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Iran's sponge iron production leap outstanding

BY MAHNAZ ABDI

TEHRAN - While Iran is fighting the U.S. severe sanctions on its economy, and the country's different industrial and economic sectors have been affected by the limitations and difficulties caused by the sanctions condition, the country's mining sector is moving forward noticeably, overcoming such barriers.

Among the mining sector's different products, sponge iron is an outstanding example, as the production of this item is rising more and more in the country.

The latest eye-catching achievement in this field was standing at first place globally during the first five months of 2020, when Iran's sponge iron production was the highest in the world, despite all the hurdles created by the sanctions.

The country's sponge iron output was also the highest in May 2020, when Iran lagged India behind.

Iran is only second to India globally in terms of the volume of sponge iron production, but during the first five months of 2020, Iran's production of the product was over 12 million tons, while that of India was 11 million tons.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Iran's largest metals and mining holding, has stated that one of the most important reasons for the increase in sponge iron production in Iran is the establishment of new sponge iron plants, adding that in recent years, with its new strategy and with the participation of the private sector, the organization has been able to launch several projects to produce sponge iron.

Sponge iron production in Iran has been also on a rising trend during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20, 2020).

The most recent report in this due, which was released on Sunday, indicates that the sponge iron production by the major minerals and mining companies, which are the subsidiaries of IMIDRO, has increased eight percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 - January 19, 2021), as compared with the corresponding time span in the past year.

As reported, these companies, including Mobarakeh Steel Company, Golgozar Mining and Industrial Company, Chadormalu Industrial Company, Khuzestan Steel Company, Hormozgan Steel Company, Iranian Ghadir Iron and Steel Company, and South Kaveh Steel Company, have produced 25.554 million tons of sponge iron in the ten-month period of the present year.

Alireza Jahanbakhsh wastes time at Brighton

BY MASOUD HOSSEIN

TEHRAN - Alireza Jahanbakhsh is in a race against time as he grows older and older at Brighton, waiting for a chance to show what he can do.

He signed from AZ Alkmaar in 2018 for a then club-record fee of £17m but has since endured a frustrating time in the Premier League on the south coast.

It cannot be said it was a wrong transfer but, unfortunately, things didn't go well for the Iranian winger.

Playing in English Premier League is really mouth-watering and Jahanbakhsh made the best possible decision but he never found his place in the team.

Jahanbakhsh is about 28 and it means he has no enough time and is racing against the clock. In my opinion, he has fought enough and did everything he could. Jahanbakhsh should not waste his time in the English side.

He has struggled for game time under Graham Potter and it seems it's time to change the things. The iconic winger has recently said he is at a point in his career he has to "play a lot more and have better conditions."

He's absolutely right.

Jahanbakhsh has previously displayed that what a quality player he is. Last year, he scored a phenomenal overhead kick against Chelsea and stunned the football fans.

But he's frustrated of course over lack of playing time. He has to play more and more in the last years of his playing career. Jahanbakhsh must once again make the best decision. To stay at Brighton is not the best possible way and he can try his luck elsewhere.

He has a chance of playing in Eredivisie teams since he is unhappy with his limited role with the Seagulls.

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BLM protest in NYC leaves two NYPD cops injured, 11 arrested

A Black Lives Matter march through Midtown Manhattan turned violent Friday night, with 11 protesters arrested.

The NYPD reported that two officers suffered minor injuries during the protest, which was attended by about 100 marchers; officials could not immediately say how the cops were hurt.

At least some of those arrested were accused of attacking Daily News photographer Sam Costanza at the intersection of Sixth Avenue and 54th Street in the mistaken belief that he was a cop, sources said.

The photog was surrounded and struck after one of the marchers recognized him from a BLM protest outside the NYPD's 6th Precinct house in Greenwich Village last year, according to sources.

The agitated protester began yelling, "He's a cop," inciting many of his fellow marchers.

About a dozen people surrounded the photog, shoving him and beating him with their fists and other objects, sources said.

The NYPD confirmed the attack, telling The Post "a member of the media" was assaulted, and police made "a number of arrests." Angel Rivera, 19, of Manhattan, was arrested for kicking one officer in the foot and biting another officer on his thigh during the 9:15 p.m. fracas, the spokeswoman said.

Rivera was charged with two counts of assault on a police officer, two counts of assault, one count of resisting arrest, obstructing governmental justice and unlawful possession of a noxious matter.

At least some of those taken into custody were accused of attacking Daily News photographer Sam Costanza at Sixth Avenue and 54th Street - in the mistaken belief that he was a cop, law-enforcement sources told The Post.

Costanza was surrounded and struck after one of the marchers recognized him from a previous BLM protest outside the NYPD's Sixth Precinct station house in Greenwich Village last year, according to the sources.

Discover outstanding example of Iranian bathhouse

BY AFSHIN MAJLESI

In earlier times, bathhouses or hammams were not only places for bathing and cleaning up in Iran. They were also venues where people socialized, shared humor and news; a peaceful place for exchanging views about politics and everyday life.

Sultan Amir Ahmad Bathhouse, which is the subject of this article, is an outstanding example of such public places. The centuries-old bathhouse is located in the oasis city of Kashan on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir aka the Great Salt Desert.

The bathhouse is now a top tourist destination, featuring very eye-catching decorations. The lime and gypsum plaster of this building stare everyone's eyes. Lime cutting, the art of sculpture, embossed on a surface of lime, is one of the most beautiful decorations of Iranian buildings.

Turquoise blue and golden tiles, seven layers of plaster, and special architecture, have made this bathroom one of the most prominent baths in Iran. Other features include the use of vaulted ceilings, intricate tilework, mosaics, and wall

paintings that have been designed to create special effects.

Twisting corridors is a feature of Kashani architecture, designed to maximize the privacy of the household; here in the bathhouse, the purpose was to keep in the steam.

From another point of view, it is somehow an anthropology museum as many wax effigies there, clad in traditional attire, are expected to display scenes of its heyday.

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Toward a 'knowledge-based' socio-economic growth

BY MEHDI GARSHASBI

TEHRAN - The law for promoting and supporting knowledge-based companies was approved by the Majlis (Iranian parliament) in 2010, paving the way for a jumpstart in the march toward scientific progress.

Over the past couple of years, the concept of 'knowledge-based company' has changed to 'knowledge-based society', meaning that supporting knowledge-based companies will lead to many social and economic advantages for the public.

The deputy vice president for science and technology, Mehdi Elyasi, says the number of knowledge-based companies has increased from around 50 in 2013 to more than 5,700 in the current year.

Currently, many knowledge-based companies are active in different fields, ranging from information and communication technology to health, agriculture, and energy with an estimated total sale of 1,200 billion rials (around \$28 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), Elyasi explained.

Most-advanced fields

Various knowledge-based companies have made advancement in different fields, however, the level of progress in the fields of health, ICT, agriculture, and energy has been more noticeable. Of course, other sectors such as the automotive industry have removed many bottlenecks so far. At present, 40 knowledge-based companies with large turnovers are listed on the stock market, Elyasi added.

Dealing with sanctions

Although sanctions have put pressure on the country, it has provided a unique opportunity for business development and the activity of knowledge-based companies in the country.

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10th anniversary of Bahrain uprising marked

The tenth anniversary of the pro-democracy movement of the Bahrainis against the despotic al-Khalifa regime was marked at the shrine city of Qom on Saturday night. The ceremony was addressed by Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim, the leader of the movement. The uprising against the ruling family were a series of demonstrations that started in February 2011. The protests were peaceful but they were suppressed violently. Even Saudi Arabia sent military forces to the tiny island state to crack down on the demonstrators.

The crux of Biden's foreign policy: JCPOA or East Asia?

By Azin Sahabi

TEHRAN — Since President Joe Biden was inaugurated on January 20, returning to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal has been quite controversial in various terms. The barriers for Biden's administration to revive the JCPOA have been discussed extensively.

In fact, there exists ingrained obstacles to reviving the JCPOA by the U.S. in terms of lifting sanctions. These deeply rooted barriers are sanctions that are tied to the issue of terrorism as a policy that Ronald Reagan's administration embarked on. It identifies Iran as a terrorist hub under an American law. Anticipating Biden's likely intention to reenter the JCPOA and offering some sanctions relief to Iran, this policy was intensified by Trump's team in a bid to make it difficult for Joe Biden to lift Iran sanctions.

Undoubtedly, the Biden administration is fully aware of the complicated structure of U.S. multidimensional sanctions against Tehran during the last four decades. Also, nearly all top U.S. think tanks have explicitly and implicitly recommended the White House not to reenter the deal. Those right-leaning neoconservative think tanks overly warn the Oval Office against rejoining the deal, keep all sanctions in place and follow the exact footprints of Trump's administration towards Iran.

On the other hand, some think tanks, which are categorized as liberal, highlight several political and technical obstacles and describe the likely process too demanding to be realistic.

Recent publications by Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft and the Atlantic Council on the issue are worth mentioning. In fact, the Donald Trump administration sanctioned numerous major Iranian economic entities such as the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) under the label of "terrorism" to consolidate these kinds of sanctions as the centerpiece of the administration's "maximum pressure" strategy on Iran.

In this regard, Kenneth Katzman, an Iran expert at the Congressional Research Service and another fellow at the Quincy Institute, have commented on "terrorism sanctions on Iran and the path forward" and "dismantling the 'sanctions wall' myth", respectively.

"Analyzing terrorism sanctions on Iran and the path forward"

In an analysis published on Feb 11, 2021 by the Atlantic Council, Katzman, a top researcher for the U.S. Congress who regularly writes reports titled "Iran sanctions", stresses that one of the most challenging barriers which the Biden administration faces in terms of his stated intention to return to the JCPOA, is "how to 'de-list' from U.S. sanctions not only those Iranian and Iran-related economic entities de-listed in 2016—when the JCPOA went into effect—but also economic entities sanctioned by the Trump administration — even if the economic entities have been designated as terrorist."

The author, who accuses Iran of supporting terrorist groups in the region and conducting a nuclear weapon program and describes the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as terrorist group, not to mention "malign activities" of Tehran, argues that if the Biden administration revokes terrorism designations of Iranian economic entities, the Oval office's commitment to counter "terrorism" will be questioned.

It is worth mentioning that Katzman's recommendations are in accordance with John Kerry's claims in early 2016. In an interview with CNBC in Davos on January 21, 2016, he claimed that some of the money Iran received in sanctions relief would go to groups considered terrorists and said: "I think that some of it will end up in the hands of the IRGC or other entities, some of which are labeled terrorists."

Katzman analyses the JCPOA through the lens of the measures that the U.S. has implemented against Iran under the label of "counter-terrorism" and emphasizes that one of the main pillars of U.S. approach towards West Asia is deterring Iran effectively in terms of gaining regional influence. Thus, he stresses that if Biden considers lifting terrorism sanctions against the long list of Iranian economic entities as a necessary step for reviving the JCPOA, this will undermine U.S. policies that could roll back Iran's influence in the region.

In this context, the Quincy Institute has commented on the issue, too.

A myth to reconsider: Dismantling "sanctions wall"

Underlining the debate, the Quincy Institute on February 12, 2020 speculated on how Iranian and American parties can come back into compliance with the deal and what barriers stand in the path forward. To describe the obstacles Biden faces, the article points to the "sanctions wall" that architects of the Trump administration's Iran policy designed to target those Iranian entities with terrorism designations. In fact, those entities were the subject to nuclear-related sanctions relief under the Obama administration but as the previous administration declared: "this double layer could create a 'sanctions wall of political and market deterrence' to undermine a future administration's ability to ease or lift sanctions."

The institute also mentions that supporters of the "sanctions wall" at the U.S. Congress did not miss the opportunity to question Anthony Blinken's assessment of "terrorism sanctions" on Iran's financial and oil sectors. Senator Ted Cruz, a vocal opponent of the JCPOA, challenged Biden's pick for the Department of State at a Senate confirmation hearing and asked if he "believe[s] it is in America's national security interests to lift those terrorism sanctions and to allow billions of dollars to go once again to funding terrorist activities?"

Similarly, Jim Inhofe, a senior Republican senator who advocates "maximum pressure" campaign, detailed in an op-ed for Foreign Policy how he and his partners in Congress intend to make it difficult for Biden to reenter the JCPOA.

In fact, as Biden himself said, he will not lift "non-nuclear" sanctions, a move consistent with what the architects of Trump's "sanction wall" support.

Biden's critical priority: JCPOA or East Asia?

Although Iran definitely remains one of the main issues on Biden's foreign policy agenda, perhaps the Americans do not perceive Iran's nuclear issue as the priority to be addressed urgently at the Oval Office. In fact, it seems the somehow similar strategy is already arranged in terms of how to deal with Iran and maybe nothing fundamentally new will come up.

Apparently, articulating a new American strategy towards East Asia, particularly China, would be the most difficult challenge facing the Biden administration in laying out U.S. foreign policy goals in the foreseeable future.

Reviewing major and long policy papers and reports on East Asia and the related security, economic and political interests of the U.S. in this geostrategic region can further reinforce the concept that China, not Iran, would be placed high on the Biden administration's foreign policy.

For instance, the Atlantic Council has published issue briefs and strategy papers in which detailed road maps towards East Asian countries including Pakistan, India and mostly China are put forward for Biden's administration.

Defense chief says Iran's missile capability acts as deterrent

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Brigadier General Amir Hatami, the defense minister of Iran, has highlighted the Islamic Republic's deterrent power based on domestically manufactured missiles with great accuracy and maneuverability.

Speaking to Tasnim news agency on Sunday, Hatami emphasized, "Iran is currently in the best state of defense and missile power."

"Today, all of the Islamic Republic of Iran's missiles are precise and have great maneuverability and the necessary explosive power to maintain the country's defensive deterrence," the minister remarked.

Army tests new smart missile with 300-km range

Regarding Hatami's emphasis on Iran's defensive missile capabilities, the Iranian Army Ground Force also tested a new smart missile with a range of 300 kilometers on Sunday.



Speaking at the event, Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, the Army Ground Force

commander, said, "The missile units have tested a new mid-range missile to evaluate

its accuracy and power."

Pointing to the range of the new missile, General Heidari noted, "With a range of 300 kilometer, the smart missile can hit targets with pinpoint accuracy."

The commander added, "Launched with automated systems, the missile can be fired in various weather conditions."

'Iran firm to take revenge on Fakhrizadeh assassinator'

Hatami also repeated that Iran is determined to take revenge on those who ordered and perpetrated the assassination of senior Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh in November.

Fakhrizadeh, a senior nuclear and defense scientist, was assassinated in a small city east of Tehran on November 27.

"As a great country with management of strategic thinking, the Islamic Republic of Iran will mete out the punishment in the proper time and place. This will undoubtedly happen," the defense minister added.

Clerical association declares support for Raisi presidential candidacy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Combatant Clergy Association will support the candidacy of

Ebrahim Raisi for the 2021 presidential election without any hesitation, the association spokesman Gholam Reza Mesbahi Moghadam says, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Raisi, the current Judiciary chief, ran for the post of president in the 2016 elections.

"In the past election, we voted for Raisi," added Mes-

bahi Moghadam, a former MP who is now a member of the Expediency Council.

Stressing the necessity of building consensus among members of association in the run-up for the June presidential election, he said, "The association intends to bring together all parties to reach a consensus on the presidential candidate."

Iranian presidential election will be held on June 18,

2021.

On Joe Biden's policy towards Iran, Mesbahi Moghadam said, "I see no difference between Biden and his opponents because the U.S. has its own principle. I don't think the U.S. approach to Iran has changed over 42 years."

Regarding the revival of the JCPOA, he underlined, "If the U.S. wants to rejoin the nuclear deal, as the Leader said, it needs to lift all sanctions on Iran."

Iran set to hold joint naval drill with Russia, China

Joint naval exercise with Russia shows Iran's naval power: admiral Sayyari

I → "When the powerful Russian navy conducts exercises with the navies of the Islamic Republic Army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, it sends a clear message," said Admiral Sayyari.

Pointing to high tech capabilities of the Iranian Navy, he noted, "Iran's Navy is at the

level of the world naval powers in terms of equipment, manpower, technique and tactics, command and control, communication and access to new equipment."

Pointing to various foreign threats to Iran's national security, the admiral said, "Our country has been facing many threats

since the first days of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and the enemies have put forward various plans in this regard, all of which have failed."

Sayyari stressed that the reason for the failure of the enemies' plans is the authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the de-

terrent power of the Armed Forces

"The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the Army, with regard to its mission of maintaining territorial integrity and independence, has achieved authority and dignity and will definitely respond to the threats of enemies."

Decision time soon for Biden on Iran nuclear deal

With February 21 fast approaching, "it is imperative that diplomacy happens," a former European Union diplomat says

U.S. President Joe Biden ran supporting a return to diplomacy with Iran but made clear he will not be rushed into re-entering a 2015 nuclear deal trashed by Donald Trump.

Nonetheless, a series of dates are coming up that will force the new U.S. administration to show its hand.

What dates are coming up?

The Biden administration has repeatedly said it will return to full compliance with the deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Agreement Plan of Action (JCPOA), once Iran does.

In other words, Biden will lift draconian sanctions imposed by Trump only after Iran reverses nuclear steps it took to protest those sanctions.

Iran, likely mindful of the widespread hostility it faces in Washington, wants to ensure an end to sanctions before it backs down on steps away from the nuclear commitments, which included enriching uranium beyond agreed limits.

A key date comes on February 21 when Iran, under a law passed in December by the conservative-led parliament, is set to stop allowing intrusive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency unless there is an easing of U.S. sanctions.

Kelsey Davenport, director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association in Washington, said that Iran can quickly undo most steps such as uranium enrichment.

"But the steps that are coming, I think, do pose a more significant risk and are more difficult to reverse," she said.

While Iran has stopped short of threatening to expel IAEA inspectors, Davenport worried that any loss of access would fuel speculation that Tehran is engaged in illicit activities.

The risk "underscores the importance of restoring full compliance with the JCPOA before Iran takes these steps and develops this new knowledge," she said.

Another key date is in June when Iran holds elections that



Jon Wolfsthal



Kelsey Davenport

could bring to power a hardliner to succeed President Hassan Rouhani, who bet on engagement with the West when Barack Obama was president only to see tensions soar under Trump.

Is there time?

With February 21 fast approaching, "it is imperative that diplomacy happens," a former European Union diplomat said.

"The next 10 days will be important to give us an idea of what is occurring and how successful it will be" in persuading Iran to step back, the diplomat said.

"The entire issue is to make sure that the threshold is not crossed on that date," said another European diplomat.

The diplomat said that position was shared by Russia and China, which are also signatories to the JCPOA but enjoy much closer relations with Iran than Western powers.

Jon Wolfsthal, who advised Biden when he was Obama's vice president, said that the United States and Iran, along with other JCPOA nations, could issue a statement before February 21 "that would show their mutual intent to return to full compliance."

But while action would be best as soon as possible, he doubted that decision-making would fundamentally change after the elections in Iran.

Does Iran envoy in Biden administration open a window for diplomacy?

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Robert Malley, the son of a leftist, Jewish, Egyptian-born journalist, is appointed as Iran envoy in Biden's administration. He is the focal point for President Biden's diplomacy towards West Asia, and the Iran nuclear deal, according to the New York Times.

Robert Malley spent years as a staff aide in the Clinton and Obama administrations, where he was widely admired as a learned student of West Asia.

President Biden forged his foreign policy team with remarkably little trouble. He picked the heads of State and Defense Departments, and filled senior intelligence posts, without much controversy and almost no Republican opposition.

But a political crossfire raised when the Biden administration announced the appointment of Robert Malley as Iran envoy. The choice of Malley, a longtime diplomat and conflict mediator, immediately provoked an intense Washington debate about the 2015 Iran nuclear deal which the U.S. withdrew from it during Trump's administration. It also inflamed the sensitive politics of Israel

and, for good measure, served as a test case for the influence of progressives in Biden's new foreign policy team.

As Benjamin J. Rhodes, a former deputy national security adviser to President Barack Obama joked, "Rob is a proxy for everything."

Although he has been accused of holding dangerous views about West Asia, Malley may seem an unlikely source of controversy. Malley, the son of a Jewish Arab leftist, is a well-known advocate for engaging with groups and governments — including, over the years, Hamas, Hezbollah and President Bashar al-Assad of Syria — widely considered enemies of the United States and Israel. He is widely criticized on the ground that he is very skeptical of American power and overly sympathetic to foreign actors including Iran and the Palestinians.

The critics claim Malley is seeking for a new deal with Tehran that will concede too much to Iran in the name of reconciliation. When his appointment first announced in the news media, Senator Tom Cotton, Republican of Arkansas, condemned "radicals like Malley" who, he said, holds "a long track

record of sympathy for the Iranian regime" and "animus towards Israel."

Mark Dubowitz, the chief executive of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and another opponent of negotiating with Iran, expressed his concern in more soft terms. "The appointment of Rob Malley may be a clear indication that the Biden administration is prioritizing a return to the JCPOA over a policy of deploying American power to get a more compressive and permanent agreement," he noted. "Malley is not a believer in American power," he added.

Defenders of Malley, whose position does not require Senate confirmation, say that he has become a convenient target for the Israeli lobbies intended to warn the Biden administration against working with Tehran on another nuclear deal like the 2015 accord that became one of the most bitter foreign policy battles of the Obama years.

Aaron David Miller, a West Asia peace negotiator in several U.S. administrations, who worked with Malley, said, "Most of the judging of Rob comes from people who do not know him and who choose to believe that he has no conception of American national

interests, and that it's all about trying to find a way at any costs to reconcile with our enemies."

Miller said that whatever Malley's views, he would not be making policy himself, and that critics were using him to pressure Biden and his new secretary of state, Antony J. Blinken, both politicians widely trusted in Israel's security establishment.

Largely unspoken on the right is a suspicion that Robert Malley may have inherited too much political sensibility from his father, Simon Malley, an Egyptian-born, Jewish journalist and "an Arab nationalist of the fiercely secular, anti-Zionist sort," as the younger Malley put it in a 2008 lecture. It was his father who "awoke in me an interest in his part of the world," he said.

The Obama presidential campaign fired Robert Malley as a foreign policy adviser after an uproar over reports he had met with members of the Palestinian Hamas group. Malley, then working at the International Crisis Group, a conflict mediation think tank, made no apology for the contacts, saying they were vital to his work and not secret.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Alireza Jahanbakhsh wastes time at Brighton

1➔ Jahanbakhsh has made only five league starts since Graham Potter arrived at The Amex in 2019.

He can only showcase his abilities if he gets regular starts at Brighton, something that hasn't happened since the start of last season.

"Once came to Europe to play at the highest level. With the Premier League I am currently there, but just being on the level is not enough for me. Just like at Nijmegen and AZ Alkmaar, I also want to leave something behind here," the Iranian international winger had previously said.

All things considered, Jahanbakhsh must change his team before it's too late.

Iran ends World Para Athletics Grand Prix with 15 medals

SPORTS TEHRAN – Iranian Para athletes claimed 15 medals at the Dubai 2021 World Para Athletics Grand.

On Day 4, the Iranian competitors won three medals. Hamed Amiri took the gold with 9.68 meters at the Men's Shot Put F54. Greek Manolis Stefanoudakis with 8.13 meters and Abdulla Mesbahi from Emirates won the bronze with 6.32 meters. Saeid Afroz seized a silver medal at the Men's Javelin F34. He finished in second place with a 34.97 meters throw. Hassan Ali Obaid Malaleih from the UAE and Lithuanian Eugenijus Vaicaitis came second and third, respectively.



And Hajar Safarzadeh snatched a silver medal at the 400 meters T12 with a time of 1:00. 36 minutes.

Turkey's Sevdal Kilinc Cirkoglu won the gold with 59.14 seconds and bronze medal went to Nelly Nasimiyyu Munialo from Kenya with 1:08.41 minutes.

Iranian Para athletes had won 12 medals in the past three days. On Wednesday, Hamed Amiri, Saman Pakbaz and Vahid Alinajimi claimed a gold, a silver and a bronze medal in the Javelin - F54, Shot Put - F12 and 100m - T13, respectively.

On Thursday, Mahdi Olad and Behzad Azizi claimed two gold medals in Men's Shot Put F11 and Javelin F12/13.

Hamed Amiri seized a silver medal at the Men Discus F54/55 and Alireza Sadeghian also took a silver in the Men's 100m T38 Masoud Heydari claimed a bronze at Javelin F12/13. Alinajimi took a bronze medal in the Men's 400m.

On Friday, Mahdi Moradi claimed a gold medal at the Men's Long Jump T/F13 with 6.57 meters.

Mahdi Olad also seized a gold medal at the Men's Discus Throw F11 with a 39.06 meters throw on Day 3.

And Aliasghar Javanmardi won a silver medal at the Men's Shot Put F35/36.

The competition, which has brought a total of 471 Para athletes from 52 countries together in Dubai, served as the one of the seven qualifying Para Athletics events for Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Iran matches against Hong Kong, Cambodia postponed - spox

SPORTS TEHRAN – Iran matches against Hong Kong and Cambodia at the 2022 World Cup qualifiers have been postponed to June, Iran Football Federation's spokesman Amirimehdi Alavai said.

"The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has rescheduled the matches due to coronavirus concerns. The matches against the teams will be held in June," Alavi said.

Iran football team were originally scheduled to meet Hong Kong and Cambodia on March 25 and 30 in Tehran and Phnom Penh, respectively.

AFC has yet to release an official statement on the status of the games.

Iran, who sit third in Group C, will have to play Bahrain and Iraq.

Persepolis edge Paykan in Iran Professional League

SPORTS TEHRAN – Persepolis football team earned their fourth victory in a row in Iran Professional League, defeating Paykan 1-0 here on Sunday.

Ahmad Nouroollahi scored the winner in the 54th minute. Persepolis moved up to second place with the win, one point behind leaders Sepahan with one game in hand.

Persepolis could go top of the table on Friday with just a draw against Gol Gohar in Sirjan.

Earlier in the day, Tractor came from behind to beat Saipa 2-1 in Tehran's Pas Stadium.

Mehrdad Heydari scored for Saipa in the 8th minute but Mohammad Reza Khanzadeh leveled the score in the first-half's injury time. Hamid Bouhamdan made it 2-1 for Tractor with a powerful strike before the break.

Mes Rafsanjani also beat crisis-hit Zob Ahan in their home match. Faraz Emamali opened the scoring for Mes in the 34th minute but Vahid Mohammadzadeh canceled out his goal from the penalty spot in the 68th minute.

Two late goals from Ghaem Eslamikhah and Alireza Naghizadeh sealed a home win for Mes.

Unplugging the cameras

MP tells the Tehran Times: Iran dead set on stopping implementation of Additional Protocol

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN – The clock is ticking. Each day brings Iran closer to an important deadline that could turn the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major world powers into a thing of the past.

The West is only one week away from the point where it may forever lose the opportunity to revive the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

After more than two years of heroic patience in the face of Western non-compliance with the JCPOA, Iran ultimately made it clear to the United States and Europe that the time to implement the JCPOA obligations one-sidedly is over, and that they must live with the consequences of their non-compliance if they fail to ensure what was promised to Iran under the JCPOA.

On February 21 the Iranian government will be obligated to implement a nuclear law that was passed mainly to compel the West to realize that Iran will resume the full implementation of the JCPOA only after the remaining parties to the JCPOA as well as the U.S. start keep their end of the bargain.

On December 10, the official gazette of record for the Islamic Republic of Iran published a 9-article law that set the stage for Iran to substantially increase its nuclear activities, including raising the level of uranium enrichment to up to 20% in early January.

The nuclear law, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation's Rights," outlines a step-by-step strategy for Iran to force the West into changing its policies toward Iran, according to Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

"By enacting the Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions, the Parliament aims to exert pressure on Western parties and force them into changing their policies," Amouei told the Tehran Times on Sunday.

The nuclear law stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20% and suspending the



voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in few months if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the JCPOA.

The sixth article of the law clearly stipulates that if the remaining parties to the JCPOA – Germany, France, China, Russia and the UK- failed to facilitate Iran's oil exports and the return of Iranian oil revenues in two months, the Iranian government would be obligated to stop inspections beyond the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, including the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol.

Amouei said this article gave the West a period of two months to facilitate Iran's oil sales and normalize its banking ties with the world, however, the West failed to do so and now is hell-bent to stop the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol.

According to Amouei, there is no sign that the West is moving toward facilitating Iran's oil exports and its banking ties.

"We think that the West has not seized on this two-month period as we have not seen any effective measure on part of the West," the spokesman said.

In early January, Iran partly implemented this law by raising the uranium enrichment level to 20%. Iran also vowed to reduce the international inspections of its nuclear facilities. Some Iranian officials even threatened to expel the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors if the U.S. failed to remove sanctions by February 21.

With the February deadline only a week away, Iran is "dead set" on implementing the nuclear law, according to Amouei.

"The Parliament is dead set on implementing this law and will follow up on it," he said, adding that there is an overwhelming consensus among all of Iran's institutions about moving forward with the nuclear law.

But does this mean that Iran will take steps it has so far avoided taking? It remains to be seen whether Iran will take measures that will change the nuclear state of play.

But the Europeans and Americans don't seem to be understanding the seriousness of the situation. They are in close contact but refuse to make any meaningful move to salvage the JCPOA.

"I spoke to Tony Blinken yesterday we're cooperating on a whole range of issues, including the nuclear issue around Iran, many

others, Myanmar, and will continue to do so," UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said in an interview on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

Earlier on Friday, the UK, along with France and Germany, issued a statement calling on Iran to immediately stop its recent nuclear activities.

"We, the governments of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, note with grave concern the recent confirmation by the IAEA that Iran is producing uranium metal in violation of the JCPOA.... We strongly urge Iran to halt these activities without delay and not to take any new non-compliant steps on its nuclear program," the statement said.

The three European signatories to the JCPOA – collectively known as the E3- also accused Iran of escalating its non-compliance while undermining the opportunity for renewed diplomacy to fully realize the objectives of the JCPOA.

By accusing Iran of undermining the opportunity for renewed diplomacy, which is a clear reference to the coming of Joe Biden, the Europeans once again demonstrated that they are still doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results.

For more than 30 months Iran has been repeatedly calling on Europe to save the JCPOA before it's too late but its calls fell on deaf ears in Europe. And even now, Iran is not stopping the implementation of the Additional Protocol abruptly. It has told the Europeans in advance that it will stop the implementation of the Additional Protocol.

But the Europeans refused to seize on this opportunity. This time, the European negligence will cost them dearly because Iran will stop all the inspections being done in accordance with the Additional Protocol. And this includes the surveillance cameras that were placed in Iran's nuclear facilities according to the Additional Protocol.

"Inspections related to the Additional Protocol will be stopped. The surveillance cameras that were placed in accordance with the Additional Protocol will be unplugged," Amouei told the Tehran Times.

Iranian ambassador meets Yemen FM

POLITICAL DESK TEHERAN – Iran's Ambassador to Yemen, Hassan Irlou, met with Yemeni Foreign Minister Hisham Sharaf on Saturday to discuss cooperation between Tehran and Sanaa and the latest developments in the region including the Persian Gulf, Iran's state news agency IRNA reported.

During the meeting, the two officials also examined the results of the recent visit by UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths to Tehran.

The Iranian ambassador reiterated Tehran's long-held position for a political solution to the Yemen crisis, noting that there is no military solution for what has happened in Yemen.

Griffiths began a two-day visit to Iran in the first week of February to discuss issues related to the Yemen crisis.

During his first visit, the UN official met with senior Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his special assistant Ali-Asghar Khaji.

Zarif and Griffiths discussed the latest status of the Yemen crisis, and explored avenues to achieve peace and stability in the Arab country, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry following the meeting.

The chief Iranian diplomat highlighted the developments following the beginning of the Yemen crisis, especially the history of Iran's moves and initiatives in these years through different channels, and elaborated on the Islamic Republic's viewpoint regarding the need to end this big humanitarian crisis in the region, and the necessity of mitigating the pains and problems of the deprived people of Yemen.

Zarif noted that a political solution, rather than an imposed war, is the only way to resolve the Yemen crisis.

Iran's top diplomat said Tehran is fully prepared to support any effective role played by the UN in settling the crisis considering the very difficult conditions caused by the war and economic siege imposed on the people of Yemen.

The UN envoy, in turn, highlighted the importance of being aware of Iran's views on the establishment of peace and calm in Yemen.

He also elaborated on the UN's viewpoint on the settlement of the Yemen crisis



through the establishment of a ceasefire, delivery of economic aid and resumption of political talks.

Immediately after Saudi Arabia led a war against Yemen in March 2015 to restore a government loyal to Riyadh, Iran presented a four-point plan to the UN to end the war. Iran's proposal called for the cessation of hostilities and an immediate end to all foreign military attacks, direct delivery of medical and humanitarian aid, the resumption of political talks and the creation of a broad Yemeni unity government.

"It is imperative for the international community to get more effectively involved in ending the senseless aerial attacks and establishing a ceasefire," Zarif wrote in a letter to then UN chief Ban Ki-moon in April 2015.

On Wednesday, Ambassador Irlou noted that the Islamic Revolution of Iran has successfully inspired the Yemeni people to stage their own Islamic revolution.

"The Islamic Revolution took place in order to eliminate domestic tyranny & foreign domination to help the oppressed nations, which frightened the global arrogance & the Zionists from repeating [itself] in Yemen. The Islamic Revolution won and the aggression against it is the biggest reason to prove that," the Iranian ambassador tweeted as Iran celebrated the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution which toppled the U.S.-backed Pahlavi regime.

Earlier in late January, the Iranian diplomat hailed the expansion of ties between Iran and Yemen on the eve of the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

"On the forty-second anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, we are witnessing the expansion of cooperation between the two friendly and brotherly nations of Iran and Yemen, despite the opposition and conspiratorial machinations of global arrogance and its regional clients," Irlou tweeted on January 30.

Huge blaze on Afghan border didn't damage Iran's customs post

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN – A fuel tanker blast at the Iran-Afghanistan border that caused massive fire did not affect a key crossing on the eastern border with Afghanistan, a local Iranian official has said.

The local official from Iran's Khorasan Razavi province said that the fire in Afghanistan's Islam Qala border crossing had not spread to Iran's Dogharoon post, according to Press TV.

"Up to now there has been no report about damage on the Dogharoon border terminal," said Omid Jahankhah, who serves as supervisor of customs offices in Khorasan Razavi.

Videos and footages circulating on social media on Saturday showed dozens of fuel tankers were damaged in the massive explosion in Islam Qala.

The fire also caused massive damage to infrastructure in the area, including pylons that transmit electricity from Iran to the urban regions in Herat.

Jahankhah would not elaborate on the number of Iranian trucks damaged by the fire on the Afghan side of the border, saying details would emerge after an initial study of the situation on the ground.

According to a Press TV report, at least 60 people had been injured in the blaze. Others said many lorry drivers are feared dead.

After a senior local Afghan official in Herat said Afghan first responders did not have the means to put out the huge fire, Iran offered assistance to Afghanistan. Wahid Qatali, Herat's provincial governor, said Afghanistan had requested support from Iran in the form of firefighting aircraft.

Iranian rescue teams and firefighters rushed to the scene of the explosion in Islam Qala after the governor of Herat asked for assistance.

Iran's official IRNA agency said that the governor of Khorasan Razavi province had also traveled to the region to personally supervise the rescue operation.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry confirmed that Iran rushed to help Afghanistan. In a statement on Saturday, ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Tehran was offering assistance to put out the massive fire caused by the explosion of a gas tank.

The spokesman said that following



an explosion at a gas tanker at the Islam Qala customs post on February 13, 2021, and the ensuing massive blaze there, the governor of Afghanistan's Herat province contacted the governor of the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan Razavi and asked for help to contain the spread of the fire and prevent further harm to the installations as well as people at the customs post.

"Preliminary arrangements were made immediately to offer more facilities to the individuals and vehicles engulfed by the blaze in area, and the Iranian consul general in Herat made contacts with authorities in the province, including the provincial governor, to review the dimensions of the incident," Khatibzadeh pointed out.

He continued, "Moreover, in coordination with the [Iranian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Border Guard Unit and other relevant institutions, the Islam Qala-Dogharoun border post was opened to trucks, vehicles and people fleeing from the blaze to the Iranian border."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has also adopted measures to help those possibly hurt or wounded, and contacts are underway between relevant officials of both countries in that regard," Khatibzadeh explained.

"So far, there have been no reports on individuals possibly hurt in the incident, and we have received no word, either, on possible harm to Iranian nationals," the spokesman noted.

"We hope the blaze will be contained soon with the help of both countries' officials," he said.

Iran is a major supplier of goods to Afghanistan and Dogharoun and Islam Qala terminals are busy with tanker trucks that transport fuel across the border.

The crossings also process passengers and cargo transit through Iran to Afghanistan and vice versa.

In his message, Rouhani hoped for the promotion of political, economic and cultural cooperation with the Republic of Serbia.

"I hope the bilateral relations would further grow and become stronger in all political, economic and cultural

fields considering the two countries' ample capacities and in light of joint efforts," President Rouhani wrote.

The Iranian president also wished Vucic health and success and hoped for the Serbian nation's prosperity and happiness.

Rouhani congratulates Serbia on National Day

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has sent a congratulatory message to his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic felicitating him and his people on the National Day of Serbia.

Gholamreza Shariati appointed new head of ISIRI

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has appointed Gholamreza Shariati as the new head of the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI), ILNA reported on Sunday.



Shariati, a university lecturer and executive director, who has served as the governor of Khuzestan Province since 2016 replaced Nayereh Pirouzbakht.

He will remain in this position for a four-year period.

The Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran is the Iranian governmental institution for standardization and certification. It is the Iranian representative of the International Organization for Standardization.

TEDPIX up 2,000 points on Sunday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 2,083 points to 1.264 million on Sunday.

The first market's index rose 6,095 points, and the second market's index climbed 11,741 points on Sunday.



TEDPIX rose 3.4 percent in the past Iranian calendar week. During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Group, Saipa Company, Social Security Investment Company, Tehran Oil Refining Company, and Isfahan Oil Refinery were the most widely followed indices.

Non-oil export from Ardebil Province rises 94%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Non-oil export from Ardebil Province, in northwest of Iran, has increased 94 percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020 – January 19, 2021), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Ramin Sadeqi, the head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, said that commodities worth \$194 million have been exported from the province in the ten-month period of this year, and it is hoped that the export will continue the rising trend by the yearend.

He said, "Unlike previous years, when potatoes and plastic products were the main export items of the province, this year 60 percent of Ardabil's exports are related to industrial products, and this has given more hope for the development and prosperity of this sector than before."



The official announced that the main export destinations of this province's products are neighboring countries, especially Central Asia and the Caucasus, and added: "The two main programs in the export sector are closely monitored and followed, the first of which is to increase the value-added export products."

Iran has traded 122.8 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$58.7 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Of the total volume of the country's non-oil trade in the mentioned period, 94.541 million tons worth \$28.63 billion was the share of exports and about 28.249 million tons valued at \$30.639 were the imported goods, Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi said.

According to the official, the exports of non-oil goods in this period decreased by 17.7 percent and 20 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, compared to the same period last year.

The figures, however, grew significantly compared to the previous calendar month (December 21, 2020-January 19, 2021), the official added, noting that the upward trend is expected to continue in the coming months.

In comparison to the previous year's same time span, the imports of the mentioned commodities also declined by two percent and 15.5 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, according to the IRICA head.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$7.2 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$6.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$3.7 billion, Turkey with \$2 billion, and Afghanistan with \$1.9 billion.

The mentioned countries imported a total of 69.5 million tons of goods worth \$21.3 billion from Iran in the said 10 months, accounting for 73.5 percent and 76 percent of the total exports in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$7.9 billion, the UAE with \$7.4 billion, Turkey with \$3.4 billion, India with \$1.8 billion, and Germany with \$1.4 billion worth of imports.

Over \$2.42b of loans paid to production units in 10 months

1 → Based on the mentioned program, 201.299 trillion rials of facilities (about \$4.79 billion) have been planned to be paid to production units to support domestic production and maintain or create job opportunities.

Part of the said figure is provided by the National Development Fund (NDF) and part of it is supplied by the banking system. So far, a total of 110.4 trillion rials (about \$2.6 billion) of capital has been provided by NDF and the country's banks for the mentioned program.

Following a major plan for developing

the country's production under the frameworks of the resilient economy, the government has defined several projects with the aim of creating 1,032,962 job opportunities.

In this regard, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has put supporting production on the agenda as a major plan over the past two years and CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has constantly stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country's banking system.



Industry Ministry had previously announced that over 335.77 trillion rials (nearly \$7.99 billion) was paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects

during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020).

The mentioned payments were made in the form of 20,930 bank loans to various projects and production units.

NIOC outlines HSE priorities for major subsidiaries

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has outlined the main Health, Safety and Environment (HSE)-related priorities of the company to its major subsidiaries namely Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), and Iranian Oil Terminal Company (IOTC).

In a directive addressed to the managing directors of the mentioned subsidiaries, Masoud Karbasian has stressed that all the health and safety measures taken by the mentioned companies should be supervised by the NIOC's HSE Department, Shana reported.

Accordingly, the direct responsibility for implementing and reporting on approved HSE operational plans in the southern oilfields lies with the NISOC and under the supervision of the NIOC. IOOC and IOTC will also be in charge of

implementing and reporting the HSE operations carried out in the southern Khark region again under the supervision of the NIOC HSE Department.

As reported, all companies affiliated with the NISOC and companies based in the Khark region are required to consider the funds needed to implement HSE-related operational projects in their annual budget, or if necessary, in the form of special budgets.

NIOC's HSE Department is also tasked to prepare comprehensive periodic reports and present them to the relevant authorities.

The National Iranian Oil Company is a government-owned national oil and natural gas producer and distributor under the direction of the Iranian Oil Ministry. NIOC ranks as the world's second-largest oil company, after Saudi Arabia's state-owned Aramco.

NIOC is exclusively responsible for the exploration, drilling, production, distribution, and export of crude



oil, as well as exploration, extraction, and sales of natural gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Iran's top 100 companies honored

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has introduced the country's top 100 companies in a ceremony held on Sunday, IRIB reported.

The mentioned companies have been selected by the Iran Industrial Management Company (IMI) in the 23rd edition of the company's ranking conference (IMI-100) which is held annually.

As reported, the event was attended by representatives of the selected companies as well as senior officials from the Industry Ministry including Deputy Industry Minister Saeed Zarandi.

Speaking in the event, Zarandi pointed to the development of large-scale companies as a major strategy of the Industry



Ministry, saying that "it will lead to the growth of the country's economy."

According to the official, the Industry Ministry's comprehensive model for the country's industrial development is focused on the development of large companies.

"Today 11 companies affiliated to this ministry have a total value of over 11 trillion rials (about \$260 million), which is equivalent to a quarter of the country's stock market value," he said.

He further urged the top companies to invest in the country's production sector, including the production of 200 major commodity items which account for the largest volume of imports.

Regarding the facilities that are going to be awarded to the 100 top companies, Zarandi said: "We have proposed to the

government to allow these companies to be able to offer their shares at the stock market without the need for a guarantor."

According to Zarandi, Iran's top 319 companies have accounted for over 20 percent of the country's production over the last 10 months.

He pointed to innovation, employment, and productivity improvement as the results of the development of large companies and added: "Although the employment rate is higher in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the employment stability in large-scale companies is higher."

At the end of the mentioned ceremony, the country's five major firms were also selected and honored.

Agriculture minister stresses expanding ties with FAO

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi has stressed the need for expansion of ties with the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for meeting the country's agricultural needs.

"Developing Iran's interactions with the FAO is essential for meeting the needs of the agricultural sector," IRNA quoted Khavazi as saying on Saturday.

As reported, the official made the remarks in a ceremony held for introducing the country's new ambassador and permanent representative to the organization.

In the mentioned ceremony Masoud Zare, who was previously the deputy head of Agricultural Research Education and Extension Organization (AREEO), was appointed as the country's new envoy to FAO.

Speaking in this ceremony, the minister stated that the Iranian representative to FAO should be constantly in touch with the Agriculture Ministry, noting that periodic reports should be prepared and sent to the



Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi (L) and the country's new permanent envoy to FAO Masoud Zare

Agriculture Ministry by the country's representative. "We would need food analyzers for our future macro

policies," Khavazi stressed.

Founded in October 1945, the Food and Agriculture Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security. Its Latin motto, fiat panis, translates to "let there be bread".

FAO has had a long-lasting collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran since the country became a member of FAO in 1953. The cooperation was strengthened with the re-opening of the country office in 1992, and over the years FAO has provided policy and technical assistance in promoting sustainable development of the country's agriculture and rural sectors.

More recently, the interventions have focused on policy advice, capacity building, and planning to increase agricultural productivity and improvements to forestry. Another key area of cooperation is the development of sustainable small-scale agriculture based on agro-ecological and climate-smart approaches.

Commodities worth \$470m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday) Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed trades of 790,283 tons of commodities worth \$470 million, showing nine percent and eight percent of growth in volume and value of trades, respectively.

According to a report by the IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, the exchange traded on its mineral and industrial trading floor 367,043 tons of various commodities valued at nearly \$267 million.

Commodities sold on the floor included 342,073 tons of steel, 8,040 tons of copper, 8,655 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 15 tons of precious metals concentrate, 500 tons of coke, 80 tons of lead and 8,100 tons of zinc.

On its oil and petrochemical trading floor, the IME saw over its both domestic and export rings traded of 415,410 tons of commodities with a total trading value



of more than \$203 million.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 99,500 tons of vacuum bottom, 150,950 tons of bitumen, 93,088 tons of polymeric products, 38,050 tons of chemicals, 20,500 tons of lube cut, 70 tons of argon and 10,000 tons of sulfur.

It's worth noting that the IME also sold 7,830 tons of commodities on its side market.

As previously reported, over 2,893 tons of commodities worth nearly \$1.5

billion have been traded at IME during the past Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 21, 2020-January 19, 2021).

The exchange hosted trading of 1,176,000 tons of commodities with a trading value of more than \$740 million on its mineral and industrial trading floor.

On this floor the IME sold 1,093,000 tons of steel, 5,160 tons of copper, 30 tons of precious metals concentrate, 480 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 15,955 tons of aluminum, 800 tons of coke, 20,500 tons of zinc dust, 40,000 tons of iron ore concentrate, 300 tons of cast iron and 54 kg of gold bars.

On its oil and petrochemical trading floor, the IME traded more than 1,707,000 tons of commodities worth nearly \$749 million, which included 602,855 tons of various types of bitumen, 257,511 tons of polymeric products, 124,965 tons of chemicals, 6,300 tons of slop wax and 503,760 tons of vacuum bottom. Moreover, the exchange sold on this floor 11,825 tons

of base oil, 69,725 tons of sulfur, 200 tons of argon and 129,000 tons of lube cut.

The next trading floor of the IME was agricultural with 10,500 kg of saffron sold on it.

Last but not least, the IME's side market saw trade of 9,510 tons of various types of commodities within the same month.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

In last April, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production" is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

Involving Iran’s rivals in JCPOA talks to lead to failure

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

TEHRAN— Stating that involving Iran’s rivals in JCPOA talks would mean the failure of any talks even before it starts, Shireen Hunter said that Macron wanted to curry favor with the Saudis in the hope of getting lucrative contracts.

The 2015 deal, more formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — the US, the UK, China, Russia, and France — plus Germany and the EU.

French President Emmanuel Macron recently said that Saudi Arabia should be involved in any new negotiations with Iran about the 2015 nuclear deal claiming that excluding regional states from nuclear talks that culminated in the JCPOA, with Iran in 2015 was a big mistake.

Macron who acts as Riyadh’s French spokesperson these days called for incorporating Iran’s missiles, Saudi Arabia as well as Israel’s regime into the talks with Tehran to revive the JCPOA.

In reaction, Iran has said that it considers the JCPOA a finished affair that must not be reopened or subject to new negotiations.

On the other hand, in an interview with CBS, U.S. President Joe Biden said that the United States will not lift sanctions against Iran as a means to resuming negotiations, and Tehran needs to stop its uranium enrichment activities first.

The remarks are a repetition of similar claims made earlier by the White House spokesperson Jen Psaki, claiming that the ball is in Iran’s court.

All these remarks came while the former U.S. President Donald Trump withdraw the



U.S. from the deal and reimposed sweeping economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

After the illegitimate U.S. exit from the JCPOA in May 2018, the three European signatories to the deal remained indifferent to making up for Iran’s losses.

Amid the Europeans’ lack of action, Iran took five steps to reduce its commitments to the deal while vowing that it will reverse the course as soon as the other parties live up to their commitments under the accord.

Recently, the Iranian parliament passed a bill, dubbed the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions in early last December, setting a Feb. 21 deadline for Biden to lift the U.S. sanctions. Otherwise, Iran will halt inspections of its nuclear sites by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and further boost uranium enrichment.

Iran has so far resumed 20% uranium enrichment at Fordow plant in accordance

with the Parliament’s legislation and has warned that in the case Washington does not remove all the anti-Iran illegitimate sanctions, it will also stop voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, which gives IAEA inspectors unannounced visits to Iranian facilities.

Meanwhile, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei highlighted that Iran will not return to its commitments unless the U.S. lifts all sanctions and Tehran verifies Washington’s measures.

To know more about the issue, we reached out to Shireen Tahmaash Hunter, Professor of Political Science at Georgetown University in the U.S.

Q: The French president wants Saudi Arabia to enter the possible nuclear talks among parties to JCPOA, while other European parties have announced this request is not theirs. Why has Macron raised such a request?

A: I believe that President Macron wanted to curry favor with the Saudis in the hope of getting lucrative contracts. Otherwise, his statement makes no sense, since involving Iran’s rivals in such talks would mean the failure of any negotiation even before it starts.

Q: As Iran has strongly rejected France’s president’s request, what can be the negative impact of such an unreasonable request on possible future nuclear talks with Iran? Is such a request constructive and can help the sides to reach an agreement?

A: Clearly, if other parties to the JCPOA make similar demands, the result would be a stalemate and the future of JCPOA would be in danger.

Q: U.S. administration claims that the ball is in Iran’s court and sets conditions for its return to the JCPOA, while the U.S. has left the JCPOA illegally and unilaterally and Iran has been committed to its commitments despite being deprived of the JCPOA benefits due to the U.S. and E3 failure to fulfill their commitments. Is the Biden administration’s request reasonable? What do you think of this?

A: A reasonable way to revitalize the JCPOA is for both sides simultaneously to perform their obligations: The U.S. should return to JCPOA while Iran reverses increases in the level of its enrichment.

Q: Some in the U.S. and Europe insist to include Iran’s conventional missile program in possible future nuclear talks, while Iran rejects this request strongly. How constructive is such a request? What can be the consequences of such a request on the outcome of the potential future talks to review JCPOA?

A: Iran is unlikely to agree to such demands. These issues should be addressed in the context of broader discussions of overall arms buildup in the Persian Gulf.

Ten rays for the dawn of a nation

By Batool Subeiti

1) A nation with an unmistakable identity

The Islamic Republic is the identity of Iran. Indeed, the world acknowledges religion as a system of governance for the individual. It is seen as a way to organise an individual’s life. Despite all the so called ‘Islamic’ dynasties that have ruled in the world after the governments of the infallibles, the rest have used the name of Islam as a cover for their interests. For the first time, a state like Iran is using the religion of Islam as a determining factor and a real identity for the state and for society.

At the same time, it acknowledges that religion is a free choice for the individual and there is no jurisdiction over one’s private beliefs or actions. However, on a societal level it is compulsory to observe the laws of Islam, in order to respect the democratic will of the overwhelming majority.

Imam Khomeini’s leadership was such that he expected the people to create the change, not him as an individual, and he led in such a way that the people came to the realisation that their presence on the streets is what will bring about the change, as the revolution itself was led whilst he was in exile.

Even today, the strength of the Islamic Republic comes from its people approving the system, and it is through this system that progress and changes are made, if elements prove unworkable in any field; it is a system that has the capacity to renew itself and to absorb any noticeable problems that may surface – and the moment the nation’s people decide to collectively abandon the Islamic Republic and its leadership, the system will fail to stand as it does today.

2) A nation of unified and well monitored institutions, not owned by individuals

The Islamic Republic of Iran sought to strengthen and protect its nation through the creation of institutions from scratch, such as the Islamic Consultative Assembly, Guardian Council, Expediency Council, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Basij. All these bodies are either directly or indirectly elected by the nation, who therefore have a say in the appointment of officials, whilst these bodies are designed to monitor each other, not allowing any possibility of diversion or abduction by those in power. This naturally leads to a strong adhesion between the nation and the leadership, whereby the people feel they are agents, participating in the decision-making process.

These institutions are cohesive and cover all aspects of ruling the country, based on serving the public to the maximum ability, and were built in such a way that they depended on the masses and not select individuals; thus, it has not allowed for the interest of those in power to dominate, or for them exit from the line that has been drawn, no matter the importance of their position.

As a result, the Islamic Republic became a deep state that is overpowering, such that its principles penetrated the heart of the nation, whilst issues, semi-uprisings or seditions caused in the aftermath occurred at the surface and were diffusible.

3) A free, independent nation

It was the Iranian people who chanted on the streets ‘No East, No West, Islamic Republic’, and the world, specifically the superpowers, had witnessed this slogan materialise with respect to their own relationship with Iran, and the independence and freedom the nation got from the monopoly of the Western superpowers- over their land and affairs, is now something well known and speaks for itself.

With independence, it means the country has been able to depend on its real power and its domestic resources. Right from the start, the Islamic Republic took an independent line from the superpowers, exploring their own methodologies and ways of improving their potentialities, in a way befitting to any mission or policy they wish to go forward with.

4) A nation with principles overshadowing their national interests

The Islamic Republic added a new dimension to the political system of governance, through showing the world that principles ought to overshadow a nation’s interests; that is to say, interests need to be built on core principles. Indeed, a nation’s interests are very important, and they simply cannot be ignored; nations need to be ambitious, need to collaborate and seek ways to improve

and fulfil their needs, however it is interests built on principles that is missing from governmental practices and policies of the past and present, that simply lack ethics and morality.

Indeed, the Iranian nation is even losing out on many ‘benefits’ it may otherwise gain in the short term, because it is sticking by these human principles. For example, its proactive stance towards the Palestinian liberation cause, whether that is through strengthening the resistance groups on the ground, or establishing Al-Quds Day as an international day to remember all the oppressed groups around the world, in the name of Palestine.

Prior to the Islamic Revolution, no entity dared to speak out against the oppressive superpowers, and this is what has led the most powerful states in the world to sanction Iran, in hopes to get the nation on its knees. Despite this, the Islamic Republic has not once abandoned the Palestinian cause.

5) A patient nation

In order for a nation to sustain itself under high external pressure and sanctioning, sub-characteristics ought to exist within the morale of its society. For example, it has to possess a high degree of patience and ability to see the long term. Iran has demonstrated this under many circumstances, such as its endurance in the face of the maximum pressure policy imposed by the American administration, the long-term negotiations for the JCPOA that were scrapped by Trump, and not to forget the 8-year imposed war on Iran by Saddam who was pushed by the West. Iran did not accept defeat and insisted on not compromising until equality was established, and until it liberated all areas occupied.

It is worth pointing out that what got the nation through this 8-year crisis and the aftermath- without giving up- was sticking to their principles. Their slogan throughout was, ‘if you starve us, we are the children of Ramadan; if you kill us, we are the children of Ashura.’

6) A nation with an open hand policy

The Islamic Republic’s foreign policy rests on the principle of supporting all oppressed people, no matter their religion, sect and ethnicity, and many examples can be given in this regard; for example, its long term practical and moral support of Venezuela in the face of the U.S. sanctions, despite the further sanctions Iran has had to face as a result.

When America entered Iraq in the 1990s, during the (Persian) Gulf War and during the 2003 invasion, Iran was in a position where they opened their hands, even to those groups that had opposed them but had the common interest of fighting the American presence in the region; they were able to distinguish between the primary foreign enemy and the secondary, local power that opposed them. They opened their hands of support to whomever was willing to resist the American occupation, supporting various Iraqi factions in this regard.

In addition to this, the ensuing vacuum created in the Iraqi economy and national infrastructure was accommodated for, for example, through the support of building its institutions, the supply and export of electricity and fuels, and the support of martyred families through the Shaheed Foundation, that has branches in many other countries, such as Lebanon, Palestine, Nigeria, etc. More recently, Iran has provided tactical military support to the Syrian, Iraqi and Kurdish factions fighting ISIS on the frontlines.

This policy of having an open hand for all and looking for the common interests with other parties, whilst dealing mercifully is a long-term strategy, not only informing the security and sovereignty, but the building of institutions that serve people and nations, where there is a willingness for the other party to work with them.

This is case, despite the psychological barriers the West has sought to create in the minds of the people, through their demonization towards the Islamic Republic, leaving many who would rather be slaves of their imperial masters, than receive support from a nation that is predicated on providing support to others.

7) A nation with consistency

The Islamic Republic has proved that it is consistent with its actions and does not react based on impulse or in response to

provocations, whilst looking at the whole picture strategically. For example, in response to the assassination of its top major general and scientists, they did not respond in the same manner to the perpetrating entity, because they consider assassinating individuals in such a manner to be wrong. Their focus is on taking calculated measures and opting for the long-term, that is the removal of the superpowers from the entire region, which is an even greater blow. A key characteristic the nation has proved is that nobody pulls them to the square they want them to be in; they respond from their own lane and based on their policies.

8) A nation with practicality

Due to the oppressive nature of the world order system, that is manipulated and subservient to the superpowers, the Islamic Republic has had to deal with this unfair system as it is, whilst seeking their own rights within that system. For example, Iran’s right to produce nuclear energy for peaceful use is denied by a world baselessly accusing them of seeking to possess nuclear arms. In their practicality, the nation has sought to reach compromises and agreements within that unfair and oppressive world system, whilst obtaining the maximum they can get from it.

Within its constraints, the Islamic Republic have sought to build strengthening components for themselves and are creative, therefore they do not stick to conventional routes and follow their needs with high practicality. For example, they are not interested in following the typical yardstick of the more powerful militaries, regarding the quantity and advancement of their equipment; Iran’s strategies are fixated on the type of equipment and weapons that are suitable and fit for their needs. Whilst their archenemies are ahead of them in military aircraft and quality production, they do not seek to compete in this regard, through the purchase of Russian or Chinese military aircrafts, for example, that the Americans will still be more advanced in; rather, they tend towards the use of anti-craft missiles, drones, strengthening their sea marine presence, and have demonstrated the defensive rather than offensive strategy. As a result, their enemy has failed to use its magnanimous strength to its advantage in this regard, whilst the focus of Iran has been on using the necessary resources in the best possible way, whilst producing technology of such accuracy, such that it knows precisely where to hit targets.

Despite being a developing country, its cyber capabilities are that of a first world country, as Iran has a broad spectrum of sophisticated cyber networks.

9) A nation that renews itself in a dynamic way

It has been over four decades since the Revolution, and it is still alive within the hearts and minds of the Iranian people and beyond, whilst there are overpowering feelings in the new generation, that have not even witnessed the Revolution or the Iran-Iraq war themselves, and despite the enemy’s plot to target their belief through the soft war. This implies the Revolution has a dynamic understanding of the needs of the new generation that is attracted to it, despite the great challenges that come about with sustaining revolutions and the prevalence of subsequent generations losing touch with the original causes, however, this has not been the case with the Islamic Republic.

10) A nation seeking a new world order

The Islamic Republic has displayed ambitions in doing things. They look for a new world order system, despite being a developing country, and have a major say on world politics. The current world order system is an aggressive and oppressive one, in favour of the strong maintaining monopoly over the weak, with no compromises or shame to impose themselves as the rulers of the world. The Islamic Republic presented a model of a new world order standing on justice, mutual respect towards other nations as representatives of people, and contracts built on co-operation, exchange of expertise and growth. This necessitates the elimination of monopolies, aggression, states offending others, and imposing their interests at the expense of the people’s interests.

Indeed, the equation of the more powerful subjugating the weak has been going on since the creation of man, and what the Islamic Republic brought forward is policies that have not been seen before in the dirty world of politics.

Russia’s rivals attempt to ‘exploit’ effects of Covid-19 pandemic by encouraging protests in support of Navalny: Putin

Foreign powers are trying to weaponise frustration over falling living standards due to the Covid-19 pandemic to stir up protests in support of jailed Russian opposition figure Alexey Navalny, President Vladimir Putin has said.

With almost every major country in recession, people all over the world have been growing increasingly weary and frustrated with the toll the coronavirus pandemic has taken on living standards, and Russia is no exception, Putin said in an extensive interview with Russian media published on Sunday.

He added that it’s only normal to pin the blame on the authorities for all the woes the population might face in times of crisis such as the current one, but Moscow’s opponents “try to exploit” this sentiment to spite the Russian government.

“That’s what they did! Of course they would. That’s what they had counted on,” Putin said.

The Russian leader argued that “ambitious, power-hungry” people like Navalny are being cultivated and used by foreign powers to undermine and contain Russia. “We have had a lot of success, and it annoys them. That’s where the containment policy, including in the economy, comes from.”

Taliban warn NATO to push ahead with troop withdrawal in Afghanistan

The Taliban militant group has warned NATO forces against seeking a “continuation of war” in Afghanistan beyond the May withdrawal deadline agreed with the United States.

The Taliban warned in a statement on Saturday that any group or government responsible for the continuation of war in Afghanistan will be held liable. “Anyone seeking extension of wars and occupation will be held liable for it just like the previous two decades.”

“Our message to the upcoming NATO ministerial meeting is that the continuation of occupation and war is neither in your interest nor in the interest of your and our people,” the Taliban added.

NATO defense ministers are scheduled to meet next week to discuss the alliance’s 10,000-strong presence in Afghanistan.

The U.S., under former President Donald Trump, reached an agreement with the Taliban in Doha last February, under which the U.S. and its NATO allies are expected to withdraw all troops in 14 months in exchange for the Taliban upholding their promises, including halting attacks on international forces.

However, the administration of President Joe Biden has said it would not commit to a full withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan by May. NATO sources have also singled a desire within the alliance for staying in the country beyond the deadline.

The U.S. overthrew a Taliban regime shortly after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. But occupation forces have remained bogged down there ever since and violence continues to take a heavy toll on the country.

Trump acquitted on charge of inciting U.S. Capitol riot

Former U.S. President Donald Trump has been acquitted on a charge of “incitement of insurrection” in relation to the January 6 riot at the United States Capitol.

After a five-day impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate, the vote was largely split along party lines with 57 lawmakers voting to convict and 43 voting to acquit.

That fell short of the two-thirds Democrats needed to convict Trump, who is the only U.S. president to ever be impeached twice while in office.

Notably, however, seven Republican senators voted to convict the former president, the largest number of conviction votes from senators in president’s own party for impeachment in U.S. history.

This was Trump’s second impeachment trial, the only time a president has been through this process twice. Trump’s first impeachment trial, which took place in February 2020, ended in an acquittal of charges that he tried to pressure Ukraine to investigate now-President Joe Biden.

Resistance News

Sawafta calls for supporting steadfastness of Jordan Valley residents

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**— Nader Sawafta, a senior Hamas leader, called on Sunday for supporting the steadfastness of the people in the northern Jordan Valley and fulfilling their requirements to confront the settlement plans of the Israeli occupation authority (IOA).

Sawafta addressed the citizens of Tubas and the northern Jordan Valley by stressing that over the past years, Tubas has suffered many difficulties and faced troubles without any significant assistance.

“It is time for us to move and to work on improving the situation in the province, fulfill the aspirations of its citizens and strengthen the steadfastness of our people in the northern valleys”, he added.

In 2021, the IOA seized more than 11,000 dunums in the Palestinian Jordan Valley. Most of these lands are pastoral lands and they were seized in favor of the so-called nature reserves. This is one of the largest theft of Palestinian lands in the Jordan Valley.

Since its occupation of the West Bank back in 1967, Israel has sought to annex and Judaize the Palestinian Jordan Valley which is located over an enormous reservoir of water.

The Jordan Valley is the food basket of Palestine and it is the most affected area by the IOA annexation project, which envisages appropriating thousands of dunums of Palestinian agricultural land.

Several areas in the West Bank, especially in the Jordan Valley and villages adjacent to the settlements, are under constant attack by settlers with the aim of confiscating more lands, building settlement roads and displacing the Palestinian inhabitants.

Andabil ski resort to boost tourism infrastructure

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Though Iran is a semi-arid country, it is home to tens of ski resorts, some of which amongst the tops in the globe. Andabil ski resort, situated in the northwest of the country, is one of those planned to be developed in terms of tourism facilities and infrastructure.

“Cable cars and ski lifts are set to be installed in Andabil ski resort as part of the development project,” Ardebil province’s tourism chief said on Sunday.



Last year, a budget of 520 billion rials (over \$12 million) was allocated to enhance tourism infrastructure and implement related development projects in some ski resorts, including Andabil, across the province.

The resorts also cater to the desires of domestic holidaymakers and sightseers who seek to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city life. Being quite high, the ski areas retain their snow quite well as the season usually stretches from November through to May.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, whose altitude averages 3,000 meters above sea level, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition, it is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble. The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands of travelers every year.

Iran has long been an international destination for avid powder chasers during winter, while - in total contrast - its arid and semi-arid climate reaches sweltering levels in summer.

Maybe not the first that comes to mind, snow-capped mountains above Tehran are home to some of the world's best ski resorts where powder hounds can enjoy famous Iranian hospitality.

Amongst uppermost are Dizin, Tochal, Shemshak, and Darbandsar, all situated within some 100 kilometers of the capital city and up to international standards.

Historical Sarab cave to become more tourist-friendly

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The tourism infrastructure of the historical cave of Sarab in the small city of Baba-Heidar, southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, is planned to be developed, the provincial tourism chief has said.



A budget of 420 million rials (\$10,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, which is estimated to take at least three months to be completed, Mehrdad Javadi announced on Sunday.

The limestone Sarab cave is considered as one of the most beautiful and pristine attractions of the region. Entering this cave and going all the way is a very exciting and technical task as it is located in a place with a narrow path and paralleled to a valley.

Even if one cannot enter the cave, they can enjoy the cold and refreshing water of a spring at the entrance of the cave.

The small entrance of the cave opens into a beautiful corridor with stalactite-covered tops, which look like chandeliers hanging from the roof.

Exploring a cave may not be on the “to-do list” of travelers in Iran. However, Karaftu, Ali-Sadr and Quri Qaleh, and Katale-Khor are amongst the most visited caves.

Iran is geologically a part of the Alpine-Himalayan organic belt. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the enigmatic evidence of human presence on the Iranian plateau is as early as Lower Paleolithic times.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

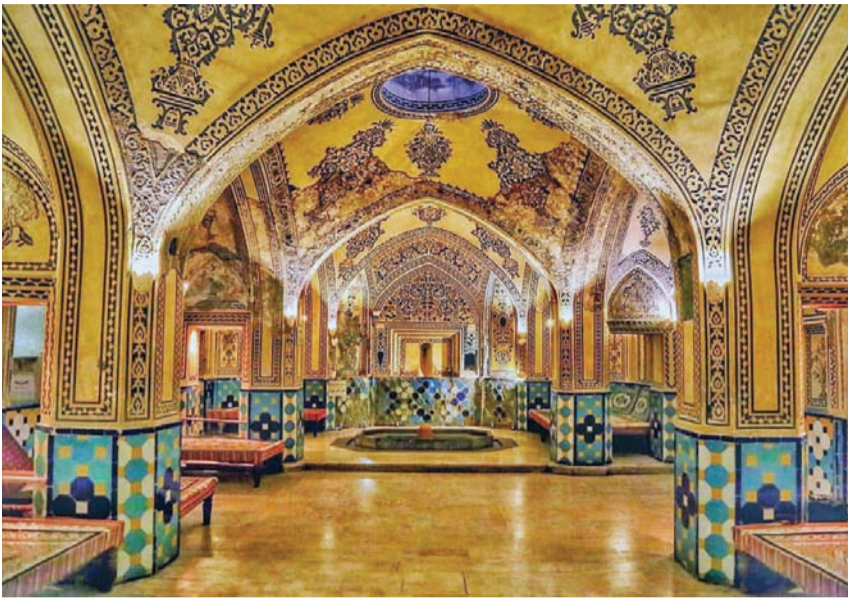
Discover outstanding example of Iranian bathhouse

➔ **1** A recent restoration has stripped away rotten layers of plaster to reveal the original sarough, a type of plaster made of milk, egg white, soy flour, and lime that is said to be stronger than cement. Richly colored tiles and delicate painting feature throughout, and a further highlight is the panorama of the town's minarets and badgirs viewed from the roof.

The rooftop of this bathroom is one of the symbolic places of Kashan and the subject of many photographers. In the old days, the rooftop of baths was a place to dry clothes and towels, so there was a stairway to access there. Some domes are placed on this roof, each with luminous convex lens glasses to give enough light to the various parts of the bathroom and prevent it from seeing inside of it.

Entering a bathhouse through a corridor, there is a large room covered with intricate tiles and equipped with wooden benches, which is called 'rakhtkan'. It is a place for customers to undress and tie a gamucha (“long”) around their waists. It is also a place for drinking tea, smoking, and chatting with others.

The dressing room was a covered courtyard with a large pool in the middle and high platforms around which remove their clothes. There were poles around the locker rooms and colorful glass balls were hung on the poles. The master of the bath sat on one of those



platforms or one of the platforms. A large lamp and sometimes chandelier hung from the roof of the dressing room above the pool.

In the past, some people took a bath before sunrise until eight o'clock in the morning, and from that time until the afternoon, women would have a bath. It is interesting to know that washing in public baths had different etiquettes, some of which is given below:

Everyone who entered the bath greeted the people who were washing. Later, the person would take some of the water from the tub with a copper bowl and pour it on the shoulders of the people in the bath, whether familiar or unfamiliar, even showing more love and affection to strangers because they believed, friends and acquaintances do not need compliments. There is an Iranian prov-

erb that says about two very close friends that “they are friends in the bath and the garden.”

Many believed that bathhouses were placed for treatment; the existence of hot and cold water reservoirs was used to treat some diseases. Bathhouses were sometimes used as shelters for those who fled from various social or political events.

For water supply, two wells were utilized, and for transferring water between different parts of the bathroom, tannins or pottery were used. Bowls made of copper were used for heating the water and pipes channeled the water underground heating the floors.

The fuel for baths in the past was desert thorns, firewood and animal dried defecation. Under the bathtub, there was a fireplace or a firebox, and a large copper vessel was placed under the floor of the tub, and a fire was lit under it so that the tub water would be warm during the night and warm for bathing in the early morning.

In those days, mosques, bazaars, houses, bathhouses, and subterranean cisterns constituted the main elements of each Iranian city.

There are still hundreds of bathhouses across the country, many of which have lost their original function since nearly all people have bathrooms in their homes as the result of a ubiquitous clash between traditionalism and modernism.

Sistan-Baluchestan tourism boom continues with new job opportunities

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A total of 212 job opportunities will be generated by implementing 46 tourism-related projects in Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

The mentioned projects, 15 of which are being carried out by the private sector, could lead to sustainable employment once they come on stream, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The projects, which are underway in the north part of the province, include accommodation centers such as hotels and eco-lodge units as well as several tourist complexes, the official added.

As the north part of the province, Sistan, is home to several historical sites and tourist attractions, developing its tourist infrastructure is one of the priorities of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, Mojtaba Mirhosseini announced on Sunday.

Earlier this month, the provincial tourism chief Alireza Jalalzai announced that the province has lost 1,440 billion rials (\$34.2 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) in earnings from tourism as many potential visitors stay away due to the impact of the coronavirus.

The official noted that Sistan-Baluchestan has set sights on [a significant] tourism development, and its

travel infrastructure has been drastically extended over the past couple of years.

He also pointed to various tourism campaigns being launched over the past couple of years, adding the campaign 'Let's see Sistan, let's hear Baluchestan' has taken a noticeable impact on the tourism thrive of the province mainly by the means of on-line programs.

Last year, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said that the development of the travel industry across Sistan-Baluchestan province is among the top priorities for the ministry.

“I am interested in Sistan-Baluchestan, and the development of this province is a priority for this ministry and the government,” the minister stated.

“The majority of my travels during my tenure has been to Sistan-Baluchestan, which I consider it as a safe province with significant values in terms of culture, history, handicrafts, and tourism.”

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. In ancient times, the region was a crossword of the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations.

The province possesses special significance because



of being located in a strategic and transit location, especially Chabahar which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters.

The vast province is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

Flood-hit historical bridge in Lorestan restored

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A restoration project has recently been completed on Chalanchulan Bridge, an arch brick monument located in the western province of Lorestan.

The Qajar-era (1789-1925) bridge had suffered damage from heavy flooding in 2019 so it needed some rehabilitation works to be preserved for future generations, the provincial tourism chief said on Sunday.

A budget of 400 million rials (\$9,500 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the project, Seyyed Amin Qasemi explained.



With 120 meters long, Chalanchulan Bridge was built on the remains of an ancient

structure dating back to the Sassanid-era (224 CE to 651). It has six brick arches and its columns are made of stone and brick. The structure was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1997.

There are over 100 historical bridges across the province that should be carefully protected as they are architectural specimens of different historical eras and they are part of the identity of the region, the official added.

In 2019, days of devastating flooding and heavy rain inflicted damage to tens of cultural heritage sites in Lorestan; for instance, it washed away parts of a historic hill, on top

of which the famed Falak-ol-Aflak Castle is nested.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

First agritourism permit issued for farm in ancient Kowsar

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A farm in Kowsar has been granted the first-ever agritourism permit issued in the northwestern ancient town, situated in Ardebil province.

Such permits are granted to eligible farm owners in the country to launch their agritourism businesses, aiming to set certain standards in a move to ensure the quality of such services in the country.

“To boost and develop tourism in rural areas which have agricultural capacities, the first agritourism license has been issued in the town of Kowsar,” CHTN quoted a provincial tourism official as saying on Saturday.

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ranch recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, ed-



ucational activities, etc.

Experts believe that in addition to the customer

Millennia-old relics recovered in Kordestan

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Iranian police have recently confiscated some historical relics from three smugglers in Saqqez county, western Kordestan province, CHTN reported on Sunday.

The relics, which are estimated to date back to some 3,000 years ago, include some clay utensils, a few pieces of beads, and decorative objects made of glass and metal,

Saqqez's tourism chief Salah Nasrollahi said. All the objects are original and have historical origins, being discovered through unauthorized excavations from ancient sites of the region, the official added.

He also noted that the culprits were detained and handed over to judiciary officials for further investigation.

The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turk-

ish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), the name Kurdistan was applied to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains. It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.



Women's share in research, development up to 39%

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The participation of Iranian women in higher education's research and development projects has increased from 27 percent in 2000 to 39.6 percent in 2017, Science Minister Mansour Gholami has said.

In all levels of education, the share of women has risen from 5.3 percent in 1978 to over 50 percent or even 60 percent during the past seven years, he noted, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Also, Iranian women have been able to obtain the top ranks of the university entrance exam, except for the technical and engineering field, compared to men with a quorum of 2 times, Gholami said.

Over 4,500 women enrolled in doctoral courses each year, and in the past three years on average, the number of doctoral theses registered by women is equivalent to 40 percent of the total dissertations registered in the database, he further explained.

While the share of the female population in higher education was only 281 per 100,000 populations in 1978, now, it reached 4,747 people (4.7



percent, almost 20 times), and the gross female enrollment rate (total number of students aging 18 to 24) has risen from 2.1 percent in 1978 to 41.2 percent (20 times) this year, Gholami noted.

In 1978, only 18 percent of women were faculty members working in higher education institutions, while this number reached up to 30 percent by now, he concluded.

Women's participation above global average

The participation of Iranian women in research and development fields is higher than the global average, according to the UNESCO 2020 report on Women in Science.

Iranian women's participation in research and development has increased from 27.7 percent in 2019 to 31.2 percent in 2020, which is above the global average of 30 percent.

The increase in the share of women in research and development is mostly due to their increasing share in knowledge-based companies, Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women's and family affairs, said in August 2020.

FAO, Iran to reinvigorate agricultural innovation

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in close collaboration with the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO) of Iran, has taken the first step to establishing an Agricultural Innovation Lab (i-Lab) Program in the country.

To strengthen the Iranian national capacity in addressing emerging challenges in food and nutrition security, agricultural productivity, and environmental conservation, FAO supports the establishment of an agricultural innovation lab in Iran.

The FAO-Iran i-Lab initiative would bring researchers, technologists, young people, public and private sectors, and start-ups together to construct and implement capacity development plans for agricultural innovations.

According to a press release published by the FAO Representation in Iran, as the first step, FAO and AREEO held a joint stakeholders' engagement and validation workshop, congregating experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, AREEO and international experts to discuss the requisite procedures, frameworks, priority working areas and guidelines for an open call of proposals.

"The initiative, modeled by FAO in nine pilot countries in Africa, Asia, and Central America, would provide an enabling environment for innovative procedures to harness

the untapped power of existing and frontier technologies; design, pilot, accelerate and scale-up innovative ideas, services, and tools; and transform new solutions into public goods," said Gerold Bödeker, FAO Representative to Iran in his opening remarks at the event. "This joint program is expected to enhance the productivity, effectiveness, competitiveness, and resilience of the country's agriculture and food system."

Bödeker added that "the i-Lab will provide a platform for FAO to utilize the knowledge, experiences and new ideas of Iranian experts, scholars, and entrepreneurs for achieving innovative solutions in addressing challenges pertaining to the climate change, soil erosion, desertification, deforestation, and the food and nutrition security and safety."

"The establishment of FAO-Iran i-Lab would also develop an intra-organizational model of innovation; promote an entrepreneurial culture; help to identify owners of innovative ideas among the private sector, academia, governmental agencies, and entrepreneurs; and assist in evaluating the potential capacities of the proposed ideas," he stated.

Based on the AREEO campus in Karaj, this initiative will provide the space to mentor start-up teams, provide funds, expand communication networks, and advocate for agro-innovation proposals.

The program will provide capacity-building opportunities,



including workshops, training, and entrepreneurship events for governmental staff and catalyze effective interaction between research institutes and industries. This initiative would establish a solid platform to gather the most recent and novel ideas in areas of agriculture, natural resources, and environmental management.

Being the lead UN agency in promoting sustainable climate-smart agro-rural development, FAO extends its support to member countries to adopt a system-wide approach to unlock the potential of innovation, linking network of actors together with supporting policies and institutions to harness new technologies, products, processes, and forms of organization in responding to the emerging needs and challenges.

'Invisible killer': fossil fuels caused 8.7m deaths globally in 2018, research finds

Air pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil was responsible for 8.7m deaths globally in 2018, a staggering one in five of all people who died that year, new research has found.

Countries with the most prodigious consumption of fossil fuels to power factories, homes and vehicles are suffering the highest death tolls, with the study finding more than one in 10 deaths in both the US and Europe were caused by the resulting pollution, along with nearly a third of deaths in eastern Asia, which includes China. Death rates in South America and Africa were significantly lower.

The enormous death toll is higher than previous estimates and surprised even the study's researchers. "We were initially very hesitant when we obtained the results because they are astounding, but we are discovering more and more about the impact of this pollution," said Eloise Marais, a geographer

at University College London and a study co-author. "It's pervasive. The more we look for impacts, the more we find."

The 8.7m deaths in 2018 represent a "key contributor to the global burden of mortality and disease", states the study, which is the result of collaboration between scientists at Harvard University, the University of Birmingham, the University of Leicester and University College London. The death toll exceeds the combined total of people who die globally each year from smoking tobacco plus those who die of malaria.

Scientists have established links between pervasive air pollution from burning fossil fuels and cases of heart disease, respiratory ailments and even the loss of eyesight. Without fossil fuel emissions, the average life expectancy of the world's population would increase by more than a year, while global economic and health costs would fall

by about \$2.9tn.

The new estimate of deaths, published in the journal Environmental Research, is higher than other previous attempts to quantify the mortal cost of fossil fuels. A major report by the Lancet in 2019, for example, found 4.2m annual deaths from air pollution coming from dust and wildfire smoke, as well as fossil fuel combustion, the Guardian reported.

This new research deploys a more detailed analysis of the impact of sooty airborne particles thrown out by power plants, cars, trucks and other sources. This particulate matter is known as PM2.5 as the particles are less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter – or about 30 times smaller than the diameter of the average human hair. These tiny specks of pollution, once inhaled, lodge in the lungs and can cause a variety of health problems.

"We don't appreciate that air pollution is an invisible killer," said Neelu Tummala,

an ear, nose and throat physician at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. "The air we breathe impacts everyone's health but particularly children, older individuals, those on low incomes and people of color. Usually people in urban areas have the worst impacts."

Instead of solely relying upon averaged estimates from satellite and surface observations that account for PM2.5 from a range of sources, the researchers used a global 3D model of atmospheric chemistry overseen by Nasa that has a more detailed resolution and can distinguish between pollution sources. "Rather than rely on averages spread across large regions, we wanted to map where the pollution is and where people live, so we could know more exactly what people are breathing," said Karn Vohra, a graduate student at University of Birmingham and study co-author.

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ع

\$7b to be allocated to retrofit, rebuild flood-devastated houses

A budget of 290 trillion rials (nearly \$7 billion) will be allotted to reconstruct and repair housing units destroyed by flood in 18 provinces across the country, Mehdi Jamalinejad, deputy interior minister for urban and rural development has announced.

Flood has devastated some 169,377 housing units, 68,333 of which are beyond repair and must be reconstructed, he stated.

Moreover, household appliances of 109,832 families also have suffered damages, he further regretted.

He went on to say that 20,000 housing units, undergone devastation by recent flooding in Aq-Oala county in northern Golestan province, are under construction.

Non-repayable loans amounting to 25 trillion rials (nearly \$600 million) will be provided for retrofitting of houses, 7.4 trillion rials (around \$177 million) will also be earmarked to compensate for the infrastructure damages, he explained.

اختصاص بیش از ۲۹ هزار میلیارد تومان برای بازسازی خانه های سیل زده

معاون عمران و توسعه امور شهری و روستایی وزیر کشور گفت: براساس مصوبه اخیر هیات وزیران مبلغ ۲۹ هزار و ۱۳۰ میلیارد ریال برای بازسازی و جبران خسارات ناشی از سیل در بخشهای مختلف ۱۸ استان پرداخت می شود.

بر اساس ارزیابی های انجام شده در ۲۱ استان کشور، بیش از ۱۶۹ هزار و ۳۷۷ واحد مسکونی شهری و روستایی در سیل های اخیر در کشور آسیب دیده اند که باید دوباره احداث شوند.

جمالی نژاد بیان داشت: در اثر سیل به ۱۰۹ هزار و ۸۳۲ واحد مسکونی نیز خسارت معیشتی وارد شده است.

وی اضافه کرد: امروز ساخت ۲۰ هزار دستگاه واحد مسکونی که در سیل آسیب دیده بودند نیز در آق قلا شروع شد.

دبیر کمیته نوسازی و بازسازی قرارگاه بازسازی مناطق سیل زده در ادامه گفت: ۲۵ هزار میلیارد ریال تسهیلات قرض الحسنه و همچنین مبلغ ۷ هزار و ۴۶۰ میلیارد ریال برای مرمت زیرساخت های آسیب دیده از سیل پرداخت خواهد شد.

Educational, scientific cooperation highlighted by Iran, Georgia

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iran and Georgia have emphasized the need to boost cooperation in the field of education and science.

The issue was discussed by Iranian Ambassador to Georgia Akbar Qassemi and Georgian Education, Science, Culture and Sport Minister Mikheil Chkhikadze during a meeting on Saturday, ISNA reported.



The Iranian official said the two sides agree on taking steps to confirm and approve certificates issued by universities in the two countries.

For his part, the Georgia minister referred to strategic bilateral ties, saying that Tbilisi has always had a positive point of view toward boosting academic relations between the two nations.

Academic achievements

Iran ranked 14th among 102 countries for the highest number of top universities, as 46 Iranian universities were listed on ISC World University Rankings 2020.

ISC is the third internationally accredited citation center established in the Islamic Republic of Iran based on a resolution adopted in 2008 by the 4th Meeting of the Islamic Ministers of Higher Education (ICMHESR) in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to index, evaluate and publish scientific productions in Islamic countries.

There are 2,182 universities from 102 countries in the ranking, of which 46 universities are from Iran, ISNA reported.

In 2019, Iran participated with 43 universities, which shows an increased share in the recent ranking.

Abdol-Hamid Alizadeh, the deputy science minister, has said that 40,000 foreign nationals are studying in 43 Iranian universities, 22,000 of whom are studying at the universities affiliated to the Ministry of Science, 8,000 at the Azad University, 3,000 at the Ministry of Health, and the rest at other universities.

So far, foreign students from 129 countries have come to Iran to study, he noted.

Toward a 'knowledge-based' socio-economic growth

1 → The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers are more engaged in, leading to a reduction in imports.

Sourena Sattari, the vice president for science and technology, told the Tehran Times in October 2020 that although U.S. sanctions have caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline over the past three years, the exports are projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20).

The vice presidency for science and technology in cooperation with the ministry of foreign affairs is planning to boost 'technology diplomacy' through expanding innovation and technology centers in export target countries.

Fighting with COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has proved the efficiency of knowledge-based companies so that around 100 companies are working exclusively to supply the domestic market with medicine and equipment necessary to fight the disease.

Esmail Qaderifar, head of the center for strategic technologies development of the vice presidency of science and technology, has said that under sanctions in the most difficult conditions, Iran combatted the pandemic and knowledge-based companies could make the country independent. Moreover, they managed to produce pharmaceutical items required by the country's health system.

"Also, the production of medical equipment such as ventilators is one of the honors of knowledge-based companies, which is a vital and important item for ICU patients, which have even reached the export stage," he said.

Experts believe that promoting the culture of scientific growth in the society is one of the necessary infrastructures and basic needs for the success of the country in the process of passing from an oil-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 129)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

اِمَشَبِ شَبِّ يَلِدَا، شَبِّ اَوَّلِ زِمِسْتَانِ وَ بَلَنْدَتَرینِ شَبِّ سَالِ
است. اَقایِ امامی نَزْدِیکانِ خود را به میهمانی دَعَوَتْ
کَرْدِه است. او برای این میهمانی اَنَارَ، پُرْتَقَالَ، هِنْدِوانِه،
هَمچنین آجیل و شیرینی خَرَبِدِه و خانمِ امامی غَذایِ
خَوْشَمَزِه ای دُرُست کَرْدِه است.
میهمان ها اَمَدِه اَنَد و رَوی صَنْدَلِی یا رَوی قَرشِ
نِشَسْتِه اَنَد. اَنها می گویند، می خَنَدند، میوه و آجیلِ
می خورند و به موسیقی گوش می کنند. پَدربزرگ از
گُذَشْتِه ها حَرْف می زَنَد و مینو اَشعار حَافِظ را می خواند.
میهمانی شب یَلِدَا یکی از سُنَّت های قَشَنگِ ایرانی به
شُمَار می رَوَد. دَر فَرهَنگِ ایرانی، تاریکی و نادلانی
دُشَمَنان اِنسانند و ایرانیان با جَشَن شَبِّ یَلِدَا به جَنگِ
تاریکی می روند.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be not like the hypocrite who, when he talks, tells lies; when he gives a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he proves dishonest.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Photographer of Islamic Revolution figures Reza Hushvar dies at 72

A R T **TEHRAN** — Photographer Reza Hushvar, who was best known for his photos of Islamic Revolution figures, has passed away after a heart attack. He was 72. He died at his home in Tehran after returning from the Wednesday rally to mark the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic



Photographer Reza Hushvar in an undated photo.

Revolution, the Persian service of FNA quoting Hushvar's son, writer Hamid Davudabadi, reported on Sunday.

"He was a great artist whose photos of Imam Khomeini and numerous revolution figures and soldiers during the Sacred Defense [1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war] will never be forgotten," he said.

Hushvar was the owner of Quds Atelier located near Tehran's Baharestan Square. He used to attend Imam Khomeini's occasional meetings with people to take photos.

In the early days after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, he also was present during Friday prayers every week to take shots of the revolution figures.

He then offered the photos at his atelier, which was the haunt of supporters of the revolution.

"He did this work due to his love of the revolution rather than for its financial benefits," photographer Bahram Mohammadifard said.

Book on 1979 Islamic Revolution published in Spanish

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Spanish translation of Iranian writer Mohamad Haqqi's book "Islamic Revolution, Principles and Characteristics" has been published in Spain.



Translator Kobra Valadkhani holds the Spanish version of "Islamic Revolution, Principles and Characteristics" during a ceremony organized at the Embassy of Iran in Madrid to introduce the book written by Mohamad Haqqi.

The book has been rendered into Spanish by Iranian translator Kobra Valadkhani and was introduced at the Embassy of Iran in Madrid, Iran's Cultural Office in the Spanish capital announced in a press release published on Sunday.

The ceremony was attended by Iran's ambassador Hassan Qashqavi, cultural attaché Mohammad-Mehdi Ahmadi and several Spanish academics and cultural officials.

Speaking at the ceremony, Qashqavi pointed to the cultural identity of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, saying that the Islamic Revolution has reached its goals in the cultural arena.

Translator Valadkhani said that she agreed to work on the book because she had noticed its difference in structures and contents compared to other books written about the Islamic Revolution.

This is a research book with academic structure, she said, adding that the translation of the book into Spanish was a big challenge for her because of its deep concepts.

Spanish journalist Gustavo Morales, also attending the ceremony, spoke briefly on the achievements of the Islamic Revolution in various political, social and cultural fields.

Iran's Book of the Year Awards announces nominees in literature category

»1 "Stylistics through Persian Prose and Poetry" by Paul Simpson and Fatemeh Kordchegini and "An Introduction to Contemporary American Poetry" by Kamran Ahmadgoli and Bahdor Baqeri are also competing in this category.

Over five books, including "Epic of Musayyebnameh", are competing in the Classical Literature section.

The above book is about Musayyeb ibn Qaqa Khazai, a companion of Imam Ali (AS) and his sons Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein (AS).

The book written by Mohammad-Baqai Vars Bukhari and Abu Taher Tarsusi has been translated and corrected by Milad Jafarpur. The Mahmud Afshar Foundation is the publisher of the book.

In the Non-Persian Literature section, a Persian translation of Russian writer Andrei Bely's novel "Petersburg" by Farzaneh Taheri is among the nominees. It is a symbolist work that arguably foreshadows James Joyce's modernist ambitions.



Iran's Book of the Year Award.

Olga Tokarczuk's "Flights" translated into Persian by Fariba Arjmand, Titus Muller's "Nighteye" translated into Persian by Hossein Tehrani, Richard Powers' "The Overstory" translated into Persian Arash Hushangifar, and Josh Malerman's "Bird Box: Don't Open Your Eyes" translated into Persian by Mohammad-Hossein Esmaeilzadeh have also been nominated in this category.

"The Spike" written by Arnaud De Borchgrave and Robert Moss is also another contender in this section. It has been rendered into Persian by Mahmud Behforuzi.

Nominees in the Arabic Literature section are Mustafa Badawi's "A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry" translated into Persian by Rahim Kushesh and A. R. Sharkawi's "The Journey of Uprising" translated into Persian by Gholamreza Emami.

Winners receive their awards from the Iranian president every year during a special ceremony, which is organized by his office.



Neyanban virtuoso Mohsen Sharifian gives a performance with his band Lian on July 10, 2019. (Mehr/Masud Saki)

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Kish Island on the Persian Gulf will be hosting an international neyanban festival to promote the Persian instrument, which is most common in southern Iran.

The festival will be running from March 10 to 12, the organizers announced in a press release on Sunday.

The instrument, which is a kind of bagpipe, enjoys a high tourism attraction, helping to encourage interested

Kish Island to host intl. neyanban festival in March

musicians to make a journey to the island.

This old instrument, which has been inscribed on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2015, is mostly played in the provinces of Bushehr, Khuzestan, Kerman and Hormozgan, while the festival will help introduce this instrument in the international arena as well.

The organizers have corresponded with the embassies of Greece, Algeria, Germany, Tunisia, Turkey, France, Armenia, Austria, Spain, India and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, inviting their musicians to attend the festival.

Introducing this instrument to the fans of the regional music as a cultural identity of the country, attracting more tourists to the island and encouraging the youth to learn neyanban are among other goals of the festival.

Mohsen Sharifian, the leader of the Lian ensemble from the southern Iranian city of Bushehr, who is a skillful player of the neyanban, introduced an electronic version of the neyanban named "Lianic" in January. The instrument takes its name from his band's name, Lian.

"Due to the sanctions that make access to similar foreign instruments difficult, we decided to design and make an Iranian electronic neyanban," Sharifian had said.

"Lianic is a localized instrument similar to what is used in Europe by musicians and learners during their rehearsals," he added.

He said that the Lianic is an appropriate instrument for finger exercises and learning rhythms and melodies, and doesn't require tuning.

The album "Music of Kish Island" featuring the folk music of Kish Island in the Persian Gulf was released in early January.

The collection contains 19 tracks recorded and performed based on extensive research by Sharifian.

He performed at the William Kennedy Piping Festival in the Irish town of Armagh in November 2019.

His group also gave a concert in the Indian city of Mumbai during an Iranian festival presenting art and cultural performances from the southern Iranian city of Bushehr under the title "From Bushehr to Mumbai".

French publisher Gallimard releases anthology of short Persian love stories

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Gallimard, a leading French book publisher in Paris, has released an anthology of contemporary Persian short love stories in a book entitled "Amours Persanes".

Julie Duvigneau and Masumeh Lahidji have selected and translated the stories for the collection, which carries a preface by the late French filmmaker and writer Jean-Claude Carrière and an introduction by Iranian writer Nasim Vahabi.

Bringing together seventeen

contemporary authors of Persian origin from across the world, this collection offers a range of short stories in forms of filial love, divine love, tyrannical love, broken love, youthful love, love of art and sport, and, above all, love as resistance.

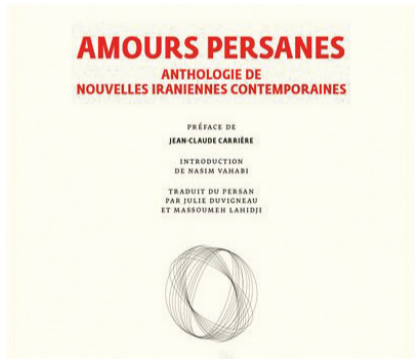
Among the writers are Hushang Moradi Kermani, Mehrnush Mazraei, Fereshteh Molavi, Amir-Hossein Cheheltan, Shahriar Mandanipur, Gita Gorgani, Nahal Tajaddod and Javad Javaheri.

The book also contains stories by Fariba Vafi, Namdar Nasser, Nasim

Vahabi, Peyman Esmaeili, Maria Tabrizpur, Alireza Gholami, Amir Khodaverdi, Ahmad Hassanzadeh and Nasim Marashi.

"This anthology is an invitation to a literary journey, during which these eight women and nine men tell their vision of love, in all its diversity," the publisher wrote in a short introduction to the book.

It took three years for the book to be prepared for publication, and thirteen stories of the collection have never before been published.



Front cover of Gallimard's new book "Amours Persanes" containing French translations of 17 contemporary Iranian writers' short love stories.

15th Fajr Poetry Festival honors winners



An honoree holds the award he received at the closing ceremony of the 15th Fajr Poetry Festival held at Vahdat Hall on February 14, 2021. (IRNA/Ehsan Naderipur)

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Winners of the 15th Fajr Poetry Festival were honored Sunday during a ceremony at Vahdat Hall in Tehran.

The honoring ceremony was attended by the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Seyyed Abbas Salehi.

No book was picked as the best in the Adults' Poetry section, but the book "Fourteen Nights" by Majid Salehi received an honorable mention.

In the New Poetry Section, the two books "Aman Nameh" by Seyyed Akbar Mir Jafari and "Skyless Bird" by Mohammadreza Ruzbeh shared the top award.

The organizers also honored two veteran poets, Mohamad Hossein Mahdavi, who is also known by his pseudonym M. Moayyedi, and Mohammad-Baqer Kolahi Ahari, with lifetime achievement awards.

In the Classic Poetry Section, the two books "My Heart

Is Pounding for Khazar" and "Norahan" by Mohammadreza Taqidokht shared the top award.

In the Children's Poetry section, the two books "The Rain Is Pouring within Me" by Hossein Tavallai and "Parpari Dress" by Maryam Hashempur shared the best award.

"Life of Sadi Shirazi" by Javad Bashari and "Secret of Meaningful Words of Khaqani" by Mohammadreza Torki shared the best award in the About Poetry section.

In the Sacred Defense section several poets were also honored including Yusefali Mirshakkak, Abdoljabbar Kakai, Ali-Mohammad Moaddab and Alireza Qazveh.

The poets who were also active during the coronavirus restriction days and pandemic were also honored including Mohammadreza Ekramifar, Maryam Hayeri, Mohammad-Kazem Kazemi, Mohamad Milan Lak and Mohammad-Hossein Nemat.

Short stories by Edgar Allan Poe published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Seven short stories from "Tales of Mystery and Imagination", a popular title for posthumous compilations of writings by American writer Edgar Allan Poe, have been published in Persian in a single book entitled "The Gold Bug and Several Other Stories".

Shojaeddin Shafa is the translator of the collection published by Nakhostin in Tehran.

"The Gold Bug" is a highlight of "Tales of Mystery and Imagination", which was the first complete collection of Poe's works specifically restricted to his suspenseful and related tales.

The short story was published in 1843. It follows William Legrand, who was bitten by a gold-colored bug. His servant Jupiter fears that Legrand is going insane and goes to Legrand's friend, an

unnamed narrator, who agrees to visit his old friend. Legrand pulls the other two into an adventure after deciphering a secret message that will lead to a buried treasure.

The story, set on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, is often compared with Poe's "Tales of Ratiocination" as an early form of detective fiction. Poe became aware of the public's interest in secret writing in 1840 and asked readers to challenge his skills as a code-breaker. He took advantage of the popularity of cryptography as he was writing "The Gold Bug", and the success of the story centers on one such cryptogram. Modern critics have judged the characterization of Legrand's servant Jupiter as racist, especially because of his comical dialect speech.

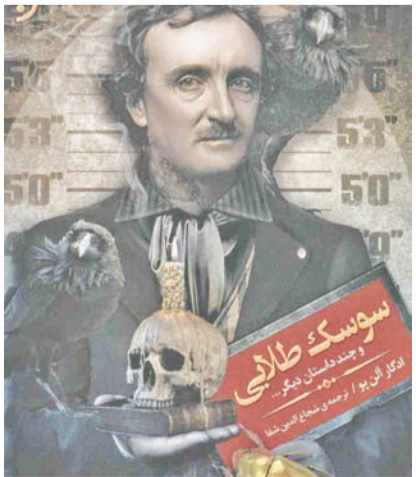
Poe submitted "The Gold Bug" as an

entry to a writing contest sponsored by the Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper. His story won the grand prize and was published in three installments, beginning in June 1843. The prize also included \$100, probably the largest single sum that Poe received for any of his works.

"The Gold Bug" was an instant success and was the most popular and most widely read of Poe's works during his lifetime. It also helped popularize cryptograms and secret writing.

"A Descent into the Maelström", "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", "The Purloined Letter", "The Pit and the Pendulum", "Ligeia" and "Manuscript Found in a Bottle" are other stories of the collection.

Several collections of Poe's short stories have been published previously in Persian.



Front cover of the Persian collection of American writer Edgar Allan Poe's short stories published in a book entitled "The Gold Bug and Several Other Stories".