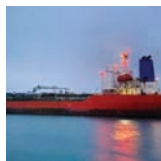




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Saudi coalition flees from Ma'rib as resistance advances

Iranian military says to 'definitely' respond to attack on merchant ship in Red Sea

TEHRAN - Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, a senior spokesman of the Iranian Armed Forces, said on Thursday that Iran will "definitely" respond to a recent attack on one of its merchant ships in the strategic Red Sea.

Iran's response to the attack on the Saviz ship will come once the source of the assault is uncovered, General Shekarchi remarked.

"We need to ascertain the source of

the incident. If we uncover the source of the attack on the ship, we will definitely respond, we will never be silent," Shekarchi told the Russian Sputnik news agency.

"The ship was targeted and now different things may have happened to the ship, but we cannot take a decision on what we are going to do until after our investigations are concluded with utmost accuracy," the senior spokesman pointed out.

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Iran discusses oil comeback with OPEC

TEHRAN - Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, the secretary-general of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), met with Amir Hossein Zamaninia, Iran's governor for OPEC in Vienna, on Thursday to discuss the Islamic Republic's return to the oil market in case of U.S. lifting the sanctions on Iran's oil industry.

Speaking in the meeting, Barkindo expressed hope that as a result of the ongoing negotiations on Iran's nuclear program in Vienna, the unfair conditions

imposed on Iran will end and sanctions will be lifted, Shana reported.

According to Zamaninia, during the meeting, issues related to the current management of the OPEC Executive Board were also discussed.

Iran could be poised to officially rejoin the ranks of oil exporters in the current year as the U.S. seems willing to rejoin the nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic.

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The Saudi coalition ordered its elements to remove the remaining heavy weapons from the operational fronts around Ma'rib, including American armored vehicles, Lebanon's al-Akbar newspaper reported.

Over the past few weeks, Ma'rib has been the scene of large-scale operations by the Yemeni troops and allied Popular Committees fighters, who are pushing against Saudi-led mercenaries and militants loyal to Yemen's former president,

Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The battle for Ma'rib likely will determine the outline of any political settlement in Yemen's second war since the 1990s. If seized by the Houthis, the resistance group can press that advantage in negotiations and even continue further south. If held, Yemen's fugitive government saves perhaps its only stronghold as secessionists challenge its authority elsewhere.

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Iranian fans outraged by AFC's decision to choose Bahrain as host

BY FARROKH HESABI
The Asian Football Confederation's decision to award the hosting rights of the last eight matches of the joint FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 / AFC Asian Cup China 2023 in Group C to Bahrain has outraged Iranian football fans.

In late March, AFC sent a letter to Iran federation and said Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa has not intervened to select his homeland as centralized venue for the qualifiers.

The Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has appealed to Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the decision in relation to choosing Bahrain as centralized venue.

Below is a summary of events that have unfolded since February:

Early February:

Online chattering appears on Iraqi and other Arabic social media platforms suggesting that Bahrain would be granted the hosting rights of Group C.

16 February:

AFC meets with its Member Associations to discuss how to deal with qualifiers in March in light of travel restrictions between nations across Asia. According to Iran's head coach, Dragan Skocic, a message appears on the screen that March qualifiers will be postponed and switched to June when the competition will be staged on a centralized format. Bahrain representative immediately express their wish for hosting.

17 February:

Bahrain Football Association submits a letter inviting Iran to accept their intent to stage the last Group C eight matches. Bahrain FA suggests that in addition to covering all local expenses - an AFC requirement - they will pay for the Iranian delegation international flights costs, which was not an AFC requirement. In the event of a member association's objection to AFC's selection of hosts, all other three countries in that given group had to agree on the same protest partners.

5 March:

The AFC General Secretary - Dato' Windsor John - submits a letter of query to Iran querying how they will overcome challenges they face in light of international sanctions and a whole host of other reasons in relation to their applications to host a number of AFC competitions that their rights belong to AFC and their commercial partners.

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Coronavirus: outbound travels slump by 85% during Iranian New Year holiday

TEHRAN - Iran's outbound travels fell by 85 percent during the New Year (Noruz) holiday (March 21-April 4) compared with two years earlier, according to the head of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies.

"International travels made by Iranian nationals slump some 85 percent during Noruz holiday in comparison to the same period in the year 1398," IRIB quoted Hormatollah Rafiei, the head of the association, as saying on Friday.

Oversees tours and trips were not welcomed by Iranians this Noruz due to both the coronavirus restrictions and economic hardship so that many passenger flights to foreign countries, including Turkey, were semi-empty, Rafiei said.

He, however, did not provide any data on the number of outbound travelers, adding "Last year, almost all borders were closed to (potential) travelers due to strict coronavirus lockdown."

Experts believe that whenever the disease

is contained, the tourism industry begins to flourish once again. The Islamic Republic of Iran, which is home to countless travel destinations, is among those highly suffered from the pandemic when it comes to tourism. The average of international travels to and from the country fell by 84 percent during the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2021) from a year earlier.

Besides, according to Vali Teymouri, the deputy tourism minister, the number of domestic travels fell by 96 percent during the two-week holidays compared to two years earlier.

According to the latest data Iranians made some 2.5 million overnight stays across the country during the Noruz holidays, while the number added up to over 74 million in the same period in 1398 (March 21-April 2, 2019), which shows a drastic fall, Teymouri explained last week.

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Syria urges UNSC to adopt firm, immediate action against Israeli attacks

Syria has renewed its call for the United Nations Security Council to take a "firm and immediate" action against acts of aggression by the Tel Aviv regime, urging the world body to hold to account Israeli authorities over their support for terrorism, crimes against the Syrian and Palestinian nations as well as their backing of Takfiri terror outfits.

The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, in a statement released on Thursday, said the Israeli missile attack near the Syrian capital city of Damascus at the dawn was in flagrant violation of the UN Charter, principles of the international law, and relevant Security Council resolutions, which all demand respect for Syria's sovereignty.

"The Israeli act of aggression comes at the time when the world is celebrating Easter, which carries the message of love and peace. Israel, however, has proven though its incessant at-

tacks on the Syrian soil that it does not believe in peace but rather in the law of the jungle," the statement read.

According to Press TV, the Syrian ministry added that Israeli officials tend to pride themselves on such acts of aggression in order to cover up their moral and political crises, highlighting that the authorities' persistence on the attacks comes under the aegis of Washington's unlimited and continuous support.

The statement went on to say that Israeli officials support terrorist groups wreaking havoc across Syria, and prevent Syrian government forces and their allies from crushing Daesh, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other militant outfits.

The Syrian foreign ministry then criticized what it described as frenzied Western campaign to stifle the Arab nation economically by means of sanctions and restrictions on access to food, medical and fuel supplies.

'Sympathetic Iran' to begin helping deprived affected by pandemic

TEHRAN - The third phase of Iran-e Hamdel (literally meaning sympathetic Iran) national campaign will kick off by the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan (April 13) to help the financially struggling families affected by the coronavirus.

The campaign was first launched in 2020 aiming to provide financial assistance to the needy affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has collected 1.5 trillion rials (nearly \$35 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

The second phase of the sympathetic Iran

movement with the aim of cooking and distributing 27 million warm foods among the deprived started on Eid al-Ghadir Khumm (August 9, 2020) until the end of Safar (the second month of the lunar-based Islamic calendar).

Iranian benefactors, charity centers, and religious organizations take part in the campaign by cash and kind contributions.

It is planned to provide 12 million warm food and 888,000 food packages through the third phase of the campaign.

Besides the health professionals, volunteers, university students, and Basij forces have entered the battlefield against Corona and their services are indescribable, the Leader's Twitter account wrote.

People's participation in the fight against Corona was truly amazing: 1) people feeding the needy; 2) turning houses into workshops to sew free masks; 3) disinfecting public areas; 4) talking to landlords and shop owners to exempt people from their rents.

National subway train unveiled

TEHRAN - The first domestically-manufactured subway train was unveiled on Thursday by President Hassan Rouhni in attendance, IRIB reported.

In June 2019, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Company, and the Innovation and Prosperity Fund to complete the subway train project under an 18-month contract.

Through the project, the 25 to 30 percent share of domestic companies in designing, manufacturing, and supplying subway train parts has increased to 85 percent, Ali Emam, head of Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Company said on March 13.

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'Read and fight for what's right', Danish-Lebanese artist tells the youth

BY MOHAMMAD ARAGHI

Now at 29 years of age, the Danish-Lebanese artist is now a father of two, and as a Muslim artist, he is dealing with the reality of today's lifestyle in the pandemic. Having experienced a journey of self-realization in his early twenties, Ali Al Hadi says Islamic artists have a big responsibility to fulfill.

Ali has released a series of tracks and music videos during the pandemic that included an exhausting and difficult journey to several countries but his dedication and passion for his work resulted in a great production. "I have a responsibility," he said. "I felt the need to respond to the negative portrayals of our religion in the media"

In an interview with the Tehran Times, we learn more about the life and struggles of this talented artist, as well as his aspirations.

Can you tell us about your experiences during the lockdown and spending more time with your children? How has it affected you?

As a parent you can't help but feel sorry for your children during lockdown restrictions, especially when they express how much they miss the regular activities like going to school, visiting the local mosque, and participating in social gatherings.

We can only be grateful for the lockdown period because it allowed us as parents to spend more time with our kids. Living in the west, and working a full-time job had made it increasingly difficult to spend as much time with our kids as we would have wanted to.

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Leader: Verification of U.S. sanctions removal means Iran should be able to sell its oil

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says any U.S. claim to having removed Iran's sanctions must be verified by Tehran and this means that the Islamic Republic should be able to sell its oil under normal conditions and receive its money.

The Leader's remarks came in a post on his Instagram page on Thursday as an Iranian negotiating team was in the Austrian capital city of Vienna to discuss conditions for the revival of the landmark 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with other signatories to the deal.

"Verification [of U.S. sanctions removal] means [being capable of] selling oil in an official manner, with ease and under normal conditions, and its money be received by Iran," the Leader added.

The Leader's Instagram account also released a video in which Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated that Tehran is in no hurry for Washington to come back to the nuclear agreement.

The Leader added that the signatories of the nuclear agreement failed to abide by their commitments under the deal, noting that the decision by the Iranian government and parliament to roll back Tehran's nuclear commitments was right.

Ayatollah Khamenei stated that commitment on one side should be reciprocated by commitment on the other side and the U.S. must remove all sanctions if the West wants Iran to return to JCPOA compliance.

The Leader said Tehran will return to full compliance with the nuclear deal once it verifies sanctions have been really removed by the U.S.

Ayatollah Khamenei said other signatories to the deal have no right to set conditions for Tehran as long as they have not fulfilled their obligations, emphasizing that this is Iran's definitive policy from which Tehran will not step back.

(Source: Press TV)

Zarif: Logical path is that U.S. 'should return to full compliance first'

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — In a Twitter message on Friday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran is proposing a "logical path" to bring the 2015 nuclear deal fully to life.

Zarif said the United States created the current crisis over the nuclear deal and therefore it "should return to full compliance first."

Zarif, who was Iran's chief negotiator in crafting the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, said a full compliance by the U.S. which is rapidly verified will be reciprocated by a complete adherence to the agreement by Iran.

The foreign minister went on to say that all sanctions imposed on Iran with whatever label are against the JCPOA and must be lifted.

The tweet by Zarif followed after the JCPOA Joint Commission ended its negotiations in Vienna on Friday and plans to meet on Wednesday.

South Korean PM to visit Iran on April 11-12

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed on Friday that South Korea's Prime Minister, Chung Sye-kyun, will pay a visit to Tehran on April 11-12.



Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Chung will meet Iranian officials to discuss bilateral issues, including the issue of illegal restrictions on Iran's access to its Central Bank resources in the Republic of Korea.

Khatibzadeh added, "Technical coordination to finalize the details of the trip is being pursued by both sides."

The prime minister is set to meet Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

Considering the history of relations between Iran and Korea, the spokesman said, a friendly meeting is being planned between the prime minister and Ali Larijani, advisor to the Supreme Leader.

Salehi says has no intention to run for president

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Salehi, the vice president and chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has dismissed speculation that he intends to contest the June 18 presidential election.

"I have said before that I have no intention nor a plan in this regard," Salehi told ISNA on Friday.

Some media outlets have run stories in recent days claiming that Salehi intends to run for the presidential elections.

Analysts believe that the main rivalry for the late spring elections will be between principlist candidates.

However, efforts are underway by principlist figures to rally behind one candidate.

Iranian military says to 'definitely' respond to attack on merchant ship in Red Sea

➔ He also said Iran suspected Israel and the U.S. were linked to the attack, stressing that Washington is undoubtedly involved in any attempt to undermine the Islamic Republic.

The Saviz ship was struck by a blast at around 6 a.m. local time (0300 GMT) on Tuesday near the coast of Djibouti, and sustained minor damage.

12 Iranian MPs visit four nuclear sites to monitor nuclear law implementation

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — A spokesman for the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has explained about the details of a visit by a number of MPs to the country's four nuclear sites.

Abolfazl Amoui said, "In order to monitor the implementation of the law on lifting sanctions, 12 members of the Majlis, mainly from the National Security and Energy Committees, visited four nuclear sites in Isfahan, Natanz, Khondab and Fordow."

The visits to the nuclear sites took place in line with inspecting the implementation of a parliamentary ratification late last year. The ratification, called Strategic Action Plan for Lifting Sanctions and Protect the rights of the Iranian Nation, obliges the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to take number of steps, including installing and increasing more advanced centrifuges, increasing the purity of nuclear fuel to 20 percent, etc.

Amoui said the representatives visited the production units of rods and fuel plates at the Isfahan site. "Also, at the Isfahan site, the procedure of completing the metal uranium factory was observed."

He said, "Article 4 of the law on Strategic Action for Lifting Sanctions gives five months to complete this factory."



Amoui, a representative from Tehran, added, "During a visit to the Shahid Ahmadi Roshan complex in Natanz, it was observed that in implementation of Article 3 of the Law on Strategic Action for Lifting Sanctions, 1000 IR2m centrifuges have recently been installed. Also, a chain of 164 sixth generation centrifuges has been installed in the Natanz

site within the legal three-month period."

The spokesman went on to say, "The hard-working experts of our Atomic Energy Organization in the Natanz site, in order to increase the enriched uranium reserves required by the country, have used 2 chains of IR4 centrifuges in the Natanz site to produce uranium."

Iran releases South Korean tanker

SEOUL/TEHRAN — Iran released a South Korean oil tanker and its captain, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said on Friday, the Yonhap news agency reported.

The tanker and captain were released about three months after they were seized over alleged oil pollution.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the ship was released after completion of investigations.

Upon request by the ship owner and the Seoul government the order for the release of the tanker was issued by the prosecutor, Khatibzadeh explained.

Khatibzadeh added since the captain and the ship had no bad record in the regional waters it provided the ground for a positive view by the prosecutor to order their release.

The ship, with its captain and 12 other crew members aboard, left the port near Bandar Abbas on the southern coast, at around 6 a.m. (Iran time), the ministry said. The crew members had been released earlier but have remained on the ship for maintenance purposes.

The ministry said the captain and the crew members remain safe and sound.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps seized the Hankuk Chemi and its 20 crew members in its waters on Jan. 4, saying the ship violated environmental rules.

But speculation has persisted that the seizure was linked

to Tehran's anger over Seoul's lack of efforts to release about \$7 billion of Iranian assets locked in South Korean banks due to U.S. sanctions.

Iran has said the seizure is purely a technical issue to be dealt with in accordance with judicial procedures.

The release came amid speculation that Seoul and Tehran might have made headway in addressing the West Asian country's call to unlock the funds, although neither side has acknowledged that the ship seizure and the frozen funds are related.

The two countries have been in consultations to resolve the issue of the frozen money, including using a U.S.-backed Swiss humanitarian trade arrangement to facilitate the export of humanitarian goods to Iran.

Using the money to pay off Iran's UN dues in arrears has also been among the payment methods being discussed.

"We're expecting to make a considerable progress in terms of paying the UN dues," a Foreign Ministry official said. "We have also exported some \$30 million worth of medical equipment since we resumed the humanitarian trade with Iran last April."

Seoul has also closely consulted about the frozen funds with the U.S. and European partners, the countries that are conducting negotiations with Tehran to restore the 2015



nuclear deal (JCPOA), the official added.

"If the JCPOA talks move forward, we think that it could have a positive effect on the frozen funds issue," he said.

Meanwhile, the ship's release was decided after the Iranian authorities and the vessel's Korean operator reached a settlement. Tehran had never begun any legal proceedings against the ship, according to the official.

Since February, the captain and a few crew members have stayed on the ship after the Iranian authorities announced they would set free all sailors except for the captain for the ship's management.

Iran, Tajikistan agree to establish joint defense committee

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Tehran and Dushanbe have agreed to establish a joint defensive and military committee, Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Baqeri told reporters after a meeting with visiting Tajik Defense Minister Colonel General Sherali Mirzo on Thursday.

Major General Mohammad Baqeri said the joint committee will draw the future of military and defense cooperation between the two countries, IRNA reported.

He said that the visit to Tehran by the Tajik defense minister laid the foundations for the expansion of military cooperation between the two countries.

Baqeri said he believed cooperation between the armed forces of Iran and Tajikistan will definitely help boost regional security and stability.

After a meeting with General Baqeri, the Tajik defense



minister met with his Iranian counterpart Brigadier General Amir Hatami for a second time during his stay in Tehran.

Mine clearance must be consistent with UN Charter, says Iranian ambassador

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Majid Takhat Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, said on Thursday that mine-clearance activities, whether in the context of peace-keeping operations or otherwise, must be consistent with the United Nations Charter, IRNA reported.

Taking into account the threat that mines and explosive remnants of war pose to the lives of United Nations peace-keeping personnel, the council must continue to consider this issue in the mandates of peace-keeping operations, Takht Ravanchi told the UN Security Council meeting on mine-clearance activities.

However, it is evident that the involvement of peace-keeping forces in mine-clearance

does not provide any mandate to the council to put the subject of mine action under its purview, he added.

"Due to the serious humanitarian and socioeconomic nature of the mine action, it remains under the purview of the General Assembly and it must therefore continue and upgrade its relevant functions including in the post-conflict situations," Takht Ravanchi stated.

"Mine-clearance activities, whether in the context of peace-keeping operations or otherwise, must be consistent with the United Nations Charter, particularly the principles of full respect for the sovereignty, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all states, and non-interference in their internal affairs," the ambassador noted.

"To ensure that mine action operations contribute effectively to sustaining peace and socioeconomic development of the societies that are facing the challenges of mines and explosive remnants of war, enhanced international cooperation and assistance, upon request, is a must. This should therefore be a key priority area for the relevant United Nations bodies," he added.

Tehran's ambassador to the United Nations said his country is ready to share experiences with regional and extra-regional countries in de-mining projects.

"To that end, the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to extend its cooperation in humanitarian mine action with countries in the region and beyond, to share its experiences, exchange technical experts and expertise, hold

training courses and implement de-mining projects," the ambassador underlined.

In a message on the occasion of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on April 5, Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami said Iran became the biggest victim of landmines after eight years of war imposed on the country by the Saddam regime in the 1980s. Hatami also denounced the supporters of Saddam for refusing to help Iran in demining activities after the war.

The defense chief said Iran became the biggest victim of mines during the war as around 42,000 square kilometers of the Iranian territories were contaminated by 20 million various types of landmines and explosives.

Europe is late but crucial in reviving the nuclear deal: Carnegie Europe

Vienna, here we come—again. Six years after world powers concluded their negotiations on Iran's nuclear program in the Austrian capital, diplomats are talking again in the stucco-clad ballrooms of otherwise mostly deserted five-star hotels. Yet despite the genteel setting, the talks will be no waltz in the park.

the EU is starting from a weaker position this time

The EU is trying to broker an agreement between the United States and Iran on each side's return to the deal. Yet just like in July 2015, success is far from guaranteed. In fact, the Europeans look much weaker today than then, and that's not just because of their dismal

record in the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. If anything, the past three years since the United States left the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, have shown Europe's inability to keep the deal alive beyond its vital functions.

It's true that France, Germany, and the UK—the three European co-signatories of the deal (the E3)—have fought hard to prevent the agreement from unravelling, including by torpedoing America's unilateral efforts to reinstate all United Nations sanctions on Iran in September 2020. However, they could not maintain the economic opening that Tehran was promised in return for strict supervision of its nuclear program. Even after the pandemic

had hit the Islamic Republic especially hard, European governments failed to find a way to increase humanitarian trade, or indeed grant multilateral aid to Iran, in the face of continuing U.S. sanctions.

The Europeans are learning the hard way that it is one thing to rally countries around the world against a bully in the White House but quite another to devise a plan for two sworn enemies with domestic politics to find common ground again. In addition, they too have grown wary of an Iranian government that has methodically dismantled its compliance with the nuclear agreement, while enlarging its foothold in the wider region.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Inside JCPOA Friday talks

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The negotiating teams of Iran and the U.S. are present in the Austrian capital to discuss ways to get the 2015 Iran nuclear deal back on track, a move that requires Washington to articulate its measures in that regard.

The nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is once again being revived after more than three years of American pressure that brought it closer to total collapse during the Trump administration.

The latest meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, a group comprised of Iran and the P4+1 responsible for overseeing the implementation of the deal, was held on Friday.

During the meeting, participants received a report from the two newly-established expert groups, which were put together on Wednesday to conduct technical talks over how to revive the JCPOA and what measures are needed to be done by Iran and the U.S. in this regard. One of the groups is tasked with specifying the sanctions that the U.S. should lift to revive the deal while the other is discussing how to reverse the nuclear measures taken by Iran in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA.

Receiving a report about these groups' technical talks was the most important agenda of the Friday meeting, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday shortly after the meeting was concluded.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who leads Iran's negotiation team, underlined during the meeting Iran's willingness to continue "serious interactions" but said that hinges on witnessing "political will and seriousness" on part of the other sides. "Otherwise, there will be no reason to continue negotiations," he warned.

Araghchi reiterated that the lifting of all U.S. sanctions imposed during the previous U.S. administration was a necessary step in reviving the JCPOA, and that only after verification of the lifting of these sanctions Iran would be ready to suspend its remedial measures and fully



return to JCPOA.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the next meeting of the Commission at the level of deputies and political directors to be held next Wednesday in Vienna. The Iranian Foreign Ministry said the Wednesday meeting will immediately be followed by technical and specialized intensive negotiations in the framework of expert groups to prepare a list of nuclear and sanctions measures that should be done by all parties to revive the JCPOA.

Enrique Mora, the European Union's coordinator and the chairman of the JCPOA Joint Commission, also issued a statement following the meeting.

"Participants took stock of the discussions held at various levels since the last Joint Commission in view of a possible return of the US to the JCPOA and discussed modalities to ensure the return to its full and effective implementation. The Joint Commission was briefed on the work of the two expert groups on sanctions lifting and nuclear implementation measures and participants noted the constructive and results oriented exchanges," Mora said, adding that the coordinator will continue his separate contacts with all JCPOA participants and the United States.

According to Mora, the Joint Commission tasked expert groups to continue their

work and agreed to reconvene in Vienna in the course of next week.

From Iran's point of view, the ongoing negotiations pursue one simple goal: the lifting of U.S. unilateral sanctions. Iran has made it clear that it wants a verifiable removal of sanctions. Iran's roadmap to revive the nuclear deal was summed up by the country's top diplomat.

"Iran proposes logical path to full JCPOA compliance: -U.S.—which caused this crisis—should return to full compliance first; -Iran will reciprocate following rapid verification; -All Trump sanctions were anti-JCPOA & must be removed—w/o distinction between arbitrary designations," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted on Friday.

Iran has announced at the highest levels that only after verifying the U.S. lifting of sanctions it will return to JCPOA commitments. This policy will not be violated in any way, according to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

"This policy is that the Americans should lift all sanctions. After that, we will verify. If the sanctions have been lifted, we will return to our JCPOA commitments. We will return without any problem. This is a definite policy," the Leader said in a televised speech delivered on March 21.

The issue of verifications has turned into a focal point in the negotiation. Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, provided more details on what Iran means by verification.

In an interview with khamenei.ir, he said that "the meaning of verifications is that for example, the Islamic Republic should be able to sign its oil contracts and export its oil, and transfer its revenues through banking channels to the country or consider other uses for it. Or in the banking sector, it should be able to perform its financial transactions through various financial channels. Only then can it be assured that the lifting of sanctions will have practical effects."

Sorting sanctions out is another point of contention. Iran has insisted that the U.S. should remove all the sanctions that were imposed, reimposed, or relabeled under Trump.

Sources closely monitoring the Vienna talks told Al Araby Al Jadeed that Iran demanded that the U.S. lift at least 1,600 sanctions imposed all at once.

The sources added that the Vienna talks on Friday did not make a major breakthrough, and the views of the American and Iranian sides are still wide. However, they revealed that Washington has, in principle, shown flexibility in lifting sanctions that are inconsistent with the nuclear deal, but regarding the issue of naming these sanctions, which should be lifted, there is still a deep disagreement between the Iranian and American sides, as Washington does not see that some of the sanctions imposed by former President Donald Trump on Iran, under counterterrorism authorities, are inconsistent with the nuclear deal, while Tehran stresses the need to lift the 1,600 sanctions imposed on it altogether.

The issue of how and what sanctions should be lifted is still under discussion but the U.S. needs to understand that Iran is determined to get the sanctions lifted — and verified— altogether. Moreover, the U.S. should announce the sanctions that it will lift if it really wants to pursue diplomacy with Iran.

U.S. measures to bring Iran to its knees failed, Rouhani says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has denounced U.S. sanctions on Iran as "economic terrorism," underlining that these measures failed to bring the Iranian people to their knees.

The president made the remarks on Thursday at the 10th virtual D-8 summit.

"Further to the disaster of COVID-19, unilateralism, economic terrorism and the way they have been addressed are among the issues that have stained the features of the international community. Actions like these not only illegally and illegitimately target sovereign governments and independent nations, but are also a serious threat to the achievements of the international community. More to this, the world of Islam has fallen quarry to organized Islamophobia. This organized Islamophobia has not only targeted the sublime values of Islam, but it has also brought with it wider adverse economic and developmental consequences for Muslim countries."

He took pride in the fact that the U.S. economic pressures on Iran ended in failure.

"I am proud to announce that the U.S. illegal and unilateral measures aimed to bring the great nation of Iran to its knees have failed and despite the strong headwind of colossal economic pressure, by relying on our own willpower and domestic might, we have managed to do great feats and make significant breakthroughs in various areas including the fight against COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts and consequences. The illuminous testament to the failure of the United States in the war it has waged on the Iranian people is that Iran, struggling with sanctions and the coronavirus combined, managed to secure an economic growth of more than 2 percent in the year when the world economy shrank by 3.5 percent and many countries experienced negative economic growth of -5 to -10 percent," the Iranian president noted.

He added, "In the past four years, the international community has witnessed as the U.S. economic warfare against Iran has intensified. These oppressive sanctions have inflicted substantial damage on our country. The nuclear deal,



which the U.S. violated and maximally tried to obliterate, has been preserved owing to the Islamic Republic of Iran's tactfulness. The U.S. must return to the JCPOA, first, by lifting the sanctions and adopting practical arrangements; for that is the obligation of the same government that has reneged on the promise. The Islamic Republic of Iran will but respond to U.S. action by positive action."

Rouhani also reaffirmed the will of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the country's public and private sectors to deepen cooperation within the framework of the D-8.

He reiterated Iran's willingness to strengthen multilateralism as one of Iran's top priorities.

"Strengthening multilateralism is one of the Islamic Republic of Iran's top foreign policy priorities. From the standpoint of economic development, too, we have invariably supported the developing and attuned countries' collective strive for a fair and non-discriminatory international economic system. The ultimate goal of all these collective and legitimate efforts by developing countries is to attain economic growth, balanced development, public welfare and prosperity, and to preserve national values and cultures and secure a decent status in international relations," Rouhani pointed out, adding that "it is by way of this very approach, that we have become an

active member of international and regional groupings such as the Group of 77 (G77), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Cooperation Mechanism of the Caspian Littoral States, and, of course, the D-8. From the vantagepoint of convergence and business interaction, we are laying the foundations of free regional trade with neighboring countries and we will soon establish, together with the Eurasian countries, the first free-trade zone."

Rouhani said that despite its geographical dispersion, the D-8 organization enjoys tremendous capacities and bounties of, inter alia, human and natural resources, energy reserves, complementary economies and avid private sectors.

"Further, we all have more or less similar challenges on our paths to economic development."

He added, "Ever since the dawn of the D-8, the Islamic Republic of Iran has endeavored to play its part in the accomplishment of the lofty objectives of the organization. Such measures as the establishment of the D-8 International University and D-8 Technology Transfer and Exchange Network, which, combined, target two key areas of 'education and human resource development' and 'development of technological cooperation' among eight countries, are testimony to our efforts. We are fully prepared to participate in the operationalization of D-8 agreements in IT, trade facilitation, investment, agriculture, petrochemicals, science, health, tourism, and facilitation of visa issuance," Rouhani continued.

He noted, "Given the importance of foreign trade for national development and public welfare of the great people of D-8 member states, I would like to stress that the current trade volume among the eight countries is a far cry from the actual trade potentials of the D-8. As such, it is necessary that certain mechanisms be developed for the facilitation and promotion of trade among member states, including through customs and banking facilities and mechanisms as also non-banking ones. In this context, such proposed initiatives as a D-8 chamber of barter trade and D-8 credit cards may be helpful."

Iran highlights 'special importance' of strategic relations with China

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Establishing strategic relations with China has been of special importance for Iran, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry Saeed Khatibzadeh has said as Tehran and Beijing concluded a 25-cooperation plan on March 27.

In an Instagram post published on Wednesday, Khatibzadeh elaborated on certain points concerning the Iran-China 25-year cooperation document.

In his post, Saeed Khatibzadeh described China as economic heavyweight.

"As a major power having an economy with a top global rating, China has signed and is signing comprehensive cooperation agreements as well as major trade contracts with different countries, from the US and Europe to Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region as well as countries in Central Asia, the Middle East and the Far East," he wrote. "For Iran, too, strategic relations with

China have been of special importance," he added.

"The enhancement of relations with Iran up to the level of strategic partnership was also a priority for China, which was realized during the Chinese president's trip to Iran," he added.

"As a player with a role in international relations, Iran naturally cannot succumb to pressure caused by the United States' cruel sanctions when delineating its development programs, and seizes every opportunity to promote its policies," the spokesman noted.

"It goes without saying that the attempts we make on this path are not favourable to those who want Iran to give in or to be isolated; so, they hastily put on their agenda plans to distort [realities] and launch propaganda campaigns against such agreements as the same thing happened with this case (Iran-China cooperation)."

"The Iran-China Cooperation Program is a roadmap for cooperation which can benefit Iran and its people if it enters the practical phase and particularly lead to economic agreements between those working in different sectors," he said.

"The short video which has been prepared is a glimpse at what is included in the agreement and probably at what is not included therein," he added.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi signed the plan on March 27, raising Tehran-Beijing relations in various fields to a new, strategic level.

"The document focuses on the capacities and perspectives for bilateral cooperation between the two countries in various areas including economic and cultural fields, among others. We believe this document will further contribute to the continued development and comprehensive partnership of Iran and

China, and will bring about prosperity for the two nations," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement following the signing of the document.

The plan, officially known as the "Comprehensive Cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China," was extensively hailed by almost all Iranian officials as a "strategic" decision, though they somehow differed on the underlying reasons behind cementing ties with China.

Early negotiations over the plan date back to 2016 when Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a successful visit to Iran during which China and Iran announced the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership, according to Chinese Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua. Since then, Chang had told the Tehran Times, exchanges and cooperation in various fields of the two countries have become increasingly close.

SPORTS

Iranian fans outraged by AFC's decision to choose Bahrain as host

→1 The letter included the joint FIFA World Cup / AFC Asian Cup qualifiers, a competition that the AFC and its commercial partners have no commercial interest in.

7 March:

Iran responds to AFC's letter dealing with all subject of AFC's concerns. They also remind the office of the General Secretariat that AFC has no commercial interest in the current stage of the joint qualifiers and as such AFC and its commercial partners will have no commercial presence during the matches in Iran.

12 March 2021:

The AFC announces the eight host nations for the June Centralized qualifiers. Six of the eight seeded teams are designated as hosts. Australian government does not waive its 14-day quarantine for all international arrivals in their country. Kuwait's bid is chosen over Jordan's to respect the spirit of fair play. Iran is the only AFC seeded team with three home games against its direct opponents whose hosting rights are denied and given to Bahrain, the home country of the AFC President, Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa.

13 March 2021:

Iranian Football authorities submit a letter of protest seeking AFC's clarification.

15 March 2021:

Iran submits another letter to AFC reminding them that they have ignored their letters and the least they expect is an acknowledgement and exhibition of respect towards one of their member associations.

16 March:

Iranian football officials send a letter to the office of the AFC President in Manama seeking a top urgent meeting with Sheikh Salman to discuss Bahrain's hosting.

16 March:

AFC General Secretary - Dato' Windsor John - responds to Iran's letter of 15 March stating the same vague explanations as to why Iran had not been given the hosting rights.

19 March:

Iran submits a 12-page dossier responding to Dato' Windsor John's vague and short explanations with indisputable facts and exhibits.

19 March:

Dato' Windsor John responds to Iran's request of 16 March to meet with Sheikh Salman, advising Iran that Sheikh Salman would meet with the newly elected President of the Iranian federation in Manama, on Saturday, 3 April. He writes as Bahrain's hosting decision was made by his office, the President will not discuss the subject, most important to Iran. This admission was a stark contrast to AFC's own regulations that such decisions are made by their Competitions Committee, approved by their Executive Committee and finally ratified by FIFA as this particular decision also concerned FIFA.

28 March:

Iranian football authorities invite Dato' Windsor John to an online meeting on Tuesday, 30 March for both parties to discuss the office of the General Secretariat's decision to appoint Bahrain as Group C host.

30 March:

By the end of business day in Kuala Lumpur, Dato' Windsor John neither responds nor acknowledges Iran's invitation.

31 March:

Following non-responsiveness of the office of the General Secretariat, the Iranian football authorities see no point in travelling to Manama. The 3 April proposed meeting date would have been after the legal deadline for Iran to take their grievance to CAS, as a last resort.

31 March:

Iran submits their case to the Court of Arbitration for Sports minutes ahead of the legal deadline.

5 April 2021:

CAS acknowledges the recipe of Iran's file.

Iranian wrestlers secure two Olympics Greco berths

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Mohammadreza Geraei and Mohammadhadi Saravi secured two Olympics spots at the Asian Olympic Qualifiers in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Friday.

Geraei defeated Indian wrestler Ashu Ashu by technical fall 9-1 and will face Korean Hansu Ryu in the 67kg weight class in the final.

"It's great to qualify here and I am ready for the Tokyo Olympics," Geraei said. "It's always great to be a champion. My brother (Mohammadali Geraei, 77kg) qualified for the Tokyo Olympics and he is a champion as well. He got it in Nursultan and I did it in Almaty. We will now do well in Tokyo."

In 97kg, Saravi advanced to final with a 10-2 technical fall over Yanan Chen from China.

He will face Uzur Dzhuypbekov from Kyrgyzstan in the final match.

Iran had already secured three Greco berths at the 2019 World Championships in Nursultan.

Alireza Nejati (60kg), Mohammadali Gerai (77kg) and Amir Ghasemi Monjezi (130kg) had previously booked their place at the Olympics.

Foolad Khuzestan have a difficult task against Al Ain in ACL playoff

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foolad will have a difficult task against the UAE's Al Ain since the 2002-03 champions are aiming to reach the AFC Champions League group stage for the 16th time in their history.

The match will be held in Riyadh's Faisal bin Fahad Stadium on Saturday.

The UAE side have never lost an AFC Champions League playoff game, having beaten Indonesia's Sriwijaya FC in 2011, Bahrain's Malkiya SC in 2018 and Uzbekistan's Bunyodkor last year.

Foolad, on the other side, have never contested a playoff match, having appeared in one edition before qualifying playoffs were introduced and qualified to the group stage directly in two subsequent appearances.

Iran discusses oil comeback with OPEC

➔ **1** Iran could be poised to officially rejoin the ranks of oil exporters in the current year as the U.S. seems willing to rejoin the nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic.

Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, has named the removal of Trump-imposed U.S. sanctions as the only pre-condition before Iran can agree to scale back atomic activities under the 2015 nuclear deal, dubbed Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The United States, for its part, appears willing to play ball after President Joe Biden expressed support for a return to something similar to JCPOA. However, the Biden administration has been adamant that Iran must first take steps to return to compliance, a parameter that Tehran has rejected.



OPEC Secretary-General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo (R) and Amir Hossein Zamaninia, Iran's governor for OPEC, hold talks in Vienna on Thursday.

Nevertheless, many experts expect the parties to reach some form of agreement, which could see the oil sanctions lifted in the current year. In fact, the members of the nuclear deal (the UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China) are now getting together in Vienna to discuss what happens next, with the Biden administration also in Vienna, though there will be no face-to-face with the Iranians.

Before the sanctions, Iran was one of the world's leading crude exporters, capable of pumping in excess of four million barrels a day in its heyday.

While the specter of millions of barrels flooding the market could be unsettling for the bulls, experts believe that investors should not fret too much about it.

Sanctions, coronavirus pandemic not to hinder Iran's development projects

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The spokesman of the Economic Committee of the Iranian parliament (Majlis) said that the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic could not stop the country's development projects.

"Despite the country's conflict with the most severe sanctions and the coronavirus crisis, although development projects were hampered, their implementation not only did not stop, but important projects were inaugurated", Mehdi Toghiani noted.

Referring to the U.S. sanctions against the country and the enemy's attempt to cripple Iranian economy, he said, "The campaign of maximum pressure and sanctions against our country caused many problems inside Iran, but the enemy's goals were not achieved."

"It is true that we experienced a relatively severe inflation; inflation that is unprecedented in the last 20 years, but we did not experience hyperinflation. It means that the country's economy was able to regulate itself", the spokesman of the Economic Committee further stated.

"Our unemployment has risen, but those surprising numbers, which exist even in the European countries that have no economic pressure, have not been experienced in Iran", he added.



The U.S. sanctions have targeted Iran's all aspects of economy and industry, but the "self-reliance" approach that the Islamic Republic has taken to nullify the sanctions has proved that nothing can impede Iran from progress.

Since the U.S. re-imposition of the sanctions, the self-reliance strategy of Iran has been followed up by all state-run and private bodies.

In the past Iranian calendar year, which was named as the year of "Surge in Production" by the leader of the Islamic Revolution, all ministries defined their comprehensive programs to pursue for materialization of that motto.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, as one of the major players in this due, also outlined an all-out plan in this regard.

Since the beginning of the past year, the government has urged various bodies and ministries to take the necessary measures for the realization of the year's motto.

In this regard, every week several major projects have gone operational all over the country in different sectors.

The Energy Ministry has implemented a program called "A-B-Iran" based on which the ministry inaugurates several energy projects every week, and the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry is also following a new scheme called "Persistent Production-Effective Employment-Sustainable Exports" under which the ministry has inaugurated numerous projects so far.

The Leader named the present year as the year of "Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles."

Regarding this year's motto, the industry minister said that his ministry along with other ministries like oil and agriculture ministries will make every effort to support production and eliminate the obstacles.

South Pars annual production goals realized: POGC

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Iran's South Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the country's giant South Pars gas field, has announced that the production goals set by the Oil Ministry for the field in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) have been completely realized.

As Shana reported, Mohammad Meshkinfam said that the South Pars gas field's output even exceeded the ministry's production targets by 15 million cubic meters per day during the previous year's winter period.

"Fortunately, with the efforts of our colleagues in the operations and support department, about 15 million cubic meters per day of gas was produced in excess of the target output approved by the Oil Ministry during the last winter," the official said on the sidelines of a meeting with the managers of POGC's operations and support department.

Referring to the preparation of a 20-year outlook plan for South Pars' development and maintenance, he added: "it is necessary to form a working group to prepare and



compile a guiding document for maintaining sustainable gas production from South Pars in short-term and long-term periods and

in order to identify problems and to make plans for eliminating bottlenecks."

The POGC head stated that about 70

Over 13m tons of livestock feed inputs imported in a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran imported over 23.107 million tons of basic goods in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) of which 58 percent or 13.438 million tons were livestock feed inputs, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

Rouhollah Latifi put the total value of the basic goods imported into the country over the past year at \$12.029 billion, IRNA reported.

According to Latifi, corn, barley, and soybean meal were the three main inputs imported into Iran in the previous year, accounting for 31 percent of the total value of the imported basic goods.

Over 13.438 million tons of the mentioned commodities worth over \$3.741 billion shipped into the country last year, the official said.

Corn was at the top of the country's imports list in the said year with more than 9.782 million tons of imports worth over \$2.498 billion, followed by soybean meal with over 1.819 million tons valued at \$793.938 of imports and barley with 1.836 million tons worth \$457.32 million.

Back in December 2020, the Agriculture Ministry had

announced that despite the trade limitations in the country, the required livestock feed inputs were provided to all meat and poultry chains in the country, and there were no restrictions in terms of providing and delivering inputs to the producers.

The Director-General of the Agriculture Ministry's Grains and Essential Goods Department Faramak Aziz-Karimi had said in late December 2020 that the implementation of a plan for reducing dependence on imports of livestock, poultry, and aquatic inputs, in a one-year project, the volume of imported corn and soybean meal decreased by three million tons and 400,000 tons.

According to Aziz-Karimi, the mentioned plan was implemented to substitute corn with other alternative crops such as millet, sorghum, triticale, vetch, soybean oil, and its meal, cotton meal, sesame, canola, and sunflower.

Based on the latest data released by Iran Feed and Grain Importers Union (IFGIU), Iran imported 8.5 million tons of animal feed inputs in the first seven months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21,2020), down 10 percent compared to the corresponding period in the preceding year.



According to IFGIU, some 9.5 million tons of the mentioned products were imported into the country in the previous year's same seven months.

The total value of imports of livestock inputs in the said period stood at over \$2.377 billion, 18 percent less than the same period last year in which \$2.903 billion worth of such products were imported.

CBI to allocate 50% of bank deposits in free zones to production units

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has agreed to a plan for allocating 50 percent of the bank deposits of the country's free zones to the production units based in these zones, an official with Iran's Free Zones High Council announced.

"The central bank has agreed to allocate 50 percent of the bank deposits in each zone to meet the financial needs of the production units in that zone, which would provide some of the support needed to finance the

economic activities of the mentioned units," IRIB quoted Ahmad Jamali as saying.

According to Jamali, the mentioned decision has been made in order to pave the way for the realization of the current year's motto which is "Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles."

Referring to some of the problems that the production units in free zones are currently facing, Jamali said: "The main concern of production units in these zones are related to order registration, customs,

financing, issuing establishment and operating licenses."

"Based on the agreements we had with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, the Central Bank of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, their problems and concerns should be resolved in near future," the official added.

He further stressed that the Secretariat of the Iranian Free Zones High Council's new approach is to focus on solving the problems

of the private sector.

According to the official, the Free Zones High Council has started monitoring the country's free zones to detect possible problems and issues in the way of materializing the year's motto in order to eliminate them.

The official also underlined some of the concerns of the investors in the country's free zones and noted that the council is communicating with the pertaining organizations and government bodies in order to address such concerns.

Annual export from Qom province rises 8%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of export from Qom province, in central Iran, has risen eight percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), the director general of the province's customs department, announced.

Esfandiyar Darikvandi also said the weight of exported products from the province indicates an 11-percent growth year on year.

There was a heavy pressure on the export sector of the province in the previous year due to the sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, but as the result of some good planning and taken measures a proper ground was laid and a better condition was provided for the enterprises of the province, the official noted.

He announced that 125,731 tons of products valued at \$148 million were exported from the province to countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), India, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan, and 81,000 tons of goods worth \$270.8 million were imported from countries such as China, India, Italy, the UAE, Turkey, and Japan in the past year.



As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi also put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons, and said that the figure shows a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the

TSE witnesses 3.6% drop of its main index in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 45,000 points, or 3.6 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1,249 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Opal Kani Pars Mining and Processing Company, Social Security Investment Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, and National Iranian Copper Industry Company were the most widely followed indices.

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.

Market analysts and experts suggest investors to focus more on long-term investment in the Iranian stock market and to invest through intermediary tools like exchange-traded funds (ETFs) to prevent possible losses in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21).

They also advise shareholders to avoid impulsive decisions for quitting the market rattled by the surprising fluctuations in the stock market in the previous year.

In this regard, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors at Tehran Stock Exchange Javad Eshqi-Nejad said the "exit strategy" is the worse course of action that a shareholder can take.

"For some hasty shareholders, exiting the market is their first choice after any fluctuation, while we have repeatedly stated that this is the worst type of strategy in this market," Eshqi-Nejad told IRNA.

"Only those shareholders who invest in this market with a long-term vision should expect profit," he stressed.

According to the official, people who are looking to invest in this market with small capitals and do not have much experience in this regard should invest through intermediary tools such as ETFs.

"Investing directly in the market is only for people who have enough experience in this market and are familiar with the risks," he emphasized.

Market analyst Alireza Tajbar believes that investors should consider the trend of stock exchange transactions in the past

year as a criterion for their investment in the current year and to avoid entering the market directly.

People should invest in this market through intermediaries such as financial institutions in order to obtain a reasonable return on the market and prevent possible losses, he said.

According to Tajbar, in addition to stock market analysis, shareholders must be careful and consider the value of companies' profitability and spend more time for market analysis when investing.

Stock market expert Mohammad Eqbal-Nia also suggests investors to have always a long-term vision for investing in the stock market, and if they do not have enough knowledge or time to spend in the market, it is better to enter the market through indirect methods such as mutual funds.

Does the trust between countries have to be scarce in the age of epidemics?

By Professor Zhang Yuan

Trust between nations is an important issue that prevails in international politics. At present, the Covid-19 global pandemic is still threatening the safety of human life. Since the Covid-19 strike, one of the consequences of a series of measures originally intended to block the spread of the virus, such repeated lockdown on metropolitan cities?close the country for several weeks or even months, is that the process of globalization is being fully impeded. As the vaccine development process evolves, vaccine nationalism is again becoming a serious challenge plaguing the fight against the epidemic in underdeveloped countries. In the age of epidemics, or in the future post-epidemic era, is trust between countries scarce?

Between March 24 and 30, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi paid official visits to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, and a working visit to Oman. Foreign Minister Wang Yi's trip to six West Asian countries unleashed to the world China's determination to enhance mutual trust with countries in West Asia, maintain common security in the region, and jointly promote stability.

Building mutual trust

One way to build trust between countries is through ally dependence, just as collective security and security communities are built on the basis of members' identification with the community. Secondly, the key prerequisite for trust between countries is to respect the equal status of international actors among countries, and is that the process of building mutual understanding and trust between states does not come at the cost of targeting third parties and undermining their interests. The third is to face up to the rise and fall in power among countries within the international system. The formation of deep and long-term trust between countries requires civilized dialogue and exchanges, that is an ideal international community that values both deepening intimacy and increasing interests.

Solidifying the foundations of trust

Building trust between countries is urgent to end the damage of the epidemic and to boost the global economy. Miscalculation among countries is due to the lack of a foundation of trust. The danger



Dr. Zhang Yuan is a Professor in the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University. She also serves as the director of the Middle Eastern religious Studies Project, visiting researcher of Religion and China's National Security Research Center of University Think Tank in Shanghai and visiting researcher of the Center for Religion and International Relations at Fudan University.

of miscalculation between countries can be both the security dilemma in international relations and the stagnation of development. The zero-sum game, the collection of a few countries into small groups, and the disregard and defiance of the international system with the United Nations at its core are all extremely short-sighted.

Close alliance relationships rely on the identification of common threats. In the current international system, some of the U.S. allies do not fully recognize the competitors marked out by the U.S. government as threats to them as well. This relationship differs from the Cold War bipolar pattern. On the other hand, strong alliance relationships also depend on the willingness and ability of core countries to provide timely and generous assistance to their allies when treats come to them. However, in recent years, in terms of both its national strength and its foreign engagement practices, the U.S. has struggled to fulfill its allies' expectations. The absolute trust that allies used to have in the United States is being eroded by the United States' own performance.

Time to enable trust building

In the face of common imminent and potential threats of Covid-19, West Asian countries have not only cooperated with China in fighting against the epidemic, but also in the process, they have exchanged experiences in governance.

The formation of trust between countries may be driven by external objective conditions. For example, in the face of an urgent public security crisis, the lack of trust between countries, without effective communication and joint action, will not achieve the goal of curbing the flow of viruses across borders. The formation of trust between countries is more the result of subjective willingness to deepen political, economic and cultural exchanges in multiple fields in an open and inclusive manner. In the long run, solid interstate trust relies more on long-term, continuous and peaceful civil contacts forming trust networks and public trust.

What do countries trust in?

In the era of the epidemic, according to the degree of urgency, the content of trust between countries is first of all belief in the determination to work together to fight the epidemic. Countries living in the international community

trust that working together to stabilize and rehabilitate the world economy is indispensable.

The second is trust in the future of expanding development cooperation and in the possibility of win-win cooperation between countries without harming each other's interests. What is more important is the trust that security and stability are common pursuits. A war of words cannot solve the problem of economic recovery, nor can it effectively solve complex global problems. The implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative provides a platform for countries around the world to build trusting relationships.

The third is to attach importance to the important role of key regions. China attaches importance to friendly relationships with West Asian countries, and has attached importance to mutual benefits in cooperation with West Asian countries. China regards the region countries as partners in cooperation, development, and peace. China has signed the "One Belt, One Road" document with 19 West Asian countries. High-level cooperation and communication platforms, such as China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, China-Arab Summit and Middle East (West Asia) Security Forum demonstrate that China is building institutionalized trust with West Asian countries.

The fourth is to trust that at the level of a more macro development pattern it can promote strategic co-construction and development goals. China and the leaders of West Asian countries have reached a consensus that it can achieve docking in major development strategies between China and West Asian countries.

China is a trustworthy, sincere and cooperative member of the international community. In a hostile international environment, where hegemonism and zero-sum games are still common, the friendly relations between China and West Asian countries provide an excellent example of trust among nations.

Although the establishment of solid mutual trust between all countries is almost a fairytale, the glorious humanity of mutual assistance between people during the epidemic and the moving belief that countries can overcome difficulties together shoulder to shoulder are reflections of human civilization. Interdependence with a sense of trust as the basis and guarantee is what makes international relations solid, peaceful and benevolent.

Intl. activists warn against left-wing Zionism promotion, attacks on Palestinian resistance front

A group of dozens of international human rights activists has warned against the promotion of the left-wing Zionism, which seeks to colonize popular solidarity with the Palestinian people through presenting them as a helpless nation and attacking the resistance front against the Tel Aviv regime.

The campaigners, in an open letter addressed to the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN), warned the non-governmental organization against the decision to opt former Australian journalist and television presenter Sophie McNeill as the keynote speaker during its upcoming

event, scheduled for May 23.

The activists highlighted that McNeill has encouraged the "Palestinians as victims" line at the same time as she has ferociously been attacking the anti-Israel resistance front.

They went on to describe her as a Western apologist, who attacks the resistance bloc in order to defend Washington's divide and rule strategy, U.S.-led military invasions, and attempts to either destroy or balkanize Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Following the assassination of top Iranian anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani near Baghdad airport in a terror drone strike authorized by former U.S. president Donald Trump on January 3 last year, every Palestinian faction pointed to his enormous role and unswerving support to the Palestinian cause, the human rights activists said.

Palestinian activist Ahd Tamimi, similarly, underscored the prominent role of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement, in this regard.

Leila Khaled, long-time activist and Central Committee member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), has also pointed to the regional character of the U.S.-led militancy imposed on Syria.

The activists said McNeill now works as a researcher for the so-called Human Rights Watch (HRW), whose executive director is a prominent liberal Zionist and he frantically tries to conceal the apartheid nature of the Israeli regime by a humane mask.

Human Rights Watch regularly makes moral equivalence between Israeli massacres and resistance mounted by Palestinian groups in the face of the Tel Aviv regime's acts of aggression, they argued.

They further noted that McNeill repeatedly made U.S.-HRW-crafted allegations about the use of barrel bomb and chemical warfare in Syria in order to incriminate the Damascus government as well as Syrian government troops, and prolong the Syrian conflict.

The activists said the former Australian television presenter also ran the publicity stunt about young Syrian boy Omran Daqneesh, whose blood- and dust-covered face spread across the internet following an alleged airstrike in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo in August 2016.

Her frenzied and scathing attacks on Syria also led American-Palestinian activist Ali Abunimah to ask her to explain her intentions which probably sought an Australian invasion on the conflict-plagued Arab country, they underlined.

The activists noted that McNeill was nominated for a Lowy Institute award back in 2017, stressing that the institute is known to be a staunch supporter of the Tel Aviv regime and said that Australia and Israel should be "partners in Asia."

They finally urged the APAN to reconsider its decision regarding the main speaker of its forthcoming event, otherwise they will certainly not take part in it.

Russian force on Ukraine border larger than any time since 2014, U.S. says

Russia has more troops on Ukraine's eastern border than at any time since 2014, when it annexed Crimea and backed separatist territory seizures, and the United States is concerned by growing "Russian aggressions," the White House said on Thursday.

According to Reuters, the United States is discussing its concerns with its NATO allies, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told a briefing.

The Russian buildup has become the latest point of friction in icy relations between Moscow and U.S. President Joe Biden's administration, adding to disputes over arms control, human rights and other issues.

Biden last week expressed "unwavering support" for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his confrontation with Russia, which in 2014 annexed the Crimea peninsula and backed separatists who seized large parts of the eastern Donbas region.

Saudi coalition flees from Ma'rib as resistance advances

➔ 1 Losing Ma'rib would be "the final bullet in the head of the internationally recognized government," said Abdulghani al-Iryani, a senior researcher at the Sanaa Center for Strategic Studies. "You're looking at a generation of instability and humanitarian crisis. You also will look at a free-for-all theater for regional meddling."

'Aggressors looking for escape from Yemen quagmire'

Meanwhile, Yemeni Defense Minister in the National Salvation Government, Major General Muhammad Nasser al-Atifi, says Saudi Arabia and its allies involved in the ongoing war on country are searching for ways to get out of the Yemen quagmire.

"The coalition of aggression member states are going through miserable conditions, and are now looking for a way out of the Yemen quagmire," Atifi said in an exclusive interview with Yemen's al-Masirah television network on Friday.

"We have the information and coordinates that give us the opportunity to vigorously challenge the coalition of aggression, and to enrage Riyadh, Washington, London, Paris and Tel Aviv. They will find nothing other than a retaliatory attack as long as their aggression persists."

The high-ranking Yemeni military official pointed out that the Saudi-led military alliance does not want to concede defeat in its campaign against Yemen, noting that those who dragged the Riyadh regime and its allies into the aggression are now looking for their escape in a face-saving manner.

Saudi Arabia, backed by the U.S. and its other regional allies, launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of Yemen's former president back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah movement.

The Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees have, however, gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

The Saudi-led military aggression has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions of people.

It also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases across the country.

ISIL chief was a prison informer in Iraq for U.S.

In confidential interrogation reports, Iraqi detainee Mo60108-01 is depicted as a model prisoner, "cooperative" with his American captors and unusually chatty. At times, he seemed to go out of his way to be helpful, especially when offered a chance to inform on rivals within his organization, then known as the Islamic State of Iraq.

Over several days of questioning in 2008, the detainee provided precise directions on how to find the secret headquarters of the insurgent group's media wing, down to the color of the front door and the times of day when the office would be occupied. When asked about the group's No. 2 leader — a Moroccan-born Swede named Abu Qaswarah — he drew maps of the man's compound and gave up the name of Abu Qaswarah's personal courier.

Weeks after those revelations, U.S. soldiers killed Abu Qaswarah in a raid in the Iraqi city of Mosul. Meanwhile, the detainee, U.S. officials say, would go on to become famous under a different name: Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi — the current leader of the ISIL terrorist group.

U.S. officials opened a rare window into the terrorist chief's early days as a militant with the release this week of dozens of formerly classified interrogation reports from his months in an American detention camp in Iraq.

Resistance News

Israel to build 540 settler units in East al-Quds for first time since Biden inauguration

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Israeli authorities have given the green light for the construction of hundreds of illegal settler units in the occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds in the first such measure since US President Joe Biden assumed office in late January.

The proposed 540 housing units are to be built in the Palestinian neighborhoods of Beit Safafa and Shara'fat, and create territorial continuity between the two major settlements of Har Homa and Givat Hamatos south of East Jerusalem al-Quds, Israeli English-language newspaper Haaretz reported.

The so-called Local Committee for Planning and Construction in the Jerusalem Municipality said it had approved the construction in Har Homa, which will consist of 12- and 30-storey residential towers. The complex will reportedly include road and transport infrastructure and new public spaces.

The outline plan for the units is scheduled to be discussed by the committee on April 21. If approved, the neighborhood would officially go forward.

The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority condemned the Israeli decision, with presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh saying in a statement that the move is "condemned and rejected."

"It violates all United Nations resolutions that condemn settlements, especially Resolution 2334 which affirmed that all forms of settlements on Palestinian lands are illegal," Abu Rudeineh said.

President Biden had claimed his administration would restore the US policy of opposing settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territories.

First Announcement



Qualitative Evaluation Notice for Selection of Consultant International Tender No.22-97-3

Subject: First Notice of Invitation for Engineering, Designing & Supervision Services of Gramsar-IncheBorun Railway Electrification Project (Tender no.22-97-3)

The Railways of Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI) intend to hold a qualitative evaluation for selection of a qualified consultant among eligible bidders in accordance with Article 29–Clause E of Executive Regulations Statute of Tender Holding Law as per hereunder described items:

1- General Scope of Tender Subject:

Selection of Consultant for carrying out engineering, designing & supervision services of Gramsar-IncheBorun Railway Electrification Project.

2- Project Execution Place: Railways of Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI)

3- Deadline for Purchasing Tender Qualitative Evaluation Documents: Utmost by 14:30 local time on Saturday 24.04.2021 corresponding to 04.02.1400.

4- Deadline and place of submission of completed Qualitative Evaluation Documents: Bidders can complete and submit the completed documents to RAI Procurement and Logistics General Department (Foreign Orders Department) utmost by 14:30 local time on Tuesday 25.05.2021 corresponding to 04.03.1400.

Address: 2nd Floor, Iranian Railways Central Building; Argentina Sq., Nelson Mandela Blvd (Africa), Tehran-Iran, P.O. Box 15197-13111

5- Manner of receiving the documents: Bidders can receive tender documents from the above address after paying RLS 500000 to IBAN no.IR710100004001064004005747 by mentioning the remittance code of no.234064074280500885134499810000 opened in favor of Iranian Railways by Central Bank of Iran (payable in all branches of Bank Melli Iran). Bidders should hold a letter of introduction in order to receive a version of qualitative evaluation documents personally. Bidders can also receive the said documents free of charge through National Tender Information Database at the address: [HTTP://IETS.MPORG.IR](http://IETS.MPORG.IR).

6- The participants in the bid consultation notice (Iranian partnership) should have certificate of competency Grade: One, Group: Road & Transportation in Railways Proficiency Field (Consultancy) issued by Management and Planning Organization of Iran.

7- All Bidders should introduce their foreign partner or partners.

After fulfillment of qualitative evaluation, the qualified companies who have been nominated in accordance with Clause 6-A of Article 12 of Executive Regulations Statute of Tender Holding Law (Article 29–Clause E), will be invited to receive tender documents in consulting services process.

Procurement and Logistics General Department
Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI)

15 newly-found petroglyph sites documented in northwest Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Iranian archaeologists and cultural heritage experts have completed the documentation process of the fifteen sites of petroglyph, which were discovered last year in the plains of Meshginshahr county, northwest of the country.

The sites were discovered last [Iranian calendar] year (ended March 20) and now their documentation process has come to an end, Emamali Imani, the tourism chief of Meshginshahr, said on Thursday.



According to the official, the historical sites contain over 100,000 petroglyphs, which are rare in their kinds in north-western Iran.

“The discovered objects bear depictions of human beings in archery, cavalry in rhythmic and magical themes... Some of those date back to 40,000 years ago.”

In November 2018, Imani announced that new traces of prehistoric relics and petroglyphs were detected through an archeological survey in Meshginshahr county.

Some petroglyphs depict mountain goats, boat anchors, shooting and scenes of war, and scenes of deer hunting in individual and collective forms, the official stated.

The rock art can be seen in some mountainous regions across the country, offering good clues to help shed light on daily life in the distant past, though some of which bear figurative figures.

UNWTO reports 87 percent decline in tourist arrivals during January

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has stated that the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global tourism has carried on into 2021, with new data showing an 87% fall in international tourist arrivals in January as compared to 2020.

The outlook for the rest of the year remains cautious as the UNWTO continues to call for stronger coordination on travel protocols between countries to ensure the safe restart of tourism and avoid another year of massive losses for the sector, the Travel Daily News reported.

Following a difficult end of the year 2020, global tourism suffered further setbacks at the beginning of the year as countries tightened travel restrictions in response to new virus outbreaks.

According to the latest edition of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, all world regions continued to experience large drops in tourist arrivals in the first month of the year.

Mandatory testing, quarantines, and in some cases the complete closure of borders, have all hindered the resumption of international travel. Besides, the speed and distribution of the vaccination roll-out have been slower than expected, further delaying the restart of tourism.

Asia and the Pacific (down 96%), the region which continues to have the highest level of travel restrictions in place, recorded the largest decrease in international arrivals in January. Europe and Africa both saw a decline of 85% in arrivals, while the Middle East recorded a drop of 84%. On the other hand, the Americas saw international decreased by 79% in January following somewhat better results in the last quarter of the year.



Based on current trends, UNWTO expects international tourist arrivals to be down about 85% in the first quarter of 2021 over the same period of 2019. This would represent a loss of some 260 million international arrivals when compared to pre-pandemic levels. Looking ahead, UNWTO has outlined two scenarios for 2021, which consider a possible rebound in international travel in the second half of the year. These scenarios are based on several factors, most notably a major lifting of travel restrictions, the success of vaccination programs, or the introduction of harmonized protocols.

The first scenario points to a rebound in July, which would result in a 65% increase in international arrivals for the year 2021 compared to the historic lows of 2020. In this case, arrivals would still be 55% below the levels recorded in 2019. The second scenario considers a potential rebound in September, leading to a 30% increase in arrivals compared to last year but even then, it would be 67% below the levels of 2019.

Zurab Pololikashvili, secretary-general, UNWTO said in a statement that 2020 was the worst year on record for tourism and the international community needs to take strong and urgent action to ensure a brighter 2021. The official mentioned that millions of livelihoods and businesses are dependent on tourism and hence improved coordination between countries and harmonized travel and health protocols are essential to restore confidence in tourism and allow international travel to resume safely ahead of the peak summer season in the northern hemisphere.

Archaeological survey to probe Sassanid relics in Sirvan

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Iranian archaeologists are to commence a survey in Sirvan, a western Iranian town in modern Ilam province estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224–651).

“An archaeological excavation will commence within the next few years on the town of Sirvan, which was once an illustrious Sassanid city,” provincial tourism chief Abdolmalak Shanbehzadeh announced on Tuesday, CHTN reported.

“Sirvan was one of the most important and prosperous cities of Iran in the Sassanid period. It is home to [the ruined] bridges, roads, yards, numerous castles and other ancient settlements dating back to the Sassanid era.”

The historical city of Sirvan was inscribed on Iran’s National Heritage List in 2001.

The under-the-radar province is making its best to grow into a major travel destination for both domestic and international holidaymakers, sightseers, history buffs, and nature lovers.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Experts believe during the Sassanid era the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated,



as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

The Sassanid archaeological landscape

also represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of

Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region” -- to its World Heritage list. The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. It reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

The dynasty evolved by Ardashir I and was destroyed by the Arabs during a period of 637 to 651. The dynasty was named after Sasan, an ancestor of Ardashir I. Under his leadership who reigned from 224 to 241, the Sassanians overthrew the Parthians and created an empire that was constantly changing in size as it reacted to Rome and Byzantium to the west and the Kushans and Hephthalites to the east, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

At the time of Shapur I (reigned 241 CE–272), the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys.

Coronavirus: outbound travels slump by 85% during Iranian New Year holiday

→ 1 It seems many people have postponed, rescheduled, or even delayed their travel plans to help limit the spread of the coronavirus around the country, the official added.

Back in January Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced that Iran’s tourism industry has suffered a loss of over 140 trillion rials (about \$3.33 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. Although the worldwide outbreak

of COVID-19 has brought the whole world to a standstill, the tourism industry has been the worst affected of all economic sectors, he explained.

However, efforts are being made by the government to help the tourism sector flourish again with continuous support and injecting supportive packages, the minister said.

Iranians traditionally make hundreds of thousands of domestic trips during the New Year holidays, when most businesses and workplaces are closed, as are schools.



70 historical petroglyphs discovered in central Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A total of 70 historical rock-carved petroglyphs, which experts believe date back to the Sassanid era, have recently been discovered in Mahallat county of Markazi province in central Iran.

“Yesterday, 70 petroglyphs were in Sanjeh Bashi district of Mahallat county,” CHTN quoted Mehdi La’ibar, the tourism chief of Mahallat, as saying on Thursday.

“The petroglyphs depict various motifs including mountain goat and hunter, horseman holding a spear. And according to experts, they date from the Sassanid



period (224 CE–651),” the official noted. In many ways, Iran under the Sassanian

rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance during Sassanid rule. In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Of all the material remains of the era, only coins constitute a continuous chronological sequence throughout

the whole period of the dynasty. Such Sassanian coins have the name of the king for whom they were struck inscribed in Pahlavi, which permits scholars to date them quite closely.

The legendary wealth of the Sassanian court is fully confirmed by the existence of more than one hundred examples of bowls or plates of precious metal known at present. One of the finest examples is the silver plate with partial gilding in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The dynasty was destroyed by Arab invaders during a span from 637 to 651.

New cultural heritage elements in southeast Iran added to national list

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A total of eight new cultural elements, which are practiced in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, have been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Thursday announced the inscriptions in an official document it submitted to the governor-general of the province, CHTN reported.

The skills of making several local dishes such as Chicken Abgoosht, Kalehjoosh, and Kashk-e Baluchi were amongst entrees to the prestigious list.

The expertise of making waterskins, and the skill of making Sistan’s traditional broom were other elements being registered, the report added.

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and



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

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

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

Qajar-era ice storage to undergo restoration

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A Qajar-era Yakhchal (ice storage), which stands tall in Mamuniyeh, central province of Markazi, is scheduled to undergo some rehabilitation works within a month, a local tourism official has announced.

“Strengthening exterior walls using cob material as well as repairing and replacing worn-out bricks are amongst restoration work to be conducted,” Zahra Ranjbar said on Thursday.

A budget of 200 million rials (about \$4,700 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, the official added.

Mahdiabad Yakhchal with its conical mud-brick adobe structure has been added to the National Heritage list.

When there was no electricity, no refrigerators, and no appliances, people kept a huge amount of water next to the high walls of Yakhchal, which cast a shadow that kept the water cool.

The water turned into ice during the wintertime. Then people cut the ice into many portable parts and put them in the ice house and covered the surface of the ice with special local grass.



The structure is built high to minimize the contact of warm air with the ice surface as the warm air floats upwards. The feature of the ice storage was essential to its functioning.

There were also wells behind the ice storages with a connective canal at the bottom of the ice storage to the wells with a slight slope.

When people piled up the ice, a little amount of water remained under the heap of ice. If the water was not removed it would make the rest of the ice melt. By channeling the water into the well, not only did they prevent the ice stored in the ice house from melting, but also they had cold and tasty water during summer months when the weather went up to 40 degrees Celsius.



“TENDER”

Tender for purchasing of the following items:

- 1) 38,430 MT first class wood free high white offset printing paper in reel (70gsm)
- 2) 4,570 MT fully coated paperboard with white back for book covering (210gsm)
- 3) 1,400 MT first class wood free high white offset printing paper in sheet (70gsm)

Offset Press Inc. and Iran Textbook Printing and publishing Co. intend to purchase the above mentioned paper in one package or in 3 parts through a tender.

Interested parties who wish to participate may collect the tender documents from the address below as soon as possible and send the requested documents and samples by 2pm on Tuesday 24/04/2021.

Address: Offset Press Inc. No.8, Damavand Road, Tehran – Iran
Postcode: 1746853171

Tel: (+98) 21 77961611 Fax: (+98) 21 77339097 Email: info@offset.ir

National subway train unveiled

➔ **1** The national train was produced by 18 knowledge-based companies and based on the experience of the last 20 years in the production of three generations of subway cars, costing €12 million and causing €8 million currency saving, he stated.

One of the most important and basic projects to reduce pollution and traffic in metropolitan areas is the development of public transportation, and the metro has a special role in this regard, Pirouz Hanachi, Tehran mayor said during the inauguration ceremony.

In the capital city of Tehran, in less than 10 years, we need 5,000 subway cars to maximize the efficiency of the subway infrastructure system, he noted, adding, we operated the largest transportation project in 7 metro lines with a length of 246.8 km and 141 completed stations in Tehran, he highlighted.

By the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2022), we have the capacity to manufacture 105 subway cars, he further emphasized.

Based on the Sixth Development Plan (2016-2021), 2,000 subway cars worth 2 billion euros must be provided to the transport system by the end of the current year, he stated.



With the mass-production of the national subway trains, 5,000 direct jobs and 10,000 indirect jobs will be generated, he added.

Metro development and air pollution reduction

Traffic congestion and air pollution pose

pressing urban challenges in many developing and emerging countries.

Air pollution brings a heavy economic burden amounting to \$7 million per day for the metropolis of Tehran.

According to the World Bank in 2018, the economic consequences of air pollution haunting the metropolis of Tehran equal \$2.8 billion per year, the number of deaths attributed to air pollution in Iran is estimated at 12,000 per year, of which 4,000 are related to Tehran.

Metro is an important means of transportation, which bears a very heavy task of public transport. Especially in large cities, metro transport accounted for an important part of daily travel which causes significantly less air pollution in comparison to other transport fleets.

The expansion of the subway network can create a countervailing force that could affect air quality, the improved subway coverage could lead some commuters to switch from traveling using private cars to using subways and can relieve traffic congestion and thus reduce air pollution.

Algal blooms could spew lethal toxins into the air: study

Harmful algal blooms may be even more harmful than we thought.

They have already been shown to kill the fish that swim in the water they infest or the animals that drink from it. Now, new research indicates they could even poison the air. In a study published in Lake and Reservoir Management this month, scientists for the first time detected an airborne instance of the algal toxin anatoxin-a (ATX), also known as “very fast death factor.”

“ATX is one of the more dangerous cyanotoxins produced by harmful algal blooms, which are becoming more predominant in lakes and ponds worldwide due to global warming and climate change,” study lead author Dr. James Sutherland of the Nantucket Land Council said in a press release.

ATX is a toxin made by cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae. Despite their name, these single-celled organisms are not plants but rather bacteria that can photosynthesize. The toxin can cause loss of coordination, muscular twitching and respiratory paralysis. It has been known to kill livestock, pets and other animals that drink contaminated water.



“Although no previous studies have documented the capture of airborne ATX molecules or cyanobacteria cells containing ATX, we hypothesized that ATX could become airborne under certain environmental conditions,” the study authors wrote.

To test this idea, the scientists devised a way to sample

the air above a pond in Nantucket, Massachusetts dealing with a harmful algal bloom (HAB). They brought an air sampling device to the shore on windy days and collected airborne particles on filters. They also tested the water for the presence of the toxin.

The scientists collected their samples between July and October of 2019. They detected ATX in the water at concentrations as high as 21 nanograms per milliliter, Science Alert reported. And, on one foggy and windy day in September, they detected it in the air also. They recorded an average of 0.87 nanograms per filter on their air sampling device, which would equal an airborne exposure of 0.16 nanograms per meter squared.

The researchers are not sure how the toxin ended up in the air, but think the wind might have blown it in small droplets from the pond, and then the fog allowed it to persist for longer than usual. In any case, it is a problem worth investigating further.

“These findings indicate that emission of ATX molecules, or cyanobacteria containing ATX, during HABs presents a potential human health exposure not previously examined,” the researchers wrote.

Cycling is more important than electric cars for achieving net-zero cities

Globally, only one in 50 new cars were fully electric in 2020, and one in 14 in the UK. Sounds impressive, but even if all new cars were electric now, it would still take 15-20 years to replace the world's fossil fuel car fleet.

The emission savings from replacing all those internal combustion engines with zero-carbon alternatives will not feed in fast enough to make the necessary difference in the time we can spare: the next five years. Tackling the climate and air pollution crises requires curbing all motorized transport, particularly private cars, as quickly as possible. Focusing solely on electric vehicles is slowing down the race to zero emissions.

This is partly because electric cars aren't truly zero-carbon – mining the raw materials for their batteries, manufacturing them and generating the electricity they run on produces emissions.

Transport is one of the most challenging sectors to decarbonize due to its heavy fossil fuel use and reliance on carbon-intensive infrastructure – such as roads, airports and the vehicles themselves – and the way it embeds car-dependent lifestyles. One way to reduce transport emissions relatively quickly, and potentially globally, is to swap cars for cycling, e-biking and walking – active travel, as it's called.

Active travel is cheaper, healthier, better

for the environment, and no slower on congested urban streets. So how much carbon can it save on a daily basis? And what is its role in reducing emissions from transport overall?

In new research, colleagues and I reveal that people who walk or cycle have lower carbon footprints from daily travel, including in cities where lots of people are already doing this. Despite the fact that some walking and cycling happens on top of motorized journeys instead of replacing them, more people switching to active travel would equate to lower carbon emissions from transport on a daily and trip-by-trip basis.

What a difference a trip makes

We observed around 4,000 people living in London, Antwerp, Barcelona, Vienna, Orebro, Rome and Zurich. Over a two-year period, our participants completed 10,000 travel diary entries which served as records of all the trips they made each day, whether going to work by train, taking the kids to school by car or riding the bus into town. For each trip, we calculated the carbon footprint.

Strikingly, people who cycled on a daily basis had 84% lower carbon emissions from all their daily travel than those who didn't.

We also found that the average person who shifted from car to bike for just one day

a week cut their carbon footprint by 3.2kg of CO₂ – equivalent to the emissions from driving a car for 10km, eating a serving of lamb or chocolate, or sending 800 emails.

When we compared the life cycle of each travel mode, taking into account the carbon generated by making the vehicle, fueling it and disposing of it, we found that emissions from cycling can be more than 30 times lower for each trip than driving a fossil fuel car, and about ten times lower than driving an electric one.

We also estimate that urban residents who switched from driving to cycling for just one trip per day reduced their carbon footprint by about half a tonne of CO₂ over the course of a year, and save the equivalent emissions of a one-way flight from London to New York. If just one in five urban residents permanently changed their travel behavior in this way over the next few years, we estimate it would cut emissions from all car travel in Europe by about 8%.

Nearly half of the fall in daily carbon emissions during global lockdowns in 2020 came from reductions in transport emissions. The pandemic forced countries around the world to adapt to reduce the spread of the virus. In the UK, walking and cycling have been the big winners, with a 20% rise in people walking regularly, and cycling levels increasing by 9% on



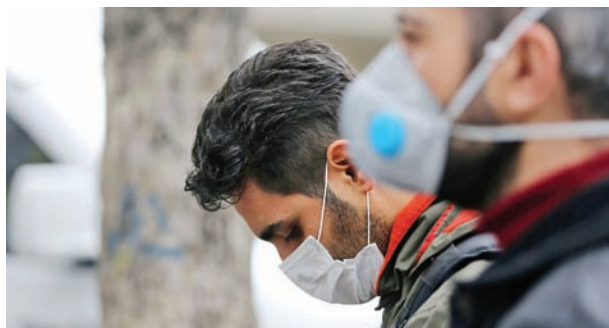
weekdays and 58% on weekends compared to pre-pandemic levels. This is despite cycle commuters being very likely to work from home.

Active travel has offered an alternative to cars that keeps social distancing intact. It has helped people to stay safe during the pandemic and it could help reduce emissions as confinement is eased, particularly as the high prices of some electric vehicles are likely to put many potential buyers off for now.

So the race is on. Active travel can contribute to tackling the climate emergency earlier than electric vehicles while also providing affordable, reliable, clean, healthy and congestion-busting transportation.

Ten-day lockdown begins today to curb pandemic

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has announced a new lockdown for ten days from today as the country continues to battle a fourth wave of the coronavirus.



Under the restrictions, shopping malls, gyms, mosques, salons, universities, schools, libraries, kindergartens, cinemas, museums, cafes, zoos, and amusement parks will be closed in cities at high risk of infection, IRNA reported on Friday.

Currently, 257 cities including all provincial capital cities, are in the high-risk red zones, Alireza Raeisi, spokesman for the National Headquarters for Coronavirus control said.

The number of coronavirus cases has been rising in Iran after the two-week Noruz holidays, which officially began on March 20.

The country has hit a new coronavirus infection record, reporting over 22,000 daily new cases.

The UK variant now has spread widely across the country to an extent that no provinces have been spared from it, Massoud Mardani, a member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, said.

■ New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Friday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 22,478 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,029,412. She added that 1,693,005 patients have so far recovered, but 4,278 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 155 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 64,039, she added.

So far, 13,494,296 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Third of Antarctic ice shelves 'will collapse amid 4C global heating'

More than a third of the vast floating platforms of ice surrounding Antarctica could be at risk of collapsing and releasing “unimaginable amounts” of water into the sea if global temperatures reach 4C above pre-industrial levels, UK scientists say.

Researchers from the University of Reading said that limiting the temperature rise to 2C could halve the area at risk and avoid a drastic rise in sea levels.

The findings, published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, suggest that 4C warming could leave 34% of the area of all the Antarctic ice shelves – amounting to about half a million square kilometres – at the risk of collapse.

Ice shelves are permanent floating sheets of ice that connect to a landmass; most surround the coasts of Antarctica.

Ella Gilbert, a research scientist in the University of Reading's meteorology department, said: “Ice shelves are important buffers, preventing glaciers on land from flowing freely into the ocean and contributing to sea level rise. When they collapse it's like a giant cork being removed from a bottle, allowing unimaginable amounts of water from glaciers to pour into the sea.

“We know that, when melted ice accumulates on the surface of ice shelves, it can make them fracture and collapse spectacularly.

“Previous research has given us the bigger picture in terms of predicting Antarctic ice shelf decline. But our new study uses the latest modelling techniques to fill in the finer detail and provide more precise projections.”

Gilbert said the team's work highlighted the importance of limiting the global temperature increases as set out in the Paris climate agreement, which promotes a global framework to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to less than 2C above pre-industrial levels.

As part of their modelling study, the researchers also identified Larsen C, the largest remaining ice shelf on the peninsula, as being particularly at risk in a warmer climate. They said other ice shelves facing this threat included Shackleton, Pine Island, and Wilkins.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 154)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

پیاده‌روی و کوه‌نوردی در شمال شهر تهران از ورزش‌های جالب و عمومی به شمار می‌رود.
قله‌ی توجال، که ۳۹۳۳ متر ارتفاع دارد، نزدیک‌ترین قله به داخل شهر است. در روزهای تعطیل، مخصوصاً در فصل تابستان، زن و مرد، پیر و جوان، یا پیاده به طرف قله می‌روند یا سوار تله‌کابین می‌شوند. در فصل زمستان، موقعی که برف کافی روی زمین می‌نشیند، مردم برای اسکی به ایستگاه هفتم می‌روند. تله‌کابین توجال دارای هشت ایستگاه است.
جمعه‌ی گذشته، دانیل و میخال به ایستگاه هشتم رفتند. در رستوران هتل، مردم ناهار می‌خوردند و از هوای تمیز و خنک بالای کوه لذت می‌بردند. آنها می‌توانستند از آنجا شهر تهران را تماشا کنند.

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ج

'City-friendly schools' scheme launched in Tehran

The “city-friendly schools” scheme was launched in the capital to promote environmental protection and urban development issues among students, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Mojtaba Daneshvar, director general of citizenship education at Tehran Municipality, said that the project covers more than 550 schools, consisting of 160,000 students.

It aims to familiarize students with the rights and duties of citizens, the environment, waste, transportation and traffic, safety and security, crisis management, he explained.

The training programs will be in the form of workshops, role plays, cultural and educational camps, production of educational content such as books, brochures and posters, he concluded.

آغاز طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» در تهران

طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» با هدف آشنا کردن دانش آموزان با حقوق و تکالیف شهروندی، محیط زیست و پسماند، حمل و نقل و ترافیک، و ایمنی و مدیریت بحران در مدارس منتخب شهر تهران آغاز شد.

به گزارش ایسنا مجتبی دانشور، مدیرکل آموزش‌های شهروندی شهرداری تهران، گفت این طرح بیش از ۵۵۰ مدرسه شامل ۱۶۰ هزار دانش آموز را در بر می‌گیرد.

برنامه‌های آموزشی این طرح در قالب برگزاری کارگاه‌های آموزشی، تولید محتوای آموزشی در قالب کتاب، بروشور و پوستر، اجرای نمایش و برگزاری اردوهای فرهنگی و آموزشی خواهد بود.

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

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
info@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
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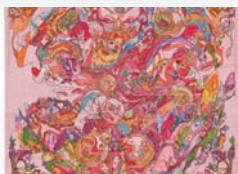
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P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Best way to defend Islam, is to practice Islam.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Miniature

■ An exhibition of miniatures by Hadith Fakhri is currently underway at Aran Gallery. Entitled "The Infinite World", the exhibition will run until May 7 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



Painting

■ A collection of paintings by Abdolreza Amin Lari is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery. The exhibit will be running until April 27 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St. ■ Samira Rezai is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery. The exhibit named "Spring 30" will run until April 14 at the gallery located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.



Multimedia

■ A collection of artworks in various media by a group of artists is on display in an exhibition at Soo Gallery. The exhibit named "The Depth of the Dark Cave" will continue until May 3 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off Somayyeh St.



Photo

■ Photos by Spideh Safiyari are on view in an exhibition at 009821 Projects Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Assumption" runs until April 20 at the gallery located at No. 25, 18th Alley, Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.



Calligraphic painting

■ Negar Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of calligraphic paintings by Hassan Mehrabani. Entitled "Tiamat", the exhibit runs until April 20 at the gallery that can be found at 54 near Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Blvd.

"Islamic Revolution Art Week" pays tribute to Morteza Avini

A R T TEHRAN — As a tribute to Basiji Artist and Filmmaker Morteza Avini, who was martyred on April 9, 1993 and after a petition was submitted by poets, writers, and artists following his martyrdom and endorsed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Islamic Revolution Art Week is held every year during the month of April.



It has become a national norm in Iran to name the days of the year after notable individuals with the aim of glorifying prominent Islamic and national figures, and this applies more specifically to martyrs who sacrificed their lives for Islam and for their country.

Avini is famously known by Iranians as having spent all the moments of his life struggling to promote Islamic values in the form of Art and provided valuable services in the field of media, and because of his significant involvement in this field, the anniversary of his martyrdom has been named as the Art Day of the Islamic Revolution.

In 1979, Avini turned to filmmaking after the return of Imam Khomeini from exile and the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The most notable piece of work produced by Avini is the documentary series called "Narration of Conquest" which are in the form of extraordinary real-life footage recordings of the Iran-Iraq war in the frontlines presenting an inspiring narrative of sacrifice in several frontline combat operations. As part of this series, a special episode called "City in the Sky" which depicts the resistance of the people of Khorramshahr was produced and this was the final production of the late martyr.

'Read and fight for what's right', Danish-Lebanese artist tells the youth

→1 Lockdown was an opportunity to bond more closely as a family because as parents we now had a chance to strengthen our relationship with our children.

Some of the things we had more time for during lockdown were ordering Islamic books online and reading stories about the prophets and the imams to our kids and teaching them more about Islam. We also had the opportunity to teach our kids the Arabic language for reciting the Holy Quran and developing their general understanding of the Quranic Arabic recitation.

Aside from Islamic activities, we also had the chance to cook together, like baking cakes and pizza. This was also a great opportunity to develop our children's sense of responsibility by giving them cleaning tasks! Although we always had to re-do the cleaning all over again ourselves, at least they learned to be responsible for cleaning their own rooms and helping with household chores.

On a personal level, it was very tough to suddenly dive into dealing with "homeschooling", as we didn't have any experience on this prior to the pandemic. But Kids are kids! Even though we know they're a blessing, but they can sometimes get on your nerves! But Alhamdulillah, an overall very useful and educating experience both for us as parents, and hopefully for them as children.

Can you give us some details of your recent tracks and artworks?

Since the start of the pandemic, I am grateful to have been able to release 2 singles and 2 music videos despite the lockdown restrictions.

My first release during lockdown was the Music Video for Lady Fatima Zahra's birthday. It was called "Divine Light feat. Kassem Hmede", and it was filmed in Beirut, Lebanon. The track is a mixture of Arabic and English songs, praising Lady Fatima Zahra (SA).

The 2nd release was in the holy month of Ramadan. The track was called Ramadan, and it was again a mixture of Arabic and English songs.



The 3rd, and in my opinion the most interesting release in this period, was the English, Arabic, and Persian track and music video "I Heard" that was co-produced with the global Love Muhammad campaign.

"I Heard" was released as a clear condemnation against the insults to the prophet by the French Charlie Hebdo and the Danish Jyllands-Posten, who re-released the shameful drawings that insulted our beloved Prophet (PBUH) in 2020.

In the video, we also portrayed Western systematic racism, and especially the sad racist incident with the late African-American George Floyd.

The music video was shot in multiple international locations, and especially in Denmark. The 4th release was the track for Imam Ali's birthday, "Ya Ali", which is a song in praise of Imam Ali (AS) on his blessed birthday.

Why do you make songs for Imam Ali and the Prophet? What inspires you to sing in their praise?

As an Islamic artist, I have a responsibility towards my fellow Muslims. I feel that there is a big gap in the Islamic arts industry especially in the current era where the media has so much

influence in our lives.

Praising Allah, and the beautiful religion of Islam, the holy prophet and the Ahlulbayt, is mainly based on the love for them, and also on a personal feeling, a feeling for a need, a need to respond to the negative portrayals of our religion in the media. The media that targets Muslims and tries to impose an ugly image of hate for Islam. We are a peaceful, friendly, and loving society that respects all faiths and wants to live in harmony with our fellow humans. So, producing Islamic art is a response, and a responsibility, to show the world the real picture of true Islam, the Islam of our beloved Prophet (PBUH).

What would you name as your best achievement in your life up to now?

My best achievement on a personal level, in life, must be the self-realization that I experienced in my early twenties. All praise to Allah, I was born and raised as a Muslim, but after studying Islam more comprehensively, I came to the conclusion that Islam isn't "just" a religion, rather Islam is the way of life, and the way to the afterlife. The more I studied, the more I discovered how little I knew about Islam.

May Allah give us the strength and knowledge to fall deeper into his mercy.

On the artistic side, I would say that my biggest achievements have been the response I received from people who enjoyed my music and sent me lovely emails and messages, and I am grateful to all of them, and I hope they benefited from our work. As Islamic artists, our main job is to serve this Ummah.

As a Muslim artist living in Europe, how have you been able to cope with the recent global changes?

Regarding our global networking as artists, we could say that generally speaking, our main interactions with our followers and listeners have been through social media. And because of covid19 and lockdown, our connection through social media has been strengthened. But on the other side, many events, concerts, and trips have been canceled due to pandemic circumstances. We pray that Allah helps us defeat this disease and return to a better life than the one we had before it.

What are your plans for the holy month of Ramadan?

For the holy month of Ramadan, I have produced a few tracks that will be released soon inshallah. I have had the chance to work with British-Jamaican artist Ahmad Ikhlas on a track that mentions Israa Wal Me'raaj (Night Journey), and I've also worked with Iraqi-Danish Reciter Ahmad Al Moalem on a lamentation track for Imam Ali's martyrdom.

I will personally not release any tracks until after the holy month of Ramadan, inshallah.

What advice would you give to the youth in general?

My only advice to the youth would be the first verse that was sent to our Prophet: - Iqra' - Read!

What I mean here is not just to read, but read to learn, read to know more, read so you can develop, so you can grow as a person, read and open your mind. Read in the name, and with the name of God.

Read and fight for what's right. Believe in your dreams and have trust in God.

"Humankind: A Hopeful History" at Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — Dutch popular historian and author Rutger Bregman's book "Humankind: A Hopeful History" has recently been published by the Logos Publications in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Sohrab Khalili Shurini. While it is mostly believed that human beings are by nature selfish and governed primarily by self-interest and the roots of this belief have sunk deep into Western thought, the international bestseller Rutger Bregman provides a new

perspective on the past 200,000 years of human history, setting out to prove that we are hardwired for kindness, geared toward cooperation rather than competition, and more inclined to trust rather than distrust one another.

In fact, this instinct has a firm evolutionary basis going back to the beginning of Homo sapiens.

Bregman shows us that believing in human generosity and collaboration isn't merely optimistic—it's realistic. Moreover, it has huge implications for how society func-

tions. When we think of the worst of people, it brings out the worst in our politics and economics. But if we believe in the reality of humanity's kindness and altruism, it will form the foundation for achieving true change in society, a case that Bregman makes convincingly with his signature wit, refreshing frankness, and memorable storytelling.

Published in 2020, the book became New York Times Bestseller and has longlisted for the 2021 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction.

Iranian filmmaker Majid Movasseghi on Visions du Reel jury

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Majid Movasseghi has been selected again as a member of a jury for the Visions du Reel International Film Festival in Switzerland, the organizers have announced.

He along with three other filmmakers and scholars will



Iranian filmmaker Majid Movasseghi in an undated photo.

judged movies selected to be screened in the Interreligious Section of the festival, which will be held in the Swiss city on Nyon from April 15 to 25.

Journalist Noemi Gradwohl, President Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Media Marie-Therese Mader and Writer and filmmaker Wilfried Meichtry, all from Switzerland, are other members of the jury.

A number of movies on religious topics will be competing in this section.

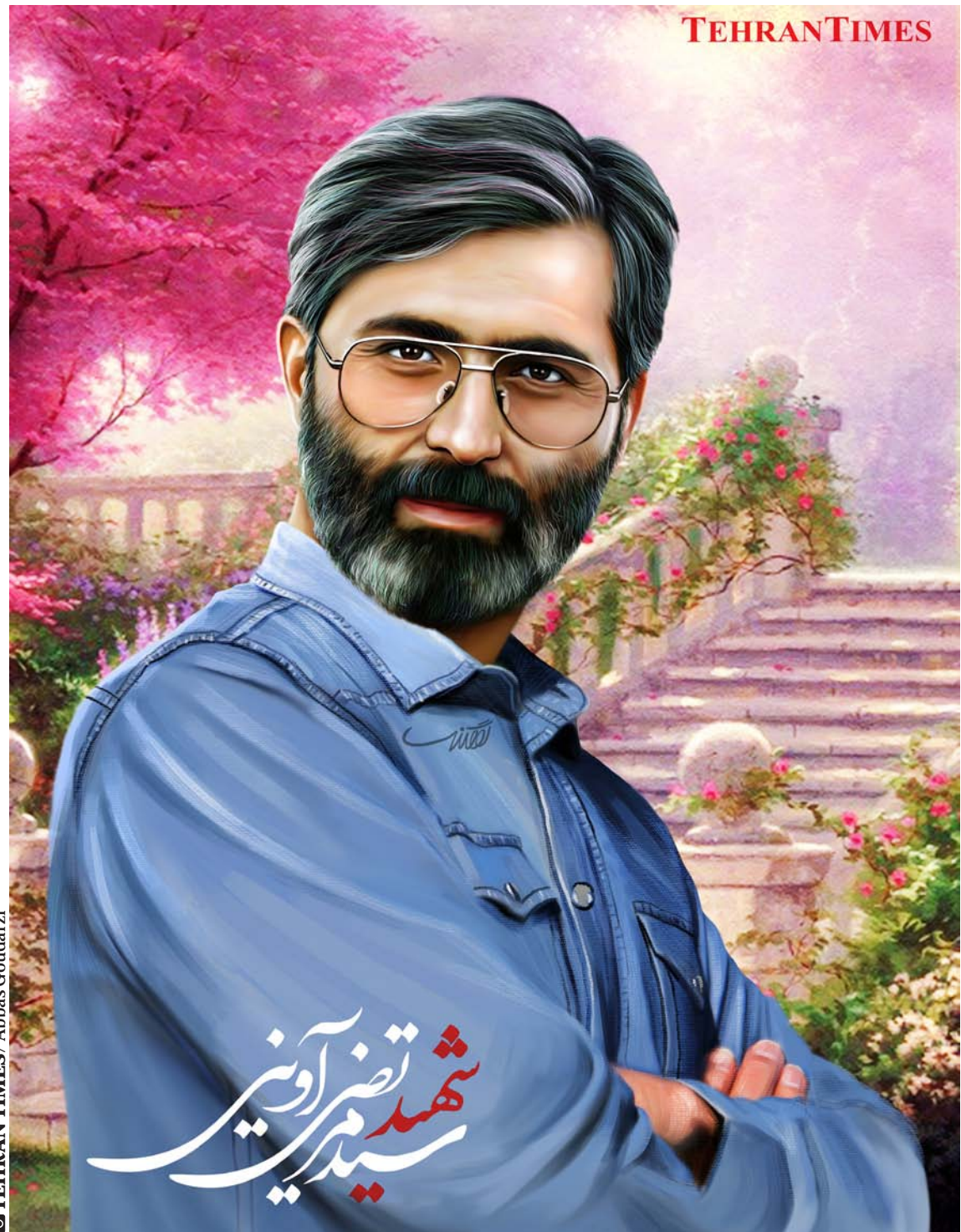
Movasseghi who is living in Switzerland, was also selected as a member of the jury for the Interreligious Section of the Visions du Reel International Film Festival in 2018.

He has earlier judged movies at the DOK Leipzig, a German festival for documentary and animated films, in 2019 and 2020.

The 22nd Videoex Experimental Film & Video Festival in Zurich, Switzerland, also selected Movasseghi as a member of its jury in 2020.

Over nine days, the Visions du Reel International Film Festival turns Nyon into a focal point at which several generations of filmmakers and artists from all over the world find a loyal audience on a voyage of discovery.

Recognized globally as one of the major festivals dedicated to non-fiction filmmaking, it presents a majority of films as world or international premieres, and constitutes an essential platform for creation for the thousands of film professionals who meet there every year.



Digital painting depicts the late Iranian filmmaker Morteza Avini who was martyred by a landmine in 1993 during his last trip to the former Iran-Iraq war zone in southwestern Iran while making a documentary about soldiers who were still listed as missing in action.