil and Gas Industries

- 1- Realization of more than 130 percent of oil exploratory commitments as well as 170 percent of commitments of gas explorations in the first half of the country's Five-Year Exploration Program
- 2- Discovering the large ERAM Gas Field with the storage capacity of 540 billion cubic meters of in situ gas in summer 2019
- 3- Discovering the large NAMAVARAN Oil Field with the storage capacity of 53.3 billion barrels of in situ oil in autumn 2019

Development Contracts of Hydrocarbon Fields by Relying on Domestic Capabilities and Potentials

- 1- Signing and sealing 13 contracts related to the second stage of oil production increase and retention plans.
- 2- Signing and sealing a contract for the completion of development of South Azadegan Oil Field
- 3- Signing and sealing contract for the construction of the largest country's oil and gas processing unit (CTEP)
- 4- Signing and sealing contract for the improvement of recycling, increasing production and operation of PERANJ and PARSI oilfields,
- 5- Signing and sealing development contracts in YARAN Oilfield and BELAL Gas Field
- 6- Operation of eight exploratory contracts in various oil and gas areas of the country

The Desired Objectives in Signing Domestic Contracts:

- * Preserving the national asset
- * Increasing country's oil and gas production capacity
- * Generating widespread and vast employment opportunities at the level of native and aboriginal manpower
- * Supporting domestic production and empowering the domestic companies
- * Taking advantage of capabilities and potentials of experts as well as human and native assets

Social Responsibilities

- 1- Fulfilling 4,280 public utility project, costing over 23.4 million rials (implementation of 580 projects in 2019 and 2020)
- 2- Implementation of 416 projects related to the flood-hit regions in Khuzestan province, with the allocation of 1,300 billion rials
- 3- Allocation of 132 billion rials credit for the implementation of water conveyance to Gheyzanieh of Ahvaz, Khuzestan province
- 4- Fulfilling social responsibility of oil industry in confronting coronavirus, COVID-19.

A Glance at West Karoon Combined Cycle Power Plant & Salient Achievements of MAPNA Group



Construction operation of West Karoon Combined Cycle Power Plant was planned in 2013 within the framework of investment projects with Build, Operate and Own (BOO) basis with the aim of supplying electricity for oil installations of West Karoon and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) 3200. Finally, contract of construction operation of West Karoon Combined Cycle Power Plant was exchanged between Oil Engineering and Development Company (OEDC) as investee and MAPNA Group of companies in BOO basis within the framework of contract for converting energy and guaranteed purchase of electricity for a period of 20 years.

The nominal capacity of West Karoon Combined Cycle Power Plant stands at 520 megawatts which includes a combined cycle bloc comprised of two gas-powered turbines of MAP2A type manufactured by MAPNA Group and a steam-powered turbine with all offsite facilities and a substation with 230-kV.

Currently, the first phase of this giant project, including gas department of the power plant, is ready for operational with the completion of installation operation.

It should be noted that MAPNA Group has embarked on launching this giant project from its financial resources. Some part of financial resources needed for launching this giant project has been provided by MAPNA Group.

It should be noted that the development plans at West Karoon Oil Fields is currently considered as the most important national projects of the country. It is obvious that operation of projects of this area strictly hinges on the safe and sustainable supply of electricity, so that this power plant was launched for meeting the electricity demands.

MAPNA Group is honored to say that, with the nonstop and unflinching efforts of its specialized and expert manpower, it has played a key and leading role in developing and operating oilfields. Benefited from high capabilities and potentials of domestic companies, MAPNA Group has used all its specialties and expertise in the country in line with realizing objectives of resistance economy.

In addition to prevent capital flight, the Group has taken giant strides in line with generating new employment opportunities.

Hereunder are of the most important and salient specifications of this project:

- This power plant will be considered as the first combined cycle power plant in the country in the form of E-Type with the nominal production capacity of about 53%. In this line, West Karoon Combined Cycle Power Plant is equipped with an advanced three-pressure turbine which is unique of its kind in the country in order to



reach its maximum output obtained from smoke emitted from gas units. In addition, the power plant is equipped with two recycling boilers (HRSG), main cooling tower system of ACC type, etc. in line with increasing its production capacity.

- With due observance to the social responsibility of MAPNA group and given the scheduled program, necessary predictions have been made for converting gas turbines of this power plant into MAP2B version at the first fundamental repair and maintenance

services. It should be noted that conversion of gas turbines of this power plant into MAP2B version will increase the efficiency and production capacity of each unit considerably.

- Supplying main fuel of the power plant: Major fuel of this power plant will be supplied from LNG 3200 Factory in order to prevent loss of energy and converting it to the electricity required by operational regions and electricity grid of country

- Reducing production of greenhouse gases and decrease greenhouse

gas emissions as much as 185,000 tons per year due to the increased efficiency of combined cycle from 49%, which is the soft amount in similar power plants in the country, to 3% as well as using DLN system for reducing environmental pollutants.

- Air-Intake System and some other systems of this power plant have been designed and installed in specific form due to the special condition of region in terms of dust and humidity.

- Given the possibility of increasing the need for electricity in the region, in the design and location of the power plant, necessary arrangements have been made for the construction of two more combined cycle blocks at the current location of the power plant.

- Using a native control system called MAPCS, MAP2A and MAP2B gas turbines from the products of knowledge-based companies, affiliated to MAPNA Group

- Using a special design to reduce water consumption in the process section, water consumption in this power plant has decreased from 11 meters per hour in similar projects to about 4.3 cubic meters per hour. Generally speaking, giant steps have been taken in the field of reducing water consumption in West Karoon Combined Cycle Power Plant.

- During the construction period of the power plant, efforts have

been made to make maximum use of local and native manpower in the region, so that an average of about 400 direct manpower has been generated in the workshop of the power plant and more than 1,500 people have been employed indirectly per month. During the operation period, using specialized forces in the region and after the necessary training services, employment opportunities have been generated for about 100 people.

- The main working volumes of this project include: more than 213,000 cubic meters of excavation, about 60,000 cubic meters of concreting, piling at depths of 12 and 25 meters with the amount of about 1300 pieces (in order to strengthen the bed), installation and commissioning of 15,000 tons of equipment and about 5,000 tons of steel structures.

With the incessant efforts of specialized manpower of MAPNA Group and the cooperation and support of the Oil Engineering and Development Company, the first and second gas units were synchronized with the national electricity grid in summer 2019 and after conducting necessary tests, they have been put into commercialization operation. MAPNA Group will use all its efforts to set up a steam unit and complete the power plant as soon as possible in order to promote national production and achieve self-sufficiency as in the past.



West Asian states should unite against U.S.-Israel-Saudi-UAE axis: Turkish party leader

“Emiratis even ally with the devil for their own benefit,” says Turkish Patriotic Party chief

➔ Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Do you believe that Iran, Turkey and some progressive Arab countries can establish a regional alliance?

A: This alliance can be established and it has already been done. West Asian countries should come together against the axis of U.S., Israel, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates because we are facing common threats.

■ What is the attitude of Turkey about the presence of foreign powers in the region especially in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan? What do you think of the normalization agreement between the UAE and Israel?

A: The UAE has once again demonstrated its destructive role for our region by making an agreement with Israel. It's not surprising, frankly. They even ally with the devil for their own benefit! Our goal is a West Asia free from all external forces and influences; A region dominated by peace and mutual respect, and a common effort to fight against terrorism. Turkey is slowly coming to this line, and that is why the U.S. is trying to undermine the Erdogan government. They tried to overthrow his government and kill him. That opened Erdogan's eyes to see the facts more clearly. Now Turkey heads towards a more region-based policy.

■ President Erdogan announced on Friday that Turkey made its biggest-ever discovery of natural gas after completing new exploration work in the Black Sea. What will be the impact of the discovery on Turkey's political and economic future?

A: As you said the discovery has a his-



toric importance for Turkey. Turkey's gas find meets its need to natural gas for 7 years. This means about 70 billion dollars. But Turkey cannot solve its energy problems by the recent discovery and the country will continue to buy natural gas. However, with the discovery of new reserves in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the need to buy natural gas from outside may decrease over time.

It does not mean that economy of Tur-

key will be heavily dependent on gas, like oil-dependent countries including Saudi Arabia. Turkish industry is multidimensional.

■ Do you see any possibility to solve problems between Turkey and Egypt?

A: This is a necessity for both countries. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a speech he gave recently, stated that Turkey is ready to meet with all countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt

is undoubtedly one of these countries. Turkey must attract Egypt which is now on the side of Greece and the United States. This can be done by putting aside old disputes.

■ Given the Persian Gulf states' attempts to confront Turkey in Libya, what is the stance of Ankara to ceasefire in Libya? Do you expect a comprehensive solution in Libya?

A: Turkey is supporting the legitimate government in Libya. Libya and Turkey have maritime boundary in Mediterranean Sea.

Moreover, there are serious historical and cultural ties between the two countries. For these reasons Turkey attempts to reinforce its ties with Libya are understandable.

We are thinking different from the Turkish government. Turkey should attract Egypt and Syria to its side in the eastern Mediterranean. Turkey should not be left alone in the eastern Mediterranean front established by U.S., Israel, Cyprus and Greece.

Ankara should follow a policy that includes strengthening ties with Russia. In Libya, a ceasefire is necessary only to the extent that it serves Libya's political unity.

■ Why does Turkey enter the regional conflicts especially in Libya while it had announced before that it would follow policy of “zero problems with neighbors?”

A: I explained above. Turkey and Libya have maritime boundary and are neighbors with deep-rooted ties. Instead of questioning Turkey we should ask countries such as the U.S. and Israel which do not have maritime border with Libya.

German expert describes U.S., Israel as today's oppressors

By Zahra Mirzafarjoun

Imam Hussein (AS) is an important figure in Islam. The timing of Imam Hussein's life and death were crucial as they were in one of the most challenging periods of the seventh century. During this time, Umayyad oppression was rampant, and the stand that Imam Hussein and his followers took became a symbol of resistance inspiring future uprisings against oppressors and injustice. The martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) has had a deep impact on Muslims in general and on the Shia in particular; it has been a source of inspiration for various resistance movements and revolutions throughout history.

Throughout history, many notable personalities, such as Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi, have cited Imam Hussein's stand against oppression as an example for their own fights against injustice.

In an exclusive interview, Dr. Markus Fiedler, a German sociologist, Islamic scholar, and lecturer at al-Mustafa Institute in Berlin shared his views on Imam Hussein's uprising and its messages for the people in the contemporary time.

■ Every year, the freedom-lovers of the world keep the memory of Imam Hussein alive in the month of Muharram. Why is the uprising of Imam Hussein still dynamic despite the passage of many years?

A: The uprising of Imam Hussein and the positions of Islamic liberation theology seem highly topical, as the injustice in the world is becoming increasingly acute for everyone. According to an Oxfam report two years ago, 8 billionaires now own more than half of humanity, and the gap between rich and poor is widening. To a certain extent, he refutes the words of Karl Marx that religion is ultimately only “opium for the people”. It shows that people - because of their religious convictions - oppose unjust conditions without simply putting people off to the hereafter.

■ In his uprising, Imam Hussein sacrificed his position, wealth and even his own family to fight against the

oppressive ruler. What are the guidelines and messages of his uprising for the popular uprisings in the contemporary time?

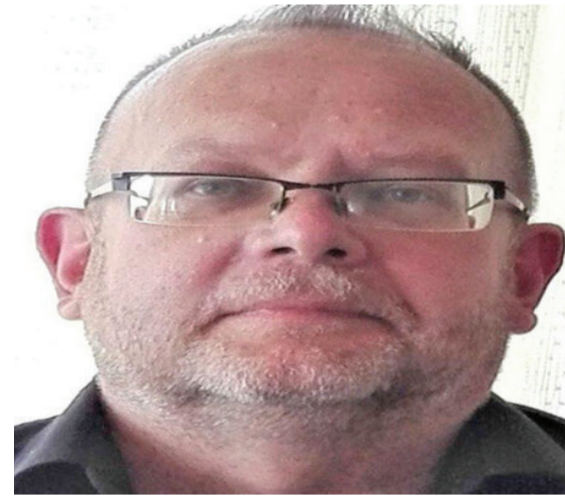
A: The uprising of Imam Hussein shows that one should not allow oneself to be intimidated, even in the face of the apparently enormous superiority of the oppressors' camp. In the course of history, all great empires, however invincible in their time, have perished. There are timeless truths. Whoever hurls the truth at the oppressor - or whatever empire - and is not ready to raise the white flag, shows courage and steadfastness. Since it is a fight for a just cause, one knows according to all world religions that sovereignty is, so to speak, the basis of human dignity. It is undignified to crawl before oppressive powers.

■ Imam Hussein fought against Yazid to institutionalize the message of freedom and resistance to oppression. In your opinion, who are the oppressors of today's world?

A: It is actually clear who is acting as an occupying power in Palestine, driving out the native population, treating it as second-class people and occupying foreign land. On a global scale there is only one military superpower today that maintains over 700 military bases in foreign countries. It threatens the few sovereign states in the world, tries to destabilize them and carry out a “regime Change” there. Overturns and various “color revolutions” are staged. Instead of a democracy, however, such a regime change means the loss of sovereignty.

A distinction must be made between the American people and the ruling elite; the “establishment” is now also hated by broad sections of the U.S. population. The U.S. is really an oligarchy, not a democracy. This is not mine; it is the result of studies in the United States - one of which is that of political scientists Martin Gilens (Princeton) and Benjamin Page (Northwestern University).

According to the political scientist Jeffrey Winters who teaches at Northwestern University in Illinois, the super-rich controls politics and the media in the USA with their money. According to Winters, the super-rich only



make up a tenth of one percent of the U.S. population, i.e. 300,00 people. Today the financial elite is decisive. Around 1,000 trillion dollars are invested in derivatives that U.S. investor Warren Buffet calls “financial weapons of mass destruction”.

■ What can today's freedom-seekers movements, including the anti-racist movement in countries like the United States, learn from this uprising?

A: The tendencies towards resignation in societies must be countered. Instead, people need to be educated about Western propaganda. As I said before: Today one can learn from this not to despair, even in the face of the apparently gigantic superiority of the oppressors' camp. As we can see, given the events of our day (corona crisis, race riot in the U.S., economic crisis, etc.), the situation can change completely in a short period of time. It is not the person who determines the fate of the world. God also has His plan - and this will ultimately prevail.

U.S. intelligence behind assassinations in Basra

By Fatemeh Salehi

Basra province in southern Iraq has been the scene of high tensions and riots in recent days amid popular protests against the economic situation in the country.

However, it seems that the protests in Basra have become a cover for some rioters to damage public property and aggravate the situation by creating unrest in the region.

In the midst of these protests, the assassination of a number of Iraqi activists by unknown agents has worsened the situation in Basra.

To shed more light on this, Tehran Times conducted an interview with Spokesman of Al-Sadiqoun Bloc in Iraq, Mahmoud al-Rabee, about the developments in Basra province and the recent visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister to the United States.

■ Why do you think Basra province is so important for the United States?

A: Basra is one of the most important provinces in Iraq, home to Iraq's only waterway. Basra is the most important and largest economic city in Iraq and is considered as one of the top competitors in regional and international issues.

The United States is trying to bring Basra under its own influence, as the prov-



ince is close to the U.S.-allied Persian Gulf states, and with their help, Washington intends to take control of the Middle East, which is like the center of the world.

■ Do you think that the U.S. is involved in the recent assassinations in Basra and the riots in this province?

A: That's exactly the reason behind the recent moves by the American consulate in this province. The Americans are trying to take advantage of the protests of the youth of Basra to achieve their own goals. For this reason, we strongly believe that the U.S. intelligence service and its affiliated gangs are behind the assassinations in Basra.

With these assassinations, the Americans are trying to create chaos in Bas-

ra, turning this region into a center of tension and sedition, and then affecting and altering the general situation in Iraq. Unfortunately, partisan conflicts over official positions in Basra have played a large role in creating the current situation.

The media have also tried to tarnish the resilient nature of Basra, which is a source of goodness and blessings for Iraqis, by presenting images of chaos and turmoil in the province. However, the children of the residents of Basra have played an important role in liberating Iraq from foreign occupiers and elements of the terrorist organization ISIL.

■ Why was there no talk of an immediate withdrawal of the American occupiers during Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's visit to the U.S. and his meeting with President Donald Trump?

A: The visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to the U.S. cannot be judged on a success or failure basis, since the trip showed the inability of Iraqi leaders to express the will of their people and members of parliament.

The fact that al-Kadhimi did not say anything about the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq during this trip makes it clear that he does not value the wishes of the Iraqi people. Regarding the agreements signed during Al-Kadhimi's

visit to the U.S., I must say that anyone who pins hopes on the Americans is only following a mirage.

Moreover, Trump has destroyed Iraq and made some wrong decisions regarding the recognition of Jerusalem al-Quds as the capital of the Zionist regime. For this one move alone, we should boycott him and call for the arrest of this criminal, not to meet with him and sign an agreement.

By signing these agreements with Trump, Iraqi officials gave him the opportunity to consolidate his position after his major failure to resolve U.S. internal and external crises during his time in the White House.

■ During this meeting, Trump said that the withdrawal of American troops would take three years. How do you evaluate this claim?

The three-year deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq reflects Trump's demands; Meanwhile, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi remained silent in the face of this demand and acted as if he was okay with it.

Al-Kadhimi is well aware that we are committed to our pledge to our martyrs regarding the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops; as such, we are opposed to this deadline and want a schedule for the immediate withdrawal of the American troops from our country.

News

Sudan PM to Pompeo: Govt. has no mandate to normalize with Israel

Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has dashed America's hopes for quick normalization with Israel, saying his government has no mandate to establish ties with Tel Aviv and any such a decision should wait until after the transitional period ends in the African country.

During talks in the capital Khartoum on Tuesday, Hamdok “clarified” to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the country's transitional period “is being led by a wide alliance with a specific agenda — to complete the transition, achieve peace and stability in the country and hold free elections,” Sudanese government spokesman Faisal Saleh said in a statement.

It “does not have a mandate beyond these tasks or to decide on normalization with Israel,” Hamdok was quoted as saying.

France & Italy throw weight behind Greece as naval war games kick off amid Athens-Ankara row

France, Italy, Greece and Cyprus are staging a massive maritime exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean, in an apparent veiled nod to Turkey, which recently began researching oil and gas deposits in the area, raising ire in Athens.

Codenamed ‘Eunomia’, the aeronautical exercises launched on Wednesday off the southern shores of Cyprus, the host nation of the war games. Athens' defense minister announced the start of the drills earlier in the day, saying they are to reinforce “the rule of law as part of the policy of de-escalating tensions.”

France, in turn, also confirmed the news, having dispatched its ‘Lafayette’ frigate, as well as three Rafale fighter jets. Italian and Cypriot vessels were also said to have joined the exercise in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, RT reported.

A day prior, separate drills kicked off near the Greek island of Crete, this time involving Hellenic and U.S. armed forces.

Pompeo meets with Bahraini leaders

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo discussed regional stability and Persian Gulf Arab unity with Bahraini leaders on Wednesday, as part of a West Asia tour following an accord between Israel and the United Arab Emirates on normalizing relations.

On his arrival on Tuesday night, Pompeo had said it was vital to seize the momentum of the U.S.-brokered deal announced on Aug. 13. Israel and the United States have said they are pushing more Arab countries to follow the UAE's path. Israel's intelligence minister has mentioned Bahrain as a possible candidate.

Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa said he welcomed U.S. efforts towards the Israel-UAE accord, noting “the importance of re-doubling efforts to realize a just solution which utilises peace as a strategic option to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict”, state news agency BNA said.

Bahrain said Wednesday it was committed to the creation of a Palestinian state in talks with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, implicitly rejecting his push for Arab countries to swiftly normalize ties with Israel.

Macron to visit Beirut Sept. 1

French President Emmanuel Macron will travel to Beirut Sept. 1, his office said Wednesday.

Macron was the first foreign leader to visit Beirut after a massive blast destroyed parts of the Lebanese capital in early August.

Flash flooding kills nearly 70 in northern Afghanistan

Heavy flooding in northern and eastern Afghanistan has killed nearly 70 people, as the deluge ravaged large parts of Charikar city, the capital of Parwan province, officials have said.

Wahida Shahkar, spokeswoman for Parwan province, said on Wednesday the number of casualties may rise as rescue teams work to locate people buried under destroyed houses.

“At least 68 have been killed and 90 injured, the death toll might rise and people are still stuck under the rubble as rescue operations are ongoing,” Shahkar told Al Jazeera.

Containing the incident and helping the affected families was beyond the capacity of the local government, and the central government should step in quickly, Shahkar said.

Many children were among the dead in Charikar, which was hit by heavy rains overnight, the Ministry of Disaster Management said in a statement.

Ahmad Jan, a resident of Shahrak-Malimin village in Parwan province, said most people are still stuck under the rubble of their houses.

Resistance News

Lebanon to complain to UNSC about Israel border escalation

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — Lebanon says it will file a complaint with the United Nations Security Council about a recent Israeli attempt at escalation that saw the regime fire dozens of flares over the country's border.

The country's Supreme Defense Council announced the plan during a meeting chaired by Lebanese President Michel Aoun on Wednesday, Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) reported.

Early in the day, Israel's Channel 12 said the regime had fired more than 30 of the projectiles into Lebanon.

Lebanon's al-Manar television network, however, described the projectiles as phosphorous shells and identified the targeted areas as the southern Lebanese towns of Houla and Mays al-Jabal.

The regime described the development as a “security-related incident.”

Israeli media initially said the firing came amid concerns over what they called a possible infiltration near Kibbutz Menara in the Upper Galilee area, located near the Lebanese border and the Israeli-occupied Syrian territory of the Golan Heights.

Neither the Lebanese army nor the country's resistance movement of Hezbollah has, however, reported carrying out any such operation into the occupied territories.

A glimpse of Muharram mourning rituals across Iran: Sham-e Ghariban

(Part 8/8)

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The night of Ashura in Iran is called Shaam-e Ghariban, meaning “the night of strangers” and those who are far from home and help. People light candles in holy places and gatherings in every corner of the country.

However, this morning ritual is enormously popular in Mashhad in particular within the holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS) and tens of Hussainiyas, mosques even private houses.



At that night, the servants of the shrine gather at Goharshad mosque yard of the shrine with candles in their hands. Then they mourn and perform chest-thumping.

During Muharram, a part from mosques, each neighborhood sets up its own establishment for the ceremonial processions of the month known as “Tekkiyeh”, which are venues for gathering of mourners known as ‘heyat’ (literally meaning group or delegation) who honor the life of Imam Hussein (AS).

Origin of Sham-e Ghariban

The event is held in commemoration of survived children who left alone after Ashura. The ceremony is held for sympathy and show the love of mourners toward Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal companions.

Belqeys citadel being restored to original glory

TOURISM TEHRAN — The remnants of Belqeys citadel, the second-largest mudbrick fortress in Iran after the UNESCO-registered Bam citadel, are being restored to original texture, a local tourism official has said.



The ruined citadel, which is sometimes referred to as Shahr-e Belqeys (“The city of Belqeys”) is located in northeastern North Khorasan province. It lies at a short distance from the city of Esfaryen.

A budget of three billion rials (about \$72,000) has been allocated to the project, Hossein Rahmani announced on Wednesday.

Remnants of the citadel, family lodgings, irrigation channels, a cistern, and a hypostyle hall are amongst objects so far been unearthed in Belqeys during rounds of excavation.

From ancient to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortresses were designed primarily to defend territories in warfare and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today’s archaeologists.

Police bust gang trading historical objects online

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iranian authorities have recently busted a smuggling gang that was illegally trading ancient relics online in northern Mazandaran province.

Ninety-five historical objects including earrings, bracelets, rings, and 300 bronze and pottery relics belong to different historical eras were seized from the smugglers, said Amir Rahmatollahi, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage, CHTN reported on Wednesday.



The culprits were detained and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

He also noted that to identify the websites that illegally sell historical relics, the cyberspace is being monitored 24 hours a day.

In July, Iranian police blocked 86 websites which were illegally trading historical artifacts.

Back in June, Facebook banned the sale of historical artifacts, including Iranian carpets, on its platforms in an attempt to prevent priceless items looted or stolen from being sold online.

Published photos of stolen historical artifacts on Facebook and Instagram were one of the reasons which led to the decision.

Several reports confirmed that the looters were using the platform to identify and sell illegally excavated antiquities mostly from the countries in West Asia.

Tekyehs echo Muharram mourning through history

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

Tekyehs, venues for the gathering of mourners who honor the way Imam Hussein (AS) chose to live and to die, have been blood floating in the Iranian mourning culture veins, refreshed year after year, century after century, since Iranians have mourned the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his 72 loyal companions for centuries.

The round stages of tekyehs have been a place for eulogists who lead the mourners to beat on their chests according to the rhythm of a sung eulogy, a rendezvous for those who are wailing over an old but still bleeding wound, as well as a stage for performing tazieh, Iranian passion play, inspired by historical and religious narrations, reviving the story and the pain over and over again.

The horses’ whinnies, the clanging of the swords along with men in war clothes as well as the sound of the crying women who are watching the play from the balconies, remind the audience of the events on Ashura, the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala in 680 CE.

The beginning of the Muharram rituals in Islamic countries and Iran can be traced back to the Buyid dynasty (945–1055), however after centuries, during the Safavid era (1501–1736) that a religious government was established, such ceremonies were practiced more seriously.

While Tekyehs had different uses, they faced various changes over time



and gradually they have become places for holding mourning ceremonies especially during the lunar month of Muharram. They have been able to bridge the gap between people from different walks of life with Ashura culture and have tried to keep this culture alive and unforgettable through history.

During the Qajar era (1789–1925) new styles and methods in the mourning ceremonies were created and the ceremonies became more thriving, making tekyehs more popular.

However, in the early Pahlavi period (1925–1979), by order of Reza Shah, religious mourning ceremonies were

banned and tekyehs were closed. This was the time places such as mosques, shrines and even gardens and corners of the yards of people’s houses became small tekyehs and these places played a vital role in keeping alive and promoting such ceremonies.

Nowadays, after almost one century, during Muharram, apart from mosques, each neighborhood sets up its own tekyeh for gathering of mourners known as ‘heyat’ (literally meaning group or delegation) and the ceremonial processions of the month.

Participating in mourning ceremonies was a large part of people’s lives in old

Tehran as well as other central cities across the country. About 150 years ago, Tehran had between 50 and 70 local tekyehs, which are now destroyed or replaced by hosayniyas (places used for religious mourning ceremonies).

Today tekyehs, however, are specific locations for mourners who meet and participate in religious gathering after which they head out on the streets in groups known as dasteh (literally meaning cluster) to parade dramatic mourning.

Tekyeh Dowlat, one of the icons of ancient Tehran, is the most well-known tekyeh in Iran, while Tekyeh Khanum seems to be the oldest one.

Being completed in 1868 by the order of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, Tekyeh Dowlat, literally meaning “State Theater”, was one of the most famous of all the tazieh performance spaces in the country. It has a capacity for more than 4,000 people.

It is said that American statesman Samuel Greene Wheeler Benjamin believed that Tekyeh Dowlat was comparable to Verona Arena, a Roman amphitheater in Piazza Bra in Verona, Italy.

Tekyeh Khanum was built by the order of the sister of Tahmasp I, one of the Safavid kings. When the king was developing Tehran, his sister was constructing a school, a public bathhouse along with the tekyeh, which are all known as Khanum buildings.

Tekyehs and holding Muharram rituals have kept the story of Ashura alive over the years. Apart from mourning, holding these ceremonies have affected art and architecture as well as drama and literature, and are now an important part of people’s lives.

Nonzero: only 74 international travelers visit Iran during spring

→ The tourism minister on Monday said that his ministry is in full coordination with the Ministry of Health for strictly implementing health protocols in travel destinations, hospitably centers, and museums, amongst others, underlining that “people’s health is our first priority.”

“Protocols outlined by the [both] Ministry of Health, and National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control are being strictly implemented.”

Earlier this month, Mounesan proclaimed: “If the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic is contained, all the tourism businesses across the country will have the capacity to fully resume their activities both in domestic and foreign markets.”

“Many tourism projects have been completed, or are being implemented, showing that a very good capacity has been created in the field of tourism in the country and [this trend] should not be stopped,” he explained.

According to Mounesan, 2,451 tourism-related projects

worth 1.370 trillion rials (around \$32 billion) are currently being implemented across the country that “signals a prosperous future for Iran’s tourism sector.”

In August, the tourism minister said the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. “Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning.”

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic



Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan speaks in an undated photo.

during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

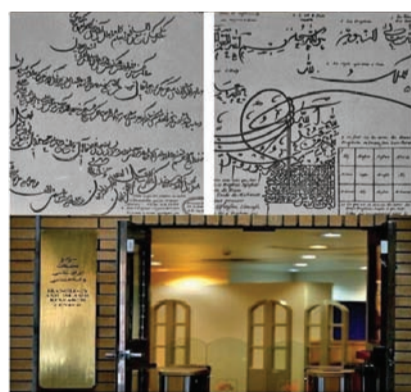
Travelogues: tapping into the past hearing Muharram rituals from Europeans visiting Persia

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Travelogues, inscribed by European travelers to Persia (Iran) over the past centuries, is a good source to hear about Muharram mourning ceremonies from the point of view of Westerners, experts say.

“Travelogues of globetrotters, particularly European travelers to Iran during the [lunar] months of Muharram and Safar bear narrations of Ashura [mourning ceremonies] in different historical periods, some of which belong to the mourning ceremonies of Tasua and Ashura during the Safavid and Qajar periods,” according to the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI).

“A section at the National Library and Archives of Iran is dedicated to Iranology and Islamology arenas, containing a treasure trove of related documents and studies. And there are also over 400 travelogues being kept in this section,” Iraj Enayatzadeh, who presides over NLAI department for Iranology and Islamology.

“Some of those travelogues belong to famous European tourists, which contain objective and historical materials and important documents of Muharram and



Ashura mourning ceremonies and the way Iranian society observed Muharram in the past centuries.”

Travelogues by Pietro della Valle (1586–1652), Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605–1689), Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson (1884–1940), Frederick Charles Richards, and Heinrich Karl Brugsch, which are being kept at the National Library and Archives of Iran, portray scenes from Shia Muslims commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions during the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

According to sources, in his travelogue, the Italian author Pietro Della Valle who visited yIran in 1618 described the Muharram mourning ceremony with all rites and features of the event. yTravelers and tourists who journeyed to Iran in Safavid and Qajar eras referred to interesting points about the Iranian ceremony in the month of Muharram from black wearing neighborhoods to mourning bands in cities.

In fact, travelogues are valuable sources which highlight different aspects of the Iranian social history, particularly where it is hidden from the eyes of Iranian historians. It is with the assistance of these travelogues that reconstruction of social, cultural, etc. spaces in the past becomes possible and on the same basis, it may be claimed that travelogues include points that are very important in cultural historiography.

One of the most important issues that are addressed in these travelogues is Muharram ceremonies among Iranians. The rituals performed in this month contain valuable cultural points that are portrayed in an interesting way by the European tourists.

Pietro Della Valle describes the event

in Karbala as such: “Imam Hussein was attacked by his enemies, known as ‘Khavarej’, while traveling and was killed in Karbala together with seventy or eighty of his companions. He is buried there and his shrine is a pilgrimage of the Muslims who even travel from distant places to this city.”

“In the month of Muharram”, he writes, “mourning ceremonies are held in most houses, particularly on the ninth and tenth days which are called Tasua and Ashura, to commemorate Imam Hussein’s martyrdom. Everybody can freely take part in these ceremonies, whether rich or poor, to listen to the sermons and drink tea, coffee, and sherbet.”

Over the past couple of years, Yazd, Meybod, Isfahan and Kashan were among Iranian cities which hosted the highest numbers of foreign tourists during the day Tasua and Ashura when the mourning ceremonies reach its climax. Holidaymakers can witness various ceremonies such as Tazieh, a passion play inspired by historical and religious narrations, and Sineh-Zani [beating the chest]. They also converse with locals and religious figures while taking shots of mourners to document the events.

Restoration of Seymareh ancient city completed

TOURISM TEHRAN — Architectural sites and agricultural lands inside the ancient city of Seymareh, western Ilam province, which had been damaged by floods and seasonal rains last year were repaired and restored.

With a budget of one billion rials (about \$24,000), the restoration work has been fully completed, provincial tourism chief, Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh, announced on Wednesday, CHTN reported.

Seymareh ancient city, with an area of 200 hectares, is located near Darreh Shahr city. It dates back to the Sassanid-era (224 CE–651) and is believed to be built on remnants of the Elamite capital, Madaktu.

The archeological findings show that the city included



about 5,000 houses with some modern aspects like water distribution system through clay pipes and underground sewers. The city was destroyed and deserted after a huge earthquake around 950 BC.

The remnants of the city were inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1931.

Darreh Shahr was once the summer capital of Elamites, a pre-Iranian civilization dated from 2700 to 539 BC. The city also enjoyed centuries of prosperity during the Sassanid era.

Darreh Shahr and its surrounding regions boast vestiges of Sassanid constructions such as arches, ceilings, alleys and passages that follow a specific order of urban development criteria of the time.

A glimpse at unique Kopet Dag biodiversity hotspot

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Kopet Dag biosphere reserve, located in the northeastern province of North Khorasan, holds a great share of exotic and endemic plant genera and species, with natural attractions, cultural diversity, and the presence of local and nomadic communities.

Kopet Dag is a protected area stretching over 18,000 hectares of land area and is filled with thick forests and a variety of plant and animal species that received UNESCO recognition for biosphere reserves in 2018.

The Kopet Dag is a chain of mountains between the Balkans and the plateau of Iran and Turan that consists of two mountain ranges with a parallel extent covering the most surface area. The ecological region of Kopet Dag is an important part of the Irano-Anatolian biodiversity hotspot; whose primary function is the conservation of many of the endangered species in this area. The main economic activities are agriculture and livestock, according to the UNESCO website.

Biodiversity significance of Kopet Dag

There are 52 major animal species occurring in the area, including many endemic species.

Many of the endangered species are the primary focus for conservation in this hotspot, include leopard, Caspian snow-cock, wild sheep, bezoar (bearded) goat, hyena, Indian porcupine, and a number of other rare species of mammals, birds, snakes, and lizards.

This mountain range is the center of origin of many of the ancestors of domesticated plant and animal species.



Reach flora covering the international biosphere

Mountain forests and woodland regard most of the site which covers 79.6 percent of the area. The mountain corridor has been a breeding center in the area probably from the Pleistocene era. There are 169 important plant species.

The fauna and flora of Mesopotamia, which have not been able to withstand droughts in the low altitude of the adjacent land, occur in the area. The varied biodiversity is directly involved in the provision of ecosystem services. For example, aromatic plants are common resources of food, juniper woods can be used as fuel, bees and wild pollinating insects play a crucial role in agricultural crop pollination.

Fauna and flora of Kopet Dag express the mixed character of their biogeographic connections with Mediterranean and Turanian elements. The Kopet Dag flora is especially rich in plant diversity, of which 332 species are endemic.

Due to a good annual rainfall of an average 450 mm a year, the vegetation of Kopet Dag is desirable. The sparse forests of Greek juniper, hawthorn, wild barberries, etc. cover Kopet Dag Mountains.

Challenges facing the region

The most important challenge facing the region was unsustainable infrastructure development and tourism, heavy logging and overgrazing by outsiders. Severe soil erosion is caused when these activities occur in the upper watersheds and rangelands, in addition to mud floods, destroying ecosystems, and habitats.

The weakening of customary laws and governance systems of the tribes has resulted in increased poaching and degradation of bio-cultural diversity.

The decline in wildlife populations, especially valuable mammals such as leopards, urials, and goats due to unauthorized hunting and destruction of their habitats.

Expansion of communication networks in some of the unique natural areas that the

loss of coherence between natural and environmental components.

Pollution of aquatic and terrestrial biomass reserves of Kopet Dag Biosphere Reserve due to the excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Iran's biosphere reserves

The main characteristics of biosphere reserves are achieving the three interconnected functions including conservation, development, and logistic support and out-pacing traditionally confined conservation zones, through appropriate zoning schemes combining core protected areas with zones where sustainable development is fostered by local dwellers and enterprises with often highly innovative and participative governance systems.

Iran has 13 UNESCO recognized biosphere reserves including Arasbaran, situated in the north at the border with Armenia and Azerbaijan; Arjan and Parisian, in the Zagros Mountains, situated to the very south of the Zagros Mountains, close to the Persian Gulf; Golestan, located in the north; Hara, located in the Mehran River delta in the south near the Straits of Khuran between Qeshm Island and the Persian Gulf; Kavir, in the Anatolian Iranian Desert; Lake Urmia, in the northwest; Miankaleh, in the southeastern region of the Caspian Sea; Touran, in the central province of Semnan; Dena, in the Central Zagros Mountains; Tang-e-Sayad and Sabzkuh, in the southeastern Chahar-mahal and Bakhtiari province; Hamoun in southeast which includes both terrestrial and wetland ecosystems; and Kopet Dag.



97% of rural population covered by community-based rehabilitation

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The national community-based rehabilitation program has so far covered 97 percent of the country's rural population, according to the Welfare Organization's website.

The program started in the country in 1995 and is now part of the Sixth Development Plan (2016-2021) and has so far been able to cover 97 percent of the country's rural population.

Every year, about 480,000 people with disabilities covered by this program receive various services of health, education, financial assistance, social activities, and empowerment in rural areas with the help of governmental and non-governmental sectors and community members, Mohammad Nafarieh, deputy head of the Welfare Organization said.

Rural community-based rehabilitation (CBR) strategy includes rehabilitation, poverty reduction, equalization of opportunities and social integration of all persons with disabilities through the joint efforts of the disabled and their families, organizations and communities, the public and private sector, he explained.

"The CBR matrix developed by the World Health Organization in 2010 includes five key components, including, health, education, livelihood, social, and empowerment, each of which has five components.

The first four components are related to key development sectors, which indicates the focus of the multi-sectoral approach in CBR," he noted.

He went on to state that the last component is the em-



powerment of people with disabilities, their families, and society, which is the basis for ensuring that people with disabilities have access to all areas of development and the quality life and human rights.

In recent years, efforts to develop and implement CBR has been more concentrated in rural areas, but since people with disabilities living in low-income and densely populated urban areas (suburbs) often do not have access to rehabilitation services, the program is implemented in urban areas since two years ago in 5 deprived provinces and 25 cities, he highlighted.

This program is designed with the aim of improving the level of health and physical, mental and social capabilities of people with disabilities living in villages and marginal areas and includes three stages, he further said.

Last year, a plan on the rehabilitation of the elderly was implemented in 19 provinces across the country, he concluded.

Over 1.3m persons with disabilities live in Iran
Pirouz Hanachi the mayor of Tehran said that over 1.3 million people suffering from disabilities live in the country and the figure rises by 50,000 every year.

Majlis [the Iranian parliament] approved both general outlines and details of a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities in January 2018. Development of disability-friendly cities, free transportation, health insurance, free education, job creation, housing loans, and fewer working hours are some of the articles of the law.

Since the approval of the law, education for students with disabilities have been provided in Azad universities, subsidies for patients with spinal cord injury as well as disability care centers have been increased, he stated, adding, 1,057 residential units will be provided to families having members with disabilities within next week.

Disability prevalence worldwide

About 15 percent of the world's population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4 percent experience significant difficulties in functioning.

The global disability prevalence is higher than previous WHO estimates, which date from the 1970s and suggested a figure of around 10 percent. This global estimate for disability is on the rise due to population aging and the rapid spread of chronic diseases, as well as improvements in the methodologies used to measure disability.

DOE draws up plan on biodiversity, habitat protection

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — The Department of Environment (DOE) has prepared 11 action plans for the conservation of endangered wildlife species, which will soon be implemented.

A total budget of 700 billion rials (nearly 168 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated for the implementation of biodiversity and habitat protection programs, Kioumars Kalantari, deputy DOE chief for natural resources and biodiversity stated.

The conservation plans include endangered species of brown bear, Asian black bear, Persian fallow deer, marsh crocodile, Kaiser's mountain newt, Euphrates softshell turtle, great bustard, greater white-fronted goose, and leopard, he explained.

Protected areas added by 1m ha

He went on to say that one million hectares of natural lands added to the country's protected areas.

Currently, about 18.8 million hectares of the country's lands are under the management of the DOE, which was 17.7 million hectares before this, he explained.

In fact, 13 newly managed areas were approved in seven provinces, including Isfahan, Tehran, South Khorasan, Fars, Kordestan, Yazd, and Khuzestan, of which seven protected areas, three wildlife sanctuaries, two national natural monuments, and a national park.

Four types of areas have been designated for protection, including 31 national parks, 46 wildlife refuges, 169 protected areas, and 38 natural national monuments.

Sustainable exploitation of biodiversity a must

Today, all governments have come to the conclusion that all aspects of human life, as well as growth and development, depend on biodiversity.

All three pillars of biodiversity namely, variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem levels are important and must be considered to ensure biodiversity preserve; any damage to any of these three pillars will damage the entire biodiversity and pose a serious threat to human life.

"Indeed, Iran is not one of the megadiverse countries, like Brazil, India, and Malaysia, but it has habitats with the richest biodiversity. However, various factors such as sustainable exploitation of biodiversity should come to the center of attention to better protect the country's biodiversity, to do so, help local communities earn income, and biodiversity can also benefit from local communities' protection," Shahaboddin Montazemi, director of the wildlife's conservation office at the DOE told the Tehran Times in June.

He went on to say that "the DOE has taken extensive measures in various areas such as habitat, species, and genetics; as animal species in the country include 37 species of mammals, 78 bird species, 22 species of reptiles, 6 species of bivalves, and 25 species of fish of inland waters. The organization's gene bank is also a major step toward the genetic protection of species."

Iran ranks second worldwide for scientific growth

I → came in 539th, 656th, 826th, 908th, 915th, 916th places, respectively, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities.

In June, Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2020 ranked five Iranian universities among the top 100 universities worldwide.

The Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking has placed 36 Iranian universities in the list of over 1,000 major universities worldwide in 2020 compared with 26 universities in 2019.

Also, five Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top 1,000 universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

RENOWNED TEHRAN'S HAY'ATS

Senf-e Lebas Foroush-ha Hussainiya: mourning ceremonies of trade people

As its name suggests, the hussainiya Senf-e Lebas Foroush-ha (cloth-selling guild) holds the place and it mostly hosts trade men.

For this reason, the hussainiya, located on Sa'adi Street before Makhberodoleh intersection, holds mourning ceremonies in the morning after morning prayers instead of nights and evenings.

Although there are several mosques and Hussainiyas in Tehran, which hold mourning ceremonies in the morning because of their location in Bazaar. Like past years, Haj Mansour Arazi recites Ziyarat Ashura after Morning Prayer and the ceremony is ended one hour after that.

*The reason for being special: holding mourning ceremonies in the morning

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Non-repayable loans for e-bikes must increase: Tehran City Council chairman

While an important strategy to contain Tehran's air pollution is using clean energies, non-repayable loans to incentivize the owners to replace their motorcycles with electric ones is not sufficient and must increase, Mohsen Hashemi, Tehran City Council chairman, has said.

The scheme on encouraging the citizens to replace carbureted motorcycles with electric ones has started over a few years ago, however, the process has been evolving slowly, he said, adding, we hope to increase the use of electric motorbikes by allocating the necessary funds along with supporting the manufacturers next year (March 2019-March 2020).

تاکید رئیس شورای شهر تهران بر افزایش وام بلاعوض خرید «موتورسیکلت‌های برقی»

محسن هاشمی رئیس شورای شهر تهران با اشاره به اینکه یکی از راه‌های کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران استفاده از انرژی‌های پاک است، گفت: رقمی که به عنوان وام بلاعوض خرید موتورسیکلت برقی برای تشویق دارندگان موتورسیکلت پرداخت شده است، پاسخگوی این شرایط نیست و این رقم باید افزایش یابد.

وی تصریح کرد: جایگزینی کردن موتورسیکلت‌های برقی به جای موتورسیکلت‌های کاربراتوری از چند سال پیش آغاز شده است اما این کار با کندی پیش رفته است و امیدواریم در سال آینده با تخصیص اعتبارات لازم و حمایت از تولیدکنندگان، میزان استفاده از موتورسیکلت‌های برقی افزایش یابد.

Vacancy

Australian Embassy in Tehran

CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER

The Australian Embassy in Tehran is seeking applications for the position of Corporate Services Manager. The terms of employment will be in accordance with the Australian Embassy in Tehran Locally Engaged Staff Terms and Conditions of Employment. Employment will be offered on a contract basis with a starting salary of € 2,315 per month. The successful candidate is expected to commence from October / November 2020.

Please note, continued employment is subject to successful completion of a 3 month probation period.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must complete and submit an application form. Please visit www.iran.embassy.gov.au for the position description and application form. Completed application forms must be emailed to recruitment.tehran@dfat.gov.au by COB Wed 09 September 2020.

Late or incomplete applications will not be taken into consideration. We thank all applicants for their interest; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted. The Australian Embassy in Tehran is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. Information provided will be used for recruitment and employment purposes only.

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■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

▶ Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
▶ Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
▶ Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430
▶ Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
▶ Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
▶ Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Death with dignity is better than a life of abasement.

Imam Hussein (AS)

Tehran City Council renames street after graphic designer Morteza Momayyez

A R T TEHRAN — The Tehran City Council has renamed a street after graphic designer Morteza Momayyez, who is considered to be the father of modern graphic art in Iran.

The street is near the Iranian Artists Forum and its nameplate was unveiled during a ceremony on Tuesday.

Momayyez family members, Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi and a number of artists attended the ceremony.



Tehran City Council member Mohammad-Javad Haqshenas (2nd R) unveils a bust of graphic designer Morteza Momayyez in the courtyard of the Iranian Artists Forum on August 25, 2020. (PANA/Helvia Saiedi)

Speaking at the ceremony, the director of the Cultural-Social Committee of the Tehran City Council, Mohammad-Javad Haqshenas, said that the decision to rename the street after Momayyez was made to show appreciation for the artist's contributions to the visual art of the country over the years.

Momayyez died of cancer in 2005 at the age of 70. Graphic designer Saeed Meshki pointed to the high number of artworks created by Momayyez during his artistic career and said, "It is a big surprise to see such an amount of artworks created by a single individual, while he was busy establishing the Iranian Graphic Designers Society and organizing biennials."

"One can say all these are possible only because of his endless love to creating and producing artworks, something which is quite clear in his works," he said.

Next, a bust of Momayyez was unveiled in the courtyard of the forum. The bust has been created by Iraj Mohammadi.

In addition, a book published in honor of Momayyez was introduced at the ceremony.

In April 2019, the Tehran City Council approved the renaming of several streets after contemporary Iranian artists.

Jeem Street in the Velenjak neighborhood was renamed after the actor Jamshid Mashayekhi.

Most of the streets that have been selected to be given new names are in the vicinity of the artists' homes.

Shorts from Iran competing in Sao Paulo festival

A R T TEHRAN — Three movies from Iranian filmmakers are competing in the 31st Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival.



Iranian movie "The Other" is competing in the 31st Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival in Brazil.

"Weekend" by Ario Motevaqe, "The Other" by Ako Zandkarimi and Saman Hosseinpour, and "Kallima" by Ashkan Ahmadi are among dozens of other shorts selected from across the world to be screened at the festival, which is currently underway in the southeastern Brazilian city.

"Weekend" is about the Moniri and Kheradmam families, whose members are at the park for a picnic. After finishing the meal, it is revealed that they are here for something else.

"The Other" tells the story of a traditional religious man who, after the death of his wife, suspects that she had engaged in a relationship with another man.

"Kallima" is about a little girl who travels with her father to catch a butterfly on the borders of a hostile territory.

The 31st Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival has begun since August 20 and will announce winners on August 30.

Love of Imam Hussein (AS) has no limit: director Majid Majidi

→ and this shows that Imam Hussein was so perfect as a man that the love of him goes beyond the boundaries of the Shia countries," said Majidi who made his 2017 drama "Beyond the Clouds" in India.

"I also saw in Tibet that Buddhists are interested in the Muharram mourning rituals and Imam Hussein (AS). The blessed aspects of Imam Hussein's character should not only be defined in religious terms, but also his morals and perfection can be shown to the world,

and I hope we can organize the festival as a global event in upcoming years," he added.

Only one-minute-long films and movies under three minutes are allowed to participate in the festival, and submissions should be sent to the organizers by the end of September 21.

Movies will be judged by a jury composed of Majidi and Iranian filmmakers Reza Mirkarimi and Narges Abyar.

The festival also intends to highlight



Director Majid Majidi attends a press conference at the Rahe Iman Charity Organization in Tehran on August 26, 2020 to brief the media about the Mourning at Home Short Film Festival. (Mehr/Shahabeddin Qayyumi)

top Islamic clerics' calls for conducting the Muharram rituals at home due to the pandemic.

The Rahe Iman Charity Organization has been established with contributions from Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Sistani to raise living standards among people living in

poverty in the remote border towns of southeastern Iran.

Shia Muslims commemorate the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions with rituals that begin every year from the first day of the lunar month of Muharram.

Expert laments ignorance of tazieh



A tazieh performance at the Rudaki Open-Air Theater in Tehran on August 22, 2020. (Honaronline)

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian Association of Tazieh managing director Ebrahim Galledarzadeh has criticized the ignorance of tazieh in the country.

"During the first ten days of the [lunar] month of Muharram everyone likes to take photos with tazieh performers but when it is over, tazieh turns into a parasite," he said.

He lamented that tazieh has been omitted from university courses and also criticized the lack of any plan to record the tazieh performances and the dearth of any proper TV programs on the traditional dramatic art.

He said, "A number of tazieh performances recently streamed online in Tehran and Qazvin has been welcomed. Of course, we first felt doubt but the result was satisfactory and the troupes also found out that they can have more of an audience through online performances."

He added that members of the association give performances at night, though their performances have been recorded ahead of time during the current situation of coronavirus spread.

"Although these days of the pandemic are the best days to record tazieh performances, veterans refuse to perform since most of them are old and are more vulnerable to the deceases and prefer home quarantine," he remarked.

"Unfortunately we are losing our veterans before their performances are recorded and registered for the interested youth and researchers," he noted.

He called tazieh a rich treasure which can attract many tourists to the country and added, "They would like to see our national culture and do not have much interest in watching foreign plays."

Galledarzadeh had earlier said that tazieh performances should not be halted, and these ritual plays can be performed during Muharram observing health protocols despite the pandemic.

"Tazieh is a ritual performance, which dates back centuries ago in Iran and is performed during Muharram. It is not only a kind of performance but also a ritual play people have belief in," Galledarzadeh had said.

"Tazieh has long been liked by many from the old days, and many gathered to watch the performances, and that is why Dowlat Tekeyeh was built," he said.

Dowlat Tekeyeh was a place for seasonal Islamic ceremonies that was built during the reign of Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah near the Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran.

"Hearing" director Amir-Reza Kuhestani prepares "Waiting for Godot" for open-air performance

A R T TEHRAN — Amir-Reza Kuhestani, director of the acclaimed plays "Hearing" and "Timeloss", has prepared Irish writer Samuel Beckett's tragicomedy "Waiting for Godot" for some open-air performances in Tehran.

In a press release published on Wednesday, Kuhestani's public relations team announced that his troupe is currently rehearsing the play.

Despite the male nature of the characters in "Waiting for Godot", he plans to stage the play with a cast of five actresses.

Kuhestani is the director of the Mehr Theater Group, which has performed his plays "Hearing", "Summerless" and "Timeloss" in Italy, France, Germany and several other European countries.

The play was originally published in 1952 in French as



Director Amir-Reza Kuhestani in an undated photo. (Theater.ir)

"En attendant Godot". It was a true innovation in drama and the Theatre of the Absurd's first theatrical success.

"Waiting for Godot" consists of conversations between Vladimir and Estragon, who are waiting for the arrival of the mysterious Godot, who continually sends word that he will appear but who never does.

They encounter Lucky and Pozzo, they discuss their miseries and their lots in life, they consider hanging themselves, and yet they wait. Often perceived as being tramps, Vladimir and Estragon are a pair of human beings who do not know why they were put on earth; they make the tenuous assumption that there must be some point to their existence, and they look to Godot for enlightenment. Because they hold out hope for meaning and direction, they acquire a kind of nobility that enables them to rise above their futile existence.

Tajikistan Somoni exhibition honors more Iranian photographers

A R T TEHRAN — More Iranian photographers have been honored at the 1st Somoni International Exhibition of Photography in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The exhibition was organized under the auspices of the Photographic Society of America (PSA) and Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP) in six categories of Open Monochrome, Open Color, People, Landscape, Portrait and Travel.

In the Open Monochrome Section, Seyed Mohammad-Javad Sadri won the FIAP Ribbon for his photo "Azadi Square" while the FPC Trophy went to Seyed Shahabeddin Montazeri for his work "Reflection".

By receiving the FIAP Ribbon for "Green Mask", Ahmad Mohammad-Taqi Shirazi was the sole Iranian winner in the Open Color Section.

"Pain" by Fatemeh Hosseinaqai was awarded a FIAP Ribbon in the People Section, and "Hawramantakht" by Mohsen Mohamadkhani received a FIAP Gold Medal in the Landscape Section.

In the Travel Section, three photos by Iranian photographers were awarded. "Village Man" by Babak Mehrafshar and "Worship in the Light" by Seyyed Ehsan Mortazavi received FIAP Ribbons, and the FPC Trophy went to Hadi Dehqanpur for "Muharram".

The organizers announced in a report they published earlier that Iranian photographer Amin Mahdavi and Mehrzad Maqsudian won the FIAP Gold Medal and a FIAP Ribbon respectively in the Portrait Section.

The winners were announced on Sunday and the exhibition will open on October 28.



"Hawramantakht" by Iranian photographer Mohsen Mohamadkhani won the FIAP Gold Medal in the Landscape Section of the 1st Somoni International Exhibition of Photography in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Iranian animation "H2ope" to compete in two intl. events



A poster for Iranian animation "H2ope".

A R T TEHRAN — Hoorakhsh Studio, an animation and game studio in Tehran, announced on Wednesday that its short 3D movie "H2ope" about the water crisis will be competing in two international festivals.

The animation co-directed by Ashkan Rahgozar and Negin Khajei will be competing in the Bucheon International Animation Festival, which will take place in the South Korean city from October 23 to 27.

It will also be competing in the Chaniartoon, Chania Cartoon and Animation Festival that will be held on

the Greek island of Crete in Chania from September 11 to 20.

Rahgozar is the director of the acclaimed movie "The Last Fiction", which was among the 32 submitted for consideration in the animated feature film category for the 92nd Academy Awards.

This was the first Iranian animation ever selected as a submission to the race.

"The Last Fiction" recounts a story from Persian poet Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece Shahnameh. It is about Zahak's treacherous rise to the throne in Jamshid in Persia. The young and naive hero Afaridoun will have

to save the kingdom and its people from darkness. But he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian mythology that reveals human nature.

An all-star cast including Parviz Parastui, Leila Hatami, Hamed Behdad, Baran Kowsari, Ashkan Khatibi, Akbar Zanjani and Farrokh Nematollahi have lent their voices to the characters in the production.

The world-renowned Iranian vocalist Shahram Nazeri has sung the closing credits song in the movie, which has been acclaimed at several prestigious Iranian and international events.