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**Delay in removing** sanctions benefits Iran, harms West Page 2



Iran's Farhad Shahmiri ends refereeing career Page 3



Value of 11-month export to Afghanistan hits \$2b Page 4



**IRGC** hospitals double capacity to battle coronavirus Page 7



## West, IAEA failed to provide nuclear technology to Iran, Rouhani bemoans

TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the common name for the 2015 nuclear deal, completely legalized nuclear technology in Iran and this was a great achievement that happened during his early years as president.

Rouhani made the remarks as Iran marked National Nuclear Technology Day on Saturday.

"One of the honorable results of the JCPOA was that it fully legalized nuclear

industry in Iran," the president remarked. Rouhani said, "This was great thing that was done in this time.'

The JCPOA was concluded on July 14, 2015 between Iran and the 5+1 nations, and the European Union. It was endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231. However, former U.S. president Donald Trump abandoned the deal in violation of international law and this led to many consequences.

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#### Over 89m Kwh of electricity generated from renewable sources in a month

TEHRAN – According to the data released by Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), the country's renewable power plants generated over 89 million kilowatt-hours (Kwh) of electricity in the last month of the previous Iranian calendar year (February 19- March 20), IRNA reported. Electricity generation from renewables in the said month led to economizing on the consumption of natural gas by 25 million cubic meters while saving 19 million

liters of water and also prevented the emission of 57,000 tons of Green House Gases (GHG). The capacity of Iran's renewable power

plants reached 920.260 megawatts (MW) in the mentioned month, of which solar power plants with  $452.75\,\mathrm{MW}$  had the biggest share.

Wind power plants with 317 MW of energy production stood in second place, followed by small hydropower plants with a generation of 105.65 MW.

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### Medical equipment export grows by 23% despite sanctions

TEHRAN – The export of medical equipment experienced a growth rate of 23 percent over the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021) despite U.S. sanctions, Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz, head of the Food and Drug Administra-

In the field of medicine export, there was also an 8 percent increase compared to a year before, while export of cosmetic products increased by 15 percent, he added, ISNA reported on Saturday.

"In the field of detergent products, we have had 13 percent export growth compared to the same period a year before.'

One of the important programs of this year will be to facilitate exports and further activity in the markets of the target countries, he concluded.

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#### Tebuireng School of Religious Sciences

BY MOHAMMAD JAVDAN

n 1899, while Muhammad Hasy im Asy'ari was returning from a trip to Mecca, he thought of establishing a school of religious studies to help the Indonesian community entangled in poverty and ignorance.

For this purpose Asy'ari went to one of the villages near where he lived, which was known for corruption and gambling. Those in Tebuireng never imagined that their village would later be known as the cradle of the world's largest Muslim movement.

Haji Muhammad Hasyim, known locally as "Kiai Haji" Muhammad Hasyim, got acquainted with religious sciences through his father at the School of Religious Studies. Then he left Indonesia for Mecca as a young man. And for many years during his presence in this holy city, he studied religion under the great Muslim scholars.

Originally a Shafi'i )one of the four Sunni schools of religious law(, he gained more knowledge in the science of hadith and came under the teaching of several great Indonesian scholars who specialized in hadith in Mecca and taught Sahih Bukhari (Sahih al-Bukhari is a collection of hadith compiled by Imam Muhammad al-Bukhari; d. 256 AH/870 AD).

Kiai Haji Muhammad Hasyim then got acquainted with other great scholars who were present in Mecca, and after a few years of studying other sciences such as astronomy, mathematics, algebra and other sciences, he decided to return to Indonesia.

After settling in Indonesia, he decided to establish a school of religious studies to teach people what he had learned and use it to promote his country, a dream that came true a few years later.

Kiai Haji Muhammad Hasyim established a school with only two rooms, in one of which he lived and in the other he taught only 8 students of religious sciences.

His great thoughts, however, were not limited to one room. He brought about such a change in Indonesia's education system that for many years all public schools and colleges imitated him and his seminary. His students grew from 8 to more than 2,000 students in less than a year.

#### Kiai Muhammad Hasyim is one of the most leading scholars of the contemporary era

The establishment of the boarding school for religious studies was the starting point of a great thought that Asy'ari believed in. At first, he believed that publicization and cultural activities could bring good to society.

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#### Iranian handicrafts: discover **Gabbeh of Bushehr**

TEHRAN – Gabbeh is a traditional flooring similar to carpet but they differ from one another in motifs, size, colors, and the number of its long and thick wefts. It is one of the most popular handicrafts in the southwestern province of Bushehr.

Gabbeh represents a rough and primitive carpet with patterns mostly made by nomadic people. They are manufactured by handspun wool, both in the pile and warp, and the yarns are dyed using plant dyes. The patterns of the carpet are of a simple type with only a few elements of decorative, mostly rectangular objects containing animals.

They are common in almost all the villages and even some of the cities of the southwestern province. The motifs and patterns of Gabbeh are not the same as the carpet. Gabbeh may do not have any margin, or may not be symmetrical. Many of its motifs look like paintings of children, quite simple and primitive, but inspired

by nature and surroundings.

Patterns of Gabbeh are created by the memory of their weavers. They are completely free to use any motif and they can place it anywhere they desire in the pattern. Another major difference between Gabbeh and carpet is the color palette used in them, according to Visit Iran, the official travel guide to the country.

A major part of the Gabbeh is weaved using wools in their raw color. The Bushehr Gabbeh has plain backgrounds in white, cream, brown, black, and grey, and the patterns are made in black, red, dark blue, and other similar colors.

The weavers are mostly women and girls who each have a special kind of motif on their minds and they skillfully weave them. In general, the common feature of the Gabbeh of Bushehr is the traditional patterns that have been evolved through generations and are artistically valuable.

#### 40% of U.S. Marines have rejected coronavirus vaccine

Just shy of 40 percent of Marine Corps service members have refused to take the coronavirus jab, new data provided to the media shows. The revelation comes as Democratic lawmakers push to make the vaccine mandatory for soldiers.

Some 75,500 Marines have agreed to be vaccinated as of Thursday, while around 48,000 have declined the inoculation, CNN reported, citing numbers provided by the branch. That puts the rejection rate at 38.9%, slightly higher than the 33% rate for the whole military given by defense officials.

Marine spokeswoman Colonel Kelly Frushour explained that Marines may be refusing the shot for a number of reasons, including allowing others in more vulnerable groups to take it first, allergies to the vaccine or obtaining it by other, non-military means.

cine confidence" among servicemen, adding that reluctant troops can always "change their mind and become vaccinated when next the opportunity presents itself."

Another 102,000 or so Marines, including active-duty and reserve troops, are still in line for the immunization and have not had a chance to accept or decline.

The rejection rate was much higher at certain bases, such as Camp Lejeune, a major Marine installation in North Carolina, where 57% of service members have refused to take the shot.

While the military is currently barred from mandating any of the coronavirus vaccines rolled out in the U.S., as each has received only emergency FDA approval rather than full authorization, some in Congress have pressed the Joe Biden administration to change that.

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#### Minorities struggle racism in Europe as right-wing movements rise: scholar BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - A London-based history professor says that today many people across the world face every day discrimination fuelled by the rise of right-wing movements.

"Many – as other minorities – struggle with everyday racism, now further fuelled by the rise of right-wing movements," David Motadel notes.

The situation of minorities in Europe is overall better than anywhere else in the world," Motadel, associate professor of international history at

the London School of Economics and Political Science, tells the Tehran Times

Motadel who has held visiting positions at Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Sciences Po, and the Sorbonne also believes that "Europe has sometimes been defined in religious terms, as Christendom. But there is a long history of Judaism in Europe.'

However, the author of Islam and Nazi Germany's War and the editor of Islam and the European Empires, notes that "the majority of Muslims in today's Europe is well-integrated

and successful."

Following is the text of the Interview with David Motadel: How do you see the status of Muslims

in European countries in view of the rise of populists in Europe? I am concerned about the growth of right-wing

nationalist movements in Europe. Yet I am still convinced that the majority of Europe's population is tolerant and will continue to resist these groups. Continued on page 5

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## **GSA: Riyadh, Tal Aviv** unhappy over possible transformation from 'maximum pressure' to 'maximum diplomacy'

BY M.A. SAKI

TEHRAN - Chief executive officer of Gulf State Analytics (GSA) says that both Saudis and Israelis in a "tacit partnership" are worried about a revitalization of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

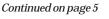
"Saudi Arabia and Israel both share major concerns about the possibility of Biden's administration transforming Washington's Iran foreign policy from "maximum pressure" to "maximum diplomacy,' Giorgio Cafiero tells the Tehran Times.

Iran and the remaining members of the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, plan to continue talks on the nuclear deal especially after they first held a virtual meeting on April 2 and then agreed to hold talks in Vienna on April 7. They also held talks in Vienna on April 9. The sides also agreed to meet in the coming Wednesday. The talks are being arranged by the European Union as the coordinator of the JCPOA Joint Commission.

However, some regional regimes, particularly Israel and Saudi Arabia which seems to have formed a secret alliance, are really unhappy with a diplomatic solution when it comes to Iran.

Both the Saudi and Israeli governments believe that former President Donald Trump's 'maximum pressure' on Tehran needs to stay and should not be eased until Iran drastically changes many aspects of its foreign policy," the DC-based

consultant adds.





## Germany, U.S. voice cautious optimism on Iran nuclear deal talks

German foreign minister describes the ongoing talks as "constructive"

Representatives from major world powers and Iran continued talks on the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Friday in Vienna, with the U.S. and Germany both expressing cautious optimism about the state of the ongoing negotiations.

"The United States team put forward a very serious idea and demonstrated a seriousness of purpose on coming back into compliance if Iran comes back into compliance," a top U.S. State Department official in the talks told reporters Friday.



The official said the U.S. is now waiting for Iran to reciprocate its efforts.

What are European officials saying about the talks? German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas described the

ongoing talks as "constructive."

"All sides showed a willingness to work with the necessary sincerity towards the same goal — the full implementation of the nuclear deal with Iran," Maas told German outlet RND in comments published on Saturday. "It won't be easy. We are only at the beginning of intensive

negotiations.

EU diplomat Enrique Mora called the talks "constructive and results-oriented." Permanent Representative of Russia to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov said JCPOA participants "noted with satisfaction the initial progress made."

Iran says U.S. must lift all Trump-era sanctions
A tweet from Jennion Foreign Minister Javed Zarif carlier

A tweet from Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif earlier in the day urged Washington to return to "full compliance first." He said "anti-JCPOA" sanctions implemented under former President Donald Trump must be removed.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said prior to Friday's negotiations there "are signs that the U.S. is about to revise its position and lift sanctions."

Although the United States was an original signatory to the deal in 2015, Trump ordered the country's withdrawal from the agreement in 2018. The U.S. maintained a "maximum pressure" policy towards Iran during the Trump era, severing its connection to the global financial system.

President Joe Biden has previously said his administration would be unwilling to remove sanctions unless Iran ceases its uranium enrichment.

 $Negotiations\ in\ Vienna\ are\ slated\ to\ resume\ on\ Wednesday.$ 

#### **Delay in removing sanctions** benefits Iran, harms West: nuclear official

The spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) says any foot-dragging in removing U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic is in the interests of Tehran and to the detriment of the Western countries.

"Iran is moving fast in the nuclear industry, and time is on its side. In this regard, if no progress takes place in the negotiations, we are still making progress technically," Behrouz Kamalvandi said on his Instagram account.



Talks were held in Vienna earlier this week between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries — Britain, France, Russia, and China plus Germany — within the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Joint Commission.

An American delegation was also present in the Austrian capital, but it was not allowed to attend the talks aimed at removing anti-Iran sanctions and discussing other issues related to the 2015 nuclear deal, from which former U.S. president Donald Trump withdrew his country in May 2018 and imposed the "toughest ever" sanctions against Tehran.

After the withdrawal, Iran waited for a year for the Europeans to take remedial measures and thwart the unilateral U.S. bans as per their obligations under the JCPOA, but to no avail.

That prompted the Islamic Republic to scale down some of its commitments in line with its legal rights stipulated under Article 36 of the nuclear deal.

Trump's successor, President Joe Biden, has claimed his administration was willing to rejoin the JCPOA, but he has taken no practical measures.

no practical measures.

Tehran says Washington, as the first party that reneged on its commitments, should take the first step towards unconditionally

remove all the anti-Iran sanctions in a verifiable manner.

Kamalvandi said, "Now, the situation is such that as long as the Western side dithers, it will benefit Iran and harm the other side. The number of our centrifuges and the amount of enriched

material is rising fast."

The official said Iran will not act until the sanctions are removed and the process is verified.

"We have no trust in the other side. The list of 1,600 sanctions as well as demands mentioned in the JCPOA but not met in practice have now been brought up by Iran. No measure will be taken by Iran until these issues are resolved," he said.

The AEOI spokesman stressed that nuclear power is very important to Iran's progress, adding it is a driving force behind the development of the country's industries.

Kamalvandi said Iran's nuclear industry has become completely indigenous and the country has made great progress compared to previous years.

(Source: Press TV)

# West, IAEA failed to provide nuclear technology to Iran, Rouhani bemoans

President says JCPOA fully legalized nuclear technology in Iran

→ 1 Rouhani said nuclear technology is among superior technologies but since the other sides have used this technology for building atomic weapons have been pressing Iran and "put us parallel with themselves".

'16 years of problems for the Iranian nation'

The president went on to say that "unwarranted worries" about Iran's nuclear program have created problems for the Iranian nation for more than 16 years.

The nuclear negotiations with the European Union first started in 2013.

"If the other side thinks properly, they will realize that their worries are unwarranted. These unwarranted worries have caused problems for the Iranian nation for 16 years," the president remarked.

The president added if this "wrong assumption" had not been in "their minds" and paid attention to the history of the Iranian nation they would have become assured that the Iranian nation pays special attention to "religious and ethical issues".

Noting that Iran's nuclear policy is

transparent, he said nuclear technology has applications in agriculture, medicine, electricity production, etc. Negotiations have started since April 2

Negotiations have started since April 2 to revitalize the JCPOA as President Joe Biden, a Democrat who served as Barack Obama's right-hand man, has expressed



willingness to renter the U.S. into the agreement that Trump abandoned.

Rouhani said the fact that Iran is still negotiating with the West, including Americans, is that they have "created problems and caused concerns for themselves" about Iran's nuclear program.

However, it should be noted that in the ongoing talks in Vienna there is no direct talks between the Iranian and American sides. Iran has linked direct talks to a full

termination of U.S. illegal sanctions.

Rouhani added, "I reiterated once again that all of our nuclear activities are peaceful and for non-military purposes. And as the Supreme Leader have announced several times, in our sharia view seeking nuclear arms that can pose great danger for the world is haram (forbidden)."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the president said the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United States, Europe and

industrialized countries are indebted to Iran for failing to help Iran in the nuclear industry.

Iran joined the NPT, acted based on the IAEA Safeguards Agreement and voluntarily agreed to surprise inspections based on the Additional Protocol to the NPT to receive technological support but this did not happen, the president explained.

Rouhani, who was Iran's chief nuclear negotiator during the Khatami administration from 2013-2015, said the duty of the IAEA is not just inspection and it should provide technical services to NPT signatories.

He added Iran has single-handedly manufactured 15 kinds of centrifuge machines without any technical support by the IAEA and countries with nuclear technology, saying they have shunned their responsibility in this regard.

The world failed to help Iran in manufacturing centrifuges, stabile isotopes, heavy water reactor, the president lamented.

"That today we say we are ready to voluntarily implement the Additional Protocol and the Agency have the highest supervisions its reward is not that the world say we will not sanction your commercial and economic activities."

Addressing the West, the IAEA and countries mastering nuclear technology, Rouhani said, "You are indebted to us. You are not creditor."

## Age, education and managerial posts of presidential candidates will be observed: MP

**POLITICAL** de s k representation parliamentarian has said the age, education and managerial record of presidential candidates in senior positions will be observed in the registration process.

"The negotiations of Majlis (parliament) with the Interior Ministry shows that at least the education degree, having state positions and the age of will be observed in registering the names of the candidates," Mohammad Hossein Farhangi, the spokesman for the Majlis presiding board, told reporters on Saturday.

The presidential elections will be held on June 18.

He also expressed hope that the registration process for presidential elections will be held in accordance with the new bill passed by the Majlis.

However, Farhangi said, the final say in this regard lies

with the views of the oversight Guardian Council and the Expediency Council.

Meanwhile, Manouchehr Mottaki, the spokesman for the unity council of the principlists, said there is a plan to ask more possible presidential candidates to present their plans for running the country as president.

Reportedly, Ayatollah Movahedi Kermani, a member of the Assembly of Experts and Tehran Friday prayer leader, has written letters to three key potential presidential candidates from the principlist faction, including Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi, Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and Mohsen Rezaei, the secretary of the Expediency Council to present their plans.

Mottaki, a former foreign minister, said the number of persons that the unity council plans to invite are more than



Raisi, Qalibaf and Rezaei.

So far, these three figures have been asked to present the list of the key members of their cabinet to the council, Mottaki said.

### Senior analyst says U.S. 'needs to do some serious steps to revive the trust' with Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — "The U.S. needs to do some serious steps to revive the trust" with Iran, says a senior nuclear policy specialist at Princeton University.

Hossein Mousavian, a Princeton University researcher, says the U.S. has "killed the trust" with Iranian by quitting the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA- and now Iranians feels deceived.

The analyst makes the remarks with the Democracy Now as the United States and Iran are holding more indirect talks as part of a push to revive the JCPOA.

The two countries have agreed to set up two expert-level working groups along with other signatories of the 2015 deal.

The U.S. abrogated the nuclear deal as former president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of the deal in May 2018 and imposed the harshest ever sanctions on Iran under his "maximum pressure" campaign against the Islamic Republic.

The United States has imposed some 1,600 different sanctions on Iran in a move that has also made it harder for Iranians to even import food and medicine, a situation that became even more dire during the pandemic.

The main hurdle to reviving the nuclear deal is doubt over the U.S. commitment to diplomacy, says Mousavian.

State Department spokesperson Ned Price described the talks with the JCPOA Joint Commission as "start of a process" and claimed the Biden administration is prepared to lift sanctions on Iran.

"When it comes to sanctions, the point I made before remains. We are prepared to take the steps necessary to return to compliance with the JCPOA, including by lifting sanctions that are inconsistent with the JCPOA," Price said.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi who leads the Iranian team in Vienna told Press TV the lifting of the sanctions must happen before the nuclear deal is revived.

"If the U.S. is serious, they should be prepared to lift all sanctions that they have imposed or reimposed against Iran. And after verification, we'll certainly go back to full compliance. If we wanted to avoid full compliance to the JCPOA, we would have done it before. We would have totally withdrawn from the JCPOA once the U.S. administration — the previous U.S. administration left the JCPOA. So, we are quite serious. Nobody can question Iran's goodwill. The JCPOA is alive because of Iran, and we have paid a heavy price for that," Araqchi explained.

Though Iran formally remains in

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the JCPOA, it has taken some remedial measures in accordance to paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which has "provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance."

However, Iran has said if the U.S. lifts the illegal sanctions fully and in a verifiable manner Iran would be ready to undo its nuclear measures.

In a Twitter message on Friday Foreign

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

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

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

#### "Iranians feel deceived"

The nuclear policy analyst tells Democracy Now that Iranians are angry and feel betrayed by the United States.

The Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA despite the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency was regularly reporting that Iran was in full compliance with the terms of the JCPOA

"Iranians, frankly speaking, they think they have been deceived by the U.S. They have accepted the most comprehensive commitments during the history of nonproliferation. They have implied — they have complied perfectly. In reward, they have received the most comprehensive sanctions ever, after the revolution. Therefore, they are coming back to nuclear negotiations with complete mistrust," the senior analyst and former diplomat regrets.

He adds, "Actually, the problem with the current negotiation is that since the U.S. broke the promise, practically the U.S. killed the trust on the Iranian side, because after 12 years of negotiation, Iran and the U.S., Iran and the world powers, they agreed in 2015 on a deal, which is the most comprehensive agreement during the history of nonprolif-

eration. It was working very well, and Iran delivered completely every promise within the deal. Iran was in full compliance, with zero failure. And the U.S. withdrew, imposed — not only reimposed the nuclear sanctions, but the U.S. imposed the most comprehensive sanctions ever, after the revolution."

"Iran is a member of JCPOA; the U.S. is not."

He also says if Washington is serious to revive the JCPOA it must lift sanctions first because it was the U.S. that created this crisis by abrogating the agreement.

"If the U.S. wants to revive the nuclear deal, since the U.S. killed the deal, they have to lift the sanctions first. Iran would be ready to come to full compliance. Here, there is a big difference: Iran is a member of JCPOA; the U.S. is not. Iran is at least implementing 50% of the JCPOA; the U.S. is at zero implementation. And the U.S. is really the country who killed the deal. That's why the U.S. needs to do some serious steps to revive the trust and to fill the gap already has been created by President Trump."

### "U.S. needs to start from 0% to 100% compliance"

On what "compliance for compliance" means, the nuclear policy analyst says, "Compliance for compliance means that, first of all, the U.S., during President Obama, was really serious to implement the deal. But even during President Obama, the United States was not in position for full compliance because of primary and secondary sanctions before the nuclear deal. However, Iran remained committed and implemented 100%, while, during President Obama, the U.S. was implementing 30% because of the primary

and secondary sanctions.

"Now, President Trump withdrew and imposed not only nuclear sanctions, hundreds of other sanctions, far, far, far beyond nuclear. Therefore, now Iranians say, 'Look, we showed our full commitment for full compliance for three years nonstop with zero failure. It was you that even you were not able to comply with your commitments during President Obama because of the primary sanctions. Now we have an ocean of new sanctions by President Trump. Therefore, we need to see you would really lift the sanctions.'

"Compliance from the U.S. side is lifting the sanctions. And compliance from the Iranian side is to continue to accept the measures within the JCPOA, which is the most intrusive inspections among all NPT members and the most limits on Iranian nuclear program, like cap on 20% or 90% or 60% enrichment, cap to below 5%, cap to a stockpile, and a lot of other commitments. Therefore, Iranians

need to go back to full compliance. It means, currently, they are complying with 50%; they need to go back from 50 to 100. And the U.S. needs to start from 0 to 100. This is compliance for compliance."

Also, when asked what the primary sanctions are, he said, "Before the nuclear deal, the previous U.S. administrations imposed sanctions, like sanctioning Iranian oil, sanctioning investment on Iranian oil industry, many other sanctions under the umbrella of terrorism or human rights, and so and so. That's why those sanctions practically blocked any economic relation between the U.S. and Iran. Iran was ready to continue economic relations, trade relations with the U.S. But it was the U.S., because of the sanctions, that practically blocked any trade with Iran. However, there are some sanctions even before the nuclear deal that the U.S. had decided for exterritorial imposing sanctions. It means if the other countries are going to make business with Iran, the U.S. would not make business with them. That's why these are the problems before the nuclear deal. When they came to nuclear deal, based on JCPOA, there is a clear statement in JCPOA saving the signatories, the P5+1. the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany, they would not do anything to impede normal trade business between other countries and Iran."

He added, "Therefore, the primary sanctions practically blocked the normal trade business between the other countries and Iran. That's why we are saying the primary sanctions are a problem. The nuclear sanctions are a problem. Strong sanctions are a problem. That's why I believe the current U.S. nuclear team now in Vienna, headed by Robert Malley, they have a really, really difficult — they are in a very difficult situation, because they have a lot of sanctions which, based on JCPOA, they have to lift it in order to make normal trade business between Iran

#### and the other countries possible." "Sanctions during pandemic is

The senior analyst called sanctions on Iran during the Covid-19 pandemic a "disaster", saying thousands of people have lost their lives because of the shortage of medicine and medical assistance."

He adds there is a "huge shortage" of medical equipment in the hospitals and foreign companies "cannot export medicine to Iran because of the U.S. financial sanctions."

The former nuclear negotiator says it is because of this reason that "now Iran has the most difficult situation with corona."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

## Top Iranian negotiator hails Vienna talks but highlights complications

TEHRAN – Iran's Depude s k ty Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi expresses satisfaction at the progress made in Friday's nuclear talks between Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Araghchi, who led Iran's negotiating team in the Vienna talks, said the discussions over how to revive the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), were moving in the right direction.

"The conclusion is that we think we are going in the right direction and that we have to continue. It was something that all delegations agreed. We had three days of intensive discussions in two working groups and the job done by the working groups was fairly good, but still they need to continue discussions, especially in the field of sanctions lifting because it is so complicated," Araghchi told Press TV on Friday night.

"Today, we heard the reports by the two working groups. And we decided to give them a break to go back and have more consultations in their capitals and we come back fresh on next Wednesday to resume the talks," he added.

Explaining Iran's stance on the verification of the lifting of sanctions, Araghchi said, "What we mean by verification is to see the effects of sanctions lifting in practice. So, it is not enough for the U.S. to sign waivers or executive orders.'

"They have to officially sign [the orders], but what matters for us is to see the effects of sanctions lifting on the ground. And we insist that we have to verify what is lifted. This needs its own methods that we are working on. I don't know how long does it take. But we stand ready to discuss with other JCPOA participants for a fast and easy verification."

Araghchi also reiterated Iran's position that the U.S. should take the first step to lift all its sanctions on the Islamic Republic before Tehran pedals back on some of the "remedial" measures which it has taken in response to the other sides' non-compliance.

'Well, this is a very logical and reasonable position by Iran and everybody understands by reason that the U.S. has left the table. The U.S. has left the JCPOA and they have to come back first. They should lift their sanctions and become again a participant to the JCPOA, then, Iran would follow and go back to full



"What we mean by verification is to see the effects of sanctions lifting in practice. So, it is not enough for the U.S. to sign waivers or executive orders."

compliance," he said, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action by its initials.

This is actually a concept that almost everybody agreed on. We need to somehow identify how this is going to happen, but before we come to that point now we are working on the measures that both sides should take. Once we have done with this and once we know exactly what the U.S. should do and what Iran should do, then we have to work on the question of sequence of verification," Araghchi added.

"U.S. president has authority to terminate sanctions through executive orders'

Asked about the kind of sanctions relief, the Iranian deputy foreign minister said, "We know we have to go back to the same model in the JCPOA. They are sanctions which should be terminated and the U.S. president has the authority to terminate them. So, they should obviously be terminated through executive orders.

"For the sanctions that are the result of Congress legislation, the (U.S.) president could only waive. This has been mentioned in the JCPOA. So, we want all those sanctions be reversed... Whatever imposed, re-imposed or re-labeled during the Trump administration and whatever is mentioned in the JCPOA should be lifted and they should reverse whatever has been done and I think the Americans know best how to do that."

Iran's top negotiator, however, said the discussion is going on.

"We are now in a position to have a better understanding of each other's position. As I said we have a long way to go. We are not still in a position to say what measures should be taken exactly by both sides. But we are moving on that direction. Our demands are clear and we insist on that. Let's see what happens in the next rounds," Araghchi noted.

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.

Araghchi 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 J.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.

Araghchi also said Tehran will not reverse the reduction of its nuclear compliance before the U.S. removes all its sanctions and returns to the JCPOA, according to IRNA.

"Until the United States removes all of its sanctions and returns to the JCPOA, none of Iran's nuclear activities, especially in the field of enrichment, will be halted or even reduced," he asserted.

He pointed out, "Our 20% enrichment is now moving even faster than the speed envisaged by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Iranian Parliament) in its law, and 20% enriched materials are being produced now."

He asserted that the process will continue until an agreement on the implementation of the JCPOA is reached, under which the U.S. should remove all of its sanctions.

"As it has been stressed many times, all of the sanctions must be removed in one step,' the top Iranian negotiator added.

## Iran ready to thwart enemies' threats, IRGC commander says

**TEHRAN** — Commander of the Islamic d e s k Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami said on Saturday that Iran is ready to confront any threat posed by the country's foes, Fars News reported.

The IRGC commander underlined the unity, amity, integrity and all-out readiness of the Armed Forces to counter threats and conspiracies waged against Iran.

"We will badly punish aggressors," he warned.

Earlier this week, Commander of the IRGC Navy Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said IRGC forces will continue efforts to grow increasingly stronger to defend the country and the Islamic Revolution.

"The IRGC Navy forces do not hesitate even a moment in paving the path of strength and they are ready for all-out defense for the Islamic Revolution at any point on earth," Rear Admiral Tangsiri pointed out, according to Fars News.

He added that the Americans are not in favor of Iran's security, stability, economic and scientific growth, and international dignity and attempt to block the country's progress.



## We fought for this for 43 years

Iran unveils dozens of nuclear achievements on Nuclear Day

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iran has by Iranian experts and scientists during the k announced 133 nuclear Islamic Republic. Instead of cooperating achievements and a series of nuclear meas-

ures in what amounted to a new leap in Iran's march toward achieving advanced, peaceful nuclear technology. The announcement was made on Saturday on the occasion of the National Day of

Nuclear Technology. At a ceremony held to commemorate thd day, President Hassan Rouhani issued a presidential order instructing nuclear authorities to start using the announced achievements. "Design, construction and commissioning of the second phase of industrial production

units in Arak, design and construction of spin test machine, construction and assembly of the first prototype of the IR9S and IR9-1B centrifuges, and design and construction of 3D laser printing of metals are some of the projects that were inaugurated today," according to a statement issued by the Iranian presidency.

In addition, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) began injecting gas into a complete chain of 164 IR6 centrifuge machines, inaugurated a station purifying the Uranium Hexafluoride input in the Natanz enrichment facility, and operated an assembly line manufacturing new machinery at the Ahmadi Roshan nuclear facility, according to the Tasnim news agency.

These nuclear achievements shed more light on the history of Iran's nuclear program, which began during the Shah regime with tangible support from Western countries. After the victory of the revolution, the nuclear program was put on hold for some time before being resumed

with Iran, the West started to work against Iran developing peaceful nuclear energy.

Western countries, led by the U.S. and the so-called E3 – France, Germany and the UK- imposed severe economic sanctions on Iran since the 2000s. Iran moved to assuage the concerns of these countries with new confidence-building measures such as giving more access to international inspectors and accepting more restrictions on its nuclear program.

Since at least 2000, Iran has been in close contact with the Europeans to convince them that it does not pursue a nuclear bomb. In October 2003. Iran reached an understanding with the E3 on its nuclear program. It agreed to give more access to international inspectors. Tehran also agreed to implement the Additional Protocol to the Non-nuclear Proliferation Treaty.

While Iran kept up its end of the bargain, the Europeans went back on their word, prompting Iran to resume its nuclear activities, which led to another pressure campaign by the West that ultimately culminated in the P5+1 nuclear negotiation with Iran. This negotiation culminated in the signing of a nuclear deal in July 2015 called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). But this deal too almost fell apart after the West reneged on its

obligations to terminate sanctions on Iran. Following then-President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, the E3 failed to ensure that Iran benefits from the nuclear deal. Despite Western non-compliance with it. Iran unilaterally abided by it and kept calling on the E3 to fulfill their commitments under the deal. Iran weathered the storm and even made a stride in expanding its nuclear program. The Saturday announcement was the latest indication in this regard. Iran now has more advanced centrifuges than when it signed the JCPOA.

President Hassan Rouhani pointed to this fact in the Saturday unveiling ceremony of nuclear achievements.

Referring to the launch of the IR6 centrifuge chain at Saturday's ceremony, he said, The production capacity of these centrifuges is 10 times more than IR1 centrifuges and the next generation of centrifuges that are under research and construction have 50 times the production capacity of the country's first centrifuges."

The president praised the development of technology in the nuclear sector throughout the country and added, "Today, production and progress in the nuclear industry continue together."

Rouhani pointed out that these activities became fully legal with the JCPOA.

He noted that with the actions and efforts made by his government since 2015, Iran's nuclear activities became completely legal and the excuse was taken away from the enemies. "One of the achievements of the JCPOA was that it made Iran's nuclear technology fully legal and reserved the rights of the Iranian nation," Rouhani said, according to the official website of the Iranian presidency.

He called the concerns about Iran's nuclear activities unreasonable and added, "It was the same unreasonable concern that has been causing trouble for the Iranian nation for 15, 16 years and we are still talking to the world and the Americans to stop their illegal actions and if this misconception had not existed in their minds, we would have not gone through these problems.

At the same time, Rouhani underlined the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program, saying that concerns expressed by world powers have their roots in these powers' misuse of nuclear technology.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has never had, and will not have, non-peaceful goals from its nuclear activities," Rouhani underlined, noting, "Iran's nuclear activities have always been peaceful, but the enemies of this nation had passed several resolutions against these activities in the United Nations Security Council, which this government sent to the dustbin of history forever and legalized Iran's nuclear activities.

This year, Iran commemorated Nuclear Day amid renewed talks with the West aimed at finding ways to restore balance to the JCPOA. Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA have resumed nuclear talks in Vienna. At least two rounds of in-person talks have been held in Vienna over the past two weeks, with all parties expressing cautious optimism toward making progress. Iran and the P4+1 have established expert-level working groups to discuss the measures needed to be done by Iran and the U.S. to restore full implementation of the deal.

Tehran has called on Washington to remove all Trump-era sanctions but the U.S. is yet to agree to lift all these sanctions. This has become a major obstacle to fully revive the JCPOA, with American officials even warning that the talks may be stymied by calls for the total removal of Trump-era sanctions.

## SPORT

#### Iran's Farhad Shahmiri ends refereeing career

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Iranian international volleyball referee Farhad Shahmiri brought an end to his refereeing career.

Tokyo 2020's postponement in light of the Covid-19 outbreak means he will not be able to referee in a third Olympic Games and he is a member of the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) Refereeing Committee at the moment.

Last year, Shahmiri became the FIVB's longest-serving volleyball referee after Russian referee Andrei Zenovich announced retirement.

'I want to share my experience with the next generation of volleyball referees. Being in the AVC Referees Committee has been a decision that I made after consulting with the Iran volleyball federation," Shahmiri said.

Shahmiri, 56, had already whistled in the two 2012 and 2016 **Olympics Games** 

#### Iran's Geraei, Saravi win gold medals at Asian Olympic qualifying

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Mohammadreza Geraei and Mo d e s k hammadhadi Saravi claimed two gold medal at

the Asian Olympic qualifying in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Friday. In the Greco-Roman 67kg final, Geraei put on an impressive performance in dismantling veteran Hansu Ryu from South Korea, winning by 9-0 technical fall.

In a clash of the most recent Asian gold medalists at 97kg, reigning champion Saravi handily defeated his predecessor Uzur Dzhuzupbekov from Kyrgyzstan, finishing off a 10-0 technical fall early in the second period.

Saravi completed two gut wrenches in the par terre position to take a 5-o lead in the first period. Just 15 seconds in the second, he countered an attack and slammed Dzhuzupbekov to his back as they went off the mat for a 4-point move. An unsuccessful challenge added the 10th point.

Both wrestlers had qualified for Tokyo with victories in the semifinals in the afternoon session.

#### **Iranian Greco-Roman** wrestlers leave for Kazakhstan

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers traveled to Almaty, Kazakhstan on Saturday to participate at the 2021 Asian Wrestling Championships.

The event will take place from April 13 to 18 in the same venue the 2021 Asian Wrestling Olympic Qualification Tournament was held. Iran has sent 10 wrestlers to the competition. The wrestlers will be headed by Mohammad Bana in the event.

Greco-Roman wrestling team:

55kg: Puya Dadmarz 60kg: Mehdi Mohsennejhad

63kg: Meysam Delkhani 67kg: Hossein Asadi

72kg: Amin Kavianinejhad

77kg: Pejman Pashtam 82kg: Mehdi Ebrahimi

87kg: Naser Alizadeh 97kg: Mehdi Bali

130kg: Aliakbar Yousefi

#### Two Persepolis players to miss 2021 ACL groups stage

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Persepolis football team defenders d e S k Farshad Faraji and Saeid Aghaei didn't travel to Goa, India following their initial positive test for COVID-19.
Persepolis traveled to Goa, India on Saturday to face Indi-

an outfit Goa, Al Rayyan of Qatar and Al Wahda of the UAE in Group E of the 2021 AFC Champions League without their two defenders Faraji and Aghaei. The players will join Persepolis in the coming days if they test negative.

The Iran's Health Ministry's spokeswoman said at a press conference on Saturday that 193 coronavirus patients have diec across the country over the past 24 hours, bringing the total death toll to 64,232.

 $Sima\,Sadat\,Lari\,said\,the\,total\,number\,of\,people\,tested\,positive$ for COVID-19 infection in Iran has exceeded 2,049,000 following the detection of 19,666 new cases since yesterday, adding that 2,205 new cases have been admitted to the hospital. More than 1,702,000 patients have recovered from the coro-

navirus infection so far or have been discharged from hospitals across Iran, the spokeswoman added. Among those undergoing treatment in medical centers at pres-

ent, 4,329 coronavirus patients have critical health conditions because of more severe infection, Lari noted.

The number of people infected with COVID-19 across the world has surpassed 135 million and the death toll has exceeded

#### Geraei joyful to join his brother in Tokyo

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler e s k Mohammad Reza Geraei is very happy to join his older brother at the Tokyo Olympics.

He defeated veteran Korean wrestler Hansu Ryu in a 9-0 technical fall in the 67kg final. "It's a good day," Geraei said in an interview with UWW.

"I won all of my bouts without giving a point. So I am proud. I come from a wrestling family and my brother always supports me and pushes me. Geraei won all four of his matches by fall or technical fall in a

weight class that, because it had no Olympic qualifiers from the 2019 World Championships, was particularly deep and included the world silver medalist at 72kg. "My body was prepared for the tournament and I was able to

do exactly what I had planned," said the 24-year-old. "In Almaty I achieved the next level with my performance.' Geraei's older brother Mohammadali had already qualified for the

Tokyo Olympics at 77kg by placing third at the Nur-Sultan worlds. "It's an honor to go to Olympics with my brother," the younger

Geraei said. "I hope he can help me reach my goal of winning the Olympic gold medal. Having him there is great as a support system and partner and teacher.'

#### Value of 11-month export to Afghanistan hits \$2b

ECONOMY

TEHRAN—The value of Iran's export to Afghanistan reached \$2 billion during the period from March 20, 2020 until February 18, 2021, the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) shows.

This amount of exports indicates the high potential of the neighboring countries' markets for importing Iranian products.

Back in January, the director general of the Asia-Pacific Office of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) had said that a preferential trade agreement with Afghanistan was going to be signed in the near future.

Speaking in the fourth meeting of Khorasan Razavi-Herat Joint Trade Committee in Mashhad, Reza Seyed-Aqazadeh said: "Necessary coordination has been made with the Ministry of Commerce of Afghanistan.



He mentioned previous tariff agreements between the two countries and said: "Previously, in 2015, the tariffs for the imports of five commodity items from Afghanistan including the imports of sesame were reduced; the tariffs on sesame imports were reduced from 10 percent to five percent."

According to the official, balancing international trade, especially with Afghanistan is one of the major strategies of Iran in foreign trade, and TPO's goal is to establish a balanced trade between the

Special strategies have been adopted by the Trade Promotion Organization for balancing trade with Afghanistan and for resolving problems in this field, he said, adding that the issues and demands of Afghan businessmen will also be reviewed in a special working group in this organization to take the necessary measures and re-

Having shared historical, cultural, political, and economic backgrounds, Iran and Afghanistan have been allies for many years and the strategic cooperation between the two countries has been broadened especially over the past two decades.

As stated by the TPO head, Iran is capable of doubling non-oil exports to its neighbors in two years.

Hamid Zadboum has said that considering the future capacities, the TPO has planned increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries to about \$100 billion in a two-year time span, in a way that Iran's share of the regional markets will significantly go up.

The official has previously said: "Pakistan and Turkey have the highest capacity to import Iranian goods, which is good news for Iranian businessmen and exporters.

Pointing to the Persian Gulf states as good markets for some Iranian-made commodities, Zadboum said that large markets such as Russia and China should also be considered by exporters.

Iran shares borders with fifteen countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia whose total value of annual imports exceed \$1000 billion.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government is pursuing. First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri has called for developing non-oil exports as the only way for realizing the motto of

the surge in production. "The Foreign Affairs Ministry should provide the necessary bases for the development of [non-oil] exports by expanding and strengthening economic diplomacy," he said in a meeting on reviewing ways of boosting economic relations with the neighboring countries and supporting non-oil exporters.

Emphasizing that 15 neighboring countries and countries such as China and India and Eurasian members should be targeted as the most important export destinations of the country, Jahangiri called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant agencies to strengthen economic diplomacy and focus on these export destination countries to provide the necessary infrastructure for the development of exports to these nations.

#### **TEDPIX drops 9,000 points** on Saturday

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran d e s k Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 9,151 points to 1.24

million on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week. Over 1.476 billion securities valued at 16.214 trillion rials (about



The first market's index fell 7,191 points, and the second market's

index dropped 16,799 points. TEDPÎX dropped 45,000 points, or 3.6 percent, in the past Ira-

nian 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.

TÊDPIX 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.

## Over 89m Kwh of electricity generated from renewable sources in a month

→ 1 Renewables, including hydropower, account for about seven percent of the country's total energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

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

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

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

According to the Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a significant role in developing the region's market for such energies.

"Relying on the high potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, etc.,



the Energy Ministry has planned good measures in order to implement new policies for creating positive changes in the development of the country's renewable energy sector," Ardakani-

Back in December 2020, SATBA Head Mohammad Satakin said the capacity of the country's renewable power plants was going to reach 1,000 MW (one gigawatt) by the end of the current government's incumbency (August 2021).

### Natural gas supply to Chabahar port already costs over \$2.8b

ECONOMY TEHRAN - Managing Director of Nad e s k tional Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hassan Montazer Torbati has said that so far about 120 trillion rials (over \$2.85 billion) has been spent for connecting the southeastern Chabahar port to the national

According to Torbati, the supply of natural gas to the strategic port and to the Makran coasts is going to create industrial prosperity in the region, Shana reported.

Speaking in a follow-up meeting on Sistan-Baluchestan gas supply projects, Torbati said due to the vastness of the province, in total, 2,000 sections of gas pipelines have been designed and planned to be implemented across the province, of which so far 300 kilometers (km) have been implemented and 770 km of pipelines are currently

Torbati put the projected capital for the implementation of the mentioned pipelines with the gas supply facilities in the cities at more than 200 trillion rials (about \$4.7 billion), saying that the necessary steel sheets and pipes for the mentioned pipelines have been provided.



Back in February, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh had stated that over 95 percent of the country's population is currently enjoying natural gas through the country's huge national network.

According to the Oil Minister, the coverage of the national gas network in rural areas has also doubled over the mentioned period to reach 84 percent.

Since the Iranian calendar year 1392 (March 2013) up to the previous calendar year's 11th month (started on January 20) over 20,000 rural areas with a total population of 1.76 million households have been supplied with natural gas through the national gas network, according to Zanganeh.

Chabahar Port, the only Iranian ocean port, is a strategic port with unique opportunities that can attract investments from Iranian and foreign private sectors.

The development of the Chabahar Port is important for the economic development of the region and also the neighboring countries and in this regard sustainable supply of energy carriers to the port has been of significant importance for the Iranian government and the projects for expansion of the national gas network in Sistan-Baluchestan province, where the port lays, have been seriously pursued by the NIGC over the past

#### More than 15.5m cellphones imported into Iran in a year

TEHRAN – Iranian mobile phone traders imported 15.8 million smartphones over the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to the Iranian Association of Cellphones, Tablet, and Accessories Importers.

Based on the data released by the mentioned association, 15 million of the imported cellphones have been already sold and being used by consumers, IRNA

As reported, some 2.5 million regular



mobile phones were also imported into the country over the last year

Back in January, the spokesman of the Iranian Association of Cellphone, Tablet, and Accessories Importers had announced that the price of cellphones had dropped 12-20 percent in domestic markets.

Iran's imports of mobile phones registered a 27 percent growth in the first nine months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020) as compared to the preceding year's corresponding period.

Some 8,617,438 cellphones worth over \$1.34 billion were imported into the country in the mentioned period, placing the commodity at second among the top imported items, according to the Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (ÎRICA) Ruhollah Latifi.

The official noted that 6,779,012 mobile phones were cleared from the country's customs during the Iranian calendar year 1398's same nine months.

The value of the imported products in the said nine months also increased by 65 percent compared to the previous

#### 'PMO to fully support entities active in maritime sectors'

**ECONOMY**d e s k

Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad has said his organization plans to take all

the necessary measures for supporting the companies active in various maritime sectors during the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21). "In line with the current year's motto which is "Pro-

duction: support and the elimination of obstacles", PMO has put it on the agenda to provide necessary supports for producers in order to facilitate the process of import and export of goods in the country's ports,' According to the official, one of the important tasks

of the Ports and Maritime Organization is to support production centers and industrial units that are active in the area under the supervision of the organization.

Domestic producers that export their products through the country's commercial ports will also be subject to the mentioned supportive mechanisms and will definitely be supported to be able to export their products at the lowest possible costs, Rastad stressed.

He further noted that significant measures have been taken to supply the equipment required by the



Ports and Maritime Organization from domestic manufacturers in order to support domestic production. PMO will pursue its programs in this regard more

eriously during the current year, he added. Back in March, Rastad had said that despite the sanctions imposed on Iran's shipping activities, loading and unloading of goods have been noticeably successful

at the Iranian ports.

Making the remarks addressing the journalists and reporters on the sidelines of the annual gathering of the PMO directors, the official said, "Many fruitful measures were taken in most of the ports, while some good development projects were also implemented this year".

While the enemy is trying to halt Iran's exports and imports through imposing sanctions, operations at Iranian ports are underway without interruption as the result of the PMO's all-out efforts.

Meanwhile, as the PMO head has announced, 11 new development projects with 59 trillion rials (over \$1.4 billion) of investment are currently underway at the Iranian ports.

Not only the sanctions haven't been able to stop development activities at the ports of Iran, but some new development projects have also been defined, Rastad has said.

As the major gates of exports and imports, Iranian ports play a significant role in the country's battle against the U.S. sanctions, and the ongoing operation at the ports indicates that they are playing their part

#### Vacancy taxes to be deposited in National Housing Fund

ECONOMY TEHRAN—The deputy d e s k transport and urban development minister said that the vacancy

taxes are planned to be deposited in the National Housing Fund to be allocated for supplying homes for the low-income people.

Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh said, "The real estate and housing system is a basic measure to identify the housing situation of the country. The goal is not just taxes, but the main program is to identify the living conditions of the households for housing

Saying that any tax levied on vacant homes goes directly to the National Housing Fund and is used as a facility for the housing of the low-income people, the official said that it is a mistake to think that the government has created this system to increase tax revenues.

In late March, the head of Iran National Tax Administration (INTA) announced that

that the first taxes on vacant houses will be received in the fifth Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 23 - August 22), and added that this tax will be half the value of the monthly rent of the property.

Omid-Ali Parsa had announced in early February that the regulations for the tax on houses and luxury cars would be announced soon, adding that this annual tax has been collected and a heavy fine has been imposed on those who run away from it.

Back in last October, Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami had said that the ministry has referred a list of 194,000 vacant housing units to Iran National Tax Administration to be taxed under the new vacancy tax law.

The minister said that the owners of these houses have been informed in this regard via receiving SMSs.

In September 2020, Mahmoudzadeh

had said that in the first stage of the implementation of the program for collecting tax from the country's vacant housing units, only units belonging to natural persons are targeted.

The Iranian parliament (Majlis) had approved the double-urgency plan of the vacancy tax law in mid-July 2020.

The mentioned plan is mainly aimed at lowering the housing rental rate in the

Expressing his agreement over the approval of the mentioned plan, Hossein Hossein-Zadeh Bahraini, a member of the Majlis Economic Committee, said, "Our problem in the housing sector is not the demand higher than the supply, while the number of residential units is more than required."

This plan is vital, as many families are struggling for renting the homes, while there are many empty units, the MP fur-



ther reiterated

The vacancy tax law, as part of Direct Tax Reform Law, was put on the agenda in the Iranian calendar year ending March 2016 and was enforceable from the year ending March 2017, but there was little data on the  $number\ of\ vacant\ units\ then,\ according\ to$ Mahmoud Alizadeh, a senior official with

## Minorities struggle racism in Europe as right-wing movements rise: scholar

→ 1 We can already see a slight decline in their support in many parts of Europe. The Trump moment might be gone. But maybe I'm too optimistic.

What are the main causes of far-right groups' return to power in Europe? Economic problems or immigration?

Research on the roots and nature of such discrimination shows that there is no straightforward answer. Around the world, radical politicians are benefiting from social and political instability. Economic crises and social inequality are driving people to extremism. Yet material causes alone are not sufficient to explain the phenomenon. We should not forget that many of the populist movements have solid middle-class support. Concerns about social, demographic and cultural change and anxiety about the complexity of the modern world are also important. Europe's demagogues play on their fears, offering simple solutions, scapegoats, and a strong hand. We need to fight economic hardship and

Why do some European states try to impose restrictions on Muslim communities under the pretext of fighting terrorism?

Thankfully Europe has not seen anything like Trump's xenophobic 'Muslim ban'. Yet, while there is little institutional, state discrimination against Muslims across most of Europe today, many – as other minorities – struggle with everyday racism, now further fuelled by the rise of rightwing movements. Europe's ethnic and religious minorities have been discriminated against throughout history. Just consider the histories of Europe's Huguenots, Jews, Sinti and Roma; these are histories of exclusion and violence. At the same time, it is worth noting that the situation of minorities in Europe is overall better than anywhere else in the world, especially compared to many parts of Asia and Africa, where various religious and ethnic groups face discrimination and even persecution.

Would the EU accept Muslims as countries and communities inside itself? Take for example Turkey, where some say the EU is a Christian club and there is no room for a powerful Muslim country.

The debate about whether Turkey is part of Europe is centuries old. It depends how you define Europe's borders geographically, culturally, religiously.

Too difficult to define, the geographic concept of Europe has changed throughout history. There have been the age-old controversies over whether Russia is part of Europe or not, although most now consider the Ural Mountains as



the border between Asia and Europe, following the eighteenth-century Swedish cartographer Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg. In 1811, the Prussian geographer August Rühle von Lilienstern suggested including North Africa and the lands to the Indus, Amu, Tobol, and Ob as part of Europe. The German historian Karl Krüger advocated in the 1950s the idea that North Africa and the Middle East (West Asia) were part of a 'greater Europe', united by the Mediterranean as a Hellenistic-European cultural space. In contrast, around the same time, the British scholar Oscar Halecki claimed that the Ottoman Empire was not part of Europe because of its Islamic majority population, whereas Russia, with its Christian majority, had been part of Europe up until the Bolshevik Revolution.

It is noteworthy that this European concept was routinely defined in relation to an exterior Other, often the 'Orient'

Iranians are a highly successful minority, not just in Europe but also in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and elsewhere in the world.

usually portrayed as inferior. 'The battle of Marathon [against the Persians], even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings', John Stuart Mill once remarked. 'If the issue of that day had been different. the Britons and the Saxons might still have been wandering

Europe has sometimes been defined in religious terms, as Christendom. But there is a long history of Judaism in Europe. And there is a long history of Islam in Europe. It includes Muslim majority countries such as Albania and Bosnia. So, defining the continent as a Christian space does not make much sense

There was a serious debate about integrating Turkey into the EU in the early 2000s - a great opportunity at that time. The benefits would have been immense, on both sides. We missed that opportunity. Now the situation is different. We have a different Turkey. Erdogan's mounting attacks on his people's political freedom make it difficult for anyone

in the EU to make the case for a Turkish EU membership.
What are the main contributions and achievements of Muslims in Europe?

The majority of Muslims in today's Europe is well-integrated and successful. While the first generations of Muslims who came to Europe as part of the post-colonial and labour migration of the 1950s and 1960s worked in low-paid factory jobs, their children's and grandchildren's generations are now rising in companies, universities, civil services, judiciaries, and parliaments. Just consider figures like London's popular mayor, Sadiq Khan, or BioNTech's vaccine inventors Özlem Türeci and Ugur ?ahin. The majority of Europe's Iranians - who are not connected to the post-colonial and labour migrant community - are part of the bourgeois middle classes. In general, Iranians are a highly successful minority, not just in Europe but also in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and elsewhere in the world.

How do you assess the impact of religion (either Islam or Christianity) on political decision-making in Europe?

Religion has, overall, no major impact on political decision-making in Europe. In most countries it is considered something private. Yes, Muslims take over official responsibilities, but that does not mean that their religion impacts their political positions. London's mayor, Sadiq Khan, is a great example. He is secular. At the same time, he is very open and engages wonderfully with all religious communities in London - Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, and so on. Politicians like him make Europe a better place.

#### 40% of U.S. Marines have rejected coronavirus vaccine

In a letter sent to the White House last month, a group of Democratic lawmakers led by California Rep. Jimmy Panetta argued that unvaccinated soldiers pose a "critical threat to our national security and public health," calling on the president to issue a waiver overriding the rules - as well as the "informed consent" of the troops.

'Vaccinating every eligible service member will improve readiness and have an immediate and positive impact on the communities in which they serve," Panetta wrote in the letter, which was co-signed by six House Democrats.

#### **'U.S. wars, hegemonic** aspirations lead to horrific disasters'

A Chinese human rights organization says the United States' military interventions and hegemonic aspirations have caused "horrific humanitarian disasters" across the globe.

China's largest non-governmental organization, the China Society for Human Rights Studies, said in a report on Friday that Washington's foreign wars, launched under the banner of "humanitarian intervention," have not only cost the belligerent parties a large number of military casualties but also caused extremely serious civilian deaths and property damage.

The selfishness and hypocrisy of the United States have also been fully exposed through these foreign wars," it said.

The report cited a list of instances of US aggression, from its intervention in Greece in 1947 to its opposition to the Venezuelan government.

Conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria were also among the major US wars cited in the report.

Choosing to use force irrespective of the consequences reveals the hegemonic aspirations of the United States," the report said. 'Only by discarding the hegemonic thinking, which is chiefly

motivated by self-interest, can we prevent humanitarian intervention from becoming humanitarian disasters," it added.

#### Resistance News

#### Hamas describes Israel's refusal to cooperate with ICC as arrogance

**INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN**—Hamas Movement described the Israeli government's refusal to cooperate with the investigations of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as an assertion of its arrogance in dealing with international institutions

Hazem Qassem, Hamas's spokesman, added in a press statement on Friday that Israel is acting as if it is "above the law and

Qassem stressed that this case is a test for international institutions to enforce their decisions, achieve justice, and punish criminals.

The Israeli government decided in its meeting on Thursday to send a brief response to the ICC regarding the court's intention to initiate a trial of Israel for its crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Γhe Israeli Channel-7 reported that the response would stipulate that "the court does not have the jurisdiction to rule on cases against Israel.'

The ICC had sent a notification to the Israeli government nearly a  $month\,ago, informing\,it\,of\,the\,ICC\,intention\,to\,open\,an\,investigation$ into its crimes in the occupied Palestinian lands.

The cases that the court intends to investigate are about three issues: the construction of settlements in the West Bank, the Israeli crimes during the aggression on the Gaza Strip in 2014, and the Israeli crimes against demonstrators on the border with Gaza during the marches of return.

## GSA: Riyadh, Tel Aviv unhappy over possible transformation from 'maximum pressure' to 'maximum diplomacy'

→ 1 Following is the text of the interview: How do you read the recent events in Jordan? Was there a coup attempt?

This month's palace turmoil in Amman has created much confusion and widespread concern about the future of stability in Jordan. Nonetheless, at this point, no evidence proves that there was a coup attempt in Amman. In any event, as conflicting reports which push rival narratives keep on coming out, there are many observers who will likely continue framing this month's wave of arrests in Jordan as part of a successful effort to prevent a coup in the country. Yet skepticism is warranted. Foreign policy experts as well as Arab and Western diplomats have expressed doubts that any coup attempt took place. Various analysts have suggested that the purported threat of a destabilization plot was part of the state's efforts aimed at quieting critics of the government against the backdrop of major in the country.

Personally, I believe it is important for observers to hold off on reaching conclusions until more concrete information becomes available. The situation in Amman remains quite unclear.

#### Was it a coup like what happened in Turkey in 2016?

Unlike the case of Turkey in 2016, there was no evidence of any plot to carry out a physical coup in Amman this month. There were no elements within Jordan's military or police that even purportedly took part in this alleged destabilization plot whereas many individuals within the Turkish state's security institutions did play a role in the deadly efforts to overthrow Turkey's government in July 2016. This is all to say that the situations in Turkey nearly five years ago and Jordan this month are extremely different.

Qatar announced its support for Jordan. Is it a signal that Qatar may confront Saudi Arabia again in regional



developments?

I would not reach this conclusion. Since the al-Ula agreement's signing in January, Riyadh and Doha's relationship has warmed up significantly. While Qatar did indeed announce its full support for Jordan's King Abdullah II, so did the other five (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council member-states. Doha was very much in alignment with most Arab governments when it came to providing official and immediate support to the Jordanian head of state in the aftermath of this alleged plot to destabilize the Hashemite Kingdom.

Many pundits have speculated about foreign powers being involved in this purported plot targeting Jordan's security. However, there is currently no proof that Saudi Arabia or another Arab country in the Persian Gulf had a hand in this episode which was possibly a strictly Jordanian affair. Other commentators have pointed their finger at Israel. But given the closeness between Israel's military and the Jordanian security apparatus, there seems to be good reason to seriously question claims that the Israeli government tried to destabilize its Arab neighbor which signed a peace treaty with Tel Aviv 26 years before the Emirati, Bahraini, and Moroccan gov-

What approaches do the Biden administration follow toward Arab

Joe Biden's presidency has prompted certain states in the Middle East (West Asia) to begin seeking ways to partially reconcile with rivals and adversaries while 'agreeing to disagree' in the interest of cooling regional tensions. Concerns which countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt have over Biden's presidency have prompted these governments and others to recalibrate somewhat and find ways to relax frictions with their regional rivals and adversaries against the backdrop of uncertainty vis-à-vis Washington. The GCC's al-Ula summit, which resulted in the lifting of the blockade imposed on Qatar in mid-2017, was a salient example of this trend. Also, the thaw in Egypt's relationships with Turkey and Libya's UN-recognized government are other cases in point. Turkey's outreach to Israel is another.

Do you agree with the view that Saudi Arabia and Israel have formed an alliance to contain Biden's possible attempts to approach Iran?

Saudi Arabia and Israel both share ma-

Saudi-Israeli relationship.

jor concerns about the possibility of Biden's administration transforming Washington's Iran foreign policy from "maximum pressure" to "maximum diplomacy". Both the Saudi and Israeli governments believe that former President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" on Tehran needs to stay and should not be eased until Iran drastically changes many aspects of its foreign policy. The possibility of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) being revived deeply unsettles the Saudi and Israeli governments, which fear that such a development would undermine their geopolitical and security interests in the Middle East (West Asia) in ways that provide the Islamic Republic with unique opportunities to expand and further consolidate its clout across the region. Despite Rivadh and Tel Aviv not having official diplomatic relations, they maintain a tacit

"Without any doubt, the Kingdom and Israel's shared interests in working to dim the prospects for another partial thaw in U.S.-Iran relations factor heavily into the Saudi-Israeli relationship."

#### Biden's budget meets criticism from right and left on Pentagon spending

U.S. President Joe Biden asked Congress to sharply hike spending on climate change, cancer and underperforming schools, but his first budget wishlist on Friday drew howls of bipartisan concern over military spending.

According to Reuters, the \$1.5 trillion budget, reflecting an 8% increase in base funding from this year, marks a sharp contrast with the goals of Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump.

It would spread billions of dollars more

across areas ranging from public transit, poor schools, toxic site clean-ups, foreign aid and background checks on gun sales, but spend nothing on border walls.

The budget "makes things fairer," said Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

Yet the proposal was greeted by bipartisan scorn over its suggested funding for the Department of Defense, roughly even on an inflation-adjusted basis at \$715 billion. The administration also cut an "Overseas

Contingency Operations" account that even government bureaucrats said had come to serve as a slush fund for extra military spending.

Biden's request displeased both liberals hoping to impose cuts and hawks who want military spending to increase to deal with threats from China, Russia, Iran and North Korea - a reminder of the uphill battle Biden faces in delivering the policies he promised as  $% \left\{ 1\right\} =\left\{ 1\right\} =\left\{$ a candidate beyond the COVID-19 emergency.

"Despite Riyadh and **Tel Aviv not having** official diplomatic relations, they maintain a tacit partnership."

 $partnership.\ Without\ any\ doubt,\ the\ Kingdom$ and Israel's shared interests in working to dim the prospects for another partial thaw in U.S.-Iran relations factor heavily into the





#### **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-

InchehBoroun 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

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.

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 of participation in consulting services process.

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

The materials used in the process of Gabbeh weaving are produced from the wool of the sheep that are bred locally. Today European countries and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf are reportedly the two major buyers of Bushehr Gabbehs.

Therefore, the makers have begun dying the wool with herbal pigments such as orange, blue, green, and yellow to use them in the background. The motifs of these products are animals and



Some of the most famous patterns are Langer (anchor), Khesht (brick), chang (harp), geometric forms, birds and animals, and kinds of paisley motifs. Bushehr Gabbehs are made in villages such as Shoul, Kamali, Bahmanyari, Mohammad Salehi, Sakhareh, Zakariyayi, Bamonir, Mal Mahmoud, Khalifehee, Otaybeh, De-

The coastal province borders with the Persian Gulf on the west and bounded by the regions of Hormozgan and Fars on the southeast and east and Khuzestan on the northwest.

#### **10,000 sq meters of** traditional cloth handcrafted in Iranian village monthly

TOURISM TEHRAN – Weavers in the northeastern Iranian village of Rueen produce some 10,000 square meters of traditional cloth within a month. The village is famed as a hub of traditional textile in the country.

Situated in Esfarayen county, North Khorasan province, Rueen is famed for its delicate handwoven and industrial wrappers, colorful garments that are widely worn by women.



Some 120 weavers produce handcrafted fabrics in the village. And they make an average of 300 square meters of the cloth per day," a local official said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

The craftspeople use traditional weaving machines to make towels and shawls amongst other domestic products.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the calendar year 1398 (ended March 19, 2020) when the country was not still affected by the novel coronavirus. Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

#### New items added to intangible cultural heritage list

TOURISM TEHRAN – A total of 12 new items from the description on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list, CHTN reported.

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



Rajeyin Village's Tazieh, Iranian passion play on religious events especially on the Day of Ashura, Golabar Village's pottery, and the local games of Aradan Gashdi and Kolung Aghaji are among the items inscribed on the list.

The list also includes the skills of making the indigenous foods

of Omaj Ashi, Fesenjan stew, and Jaghur Baghur. Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katale-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

## French, German archaeologists expected to resume excavations in northeast Iran

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** – The tourism chief of Iran's North Khorasan has announced plans to resume several excavations across the northeastern province using the expertise of archaeological teams from France and Germany.

"Joint archaeological excavations with  $German\,archaeologists\,are\,planned\,to\,resume$ across Tepe Rivi if the coronavirus situation allows," ILNA quoted Habib Yazdanpanah as saying on Saturday.

"Moreover, we have are perusing to restart work on the historical town of Faruj with the presence of French archaeologists," the official said.

Last October, experts from the Louvre and the University of Tehran were granted a license to conduct a new round of excavation on the ancient town of Faruj. "Experts from the University of Tehran and the Louvre museum in Paris will conduct a new season of archeological excavation in the ruined city of Faruj with a permit obtained from the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism," according to Iranian archaeologist Meysam Labbaf-Khaniki.

In the same year, experts from the Louvre and the University of Tehran unearthed the ramparts and towers of an ancient fortress. believed to date from the times of Parthians (247 BC – 224 CE) in Viran-Shahr near Faruj.

Furthermore, teams of Iranian and German archaeologists have completed several archaeological seasons across Tepe Rivi, which has so far revealed magnificent



File photo depicts Iranian and German experts standing on Tepe Rivi archaeological ruins, North Khorasan province, northeast Iran.

remains of the Bronze Age up to the Sassanid

Archaeological research works in Rivi started in 2012. Since then archaeologists accessed remains of settlements from the Bronze and Iron Age, the Achaemenid, the Parthian, the Sassanid dynasties, and the early Islamic period.

The previous rounds of research had been hired various experts in archeology, geography, geophysics, geomorphology, and ecology who took part from the [Ludwig Maximilian] University of Munich; the [Free] University of Berlin; the University of Tehran; and Shahid Beheshti University, the report said.

Based on the studies, various architectural and archaeological evidence from the Parthian and the Sassanid era were discovered in the Rivi site, which is situated in Maneh-Samalqan county of modern North Khorasan.

The evidence, according to Mohammad-Javad Jafari who headed the fifth season of archaeological excavation at Rivi site, indicates the sequence of settlement in the area in the aftermath of the Achaemenid era, according to the Archaeology News Network.

In 2019, several historical clay stamps estimated to date from the Achaemenid and Parthian eras, were discovered in the ancient site. "The seals were found alongside clay urns in a large hall and the seals are imprinted in a variety of geometric patterns [depicting] plants, animals, and human figures. Studying the findings can yield valuable information on the economy, culture, and arts of the ancient societies," Jafari said.

'These stamps represent the widespread and complicated economic relations that people of the time had with other communities in such a way that made them bring together and store goods." Evidence suggests that residents of this area sealed the urns that were loaded with particular goods then tied them with ropes, the archaeologist said.

The history of Khorasan stretches back to very ancient times. It was part of the Achaemenian Empire of the 6th to 4th century BC and the Parthian empire, which spanned from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd

## Iran hotels remain open as fourth coronavirus wave gains momentum

**TOURISM TEHRAN** – Iranian hotels and other accommodation units remain open as the fourth coronavirus wave gains momentum across the country.

To curb the outbreak, President Hassan Rouhani on April 8 announced plans to close down all non-essential businesses, including bazaars and malls in cities color-coded 'red' or very high-risk for a ten-day period as of Saturday.

"Hotels and other accommodation unite will be remaining open during the fourth coronavirus wave," according to the Iranian Hoteliers Association, ISNA reported.

The total number of coronavirus cases surged past the two million on Thursday as the new wave of infections has overwhelmed hospitals in all major cities.

"We are expecting even more hospitalizations caused by the viral disease over the next few days," Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Friday. ICU beds are filled in many cities and the government is to set up makeshift hospitals to make room for more patients and advising patients to visit hospitals only if it is necessary.

The number of coronavirus cases rose after millions trav-

eled across the country during the Noruz holiday, which officially began on March 20. The Islamic Republic reported its highest number of daily coronavirus infections in more than three months period after millions challenged government guidelines and traveled during the two-week holiday.

Before Noruz, health officials voiced concerns about the fourth COVID wave due to the traditional travels, mostly to visit family and loved ones

Authorities had urged people to limit travel and in-person visits, saying that travels during the Noruz festival could lead to another wave of infections across the country.

Before Noruz, President Hassan Rouhani declared new travel bans for cities situated in the "red" and "orange" zones to combat the new COVID-19 variant. Rouhani called on people to avoid traveling during the Iranian New Year holidays to help contain the spread of coronavirus. He said it would be forbidden to make trips to cities marked as "red" and "orange" in terms of the prevalence of COVID-19.

"We request people to avoid traveling during Noruz holidays for the sake of their own health... It will be forbidden to



travel to red and orange towns and cities," he said. "No one should make any plans to travel to these cities," he stressed

The Ministry of Health has classified districts based on the rate of coronavirus infections with red color indicating high risk, orange meaning medium, while yellow implied low risk and blue being the least.

## Tourist map of Damavand issued

TOURISM TEHRAN - The first comprehensive tourist map of Mt Damavand, which is home to the tallest volcano in Asia, has been

"The comprehensive map represents cultural and natural attractions that are scattered across Damayand, And It also provides information about tourist facilities; ones that a typical tourist may need during their trips," Damavand's

tourism chief announced on Saturday.



map will be prepared soon with the help of the municipality," the official noted.

The dormant volcano (5671m), northeast of Tehran, is the highest mountain in West Asia. Shaped a little like Mt Fuji, it is one of Iran's most recognizable icons, appearing on the IR10,000 note, on bottles of Damavand spring water, and numerous other commercial items.

In good weather, the dramatic mountainous vistas around Damavand are attractive enough, and there are pleasant "Tourism map was one of the needs of 🧪 it is expected that an electronic tourism 🧼 hot springs for a soak in nearby Abgarm 🦯 for experienced climbers.

village, and skiing in season at Abali, on the way from Tehran, according to Lonely Planet.

Most people who head out this way, however, will do so to climb the peak. Start by heading to the large, comfortable Polour Mountain Complex (2270m), built by the Iran Mountaineering Federation – the best place to acclimatize before attempting the south and west face routes. The climbing season is from June to September, or May to October

## Restoration to begin on ancient castle in western Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN – The ancient castle of Hasdon e s k san-Abad in the western province of Kordestan is scheduled to be revived and restored in near future, the provincial tourism chief has said. The castle, which is estimated to date back to the

Parthian era (247 BC - 224 CE) and the Sassanid era (224 CE-651), is one of the magnificent tourist attractions of the province, Yaqub Guylian announced on Saturday.

The fortification was built to protect the residents of the nearby city and included residential houses as well as military equipment to help defend the city against invaders, the official added.

Aside from the high wall of the castle, it also has three guard towers, each of which is 400 meters away from the main fence of the fortress, he explained.

He also noted that the castle is only accessed through a southern part of the hill it sits on, and it is difficult to reach the castle.

From very early history to modern times, defensive



walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest. Fortifications in antiquity were designed primarily

to defeat attempts at the escalade, and to the defense of territories in warfare, and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Uruk in ancient Sumer (Mesopotamia) is one of the world's oldest known walled cities. The Ancient Egyptians also built fortresses on the frontiers of the Nile Valley to protect against invaders from neighboring territories.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than

mounds of dirt for today's archaeologists. The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), the name Kurdistan was applied to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains. It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east

in the early 17th century.

## Oxus treasure, splendid set of prehistoric Persian metalwork

The Oxus treasure is the most important surviving collection of Achaemenid Persian metalwork. It consists of about 170 objects, dating mainly from the fifth and fourth centuries BC. This was the time of the Achaemenid empire, created by Cyrus the Great (559-530 BC), when Persian control stretched from Egypt and the Aegean to Afghanistan and the Indus Valley. The Treasure seems to have been

gathered together over a long period, perhaps in a temple. It includes vessels, a gold scabbard, model chariots and figures, armlets, seals, finger-rings, miscellaneous

personal objects, dedicatory plaques and coins. It was found on the banks of the River Oxus, probably at the site of Takht-i Kuwad, a ferry station on the north bank

In May 1880 Captain F.C. Burton, a British political officer in Afghanistan, rescued a group of merchants who had been captured by bandits while travelling between Kabul and Peshawar. They were carrying with them this rich collection of gold and silver objects. Burton bought from them a gold armlet, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Other pieces from the Treasure subsequently emerged in the bazaars of Rawalpindi. Some of those now in The British Museum were acquired by Major-General Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814-93), Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, and others were obtained by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, who was both a curator in the Museum and a generous benefactor. In due course Franks bought Cunningham's share of the treasure, and eventually the entire Oxus treasure was bequeathed by him to The British Museum. (Source: The British Museum)



## Medical equipment export grows by 23% despite sanctions

→ 1 Sanctions and self-sufficiency In January, Health Minister Saeed Namaki strongly criticized the U.S. sanctions against Iran, saying the sanctions made it virtually impossible for Iran to import medicine and

Namaki made the remarks in a letter to the director-general of the World Health

medical equipment.

Organization (WHO). He stated that while the U.S. government claims that the sanctions do not include medicine, foodstuff, and medical equipment, it has blocked almost all of Iran's financial

transactions Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in late 2019 that the United States' sanctions and economic war on Iran targeted ordinary people's health and livelihood.

Despite sanctions putting pressure on the country, a unique opportunity was provided for business development and the activity of knowledge-based companies in the country.

Currently, over 5,700 knowledge-based companies are active in the country, manu-



facturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency, in addition to export the items

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

In recent years, the vice presidency for science and technology has been supporting knowledge-based companies active in the production of sanctioned items.

Iranian medical equipment market Reza Masaeli, head of medical equipment office at Ministry of Health, said in January 2019 that the growth of Iranian medical equipment market is estimated at around 9.1% while the global growth average is about 6%.

Approximately, there are around 500,000 types of medical devices in the world; while there are around 280,000 types in Iran.

Iran exports medical equipment to 55 countries including Russia, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Croatia

## IRGC hospitals double capacity to battle coronavirus

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** – Due to the rising number of k coronavirus patients, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has doubled the number of beds in its affiliated hospitals allocated to the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

The IRGC-affiliated health and medical centers are fully prepared to provide the necessary assistance in the treatment of COVID-19 patients whenever the Ministry of Health announces, IRGC's health department head Brigadier General Ahmad Abdollahi said, IRIB reported on Saturday.

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 National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control has announced a new lockdown for ten days from tomorrow 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.

When the third wave of the -19 pandemic was ravaging the whole country, fifty-six hospitals belonging to the armed forces have been equipped to exclusively admit patients infected with the coronavirus in October 2020.

Hassan Aragizadeh, the head of the healthcare department of the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces, told IRIB that the department is ready to establish field hospitals at every place, even at border points.

#### New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Saturday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 19,666 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,049,087. She added that 1,702,062 patients have so far recovered, but 4,329 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 193 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 64,232, she added. So far, 13,577,057 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been

## Over 131,000 passengers undergone COVID-19 screening in a month

e s k 131,000 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the country's official borders within a month (March 10 - April 9),

the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) spokesperson said on Saturday. Since March 10, 131,389 passengers were screened for COVID-19 by IRCS forces,

7,166 of whom with symptoms underwent PCR and 22,203 rapid tests, IRNA quoted Mohammad-Hassan Qosian as saying. He went on to lament that some 44 in-

dividuals, who tested positive, have so far been temporarily quarantined. With the cooperation of ministries of health and transport, a plan was implemented to rapidly identify and test incoming passengers and keeping them in quarantine facilities, if necessary.

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

Some 5,000 members of the IRCS cooperate for carrying out the plan; while around 8,000 individuals enter the country via borders daily, IRCS head, Karim Hemmati

Iraqi nationals visiting Iran have worsened the coronavirus pandemic in the southwestern Khuzestan province, the province's governor general said on February 20.

More than 300 Iraqi nationals cross Chazzabeh and Shalamcheh borders on a daily basis, Qassem Soleimani-Dashtaki said, adding that the issue has contributed to a rise in the number of coronavirus cases.

Last week, President Hassan Rouhani said that the fourth wave of COVID-19 resurgence has been registered in two

"If people in other provinces do not observe (health guidelines), they may experience the fourth wave as well," Rouhani was quoted as saying.



"According to the statistics, compliance with health guidelines has decreased," he

## New pediatric cancer treatment method being used in Iran

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** – For the first time, MAHAK d e s k Charity Foundation has started using children in the country.

Launched by the MAHAK Pediatric Cancer Treatment and Research Center (MPCTRC), TBI delivers radiation to the whole body from head to toe. It destroys remaining malignant cells, creates space in bone marrow for donor's bone marrow stem cells, and prevents rejection by suppressing the patient's immune system. TBI increases the survival rate in children with high-risk leukemia.

It is a part of the preparation procedure for hematopoietic (or bone marrow) stem cell transplantation. In this method, the immune system of the individual



who needs transplantation gets suppressed allowing the recipient to accept foreign bone marrow stem cells. and thereby increase survival rates of high-risk leukemia patients.

TBI is a method that has been used across the world for decades and is now mostly reserved for high-risk leukemia in need of transplantation. Using this type of irradiation in Iran would increase the survival rate of children with high-risk leukemia.

MAHAK is an NGO that supports services for cancer-stricken children and their families in accordance with international standards, as a result, over 35000 children with cancer have benefited from it during the past 29 years.

#### **ENGLISH IN USE**

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## Water level in Lake Urmia rises by 33cm

The level of water in Lake Urmia, northwestern Iran, has increased by 33 centimeters compared to the same time last year, head of the provincial department for the Lake Urmia restoration program in West Azarbaijan province has said.

Currently, the volume of water of the lake is 1.920 billion cubic meters which experienced 250 million cubic meters increase compared to last year which was recorded at 1.250 bcm, ISNA quoted Farhad Sarkhosh as saying on Wednesday.

## افزایــش ۳۳ ســانتی متـــری وســعت دریاچــه ارومیــه

مدیر دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه در آذربایجان غربی گفت: سطح آب دریاچه ارومیه نسبت به مدت مشابه سال گذشته ۳۳ سانتی متر افزایش داشته است. فرهاد سرخوش روز چهارشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایسنا گفت: حجم آب فعلی موجود در دریاچه ارومیه یک میلیارد و ٩٢٠ ميليون مترمكعب است. حجم آب درياچه سال گذشته یک میلیارد و ۲۵۰ میلیون متر مکعب بود که نسبت به سال گذشته ۶۷۰ میلیون مترمکعب افزایش یافته است.

#### **Charity foundation to** support 1,240 production units in deprived areas

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** – Barekat Charity Foundation. affiliated with the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, planned to revitalize and support 1,240 production units in deprived areas in the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20).

Last year, the Foundation invested in 742 small, medium and large production units, which will increase to about 2,000 units in the current year, which has been named by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Avatollah Ali Khamenei as "Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles", ISNA reported on Saturday.



A total of 6 trillion rials (nearly \$142 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) is allocated for the support of these production firms, which will employ more than 10,000 people directly and 40,000 indirectly, according to the report.

Last year, with an investment of 2.5 trillion rials (about \$59 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), 130 manufacturing businesses entered the production cycle and over 10,000 direct and indirect jobs were created.

#### Rural development

In Iran, where villages account for generating 20-23 percent of the value-added in the country, the development of rural areas has been always a top agenda of the governments' activities.

The sustainable economic, social, and cultural development of the villages is one of the major priorities of the current government, and many projects implemented and underway in this regard have led to outstanding development in the rural regions.

Many other efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend of migration from rural areas to cities while decreasing rural community dependency on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, or mining), including rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism.

Currently, 26 percent of the country's population lives in villages, around 39,000 villages have more than 20 households and 23,000 villages have less than 20 households.

Mohammad Omid, the vice president for rural development, said in November 2020 that for the first time in the country, the migration of people from rural areas to cities has reached zero.

A total of 220 trillion rials (nearly \$5.6 billion) has been approved for the development of villages in the current year (March 2020-March 2021), Omid said.

Some 140 trillion rials (about \$3.3 billion) have so far been spent, he noted, adding, the unemployment rate in rural areas has reached 7.4 percent, which has decreased by over one percent compared to last year.

## **Lemurs and giant tortoises** facing extinction if global warming reaches 3C

Wildlife species unique to the world's tropical islands and mountains face extinction if the Earth's temperature rises 3C above pre-industrial levels, a new research paper warns.

Exotic creatures like Galapagos giant tortoises, lemurs, Himalayan snow leopards and blue cranes will struggle to survive if the planet continues on its present trajectory and the mercury is allowed to climb to that level, as it is currently forecast to do by 2100, the study published in Biological Conservation suggests.

Such a degree of heating is expected to lead to sea level rises from the melting of the polarice caps and extreme weather occurrences, while ongoing pollution and mineral extraction activities provide further difficulties for endangered species fighting to retain their natural habitats.

The Paris climate accord, recently rejoined by the US, seeks to rein in the extent of global heating to 1.5C and would have a significant impact on averting such tragic extinctions if it could be realised, placing just 2 per cent of land-based animals at risk, compared to 20 per cent at 3C, according to the study.

But without world governments coming together to achieve that goal, nearly half of endemic marine species and 84 per cent of native mountain species would find themselves fighting a losing battle to survive say the researchers, who studied 270 locations around the world known for their high biodiversity and looked at 8,000 projections of possible outcomes.

Islands in the Indian Ocean and Caribbean as well as Madagascar, the Philippines and Sri Lanka could all begin to see an impact on their endemic plant life within the next 30 years as things stand, the authors warn.

#### TEARN PERSIAN

(Source: saadifoundation ir)

(Part 155)	(Source: saadifoundation.ir)
heavy	سنگين
third	سِوُّم
excellent	عالی
thought	کوهنّوَردی فِکر
to think	فِكر كَردَن
everything	/harčiz/ هَرچيز
nothing	/hičciz/ هيچچيز

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# Belgian film festival to review Iranian cinema

TEHRAN – The MOOOV Film Festival, which is scheduled to open in Bruges, Belgium, on April 20, has dedicated a special section to Iranian films.

A lineup of 10 Iranian award-winning films including "Bandar Band" by Manijeh Hekmat, "Yalda" by Masud Bakhshi, "There Is No Evil" by Mohammad Rasulof, "Radiograph of a Family" by Firuzeh Khosravani, and 'Just 6.5" by Saeid Rustai will be screened at the festival, which will be held online this year due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

"Careless Crime", the latest production by Iranian director Shahram Mokri, and the winner of the best original screenplay of the Venice festival and the Silver Hugo of the jury at the Chicago International Film Festival is also among the films.

The film goes back to forty years ago, during the uprising to overthrow the Shah's regime in Iran, when protestors set fire to movie theaters as a way of showing opposition to Western culture. Many cinemas were burned down. In one tragic case, a theater was set on fire with four hundred people inside, most of whom were burned alive. Forty years have passed and, in contemporary Iran, four individuals also decide to burn down a cinema. Their intended target is a



A scene from "Son-Mother" by Mahnaz Mohammadi

theater showing a film about an unearthed, unexploded missile.

The festival will also screen "That Night's Train" by Hamidreza Ootbi, which has recently won the Red Rose Award for best-released film between September 2019 and December 2020 as well as the best-adapted screenplay award at the 4th New Delhi Film Festival.

The film is about a writer who also works as a teacher. She narrates the story of an orphan girl to her students. Each student continues the story with her/his own imagination, and this gives the teacher material for her new story.

The lineup also includes "Son-Mother" by Mahnaz Mohammadi, "The Blue Girl" by Keivan Majidi, and "The Wasteland" by Ahmad Bahrami.

A co-production between Iran and the Czech Republic, "Son-Mother" is about Leila, a widow who works tirelessly at a factory that is failing due to the U.S.-imposed sanctions. She receives a marriage proposal that could mean financial security, but could also tear apart her family.

The Blue Girl" centers on a remote village in western Kordestan province, where everyone is in love with football, but there is no level field upon which to play the game. The children decide to climb up the mountain in order to find somewhere to play the game.

Shot in black-and-white, "The Wasteland" tells the story of the 40-year-old supervisor at a mud-brick factory in Iran who gets trapped between his boss who wants to shut down the factory, and his colleagues who distrust him more and more.

Moreover, "The Wasteland" will compete with seven movies from around the world including "Maternal" by Maura Delpero from Argentina, "Moving On" by Yoon Dan-bi from South Korea, "The Pink Cloud" by Iuli Gerbase from Brazil, and "Nudo Mixteco" by Angeles Cruz from Mexico in the main section of the festival.

The festival will come to an end on May 3.

#### Cormac McCarthy's "Blood Meridian" published in Persian

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

Prophet Muhammad (S)

trusted, he proves dishonest.

CULTURE TEHRAN – American novelist and playe s k wright Cormac McCarthy's 1985 novel "Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West" has recently been published in Persian.

Majid Yazdani is the translator of the book published by Cheshmeh in Tehran.

"Blood Meridian" is an epic novel of the violence and depravity that attended America's westward expansion, brilliantly subverting the conventions of the Western novel and the mythology of the Wild West.



Front cover of the Persian version of Cormac McCarthy's novel "Blood Meridian".

Based on historical events that took place on the Texas-Mexico border in the 1850s, it traces the fortunes of the Kid, a fourteenyear-old Tennessean who stumbles into a nightmarish world where Indians are being murdered and the market for their scalps is thriving.

Although the novel initially received lukewarm critical and commercial reception, it has since become highly acclaimed and is widely recognized as McCarthy's magnum opus and one of the greatest American novels of all time. Some have labelled it the Great American Novel. There have been multiple attempts to adapt the novel into a film, but none have succeeded.

"Blood Meridian" was among Time Magazine's poll of 100 best English-language books published between 1925 and 2005 and he placed joint runner-up for a similar title in a poll taken in 2006 by The New York Times of the best American fiction published in the last 25 years.

McCarthy has written ten novels in the Southern Gothic, western, and post-apocalyptic genres and has also written plays and screenplays. He received the Pulitzer Prize in 2007 for "The Road", and his 2005 novel "No Country for Old Men" was adapted as a 2007 film of the same name, which won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

Literary critic Harold Bloom named him as one of the four major American novelists of his time, along with Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and Philip Roth.

He is frequently compared by modern reviewers to William Faulkner. In 2009, McCarthy won the PEN/Saul Bellow Award, a lifetime achievement award given by the PEN American Center.

#### **Canadian exhibition showcases** works by Iranian artist

A R T TEHRAN – Works by Iranian artist Yousha d e s k Bashir are currently on view at a 3D virtual exhibition, which has been organized by the Vantage Art Projects, a Canada-based collaborative curatorial platform and online magazine for contemporary art.

Curated by American painter Katie Neece, the exhibit entitled "New Visions" explores the various modes and approaches taken by artists working within the scope of "post-digital art", organizers have announced.

The show is an examination of the way that "post-digital" does not have one singular definition, but with the rapid acceleration of technological means to iterate, create and explore

This definition of "post-digital" is a constantly shifting and morphing genre adapting and evolving within its current place in space and time. As it has throughout the history of art? technology shapes and changes the way we see the world and the way we interpret it, and these influences whether consciously or subconsciously reflect in the work that is being produced in our current moment.

Works by different artists from all over the world including Dan Becker, Austin Brady, Bex Massey, Charley Peters, Anna Nero and Bernie Liu Spimes are also on display at the exhibition, which will run until June 1.

Born in 1988, Bashir is a Tehran-based multi-disciplinary artist who has participated in different art exhibitions in Iran and other countries.

## **Tebuireng School of Religious Sciences**

After enduring years of hardship by him and his wife, this happened properly. The village of Tebuireng became a venue for attracting university students and students of religious sciences, and corruption in this rural community completely disappeared.

Muhammad Hasyim was able to extend this idea to East Java province and later to establish the great Islamic movement that opposes corruption throughout the Indonesian society.

But his thoughts were not limited to this goal. In the 18th century, few Muslim clerics thought of creating an independent economic mechanism to advance their religious goals.

Examples of such progressive clerics in those years may be seen in Iran and Egypt (one of which was the cradle of Shiism and the other the center of the Sunnis in the Islamic world), although Muhammad Hasyim had no contact with any of those clerics.

After he was relieved about his school of religious studies, he set up several business companies to achieve the larger goals he envisioned through their income. Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari established various companies using Islamic economic infrastructure such as vows and endowments.

He initially aimed to eradicate poverty in East Java society, but after the thrift of these companies, Hasyim Asy'ari used them as one of the foundations for the spread of religion

throughout Indonesia. Later, Hasyim Asy'ari's grandson established the Hasyim Asy'ari Foundation. The foundation had several billions in assets and capital through which it supported various

#### Tebuireng and the beginning of the Ulema Move-

Islamic institutions and schools.

In 1926, Hasyim Asy'ari finally saw the ground suitable for the creation of a large Islamic complex in charge of religion in the Indonesian society.

Although religious reform movements had begun in Indonesia in that decade, Asy'ari considered these reforms against the Islamic teachings and managed to establish Ulema Movement to protect Islam in Indonesia through the enormous capacity of the Tebuireng School, which had now become a large, economically viable center in Indonesia.

It did not take long for the ulema and the Muslim people of Indonesia to join the Islamic movement beyond expectation, and a large crowd joined the movement. Since then on. Tebuireng became one of the key schools in the Indonesian archipelago from which Islamic fatwas were to be issued and influential scholars and students of the country were to graduate. The Ulema Movement is now the largest Islamic organization in the world and is in charge of the main affairs



of Muslims in Indonesia.

#### **Tebuireng religious students**

The new education system launched by Haji Kiai Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari in Indonesia not only became the official education system of all Indonesian religious schools, but also attracted many elites.

With the development of this school, in addition to teaching religious sciences, schools were set up to attract students from primary to high school. By doing so, many influential people in the future of Indonesia, each with their own name, are tied to the Tebuireng School.

The role the graduates of the school played in the issue of Indonesia's independence and the leadership of the Islamic currents in the country are just one aspect of the importance of this school of religious sciences in Indonesia. The late Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, who was also Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari's grandson, also studied at the school.

Today, it is one of the most important religious schools in Indonesia, establishing and running several schools and

#### Living in Tebuireng

Tebuireng has its own rules and principles. The school has 5 basic principles that all students are obliged to observe. In fact, the scientific life in Tebuireng is based on these five principles:

1- Devotion: Everyone should strive to have devotion. Devotion is very difficult in practice, but the degree of acceptance of deeds is through devotion and avoidance of showing off.

2- Honesty: All students should know that honesty is the most important thing in their lives. Being honest never

3- Diligence is the effort to achieve the lofty goals of human

beings. This diligence, of course, must be accompanied by submission to the pleasure of God Almighty.

brings regret and guarantees a comfortable life in this world

4- Accountability: Students should prepare themselves for the great tasks they will take on in the future through practice.

5- Tolerance: Respect for the rights of all human beings through tolerance and tolerance of different tastes and opinions is one of the things that students should learn.

## **Curriculum of Tebuireng School of Religious**

In this school, three different types of sciences are taught. The first part is the national curriculum, which is in accordance with the government-announced curriculum. The second part is the international curriculum and the third part is the curriculum called "Wisdom" which is developed by the school itself.

Students are required to learn Indonesian, English, history, and a profession. Chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology are also among the other sciences that students are taught. The basic principles of Sunnah and Jama'ah, philosophy, Arabic language, principles of jurisprudence, sciences of hadith and sciences of Quran are also among the topics of wisdom courses.

Understanding the concept of Ahl al-Sunnah and Jama'ah, Hadith of rules (teaching hadiths related to Islamic rules), Quranic sciences, Hadith sciences, principles of jurisprudence (teaching Islamic rules, teaching 5 principles of religion, method of reasoning, teaching reasoning) and science and Quran (understanding the relationship between science and Quran) are also among the topics of the wisdom section.

Tebuireng School now has more than 3,880 students. It is one of the largest religious schools in Indonesia, home to the tombs of several Indonesian scholars and elders. According to the Shafi'i jurisprudence that is taught in the school, the shrines of Indonesian scholars, mystics and elders in the school are always a place for those who are interested in them and pray to God Almighty.

The Asy'ari Foundation now provides much more support to underprivileged students with financial and cultural support. And the Ulema Movement, which now has strong economic arms, thanks to the progressive ideas of Asy ari has numerous schools and mosques throughout Indonesia. The branches of this Islamic organization in Indonesia are also a place to remove religious doubts and teach and propagate Islam in Indonesia.

#### By Katy Kianush

It is difficult to trace the origins of the art of Persian miniature, as it reached its peak mainly during the Mongol and Timurid periods (13th - 16th Century). Mongolian rulers of Iran instilled the cult of Chinese painting and brought with them a great number of Chinese artisans. Paper itself, reached Persia from China in 753 AD. Hence, the Chinese influence is very strong.

The most important function of miniature was illustration. It gave a visual image to the literary plot, making it more enjoyable, and easier to understand. Miniature developed into a marriage of artistic and poetic languages and obtained a deep and sincere accordance with poetry.

During the last ten centuries there have been many great literary works to inspire the great artists of their day. At the end of the 10th Century, Ferdowsi created his immortal epic poem "Shahnameh" (The Book of Kings), which at some 50 thousand couplets, relates through fact and legend, the history of the country from the creation of the world to the Arab conquests in the 7th Century. In the 12th Century, the poet Nezami created his romantic "Khamsa" (five stories in verse), which was very popular, and was imitated several times by Indian poets writing in Persian.

## A brief history of Persian Miniature

great works by Sadi, the author of the famous "Bustan" and "Golestan". Golestan is a collection of moralizing and entertaining anecdotes and proverbs written in elegant rhymed prose, and at intervals, with fitting lines of verse. Bustan is a didactic poem, lyrical in tone and anecdotal in composition. It is considered to be one of the masterpieces of Persian literature.

In the 14th Century, there were enlightening and romantic works by Amir Khosro Dehlavi, Khajoo Kermani, Hafez, and Kamal Khodjandi. While the 15th Century was the time for the many faceted poet Jami, who wrote the seven epic poems called "Haft Owrang" (The Seven Thrones or Ursa Major). His poetry embraced all the different categories of preceding literature.

This great wealth of inspiring literature gave rise to the emergence of many important miniature schools, each with its own unique style, creating a great diversity of paintings. It was through these schools that miniature painting achieved its splendid development both in Iran and central Asia. Three of the most influential schools were in Shiraz, Tabriz, and Herat.

In the 13th and 14th Centuries Shiraz, the capital of Fars witnessed a new rise in the development of its cultural life. This was the time of Sadi, Khajoo Kermani, and Hafez. Poetry flourished and so did

One of the most important works for the illustrators of the period was "Shahnameh", and in Shiraz there were a large staff of painters dedicated to it. In the Shiraz miniatures of the 14th Century, symmetry of construction was predominant, and for the most part composition was friezelike, straightforward and monotonous.

Nevertheless, the Shiraz school was to have great influence throughout Iran, and by the end of the 15th Century it was producing miniatures of highest quality. The illustrations for "Khamseh" (1491) by Nezami serve as an example of Shiraz art at its peak. All is complete, and clear, both in composition and the distribution of detail, and in the outline of the silhouettes. The lines are firm and confident.

At the close of the 13th Century, the Tabriz school of art had been established. The early artistic development of the Tabriz school differed from that of Shiraz, as their illustrations tended to combine Far Eastern traits with the Armeno-Byzantine style of painting. This latter influence can be  $explained \ by \ the \ geographical \ situation$ of Tabriz, which is on the frontier of the Armenian region.

Closer relations sprung up between different artistic styles of Shiraz and Tabriz art schools at the beginning of the 15th Century. This time is connected with a great migration of painters which begun



after Timur had conquered Baghdad (in 1393, 1401) and Tabriz (1402). Many of them were brought to Samarkand, the capital of the conqueror, as well as to the court of his grandson, Iskandar Sultan, the ruler of Shiraz. In the new studios they adapted to the already existing ideas and tastes, but at the same time they introduced much of the traditions they had followed long before the migration.

In the 16th Century, on the vast territories of Iran and central Asia, poetry by Jami was extremely popular, and it enriched the art of painting with new themes. This was the start of great development throughout the various schools of art in Iran. In the Tabriz miniatures of the period, there appeared a magnificent ability to create within a limited space, a full illusion of a particular scene or landscape; for example, a picture of a palace building, including part of its yard, inner garden and the palace interior.