



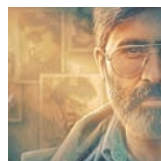
Strategic partnership with China is a warning to Washington *Page 2*



12 countries to partake at International Athletic Imam Reza Cup Tournament *Page 3*



Nanotech increasing pace of development in Iran *Page 7*



Owj docudrama chronicles life of war filmmaker Morteza Avini *Page 8*

Stab in the back

See page 3

Saudi Arabia faces accusations of involvement in palace intrigue

© Tehran Times/ Illustration by Bahman Vakhshour

IPL: Three teams in hunt for glory

BY FARROKH HESABI

Iran Professional League (IPL) title race has been wide open in recent weeks, with three top teams eagerly in the hunt for glory.

With 11 games remaining, Persepolis, Sepahan, and Esteghlal have formed a tight title race at the top of the table of the 2020/21 Iran Professional League season.

Persepolis lost two points on Saturday as they came from behind to draw 1-1 with Shahr Khodro in Mashhad. The draw left Persepolis sitting on shaky ground at the top of the table with just one point ahead of Sepahan and one more game than the Isfahan-based team. Sepahan will visit Saipa in Tehran on Monday and can lead the league with two points more than the Reds in case of winning the game.

Esteghlal had a great chance to pile the pressure on Persepolis and Sepahan as they hosted Paykan in Tehran. However, things did not go to plan for Farhad Majidi's side as they dropped two points to keep their four points distance from their archrivals Persepolis.

The table of the highest division of professional football in Iran, for now at least, appears closer than ever and surely there will be much more tension injected into a title race of a league that has been dominated by Persepolis for the last four years.

Sepahan with Moharam Navidkia, as their head coach, have been a fighting team so far with a lot of motivation to win the title. It is likely that Sepahan will keep up their current pace as they have shown the kind of consistency in their results that up to this point has elevated them to the top.

Esteghlal also after the changes on their bench, have had a good run in terms of results and their performance's rise has perhaps been overlooked. Their focus is to progress and to bring the title for their fans.

Persepolis' inconsistent start of the season saw them drop points to teams like Saipa, Nasaji and Naft Masjed Soleyman. But Yahya Golmohammadi's side were recovered and came again to the top with consecutive wins. They are the main favorites to win the IPL league for a record-breaker fifth time in row.

Iran Professional League is alive, and the exciting race among the contenders of the title makes it more attractive in the weeks towards the end of the league. Persepolis, Sepahan, and Esteghlal are expected to keep on title race until the end of the season.

Iran-China strategic partnership: a roadmap for mutual prosperity

BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI

TEHRAN – Iran, and China have signed a comprehensive long-term cooperation agreement with the aim of cementing their economic and political alliance as both countries are subjected to U.S. sanctions.

The agreement which will significantly expand the two countries' economic cooperation is seen to be a great blow to Washington's efforts for isolating the Islamic Republic of Iran's economy and therefore has raised concerns in the United States.

Since the signing of the deal on March 27, a wave of negative press has been created around the issue both on news platforms and on social media.

The agreement is claimed to be a deal based on which Iran is giving China great power and authority over the country's resources and the Chinese will soon become a stakeholder in most

of Iran's important industries.

The above-mentioned claims are just part of the efforts made by the U.S. and its allies for discrediting and sabotaging an agreement which seems to be a big threat to American unilateralism in the region.

The question, however, is how much the mentioned claims are true? And does this agreement really jeopardize Iran's integrity and interests in any way? To answer these questions some major aspects of this comprehensive agreement should be looked into in more detail.

To add to our body of knowledge in this regard, the Tehran Times conducted interviews with economists and board members of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Ali Shams Ardakani and Kaveh Zargarani.

Continued on page 4

Sanctions should be lifted 'all at once and completely': parliament

TEHRAN – Iranian parliament representatives issued a statement on Sunday saying that a return to the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – by the United States will be dependent on a lifting of sanctions "all at once and completely" that can be verified by experts.

Calling the sanctions oppressive, they said any negotiations for "synchronized steps" with the current JCPOA parties will actually lead to a procrastination in fully lifting sanctions and that will be "unacceptable" and will run counter to

the "general policies of the establishment and the Majlis law."

The statement followed as Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA – the three European countries of Britain, France Germany, Russia and China – held a virtual conference within the framework of the JCPOA Joint Commission on Friday. The virtual conference, led by senior European Union diplomat Enrique Mora, was held to explore ways to revitalize the nuclear agreement.

Continued on page 2

Annual production by major Iranian automakers rises 4%

TEHRAN – Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 900,714 vehicles in the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20), which was 4.3 percent more than the figure of its previous year, the data released by Codal website showed.

According to the data, during the past year, IKCO manufactured 480,338 vehi-

cles, which was 21.9 percent more than the output in its preceding year, that was 393,812 vehicles.

SAIPA manufactured 317,321 vehicles, with 12.6-percent fall from 363,379 vehicles manufactured in 1398.

And Pars Khodro manufactured 103,055 vehicles in the past year, showing 2.8-percent drop from the output of its previous year, which was 106,072 vehicles.

Charity foundation supports treatment of 7,000 infertile couples

TEHRAN – Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated to Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, has financially supported 7,000 infertile couples in rural areas to receive necessary treatments.

So far, 7,000 infertile couples in disadvantaged rural areas have received full treatment free of charge through a family growth plan, which has resulted in the birth of 800 infants,

IRNA quoted head of the foundation, Amir Hossein Madani, as saying on Sunday.

The Barakat family growth plan has been implemented since 2015, which resulted in the identification of 13,270 infertile couples in rural areas, and 7,000 of whom have been introduced to medical centers and received treatment, he explained.

Continued on page 7

Iraqi resistance groups reject talks with U.S., demand full withdrawal

A prominent Iraqi anti-terror group has reacted to the upcoming round of so-called strategic talks between Baghdad and Washington, whose key agenda item is reportedly the U.S. combat deployment, emphasizing that armed resistance and operations against American occupation forces will continue until they are fully removed from the Arab country.

"The message that the occupying United States, its allies, supporters and subordinates need to comprehend is that the resistance is determined to extend its operations until the occupiers leave, and close all their military bases throughout Iraq, including in Kurdistan region," Jawad al-Talibawi, a spokesman for Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq movement, which is part of the Popular Mobilization Units, wrote in a post published on his Twitter page on Saturday.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki lately said that the United States would engage in a

"strategic dialogue" with Iraq this month.

according to Press TV, the talks, which began last June under the administration of former U.S. president Donald Trump, would be the first under President Joe Biden. On the agenda is an array of issues, primarily the presence of U.S. military forces on Iraqi soil.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has told reporters he is approaching dialogue with Washington as a chance to push for the withdrawal of American troops.

Kata'ib Hezbollah, another Iraqi anti-terror group, dismissed the upcoming Iraq-U.S. talks, which are scheduled for next week, as "futile and worthless."

Meanwhile, Senior cleric and political leader Ammar al-Hakim also said Iraq's sovereignty will be complete once American occupation forces fully withdraw, underscoring that the United States should not have a permanent military base in the Arab country.

Vali-e Asr St., longest in West Asia, being prepared for possible UNESCO registration

TEHRAN – Over the past years, Tehran's Vali-e Asr Street, famed as the longest in West Asia, has undergone countless maintenance works as a prerequisite for a possible UNESCO registration.

The leafy street runs for over 17 kilometers from the railway station in the south of the metropolis to the Tajrish square in the north. It is lined with many shops, restaurants, parks, cinemas, and cultural centers.

Tehran's District 11 Mayor Nasrollah Abadian has recently talked about restoration works is has

carried out on the southernmost section of the thoroughfare, which is situated in the district.

"Vali-e Asr Street, which is the longest in West Asia, has undertaken extra maintenance and restoration works as a prerequisite for a possible UNESCO registration.... Four Kilometers of it is situated in the district 11 and others in the districts of 6, 3, and 1, respectively," Abadian said.

Landscaping and the beautification of urban spaces, flooring, and the protection of green spaces of the street are amongst tasks being practiced, he explained.

"Vali-e Asr Street is the best example which witnesses the persistent exercises of creating the concept of Garden-Street as a destination of an urban area from the Safavid era up to the modern time," according to the UNESCO website.

"A variety of architectural styles from traditional to modern and eclectic is a representation of eastern and western values synthesis in a specific geographical point, which carries a true definition of an architectural and spatial place."

Continued on page 6

The second coming of Ben-Gurion

BY ABIR BASSAM

The reasons behind capsizing the Taiwanese cargo ship "Ever Given", on the 24th of March, has become clear. The cargo ship capsized in the Suez Canal for more than 6 days. Failing to float the ship is not the news, or that the reasons behind the accident were a human failure. But the real news behind it is the revival of the old-new plans that was and is still alive in the dreams of the Zionist entity which is enlivening the "Ben-Gurion Canal" project. Yes, Ben-Gurion Canal has surfaced once more.

The project aims to connect the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Gulf of Aqaba to the Mediterranean through the Negev desert. The idea of digging a canal opposite to the Suez Canal began in 1963. It is recommended in a memo submitted by Lawrence Livermore Patriot Laps in the United States of America. The memorandum was proposed as a response to the decision taken by President Gamal Abdel Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal in 1956.

The memorandum suggested: In order to ensure the flow of navigation in the Red Sea, an alternative canal should be opened in the Gulf of Aqaba. It will be drilled through the Negev desert, which was described as an empty area that can be dug using nuclear bombs: Firstly, the project was halted due to the radiation that nuclear bombs could cause; and secondly due to the opposition that the project would face by the Arab countries, led by Nasser.

Today, political alliances have changed the face of the region, particularly after implementation of the Abraham Accords by several Arab countries. Therefore, a political atmosphere is compatible. Hence, serious deliberations of the project, after the Ever-Given capsizing, provide the idea that the accident was contrived.

Continued on page 5



A fox steals the show in Iran football

TEHRAN – A fox has stolen the show in Iran football in recent days.

The fox entered the empty Imam Khomeini Stadium in Arak during the match between Aluminum and Foolad in Iran professional league.

Its picture sitting on the stage quickly went viral on social media.

The football matches in Iran are being held behind closed doors for more than one year due to coronavirus.

Zarif urges E3 to act ‘constructively’ in Vienna meeting

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Saturday urged the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear agreement – Britain, France and Germany - to honor their commitments under the pact and act constructively in the meeting in Vienna on Tuesday.

Mohammad Javad Zarif made the remarks in a telephone call with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, which was made on the British side’s request.

The current parties to the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – held a virtual conference on Friday on how to revitalize the accord now that Joe Biden, the vice president under President Barack Obama, has taken the power at the White House.

The participants at the Friday meeting agreed to hold a JCPOA Joint Commission meeting in Vienna on Tuesday.

Senior diplomats from Iran, France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China will attend the joint commission in what appears to be the first serious push to reinvigorate the deal. The U.S. will be present in the Vienna meeting. However, there will be no direct or indirect talks between Iranian and U.S. representatives

The Vienna meeting was scheduled during a virtual session of the JCPOA Joint Commission led by senior European Union diplomat Enrique Mora on behalf of Josep Borrell, the bloc’s chief diplomat.

Biden’s predecessor, Donald Trump, adopted a policy of “maximum pressure” against Tehran after he quit the deal in violation of international law.

Iran was patient for one year. But with no palpable shift in circumstances, Tehran began a gradual process of reducing its nuclear undertakings. The decision was taken as Iran’s right under paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

(Paragraph 36 provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.)

According to Press TV, during the phone call, Zarif underlined the need for the United States to fully lift the illegal and unfair sanctions against Iran in a “verifiable” manner, adding, “Only then we will return to our commitments.”

For his part, Raab said Britain will work for a fruitful new round of talks.

Also, Zarif and his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian held a phone conversation late on Saturday. In the conversation Zarif called on France to live up to the JCPOA obligations and stop adhering to the U.S. sanctions.

“I urged France to show a constructive stance on the JCPOA in next week’s meeting in Vienna,” Zarif tweeted.

Malley to lead U.S. team in Vienna
The U.S. administration is sending a team of diplomats to Vienna. Washington also reportedly appointed its special envoy for Iran Robert Malley to head its team there.

While Iranian and American diplomats are not expected to meet face to face on Tuesday, the Biden administration has not been unwilling to hold direct and indirect talks with the Iranian side.

Iran rejects the notion of holding talks with the U.S. before the White House returns to compliance with the JCPOA. On Sunday, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi emphasized that the two sides would have no direct or indirect talks in the Austrian capital.

“We will have no talks, whether direct or indirect, with the Americans in Vienna. We will negotiate with the Joint Commission and the P4+1 and pronounce our condition for the [U.S.] return to the JCPOA. Our demand is that the U.S. must first fulfill all its obligations and remove all the sanctions it has imposed, then we will verify and return” to the point where Iran had not taken the remedial measures yet, Araqchi said.

Sanctions should be lifted ‘all at once and completely’: Iranian parliament

➔ **1** In follow-up to Friday’s meeting, the parties plan to hold a meeting in Vienna on Tuesday in which the United States will also be present but there will be no negotiations between Iran and the U.S. Even the representatives of Iran and the U.S. will not be in the same room.

The EU is responsible for holding the joint commissions. In part of their statement, the MPs said what is being pursued these days within the JCPOA Joint Commission “we insist that based on the Majlis law and insistence by all the establishment’s officials and Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the lifting of sanctions should take place fully and after verification by Iran.”

They said the government should inform the parliament’s energy and national security committees through a technical and political report about verification mechanism.

After such steps the parliament will finally approve it and declare that the U.S. can return to the JCPOA.

Iran vows ‘good news’ about nuclear propulsion in coming months

TEHRAN — The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has highlighted recent achievements in the country’s nuclear sector, promising “good news” about nuclear propulsion.

Speaking on the social media forum Clubhouse on Friday, Ali-Akbar Salehi said that Iran accepted restrictions under the 2015 nuclear deal with the world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but did not relinquish any of its rights.

“We suspended some rights for a while. For example, we did not produce metal uranium and plutonium,” he added.

Salehi noted that the Islamic Republic was supposed to produce 120 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium within a year after the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, a law passed last December by the Iranian Parliament.

“Now, we have reached 50 kilograms,” he estimated.

Salehi said, “If there is an agreement and America returns to the JCPOA and Iran verifies that, Tehran can instantly stop 20% enrichment and other expansions. But removing them will take 2-3 months.”

“In the coming months, we will inform the people of good news regarding the nuclear propulsion,” he said.

The future of the JCPOA has been in doubt since May 2018, when former U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the deal and imposed the “toughest ever” sanctions on Iran.

Despite throwing verbal support behind the JCPOA, the European parties to the deal — France, Britain and Germany — have succumbed to Washington’s pressure and failed to fulfill their contractual commitments to protect Tehran’s economic interests.

That prompted Tehran to suspend some of its obligations as part of its legal rights stipulated in Article 36 of the JCPOA.

(Source: Press TV)

Strategic partnership with China is a warning to Washington, Qalibaf says

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The signing of 25-year comprehensive

strategic partnership between Iran China was an “important warning” to the U.S., Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf told an open session of parliament on Sunday, reminding Washington that the course of developments at the international scene are not in line with the interest of the White House.

Qalibaf also said the U.S. is no longer in a position to unilaterally impose a “model”, “plan” or an “agreement” to independent states.

The comprehensive strategic partnership, which sets the roadmap for cooperation in different areas, was signed in Tehran on March 27 between Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Speaking in favor of the partnership, the speaker said the document shows that the world is not just limited to the West.

“We clarify that we welcome this move. If the signing of the document is based on this belief that the world is not just the West and that the future century (21st century) is Asia’s century it would be considered a strategic step,” the pragmatic senior lawmaker pointed out.

The parliament speaker went on to say that the document could have been inked earlier because “we believe that a lot of time for shaping real economic and political cooperation and also effective resistance against the oppressive U.S. pressure has been wasted.”

“However,” he added, “the moment should be seized and turn this document, by considering national interests, to projects,



plans and economic and political cooperation.”

He also suggested that ties with other countries, especially neighbors, should be upgraded to “strategic level” and be implemented immediately.

Mojtaba Zonour, chairman of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said Iran is seeking such a long term and strategic partnership with Russia.

Calling the strategic partnership a “general roadmap”, Qalibaf said certainly when the times arrives for implementing the document by the two governments, the Majlis will supervise “treaties and agreements” and will act to its duty to precisely study approve them in accordance with national interests

and will brief the public about its details.

Hossein Hosseinzadeh, the chairman of the Majlis Oil and Energy Committee, told IRNA on Sunday that after the signing of the partnership with China a number of European countries and big European companies have expressed readiness to do business with Iran.

The MP also said uneasiness of certain countries, including the United States, about the partnership shows the importance of the document.

He said Iran has signed the document, which contains valuable contents, with “open eyes” and with a “strategic outlook”

Pointing to China’s One Belt, One Road Initiative (BRI), which is the reactivation of the 2000-year-old Silk Road, Hosseinzadeh said

now the world’s economic look has changed from the West to the East with the centrality of China.

The head of the Majlis Oil and Energy Committee said through implementation of the BRI project and according to expert views more than 70 countries in different parts of the world will join the economic and commercial projects with China and the geographical status of Iran, as the Chinese themselves acknowledge, is very effective in the BRI.

It should be acknowledged that China will turn into a giant economic power in the world in the future years, he added.

Saeed Leilaz, a professor of economics at Shahid Beheshti University, says the cooperation document with China should be viewed in tandem with Iran’s independence and keeping the country powerful.

Writing in the Iran newspaper on Saturday, Leilaz said the partnership is a document in the post-Trump world which Iran can once again create a balance between the East and the West through it.

He suggested even the proponents of relations with the West should be happy about the document because it can prompt the West to return to the negotiating table and show them that Iran’s hands are not tied in finding ways for an “independent life” and that “it is not alone”.

Andrew Korybko, an American geopolitical analyst, has told the Tehran Times that “China is arguably the best partner that Iran could ever have.”

Korybko says, “The reportedly promised Chinese investments will enable the Islamic Republic to modernize its economy and emerge as a regional production powerhouse with time.”

An accessible passkey to the West Asia crisis How the nuclear deal can create a new solution?

By Mehrdad Pahlavani

The circle of tensions in West Asia runs slow, and after a slow or modest pace, it can potentially plunge. Like a multi-pointer watch, West Asia has several cogwheels. As one of the cogwheels of conflict bounces, the rest will pursue. Alleviation of a single tension in the region doesn’t help immune others, but the escalation of tension in West Asia needs to be defused, at least by quitting one of the cogwheels of pointers.

Appasement of tension is something that the region is in dire need of, and it can’t afford another war. Furthermore, in case of breakout of a war, warfare expenditures won’t be limited to particular sources due to transregional states’ tendency to show of power. New players are added to West Asia’s playground. Russia and China are intended to be marked as the focal point of that arena. Moreover, regional or local states are eager to spend much more in the area to upgrade their image and cover up their previous weakness.

The conflicts and feuds in West Asia have a prolonged list that the primary ones are enumerated as follows:

1) Security factors: The ceiling of security buildings is the sky, and governments try to expand security scope. In this way, West Asian countries in comparison to other regions are greedier to guarantee hard security.

****Nuclear capability is one of the security problem’s subtitles, as some regional players after Iran’s nuclear program were incited to be captioned as “nuclear state”.

2) Ideologies: Full spectrum of ideologies that are going onward against each other are alive and reinvigorated in the region. Sunni-Shia, Arab and non-Arab, and self-other factions are only some ostensible instances that when foreign interventions are augmented, the result is a full-spectrum of radicalism, extremism, and fundamentalism.

3) The Israel-Palestine tension: This conflict is disguised as a low-level issue during Trump’s presidency due to the normalization of relationship by some Arab countries with Israel, but still, it is a major concern for the region.

4) Good governance: Although the ballot box is a weird thing in some countries in West Asia, an overwhelming majority of states have nothing in common with democracy: in other words, democracy is not institutionalized, and decisions are made mostly based on human love and hate, not logic. Therefore, cherry-pick decisions are more likely to make than logical or institutional-based ones.

The cherry-picking decision stems from elements rooted in the region, including in the Sykes-Picot agreement that humiliated Arab states, long term foreign intervention, dismay from coalitions, switching West Asia into a playground, self-help norms, concerns of transregional players, economic backwardness, etc. All these can turn West Asia into tender box put the region to blaze.

To solve West Asia’s troubles and given the complexity therein, an idealistic, comprehensive, and full-scale solution is farfetched. The flipside is a doable, practical, and accessible solution that covers all the players’ common concerns begin from tough ones but simultaneously easy aspects of accessible sub-titles of problems.

Among all aforementioned factors that can be potentially assessed as sparks of conflict, as of today, on the one hand, security has been the most powerful component, and on the other, all factors have a hidden layer of security concerns.

Vali Nasr, who is always sensible in his views, in a recent article titled “The Middle East’s Next Conflicts Won’t Be Between Arab States and Iran”, describes power equation in the region, therefore to forge resolutions two factors including security-based and a non-Arab solution are necessities and available.

Iran’s nuclear program is one of the most available options that both is exercised and is a multilateral solution-based resolution which is a subtitle of security and non-Arab one.

The deal at least can quench the appetite of the region for nuclear balance and enable the non-proliferation principles, and at most, it can push the region both toward the idea of a West Asia nuclear-free zone and subsequently prioritize economy as the new path of rivalries.

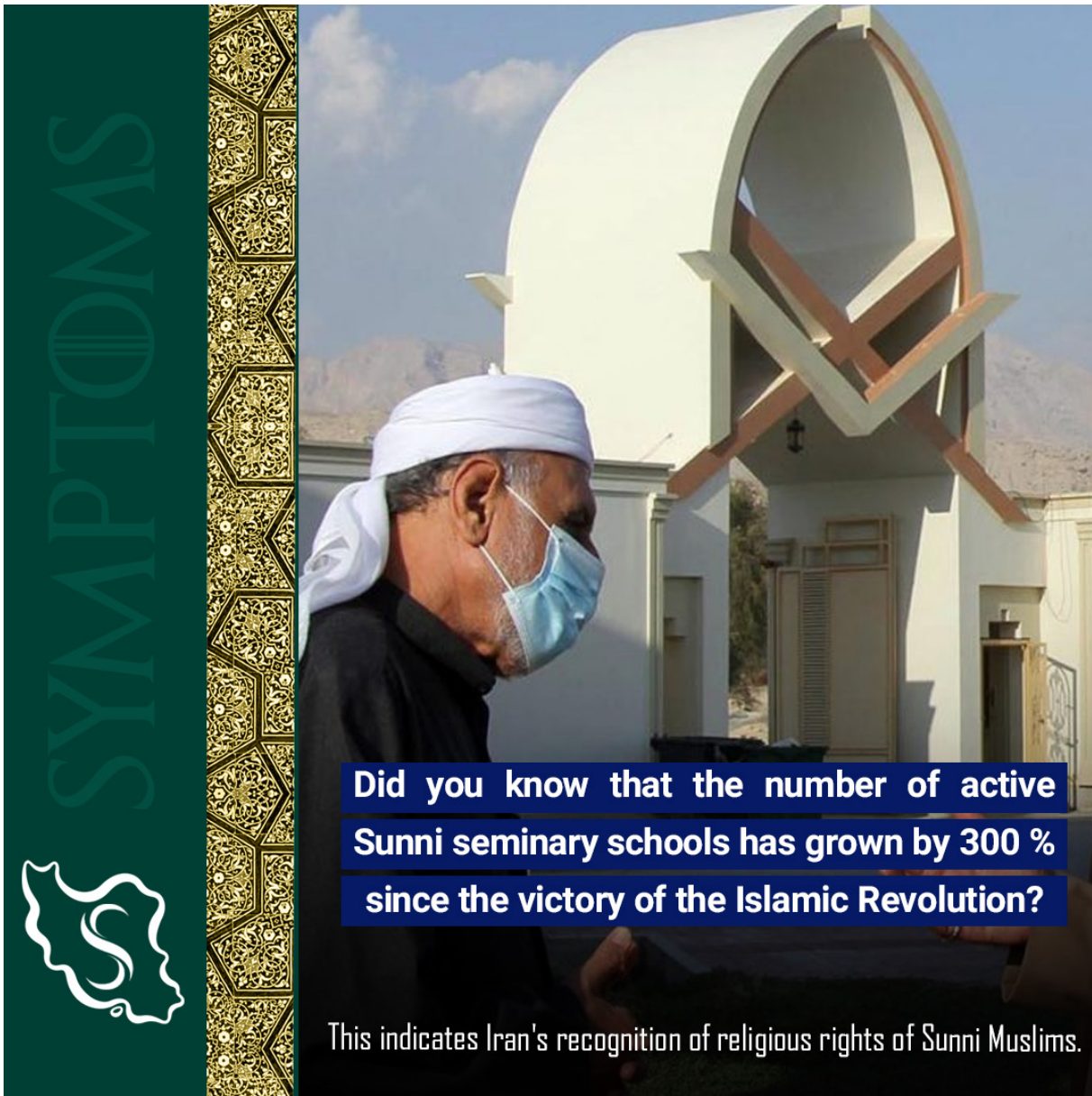
If the ambiguity in the nuclear deal status continues, two levels of measures would be predicted. At the first level, the main negotiating countries will do activities aimed at having the upper hand on the negotiation table in the future.

The second level belongs to regional states or players

who are indirectly affected by the deal that their activities could jeopardize the deal, non-proliferation principles, and stability of the region. In this vein, the more ambiguity to the deal, the more X will be enlarged to the region’s power equation, which amplifies self-help rules. Full operation of the 2015 nuclear deal can stop or return the tick of watch against the interests of states that follow nuclear ambitions or military programs in the region.

When the nuclear piece of the crisis domino stops falling, automatically other pieces will follow and the motivation of other pieces would face failure. Since consensus-oriented measure in the region has been rarely materialized, the deal can be tested in this way, and artificial taboos could be broken by addressing new phenomena.

Therefore, a multidimensional outcome for the region is a fantasy, and excessive idealism is doomed to fail. Small steps towards a solution and choosing a parcel of the crisis to be removed, are pragmatic. As security is a common concern of the region, deciding on the nuclear deal as a tested route is a doable assignment. If there is a molecule of will, there is a clear way.



SPORTS

12 countries to partake at International Athletic Imam Reza Cup Tournament

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — A total of 12 countries will participate at the first edition of the International Athletic Imam Reza Cup Tournament.

The competitions will be held in Mashhad, Iran on April 11 and 12.

International Athletic Imam Reza Cup Tournament, which serves as a qualification event for the Tokyo Olympic Games, will be held in honor of Iranian athlete Ali Baghbashashi.

Long-distance runner Baghbashashi competed in the 1952 and 1956 Summer Olympics and claimed a gold medal in the 5,000 meters event in 1951 Asian Games.



“We are planning to hold the competition annually. Until now, a total of 12 countries have shown readiness to take part in the event but we hope to hold the competition with more countries in the next years,” head of Athletic Federation of Islamic Republic of Iran (AAFIRI) Hashem Siami said in the press conference on Sunday.

The two-day competition will take place at the well-equipped Imam Reza Stadium.

The purpose of this competition is to encourage the young athletes to promote spiritual and physical health.

Gucci to leave PEC Zwolle at end of season

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian forward Reza Ghoochannejhad has been deemed surplus to requirements by Dutch football club PEC Zwolle.

The Eredivisie side are not going to continue with nine players and will not extend their contracts at the end of the season.

Mike van Duinen, Xavier Mous, Reza Ghoochannejhad, Thomas Lam, Virgil Misidjan, Jesper Drost, Clint Leemans, Marc-Olivier Doue and Nigel Bertrams are the players whose deals will not be renewed.

“I was going to leave the club at the end of the season. I had already said I would be here for two years. It’s time to play in a new team,” Gucci said in reaction to the news.

The 33-year-old forward had been previously linked with a move to the Iranian clubs for several times.

Ghoochannejhad started his football career at SC Heerenveen in 2005 and has also played at Belgian teams Sint-Truiden and Standard Liège.

Reza Ghoochannejhad was a member of Iran national football team in the 2014 FIFA World Cup and scored the only goal of Team Melli in the tournament against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He also was in Russia for the 2018 World Cup but remained an unused substitute in all three matches against Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

Iranian Paralympic athletes get COVID-19 vaccines

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — he Iranian Para athletes, who will participate at the Tokyo Paralympic Games, have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Para athletes rolled up their sleeves at the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled headquarters in Tehran on Sunday.

Iran plans to send 50 athletes to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games - more than half the size of the delegation that competed at Rio 2016.

The Paralympics are scheduled to take place in Tokyo from 24 Aug. 24 to Sept. 5.

This will mark the second time Tokyo has hosted the Paralympics, as they were first hosted there in 1964 alongside the 1964 Summer Olympics.

These Games will see the introduction of badminton and taekwondo to the Paralympic programme, replacing sailing and 7-a-side football.

In a press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry’s spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 11,680 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,932,074. She added that 1,650,569 patients have so far recovered, but 4,057 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 161 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 63,160, she added.

So far, 13,111,118 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Tehran derby to be held on May 12

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The date of Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams in the second half of the Iran Professional League (IPL) season has been revealed.

Persepolis will host Esteghlal on May 12 in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium. The first match of the season finished in a 2-2 draw at the Azadi Stadium. Persepolis and Esteghlal are both favorites to win the IPL title in the current season.

Persepolis sit top of the table while Esteghlal are third.

Jordan Burroughs out of Olympics

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Jordan Burroughs failed to qualify for the Olympics, after making all nine previous Olympic or world championships teams dating to the start of his senior career in 2011.

Kyle Dake ended Burroughs’ decade of dominance in American wrestling, making it to the Olympics for the first time with a sweep in the men’s freestyle 74kg finals at the US trials Saturday night.

“It just sets in that a run is over for me,” Burroughs, a 32-year-old who said before trials he planned to continue wrestling beyond 2021, said on NBCSN.

Burroughs gave no indication he planned to retire.

“It’s hard. It’ll be hard for a while. ... The future is still bright for me, although it just might not be in Tokyo,” he added.

Stab in the back

Saudi Arabia faces accusations of involvement in palace intrigue

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — High-profile figures in Jordan, including a member of the royal family and a longtime confidant of King Abdullah II, were arrested on Saturday in what appeared to be a nascent palace intrigue nipped in the bud.

Jordan state news agency, Petra, reported on Saturday night that Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, a member of the royal family, and Bassem Awadallah, a longtime confidant of King Abdullah II, were arrested for “security reasons” after a close security investigation.

Citing a security source, the news agency said an investigation into the issue was underway. It also said that other people were arrested along with the two high-profile figures but it stopped short of naming them.

The news came as a surprise to political circles in the region as it was the first time that a Jordanian Sharif (nobleman) was being arrested and as Sharif Hassan bin Zaid has not been an active figure in the public since he resigned his post as the head of the royal court in 2009.

Another high-profile figure - Hamzah bin Hussein - was claimed to be arrested. Unverified news reports claimed that bin Hussein, a half brother of King Abdullah, was arrested. But Jordanian Army Chief of Staff Major General Yousef Huneiti said “claims that have been published about his highness Prince Hamzah having been arrested are not true.”

According to Huneiti, Prince Hamzah had been asked to “stop movements and activities that are employed to target the security of Jordan and its stability.”

“Investigations are ongoing and the outcome will be announced with all due transparency,” he noted, adding, “All measures have been taken according to the law, and no one is above the law. Jordan’s security is above all considerations.”

In a video passed by his lawyer to the



BBC, Prince Hamzah denied reports of him being part of a foreign-backed conspiracy but described the ruling system as corrupt.

“[Jordan’s] well-being has been put second by a ruling system that has decided that its personal interests, financial interests, that its corruption is more important than the lives and dignity and future of the ten million people who live here,” he asserted.

Prince Hamzah also said that he was effectively under house arrest.

“Since then, a number of the people I know — or my friends — have been arrested, my security has been removed, and the internet and phone lines have been cut,” the prince lamented. “This is my last form of communication, satellite internet, that I have, and I have been informed by the company that they are instructed to cut it so it may be the last time I am able to communicate.”

Prince Hamzah was keen to deny any ties to a foreign-backed intrigue, a move that raised questions about whether some

accusations of conspiring with a foreign group or country were in the cards.

The Jordanian government has so far refrained from leveling the accusation of interference against a certain country but regional news media outlets were abuzz with reports of a potential Saudi and Emirati role in the Jordanian melodrama.

Awadallah and bin Zaid both had close connections to the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Despite having quickly expressed support for King Abdullah II, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman together with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed emerged as standing behind the failing plot against the Jordanian king.

Awadallah worked as Minister of Finance and Planning, and former head of the Jordanian Royal Court, then King Abdullah appointed him as an envoy to Saudi Arabia. In 2018, he was fired from his job and became close to bin Salman and one of the

people in charge of the Neom project. He also enjoyed close relations with the UAE, where he was appointed as a member of the Board of Directors of the Dubai School of Government in 2008, according to Al-Khaleej Al-Jadid.

The strong relationship between Awadallah and bin Salman is confirmed by the former’s appearance at the economic conference held by Saudi Arabia in October 2018, days after the killing of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Kingdom’s consulate in Istanbul. Awadallah also accompanied the Saudi crown prince during Eid prayers, Al-Khaleej Al-Jadid said.

Hassan bin Zaid, who holds Saudi citizenship alongside his Jordanian one, served as the Jordanian king’s envoy to Saudi Arabia, a position that was previously held by Awadallah.

Malik al-Othamna, a political analyst, believes that the Jordanian government’s move to arrest Awadallah is considered a strong message to Saudi Arabia, which now faces accusations of orchestrating the plot against a king long seen as a close ally of Riyadh.

Israeli media also reported that bin Salman and bin Zayed may have been implicated in the palace intrigue. Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth claimed that the Saudi crown prince and his counterpart in Abu Dhabi were aware of what happened in Jordan, according to the Alaraby Aljadeed.

Citing Jordanian sources, the newspaper said, “The Saudi Crown Prince and one of the leaders of one of the [Persian] Gulf states, apparently the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed, were aware of the attempted coup in Jordan.”

The Jordanian government has not yet pointed the finger at Saudi Arabia and the UAE but it said that Prince Hamzah was implicated in a foreign-backed plot against King Abdullah.

Iranian, Afghan diplomats discuss mutual cooperation at border point

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand has met with Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Mirwais Nab at the Dougharoun-Islam Qala border point, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

During the meeting on April 1, the two diplomats inspected operations to renovate and refurbish the border crossing between the two countries and discussed border affairs, including cross-border travel.

The two sides agreed that operations to rebuild and renovate the border crossing should continue full steam ahead without affecting border and legal issues, and that such issues should be reviewed and settled only by the two countries’ joint border commission, the statement continued.

They also exchanged views on the significance of development and a trade balance between the two countries



as well as the need to make efforts to regulate trips to and from the two countries by Iranian and Afghan nationals.

Among other topics discussed were the necessity of intensifying the campaign against human trafficking, drug

smuggling and international terrorism, facilitating aid operations by both sides in times of natural disasters and emergency, as well as other mutual issues.

In mid-February, a huge explosion occurred at the Dougharoun-Islam Qala border point. The explosion caused a massive fire but it did not affect a key crossing on the eastern border with Afghanistan, a local Iranian official said at the time. Videos and footages circulating on social media at the time of the explosion 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. At least 60 people were injured in the blaze.

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

No talks whatsoever with Americans in Vienna, Araghchi says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Seyed Abbas Araghchi has ruled out any kind of talks with the United States in the upcoming meeting of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal’s signatories in Vienna.

The parties to the Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), are expected to hold an important meeting in Vienna on Tuesday. The meeting was arranged during the Friday meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, which was held virtually.

“We will have no direct or indirect talks with the Americans in Vienna. We will negotiate with the Joint Commission and the P4+1 and will announce our demand and condition for returning to compliance with the JCPOA. We demand that the United States first fulfill all of its obligations and lift all the sanctions it has imposed, and then we will verify and return,” Araghchi said in remarks to Iran state TV.

He said the Vienna talks will be purely technical, implicitly rejecting political talks with the U.S.

“Our talks with the P4+1 in Vienna will be completely technical and they will be about the sanctions that should be lifted, the measures that should be done and the sequencing of what Americans should do. There must be verification,” the deputy foreign minister pointed out.

Following the Friday meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, there has been a wave of speculation about possible direct talks between Iran and the U.S. in the next meeting in Vienna as many Western news media outlets broke the news that U.S. officials will be in Vienna at the time of the Tuesday meeting.

The U.S. confirmed that it will participate in the Vienna meeting and said it was open to holding direct talks with Iran.

“These remain early days, and we don’t anticipate an immediate breakthrough as there will be difficult discussions ahead. But we believe this is a healthy step forward,” U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said on Friday of the meeting in Vienna.

“We do not anticipate presently that there will be direct talks between the Unit-

ed States and Iran through this process, though the United States remains open to them,” he added.

However, Iran insisted that there will be no meeting with the U.S. in Vienna.

“The Vienna meeting which will be attended by the Iranian delegation is a meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission aimed at discussing the U.S. possible return to the nuclear deal, and will be attended only by the current parties to the JCPOA. The U.S. will not be present at any meeting attended by Iran, including the meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, and that is definite,” Araghchi said in a statement on Friday shortly after the JCPOA Joint Commission.

He said it is up to other JCPOA parties if they would like to hold bilateral or multilateral consultations with the U.S. regarding the measures it must take, either in Vienna or in any other place.

“That is something which has happened before,” Araghchi said.

“The Iranian delegation, however, will not hold negotiations with the American delegation at any level,” he emphasized.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also ruled out any prospect for a meeting between Iran and the U.S.

“At virtual JCPOA JC meeting, Iran & EU/E3+2 agreed to resume in-person talks in Vienna next Tues. Aim: Rapidly finalize sanction-lifting & nuclear measures for choreographed removal of all sanctions, followed by Iran ceasing remedial measures. No Iran-US meeting. Unnecessary,” the chief Iranian

diplomat tweeted on Friday.

Iran has said there is no need for new negotiations over the U.S. return to the nuclear deal. Moreover, Iran has made it clear that any step by Iran to resume full compliance with the JCPOA would require the U.S. to lift all sanctions first.

Following the Friday meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, an informed source told Press TV that the only way the United States could see Iran stop its counter-measures under the 2015 nuclear deal is for Washington to lift all the sanctions it imposed on the Islamic Republic in the aftermath of its withdrawal from the agreement some three years ago.

The source referred to the negotiations earlier on Friday within the framework of the joint commission of the parties to the deal and said Iran, during the session, emphasized the necessity of a “consistent removal” of all the U.S. sanctions and its verification before Tehran’s return to full compliance.

The source added that Iran will accept nothing from the JCPOA Joint Commission but the removal of all the sanctions by the United States. According to the source, in Friday’s meeting, the consensus in Iran on the issue was emphasized.

Iran also rejected any gradual lifting of U.S. sanctions. Araghchi said on Sunday that Iran will not accept any step-by-step process for lifting the sanctions.

“We don’t have and don’t accept any step-by-step offer and initiative. In our view, there exists only one step according to which the U.S. must lift all the sanctions that were imposed, reimposed or relabeled under Trump. Ant these [sanctions] should be identified and the U.S. must lift them. We will verify and then return to our commitments,” Araghchi noted.

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Zanganeh outlines oil ministry’s major plans for current year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has announced his ministry’s programs for realizing the current Iranian calendar year’s (started on March 21) motto which is “Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles.”

Zanganeh made the announcement on Saturday during a meeting with the deputies of the country’s four major oil and gas industry companies including National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), National Petrochemical Company (NPC), and National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC).

In this meeting, the minister addressed the most important programs and goals for materializing this year’s slogan and emphasized: “The main goal [of these programs] is to focus on issues and problems that can be addressed and solved within the oil industry.”



The official mentioned a letter that he had written to the heads of the four major companies regarding the main plans for the current year, saying: “I expressed my views on the subject and asked the heads of the four companies to draft a document to determine the measures that should be taken in the months to come.”

Zanganeh further mentioned the great progress made in the oil industry during the previous year, and noted that sanctions were a determining factor that had a strong impact on the plans and programs of the Oil Ministry.

Elsewhere in the meeting, Deputy Oil Minister for Planning Houshang Falahatian briefed the attendees on the Oil Ministry’s programs for the current year.

According to Falahatian, the oil industry’s executive plans for the current year are prepared with a focus on the three sectors of production, support, and barriers in order to fulfill the motto of the year.

Maintaining and increasing oil production, managing subsidiaries, manufacturing in-house equipment, and goods required by the oil, gas, petrochemical, and refining industries, reducing paperwork and eliminating unnecessary regulations in the oil industry, optimizing and upgrading existing refineries, developing downstream oil and petrochemical industries, reducing gas consumption, increasing the production capacity of natural gas, development of the petrochemical industry and accelerating the implementation of projects related to the second and third leaps of petrochemical industry were among the major goals that the ministry has put on the agenda for the current year.

Solar farms’ installed capacity stands at nearly 900MW

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s installed capacity of solar farms stands at nearly 900 megawatts (MW), according to the Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

Highlighting that many good strides have been taken in this field in the country over the recent years, the minister said that the significant increase in the capacity of the country’s power plants, which is the result of the efforts of domestic experts, can meet all the electricity needs of the country, while boosting Iran’s electricity export.

The share of solar power plants in Iran’s renewable electricity generation capacity has reached 49 percent, according to the data released by Iran’s Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA).



Renewables, including hydropower, account for seven percent of Iran’s total energy generation, versus natural gas’s 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next four years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

According to SATBA, the number of small-scale solar power plants across the country which are used by households or small industries is also increasing noticeably as Iranian households and small industries are embracing the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

Iran is also planning on expanding its presence in the region’s renewable energy market.

According to the energy minister, the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a significant role in developing the region’s market for such energies.

“Relying on the high potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, etc., the Energy Ministry has planned good measures in order to implement new policies for creating positive changes in the development of the country’s renewable energy sector,” the minister said.

Back in December 2020, Mohammad Satakin, who heads Iran’s Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), said the capacity of the country’s renewable power plants was going to reach 1,000 MW (one gigawatt) by the end of the current government’s incumbency (August 2021).

Iran-China strategic partnership: a roadmap for mutual prosperity

→ 1 Deal or agreement

The first and most important issue that should be taken into consideration with regard to the Iran-China comprehensive agreement is the fact that it is not a “deal” in the sense of an economic or political contract, this means that no price or value has been set in any aspects of the agreement and no strict obligations are defined.

In other words, the agreement is just a roadmap that outlines the framework of the two countries’ cooperation in various areas over the next 25 years.

Benefits for Iran

Regarding the advantages of this accord for Iran, the first issue would be the huge impact that the strategic accord can have on Iran’s political stance during the nuclear talks with world powers.

In a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi prior to the signing ceremony in Tehran, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said: “Cooperation between the two countries is very important for the implementation of the nuclear accord and the fulfillment of obligations by European countries.”

So clearly the U.S. whose interests are on the line here would be against Iran forging alliance with other world powers like China.

The agreement which is expected to include Chinese investments in Iran in a variety of sectors including oil, gas, petrochemical, renewables and energy infrastructure will also bring the Islamic Republic into China’s Belt and Road Initiative, a multi-trillion-dollar



infrastructure scheme intended to stretch from East Asia to Europe; this means that Iran’s political and strategic stance in the region will become stronger.

Another significant aspect of the accord is its focus on the promotion and development of the cooperation between the two countries’ private sectors.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said earlier that the agreement was a “road map” for trade and economic and transportation cooperation, with a special focus on both countries’ private sectors.

Considering the fact that currently a lot of the Iranian private sector’s problems are

due to the lack of funding for productive projects, Chinese investment in such areas could be a great opportunity for Iran’s productive sector to thrive.

In this regard, Ali Shams Ardakani, IC-CIMA’s chairman of the Macroeconomics Committee, told the Tehran Times that Iran-China accord is a great opportunity for Iran to merge local and foreign investments in order to rise among the world’s top economies.

According to Ardakani, one of the most important issues that should be taken into consideration while assessing the benefits or disadvantages of the strategic accord with

China is the quality of the deals that are going to be signed in the future under the framework of this comprehensive agreement.

“For analyzing different aspects of the accord, we must analyze the conditions based on which the agreements concluded under this comprehensive document will be signed,” he said.

“If these contracts lead to the development of the country’s infrastructure and increase investment in productive areas, they should be supported by the government and people.”

Ardakani suggested that a headquarter comprising of high-ranking national entities should be established in order to make the necessary decisions and choices with regard to the companies and organizations that are going to be partnered up with the Chinese side in the future.

The ICCIMA board member believes that the accord should not become a tool for political parties inside the country and the government’s focus should be merely on guarding the national interests.

Also, according to the Head of ICCIMA’s Internal Trade Committee Kaveh Zargaran, China can be a financial channel through which Iranian companies could conduct business despite the U.S. sanctions.

In the political sense too, this agreement is drafted with the aim of promoting regional and international peace, stability, and development, and therefore is not intended to oppose any third party or to interfere in the affairs of any other country.

Annual natural gas consumption rises 8%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)’s Dispatching Department said the country’s natural gas consumption in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) increased eight percent compared to the preceding year (1398).

Some 233 billion cubic meters of natural gas was consumed in the country during the previous year while the figure stood at 216 billion cubic meters in 1398, IRNA reported, quoting Mohammadreza Jolaei as saying.

According to Jolaei, of the total gas consumption in the previous year, 122 billion cubic meters was consumed by domestic, commercial, and non-major industries, 24 billion cubic meters was the share of major industries and 66 billion cubic meters was allocated to power plants.

The official noted that during the past year, the consumption by domestic sector and power plants hit new record highs but NIGC managed to prevent any major blackouts even during the peak consumption periods.

The country’s power plants received an average of 167 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas per day in 1398, which



reached 181 million cubic meters per day in the previous year, indicating a 5.1 billion increase in the power plants’ gas consumption.

According to Julaei, some 262 billion cubic meters of gas was injected into the national gas network in the previous

Production of 8 major minerals, mining industry products up 54%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The production of eight major minerals and mining industry products has increased by an average of 54 percent in Iran in the first 11 months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020-February 18, 2021), the latest data released by Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry show.

Based on the mentioned data, during the mentioned period, production of crude steel and steel products, copper cathode, aluminum ingot, coal concentrate, glass containers, and cement increased compared to the same period in 1398.

According to the Industry Mining, and Trade Ministry, the mining sector accounted for 25 percent of the country’s non-oil revenues in the Iranian calendar year 1398.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries in the world in which 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world’s largest deposits of copper,



zinc, and iron; so there are numerous large, medium, and small-sized mines across the country that are being operated by the government or the private sector.

So, the country has set a new target for further development of its mining sector as the country’s economy is moving away from oil toward becoming oil-independent.

Head of the explorations department of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries

Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced the identification of 1,700 new promising mineral zones across the country.

According to Ali Asgharzadeh, the mentioned regions cover a total area of 110,080 square kilometers.

The official noted that IMIDRO carried out reconnaissance and prospecting operations on over 478,343 square kilometers of land during the previous Iranian calendar year, of which 66,000 square kilometers have been handed over to the private sector to be explored.

Noting that the necessary licenses for exploration must be issued for IMIDRO by the Industry, Mining and Trade Departments of the provinces in which the mines are located, Asgharzadeh said: “So far, IMIDRO has applied for exploration licenses for 492 regions with an area of 32,120 square kilometers.”

“Some 63 exploration licenses for various

minerals such as lead and zinc, gold, copper, iron, coal, brine, etc. have been issued for IMIDRO and its subsidiaries, and exploration operations are being pursued in licensed areas,” he said.

“Also, licensing processes are underway for 30 zones, and discovery certificates have been issued for four regions,” he added.

Back in May 2020, the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry had signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) with IMIDRO and the Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) for expansion of the country’s mining sector.

Development of cooperation in the fields of exploration, extraction, and processing of minerals, utilization of capacities, experiences, and abilities of each sector, and attracting more investment from the country’s private sector and cooperatives in this industry were some of the main goals of the signed agreement.

Commodities worth \$200m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 367,605 tons of products worth \$200 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

According to a report by the IME’s International Affairs and Public Relations Department, the exchange sold on its mineral and industrial trading floor, 195,158 tons of various types of commodities valued at nearly \$99 million.

Commodities traded on this floor were 194,528 tons of steel and 630 tons of aluminum.

Also, within this week, the IME sold on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor,



172,049 tons of commodities with a trading value of \$103 million.

Items sold on this floor included 36,100 tons of vacuum bottom, 41,971 tons of bitumen, 35,155 tons of polymeric products, 31,941 tons of chemicals, 25,000 tons of lube cut, 1,346 tons of base oil and 50 tons of sulfur.

Moreover, the IME’ side market saw trade of 398 tons of commodities within the same week.

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).

TEDPIX drops 13,000 points on Sunday

index fell 22,938 points.

TEDPIX had risen eight percent in the last week of the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

The index increased 101,000 points to 1.307 million in that week.

After several weeks of decline, growth finally returned to the TSE, Iran’s major stock exchange, as TEDPIX rose 2.4 percent during the last week of February.

Iranian Capital Market Analyst Soheil Kolahchi believes the stock market is not going to go through many ups and downs over the next six months and the market is expected to follow a stable trend.

“In the coming months, the market will not fall heavily, but we also can’t expect the index to enter an uptrend soon,” Kolahchi told IRNA last month. Pointing to the recent decline in the

Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) main index, the expert said: “The stock market is in a good condition both technically and fundamentally, but despite the positive measures that the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has put on the agenda to improve the market, it is still following a downward trend; and this has increased the shareholders’ skepticism and anxiety.”

When democracy lacks morality

By Mohammad Mazhari

Capitol Hill is witnessing sad days after an attack on the U.S. Capitol complex in Washington DC which has left one police officer dead and another injured.

This incident recalls storming Capitol building just few days before Joe Biden's inauguration, a day is known as dark Wednesday.

It was not only the Wednesday that turned to a debacle but the U.S. policies over the last decades disappointed many people all around the world who used to look at the country as a dreamland.

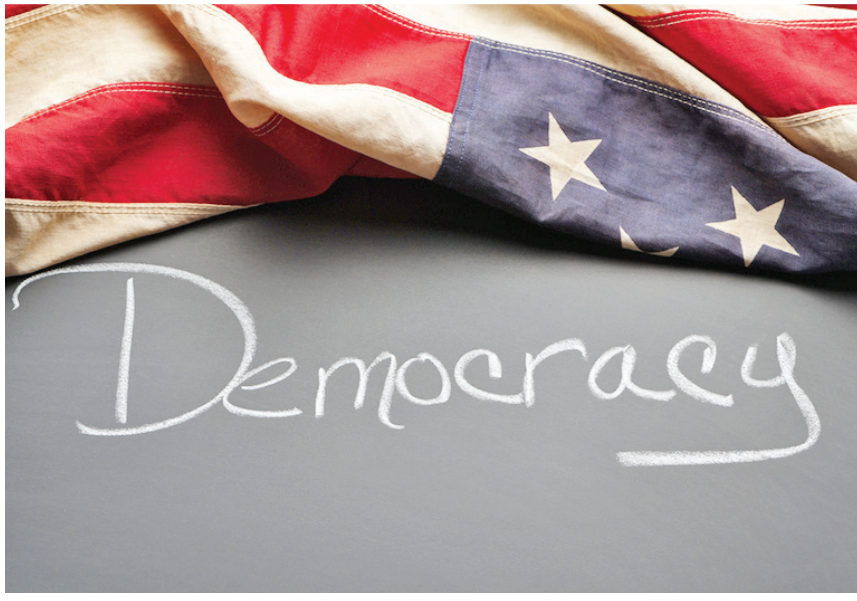
Though Donald Trump was a symptom not a cause, approaches followed by former president have not only ruined Washington's reputation and credibility but also called into question the principle of modern democracy in the United States.

Trump came to power through American democracy, which has always been claiming it represents a model of good governance in the world. But Trump showed how impulsive decisions could push American democracy into abyss, and how the country is at risk by semi-Hitlers.

Though Adolf Hitler is dead, yet the world is witnessing lunatic leaders who think like him.

Decades after the fall of the Third Reich, one of the most important issues in modern political history is to find out how Hitler came to power in a democratic political system. Hitler took the reins of power through a democratic process, but he destroyed all those democratic institutions in Germany.

The questions are: Is uncontrolled democracy is sufficient to provide greater human well-being and security? Do countries that claim democracy in the world necessarily offer a better life for their citizens? Apart from domestic policy, have all democratic states follow



Democracy certainly helps us to hold governments more responsible, but cannot guarantee accountability. A responsible government must be democratic, but a democratic government is not necessarily accountable.

sanity and justice in their foreign policy?

Israel and its apartheid policies against the Palestinians can be a good example; and of course, American foreign policy is another instance.

In recent decades, the United States has not only been involved in futile wars that have had no result other than instability and insecurity in the Middle East, it has also consolidated its ties with the tyrannical regimes in the region. Trump used to talk about his "favorite dictators".

Acknowledging these contradictions as a reality and part of international

politics may help us to deal with immoral policies in democratic governments as a step towards responsible governance.

Democracy certainly helps us to hold governments more responsible, but cannot guarantee accountability. A responsible government must be democratic, but a democratic government is not necessarily accountable.

Being unrestricted, relying on monetary cartels and pure capitalism rather than human rights may undermine democracy and mislead the masses, as we have seen in right-wing populist democracies.

It seems that the U.S. needs to prioritize repairing its value system before the sanctification of democracy; ethical rules and human rights must be considered as sacred as a democracy so that the elected person in a democratic country cannot decide impulsively with regard to domestic foreign policy matters; he won't be free to withdraw his country from the international treaties overnight.

This is a completely irresponsible way of governance when you disregard fundamental values. This is a very example of an irresponsible democracy. So, not only the governments must be encouraged to be democratic, but democracy must be responsible based on morality and human values.

Political systems always need to be updated and reevaluated at least every decade to find their defects. For instance, today many experts consider the electoral college an outdated undemocratic mechanism that is partly rooted in slavery.

Likewise, absolute power in the hands of democratically elected president can act against democracy and peace.

Democracy also needs boundaries drawn by morality and fundamental human rights. Suppose people of a country vote for the atomic bombing of a neighboring country. Obviously, this would be a violation of human rights.

Then respecting valuable experiences of the past is a must, especially when it comes to democracy as one of the most important achievements of human rationality. But we must also learn from our mistakes.

Our democracies are supposed to serve peace, equality, and development, regardless of nationality, religion, or ethnicity.

Undoubtedly, something is wrong when a democracy helps apartheid policy or wages war.

Mohammad Mazhari is an Iranian journalist & political analyst.

The second coming of Ben-Gurion

→ 1 It was intended as a new window for the return of the talks over finding an alternative to the Suez Canal.

In principle, that the accident was premeditated is a fair assumption. In an article I previously published on the Al-Ahed website, I talked about Israel's attempt to control and expand access to the gates of the water routes to the Mediterranean through the Abraham Accords. It was not a peace agreement. Rather, it was actually an economic treaty with Morocco, the Emirates, and Sudan. Once Oman signs it, Israel will be able to control the water routes from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Persian Gulf, and finally control the Red Sea through the upcoming Ben-Gurion Canal, which will provide enormous income for Israel.

Firstly, Israel and the United States are in dire need of the project to compensate for the severe economic contraction due to Coronavirus pandemic and unstable conditions. The treaties were signed between Israel and the Arab countries so as to guarantee Israel's political and economic stability, and to maintain its presence in the region.

And secondly, the project is driven by the need to restrain the rise of the economic power of China, and to hold back its ongoing project known as "One Road, One Belt". The Chinese project aims to build a train line that starts from the provinces of China in the west towards West Asia and secure water routes around the world. It is a multi-billion-dollar investment project. For example, before the Corona pandemic, several parties in Lebanon hosted the Chinese ambassador, who explained the benefits of the project, which will employ tens of thousands of workers, employees and specialists along the train line, which will be used mainly to transport goods between China and Europe. Therefore, the U.S. is trying to hamper the Chinese trade route by creating an alternative route to compete with. So, the new stage of struggle will witness an economic war aiming to control sea ports and global trade routes.

This American-Israeli project has overlapped with joining several agreements and draft agreements. For example, the United States and the United Arab Emirates have joined the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum as observers. And starting Monday, March 29th, the Military Cooperation Agreement between Jordan and the United States will take effect, which probably aims to find an alternative place for the American forces outside Iraq and Syria.



Thirdly, preparations are underway for the implementation of the New Levant Project, which extends from Iraq to Jordan to Palestine across the Arabian Peninsula to the Sinai Desert. The project aims to create a new trade route that does not pass-through Syria and Lebanon, but rather through the New Levant lands extending from the Persian Gulf in the south to the Mediterranean in the north, and through it will pass new oil and gas pipelines from Iraq to Jordan, which will replace the Tabline line.

The New Levant project might forfeit Syria's geostrategic importance for the Americans as one of the most important global and historical trade lines between the north and the south throughout history. However, the project lost its momentum at this stage because of Israel's drive to be part of it, which forced the Iraqi government to cease working on it.

The secrecy of the canal project's memorandum was revealed in 1994. It was waiting in the drawers for new conditions to revive it. It seems that the capsizing of the ship was the perfect plan. The capsizing oddly coincided with the signing of the 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership between Iran and China. The current events are evidence that the need to change alliances has become inevitable in the region. This explains the economic pressure on Syria and Lebanon and the continued decline in the price of lira in the sister countries. The Americans hoped that through sanctions they would impose conditions for reconciliations with "Israel", impose the demarcation of borders between the Palestinian and Lebanese boarders to the best interest of Israel, and prevent Hezbollah and its allies from participating in the coming government.

Eventually, the U.S. would have the upper hand to prevent the Chinese route from reaching its ultimate destination to the Mediterranean Sea. However, the reasons behind Biden's escalating tone towards China and Syria were revealed once Iran and China signed the document for cooperation. The protocol also revealed the hidden options Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah spoke of in his speech on the 18th of March.

The developments in the region may change the course of the Syrian crisis. The "One Belt and One Road" project will not achieve its real success until it reaches the port of Latakia, or/and the port of Tripoli, if the Lebanese desire, in exchange for the ports of Haifa and Ashkelon in Palestine. However, this cannot be achieved as long as Syria is still fighting its new independence war against America and Turkey. Yet, the coming of the Chinese dragon to Iran may mark a new era. Syria constitutes one of the main disputes between China and the United States. It seems that the withdrawal of the latter to Jordan under the new military cooperation agreement has become imposed by the new coming reality. The Americans can manage from there any new conflicts in the region or prolong the life of the crisis and thus obstruct the Chinese project without any direct clashes.

The construction of Ben-Gurion Canal may take several years. However, the project is now put into action. Thanks to "Ever Given" capsizing, the canal building is now scheduled around May 2021. It is clear now who is the main beneficiary of this calamity, which hit one of the most important global navigation points, namely the Suez Canal.

Normalization agreements were primarily aimed to expand Israeli influence over waterways. The disastrous consequences on the region are starting to be unwrapped. The major target is going to be Egypt. Egypt's revenue from the Suez Canal is estimated to be 8 billion dollars. Once Ben-Gurion is activated it will drop into 4 billion dollars. Egypt cannot economically tolerate the marginalization of the role of the Suez Canal as one of the most important sources of its national income, especially after the completion of the construction of the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia. Confinement of the Nile water behind the water scarcity will cause the Egyptians to starve. It will have disastrous consequences on Egypt and Europe. Since the latter will receive most of the Egyptian immigrants; however, this is another story to be told.

Iraqi resistance groups reject talks with U.S., demand full withdrawal

A prominent Iraqi anti-terror group has reacted to the upcoming round of so-called strategic talks between Baghdad and Washington, whose key agenda item is reportedly the U.S. combat deployment, emphasizing that armed resistance and operations against American occupation forces will continue until they are fully removed from the Arab country.

"The message that the occupying United States, its allies, supporters and subordinates need to comprehend is that the resistance is determined to extend its operations until the occupiers leave, and close all their military bases throughout Iraq, including in Kurdistan region," Jawad al-Talibawi, a spokesman for Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq movement, which is part of the Popular Mobilization Units, wrote in a post published on his Twitter page on Saturday.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki lately said that the United States would engage in a "strategic dialogue" with Iraq this month.

according to Press TV, the talks, which began last June under the administration of former U.S. president Donald Trump, would be the first under President Joe Biden. On the agenda is an array of issues, primarily the presence of U.S. military forces on Iraqi soil.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has told reporters he is approaching dialogue with Washington as a chance to push for the withdrawal of American troops.

Kata'ib Hezbollah, another Iraqi anti-terror group, dismissed the upcoming Iraq-U.S. talks, which are scheduled for next week, as "futile and worthless."

Jordan prince 'under house arrest' amid security crackdown

The former crown prince of Jordan says he has been confined to his house and his communications have been restricted amid an ongoing crackdown on alleged coup plotters.

In a six-minute video provided to the BBC by his lawyer on Saturday, Prince Hamzah bin Hussein, the half-brother of King Abdullah II, said he and his family have been placed under house arrest in his palace outside Amman and all his staff have been arrested.

He denied being part of "any conspiracy, or nefarious organization or foreign-backed group," accusing the kingdom's ruling system of corruption, incompetence and harassment.

"I had a visit from chief of general staff of the Jordanian armed forces this morning in which he informed me that I was not allowed to go out, to communicate with people or to meet with them because in the meetings that I had been present in or on social media relating to visits that I had made, there had been criticism of the government or the king," he said.

"Since then a number of... my friends have been arrested, my security has been removed and the internet and phone lines have been cut. This is my last communication, satellite internet that I have."

U.S. biggest violator of human rights around the world: Syria

Syria says the United States' latest annual report on human rights around the world is based on "delusions and lies" and represents the "height of hypocrisy" as Washington itself is the largest rights violator both inside and outside its borders.

Earlier this week, the U.S. State Department released the 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

On release of the report, Secretary of State Antony Blinken painted a grave picture of the deterioration of human rights in multiple countries and regions throughout the world, including in Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, China, Iran and Syria.

Regarding Syria, the report accused the government of President Bashar al-Assad of "atrocities" against the Syrian people. "Assad's atrocities against the people of Syria continued unabated, and this year marks ten years of their struggles to live in dignity and freedom," it claimed.

In a statement on Saturday, Syrian Foreign and Expatriates Ministry dismissed the allegations, saying they have all been taken from reports by terrorist organizations and their supporters and financiers in the region and beyond.

According to Press TV, the people in Syria are suffering in their food, health, and various aspects of life as a result of the inhumane economic blockade that has been imposed by the West with the aim of starving and impoverishing the nation, the statement added.

The ministry further accused Washington of hypocrisy over claims that human rights are a priority in its foreign policy.

Resistance News

IOF arrests child, other Palestinians in West Bank and Jerusalem

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**— Israeli occupation forces (IOF) launched an arrest campaign on Saturday night and at dawn Sunday in various areas of the West Bank and Jerusalem.

In Nablus, the IOF soldiers raided the eastern town of Lubban, south of Nablus, and were deployed in its neighborhoods.

IOF arrested Shaher Hanani after breaking into his place of work in the industrial zone in Beit Furik town, east of Nablus.

In Jenin, IOF stormed Ya'bad town, southwest of Jenin, and arrested Majd Atatreh while he was passing through an Israeli military checkpoint near Ya'bad.

In Occupied Jerusalem, the Israeli police stormed Hizma town, northeast of Jerusalem, and clashes erupted with the townspeople. IOF fired stun grenades and tear gas canisters at the residents.

Meanwhile, local sources reported that the occupation police shot and wounded a young Palestinian from Qatana town and arrested him near the separation wall in Khirbet Umm al-Lahim, northwest of Jerusalem.

On Saturday evening, eyewitness said that the Israeli police stationed near the Separation Wall in Khirbet Umm al-Lahm, Qatna, fired live bullets at Yaqoub al-Faqih, 20. He was injured in his foot and was left bleeding before arresting him.

Two rockets hit near Iraq airbase hosting U.S. soldiers

Two rockets hit near an Iraqi airbase hosting U.S. soldiers north of Baghdad on Sunday, a security source told AFP.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the strike, which caused no casualties or property damage.

Sunday's was the 14th attack against American interests -- including troops, the Baghdad embassy or Iraqi supply convoys to foreign forces -- since US President Joe Biden took office in January.

The leader of Iraqi anti-terror movement Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq has said the armed resistance against American forces occupying Iraq will continue until they are fully

removed from the Arab country.

"As resistance groups, we have taken up and will continue to take up arms to destroy any U.S. or U.S. military presence on Iraqi soil," Qais Khazali said.

"There is no room for American military bases, neither in al-Assad nor in al-Harir," he said. "This is the decision and promise of the men of resistance."

Iraqi lawmakers, last year, approved a bill requiring the Baghdad government to end the presence of all foreign military forces in the Arab country.


The Iraqi MPs' decision came two days after the high-profile assassina-

tion of top Iranian and Iraqi anti-terror commanders -- General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of Iraq's PMU -- near Baghdad airport in a drone strike authorized by former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Anti-American sentiments rose sharply following the assassination of the two top commanders, who played a major role in the defeat of the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq. It is estimated that there are currently 2,500 American troops in Iraq.



First Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 99/103-80/03

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender:
Broadcasting the TV networks of English iFilm , Press TV and Hispan TV on Galaxy 19 for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
From **Tuesday 06 April 2021 (1400/01/17)** until **Saturday 10 April 2021 (1400/01/21)** by **02:00 p.m** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document:
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept., 4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex, Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave, Tehran, Iran

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 62640 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 15660000000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than **12:00 p.m. on Tuesday 11 of May 2021 (1400/02/21)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:
The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes on **Wednesday 12 of May 2021 (1400/02/22)** at **10:00 a.m** in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

Time and place of opening Envelopes:
The envelopes A of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened on **Sunday 16 May 2021 at 03:00 p.m (1400/02/26)** in the office of Financial Vice President .In case of complete content in the envelopes A the envelopes of B and C of eligible participants will be opened at the same time and place.
The participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.
Fore more information please see :
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and <http://iets.mporg.ir/> Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Charity foundation supports treatment of 7,000 infertile couples

→ 1 Intrauterine insemination (IUI), a fertility treatment that involves placing sperm inside a woman's uterus to facilitate fertilization, In vitro fertilization (IVF), a process of fertilization where an egg is combined with sperm outside the body, in vitro ("in glass"), intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), an in vitro fertilization procedure in which a single sperm cell is injected directly into the cytoplasm of an egg, as well as medications, etc. to treat infertility are offered to these couples.

Moreover, in addition to infertility treatment costs the hospital birth costs are covered by the Barekat insurance.

Infertile couples can refer to Barekat insurance agents in local centers in all provinces nationwide to use the services free of charge.

Population growth policies

Some 14 policies to support childbearing and the family were announced by the Leader in [the Iranian calendar year] 1389 (March 2014-March 2015) when he stressed that social, cultural, and economic development should be done in accordance with these general policies to support families.

The policies address the need to increase the population and the various dimensions of it, including childbearing, facilitating marriage and strengthening the family, reproductive health, promoting the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle, empowering young people, honoring the elderly, and the environment, which can lead to an increase in the quantity and



quality of the population if it is timely and continuous implemented.

On March 15, the Majlis (Iranian Parliament) approved the implementation of a population growth and family support plan for 7 years to change the declining trend of childbearing.

Demographic issues

The fertility rate in Iran has been declining over the past eight years, the lowest of which was related to the past [Iranian calendar]

year (March 2019-March 2020) with a birth rate of 1.2, according to the data recently published by the Statistics Center.

The total fertility rate in simple terms refers to the total number of children born or likely to be born to a woman in her lifetime if she were subject to the prevailing rate of age-specific fertility in the population.

According to the data released by the National Organization for Civil Registration, the number of births registered during the [Iranian

calendar] year 1390 (March 2011-March 2012) was equal to 1,382,118, which increased to 1,528,053 births in the [Iranian calendar] year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017).

However, the number of births in the whole country faced a downtrend over the past three years, as registered births decreased to 1,196,135 over the past [Iranian calendar] year; a difference of roughly over 120,000 to 16,000 per year.

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) wrote in an article in July 2020 that the fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history.

Melinda Gates, an American philanthropist and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, also wrote on her Twitter account that "The fastest decrease in the rate of childbearing per woman in the history of the world has happened in Iran!"

Seyed Hamed Barakati, deputy health minister for family and school population, said last year that Iran's population growth rate has decreased to less than one percent for the first time over the past four decades.

At the beginning of the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), the country's population grew by 2.5 percent annually, however, suddenly, population growth reached about 1.5 percent in the 1980s, he highlighted.

Nanotech increasing pace of development in Iran

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Nanotechnology's trend of development is growing in Iran, as the number of nanoproducts and equipment developed in the previous [Iranian calendar] year (March 20) increased to 750, compared with 647 a year before.

Some 223 product manufacturing companies and 59 equipment manufacturing companies are active in the field of nanotechnology and by the end of last year, which developed a total of 750 products and equipment.

Of the 750 products and equipment registered in the nanotechnology product database, 535 were related to nano-products and 215 were related to nano-equipment, both of which have experienced a growing trend over the past few years, although nano-products have grown more significantly.

The field of "civil engineering and construction" with 20 percent had the largest share among nano products and equipment, followed by "medicine, health" and "industrial services and supplies" each with 13 percent.

Iran among five pioneers of nanotechnology

Iran has been introduced as the 4th leading country in the world in the field of nanotechnology, publishing 11,546 scientific articles in 2020.

The country held a 6 percent share of the world's total

nanotechnology articles, according to StatNano's monthly evaluation accomplished in WoS databases.

Iran ranked 43rd among the 100 most vibrant clusters of science and technology (S&T) worldwide for the third consecutive year, according to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020 report.

The country experienced a three-level improvement compared to 2019.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, has said that Iran is playing the leading role in the region in the fields of fintech, ICT, stem cell, aerospace, and is unrivaled in artificial intelligence.

Iranian nanotechnology companies have increased sales by 100 percent over the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020), and it is predicted that their revenue will reach up to 80 trillion rials (nearly \$1.9 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials), Sattari announced.

Knowledge-based companies

Currently, over 5,700 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in,



leading to import reduction.

Sattari told the Tehran Times in October 2020 that "U.S. sanctions caused exports of knowledge-based companies to decline three years ago, however, it has returned to growth and is projected to reach the pre-sanctions level of more than \$1 billion by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2021).

Fortunately, last year, companies achieved a record sale of 1.2 quadrillion rials (nearly \$28.5 billion), which is expected to increase by 40 percent this year."

Over 81,000 classrooms built in 8 years

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Some 81,500 classrooms have been constructed over the past 8 years across the country, Mehroollah Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, has said.

The number of old classrooms in need of reconstruction and renovation has been reduced from 30 percent to 19.5 percent over the past four years, he said.

So far, about 280,000 classrooms have been retrofitted to meet the safety standards, he added, ILNA reported on Sunday.

Over the past 8 years, school building



benefactors donated 85 trillion rials (nearly \$2 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to construct classrooms nationwide, he also noted.

The national budget bill for the next [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021-March 2022) has foreseen a significant rise for the renovation and retrofit of schools compared to previous years, as a total of 86 trillion rials (nearly \$2 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) was proposed for school renovation in the budget bill.

Rakhshanimehr said in August 2020 that some 30 percent of the country's schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors; there are 450 school-building charities in Iran.

Iran has many school-building benefactors

amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

A total of 36 trillion rials (nearly \$857 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to renovate the schools nationwide over the past 8 years, Seyed Mohammad-Ali Afshani, former head of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said on Saturday.

There are some 107,000 schools nationwide with 530,000 classes, 160,000 of which are dilapidated, not meeting safety standards, accounting for 30 percent of the schools nationwide.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Medical waste disposal become possible using plasma technology in Iran

Using plasma gasification, Iranian researchers managed to dispose medical wastes and disassemble all its hazardous gases by filters, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Considering numerous problems encountered in medical and urban waste management in the country, we decided to employ high technology to overcome them, Mahmood Quran-Nevis, an official with Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has said.

He went on to add that currently, autoclaves are used as waste disposal facilities in hospitals; the temperature of the autoclave is 130 degrees and most of the bacteria are not killed and subsequently they can contribute to various environmental problems.

Referring to the foreign countries reluctance to provide us with high technology machines, he noted that regarding the importance of medical waste disposal and disinfection, we managed to domestically produce the necessary equipment needed for healthcare waste treatment and disposal.

امحای زباله‌های بیمارستانی با کمک فناوری پلاسما

محققان کشورمان با بهره‌گیری از فناوری پلاسما موفق شدند ضمن امحای تمام زباله‌ها، گازهای خطرناک آن را توسط فیلتری جداسازی کنند.

محمود قرآن نویسن مجری طرح امحای زباله‌های بیمارستانی به روش پلاسما گفت: با توجه به مشکلات زیادی که در حوزه زباله‌های بیمارستانی و شهری در کشور وجود داشت، به این نتیجه رسیدیم که باید این مشکل را از طریق فناوری «های تک» حل کنیم.

وی افزود: در حال حاضر در بیمارستان‌ها برای امحای زباله از اتوکلاوها استفاده می‌شود که دمای حرارت این اتوکلاوها ۱۳۰ درجه بوده و بیشتر باکتری‌ها در این دما از بین نمی‌روند و مشکلات زیست محیطی زیادی را به وجود می‌آورند. رئیس مرکز تحقیقات فیزیک پلاسما دانشگاه آزاد با اشاره به این موضوع که هیچ کشوری حاضر نشد فناوری «های تک» را به ما عرضه کند، بیان کرد: با توجه به اهمیت امحای زباله بیمارستانی بر آن شدیم تا با حمایت مادی و معنوی معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری (مرکز طرح‌های کلان ملی فناوری)، واحد علوم و تحقیقات دانشگاه آزاد، مرکز تحقیقات فیزیک پلاسما و با همکاری برخی شرکت‌های داخلی، ساخت و تولید تجهیزات مورد نیاز این طرح را انجام دهیم و در داخل کشور بومی‌سازی کنیم.

COVID-19 screening for 100,000 passengers at borders

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Approximately 100,000 passengers have so far been tested for coronavirus at the country's official borders, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society said on Sunday.

Since March 10, some 18,151 rapid tests and 6,462 PCR tests have been done and 35 individuals have been temporarily quarantined, IRNA quoted Karim Hemmati as saying.

With the cooperation of ministries of health and transport, a plan was implemented with the goal of rapidly identifying and testing incoming passengers and keeping them in quarantine facilities, if necessary.

Thirty border checkpoints have been selected, including 18 land borders, nine air borders, and three sea borders, all incoming passengers will be tested and referred to the quarantine facilities in case of necessity.

Some 5,000 members of the IRCS cooperate for carrying out the plan; while around 8,000 individuals enter the country via borders on a daily basis, Hemmati said on March 26.

New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 11,680 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 1,932,074. She added that 1,650,569 patients have so far recovered, but 4,057 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 161 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 63,160, she added.

So far, 13,111,118 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Consumption habits of person in rich country drives loss of 'four trees each year'

Each person living in a G7 country causes nearly four trees to be lost each year through their consumption of goods such as coffee, cocoa and meat, a new study estimates.

The research uses fine-scale data to map the global impact of international trade on the world's forests, which act as vital carbon stores and hubs for biodiversity.

It finds that G7 countries and the emerging economies of China and India generally saw decreases in domestic deforestation between 2001 and 2015.

However, foreign deforestation linked with their imports and consumption patterns increased, the research says.

Dr Nguyen Hoang, study lead author and a senior researcher at the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature in Japan, told The Independent: "While obtaining net forest gains domestically, many major economies have mostly expanded their non-domestic deforestation footprints in all forest biomes."

The research, published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution, compares fine-scale forest loss data and patterns of international trade to map how different countries are contributing to deforestation through their imports and exports.

The scientists considered all types of forest in their analysis, from northern-latitude boreal forests to carbon-rich mangroves and rainforests.

They examined the impact of the trade of goods linked to agriculture and forestry, including meat, timber, coffee, soybeans and cocoa.

The findings suggest that tropical rainforests, which store a quarter of all the carbon locked up by land, are particularly threatened by the impacts of international trade.

Many of the "hotspots" for deforestation associated with international trade are also biodiversity hotspots, the research says. Such areas include the Amazon and the forests of southeast Asia, Madagascar and Liberia.

China and India have rapidly expanded their "deforestation footprints" since the 2000s, the research says. It finds that the amount of deforestation associated with commodity imports to both countries increased by six times from 2001 to 2014.

However, on a per person basis, it is the G7 countries that are responsible for the highest levels of trade-related deforestation, the authors say.

"While China and India have been expanding their footprints most rapidly, their average tree loss per person is much less than a person in a G7 country," said Dr Hoang.

The research estimates that, each year, consumption from an individual in a G7 country drives an average loss of around 3.9 trees.

In 2015, consumption patterns in the US drove an average loss of five trees per person, the research says, while consumption in the UK drove the loss of around two trees per person.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 152)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

خود + ضمیر پیوسته

خود is used with joined possessive pronouns for emphasis:

myself	خودم	من	←
yourself	خودت	تو	←
himself	خودش	او	←
ourselves	خودمان	ما	←
yourselves	خودتان	شما	←
themselves	خودشان	آنها	←

It may also indicate possession or reflection:

کتاب خودم my own book خودش را کشت. He killed himself.

تمرین ۴. در جاهای خالی، "خود" و ضمیر پیوسته بگزارید:

۱. او نذر کرد غذا بخرد.

۲. ما تو را معرفی کردیم.

۳. شما به او اجازه دادید.

۴. آنها نخواستند بمانند.

۵. استخر (ما) بزرگ‌تر است.

۶. معلم (من) بهتر است.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Whoever delights his/her parents, has delighted Allah and the one who displeases them has displeased Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Tehran center to host exhibition by Afghan artists

A R T TEHRAN — An exhibition of artworks by Afghan artists living in Iran will open at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on Monday.

Over 70 paintings, calligraphy works, illuminations, sculptures and photos have been selected to be showcased at the exhibition entitled “Housemate”.



A poster for the exhibition “Housemate” by Afghan artists.

The eight-day exhibition will be organized in collaboration with Iran’s Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs.

Iran has recognized Afghan expatriates living in Iran over the past few years.

In December 2020, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO organized the Afghanistan Art Week in Tehran.

The weeklong virtual festival was held on the theme of “My Beloved, Where Are You?”

The festival was organized by the commission and the Embassy of Afghanistan to express their sympathy with the victims of the ISIS terrorist attack on Kabul University in early November 2020.

The victims of the ISIS terrorist attack inspired the theme of the art exhibition.

Several gunmen attacked Kabul University, shooting at students in their classrooms and clashing with security forces for hours.

Some of the students had calls from their mothers and fathers. One of the victims had 142 missed calls, and there was a final message that read, “My beloved, where are you?”

Liam Callanan’s “Paris by the Book” published in Persian

C U L T U R E TEHRAN — American writer Liam Callanan’s novel “Paris by the Book” has recently been published in Persian.

Nima Farahi is the translator of the book released by the major Tehran-based publisher, Saleess.

The book is about a missing person, a grieving family, a curious clue: a half-finished manuscript set in Paris. Heading off in search of its author, a mother and her daughters find themselves in France, rescuing a failing bookstore and drawing closer to unexpected truths.



Front cover of the Persian version of Liam Callanan’s novel “Paris by the Book”.

When eccentric novelist Robert Eady abruptly vanishes, he leaves behind his wife, Leah, their daughters, and, hidden in an unexpected spot, plane tickets to Paris.

Hoping to uncover clues — and her husband — Leah sets off for France with her girls. Upon their arrival, she discovers an unfinished manuscript, one Robert had been writing without her knowledge... and that he had settled in Paris. The Eady women follow the path of the manuscript to a small, floundering English-language bookstore whose weary proprietor is eager to sell the whole store. Yes, today, but Leah’s biggest surprise comes when she hears herself accepting the offer on the spot.

As the family settles into their new Parisian life, they can’t help but trace the literary paths of some beloved Parisian classics, including Madeline and The Red Balloon, while hoping for more clues to arise. But a series of startling discoveries forces Leah to consider that she may not be ready for what solving this mystery might do to her family — and the Paris she thought she knew.

At once haunting and charming, “Paris by the Book” follows one woman’s journey as her story is being rewritten, exploring the power of family and the magic that hides within the pages of a book. Callanan is also a professor at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, where he serves as the chair of the English Department and teaches creative writing and coordinates the Ph.D. in creative writing program there. He also conducts workshops in creative writing for graduate students at other universities.

Owj docudrama chronicles life of war filmmaker Morteza Avini

A R T TEHRAN — A docudrama produced at the Owj Arts and Media Organization recounts the life of Morteza Avini, the writer and documentarian whose films chronicled the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war known as the Sacred Defense in Iran.

Entitled “Mr. Morteza”, the documentary has been directed by Abbas Seyyed-Ebrahimi.

“This series covers the entire life of martyr Avini from his birth until his martyrdom, and we have tried not to ignore any significant topic from his life story,” producer Mehdi Motahhar told the Persian service of IRNA on Sunday.

“Many books and various works have been produced about martyr Avini, and to avoid any parallel trend we did our best to recount all details about him in the seven-episode series,” he added.

He also noted that the series has been made based on the information gathered from people who had close relations with Avini.

Filmmakers Ebrahim Hatamikia, Rasul Sadr-Ameli, Nader Talebzadeh, Kiumars Purahmad, Behruz Afkhami and Fereidun Jeirani have been interviewed for the documentary, the first episode of



A poster for filmmaker Abbas Seyyed-Ebrahimi’s documentary “Mr. Morteza”.

which was broadcast from IRIB Channel 3 on Sunday.

In addition scholars such as Masud Naqibi, Mohammad Avini, Maryam Amini, Shahriar Zarshenas, Mohammad Rajabi, Yusefali Mirshakkak, Amir-Hushang Ardalan, Qasem Bakhshi, Reza Borji and

Mohammadreza Shahidifar also make comments about Avini in this series, which has been produced in collaboration with the Islamic Revolution Documentary House.

Avini was martyred by a landmine in 1993 during his last trip to the former Iran-Iraq war zone in southwestern Iran while

“The Inheritance”, “That Night’s Train” win awards at New Delhi Film Festival



A scene from “That Night’s Train” by Hamidreza Qotbi.

A R T TEHRAN — The 4th New Delhi Film Festival has honored Iranian movies “The Inheritance” and “That Night’s Train”.

Linda Kiani won the award for best supporting actress for her role in “The Inheritance” on the closing day of the festival on March 28.

Nine movies from Iran competing in Brazil Ecocine festival

A R T TEHRAN — Nine Iranian movies are competing in the Ecocine International Film Festival, a Brazilian event dedicated to productions on the environment and human rights.

“Balance”, “One of the Obvious Rights of Citizenship”, and “Sarevo” are among the film selected to be screened in various sections of the festival, which is currently going online.

The Iranian lineup also includes “Snowy Heart” by Alireza Biglari, “The Colorless Leaf” by Behzad Yaqmuri, “The Sea Swells” by Amir Gholami, “The Silent Cry” by Hassan Mokhtari, “Under the Walnut Tree” by



A scene from the documentary “Sarevo” by Mohammad Abdollahi.

Mohammad Heidari-Khalili and “Wood” by Yasin Zohrabi.

“Balance” directed by Barzan Rostami is competing in the animation category. The film tells the story of the soldiers who are sacrificing their lives and resist in order that the people of the city and future generations can live in peace.

“One of the Obvious Rights of Citizenship” by Reza Khodadadi centers on the difficulties facing the disabled.

Directed by Mohammad Abdollahi, “Sarevo” is a documentary about Saeid and Abdollah, two rural Iranian teenagers who have decided to revive a camel farm in a remote region near the border between Iran and Afghanistan.

The purpose of this documentary is to

making the documentary “A City in the Sky” about the fall of Khorramshahr and the liberation of the southwestern Iranian city during the Iran-Iraq war.

He became famous for “The Narration of Triumph” and was called “the master of martyred writers” by his colleagues and war veterans due to the fervent narrations he wrote for his documentaries.

Avini has been commemorated by various Iranian personalities and organizations on different occasions.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei participated in his funeral procession that began on Tehran’s Qarani Street at the Revayate Fath (Narration of Triumph) Cultural Institute, which was established by the Leader’s order in 1991 to produce films on the Sacred Defense.

The Cinéma Vérité festival, Iran’s major international event for documentary films, also honors films on the war and resistance every year with Avini Awards in a special section.

In addition, the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization commemorates Avini’s martyrdom anniversary in April every year by organizing the Islamic Revolution Art Week.

her/his own imagination, and this gives the teacher material for her new story.

The film was crowned best at the 49th Roshd International Film Festival in Tehran in November 2019.

“Thaen” by Indian director Ganesh Vinayakan won the award for best film from the Asian continent, while “Killing the Dead” by Hugo Giménez from Paraguay was also awarded at the New Delhi Film Festival.

The award for best film from the European continent was shared by “Fires in the Dark” by Lienhard Dominique from France and “Amaryllis” by Tom Lawes from the Uk.

Iranian movies “Shahre Qesseh Cinema” by Keivan Alimohammadi and “Taxi Is Here” by Sara Aqababayan were also screened in various sections of the festival. However, they failed to win an award.

“Shahre Qesseh Cinema” centers on Davud, a projector repairman for a movie theater and a movie maniac who falls in love with a girl whose father is a big opponent of cinema. He tries his best to gain her father’s approval.

The short movie “Taxi Is Here” is about a mysterious woman who decides to share a secret with a taxi driver who seems to be on familiar terms with her.

show the efforts and solidarity of two peoples who strive to improve their lives by removing divergent ideologies.

Over 130 movies by filmmakers from Brazil, Spain, India, Germany, Portugal, Argentina, Mexico, Italy, Switzerland, the United States, Greenland, South Africa, Singapore, Venezuela, Indonesia, Turkey, England, Pakistan, Montenegro, France, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Malawi, Egypt, Colombia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Greece, Russia, Ecuador, Yemen, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Poland, Australia, Hungary and Ireland are being screened in the event.

Ecocine will announce winners on Monday.

Iranian pre-Islamic elements in Islamic art

Part 1

Numerous Iranian pre-Islamic elements have contributed significantly to the formation and development of Islamic art, and they can be easily recognized in various contexts, from town-planning to architecture, from the continuity of techniques of both manufacture and decoration to iconography and some of its symbols.

Among the latter, one may mention the Sassanid crowns illustrated in the mosaic of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (dated 691), or the interesting image on the reverse of an Arab-Sassanid dirham of 694-99, preserved in four examples and showing a lance within an arch.

The lance “was one of the formal symbols of the prophetic and caliphal power”, and when placed within an arch, it also represented an axis mundi connecting the earth to the sky, in the sense of the vault of heaven.

The most striking example of such town-planning is the round city of Baghdad, the Abbasid capital founded by caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur in 762. This circular plan, originally derived most probably from the structure of Assyrian military camps (circular or oval enclosures), was a characteristic feature of major Parthian and Sassanid towns.

Baghdad is particularly similar to the Sassanid circular cities of Ardashir I, especially Ardashir Khorra, later known as Firuzabad, which according to Ibn al-Faqih was built on the model of Darabjerd. There is evidence in the Islamic architecture of some planimetric solutions and building techniques suggesting that they were derived from pre-Islamic Iranian precedents.

The plan of the Sassanid chahar taq has met with considerable success in Iranian religious architecture. According to some scholars, the mosque (of uncertain date) in the village of Yazd-e Khast, on the border between Fars and Isfahan, was established on a chahar taq.

The Masjed-e Digaran at Khazara, near Bukhara, had a similar plan, surrounded by a corridor (on the Islamic chahar taq functioning as Imamzadeh).

Two buildings in Damghan share similar significant features, namely a Sassanid building at Tepe Hissar and the Tarikhaneh Mosque (dating from the 8th century).

The vestibule of the Sassanid building divided into three aisles shows two arcades resting on massive round piers and side walls supporting three parallel tunnel-vaults opening into the courtyard, a layout also used in Tarikhaneh.

Both in the Sassanid building and in Tarikhaneh, the round piers, constructed of baked bricks, are set vertically and horizontally in alternate courses, without foundations (the same alternate courses are employed also in the Masjed-e Digaran at Khazara); moreover, their diameters are nearly the same.

The later Friday Mosque of Nain (dating from ca. 960), while possessing narrower round pillars, is entirely covered with stucco decoration like the Sassanid building at Tepe Hissar (for other Iranian mosques deriving from Sassanid architectural prototypes).

Lionel Bier was skeptical of the supposed influence of Sassanid palace architecture on early Islamic architecture. Making reference to Gertrude Bell, who in Bier’s words, in her survey of the Sassanid palaces “was sometimes obliged to make analogies with the better-preserved palace at Okhayzer in Iraq to fill in the missing parts,” Bier sarcastically states: “Put less delicately, it seems to me a fine example of how Sassanid architecture can be influenced by early Islam.”

Although the ayvan and the domed chamber are certainly the most important elements of Sassanid architecture surviving in the Islamic context, Bier hesitates to acknowledge a precise correspondence between the continuity of the Sassanid court ceremonial which survived into the Islamic period, and the continuity of form and function of the architectural background, which is not clearly recognizable either in the sources or from the archeological evidence.

Concerning the Umayyad throne complex at Mosatta (dated to 743-44), now a ruined structure in Jordan, Bier states: “neither the triconch nor the pillared hall is known in Sassanid palace architecture..., the Sassanid audience

was connected primarily, if not exclusively, with the iwan (ayvan) hall, with or without a domed chamber in back”.

With regard to the affinity between the pillared hall/ayvan with a square domed chamber at Tepe Hissar near Damghan and the Emarat-e Khosrow at Qasre Shirin (dated 590-628), Bier says: “the Imaret-i Khusrav is a fantasy based partly on Damghan itself, the arrangement at Damghan must remain an anomaly.”

However, the same complex is in the Dar al-Emara in Kufa, in Iraq, and, as regards the three-aisled hall, Masudi, in the 10th century, makes reference to the prototype of Hira. The last section of Bier’s study, however, is focused on the most probable methods of transmission of elements from Sassanid to Islamic architecture.

The Sassanid four axial ayvans fronting a domed room in the Bishapur fire temple can be found in Abbasid palaces of the 8th and 9th centuries in the Dar al-Emara of Marv, the most important palaces of Samarra, and probably Mansur’s palace in Baghdad.

The synthesis of the Parthian four ayvns opening in a courtyard and the Sassanid complex formed by an ayvan and a domed chamber in the back is also used in the Ghaznavid palaces in Lashkari Bazaar and Ghazni. In the Islamic religious buildings, the four ayvans opening on a courtyard (with a domed chamber) appear later in Iranian Seljuk architecture.

The triple-ayvan structure of Parthian origin in Hatra is clearly recognizable in the Bab al-Amma, the monumental facade of the Abbasid palace called Jawsaq al-Khaqni, built at Samarra by the caliph al-Motassim in 836, overlooking the Tigris.

The palace of Firuzabad features a particular bayt formed by an ayvan flanked by two rooms that can also be seen in Sarvestan; an ayvan with a pair of flanking rooms and a portico of three arches is in the Emarat-e Khosrow at Qasre Shirin and the castle of Okhayzer, located about 50 kilometers south of Karbala.

(Source: Iranica)