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Annual plan for tax income realized by 107%

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Yemeni forces launch retaliatory drone strike against Saudi airport, air base



A picture taken during a guided tour with the Saudi military on June 13, 2019, shows a worker inspecting the damage at Abha airport in Saudi Arabia, one day after a missile attack.

Nuclear chief: Centrifuge is one of tools needed to make COVID-19 vaccine

TEHRAN—In an interview with national TV late on Saturday, Iranian nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi discussed the progresses made by the Iranian nuclear scientists in various fields.

Iran marked National Nuclear Technology Day on Saturday during which the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) unveiled a number of new progresses in nuclear industry. President Hassan Rouhani inspected a number of new machineries and equipment used in nuclear industry.

"A large part of 133 achievements that the president talked about today is about nuclear fuel. More than 50% of nuclear achievements relates to agriculture, among other fields," Salehi said.

He clarified with an example about nuclear radiation in agriculture, saying, "It can be referred to the rice that has recently been provided to farmers. This rice has high yield and acceptable resistance to drought."

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Efficiency of Iran's thermal power plants reaches new record high

TEHRAN - The efficiency of Iran's thermal power plants has reached a new record high of 39 percent for the first time in the history of Iran's electricity industry, IRIB reported on Sunday quoting the managing director of the country's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH).

"The efficiency of the country's thermal power plants improved by over 0.4 percent from the 38.56 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) to reach

39 percent," Mohsen Tarzatabal announced.

According to Tarzatabal, the mentioned improvement has decreased the fuel consumption of the country's power plants by 846 million cubic meters in the mentioned year.

The TPPH head emphasized that the 0.4-percent increase in the efficiency of power plants has resulted in more than one percent increase in annual fuel saving.

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Yemeni armed forces and fighters from allied Popular Committees have separately carried out fresh retaliatory airstrikes against Saudi Arabia, targeting military aircraft hangars at an airport in the kingdom's southern Jizan region and an air base in Asir.

Two domestically-manufactured Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drones struck designated targets inside Jizan airport, also known as King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz airport, as well as King Khalid air base

with great precision early Sunday, spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree tweeted.

The attacks, he said, were a "legitimate response" to the Riyadh regime's devastating military campaign and crippling blockade against Yemen.

The airstrikes came only two days after Yemeni armed forces and their allies accurately targeted warplane hangars at Jizan airport.

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Iran records great annual performance in oil refining, distributing

BY MAHNAZ ABDI

While the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) was a difficult time for Iran's oil sector, which is the country's major source of income, some great performance was witnessed in terms of refining and distribution of oil and oil products.

A four-fold rise in the exports of oil products during the past year is also of great significance as it plays a big part in bringing revenue under the condition when Iran's oil export is facing the sanctions.

During the past year, National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) carried out a step-by-step plan for self-sufficiency in the production of oil products, in a way that not only Iran is no longer an importer of gasoline, but more than \$1.4 billion was earned from the export of oil products, which is a big step.

Persian Gulf Star Refinery's big role

The significant increase in the country's gasoline production and exports comes despite the fact that nearly two years ago Iran was an importer of the strategic product, shipping in over 4.5 million liters per day of gasoline.

Iran became a net gasoline exporter in February 2019, after the inauguration of the third phase of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery (PGSR) project which added 120,000 barrels to the country's daily gasoline production.

Persian Gulf Star Refinery, in the southern province of Hormozgan, is the first of its kind designed based on gas condensate feedstock received from the South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

As the largest processing facility for gas condensate in West Asia, PGSR is planned to play a big role to turn Iran into an exporter of gasoline.

16% growth in refining capacity

Not only Persian Gulf Star Refinery made Iran self-reliance in terms of gasoline production, it also increased the country's refining capacity to 2.3 million barrels per day (bpd) in the past year, while the figure was 1.8 million barrels per day for a couple of years.

The country achieved a 16-percent growth in the refining capacity over the past year.

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Senior MP: Iran-China cooperation plan is a win-win game

TEHRAN—Seyed Mahmood Nabavian, a senior member of the Iranian parliament has described Iran-China cooperation plan as a "win-win" situation and ruled out speculation about transfer of authority of Iranian islands to China, describing them as a "pure lie".

Iran and China signed a 25-year partnership on March 27. The cooperation document has been the hot trend of many discussions among Iranian and even Western journalists and politicians. Many describe the cooperation document as an important move by Iran to distance itself from Europe and the U.S., with Bloomberg describing the plan as "a challenge to the United States."

"This plan cannot be easily judged and the text of it must be read. If it is in the interest of the Iranian nation, there must be evidence in the text of this plan, and if it is to the detriment of the people, the evidence

must be found in the text," Nabavian said in an interview with the Mehr News Agency published on Sunday.

Referring to the details of the cooperation plan, he added: "This cooperation plan has 9 clauses and 3 annexes. The first appendix provides the main objectives, the second appendix details the areas of cooperation and the third appendix details the areas of cooperation."

The representative of Tehran in the parliament stated that one of the most important components of this agreement is in the field of oil and energy and clarified, "One of our main problems is the embargo on oil sales, which China has guaranteed in this agreement to buy for the next 25 years. On the other hand, we are at the height of sanctions and we currently sell about 1.2 million barrels of oil per day, of which about 900,000 barrels are sold to China."

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U.S., Israeli regime fear likely Hamas victory in May elections

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the Israeli regime's Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi have reportedly expressed shared concerns about potential victory of the Palestinian Hamas Islamic resistance movement in upcoming parliamentary elections in the occupied territories.

Ashkenazi pronounced the growing fears of the anti-Palestinian occupying regime over the likely victory of Hamas candidates in next month polls during a phone conversation with his American counterpart on Friday, RT reported citing the Tel Aviv-based Zionist Walla news website.

According to the report, the top Israeli diplomat further claimed that the possible election victory of the popular, Gaza-based Palestinian resistance movement would come as the result of growing divisions among Hamas's rival Fatah faction, based in the West Bank.

Sharing Ashkenazi's worries, the top U.S. diplomat insisted that whoever takes part in the Palestinian polls "must renounce violence, recognize Israel and respect previous deals," while ironically claiming that Washington believes that "Palestinians should enjoy equal measures of freedom, security, prosperity and democracy."

The boastful rhetoric by Blinken, however, contradicts with the wide consensus among Palestinian observers that all of the previous U.S.-brokered "peace deals" between the Israeli regime and the Palestinian Authority have, without exception, favored the interests and desires of the occupying regime, with Washington doing absolutely nothing in face of Israeli defiance of their own commitments in the accords that gave little to the Palestinian side.

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Tourism behind locked doors: Iranian companies, travel insiders promote country online

TEHRAN – Travel insiders, museums, and tourism fairs around the world are struggling to cope with the coronavirus lockdowns. While some have turned to online events, others are doubting whether they can survive.

Many Iranian museums, including the National Museum of Iran, started going online as the virus started affecting almost everything in the country last year.

In a most recent case, two separate loan exhibitions featuring ancient mining and relevant

documents were kicked off in Iran and Germany last Wednesday. The exhibition hosted by the German Mining Museum in Bochum is titled "Death in Salt, an Archaeological Narrative of the Land of Persia" and the other is named "Human Search for Resources."

Furthermore, 28 Iranian travel-associated companies and businesses from the state and the private sector took part in the International Tourism Fair (ITB) Berlin held online on March 9-12.

In the realm of handicrafts, the 34th national

handicrafts exhibition of Iran, which opened last year, is decided to remain online until further notice.

Experts believe that a strong presence in international virtual exhibitions could ensure the prosperity of the country's international tourism after the end of the coronavirus crisis, while it makes the name of Iran as a tourist destination for the post-corona era in the memory of the world market.

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Village alleys named after world's masterpieces of literature

Alleys in a village in Hamedan province, north-western Iran, have all been named after world's masterpieces of literature.

The initiative by book readers and literature lovers has given Rasoul Abad village a unique status and had made it known in the region.

Golestan and Boostan by Persian poet Sadi; The Shahnameh by Persian poet Ferdowsi; The Little Prince by French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry; One Hundred Years of Solitude by Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Márquez; The Alchemist by Brazilian author Paulo Coelho; And Quiet Flows the Don by Russian writer Mikhail Alexandrovich Sholokhov; and The Green Mile by American writer Stephen King have adorned the village's alleys.



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Biden admin incapable of handling domestic and intl. issues: rights activist

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

TEHRAN – An American human rights activist says the Joe Biden administration is not capable of leading the U.S., describing his policies as clumsily too ideological which enrages the majority of the people.

"The Biden administration is neither capable of handling domestic or international issues, and his policies and those around him are clumsily too ideological on enraging the majority of the people with prevaricating promises, puerile policies, ineffective half-measures," Randy Short tells the Tehran Times.

Amid hot discussion about the trial of Derek Chauvin, the officer who knelt on George Floyd's neck, many observers point to challenges that may threaten the future of the country like deep-rooted division in American society.

During his election campaigns, President Joe Biden pledged to restore American leadership via reversing Trump's policies. However, some pundits are skeptical of Biden's competence to treat American society's chronic wounds.

"Biden is incapable of leading the United States," Short believes.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see the rise of racist movements in the U.S., especially against Asian-Americans?

A: I do not see a rise in racist movements in the United States. These groups have always been part and parcel of American life. Scores of millions of Americans primarily white or those that consider themselves to be near-white have had armed hate groups for decades.

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South Korea PM visits Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**—South Korean Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun arrived in Tehran on Sunday afternoon for talks with Iranian officials.

During his three-day trip to Iran, which ends on Tuesday, Chung is expected to discuss ways to improve relations between Seoul and Tehran among other issues.

This is the first trip to Iran by a South Korean prime minister in 44 years.



The frozen Iranian assets in South Korean banks because of the Trump ear sanctions is expected to feature high in the talks.

Upon arrival in Iran, Chung held talks with Iran's First Vice President Es'hagh Jahangiri. He is also scheduled to meet with Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, speaker of the Iranian parliament, and Ali Larjani, advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

According to Chung's office, a meeting has also been arranged with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

The South Korean prime minister will also meet with officials from Korean companies operating in Iran, including Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics and SK Network.

Presidential chief of staff: Negotiations have been made to release Iranian prisoners in U.S.

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**—The president's chief of staff said on Sunday that Iran has not blocked the path of negotiations for the release of prisoners abroad including those in the United States.

"This issue has always been raised and we have never opposed it and it is always raised between us and others," Mahmoud Vaezi said.

He added, "The fate of our citizens in the United States or other countries who are imprisoned is important and we seek their release; and if we see an opening in this area, we will definitely work in this direction, because this issue is considered as a humanitarian action in the world."

"There are talks on this issue through intermediaries so that we can release all our prisoners in the United States or in other countries," Vaezi stated.

The United States has held 29 Iranian citizens prisoners, according to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons in November 2019.

Election official announces upcoming election schedule

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**—In a radio interview on Sunday, Jamal Orf, the election headquarters chief, said that the registration of presidential candidates will be in person

He said registration will begin on May 11 and lasts for five days.

The names of the final candidates for the presidential election will be announced on May 26 and 27, after being reviewed and confirmed by the Guardian Council.



The presidential election campaigns will also begin on May 28 and lasts for 20 days.

He also said health protocols will be observed in view of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"According to the law, we will try to make the necessary arrangements in terms of health protocols in the Ministry of Interior."

Presidential and council elections will be held simultaneously on June 18.

The Interior Ministry official also said city council registration has been completed and village council registrations are in place.

He said so far more than 50,000 people have registered for council elections and "their names will be sent to the supervisory boards for review."

Referring to the higher proportion of female registrants than men, Orf said, "We hope that women will play a greater role in this field."

Iran considers sanctioning some U.S. officials

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**—Seyed Naser Mousavi Laregani, a member of the parliament's presidium, announced on Sunday that the parliament has received a legislative plan to boycott some American officials.

Iran had already blacklisted Donald Trump and his associates including John Bolton, Mike Pompeo, Gina Haspel, Mark Esper, Christopher Miller, Steven Mnuchin, Brian Hook and Elliot Abrams on May 2020.

At the time, Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said these officials were blacklisted "for their role in terrorist and anti-human rights activities against Iran and its citizens."

MP: U.S. should abolish sanctions and apologize

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Sohrab Gilani, a member of Iranian parliament's Energy Commission, stated on Sunday that the United States of America "should surrender to the nation of Iran, abolish the sanctions and apologize."

He stressed that the parliament will follow the implementation of the law on Strategic Action for the Lifting of Sanctions in utter seriousness.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the JCPOA negotiating team should act with courage in this field and know that the U.S. war and sanctions against Iran in recent years will definitely lead to the defeat of the U.S., because the U.S. has gone all possible ways to weaken and change the regime in Iran over the past 42 years. But the results show that the United States is gradually declining in political influence and military, security and economic performance, not only in Iran, the region and the world, but also within its own country, and in some cases has been weak and failed," Sohrab



Gilani, the representative of Shushtar in the parliament, pointed out.

"The United States is recognized as the common enemy of nations in the region and the 'Down with USA' chant has resonated among the nations of the region. Due to the implementation of the U.S. strategy of con-

tainment and harsh sanctions against Iran for many years, our country is progressing in science, energy, defense and military, nuclear and security, which came with the resistance and patience of the Iranian people," he said. MP continued, "Iran has said a big no in the renegotiation of the JCPOA. The United States

Nuclear chief: Centrifuge is one of tools needed to make COVID-19 vaccine

→ 1 Or we can name the radiation systems as other types of nuclear achievements related to agriculture. Radiation systems that can be used to sterilize and extend the life of agricultural products. Radiation can prevent dates from rotting for several months."

He also pointed to the existence of a special centrifuge in the blood bank of the health sector, saying, "This centrifuge was previously supposed to be imported from Germany, but after passing many tests, our centrifuge managed to enter the country's blood bank."

Salehi described centrifuges as one of the requirements for making the COVID-19 vaccine, and the Atomic Energy Organization, through one of its companies, was able to provide the desired centrifuge for the Barekat Pharmaceutical Company.

Barekat Pharmaceutical Company is working on COVID-19 vaccine. Its vaccines are going to be administered by mid-June. Salehi, a nuclear physicist, also pointed to the production of titanium used in medical science for the first time in the country.

"In the field of radiopharmaceuticals, good accomplishments have been achieved so that the number of these radiopharmaceuticals is increasing every year. If we have to import it from abroad, we have to pay 15,000 Euros for each dose. This radiopharmaceutical has had positive responses in the treatment of prostate."

He also pointed out that the Tetra project is underway in Iran.

"In this project, about 60 million Euros worth of equipment has been purchased for the production of radiopharmaceuticals. The production of these radiopharmaceuticals is done

as standard or GMP. The project building is as big as 37,000 meters, which is being completed, and the first phase of this project will probably be launched in September. This project is unique in West Asia. Iran currently exports radiopharmaceuticals to many countries, including India, Pakistan, Iraq and Syria, and some European countries."

He went on to say after the completion of the Tetra project in September, Iran will be the "largest exporter of radiopharmaceuticals in the world."

The nuclear chief said that "ion therapy" is the latest method for treating a large number of cancers.

"We are the first in West Asia," he said.

The AEOI chief elaborated on the progresses Iran has made throughout the years in nuclear science industry, stating, "We currently have software with which we design centrifuges of about 500,000 lines. We now have the ability to design centrifuges with different capacities, but this does not mean that these designs will work immediately. It will take about 15 years, because in Europe there is a French company responsible for setting up and operating centrifuges, and they do that in 10 years of time."

The nuclear chief went on to discuss the latest accomplishments in the field of centrifuges.

"To date, we have about 15 types of centrifuges; IRS, IR9, IR8. As new centrifuges, IR5 and IR6 are among them. The complete IR6 chain was launched today (Saturday), while it should have been launched in the next eight years, but now the chain is on the verge of industrialization, although according to the law passed by the parliament, we have to launch 1000 IR6 centrifuges and install them within a year," he said.



Salehi added, "In this regard, 164 centrifuges were launched and unveiled today, two waterfalls will be launched in Fordow soon, and IR6 waterfalls will be launched in Natanz."

On the explosion of centrifuge assembly hall 10 months ago which the AEOI said was a sabotage act, Salehi said, "We did not stop and today we were able to temporarily set up a replacement hall for the exploded hall. We are currently working day and night to build all of our assembly halls in the heart of the mountains around Natanz ourselves. We hope that next year, these halls in the heart of the mountain will be ready and the facilities will be moved there."

Iran's next calendar year will start on March 21, 2022.

On 2 July 2020, an explosion hit a centrifuge assembly facility in the Natanz nuclear facility. Israel is being seen as the main suspect for the vicious act.

Senior MP: Iran-China cooperation plan is a win-win game

→ 1 He added, "The agreement also stipulates that Iran and China will cooperate in the development of oil fields, development of refineries and petrochemicals, as well as equipping oil, gas and petrochemical reserves. After the JCPOA, we all remember that companies like 'Shell' came to Iran, but they all left. In contrast, China signed this important cooperation plan with Iran at the height of sanctions."

The senior MP emphasized, "Another important issue mentioned in the agreement with China is the return of money to Iran and the facilitation of banking relations. The United States, Britain, France and Germany are looking for Iran not to be able to sell its oil and also to return the money to our country to put pressure on Iran, but signing this co-operation plan with China will prevent the enemies from achieving their goal and plan. They will fail, and it is clear that Westerners will oppose the Iran-China cooperation plan."

He added, "The agreement between Iran and China also states that China will cooperate with Iran so that we can build power plants

and be able to export electricity to neighboring countries. The agreement also stipulates that China jointly invests with Iran so that we can build power plants in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Syria, and also work with China to supply the electricity of the Silk Road countries. At the same time, Iran undertakes in this agreement to supply gas to China and Pakistan as much as it can."

He also said, "In the agreement between Iran and China in the field of transportation, including air, land, rail and sea, agreements have been concluded, because for oil exports, the issue of transportation insurance and transportation security is important, which in this agreement has been reached."

The MP stated, "Also in the cooperation program between Iran and China for the development of coasts, it is stated that the two sides can build ports with advanced technologies and also a corridor from south to north to export goods to Central Asian countries, and a corridor from south to the west for the purpose of exporting goods to Turkey and Azerbaijan, which is very important for us

and will create jobs."

"According to this agreement, a pilgrimage railway is to be established between Iran, Iraq and Syria," Nabavian said.

According to the document, Iran and China are going to cooperate in industrial levels, which is very important for job creation, the MP said.

"We have created free and special trade zones that are tax-free for export, but at the moment these zones are only import-oriented, and one of the things that is agreed with China is that Iran, in cooperation with China, can produce cars in the free zones and export them to the countries of the region," he remarked.

"It is very important for us to produce tablets, laptops and mobile phones in cooperation with the Chinese and to cooperate with China in the field of artificial intelligence," Nabavian said.

"Iran and China are also expected to cooperate in the military and defense fields, meaning that the military industries of the two countries are to work together, which will benefit the Iranian people to improve

their knowledge in this field," he emphasized.

Referring to Iran-China cooperation in political, regional and international fields, Nabavian said, "One of our problems in the (UN) Security Council is that the United States issues resolutions against our country, and if China cooperates with us and vetoes these resolutions, it will be very good and important for us. These are all important issues that should be considered."

He noted, "Iran-China cooperation program is a win-win agreement and it is not that we lose. The cooperation program is very good. Some may say that China is looking for benefits by signing this agreement, which is to say that this is true, and it is natural for each country to have its own interests, and we will definitely consider our own interests."

The parliamentarian added, "In the JCPOA, the United States and the West achieved their interests and made the most of it. They pushed back our nuclear industry, did not reduce even one sanction, and increased sanctions against Iran, and the JCPOA was completely to our detriment."

‘Maximum pressure’ on Iran has failed: NY Times

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a commentary on Saturday, April 10, the New York Times editorial board wrote that a return to the 2015 nuclear deal "is the first step out of the morass".

Following includes the main parts of the article:

There exists now a brief window of time for Iran and the United States to return to the principles of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, known to supporters and critics alike as the Iran nuclear deal.

In 2015, a group of world powers signed on to terminate some international sanctions if Iran gave up the most aspects of its nuclear program and agreed to robust inspections. The nuclear deal wasn't a peace deal. It was an agreement to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully. In 2018, the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from that agreement, convinced that a new set of far more oppressive sanctions would cripple the country enough to humiliate it into accepting new terms more favorable to the United States.

But President Donald Trump's gambit failed. The new sanctions have hurt the country. But

they also prompted the Iranian government to restart nuclear work that it had given up. Other nations, including China, which worked closely with the United States and European powers to forge the nuclear deal with Iran, have grown weary of U.S. unilateralism and could resume doing business with Iran, one way or another.

That's why Robert Malley, President Biden's special envoy to Iran, spent this past week in Vienna negotiating the path back to U.S. compliance with the deal. Diplomatic niceties being what they are, European diplomats shuttled between the U.S. and Iranian delegations, which were holed up in separate hotels. The talks, which have been described as "constructive and results-oriented," will continue next week. That's cause for cautious optimism.

On offer from the United States is an end to most of the "maximum pressure" sanctions that the Trump administration piled on in an attempt to seal Iran off from the global economy. Those sanctions target a wide array of the country's institutions, including its central bank, its oil ministry and the National Iranian Oil Company. Seyed Abbas Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister, has indicated that Iran could halt and

reverse its own nuclear work if it is given the sanctions relief promised under the agreement.

Of course, the same old spoilers who never wanted a deal in the first place are loath to see the United States talk about resuscitating it. The most common criticism is that lifting the sanctions — honoring the United States' old commitments — will squander leverage that has been accrued over the past three years. That's the attitude of Republicans like Elliott Abrams, who served as Mr. Trump's special representative for Iran, as well as Democrats like Bob Menendez, the New Jersey senator who leads the Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Menendez signed a recent letter from 43 senators that seems to call for sanctions to be kept in place until another agreement can be reached that puts deeper restrictions on Iran's nuclear program, its ballistic missiles program and its support for resistance groups in the region. That letter is more of a wish list than a starting point for talks. If Iran was inclined to capitulate to those American demands, it would have done so long ago.

At this point, the hard-line approach defies common sense. If the United States refuses to

honor the first agreement, why would Iranians ever trust it to honor a second?

The uncomfortable truth is that "maximum pressure" sanctions are unsustainable. They haven't changed Iranian behavior for the better. Quite the opposite. To punish the United States for refusing to hold up its end of the bargain, Iran has orchestrated calibrated violations of its own — to remind the United States what a world without the Iran nuclear deal looks like. Under the nuclear deal, Iran was allowed to enrich uranium up to a purity of 3.67 percent. It is now enriching up to 20 percent purity. Under the nuclear deal, Iran was limited to 202.8 kilograms of uranium. It is now estimated to have stockpiled three tons.

Under the nuclear deal, international inspectors were also allowed to investigate every inch of Iran's nuclear fuel cycle with little advance notice. Now, inspectors have been notified that they will lose that kind of access. In May, unless the nuclear deal is revived, international inspectors will lose visibility on what's happening inside Iran's nuclear sites. That status quo is not static.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Who's behind Natanz incident?

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Less than a **d e s k** week after a mysterious attack on an Iranian vessel in the Red Sea, an incident occurred at the Natanz nuclear facility for the second time in less than a year amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, a spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), told Iranian news outlets on Sunday that the electricity distribution grid of Natanz has been damaged due to an incident that he did not give many details about.

Underlining that the incident did not cause human damage or contamination, Kamalvandi said, “The causes of the incident are being investigated and will be announced subsequently.”

The spokesman stopped short of calling the incident an act of sabotage. In remarks to state TV, Kamalvandi pointed out that there was not sufficient information about the incident being an act of sabotage and that further investigations are needed to determine the cause of the incident.

But his explanations did little to quash rumors of an Israeli role in what happened at Natanz. Analysts and a lawmaker pointed the finger at Israel given its records of clandestine efforts to stymie Iran's nuclear program.

“This incident, which occurred on the anniversary of the National Day of Nuclear Technology and during Iran's efforts to force the West to lift sanctions, is highly suspected of being sabotage and infiltration,” Malek Shariati, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee, said on Twitter, noting that the parliament is following the matter and will make announcement after the conclusion.

The lawmaker was commenting on a tweet by Ali Samadzadeh, an Iranian expert on



international affairs, in which he said that “disrupting the electrical grid of the Natanz nuclear site has been one of the methods of sabotage in this strategic facility of the country for many years, and a solution must be found to eliminate and prevent it.”

“This chronic pain should be cured,” Samadzadeh said.

Some Iranian experts were clearer about who was behind the incident. Masoud Barati, a sanctions expert, blamed the incident on Israel and even said it was a continuation of the recent attack on the Iranian vessel Saviz.

“The Zionist regime [Israel] has increased its strikes because it saw Iran taking the bait of negotiations. Then the vessel incident and now Natanz,” he said on Twitter, drawing parallels between the Biden administration and its predecessor.

Israeli media outlets were quick to hint at an Israeli role. While the incident was still under investigation, these outlets broached

the possibility of a cyber attack, possibly by Israel.

“The incident at Natanz on Sunday morning was not an ‘accident’ and the damage is much graver than what Iran is presenting to the public,” The Jerusalem Post claimed without giving any evidence to support its claim.

Moreover, Chief of Staff of Israeli Armed Forces Aviv Kochavi also appeared to be hinting at Israel's involvement in recent developments regarding Iran, according to the Times of Israel.

“The Israel Defense Forces’ actions throughout the Middle East [West Asia] are not hidden from our enemies’ eyes. They are watching us, seeing our capabilities and carefully considering their next steps,” the top Israeli general claimed.

“Kohavi's comments came hours after reports emerged from Iran that its Natanz nuclear site had suffered a problem involving

its electrical distribution grid and days after Israeli commandos reportedly detonated limpet mines” on the Iranian ship in the Red Sea, The Times of Israel added.

Last week Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement that confirmed media reports claiming that Saviz was attacked in the Red Sea.

“The Iranian merchant ship Saviz sustained minor damage in the Red Sea off the coast of Djibouti at around 6:am local time on April 6, 2021, due to an explosion, the cause of which is being investigated,” Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Ministry's spokesman said.

The attack on Saviz sparked a wave of speculation about a naval war between Iran and Israel. But some observers put the attack, as well as the incident at Natanz, in the broader context of Israel's efforts to prevent the U.S. from returning to a 2015 nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Saviz was attacked on the same day Iran and the P4+1 resumed nuclear talks in Vienna and the recent incident at Natanz occurred on the Iranian National Day of Nuclear Technology. This has led some observers to draw a link between these incidents and Israel, which vehemently opposes the Iran nuclear deal.

The Associated Press said the Natanz incident complicates efforts by the U.S. to reenter the JCPOA.

The timing of the Natanz incident also coincided with another development related to Israel's animosity toward the JCPOA. As news of the incident emerged, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin landed in Israel on Sunday. Following a meeting with Austin, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said Israel will cooperate with the U.S. on the JCPOA.



Center also said the verification of any U.S. removal of sanctions on Tehran would require at least three months.

“It is obvious that the real test of sanctions removal and fulfillment of measurable indices put forward by Iran is not possible in a matter of few hours or days, and would take at least 3 to 6 months. It is also necessary to verify within specified intervals (for example every six months) that the Iranian economy benefits from the removal of the sanctions,” the report said, according to Press TV.

The Press TV source underlined the need for a “definite” removal of the coercive measures, saying the U.S. envoy would return to Washington empty-handed from the next round of the Vienna talks scheduled for next Wednesday if America refuses to accept Iran's conditions.

Meanwhile, Press TV has independently verified through Iranian sources close to the Vienna talks that Iran will by no means give its consent to a suspension, ceasing or temporary waiver of the sanctions for a period of 120 or 180 days.

On Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif outlined Iran's proposal for the U.S. to achieve participation in the nuclear deal.

“Iran proposes logical path to full JCPOA compliance: -U.S.—which caused this crisis—should return to full compliance first; -Iran will reciprocate following rapid verification; -All Trump sanctions were anti-JCPOA & must be removed—w/o distinction between arbitrary designations,” the chief Iranian diplomat said on Twitter.

Iran and the U.S. are locked in a bitter dispute over how to reach an understanding about the JCPOA. While Iran says the U.S. must lift all Trump-era sanctions, the Biden administration suggested that it may not lift all these sanctions. American officials hinted at a deadlock if Iran continues to demand that all the sanctions should be lifted.

Top Iranian negotiator reveals ‘biggest’ obstacle to progress in nuclear talks

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian diplomat leading Iran's negotiating team in Vienna talks has called on the United States to lift all of its sanctions, describing the sanctions as a major obstacle to moving forward.

“The biggest obstacle is Washington's desire to maintain sanctions,” Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi was quoted as saying by Japanese broadcaster NHK.

He also said the U.S. must lift all sanctions imposed under Donald Trump, not just those related to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“Our position is actually that if the U.S. is interested to come back to the JCPOA, they should not only lift all JCPOA-related sanctions but also sanctions imposed or re-imposed or relabeled during the Trump administration,” the Iranian nuclear negotiator said.

According to NHK, Araghchi said the best outcome would be a conclusion within five or six weeks, citing Iran's willingness to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect nuclear facilities to some extent until late May.

The diplomat's remarks came amid ongoing negotiations between Iran and the P4+1 over how to bring Tehran and Washington back to full compliance with the JCPOA.

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 U.S. sanctions

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

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

“Sanctions imposed after May 2018 are nuclear and their ‘tags’ have no relevance whatsoever”

In a tweet on Sunday, April 11, the Iranian mission to the European Union said all the sanctions that were imposed after 8 May 2018 ARE nuclear and their “tags” have no relevance whatsoever.”

The Brussels-based mission added, “They were once used to ‘nix the deal’, now to revive it, they must ALL BE REMOVED in addition to the sanctions that shall be removed in concert with the JCPOA.”

On Sunday, a source close to the Vienna discussions told Press TV that a possible U.S. removal of sanctions merely related to the 2015 agreement with Iran is not enough and that all sanctions, including those re-labeled under the administration of former President Donald Trump, will have to be terminated.

“It is not sufficient to only remove the JCPOA-related sanctions. Trump's sanctions imposed under other labels need to be removed as well,” the source said, adding that the anti-Iran sanctions imposed by the administration of former President Barack Obama under the so-called Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) and the visa program will have to be terminated, the source added.

“In addition to the Trump-era sanctions, the United States must also remove the Obama-era sanctions that are in violation of the JCPOA.”

Iran also said it will need to verify the lifting of sanctions by the U.S. The source, speaking to Press TV on Sunday, specified that the minimum time required to verify the sanctions relief is three to six months and that Iran will not agree to a temporary lifting of the sanctions or their waiver.

A detailed report by the Iranian parliament's Research

Iran announces ‘incident’ at Natanz nuclear plant

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), announced on Sunday that an “incident” has occurred at the Natanz nuclear plant affecting the plant's electrical grid.

He said the incident happened on Sunday early morning and it did not lead to human casualties or pollution.

“The causes of the incident are being investigated and will be announced subsequently,” the spokesman told Fars News.

Last year in early July, a mysterious explosion shook the plant. Later on Kamalvandi announced that the explosion that occurred at the Natanz nuclear facility on July 2 was an “act of sabotage.”

“Security investigations confirm the sabotage [nature] of this action and what is certain is that an explosion took place in Natanz,” he said.

The latest incident at Natanz coincided with the National Day of Nuclear Technology in Iran. On Saturday, Iran announced 133 nuclear achievements and a series of

nuclear measures in what amounted to a new leap in Iran's march toward achieving advanced, peaceful nuclear technology. At a ceremony held to commemorate the nuclear 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-IB 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 machin-



ery at the Ahmadi Roshan nuclear facility, according to the Tasnim news agency.

As of Sunday noon, there were no further details about the Natanz incident. But an Iranian lawmaker suggested that it could be another act of sabotage.

“This incident, which occurred on the anniversary of the National Day of Nuclear Technology and during Iran's efforts to force the West to lift sanctions, is highly suspected of being sabotage and infiltration,” Malek Shariati, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee, said on Twitter, noting that

S P O R T S

Iran claims three wrestling berths at Tokyo 2020 Asian qualifier

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian wrestling freestylers **d e s k** secured three more berths at the Asian Olympic qualification tournament in Almaty in Kazakhstan.

At the 65kg weight category, Amirmohammad Babak Yazdani Charati defeated Bahrain's Haji Ali 10-0 to win a place at the 65kg final. He will wrestle Ernazar Akmataliev from Kyrgyzstan in the final.

Younes Emami beat Sandeep Singh Mann from India 10-0 in the 74kg semifinal. He will meet Bekzod Abdurakhmonov from Uzbekistan.

And in the 97kg, Mohammadhossein Mohammadian will face Uzbekistan's Magomed Ibragimov after beating Indian Satywart Kadian 10-0 in the semifinal.

Iran had already secured three spots in Tokyo 2020.

Reza Atri in 57kg, Hassan Yazdani in 86kg and Yadollah Mohebbi in 125kg had already secure three spots in the Tokyo 2020.

In Greco-Roman wrestling, Iran has secured five berths so far.

Taremi scores against Tondela

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Porto football team defeated **d e s k** Tondela 2-0 at the Joao Cordoso Stadium in Matchday 26 of the Portuguese first division Primeira Liga.

The Dragons' goals were scored by Spaniard Toni Martinez in the 19th minute, and Iranian Mehdi Taremi in the 83rd minute.

With this win, Porto headed by Sergio Conceicao, reduced their distance to league leaders Sporting Lisbon.

FC Porto will face a decisive match in Seville next Tuesday, as they face Chelsea in the second leg of the Champions League quarter finals.

Porto lost to the English side 2-0 in the first leg.

Iran's Foolad join AFC Champions League group stage

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian football club Foolad **d e s k** defeated the UAE's Al Ain 4-0 and qualified for the 2021 AFC Champions League group stage.

In the match held at the Prince Faisal bin Fahd Stadium on Saturday, Luciano Pereira Mendes was on target twice and Saleh Hardani and Ayanda Patosi scored one goal each.

Foolad have returned to the AFC Champions League group stage for the fourth time in their history after 2006, 2014 and 2015.

The Ahvaz based football club joined Jordan's Al Wehdat, Al Nassr of Saudi Arabia and Qatar's Al Sadd in Group D.

Iran sends seven boxers to AIBA Youth World Championships

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** - Iran has sent seven boxers **d e s k** to the 2021 AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships.

The competition will be held in Kielce, Poland on April 10-24.

An impressive number of 66 nations will take part in the event. The total number of registered boxers is 487, which is higher than in the previous 2018 AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships.

The Iranian team will be headed by Reza Mehdipour in the competition.

The Iranian team consists of Mahdi Parvizi (49kg), Mostafa Rigi (52kg), Ramin Babaloo (60kg), Amir Reza Shekari (64kg), Farhad Moradi (69kg), Ali Seyedsadri (91kg) and Mahdi Jashnani (+91kg).

Saei steps down as Iran's taekwondo technical director

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Hadi Saei stepped down from **d e s k** his role as technical director of Iran's taekwondo national team.

The two-time Olympics gold medal winner was appointed as technical manager of the team in January 2020 by head of the federation Mohammad Pooladgar.

Saei was handed a one-year ban from participating in the Iran Taekwondo League on Jan. 16 after slapping the secretary of Iran Taekwondo League Organization, accusing the official of welcoming him late in the competition's hall.

Saei is the most successful Iranian athlete in Olympic history and the most titled champion in this sport by winning nine world class titles (two Olympics titles in 2004 and 2008, two world championships titles, four world cup titles and one world Olympic qualification tournament).

Iran will send two taekwondo players to the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Armin Hadipour in the -58kg and Mirhashem Hosseini in the -68kg will represent Iran in the prestigious event.

Machine Sazi, Aluminium share spoils: IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The match between Machine **d e s k** Sazi football team and Aluminum Arak finished in a 1-1 draw in Matchday 20 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Sunday.

In the match held in Tabriz, Saeid Hosseinpour gave the hosts a lead from the penalty spot in the 71st minute but Hamed Pakdel equalized the match with six minutes remaining.

Machinsazi, headed by Alireza Akbarpour, sits bottom of the table with 10 points from 20 matches.

Aluminum moved one place to fourth in the table.

Persepolis are leading the table, followed by Sepahan and Esteghlal.

Sepahan could move top of the table with a win over Naft Masjed Soleyman on Monday.

Annual plan for tax income realized by 107%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran managed to collect 1.92 quadrillion rials (about \$45.7 billion) of tax revenues during the past Iranian calendar year of 1399 (ended on March 20), showing that the country's annual tax income plan has come true by 107 percent, according to Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand.

Dejjpasand noted that tax revenues accounted for 84 percent of the total funding made in various sectors in the previous year, ILNA reported.

According to the official, over 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) of deferred taxes were also collected in the previous Iranian calendar year.

He further noted that some 2.08 quadrillion rials (over \$49.5 billion) worth of various bonds were also issued last year, the



revenues of which were used to offset the year's budget deficit.

According to the head of Iran's National Tax Administration (INTA) Omid-Ali Parsa, Iran's tax revenue increased 31 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020).

Putting the country's tax income at 1.43 quadrillion rials (about \$34.04 billion) in the mentioned year, the official said, "We managed to collect 250 trillion rials (about \$5.9 billion) as value-added tax (VAT)".

"One of the most important achievements of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in recent years has been the smartening of the tax system, the most important outcome of which has been the complete realization of the tax income plan," Parsa has said.

The country also managed to collect 1.09 quadrillion rials (about \$25.952 billion) of tax revenues during the Iranian calendar year of 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019), showing that the country's annual tax income plan came true by 97 percent.

The realization of tax income plans in recent years has taken place in the condition that the country is facing severe economic sanctions.

Value of trades at IME rises 109% in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The worth of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) increased 109 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, 745,073 tons of commodities worth \$443 million were traded at the exchange in the past week, also showing 102 percent growth.

The exchange sold on its mineral and industrial trading floor, 334,819 tons of various commodities valued at almost \$219 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 329,239 tons of steel, 4,680 tons of copper, 685 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate and 100 tons of lead.

Another trading floor of the IME was the oil and petrochemical which saw trade of 408,779 tons of commodities on both its domestic and export pits worth more than \$201 million.

On this floor the IME's customers purchased 217,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 68,103 tons of bitumen, 57,546 tons of polymeric products, 26,420 tons of chemicals, 33,200 tons of lube cut, 3,293 tons of base oil, 50 tons of argon, 250 tons of insulation rolls and 1,275 tons of sulfur.

Based on this report, the IME also traded on its agricultural trading floor 2,500 kg of saffron.

Moreover, the exchange traded 1,473 tons of commodities on its side market.



The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) rose 108 percent compared to the preceding year.

During the past year, about 3.5 quadrillion rials (about \$83.5 billion) worth of commodities were traded at the mentioned market.

As reported, over 33.39 million tons of goods valued at 3.12 quadrillion rials (about \$74.43 billion) were traded at the exchange's physical market, registering 27 percent and 127 percent of growth in terms of weight and value, respectively.

In the mentioned year, several new records were achieved in terms of the volume and value of transactions in the mentioned market's various floors including the industrial, petroleum, and petrochemical floors.

The IME's mineral and industrial trading floor witnessed the trade of 13.738 million tons of commodities worth more than 1.66 quadrillion rials (about \$39.5 billion) in the said year.

This floor was a platform to sell 12.437 million tons of steel, 207,205 tons of copper, 238,920 tons of aluminum, 13,795 tons of zinc, 1,300 tons of cast iron, 515 tons of lead, and 675 kg of gold bars.

On its oil and petrochemical trading floor, the IME traded more than 5.141 million tons of commodities worth over 833 trillion rials (over \$19.8 billion), to register 11 percent and 96 percent of growth in terms of value and weight, respectively.

Saffron and dates were the top traded commodities on the agricultural floor with 84 tons of saffron and 610 tons of dates being sold on this floor.

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

Efficiency of Iran's thermal power plants reaches new record high

→ 1 "Annual fuel savings add value and preserve national capital, so measures to increase the power plants efficiency are among the most important goals of the company," he stressed.

Tarztalab underlined the implementation of the annual overhaul program at the country's power plants as one of the determining factors in achieving the mentioned efficiency ratio and added: "Technical issues and problems that occur during operation can affect the power plants' efficiency; such issues are resolved during the implementation of the annual overhaul program to prevent the decline in the power plants' efficiency", he stated.

The official also stressed the significant impact of installing steam units in the country's gas power plants on improving their efficiency and said: "The efficiency of large gas power plants is 31 percent on average; this figure can be increased to more than 45 percent by turning them into combined cycle plants."

In this regard, last year, a total of 1,936



megawatts (MW) capacity of combined cycle power plants joined the country's national electricity network, he added.

Back in October 2018, Tarztalab had unveiled plans for an increase in the efficiency of the country's power plants up to 40 percent in three years.

According to the official, the efficiency improvement program was provisioned following a development initiative foreseen in the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), based on which the average efficiency of the country's power plants was to increase by 2.1 percent.

According to the sixth development plan, new power plants in Iran should operate with an efficiency of at least 55 percent.

Currently, with a total generation capacity of 25,083 MW (31.2 percent) combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share in the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants generating 29.9 percent.

Iran records great annual performance in oil refining, distributing

→ 1 Meanwhile, a four-fold rise in the export of oil products put Iran in the first place in the West Asia. **CNG promoting program**

In a bid to reduce the consumption of gasoline in the country, NIORDC also initiated a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) promoting program in the past year, which played a noticeable role in lowering gasoline consumption while increasing the export of this product.

As stated by the NIORDC's managing director, developing the country's CNG industry could potentially save Iran \$14 billion.

According to Alireza Sadeqabadi, increasing the country's gasoline production capacity by 20 million liters requires at least \$15 billion of investment, while boosting the country's CNG output by the equivalent of the same amount would only need \$1 billion, that means it could save the country \$14 billion.

NIORDC has also inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Iran's state-owned Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) to add new dual-fuel vehicles to the country's public transportation fleet.

Elevating quality of products

While the production of refined products registered a

record high in the past year, the quality of the products has been elevated in a way that more clean-air days were experienced.

So, the country's refining industry was able to increase the quality of oil products by planning for the development of refining industries, in addition to a significant increase in the quantity of the produced products, and to move towards the production of higher value-added products.

Major pipelines inaugurated

While the country's performance was outstanding in terms of oil products production in the past year, prominent measures were also taken in the field of transferring and distribution.

Inaugurating four major pipelines for transferring crude oil and oil products in the past winter, the country's capacity was noticeably increased in this regard.

A major project inaugurated in this field was Goreh-Jask pipeline strategic project, which was inaugurated in late June 2020 by President Hassan Rouhani.

This project is aimed at expanding the oil transport capacity in the south of the country to one million barrels a day, and is underway with the development of Iran's



second major oil terminal, Jask terminal, which is under construction on 60 hectares of land.

Goreh-Jask pipeline is also going to provide Iran with an alternative route for the country's crude oil exports that are currently carried out through the Strait of Hormuz.

Budget for supporting production of strategic crops up 82% this year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Director-General of the Agriculture Ministry's Planning and Budget Office has said the budget allocated for supporting the production of strategic agricultural products in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) has increased by about 82.3 percent.

According to Hassan Qasemi, based on the current Iranian calendar year's national budget bill, the Agriculture Ministry has been allocated about 1.772 trillion rials (about \$42 million) to promote a program for increasing self-sufficiency in the production of strategic agricultural products, IRNA reported.

The budget allocated for the mentioned program was 972 billion rials (about \$23 million) in the previous year, the official said.



Qasemi further noted that the budget allocated for promoting the cultivation of oilseeds has also been increased to 1.8 trillion rials (about \$42.8 million) in the current year.

In this year's bill, the budget for expanding the irrigation and drainage networks of the country's farmlands has also increased from 2.443 trillion rials (about \$58 million) in the previous year to 7.9 trillion rials (about \$188 million) in the current year, which shows an increase of 223.4 percent, he said.

Also, to support and promote the cultivation of medicinal plants and rainfed gardens in slopes, 1.665 trillion rials (about \$39.6 million) has been allocated, which shows a growth of 150 percent compared to the figure for the previous year.

In the past forty years, since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has witnessed a remarkable improvement in various sectors and the agriculture industry has been one of the areas in which the country has undergone

huge development.

The production at the country's agricultural sector has increased by six-fold during the mentioned period.

According to Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi, the agriculture sector currently accounts for nearly eight percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) which is about \$40 billion.

Over 18.5 million hectares of land is under cultivation of agricultural products across Iran and the country's total production of such products is at about 124 million tons.

Production of wheat, as the most strategic crop, reached about 14 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, while the target for the year was 13.4 million tons, according to the Agriculture Minister.

450 idle industrial units revived in Gilan in a year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — As announced by the governor general of Gilan province, in the north of Iran, 450 idle industrial units were revived in the province in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Arsalan Zare also announced that 300 idle units are planned to return to the production cycle in this year.

The official further said that 200 new production units were set up in the province during the previous year.

As announced last week by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, 1,500 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the past year.

According to Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were also established across the country during the mentioned year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."



Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: "The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors."

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed

over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

According to the official, there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran's industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

Iran's industrial parks play a significant role in making the country independent through boosting production, which is a major strategy of Iran to combat the U.S. sanctions.

In fact, strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

In this due, the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21) has been named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles", and all governmental bodies, as well as the private sector, are moving in line with the materialization of this motto.

Regarding its significant role in the realization of the mentioned goal, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has already defined its main programs for supporting domestic production in the current year.

In this regard, the development of industrial parks and supporting the units located in these areas is one of the major programs underway by the ministry.



TEDPIX falls 9,700 points on Sunday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 9,775 points to 1.23 million on Sunday.

Over 1.74 billion securities valued at 19.833 trillion rials (about \$472.2 million) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market's index fell 8,238 points, and the second market's index dropped 16,019 points.

TEDPIX dropped 45,000 points, or 3.6 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.249 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

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

most widely followed indices.

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

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

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

Biden admin incapable of handling domestic and intl. issues: rights activist

➔ **1** Regarding Asian Americans, there has been violence and discrimination against various Asian American ethnic groups; however, there are three things that must be kept in mind: (1) millions of Asians are embraced and assimilated as white and they are often very racist against all non-white people; (2) most Asians strive to be as white as possible which means adopting anti-Black and other racist behaviors and practices in addition to their own hatreds of people not in their clan/ethnic group, and (3) too often Asians seeking to be invisible and alien to Blacks or other non-white people or they are involved in illegal activity or are not lawfully in the United States and do not wish to risk being arrested, jailed, or deported. Therefore, for decades few Asians complain to the authorities about incidents of racial intolerance.

Across the United States, crime rates are soaring, and Asians are experiencing what other Americans are experiencing—a spike in robberies and violent crime. Another issue at hand that is not being addressed Asian businesses have been giving a commanding role in the economic life of Black and Brown communities, and they often function as an element of racist white power and economic exploitation.

Racism in the media worldwide ignores the murders, assaults, and beatings that Asian Americans mete out to Black people, and as a result, the reporting has made the situation appear as if Black people are simply hurting Asians. This is neither true nor possible. Blacks are highly segregated from Asians all over America. Second, whites kill and assault Asians with more deadly results than anything that could be said of Blacks. Asians are about 7% of the U.S. population and are 1.4% of the reported victims of hate crimes. Blacks are 12.5% of the population and are victims of 60% of the hate crimes. When is an Asian an Asian or an Arab or white?

Ignorant American whites in particular already have low or no tolerance for non-white people, in general, are easily angered by people different from themselves. People who hate others for no reason at all are predisposed to hate others if a plausible reason or cause is provided. Furthermore, many Americans cannot tell the difference between one group of Far Eastern Asians from another. It must be remembered the United States has fought many wars and insurgencies in the Far East and killed millions of Asians either directly or via proxy allies in Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan, Korea, China, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Laos. Many people grew up hearing the derogatory language used to describe Asians as “chinks”, “Japs”, “nips”, “slants”, “gooks”, “sand Niggers”, “dune coons”, “Chinaman”, “camel jockeys”, “dots”, “VCs”, and many other names. These are most common among white Americans, but these words and stereotypes have been around for 150 years. There have been anti-Asian riots and massacres in America—all done by whites whom Asians favor over more tolerant Black and Brown Americans. The Civil Rights that Asians enjoy were fought for and earned by Blacks whom they hate, and these same rights were denied to them by whites who they love. The Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon described colonized people who worshipped those that oppressed them as having “dark skin white mask”. A major solution I would like to suggest to solving the Asian American crisis is for them to stop being either passive or active supporters of white racism.

Asians have either had a free ride in American life leaving the heavy lifting of the racial cross to the Blacks they loath so much or actively helped make life harder for people who have not bombed them in Asia nor oppressed them in America. The Asian Americans’ Stockholm syndrome days are over and they must sober up to the reality that the way that they have conducted their affairs in America, Africa, and Latin America have become toxic. Money spent trying to look white or alter their appearance or enter into unhappy marriages to whiten their children have not made them fully accepted as white. Their refusal to stand for justice has a price they are paying today.

Do you think the Biden administration can address the challenges threatening the U.S.?

No, Biden is incapable of leading the United States. His honeymoon with the press and the left will end before Labor Day this year. Biden is a singular example of how the hatred of Blacks can help a mediocre non-original thinker American politician have a career in high office. He is white, male, mediocre, corrupt, and from one of the old slave-owning families. There is nothing distinguished about Biden’s corrupt and bigoted career other than his ability to help keep the Anglo-American version of Apartheid alive by carrying the torch of racial hatred for his deceased Dixiecrat friends by exceeding their oppression of Blacks with his genocidal mass incarceration bill. He is a tool of the banking sector and if these forces wish to loot and destroy the lives of the American people for profit he will dutifully comply. Biden lacks the charisma or character to amount to anything without his



handlers and managers scripting everything he says or does. Biden’s presidency is a crime against all persons suffering from dementia to place them in such a demanding position when they are not certain of whether they are still alive. Biden who struggles to handle a press conference or climb the stairs is not up to the job. Biased media-stoked Trump hatred has made much of the world’s public opinion akin to an LSD-addled cargo cult to such a degree someone so deeply flawed as is Biden with his foul temper, innate incompetence, pathological hatred of Blacks, and rapidly declining mental state can effectively perform the difficult job on earth—the presidency of the United States. Biden’s Vice-Presidential choice is evidence that he has lost touch with reality and is on a sojourn to Cloud Kookoo Land.

What are the roots of deep division in American society, especially under Trump’s presidency?

The deepest rift in America is the issue of anti-DAFTAA (Descendants of Aboriginal and Forcibly Trafficked African Americans aka Blacks) hatred and systemic oppression. The very concept of White people and Black people is at the foundation of society. Whites are the perennial winners and Blacks are the genetic perennial losers. The whole society is structured around how the Whites maintain order, wealth, and one-sided justice for themselves and deny the same to the Blacks. Most of what people know about America is based on a selective history, and many lies and myths are foundational to the national identity. The first European settlements in North America (on land presently part of the United States) were not started by the English. The Spanish had outposts in what is today Florida and South Carolina many decades before the establishment of Jamestown Virginia in 1607. In fact, a Spanish settlement on the PeeDee River in South Carolina was overrun by the Africans and Indians in 1525—nearly 100 years prior to the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1620. Secondly, the racist notion that the so-called American Indians were light-skinned Mongoloid-looking people is fiction that White Supremacists promote to hide the fact that many of the Aboriginal people of the Americas were like the indigenous people all over the world were dark in color—not white. In fact, Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) called the people he first encountered in the Americas Indians because they were very dark in color. Many of the people the Europeans encountered in North America misnamed Indians later were misnamed Negroes and later Black after 1912. Any effort to understand America without understanding that 100 years before the Declaration of Independence Bacon’s Rebellion (1676-1677) united Whites, Negroes (in the American colonial period the word Negro was inclusive of Africans and Indians), and their mixed children rose in revolt against the ruling English elites in Virginia. Angry rebels set much of Colonial Virginia alight, but Bacon became ill and died during the conflict which was suppressed shortly thereafter. The ruling English elites, in an effort to destroy the solidarity and unity between the Africans, Aborigines, and Europeans, created a color-based Apartheid-like caste system that made all persons classified as White superior free people and rendered Blacks subhuman slaves based on their color and blood. The system of Vita Durante (for life) slavery effectively made all whites and those who could become honorary whites (this is inclusive of Asians, Arabs, Turks, and mixed-race persons of the fair complexion) natural enemies of enslaved Blacks and they were rewarded for helping exploit, surveil, police, punish, kill, and enforcing the unjust order. Since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, racial hatred and racial oppression have always been central to the Anglo-American dominated republic. One of the main causes of the American Revolution was to prevent King George III’s government’s abolition of slavery and villainage in the United Kingdom and due to the Crown’s making Parliamentary laws binding on its North American colonists. Therefore, America was established in part to preserve the enslavement of Black people which was

the primary wealth of wealthy Americans. Furthermore, the greatest threat to the American patriots winning their War for Independence against the British (1775-1783) was the threat of enslaved Blacks fighting for the English King. Royal Governor Lord Dunmore offered Blacks enslaved freedom if they fought to the Crown, and the American Patriots made no similar offer. As a result for every Black who joined the American revolutionists, another 5 fought for the British Army. Likewise, the British helped over 50,000 Blacks flee the United States to various parts of the British Empire, wherein they deprived the richest rebel patriots of their chattel property. Few people are aware that the War of 1812 was fought in part by the richest Americans trying to compel the British to return stolen slaves. The greatest defeat of the United States Army at the gates of Washington in 1813 was inflicted on the ex-slaves given their freedom in exchange for military service. African-Indian people fought the United States from the early 1800s to the 1850s. These so-called Seminole Wars (also called Negro and Ibo Wars by the United States Congress) bankrupted the early American Republic and cost more lives than any war until the Civil War. Slave revolts kept the Southern States on edge, and the entire American economic system was wholly dependent on the labor of enslaved Black people—by the 1860s 60% of the U.S. economy based on cotton alone. The United States Government Constitution was delayed in ratification in part of the issue of ending the importation of Black people. Black oppression was central to American life for example the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 (which limited the expansion of slavery), the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, Banning of African Importation in 1808, The formation of the American Colonization Society (the U.S. government agency created in 1816 to repatriate Blacks to Africa), the Missouri Compromise 1820 (which limited the expansion of slavery), The Nat Turner Revolt of 1831, The Lone Star Revolution 1835-1836 (Americans fought to preserve Black slavery, the Texas Annexation (1845), Jacksonian Racial Riots (two decades of urban anti-Black riots in Northern states from 1820-1845), the Mexican American War (1846-1848) was influenced by the desire to expand slavery, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Bleeding Kansas 1854-1856 (mass violence over slavery in Kansas-Nebraska Territory) and John Brown’s Raid on the Federal Arsenal at Harper’s Ferry in 1859 all were important national events early United States history—all either wholly or significantly influenced by the institution of slavery. Finally, the most bloody and destructive war and most brutal domestic conflicts in American history the Civil War (1860-1865) and the Reconstruction era (1865-1877) were caused by efforts to preserve slavery and to reinstitute Black slavery under another guise. Over the entire course 20th century, American life has been punctuated by communal racial violence, racial pogroms, lynching, racial terror, race riots, ethnic cleansing, police murder, peonage, segregation, convict lease slavery, unjust executions under the color of law, non-consensual human experimentation, eugenics, and countless other atrocities primarily and typically inflicted upon Blacks in most of the United States, and no other ethnic group has suffered as much or as often.

Racial hatred and ethnic divisions have always been a means to maintain power by the elite, and healing these would unite the people and could bring about a major social change. Lest we forget Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy were assassinated in 1963, 1965, and 1968 for trying to unite all the American people. The Black Panthers were exterminated for trying to unite the people. There exist agencies and forces in the intelligence community that keeps the people down. Starting in 1917, the United States government began targeting outspoken activists who were deemed dangerous. The Palmer Raids/Red Scare Summer (1919), CointelPro 1956-1973 And the activities of “Black Desks”, “Red Squads”, and elements of the American intelligence agencies have

worked to divide and destroy dissent.

Donald Trump’s presidency did not divide the nation. Rather Trump’s tenure in office allowed the world and Americans to see the fissures in society that have been in existence since the European settlers first arrived on these shores. In reality, Trump’s refusal to hide or obscure real social issues helped empower activists who are often ignored and dismissed for a want of undeniable evidence of systemic and structural racism and injustice.

Trump as a President did not harm Black Americans, and his policies did not target law-abiding and legal residents or citizens of the United States. On the other hand, the racism and divisions in America are useful to the ruling classes who play on these problems to increase their power. Unity is not of interest to an elite who extracts its wealth and power from division and hatred. Biden and Harris are both persons who deeply hate poor people in general and Blacks in particular, and their roads to power were based on identity politics that thrive on conflict and racial fault lines. The Biden administration given his 50-year record of persecuting Blacks (best seen with refusal to continue the criminal justice reform policies of Trump and maniacal belief that Blacks are at war against Asians and his worship of mass incarceration policies), his total slave-like obedience to the COVID-19 mandated fascism over American life, his nonsensical immigration policies and tolerance for human trafficking, and his deviant sexual obsession with offending the religious and moral sentiments of scores of millions of Americans promoting transgenderism and genital mutilation of minors preclude his being able to unite America in anything but bloodshed and chaos.

4. Given the U.S. performance under the Trump presidency, do you think the country can present a successful model of governance to the world?

I have no faith in the present administration of President Joseph R. Biden or his Vice President Kamala Harris Emhoff because both are corrupt and insincere blindly devoted to the bankers, militarists, and the globalists in general. The complete and shameful failure of the Biden-Harris removes unwanted invading American forces from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and ends the wars in West Papua, Libya, Yemen, and the low-intensity conflicts on the African continent (Mozambique, Congo, Niger, Mali, and Nigeria). The Biden-Harris administration is destabilizing Central America by encouraging the flow of drugs, human sexual trafficking of children and post-pubescent youth, and continuing trade policies that destroy the economic base of primarily agrarian societies. Biden, aiming to mask his corruption having used his former office as Vice President to facilitate influence peddling to illegally enrich himself and his immediate family, has feigned being tough on the Peoples’ Republic of China which has given untold millions of dollars to the President’s family. Further, Biden has hypocritically denounced the Chinese mass incarceration of its restive Uyghur minority but has defined his political career repressing Black Americans for a half-century. Biden is the architect of the most draconian laws on the earth that racially targeted millions of Black Americans to be gulag and warehoused in prisons that renewed constitutionally sanction slavery for Black Americans. Biden’s disdain for China’s human rights challenges appears to be the projections of a pathological liar, careerist racist, an unhinged corrupt sociopath berefts of his mental faculties and common-sense morality. Biden’s bizarre obsession with homosexuality has prompted him to threaten loyal ally nations to forgo their religious beliefs and age-old creeds to appease his quack-science belief in transgenderism and non-binary sexuality. In a world fighting to recover its economic moorings, Biden appears to be more preoccupied with imposing debased and immoral degeneracy and psychotic realpolitik than pioneering a genuine international policy that is attuned to the political realities of today. Biden’s deliberate and premeditated attack on Syria and the continuance of the counterproductive and failed sanctions regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran manifest the maladroitness and moribund foreign policy thrust of his administration. Whereas Biden has gained some international respect for returning to the United States to various treaties relating to global warming and trade, his decisions insult the highly popular “America First Agenda” of former President Donald J. Trump. Furthermore, the notion of Biden’s providing a successful model to the world is sure to be tested as the restive and angry American public is being held captive to his ineffective and fraudulent COVID-19 “pandemic” program that is ignoring the serious social issues faced by 330 million Americans. The Biden administration is neither capable of handling domestic or international issues, and his policies and those around him are clumsily too ideological on enraging the majority of the people with prevaricating promises, puerile policies, ineffective half-measures. (See the full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Yemeni forces launch retaliatory drone strike against Saudi airport, air base

➔ **1** Saudi warplanes bomb Ma'rib

On Saturday evening, Saudi fighter jets conducted four airstrikes against the Sirwah district and another on the Medghal district in Yemen’s strategic central province of Ma’rib.

According to Press TV, there were no immediate reports about possible casualties and the extent of damage.

Saudi warplanes also attacked Bir al-Maraziq area in the Khabb wa al-Sha’af district of Yemen’s northern province of al-Jawf on four occasions and Bani Hassan area in the Abs district of northern Hajjah province.

Similar airstrikes were reported in the Harad district of Hajjah province in addition to the al-Sawadiyah district in al-Bayda province.

U.S., Israeli regime fear likely Hamas victory in May elections

➔ **1** Responding to the Israeli regime’s worries about the potential outcome of the Palestinian general elections, slated for May 22, Blinken further asserted that while Washington does not oppose the holding of the vote, he shares the preference of the Israeli officials that the Palestinians delay the polls “on their own accord,” the report added, without elaborating.

The development came nearly a week after Palestinian election officials announced the approval of all 36 applications submitted by three dozen political groups to run in the long-anticipated legislative elections next month.

According to Press TV, the vote is part of an effort by key Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, to boost support for Palestinian governance.

The Palestinian leadership has been divided between Fatah and Hamas since 2006. Back then, Hamas scored a landslide victory in parliamentary polls in the Israeli-besieged Gaza Strip.

Erdogan urges end to Ukraine tension, offers urkey’s support

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called for the “worrying” developments in eastern Ukraine’s Donbas region to come to an end after meeting his Ukrainian counterpart in Istanbul, adding Turkey was ready to provide any necessary support.

Erdogan and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held talks in Istanbul on Saturday amid tensions between Kyiv and Moscow over the long-running conflict in Donbas.

Speaking at a news conference alongside Zelenskyy, Erdogan said he hoped the conflict would be resolved peacefully, through dialogue based on diplomatic customs, in line with international laws and Ukraine’s territorial integrity.

“Our main goal is that the Black Sea continues to be a sea of peace, tranquility and cooperation,” Erdogan said.

Zelenskyy said the views of Kyiv and Ankara coincided regarding the threats in the region and as well as responses to those threats.

Erdogan stressed that Turkey’s cooperation with Ukraine in the defence industry, which was the main item on the meeting’s agenda, was not a move against any third countries.

Al Jazeera’s Sinem Koseoglu, reporting from Istanbul, said Ukraine was purchasing Turkey’s military drones.

Trump : The key to Republican success is more Trumpism

Staking his claim to the Republican Party, former President Donald Trump is casting his populist policies and attack-dog politics as the key to future GOP success.

In a closed-door speech Saturday night to donors at his Mar-a-Lago resort, Trump also reinforced his commitment to the party, according to prepared remarks obtained by The Associated Press. His appearance came as Republican officials are trying to play down an internal feud over Trump’s role in the party, his commitment to GOP fundraising and his plans for 2024. While Trump’s advisers report he will emphasize party unity, he rarely sticks to script, AP reported.

“The key to this triumphant future will be to build on the gains our amazing movement has made over the past four years,” Trump told hundreds of leading Republican donors, according to the prepared remarks. “Under our leadership, we welcomed millions upon millions of new voters into the Republican coalition. We transformed the Republican Party into a party that truly fights for all Americans.”

Resistance News

Israeli protesters demand Netanyahu’s imprisonment amid political deadlock

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN-** Thousands of Israeli protesters have d e s k rallied across the occupied territories to demand the resignation and imprisonment of embattled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as the formation of a new cabinet after four inconclusive elections deepened the regime’s political crisis.

The protesters marched through the streets across Israel on Saturday evening, calling on politicians to unite against the long-serving premier and organize a new cabinet in order to prevent a possible fifth round of elections.

The rallies were attended by members from high-profile anti-Netanyahu organizations and activist groups, including Crime Minister, Ein Matzav and The Black Flags.

The main demonstrations were held outside Netanyahu’s official residence in the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds and his private home in the coastal city of Caesaria, with hundreds of protesters calling for a “change government,” and demanding that the prime minister be imprisoned.

According to Press TV, reports said Israeli police and security forces had forcibly removed protesters from the two locations late on Saturday.

Marking a shift from previous demonstrations, dozens of protesters gathered outside the residence of Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, with clashes breaking out between police and the demonstrators after an attempt to hang a banner that read “Liar” on the premises.

Museum of traditional sweets set to open in Yazd

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A museum dedicated to confectionery and traditional sweets is set to be launched in the UNESCO-registered city of Yazd, which is famed for its local foods and edible souvenirs.

The establishment of a confectionery museum in the city of Yazd, which offers wide-ranging traditional sweets under one roof, is on agenda, ISNA quoted Seyyed Alireza Asayesh, who presides over Yazd Confectioners Union, as saying on Sunday.



The museum is expected to directly supply Yazdi sweets to the visitors, provide tens of job opportunities, and add further charm to the culinary tourism of the historical city, he noted.

For many tourists, one of the most exciting experiences of visiting a new place is to try its local food and sweets. This trend is especially true for Iran, where almost every city has its own signature food and sweets. Here are the most famed sweets one can find in Yazd:

Qottab
Perhaps the most famous of Yazd sweets throughout Iran is Qottab. This bite-size pastry is made of a thick crispy shell filled with two main variants. The first and the most famous variant is filled with crushed almonds, cardamom, and sugar, while the second is filled with honey.

Due to its exquisite taste and small size, Qottab has a reputation of being so irresistible that people can finish a pack only in one setting.

Cake Yazdi
A national favorite of the Iranians, Yazdi Cake (called Cake Yazdi in Persian) is one of the pastries that almost all Iranians enjoy having with a hot cup of tea. The combination of cardamom and rose water is repeatedly used in Iranian recipes for pastries and it's also very noticeable in Yazdi sweets.

One can purchase Yazdi Cake in any pastry shop in any city in Iran, but the ones purchased in Yazd are distinct for the flavor that the spices give to them. Ground pistachio is poured over the cakes to give them a beautiful vibrant look with a slightly nutty taste.

Baklava
The worldwide name of Baklava is an umbrella term for dessert pastries using phyllo dough, chopped, or ground nuts, and syrup or honey. Many countries have their unique kind of Baklava. Even in Iran, there are different types of Baklava in different regions such as Qazvin, Tabriz, etc.

Yazdi Baklava is generally dry and is presented in diamond-shaped cuts. The pastry is filled with almonds and pistachios. Instead of honey, it is made with rose water syrup. In comparison to other types of Baklava, the Iranian Baklava is much lighter and the use of cardamom gives it a traditional Iranian taste.

Loz
Another famous sweet made in Yazd, which looks similar to Baqlava but lacks any dough, is called Loz. There are different varieties of Loz depending on the filling. The most famous ones are filled with coconut (Loz-e-nargil), pistachio (Loz-e-peste), almond (Loz-e-badam), or saffron (Loz-e-zaferan).

The variety of Yazd sweets is awe-inspiring. Besides the major ones mentioned above, Yazd sports quite a few other sweets that are worth mentioning. Haji Badam, literally meaning almond haji, are tiny balls made of almonds (badam), sugar, butter, flour, pistachio, and cardamom. Sohan Ardi is Yazd's special type of Sohan which is less solid to bite and more powdery. Naan-e-Panjereii (literally meaning window-like bread) is the traditional Iranian rosette. Naan-e-Berenji are cookies made of rice flour and garnished with poppy seeds. Pashmak which is Iranian traditional cotton candy. If one is unsure what to choose among the vast variety of options, they can always choose a "mixed" box (makhloot), in which you can find a collection of tasty Yazdi Sweet.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that dates from different eras. Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Iran attractions: Masjed-e Ganj Ali Khan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — With an entrance concealed away in the northeastern corner of Ganj Ali Khan Sq. in downtown Kerman, this tiny but lavishly decorated mosque was once the private place of worship of Ganj Ali Khan, the 17th-century local governor who funded much of Kerman's beautiful bazaar.



Through the metal-grille gates, a narrow passage doubles back into the small chamber, which has an intricate, gilt-pattern inner dome and honeycomb windows.

Kerman has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert, to name a few.

Tourism behind locked doors: Iranian companies, travel insiders promote country online

→ 1 “The presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly its the private sector, in this fair shows the dynamism of the country’s tourism industry after a year of closure..... and we declare in this exhibition that we are ready to bring tourism back on track again after the epidemic is curbed,” said Vali Teymouri, the deputy tourism chief.

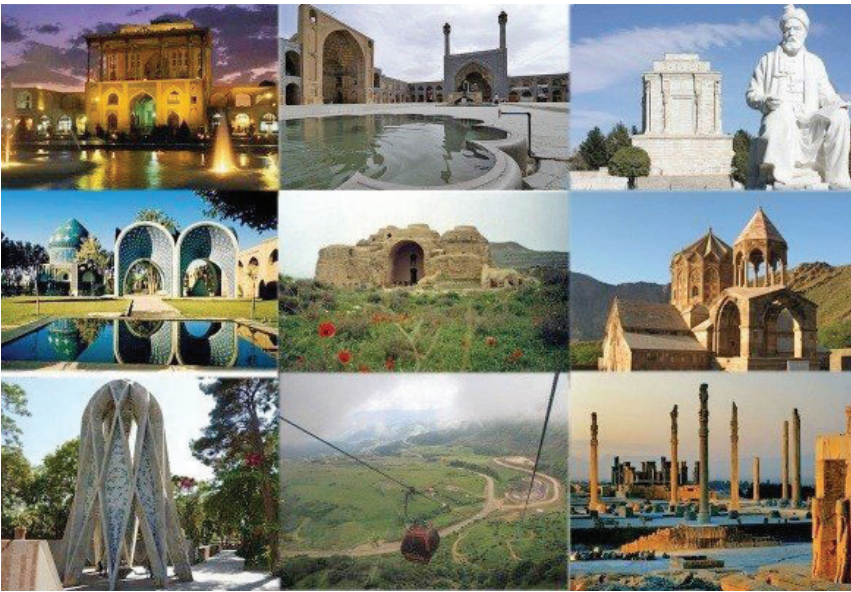
In an interview with the Tehran Times, Teymouri has made it more clear how traveling and hospitality sectors of the country are adopting to the virus-related limitations. He stresses the need to re-analyze target markets, redefine tourism products and improve the level of e-services.

“Defining new standards for e-services to tourists is very necessary due to the change in the general structure of travel during the coexistence with the coronavirus and post-corona world,” the official said.

The number of foreign visitors to Iran plunged 94% in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2020), from a year earlier, government data showed on Wednesday, as the coronavirus pandemic takes a heavy toll on the tourism industry.

“Some 450,000 foreign travelers arrived in Iran for mainly medical or trade purposes during the first nine months of the year... tightened measures to tackle the new coronavirus has reduced international travel to the country by 94 percent,” according to the official.

The global tourism industry has been plagued by the outbreak of the coronavirus for more than a year, which is a record in the history of this industry, the official



noted. In an interview with the Tehran Times, the official noted: “We need to revise marketing strategies, and to re-define tourism products by paying great attention to nature tours, rural tourism, and ecotourism, agricultural tourism as a tool to empower local communities and travel businesses.”

Tourism minister, Ali-Asghar Mounesan, announced in February that the tourism industry of the country had suffered a loss of some 220 trillion rials (about \$5.2 billion at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. “Iran’s tourism

ism has suffered some 220 trillion rials due to corona pandemic so far.... and we hope that with the production of domestic vaccines, tourism will flourish in 1400 [the new Iranian calendar year which begins on March 21],” Mounesan said.

“Over 1.5 million jobs have been lost in the tourism sector of Iran due to the COVID-19 disease..... Many of the tourism-insiders are now unemployed or they are staying at home,” Mounesan said. Iranian tourism officials are optimistic about the fate of national tourism as soon as the virus wanes.

Mounesan publicized in November

Glimpses of traditional skills of carpet weaving in Fars

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Admired for their intricate designs, lavish colors, and peerless craftsmanship, Persian carpets have not only found their way into households, but also onto workplaces and art galleries to name a few.

Many Iranian cities and regions enjoy a global reputation in carpet weaving, and the carpet weavers of Fars province, located in the southwest of Iran, are among the most prominent.

The remarkable skill, which is passed down from generation to generation, was inscribed on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list in 2010 under the name “Traditional skills of carpet weaving in Fars.”

The history of carpet weaving in Fars is very long and its exact date is not known; however, evidence suggests that carpet weaving in the southern province dates for millennia. Historians point to the presence of carpets in Cyrus’ tomb during Alexander’s invasion of Iran.

The eighth-century AH was the peak of Fars carpet weaving. The fame of Fars carpet in this period was so great that Ghazan Khan asked local artists to weave Fars carpets for his palace. In the ninth and tenth centuries AH, with the presence of more Qashqai, Khamseh tribes, and other tribes in this province, carpet weaving flourished in this region. This art continued until the present and became one of the main features of this region.

Moreover, the nomadic lifestyle has a direct impact on using of elements of nature. People in this area created beauties and these beauties emerged to the Fars carpets gradually.

Regarding the Persian carpet, along with the most famous examples of it, which are the Qashqai and Khamseh carpets, we can also mention the weavings of the surrounding villages in this province.

In addition to the numerous varieties of designs and styles that exist in these types of rugs and carpets, there are also commonalities, such as the existence of geometric designs or the use of cheerful colors that are inspired by the nature of this region. The most important common denominator among all types of Fars handicrafts is the loose texture of the knots and their lightweight, and of course, the dominance of geometric designs can be seen at first glance.

Due to the high volume of Fars carpets woven by nomadic women in this region, the loom carpet used for it is different. For example, unlike many areas, the loom carpet in this area is mostly on the ground and horizontal so that it can be easily moved during migration.

Fars carpets usually have a mental design and are woven in pairs or with a rug. The first carpet is called the “order” carpet, and the carpet or rug is woven with the ordered rug with the help of its design or mentally and inspired by the order carpet design.

Traditional motifs or patterns are often woven mentally and have a geometric structure. The most important feature of this type of Fars carpets is symmetry weaving. Fars Carpets are woven symmetrically with traditional motifs from their horizontal or vertical halves.

For weaving Fars carpets and rugs, according to the UN cultural body, wool for the carpets is shorn by local men in spring or autumn. The men then construct the carpet loom – a horizontal frame placed on the ground – while the women convert the wool into yarn on spinning wheels. The colors used are mainly natural: reds, blues, browns, and whites produced from dyestuffs including madder, indigo, lettuce leaf, walnut skin, cherry stem, and pomegranate skin.

The women are responsible for the design, color selection, and weaving, and bring scenes of their nomadic lives



to the carpet. They weave without any cartoon (design) – no weaver can weave two carpets of the same design.

Colored yarn is tied to the wool web to create the carpet. To finish, the sides are sewn, extra wool is burned away to make the designs vivid, and the carpet is given a final cleaning.

All these skills are transferred orally and by example. Mothers train their daughters to use the materials, tools, and skills, while fathers train their sons in shearing wool and making looms.

The ancient region of Fars also spelled Pars, or Persis was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country’s most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Tehran palace complexes named most-visited during new year holiday

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The three historical palace complexes of Sa’dabad, Golestan, and Niavaran were named the most-visited “cultural heritage museums and sites” in Iran during the two-week New Year (Noruz) holidays, which ended on April 2, the museum director has said.

“Some 1,245,000 people visited cultural heritage museums and sites during this Noruz as the Sadabad Cultural-Historical Complex received the topmost number of visitors during Noruz,” Mohammadreza Kargar, the director of museums and historical properties at the tourism ministry, announced on Saturday.

The UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace and Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex were named the second and the third respectively, the official noted, adding that Hafezieh, where illustrious Persian



poet Hafez is laid to rest in Shiraz, was the fourth most-visited cultural site during the holiday.

Visits to Iranian museums fell by one-fifth during Noruz holidays in comparison to the same period two years ago, when the new coronavirus was not yet an issue, according to the official. “Visits to cultural heritage museums fell by one-fifth

during the Noruz holidays of the current year (1400) in comparison to the same period in the year 1398.”

Cultural heritage museums were closed during the Noruz holiday last year (1399) due to strict social distancing measures, the official said.

Currently, 740 museums are active across Iran, of which 285 have been established since August 2013, when President Hassan Rouhani began his first administration, Kargar said in March. Back in 2018, he publicized that some three million historical objects were being kept at museums affiliated with the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Ministry.

Iran is home to one of the world’s oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It also hosts some of the world’s oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums,

mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (ca. 550 – 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa, and Chogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province, and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.



80 historical objects confiscated from smuggler in western Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iranian authorities have confiscated a batch of 80 historical objects from a smuggler in western Iran, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage said on Sunday, ISNA reported.

The objects were recovered from a suspected car which was stopped by police forces for an inspection in Selseleh county of Lorestan province, Mohammadreza

Moradian explained.

The objects included an ax head, bead, metal ring, ring, and a plate, the police official said.

The culprit was detained and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, he noted.

Lorestan is a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring. The region was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including

the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC.

The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Lake Urmia's surface increased by over 1500 km²

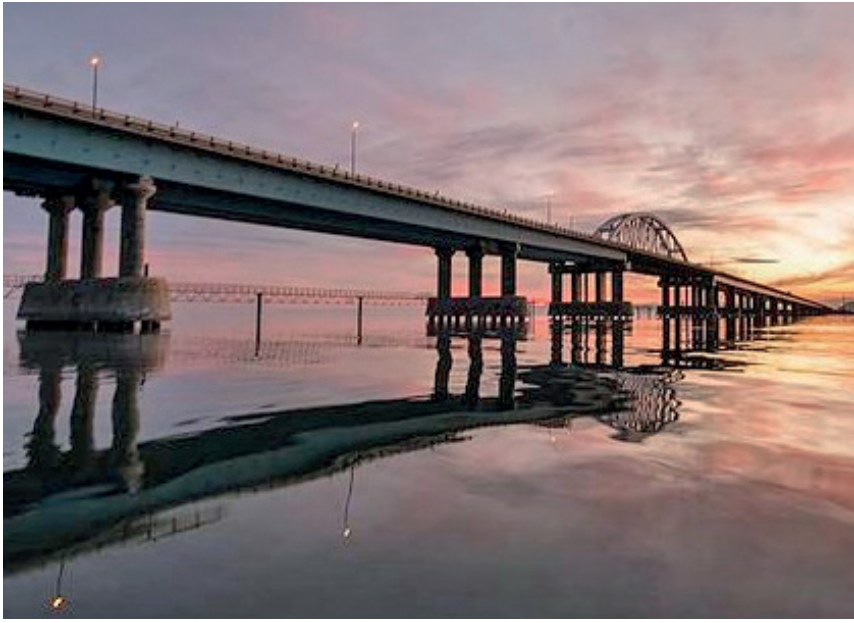
ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Lake Urmia's surface area has reached up to 2,917 square kilometers, indicating 1,582 square kilometers increase in comparison to 2013 when the Lake Urmia Restoration Program began.

The level of Lake Urmia has reached 1,271 meters, which indicates an increase of over 1.39 meters compared to the lowest volume recorded, Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province said.

The volume of water also raised by 3.81 billion cubic meters, which has increased more than 5 times compared to the Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) and before the Lake Urmia Restoration Program started, he highlighted.

The water transfer projects will cause Lake Urmia to reach its ecological level over the next seven years, which is 1274.1 meters with 15 billion cubic meters of water through increasing the lake's level by one meter each year, he explained, IRNA reported on Sunday.

With the transfer of water from Zab River, about 623 million cubic meters



of water will enter the lake permanently annually.

Lake Urmia, located in the northwest of Iran, was once the most extensive per-

manent hypersaline lake in the world. Unsustainable water management in response to increasing demand together with climatic extremes has given rise to the lake's depletion during the last two decades. The lake's restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program.

At the beginning of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program in 2013, the Lake's level was about 1270.32 meters, 1783 square kilometers in surface area, and 1.14 billion cubic meters in volume, which indicates a 50 percent increase in the lake's surface area in comparison to the current water level.

Achieving sustainable rehabilitation requires countless efforts, such as preventing the lake's water flow from entering the agricultural land. Lake Urmia's condition stabilized with a positive trend due to heavy rainfall, but there is a fear that this trend will be reversed by drought in the coming years.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve Lake Urmia, however, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level.

\$2.3m proposed to implement national document for the elderly

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A total of 100 billion rials (nearly \$2.3 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been proposed to implement the national document for the elderly, Hesameddin Allameh, secretary of the national council for the elderly, said.

The document thoroughly focuses on various aspects of the elderly's lives by meeting six prime objectives of income and livelihood, health, training and employment, and building an empowering environment, promoting the cultural level of society in the field of aging, and developing the infrastructure required for aging, he explained.

According to this document, it is necessary to see the duties of the devices in relation to aging in future budgets, IRNA reported on Sunday.

The population of senior citizens currently exceeds 8 million in Iran, constituting less than 10 percent of the whole population, and the annual growth rate of the country's aging population is about 3.8 percent, head of the secretariat national council of the elderly Hassan Salmannejad said in December 2018.

The 2011 census observed a significant demographic change in the elderly population of Iran (the percentage of the elderly population increased from 7.27 to 8.20



percent from 2006 to 2011, and to 8.65 percent in 2016). The aging population is predicted to rise to 10.5 percent in 2025 and to 21.7 percent in 2050.

Mohammad Esmail Akbari, the senior advisor to the minister of health, has said that the world has grown about 5 years older over the past 70 years, but the population of Iran has unfortunately grown 10 years older in the past 60 years.

"So that in the next 20 years, we will be one of the oldest countries in the world and the oldest by the next 30 years," he explained.

Although the increase in the number of old persons in any country indicates an increase in life expectancy, the elderly population growth needs more welfare and social institutions, which affects the policies and capacities of the country.

Airborne imagery to study climate change in Hyrcanian forests

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization has carried out aerial surveys on Hyrcanian forests using technological advances to identify the effects of climate change, ILNA reported on Sunday.

A plan is prepared to identify the effects of climate change on the incidence of pests and diseases, land-use change, deforestation, and wood smuggling in some forest areas using innovations and advanced technologies.

Through the first phase of the plan, a limited area of Hyrcanian forests will undergo airborne imagery, and in the next phase, aerial surveys will be conducted on wide areas of Hyrcanian forests, according to the report.

The use of ultralight aircraft in aerial photography is a nascent knowledge in this field and is practiced in a few countries in the world and to a limited extent. The implementation of this project is done in cooperation with a knowledge-based company affiliated with the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Using ultralight aircraft is one of the protection measures that prevent wood smuggling and deforestation.

Designated as a World Heritage site by



UNESCO in December 2019, the Hyrcanian Forest cover the northern slope of the Alborz Mountain in Iran at the southern edge of the Caspian Sea and it contains very rich ecosystems due to the particular orographic and climatic situation (precipitation rich, warm-temperate, high moisture from the Caspian Sea and damming effect of the Alborz Mountain range).

According to UNESCO, the forest contains the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity with 69 mammal species and 304 bird species, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation. It also contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Iran, Kuwait to strengthen anti-narcotics co-op

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian anti-narcotics police chief Majid Karimi, and his Kuwaiti counterpart Mohammad Qabazard emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation to fight against drug trafficking.

During a video-conference meeting on Sunday, Karimi referred to the increase in narcotics production in Afghanistan and the serious threat facing Iran and the regional countries, highlighting the need to increase bilateral cooperation in combating drug trafficking.

"Over the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), Iran seized 1,367 tons of narcotics. Meanwhile, the destination of most of these drugs was the Persian Gulf littoral countries, including Kuwait, but it has been prevented through the vigilance and timely action of the Iranian anti-narcotics police.

We have also discovered over 20 tons of methamphetamine over the aforementioned period," he noted, IRNA reported.

Karimi said holding regular meetings and sharing information among the two countries is necessary, expressing Iran's readiness to expand joint cooperation.

Qabazard, for his part, expressed readiness to increase



interaction and cooperation with the Iranian anti-narcotics police in all areas, adding, "We hope to achieve more success in the future by increasing the exchange of information on drug trafficking networks with Iran."

Iran's anti-narcotics measures

Iran seized some 1,000 tons of narcotics in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2020), putting the country in first place in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the secretary-general of Iran's drug control

headquarters, said in July 2020.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking, Momeni announced.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in the drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Iran's drug control efforts led to the seizure of 266 tons of different types of drugs during the period of April-June 2020, a 20 percent increase compared to the same period in 2019.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

11m ha of plains require aquifer, watershed management

Some 11 million hectares of the country's plains need watershed and aquifer management plans, so they must be prepared in this regard, director of watershed management at Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization has said.

Over the past 10 years, the country experienced 11 millimeters of rainfall decline while evaporation rate increased by 54 millimeters, ISNA quoted Khoshroo Shahbazi as saying on Thursday.

یازده میلیون هکتار از دشت‌های کشور نیازمند آبخوانداری است

معاون آبخیزداری، مراتع و بیابان سازمان جنگلها و مراتع و آبخیزداری، گفت: یازده میلیون هکتار از دشت‌های کشور نیازمند اجرای طرح‌های آبخیزداری و آبخوانداری است.

به گزارش ایسنا، خسرو شهبازی گفت: طی ۱۰ سال گذشته به طور متوسط در کشور ۱۱ میلیمتر کاهش بارندگی و ۵۴ میلیمتر افزایش تبخیر و تعریق را شاهد بودیم.

There's another pandemic under our noses, and it kills 8.7m people a year

It is undeniably horrific that more than 2.8 million people have died of Covid-19 in the past 15 months. In roughly the same period, however, more than three times as many likely died of air pollution. This should disturb us for two reasons. One is the sheer number of air pollution deaths – 8.7 million a year, according to a recent study – and another is how invisible those deaths are, how accepted, how unquestioned. The coronavirus was a terrifying and novel threat, which made its dangers something much of the world rallied to try to limit. It was unacceptable – though by shades and degrees, many places came to accept it, by deciding to let the poor and marginalized take the brunt of sickness and death and displacement and to let medical workers get crushed by the workload.



We have learned to ignore other forms of death and destruction, by which I mean we have normalized them as a kind of moral background noise. This is, as much as anything, the obstacle to addressing chronic problems, from gender violence to climate change. What if we treated those 8.7 million annual deaths from air pollution as an emergency and a crisis – and recognized that respiratory impact from particulates is only a small part of the devastating impact of burning fossil fuels? For the pandemic we succeeded in immobilizing large populations, radically reducing air traffic, and changing the way many of us live, as well as releasing vast sums of money as aid to people financially devastated by the crisis. We could do that for climate change, and we must – but the first obstacle is the lack of a sense of urgency, the second making people understand that things could be different.

I have devoted much of my writing over the past 15 years to trying to foreground two normalized phenomena, violence against women and climate change. For all of us working to bring public attention to these crises, a major part of the problem is trying to get people engaged with something that is part of the status quo. We are designed to respond with alarm to something that just happened, that breaches norms, but not to things that have been going on for decades or centuries. The first task of most human rights and environmental movements is to make the invisible visible and to make what has long been accepted unacceptable. This has of course been done to some extent, with coal-burning power plants and with fracking in some places, but not with the overall causes of climate chaos.

Climate change is invisible, in everyday political consciousness, because it occurs on a scale too vast in time and space to see with the naked eye and because it concerns imperceptible phenomena such as atmospheric composition. We can only see its effects – as cherry blossoms in Kyoto, Japan, peaking earlier this year than at any time since records began being kept in 812 AD, and even there the beauty of flowers is gloriously visible while the disturbance of seasonal patterns is dry data that is easy to miss. Other effects are often overlooked or denied – there were California wildfires before climate change, but they are bigger, stronger, faster, in a longer fire season now, and recognizing that also requires paying attention to data.

Among the striking phenomena of the early weeks of the pandemic were air quality and birdsong. In the quiet as human activity halted, many people reported hearing birds singing, and across the world air pollution levels dropped dramatically. In some places in India, the Himalayas were visible again, as they had not been for decades, meaning that one of the subtle losses of pollution was vistas. According to CNBC, at the outset of the pandemic, "New Delhi recorded a 60% fall of PM2.5 from 2019 levels, Seoul registered a 54% drop, while the fall in China's Wuhan came in at 44%." Returning to normal means drowning out the birds and blurring out the mountains and accepting 8.7 million air pollution deaths a year.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 156)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

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

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

In the morning, charity is due on every joint bone of the body of every one of you. Every utterance of Allah's glorification (i.e. saying Subhan Allah) is an act of charity, and two rakath prayers which one performs in the forenoon is equal to all this (in reward).

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Iranian director Asghar Farhadi honored at Spanish festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Two-time Oscar winner Asghar Farhadi received an honorary award at the opening ceremony of the 20th edition of the Las Palmas de Gran Canaria International Film Festival in the Spanish island on Friday as a significant figure of the history of the festival.

Farhadi won the Golden Lady Harimaguada Award, the top prize of the festival, in 2007 for his drama “Fireworks Wednesday”, about a woman who doubts her husband's loyalty.



The festival, which will run until April 18, plans to pay tribute to the Iranian director by programming a brief retrospective made up of four of his films, “Fireworks Wednesday”, “About Elly”, “Nader and Simin, A Separation” and “The Salesman”.

In an interview with the Spanish newspaper Canarias7 before receiving the award, Farhadi said that there is no single language spoken in the whole world, however, the language of feelings including violence, love, and hatred is shared among all people.

“There are two types of filmmakers. Some make their movies from their heart and the unconscious. Others make them from logic and reason. The latter has the ability to change things. I make them from the heart and the unconscious, so I cannot control everything,” he added.

“I cannot separate a local work from the universal. A local work, if done well, can be understood all over the world. There should be no border between the local and the global works,” he noted.

Referring to his 2018 thriller “Everybody Knows”, starring Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem, he mentioned that he is eager to make a new movie in Spain again but he hasn't made up his mind yet.

Farhadi's “The Salesman” and “A Separation”, both in his native language, won him Oscars for best foreign-language film. “A Separation” received a best screenplay Oscar nomination.

The movies grossed \$23 million worldwide and more than \$7 million in the U.S.

Tehran virtual Quran exhibition to start in May

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** – The virtual edition of the International Holy Quran Exhibition, which is organized every year during the holy month of Ramadan, known as the spring of the Holy Quran, will start on May 1 and will run for ten days.

Copies of the Holy Quran published by various Iranian and international publishers as well as books on the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), known as Sacred Defense, will be on view at the exhibit, the organizers announced on Sunday.



The annually-held exhibit will also dedicate sections to display top translations and interpretations of the Holy Quran.

Dozens of publishers from other countries are also scheduled to showcase their latest offerings on the Holy Quran.

A 20 percent discount is planned to be offered by the publishers on their products.

The previous edition of the exhibit was canceled due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and this edition was forced to be held online to help contain the spread of the virus.

Sima Films to produce series on war hero General Ali Sayyad Shirazi

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Sima Films, a film production studio affiliated with Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), announced on Sunday that it is producing a series on the war hero Ali Sayyad Shirazi.

He was a regular military officer who served as commander of Ground Forces during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

“The series will be a big and highly significant production, because Sayyad Shirazi was a great commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army during the war and played a key role during the Islamic Revolution and the war,” Majid Akbar-Shahi, a Sima Films CEO, said in a press release.

“All details about this great man should be regarded in this project, therefore, we have invited producer Habib Valinejad to join this production and we hope that the final results will be favorable,” he added.

Sayyad Shirazi's role in various seasons of the war and his assassination will shape up as the major issues in the series.



General Ali Sayyad Shirazi in an undated photo.

A team of writers directed by Hossein Hassani is writing the screenplay with contributions from a number of top Iranian military figures.

Sayyad Shirazi was assassinated by the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in 1999 while serving as the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff, the second-highest military office in Iran.

He led a counter-offensive called Operation Mersad against the MKO militants, who, with the help of Saddam Hussein, launched an attack in the summer of 1988 to capture the western Iranian city of Kermanshah.

He was assassinated on April 10, 1999, outside his house while on his way to work. The MKO claimed responsibility for the attack, which, it said the act was in revenge for Operation Mersad.

Sima Films is also currently making a TV series portraying the life story of Mehdi Bakeri, the chief of IRGC 31st Shura Division that carried out several major operations during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Atlanta Film Festival picks five movies from Iran



A scene from “African Violet” by Mona Zandi-Haghighi

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Five movies from Iranian filmmakers will be screened at the 45th edition of Atlanta Film Festival, which will open in the U.S. city on April 22.

“African Violet” by Mona Zandi-Haghighi will go on screen at the main section of the festival.

The film is about the middle-aged Shokuh who finds out that her elderly ex-husband Fereidun has been placed in a nursing home by their children. With second husband Reza, she decides to remove Fereidun and take care of him in their own home.

The film will be competing with 25 movies including “We're All Going to the World's Fair” by Jane Schoenbrun from the U.S., “Ma Belle, My Beauty” by Marion Hill from France, “Knock Knock” by Xiang Liu from China, “Akilla's Escape” by Charles Officer from Canada and “Dream Horse” by Euros Lyn from the UK.

“Eyes and Arms” by Panahbarkhoda Rezaei will be screened

at the documentary section of the festival.

The film is about a middle-aged couple, Maryam and Mohammad, who lives in almost total isolation in a rural area. Maryam has lost both her forearms and one foot in a train accident and Mohammad is blind. The couple literally completes each other with her acting as his eyes and him her arms.

The festival will also screen Iranian shorts “Crab” by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi, “The Doll” by Elahe Esmaeili, and “Spotted Yellow” by Baran Sarmad.

“Crab” tells the story of a shy schoolboy who is interested in performing in a play with his school's theater troupe. But the only part offered to him is to play the role of a crab.

“The Doll” is a short documentary about a father who consents to the marriage of his 14-year-old daughter Asal.

“Spotted Yellow” is about a young girl Roya with a yellow spot on her face. When a giraffe appears in her life, everything begins to change.

Atlanta Film Festival will come to an end on May 2.

“Samak the Ayyar” published in English

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** – “Samak the Ayyar: A Tale of Ancient Persia”, one of the old Iranian stories, has been published in English.

Translated from the original Persian by Freyduun Rasuli and adapted by “Prince of Persia” game creator Jordan Mechner, the book has been published by Columbia University Press, and the timeless masterwork can now be enjoyed by English-speaking readers.

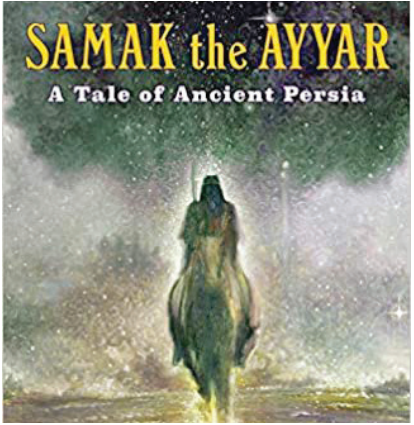
The adventures of Samak, a trickster-warrior hero of Persia's thousand-year-old oral storytelling tradition, are beloved in Iran.

Samak is an ayyar, a warrior who comes from the common people and embodies the ideals of loyalty, selflessness, and honor?a figure that recalls samurai, ronin, and knights yet are distinctive to Persian legend.

His exploits?set against an epic background of palace intrigue, battlefield heroics, and star-crossed romance between a noble prince and princess?are as deeply rooted in Persian culture as are the stories of Robin Hood and King Arthur in the West. However, this majestic tale has remained little known outside Iran.

A thrilling and suspenseful saga, Samak the Ayyar also offers a vivid portrait of Persia a thousand years ago. Within an epic quest narrative teeming with action and supernatural forces, it sheds light on the lives of ordinary people and their social worlds.

This is the first complete English-language version of a treasure of world culture. The translation is grounded in the twelfth-century Persian text while paying homage to the dynamic culture of storytelling from which it arose.



Why Western government-funded media force Iranian women to take off their hijab?

Iranian women have been subject to fierce targeted propaganda of the West in recent decades. The discriminatory and intolerant behavior of the West against Iranian civil culture as well as Islamic values has become a norm for Western media. The root of this behavior stems from the colonial era which is still present in the form of systemic racism within Western institutions.

Amid the political and economic pressures and impositions that the Iranian nation is subject to by the West, we are simultaneously witnessing attacks and propaganda against the identity and existence of the Iranian civil culture, where abandoning hijab and Iranian traditional fashion is once again being imposed on the Iranian society, whereas hijab and customary Iranian fashion has been the tradition of Iranian culture for thousands of years.

All Iranian generations promoted the customary Iranian traditions, including the Persian and Islamic dress code for both men and women. The West is forcefully attempting to strip the Iranian nation from its customary and religious traditions, specifically the hijab, and attempts to impose Western fashion on women by force, and as a result violating the rights of societies to preserve their identity, while insulting the Iranian civilization and identity at the same time.

The abandoning of the hijab in Iran during the Pahlavi dynasty is one of the most significant historical events that remains a topic of debate among many historians to this day. This historical event is widely considered as a dictatorial policy of Reza Khan which not only violated the privacy of Iranians but was also



a violation of their human rights and freedom.

According to historical facts, Reza Khan implemented the hijab ban in Iran after traveling to Turkey and meeting with Ataturk.

The banning of hijab also known as the “Kash-fe-Hejab” decree was made public on January 8, 1936, ordering men to wear uniforms and women not to cover their heads and appear without hijab in public, and with the announcement of the decree, social unrest and disapproval was intensified in the country.

Although the earlier Western cultural influence in Iran began in the era of Fat'h Ali Shah through his so-called modernization policies, the more significant Westernization took place in the early periods of Reza Khan's coerced policy to enforce Western influence in Iran, with the issue of Iranian women's clothing

used as the main option for justifying a step towards Westernization.

An option that four decades later, with the return of the hijab in the 1979 Islamic Revolution, again became one of the most tangible elements of change in Iran.

It is a widely accepted fact among Iranian historians that Reza Khan's move was both humiliating as he was purely following orders of the Europeans, and merely a show of modernity rather than a sincere attempt of modernization, resulting in the expansion of British interference in Iranian internal affairs which later led to his expulsion from power.

Reza Khan's false façade of apparent reforms and his violent actions in the implementation of his reform schemes caused dissatisfaction and disgust among the Iranian people.

While Western media repeatedly ignore historical facts and express absolute disregard towards Iranian national and religious identity and the desire of the majority of the Iranian general population, many developing countries have criticized the Western professed '2030 Agenda' which, instead of applying development as it is intended to do so, is expanding the West's influence within nations both culturally and economically.

Some critics believe these policies are equating the idea of 'being educated' with 'being Western' and many Iranian thinkers have said that the implementation of the 2030 document is in fact the imposing of Western culture on other countries, destroying the cultural and moral values of nations especially the global Islamic community.

PART 2

By Katy Kianush

Architecture and landscape from now on were included as fully as possible. The figures within the composition were no longer constrained and static, and were painted in a more lively and natural way.

In the first half of the 15th Century an art school was established in Herat. The very best of the artists in the Tabriz and Shiraz schools moved here. In the early Herat miniatures figure painting became much more skilful and drawing

gained greater accuracy. As the skill of the painters increased, the figures were placed more confidently and the rhythmic structure of the composition became more complicated. The Herat artists were exceptional at portraying people, making the surrounding a mere accompaniment.

One of the best known and most influential painters from the Herat school was Kamal-od-Din Behzad, whose creative art was greatly influenced by the works of the poets Jami and Navai. In his own works there appeared a unique attention to por-

traying not just people but what surrounded them in their daily lives. Behzad's paintings brought miniature to its genuine bloom. He shared the fame of Herat painting with other outstanding miniature painters of the time: his teacher and the head of the court studio, Mirak Nakkash, Kasim 'Ali, Khwaja Muhammad Nakkash, and Shah Muzaffar.

The theme of miniatures became more limited as time went by. In the 17th Century there were mainly love scenes, portraits and some even copied European pictures. In the 18th Century there appeared a new

