Introduction:

Iran: A concise History

“Certain regions of the world are distinguishable as being associated with a particular human culture pattern, which is at once distinctive in character and also sufficiently strong to have survived as a readily identifiable entity over many centuries... Of these regions, Iran is certainly one”.

Cambridge History of Iran

Known as Persia until 1935, Iran is a country with a history of over 10000 years and home to one of the oldest known civilizations. Persia, or Iran, as the country is more appropriately called, presents a lexicon of human history matched only by a handful of other countries in the world. The name Persia is derived from the Persis, a province in southern Iran from which a southern Iranian tribe, known as the “Persians” created a world empire in the sixth century B.C. The name Iran, pronounced “Eran”, however, comes from the term “Aryan” meaning “the land of nobles”, a name first used about the first millennium B.C.

‘Iran’ as a territory has multiple meanings. Broadly and devoid of any sort of political or territorial claims, one can see it as three regions. First, there is modern Iran, within its international borders. Then there is ‘Greater Iran or ‘Iran exterior comprising the additional areas that once formed part of the Iranian world at various times in history. Lastly, there are the areas, sometimes very remote from the center, including parts of Europe and India that exhibit Iranian influence.

In the seventh century A.D. the new faith, Islam, which was based on Monotheism, offered the Iranian population an excellent opportunity whence for several centuries Iranian arts and acumen crystallized and became paramount in the Islamic world. The following centuries witnessed the development of distinctive traditions in pottery and ceramics, tile work, stucco, brickwork, metalwork, glassware, carpets, textiles, jewelry, music and poetry.

In antiquity, and again during the Islamic period, Iran’s position between the West and China helped to transform this land into “a crossroad of civilizations” and one of the great sources of art and thought. Iran’s originality is such that it continuously invented new forms while maintaining its distinct character, as its influence extended over immense regions.
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Policy
Leader marks birth anniversary of Jesus Christ
December 25, 2019

TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has marked the birthday anniversary of Jesus Christ (PBUH), calling for adherence to the teachings of the prophet.

“The honor #Muslims attribute to #JesusChrist (pbuh) is no less than his position and merit in the eyes of the Christian believers in Christianity,” a post on Ayatollah Khamenei’s official Twitter account read.

“Today, many who claim to follow Jesus Christ, take a different path than that of him. The guidance of #Jesus, the son of #Mary (peace be upon our Prophet and her) is guidance towards worshiping #God and confronting the Pharaohs and tyrants,” another tweet by the Leader said.

“Following #JesusChrist requires adherence to righteousness and abhorrence of anti-righteous powers, and it is hoped that #Christians and #Muslims in every part of the world will adhere to this great lesson from Jesus (pbuh) in their lives and deeds.”

Christmas is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ, celebrated generally on December 25 as a religious and cultural holiday by millions of people around the world.
President Hassan Rouhani also wished his Christian counterparts and heads of states a happy Christmas and New Year.

“Establishment of peace and tranquility is the long-awaited aspiration of mankind and the prerequisite for human prosperity,” he said in a message, Tasnim reported.

“Feeling the need for this vital issue pushes us to move towards promotion of peace and justice as part of human desire to build a better future,” he added.

The president also wished the heads of states health and success and their people welfare and prosperity.

Rouhani also sent a congratulatory message to the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, hoping that followers of all divine religions would push for the establishment of global peace and justice in 2020.

In his letter, the president described Jesus Christ as the prophet of peace and kindness, messenger of monotheism and altruism, symbol of patience and fortitude, and harbinger of freedom and dignity.

He expressed hope that at Christmas, Christians and followers of all other monotheistic religions would take steps to establish peace and justice in the world.

The Iranian president finally wished the Pope health and success.

On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also extended his congratulations to his Christian counterparts and others, wishing a “joyous, peaceful holiday season” for all Christians.

“Wishing my Christian compatriots, and all across our globe who are observing, a very Happy Christmas and a joyous, peaceful holiday season. The birth of Jesus Christ, prophet in Islam, is a wondrous occasion to celebrate,” he said in a Twitter post.
1. The #US terrorist act of assassinating Lieutenant #GeneralSoleimani and a number of his companions proved that US is the main source of terrorism in the region of middle east. It showed that fight against the US is a fight against origin of terrorism and the main cause of insecurity in the region.

2. The US must know that the criminal attack against #GeneralSoleimani was the country's biggest strategic mistake in West Asia and that the US will pay a heavy price for this miscalculation.

3. The criminal attack against Iran’s #GeneralSoleimani looks exactly like the sort of revenges by ISIS against their foes, who were in the fight against terrorism.
4. The crime committed by the United States was against those who personified the defeat and uprooting of terrorism in Iraq and Syria.

5. The US one more time showed it is the main enemy of any ideology and movement that confronts terrorists.

6. Iran many times has shown that is not after waging war; a proof of this claim is that when the US Global Hawk spy drone intruded into the Iranian airspace last year, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (#IRGC) brought it down after the drone ignored Iran’s several warnings. But the IRGC let go off another intruding US manned plane and refrained from targeting it.

7. The US has set out fictitious scenarios to justify its interventions and domination of targeted countries and to open the way for its military aggression, one of which was the military invasion on Iraq, relying on a false project of eradication of Saddam's chemical weapons.

8. The Iranophobia project is an example in terms of crisis theory through which the US portrays Iran as a threat to the region in order to pursue its own goals.


10. The US assassination of #GeneralSoleimani has international consequences that will certainly cost the perpetrators of such a crime far more than its short-term propaganda benefits.

11. The US government has committed numerous crimes against the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past 40 years, including unfair sanctions, coups, mobilization of terrorist groups, proxy wars and assassination of innocent Iranian scientists and officials.

12. #GeneralSoleimani has been to Iraq with the official request of Iraqi government and people to fight against ISIS besides the domestic military forces. He was the leader of counter terrorist forces who were fighting against ISIS. Soleimani’s presence in Iraq cannot be deemed as an act of terrorism.
13. On July 03 1988, the USS Vincennes fired missiles at an Iran Air Airbus which was flying over the Strait of Hormuz from the port city of Bandar Abbas to Dubai, carrying 274 passengers and 16 crew members. Following the attack, the plane disintegrated and crashed into the Persian Gulf waters, killing all 290 on board, among them 66 children.

14. The terroristic assassination of #GeneralSoleimani has once again declared that there is an unbreakable link between the US government and terrorist groups, because #GeneralSoleimani had a great record in the fight against terrorism.

15. #GeneralSoleimani has played a leading role in the fight against terrorist groups not only in Iraq but also in Syria. Guardian, a few days ago, listed him as one of the top 10 figures in the world asserting that "the US and Israel have been working to assassinate him several times."

16. Last year, Foreign Policy listed #GeneralSoleimani as one of the top 5 defense-security thinkers due to the significant role he played in the fighting against terrorism in Iraq and Syria.

17. Since 2011, with the Western countries conspiracy and the financial backing of countries such as #Saudi_Arabia, which led to the formation of #Takfiri_terrorist_groups, including #ISIS and #Jabhat al-Nusra in the region, #Qasem_Soleimani launched a new mission to counter these threats in both #Iraq and #Syria.
US Human rights violations

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani

Ziaee Bigdeli and Enis Kalamar expressed their observations of Human rights violations

Expressing deep sorrow over the martyrdom of the Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), I, as an international law teacher, must briefly say that the drone attack targeting the life of the General Soleimani is an act of ‘Violation’. Cooperated with Iranian forces, Iraq can have a legitimate defense against the US.

According to clause 2 of the amendment of Article 5 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court ratified in 2010, this act is considered a crime and the US President Donald Trump, who has ordered killing of the General Soleimani and his affiliates, are international criminals who must face criminal persecution.

Dr. Ziaee Bigdeli, member of Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Allame Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran
Enis Kalamar, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, told CNN in an interview that there are three laws that should be considered in connection with the US illegal assassination of General Soleimani.

The first law, according to the UN Charter, concerns the use of force between countries. The question is whether the US did the assassination in self-defense? To defend itself, the United States must prove that Soleimani was involved in the process of an imminent attack on the US interests. So far, we have not received enough information whether there was an imminent threat and whether the US response was a proper one to that threat.

There are also other legal entities to mention. One of them is International Human Rights Law, and that's what I've focused on so far. According to Human Rights Law, it is unlikely that targeting General Soleimani would be a legitimate move. Such a murder can only be lawful if Soleimani himself presents a direct and imminent threat to someone's life, and it seems to me unlikely to prove so.

The third issue that has not been directly discussed, is whether there was an international armed conflict at the time of the US airstrike. Trump’s remark that said "we were preventing a war" meant that there was an international armed conflict at the time of the attack and targeting Mr. Soleimani, while there was not any.

Continuation of economic ties with Japan can be achievement of Rouhani’s visit: MP

December 25, 2019
TEHRAN - Mohammad Javad Jamali, the deputy chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said that continuation of economic ties with Japan can be an achievement of President Hassan Rouhani’s visit to Tokyo.

In an interview with ISNA published on Wednesday, Jamali said the visit will be an achievement if Iran-Japan’s relations be less affected by the United States’ sanctions.

“Like China and Russia, they [the Japanese] can find ways that their economic relations with us would not be severed,” he said.

Rouhani met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on December 20. Rouhani was accompanied by a senior political and economic delegation in his tour of Japan.

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who accompanied President Hassan Rouhani to Japan, has said that Iran is aiming to strengthen its relationship with Japan, and keep all channels open, the NHK said in a report on its website on Saturday.

Araghchi also announced on Saturday that Tehran and Tokyo are resolved to continue their consultations over key international and regional issues more closely than ever.

Araqchi, who served as Tehran’s ambassador to Tokyo from 2007-2011, said Iran has been continuously holding diplomatic talks with Japan but consultations between the countries are now of paramount importance as Iran has come under “unfair pressures and sanctions” by the United States.

“We have always had close diplomatic consultations with Japan. This year, due to the current developments, including the U.S. unfair pressures and sanctions on Iran, it was necessary to hold closer and tighter talks with Japan which are an old trade partner of Iran,” the deputy foreign minister remarked.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif hailed the “substantive, friendly and frank” summit between Rouhani and Abe, saying the meeting aimed to strengthen ties between the two countries.

“Substantive, friendly and frank summit between President @HassanRouhani and Prime Minister @AbeShizo: further strengthening bilateral, regional and global cooperation,” Zarif tweeted on December 20.
Following his meeting with Abe, Rouhani tweeted on Friday: “I welcome any effort that could boost economic exchanges, especially in the energy sector, and increase oil exports.”

During his meeting with Abe, Rouhani said that he hopes Japan and other countries in the world will work hard to help preserve the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the JCPOA.

Abe, for his part, said, “Japan would like to do its utmost to ease tensions and stabilize the situation in the Middle East.”

“As for Iran, I strongly hope the country will fully implement the nuclear agreement and play a constructive role for peace and stability in the region,” the Japanese prime minister noted.

Advisor calls for regional cooperation to protect Persian Gulf security
December 25, 2019

TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, has called for regional countries’ cooperation to protect the security of the Persian Gulf.
“Preserving the security of the Persian Gulf needs collective cooperation of regional countries,” Amir Abdollahian said in a tweet, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

“The outcome of the United States and other foreigners’ military presence and the foreigners’ stockpiling of weapons in the Persian Gulf would be an increase in insecurity,” he pointed out.

Amir Abdollahian stated that dialogue, building trust, and mutual respect are currently necessary for the region.

“And the Islamic Republic of Iran has always recommended this path,” he added.

Iran has in recent months called for closer cooperation with regional countries to counter threats.

President Hassan Rouhani, during his speech at the 74th UN General Assembly, called on regional states to join the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE).

“Based upon the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability, and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz, I would like to invite all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the ‘Coalition for Hope’, meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor,” Rouhani said at the summit.

He added, “The Coalition for Hope is based on important principles such as compliance with the goals and principles of the United Nations, mutual respect, equal footing, dialog and understanding, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, inviolability of international borders, the peaceful settlement of all disputes, and more importantly, the two fundamental principles of non-aggression and non-interference in the domestic affairs of each other. The presence of the United Nations is necessary for the creation of an international umbrella in support of the Coalition for Hope.”
Rouhani-Abe meeting shows Iran and Japan are firm to strengthen ties: Al Mayadeen
December 24, 2019

TEHRAN – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s meeting shows determination by both sides to deepen ties, Al Mayadeen has said in a commentary, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Rouhani met with Abe in Tokyo on December 20. Rouhani was accompanied by a senior political and economic delegation in his tour of Japan.

Rouhani and Abe have met a couple of times over the past years “which shows that both sides are serious about deepening and strengthening bilateral ties and are making efforts to remove impediments on path of relations,” the TV channel said.

It said that Japan is one of the most important economic partners of Iran.

The two countries have not hidden their “good” and “positive” relationship despite pressure by the United States, Al Mayadeen added.
Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who accompanied President Hassan Rouhani to Japan, has said that Iran is aiming to strengthen its relationship with Japan, and keep all channels open, the NHK said in a report on its website on Saturday.

Araghchi also announced on Saturday that Tehran and Tokyo are resolved to continue their consultations over key international and regional issues more closely than ever.

Araqchi, who served as Tehran’s ambassador to Tokyo in the second half of the 2000s, said Iran has been continuously holding diplomatic talks with Japan but consultations between the countries are now of paramount importance as Iran has come under “unfair pressures and sanctions” by the United States.

“We have always had close diplomatic consultations with Japan. This year, due to the current developments, including the U.S. unfair pressures and sanctions on Iran, it was necessary to hold closer and tighter talks with Japan which are an old trade partner of Iran,” the deputy foreign minister remarked.

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Abe, for his part, said, “Japan would like to do its utmost to ease tensions and stabilize the situation in the Middle East.”

“As for Iran, I strongly hope the country will fully implement the nuclear agreement and play a constructive role for peace and stability in the region,” the Japanese prime minister noted.
TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that unlike the United States, Iran and Russia are seeking peace and stability in the Middle East region.

“Unlike others who fuel war in our region, Iran and Russia have proposed important initiatives for the regional peace,” Zarif said during a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow.

He cited the Hormuz peace initiative proposed by Iran and also Russia’s initiative of dialogue in the Persian Gulf as examples.

According to Press TV, Zarif and Lavrov denounced attempts by Western states, the U.S. in particular, at increasing tensions in the Middle East region.

Elsewhere, Zarif said Iran-Russia relations is at its best state in the course of history and described ties as “strategic” which will continue vigorously.
“Officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran are determined to view relations with Russia, as a big power and important neighbor, as strategic,” Zarif remarked.

Lavrov, for his part, said that Iran and Russia share common views on many issues. Pointing to the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, Lavrov said that all must make efforts to preserve the deal.

‘Astana talks have helped ease tension in Syria’

In a joint press conference with Lavrov, Zarif said that the Astana talks have helped ease tension in Syria.

In line with their security cooperation, Iran, Turkey and Russia - three power brokers in Syria - launched the Astana peace talks on the Syrian crisis. The talks were launched in January 2017 with the aim of putting an end to the Syrian conflict.

Kazakhstan has hosted multiple rounds of talks on Syria since January 2017 most of which involved delegations from the Syrian government and opposition.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in August that Iran-Turkey-Russia talks have been “most effective” in tackling crisis in Syria.

‘Collective cooperation required to counter unilateralism’

Zarif also said that the U.S. has spread unilateralism and seeks to impose its demands on others and noted that collective cooperation is required to counter unilateralism.

The chief diplomat added that Iran has proven that it seeks international cooperation and is not avoiding negotiation.

“The Iranian people and government welcome interaction and fulfil their commitments. However, we do not accept unilateral implementation of an agreement,” Zarif said in an open reference to the 2015 nuclear deal which the U.S. ditched in May 2018 and imposed sanctions on Iran in line with his “maximum pressure” policy against Tehran.

Zarif also criticized the Europeans for failing to meet their commitments under the JCPOA.

Lavrov said that Washington’s action in quitting the nuclear deal violates international law.

“The JCPOA has been confirmed in 2231 resolution of the United Nations Security Council and must be implemented,” the veteran Russian chief diplomat noted.

He added, “We want our Western partners to accept realities about the JCPOA.”
Lavrov noted that Russia will continue talks on preserving the nuclear deal.

The Russian foreign minister said the JCPOA is in danger without the compliance of the U.S. and the European Union.

“Because of the destructive line that Washington keeps towing, this important achievement of international diplomacy… is in danger of falling apart,” he said, according to the breakingnews.ie.

Lavrov added that “colleagues from the European Union” were not fully complying with the agreement either.
Art & Culture
“Lotus” named best doc at Sharjah Film Platform

December 23, 2019

TEHRAN – Iranian filmmaker Mohammadreza Vatandoost’s acclaimed film “Lotus” has been selected as best documentary at the Sharjah Film Platform (SFP), a film festival that is organized by the Sharjah Art Foundation every year.

In a statement published during the closing ceremony of the festival on Saturday, the jury said that the short film received the honor for combining cinematography with poetic storytelling, the organizers announced.

The film is about an old woman who is waiting for a permit to enter an island after 12 years to visit her son’s grave.

In its second edition that was held from December 14 to 21, the festival screened more than 50 short and feature films by local, regional and international filmmakers in the narrative, documentary and experimental categories.

The award for best narrative film went to “Far in Night” by Syed Maisam Ali Shah from India for its fleeting poetry of ordinary moments.

The jury prizes were awarded to “Blessed Land” by Pham Ngoc Lan from Vietnam for its lyrical rumination on loss and progress, and “Children of the Lake” by
Emerson Reyes from the Philippines for its original approach to the need for stewardship in a violent new world.

The award for best experimental film went to “That Cloud Never Left” by Yashaswini Raghunandan from India for its hybrid of documentary and fiction. “The Dark Cloud” by Ndumiso Mnguni from South Africa was awarded the jury prize for best experimental science fiction film.

“32-Rbit” by Victor Orozco Ramirez from Mexico was awarded the jury prize for best experimental animation.

In addition to film screenings, the festival included a series of talks and panel discussions by leading moving image artists, directors, filmmakers and film industry professionals as well as workshops that focused on film criticism, acting and improvisation.

**Photo: Iranian filmmaker Mohammadreza Vatandoost (2nd L) poses with the jury members after accepting the award for best documentary for “Lotus” at the Sharjah Film Platform on December 21, 2019. (SFP)**

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**Parisian gallery hangs paintings by Iranian artist Mostafa Sarabi**

December 23, 2019

TEHRAN – An exhibition of paintings by Iranian artist Mostafa Sarabi is underway at the Balice Hertling Gallery in Paris.
Shabahang Tayyari is the curator of the exhibit “Supreme Baba”, which opened on December 19 and will be running until January 18, 2020, the gallery has announced.

“Sarabi often paints his family, depicting himself surrounded by his wife and child,” Tayyari wrote in a statement for the exhibition.

“He paints either what belongs to him or what he himself belongs to. He neither seeks to recreate an image, nor the scene in front of him,” he added.

“In his paintings, he creates his own realm. Whenever an object or an individual is depicted in his paintings, that object or individual then belongs to him,” he explained.

“Like all other Iranian men, he tries to stay strong even during his most fragile times and perhaps uses the excuse of having to care for his family in order to care for himself,” Tayyari stated.

Sarabi lives and works in Tehran. He has held several solo exhibitions in Tehran and has taken part in group shows at Giardino Segreto in Milan.

Photo: Paintings by Mostafa Sarabi on view at the Balice Hertling Gallery in Paris.

Fajr festival announces documentary lineup
December 23, 2019
TEHRAN – A lineup of 10 movies will go on screen in the documentary section of the 38th Fajr Film Festival, the organizers announced on Monday.


The lineup also includes “No Place for Angles” by Sam Kalantari, “His Excellency” by Sajjad Imani and “It’s Winter” by Mehrdad Zahedian.

Also included are “Kill Mehdi Iraqi” by Abdorreza Nematollahi, “Kami” by Mitra Ebrahim and “Living among the War Flags” by Mohsen Eslamzadeh.

The 38th Fajr Film Festival will be held in Tehran from February 1 to 11.

Photo: A poster for “No Place for Angles” by Sam Kalantari.
Children’s writer uses symbols to arrange fantasy tour of Italy

December 23, 2019

TEHRAN – Iranian writer Hadi Khorshahian has used symbols from various nations in his latest book to take children on a fantasy tour of Italy.

“Persian Cat in the Italian Boot” has recently been published by Neyestan Books. It is the third book of a series named “Delicious Thoughts”, which aims to improve children’s reading in the 8-10 age group and raise their knowledge of nations around the world, the publisher announced on Monday.

The book illustrated by Narges Nikui is about a Mexican marmot that begins a journey to Italy to pull the Tower of Pisa upright. A white Persian cat helps the marmot achieve this aim. An Italian bluebird and a German Shepherd dog join the adventurers during the journey.

This book promotes art and friendship and opens a new window for teamwork, dialogue and research among children.

“The Island of Flags”, the first book of “Delicious Thoughts”, was also authored by Khorshahian. In the book, children from various countries along with their families take a cruise to visit Indonesia. This volume carries illustrations by Razieh Shiekhali.

In the second book titled “Ooh, I Got It Finally”, writer Lida Tarzi teaches children the concept and fulfillment of a promise. Maliheh Mohammadian is the illustrator of the book.

Photo: This combination photo shows the front covers of Iranian writer Hadi Khorshahian’s books “Persian Cat in the Italian Boot” and “The Island of Flags”.

Pakistani scholars discuss Rumi’s influence on Sufism

December 23, 2019
TEHRAN – Persian mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi’s influence on Sufism was discussed during a meeting at the Cultural Center of Iran in Hyderabad, Pakistan on Saturday.

Writer Ali Akash, lecturer Noor Ahmed Janjhi and Persian literature expert Sahar Gul Bhatti were among the scholars attended the meeting, Iran’s Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) announced on Monday.

Janjhi recited a selection of poetry by Rumi and compared his poetry with compositions by Sindhi Sufi poet Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai who lived during the 17th and 18th centuries.

He said that Rumi’s poems have been translated into different languages across the world, and many scholars in the West and East have strongly been influenced by him.

Sahar Gul also recited poems by Rumi and Bhittai and discussed the mystic aspects of the works.

The meeting was organized by the ICRO and the Pakistan Writers Guild.

Photo: A poster for a meeting on Rumi’s influence on Sufism in Hyderabad, Pakistan.
TEHRAN – English director and writer Peter Brook’s play “The Man Who” went on stage at Tehran’s Divare Chaharom Theater on Sunday.

Reza Molai is the director of the play co-authored by Marie-Hélène Estienne. It is inspired by British neurologist Oliver Sacks’ 1985 book “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat”, which is the case histories of his patients.

“The Man Who” offers a series of fascinating doctor/patient scenarios that examine our attempts to understand the workings of the brain. These case studies also become Brook’s starting point in his search for a new theater form.

Shiva Ordui, Maliheh Aqai, Neda Asadi, Yasser Asghari, Mahsa Jamshidi, Mohammad Shami and Ehsan Sadeqi are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until January 14.

Photo: Director Reza Molai troupe performs “The Man Who” at Tehran’s Divare Chaharom Theater on December 22, 2019.
TEHRAN – Watercolors by 40 women artists on the theme of Yalda Night, the last night of the fall season and the longest night of the year that is celebrated in Iran, are on view in an exhibition at Avaye Honar Gallery in Tehran.

The works are created by the students of Bahman Niku and the exhibit is named “My Yalda from a New Window”.

Yalda Night, which falls on December 21, is considered the longest night of the year when the ancient Iranians celebrated the birth of Mithra, the goddess of light. It is also known as the Chelleh Night.

“I am also participating in the exhibit with one work displaying a broken bowl with pomegranate seeds scattered all around,” Niku said.

“This resembles that our traditions are in danger of being forgotten and I meant to remind the visitors to try to regard their traditions,” he added.
The exhibit will be running until December 30 at the gallery located at 1 Panahi Alley, Bosnia and Herzegovina St. off Fereshteh St.

Photo: Watercolors on Yalda Night by 40 women artists are on display in an exhibition at Tehran’s Avaye Honar Gallery.

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**Iranian films line up for Dhaka festival**

December 22, 2019

TEHRAN – A lineup of 28 Iranian films will go on screen in various sections of the 18th Dhaka International Film Festival, which will be held in the Bangladeshi capital from January 11 to 19.


“Driving Lessons” by Marzieh Riahi, “The End of a Doll’s Dream” by Mahbub Molai, “My Paintings Have No Color” by Hedyeh Khosravi and “The Feast of the Goat” by Saeid Zamanian will be screened in the short film competition.
The festival will also screen the co-productions between Iran and Afghanistan “Hava, Maryam, Ayesha” by Sahra Karimi, “Seven and a Half” by Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi and “Elephant Bird” by Amir-Masud Soheili.

**Photo:** A scene from “Amir” by Nima Eqlima.
Iranian students win gold medal, special award at SIIF 2019

December 24, 2019

TEHRAN – Iranian college students won a gold medal and a special award at the Seoul International Invention Fair (SIIF) which was held on November 27-30, ISNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

The event aimed to hold a wholly integrated invention fair providing inventors from all over the world with comprehensive information on the commercialization of inventions, patent information, and technology transfer.

Two Iranian teams consisting of school students and college students competed in the event. Shahriar Shariati and Adel Ahmadi Fariman won the gold medals among school students, Amir-Abbas Mohammadi-Koushki, head of the Iranian teams said.

The students’ innovative project was “smart depression detection system using artificial intelligence” which ranked first surpassing South Korea, the United States and Germany, he noted.
The college students’ team was awarded for “block chain system in medical information technology” which aims to eliminate insurance booklets in Iran, Mohammadi-Koushki highlighted.

Features of the project include physicians’ tax bills, saving on paperwork costs of hospital and government-run medical centers, preventing patients from using duplicate medicines, and making medical records always available, and fast access to patients’ health background for doctors while ensuring the safety of patients’ health information and data, he explained.

Supported by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Federation of Inventors’ Associations (IFIA), the 4-day event gathered inventors and researchers to showcase their new ideas and products to manufacturers, investors, distributors, licensing firms, and the general public.

In SIIF 2018, 604 inventions from 32 countries and around 40,000 spectators participated.

**Iran ranks first in international abacus contest 2019**

December 24, 2019

TEHRAN – Iranian talented children have ranked first in team category of the 19th Pan Pacific Abacus and Mental Arithmetic Association Global Abacus and Mental Arithmetic Championships which was held in Thailand on Sunday.
Children in 5 different age groups, including age 5-7 as group A, 8-9 group B, 10-11 group C, 12-14 group D and 15 or older in group E, annually attend the contest solving multiple math equations, including division, multiplication, square root, cube root, fractions, time, etc.

Iranian teams participated in the whole five age groups of the competitions; these 55 smart children won 3 “champion of champions” titles, 48 “champion” titles, three were ranked as the “first winner”, and one the “second winner”, head of Smart Kids institute Rouhollah Mokhberian said.

Some 55 children were selected among 388 students from all over the country in national competitions, he added.

The Smart Kids institute holds a national competition annually on August 2 to select members of the Iranian team for attending the PAMA global abacus championships. Children from 7 to 13 years of age take part in the competition to solve some 7 mathematical test sheets using abacuses.

Over 610 children from 24 countries participated in the event, Mokhberian noted.

Different countries, including, Taiwan, Thailand, Canada, Hong Kong, the United States, South Africa, Vietnam, South Korea, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Australia, India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Tajikistan, and Yemen attended the international competition.

The championship, organized by a non-profit organization established in 1999, is an example of what can be achieved with early intervention in abacus math and mental arithmetic education. The purpose of the competition is to allow for the observation of mental arithmetic skills from all countries, to promote abacus and mental arithmetic education, and to improve friendships among participants from around the world.

The Iranian team consisting of 35 children ranked first in different categories of the 18th PAMA Global Abacus and Mental Arithmetic Championships held in Malaysia on December 30, 2018.
Iran’s civilization, history deserve to be seen, Italian tourism expert says

December 25, 2019

TEHRAN – A senior Italian tourism expert who has recently embarked on some tours across Iran believes that a gap exists between reality in Iran and the media image of the country worldwide, emphasizing that the country’s civilization and history deserve to be seen.

“There is a gap and vacuum between reality in Iran and what is being depicted from the country [worldwide]. Outside the borders, there is no mention of Iranian civilization and historical monuments, while they deserve to be seen,” Maurizio Davolio, chairperson of European Alliance for Responsible Tourism and Hospitality, said in an interview with ISNA published on Wednesday.

Davolio, who is also the president of the Italian Association of Responsible Tourism and a member of the National Council for Development Cooperation at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has toured provinces of Kordestan, Kermanshah, Khuzestan, Fars and Tehran during his one-week stay in Iran. The expert also took part in joint project for developing cultural heritage and tourism between the two countries, which was unveiled in Tehran on December 17.

On the sidelines of the unveiling ceremony, Italian ambassador to Iran Giuseppe Perrone said: “The [joint] project aims to make sure that Iran develops its capabilities to attract more foreign tourists and better organize its tourism industries.”

The envoy described Iran “as a country that is very rich in terms of cultural sites and archeological sites… so there is a lot for people to discover,” adding “Iran is a
country that has a great and [un-]tapped potential and when it comes to tourism, cultural heritage, it has a lot to offer.”

For more than 20 centuries Iran and Italy have been the embodiment of Eastern and Western civilizations and such a long history of relationships and many historical, religious and cultural commonalities between the two nations has helped Iran and Italy better understanding each other today, ambassador added.

In November, Tehran and Rome marked 60 years of collaboration in the fields of cultural heritage and archaeology in a conference, which was held at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran.

Iran embraces hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.
Science & Technology
TEHRAN – First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri inaugurated two projects related to agricultural development in southwestern province of Bushehr on Monday, ISNA news agency reported.

One of the projects, implemented on 1,500 hectares of land with the participation of 102 farmers, aims to increase water consumption efficiency using under pressure irrigation method to conserve water and soil resources.

A total budget of 240 billion rials (nearly $5.7 million) has been spent on the project.

The other project, called greenhouse construction and development plan, has the capacity to produce 16,000 tons of crops, which was implemented on 75 hectares of land, aiming to increase the efficiency of agricultural water consumption.

The project cost 1.5 billion rials (about $37 million), creating job opportunities for 675 people.
Magnetic survey reveals two stone structures in Pasargadae

December 23, 2019

TEHRAN – A recent magnetic survey conducted by a team of Iranian and French interdisciplinary experts suggests that two historical stone structures exist beneath the UNESCO-registered Pasargadae in southern Iran.

Six places were initially identified as historical discoveries, four of which were later proved to be non-historical, ISNA reported on Monday.

Two of the findings that are situated some 70 cm beneath the surface are estimated to date from the Achaemenid era (c. 550 – 330 BC).

Soil samples from the sites have been collected to be sent to France for further examination based on the optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) method, which is used for measuring doses from ionizing radiation.

Situated in about 50 km north of Persepolis, Pasargadae embraces outstanding examples of the first phase of royal Achaemenid art and architecture and exceptional testimonies of Persian civilization.

Cyrus was the founder of Achaemenid Empire which at its greatest extent stretched from the Balkans to the Indus Valley, spanning 5.5 million square kilometers. The
Persian king declared world’s first charter of human rights, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder.

Despite the minimal nature of the ruins they make a good introduction to the wonders of Persepolis, some 60km to the south. Best visited en route from Yazd or Isfahan to Shiraz, most people fit them into an extended tour from Persepolis with stops at Naqsh-e Rostam and Naqsh-e Rajab.
Iran crowned Asian Nations Cup U14 Chess Team champions

December 25, 2019

TEHRAN – Iran claimed the title of the 2nd Asian Nations Cup U14 Chess Team Championship on Wednesday.

The Iranian team defeated Hong Kong and China D in Round Eight and won the team title.

Iran seized the title with eight wins and one lose.

The Iranian team consists of Bardia Daneshvar, Kian Pourmousavi, Abtin Atakhan, Mohammadjavad Khorshidi and Hamidreza Ebrahimi.

The competition is being held in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, China from Dec. 18 to 27.
Iranian women make history in Belt Wrestling World Championships

December 23, 2019

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s team made history by winning the 2019 Belt Wrestling World Championships for the first time on Monday.

Team Melli claimed the title with 93 points, followed by Kyrgyz Republic (89) and Kazakhstan (63).

The Iranian women won three medals in the competition.

Hanieh Ashouri seized a gold medal at the +75kg after defeating her Belarusian rival in the final match of +75kg.

On Sunday, Fatemeh Fattahi Juybari won a silver medal at the 60kg and Zahra Yazdani claimed a bronze in the 55kg.

Iran took part in the event in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan with six female wrestlers.

Belt Wrestling is a form of wrestling that is one of the oldest historically recorded sports. It involves contestants aiming to knock each other over by grappling with a belt.
Iranian lifters win two medals at Qatar Cup

December 22, 2019

TEHRAN – Iran’s Kianoush Rostami and Ali Miri won silver and bronze medals respectively at the 6th edition of Qatar Weightlifting International Cup on Sunday.

Qatar’s weightlifting star Fares Ibrahim Hassouna won the title after hoisting a total of 404kg in the 96kg category after lifting 176kg in snatch and 226kg in clean and jerk.

Rostami took the silver with 403kg (178kg snatch, 225kg clean and jerk).

And bronze medal went to Miri who lifted 371kg in total (162kg snatch, 207 clean and jerk).

Iranian female weightlifters Elham Hosseini (76kg) and Parisa Jahanfekrian (87kg) came ninth and seventh, respectively.

Female lifters compete under seven weight classes while men vie for honors in eight categories during this year's edition of the annual championship.

The tournament is a qualification event for the Tokyo Olympics 2020 and is hosted by the Qatar Weightlifting Federation (QWF) under the auspices of the International Weightlifting Federation.
Jaber Sadeghzadeh retains Iran’s Pahlevan title
December 30, 2019

TEHRAN – Jaber Sadeghzadeh retained title of Iran’s Pahlevani Wrestling Championship for the sixth time on Monday.

He defeated Mehdi Hassanpour in the final match of the +100kg weight class.

Pahlavan of Iran is an annual Pahlevani Wrestling competition held in Iran, in which athletes from across the country participate to achieve the title.

Though the competition has ancient roots, its modern form has been held since 1944.

Winner of this title is called Pahlavan and wears the special Bazouband (Armband). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) registered Pahlevani and Zourkhaneh rituals in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014.