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# Natanz sabotage reveals Iran's strength

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**Five countries seeking to purchase Iranian COVID-19 vaccine**

## 60% enrichment is response to mischiefs, Rouhani says

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that Iran's decision to enrich uranium to a purity of 60 percent and install IR6 centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear plant were a response to mischiefs against Iran, declaring that all Iran's activities are peaceful and under the supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog.

"If the Zionists conspire against our nation, we will respond. This (60% uranium enrichment) is the first step," Rouhani told during a cabinet meeting.

On Sunday morning a sabotage attack

took place at the Natanz nuclear facility, a move which is considered a "war crime" in terms of international law.

Rouhani added, "The fact that we have stated that we will operate IR-6 centrifuges in Natanz or we will increase enrichment to 60 percent, this is the answer to your malice. You cannot conspire against the Iranian nation and commit crimes in Natanz. When you commit a crime, we cut your hand."

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## Iranian heavy crude oil price rises 6% in March: OPEC

TEHRAN- Iranian heavy oil price increased \$3.64 in March to register a six-percent rise compared to the previous month, according to OPEC's latest monthly report published on Tuesday.

Iranian heavy crude oil price followed its upward trend for the fifth consecutive month to reach \$64.3 per barrel in the mentioned month, compared to February's \$60.66 per barrel.

According to the report, the country's average heavy crude price was \$60 from the beginning of 2021 up to the report's publishing day, in comparison to \$49.32 in the previous year's same period.

The report put Iranian crude output for March at 2.304 million barrels per day indicating a 137,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the previous month.

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TEHRAN — Currently, two European countries and three regional countries have asked to purchase homegrown coronavirus vaccine (COVIRAN BAREKAT), Mohammad Mokhber, the head of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has said.

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam which was unveiled on December 29,

2020, started to be mass-produced on March 29.

At least two European countries and three countries in the region are now seeking to negotiate on purchasing vaccine, but we will export once the domestic needs are met, he noted, adding, the production capacity of COVID-19 vaccine in the world is about 2 billion doses per year, while the need for a vaccine is about 14-16 billion doses.

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## Athletes among priority groups to receive COVID-19 vaccine

**BY FARROKH HESABI**

Gholamreza Norouzi, head of Iran's Sports Medicine, confirmed that no one except the athletes and officials who will participate in the 2020 Olympic Games received a COVID-19 vaccine.

On April 13, the athletes' vaccination started with cooperation between the Iran National Olympic Committee (NOC) and the Sports Medicine Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Dr. Norouzi stated that the Olympians and Paralympians are eligible to jump the queue for the COVID-19 vaccine. It was authorized by the country's health officials, Iran's NOC, and the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

"There is no possibility that someone except the athletes and the executive people of Iran's Olympic delegation to be vaccinated," Norouzi said when asked about the rumors of some non-athlete's vaccination.

"The process is done based on each person's national ID number and the announced list by the NOC. So, every step of the vaccination process could be scrutinized and controlled by the authorities," he added.

Norouzi also mentioned that: "The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has not made it mandatory for the Olympians to be vaccinated against COVID-19. It is, however, recommended when available in athletes' home countries.

"Fortunately, Iran's domestic vaccination has already started slowly. Olympians and Paralympians are among the priority groups after medical workers and high-risk people," Dr. Norouzi said. Iran administered the Chinese COVID-19 vaccine "Sinopharm" to athletes, staff, and journalists in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

"The vaccination is not limited to the athletes who will participate at Olympic Games, but the athletes who are participating in Olympic qualifiers and those who are at training camps as an alternative, are included in the list of athletes vaccination," added the head of National Headquarter of Administrating the coronavirus at Sports.

The Paralympians were vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled headquarters last week.

"There are 292 people on the Olympic delegation list, of whom 185 have been vaccinated so far. Also, 145 names are on the Paralympic list, 115 of whom have been vaccinated. The remaining athletes and staff should be vaccinated in the coming days," Dr. Norouzi concluded.

A total of 58 Olympic berths have been secured by Iranian athletes in 12 sports so far, and there are still more spots to grab for the country at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

## Zionism is the Ebola virus of American political afflictions...

**BY MARTIN LOVE**

A Palestinian boy is shot in the eye by an Israeli sniper with a rubber bullet, and loses the eye, while he is browsing in a food store. A Palestinian grandmother is run over and killed by a "settler" for no reason. A man is released from an Israeli prison after more than a decade of solitary confinement, but when he arrives home his mind has been so scrambled that he does not recognize any of his relatives, including his mother.

Every single day one can read of one or more fresh atrocities by the only Apartheid state on earth. After nurse Rezan an-Najjar was shot and killed near Gaza's fence with Israel by a sniper, the Israelis claimed few shots were actually fired and none directly at her, so it was not a random stray bullet that killed her. This assertion by the IDF actually supports the fact that she was targeted. And so on.

Back in the U.S. these stories go almost unmentioned by the press, and ever more commitments are made to Israel. More money, more (im)moral support, more lies and obfuscations, more insanity. And it never stops. It can seem like the U.S. has no friends since it only seems to court and support the most outrageous, undemocratic regimes in the Middle East (West Asia).

President Biden meanwhile intends to give back some of the funds taken away by Trump, arguably the worst President in U.S. history, to UNWRA and the Palestinian Authority. But make no mistake, it's aimed at giving the PA, and feeble "leaders" like Mahmoud Abbas more wherewithal to amplify collaboration with the Zionists to further suppress the millions of Palestinians west of the Jordan River.

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## Minnesota protests continue over police killing of Black man

Protests continued for a third night in Brooklyn Center in the U.S. state of Minnesota following the death of Duante Wright, a Black man who was shot by a white police officer during a traffic stop.

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered on Tuesday at the heavily guarded police headquarters where police in riot gear and National Guard soldiers stood watch.

After nightfall, scores of protesters lobbed bottles and other projectiles over a fence in front of police headquarters.

State police declared the gathering unlawful and ordered the crowds to disperse ahead of a 10pm curfew. The announcement set off clashes between the police officers and protesters.

Demonstrators launched fireworks and threw objects at police, who launched tear gas, non-lethal rounds, and flash-bang rounds and tried to force back the crowd, U.S. media reported.

## West Asian endgame when the lying dead is in the morgue

**BY TIM ANDERSON**

It seems fairly clear that Israel was responsible for Natanz sabotage, as (1) the sabotage is consistent with a long line of Israeli attacks; (2) the Israeli media rapidly gloated over it and (3) quoted anonymous sources saying that the Mossad was responsible.

The Israeli media seems to have given exaggerated accounts of the damage, as the few Iranian reports that give any detail say that damage was confined to one of the halls at Natanz, which

contained old centrifuges. The Jerusalem Post reported "Western sources ... said the attack, which was initially referred to as an "accident" by Iran, was carried out by the Mossad." At the least the Zionists seem happy for people to believe that they or their agents were behind it.

The apparent motive is to sabotage any lessening of tension between Iran and the new Biden administration. Israeli leaders have made it clear they would like Washington to remain on a war footing towards Iran. This is despite the ongoing failure of US attempts

to subjugate Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

The Israelis have made repeated attacks on Iranian backed movements in Syria and more recently have been attacking Iran's shipping on the open sea. To carry out a direct attack on a nuclear facility while talks were afoot in Vienna - supposedly to restart US involvement in the JCPOA nuclear deal - suggests a motive of sabotaging the process, provoking Iran into retaliation and then forcing the US to back the Zionist colony.

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## Leader: Nuclear deal talks must not be prolonged

TEHRAN — In a televised speech broadcast late on Wednesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pointed to the ongoing negotiations in Vienna for a possible revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, saying negotiations must last long.

"We do not argue (about the negotiations), but care must be taken not to prolong the negotiations," the Leader remarked.

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## Requesting more concessions from Iran is deal-breaker: Entessar

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**

TEHRAN - Nader Entessar, a professor emeritus of political science from the University of South Alabama, says an insistence on extracting concessions from Tehran in a way to weaken Iran's deterrent capabilities would put Iran in harm's way.

"Requesting more concessions from Iran, especially concessions that will lead to the weakening of Iran's deterrent capabilities against obscenely-armed regional opponents, is a recipe for disaster and invites aggression against Iran's national interests and territorial integrity" Entessar tells the Tehran Times.

While the remaining parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have started talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, a sabotage attack took place on Iran's key nuclear site on Sunday morning.

Israel is considered the chief suspect for the sabotage. Sabotage operations against Iran's peaceful nuclear program raises questions about Western negotiators' intentions who support Israel on the one hand and call for Iran to limit its deterrent capabilities on the other.

"Sabotaging Iran's infrastructural assets and facilities, including the country's nuclear plants and economic assets, will be part of Israel's long-term strategy to confront Iran," Entessar says.

Following is the text of the interview:

**What's your comment on Israel's sabotage operation against Iran's nuclear facilities?**

It is increasingly apparent that Israel will pursue a multidimensional strategy to sabotage any meaningful rapprochement between Tehran and Washington.

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## Dangerous spiral unleashed by nuclear terrorism can only be contained by lifting sanctions, Zarif warns Biden

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — In a tweet on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the “nuclear terrorism” at the Natanz nuclear site “has unleashed a dangerous spiral that can only be contained” by ending the “economic terrorism” that started against Iran during Donald Trump’s presidency.

Now Joe Biden and his vice president Kamala Harris have a clear choice and that is either restore the Obama era nuclear deal or follow Trump’s “maximum failure” campaign, Zarif asserted.

The chief diplomat, who helped craft the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – said there is “no alternative” other than choosing one of these two approaches.

At the same time, Zarif warned the Biden administration that “no much time” left to revive the nuclear deal.

## Leader: Nuclear deal talks must not be prolonged

➔ **1** He advised the parties not to delay the negotiations because it is detrimental to the country.

The Leader also said, “In some private meetings that we hear about, the Europeans admit that Iran is right and that this (Iran’s) policy is right, but they do not have the independence to make decisions, and the United States is a bully,” the Leader said.

Pointing to the real intentions of the U.S., Ayatollah Khomeini said, “What Americans call direct and indirect negotiation is not to negotiate to accept the right word, but to impose the wrong word.”

## Sabotage at Natanz is Israel’s modus operandi: Vaezi

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Mahmoud Vaezi, the president’s chief of staff said on Wednesday that there are traces of Israel in the sabotage done at the Natanz nuclear site on Sunday morning.

“Based on the fact that we witnessed a terrorist sabotage, the Zionist regime was behind it based on what the signs show,” Vaezi told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

He also said the new decisions by Iran to enrich uranium to the level of 60 percent and install IR6 centrifuges at the Natanz site a result of “the actions of the other side”.

In the sabotage attack on the electricity grid of the nuclear site a number of IR-1 centrifuges were destroyed.

Experts at the International Atomic Energy Agency of Iran (AEOI) are working hard to repair the damages.

Vaezi also dismissed rumors that a large number of centrifuges have been decommissioned, saying,

“We were able to fix these problems in a short time and the activities have started again and now the centrifuges are being replaced and these claims are just rumors.”

Elsewhere in his statements, Vaezi called for a change of behavior by the U.S. government, saying that the current U.S. administration is following the footsteps of Donald Trump and his “maximum pressure” policy by keeping the sanctions.

The new round of negotiations to revive the 2015 nuclear deal and lift the sanctions will take place on Thursday in Vienna.

## Yemen’s National Salvation Government, Ansarallah condemn sabotage act at Natanz

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Both Yemen’s National Salvation Government (NSG) and the political office of the Ansarallah movement have strongly condemned the sabotage attack on the Natanz enrichment facility.

According to Al Masirah, Ansarallah issued a statement called it a “cowardly” act and said Iran has the right to appropriately respond to perpetrators of the mischievous act.

In another part of the statement issued on Wednesday, the movement added the United States, which is full of nuclear arsenals with a “criminal history”, and Israel as its “child”, have “no right to worry about Iran’s peaceful nuclear program.”

Ansarallah also stressed that Iran’s nuclear program is an example of an independent will.

An official at the NSG Foreign Ministry also expressed support for Iran’s security and stability, saying his country is standing by Tehran’s side.

He also said the sabotage was carried out with the aim of derailing the current negotiations on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

This is an action that endangers the security of the region and the world, he added.

In his weekly press briefing on Monday, Saeed Khatibzadeh, Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, called the sabotage at the Natanz nuclear site “nuclear terrorism” and a “crime against humanity.”

Ali Rabiei, spokesman for the Iranian government, also stressed that “the punishment will be carried out in the land of the aggressor.”

## Sabotage at Natanz must be pursued internationally, says Natanz MP

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Representative of the people of Natanz in the parliament said on Wednesday that the sabotage at the Natanz nuclear plant must be pursued internationally through legal channels, suggesting that the international community must be held accountable for this act.

Speaking to ISNA, Rahmatollah Firouz Abadi described the incident as “a sabotage act done out of ignorance.”

He called on the government and the intelligence system to uproot such malicious acts and identify local and foreign agents behind it.

The MP predicted that this act “will not end here and the details” must be clarified “and agents must be identified.”

Firouz Abadi remarked, “If, after examining the dimensions of this incident, the officials and the responsible bodies come to the conclusion that the Zionist regime was behind this incident, they should be given a decisive and deterrent response. Even if necessary, retaliatory action must be taken against them.” Sabotage in the Natanz nuclear site occurred on Sunday morning. Israeli media claimed that Mossad has conducted the attack.

An official at the Iranian Intelligence Ministry has said the saboteur has been identified.

# 60% enrichment is response to mischiefs against Iran, Rouhani says

‘When you commit a crime, we cut your hand,’ president warns Zionist regime

➔ **1** Rouhani went on to describe sabotage in Natanz as “nuclear terrorism.”

Writing on his Twitter account on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also said, “Deliberate targeting of a safeguarded nuclear facility—w/ high risk of indiscriminate release of radioactive material—is nuclear terrorism & a war crime Israel threatened and now boasts about action to prevent restoration of JCPOA after US election.”

**“Iran will not stand still”**

Rouhani stated that Iran will not stand still and watch countries conspire against it.

The president said installing IR-6 centrifuges and increasing the level of uranium enrichment to 60% are proofs that Iran is not passive.

“We cut your hands, one with IR-6 and one with 60%. It is clear that we do not stand still.”

The president explained that all Iran’s nuclear activities are legal and under the supervision of the IAEA, reiterating that the Islamic Republic will not deviate from the legal path.

“What we were supposed to do in 20 days or a month, we are doing now and we will give you the answer,” he said.

All analysts and officials are unanimous in their view that the sabotage in the nuclear facility is intended to undermine the Vienna talks to restore the nuclear agreement.

Israel has since autumn of 2020 openly threatened to carry out operations to prevent the restoration of the nuclear deal.

“If the Zionists take action against our nation, we will respond. They got the first answer. The first answer was that if you have a problem with IR-1 (centrifuges) on the ground, we will not put IR-1 (centrifuges) anymore, but we will collect them and put IR-6 (centrifuges)



in their place, so that you cannot, with your malice prevent us from having this power and technology.”

**“We enter the negotiations with fuller hands”**

Addressing the adversaries of Iran, President Rouhani said, “You want to empty our hands in the negotiations, but we will enter the negotiations with a fuller hand. Our response in Natanz was that instead of IR-1, we would use IR-6 and instead of 3.67% enrichment we would do 60% enrichment, but at the same time our activities will definitely be peaceful and under the supervision of the (International Atomic Energy) Agency.”

In a letter to the UN secretary general on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the sabotage “could

have become a human and environmental catastrophe.”

In his letter, Zarif said this “war crime” must not go unpunished given its high risk of releasing dangerous materials.

“The deliberate targeting of a highly sensitive safeguarded nuclear facility—with the high risk of potential release of radioactive material—constitutes reckless criminal nuclear terrorism,” Zarif said in part of his letter.

Iran’s chief diplomat added, “Considering the possible indiscriminate human and environmental consequences of this international crime, those who planned, ordered, participated and carried out this cowardly act committed a grave war crime; one that must not go unpunished. Any power with knowledge of, or acquiescence in,

## Nuclear chief says 60% uranium is used for radiopharmaceuticals

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said on Wednesday that Iran’s move to produce uranium up to 60% purity is in line with the parliamentary ratification, noting that this level of enrichment is needed for producing radiopharmaceuticals.

Speaking to ISNA, Ali Akbar Salehi said, “We do not want to use 60% enriched uranium as fuel for the Tehran reactor. We want to produce U3O8 (uranium oxide, or yellowcake) targets, which needs uranium with 60% purity. Thus, we produce targets, using 60% uranium.”

He went on to explain about the procedure of producing various types of radiopharmaceuticals, which is the main purpose of enriching uranium to up to 60%, stating, “These targets will be placed in the Tehran reactor. After being exposed to atomic radiation for some time, a substance called molybdenum is produced, which we must separate to remove the molybdenum. This molybdenum is the raw material for the manufacture and production of many radiopharmaceuticals.”

Iran used to import a significant amount of molybdenum from abroad, Salehi said.

He also said the decision to enrich uranium to the level of 60 percent is entirely within the framework of the JCPOA, which is referred to as molar fusion (molybdenum resulting from nuclear fission).

“We have been researching this process for a long time and will use 20% targets for testing in the next week or two, but the further we go, the higher the richness, because the higher the richness, the higher the efficiency and quality of our products in a shorter duration,” explained Salehi, a nuclear physicist.

He also confirmed that a number of the centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear site were damaged. However, he ruled out rumors about the extent of the damage uttered by some foreign media outlets.

Sabotage attack on the Natanz nuclear facility on April 11 disrupted the electricity grid.

Salehi added, “We have made the preparations for implementation of 60% (enrichment), and the enrichment in

Natanz has not stopped... Only one of our halls is defective, and as soon as possible and within the next two days, the main power supply will be connected, and the process of replacing the damaged centrifuges will be started accurately and quickly.”

On the decision by the AEOI to install an additional 1,000 centrifuges at the Natanz site, Salehi said, “This action is in line with Iran’s steps to reduce its JCPOA obligations and in accordance to Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA.”

The law on Strategic Action for Lifting Sanctions was passed by the parliament in December 2020. Since then, Iran has reduced its compliance with the JCPOA.

According to the text of the law on Strategic Action for Lifting Sanctions, “The (Atomic Energy) organization (of Iran) is also obliged to fully meet the country’s need for peaceful uses of uranium enriched above 20% without delay.”

At his cabinet meeting on Wednesday, President Rouhani said that Iran was supposed to start enriching 60% uranium in twenty days, or a month, yet Israel’s sabotage act at Natanz nuclear plant accelerated the process.

## Mass failure of centrifuges at Natanz untrue, says senior MP

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ebrahim Azizi, head of the security sub-committee of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Parliament, stated on Wednesday that the recent incident in the Natanz nuclear site has damaged part of the supply and transmission cables, denying rumors that thousands of centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear site have been damaged.

Referring to a visit by a delegation from the parliamentary committee to the Natanz nuclear facility, he said, “This visit was carried out in order to investigate the dimensions of sabotage at Natanz.”

Azizi praised the hard work of the Iranian nuclear scientists, describing Iran’s nuclear industry as “progressing with the efforts of domestic experts.”

The senior MP stated that the enemies of the Islamic Republic do not expect to see these “successes and the prosperity” of Iran’s nuclear industry, so they try to undermine the industry via mercenaries.

Azizi described the sabotage act at the Natanz plant as a “blind effort,” stating that “minor damage has been caused to a part of the power supply units of this facility, which has disrupted the power supply process. Also, a part of the power transmission units

of the Natanz site has been damaged, but in general, the incident is not so important and experts are seriously investigating the problems and trying hard to solve them.”

He also noted that decommissioned centrifuges will be replaced with the more advanced ones.

“Experts and specialists are inspecting and checking all the centrifuges of this facility. Most of the IR1 centrifuges operate in Natanz, and some of these centrifuges need to be inspected for repair,” the MP said.

He denied rumors by Western media outlets about the failure of thousands of centrifuges, stating, “According to our research,

it is not true and I deny that thousands of centrifuges are out of service.”

“The enemy has not achieved its objectives and has not been able to inflict the desired damage,” Azizi said, adding that only a very small part of power cables has been damaged and now they are being repaired.

He also pointed that there is no sign of leakage whatsoever at the Natanz nuclear plant.

Sara Falahi, another representative present at the field trip stated, “According to the experts of the Natanz site, the new centrifuges will be replaced by mid-May at the latest.”

## U.S. has a destructive role in the region, Rouhani tells Barham Salih

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — On Wednesday, the Iranian president named Iraq a good friend and neighbor, stating that Tehran and Baghdad can play an important role in regional developments.

In a telephone conversation with Iraqi President Barham Salih, Rouhani also noted that the U.S. presence in Iraq has not helped stabilize the region.

Rouhani also congratulated the government and people of the neighboring Muslim country on the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan.

The president also reiterated the Islamic Republic’s support for stability, security, independence and territorial integrity in Iraq.

“Strengthening the independence and authority of Iraq and the promotion of the regional and international position of this country is special to us.”

Rouhani said that Iran considers the security of Iraq as its own security.

He added, “We oppose any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq and we consider it to the detriment of this country

and the whole region. We believe that security in the region should be provided by the countries themselves.”

The president also said the United States has always left a legacy of destruction in the West Asia region.

“The Americans have always played a destructive role in the region, and the presence of American troops in the region is not helping to bring peace,” he said

The Americans are playing a hypocritical role in the fight against terrorism and their actions on the Iraqi-Syrian border are “ambiguous”, Rouhani remarked.

Rouhani continued the conversation by emphasizing the need to accelerate the implementation of previous agreements, including the Shalamchah-Basra railway project and the connection of the two countries’ railways.

He remarked, “Iran and Iraq can, given their economic potential, as two supplementary economies work together and increase the volume of exchanges and trade relations by strengthening freight and transit

cooperation.”

In the telephone conversation, Saleh also congratulated the government and people of Iran on the holy month of Ramadan, calling the relations with the Islamic Republic “strategic and developing”.

Pointing to the long-standing cultural and historical commonalities between the two countries, the Iraqi president emphasized relations in all fields, especially economic and trade relations.

President Saleh noted, “The Iraqi government is determined to seriously pursue and implement all agreements in various fields between the two countries, which will be in the interests of both countries and the region.”

Saleh also stressed on the importance of establishing peace and stability in the region and cooperation of all neighboring countries to achieve this goal.

“The decision of the Iraqi government to end the presence of foreign troops in this country is serious and continuous strategic negotiations in this regard have been done

with the Americans that will continue until the final result is achieved,” the Iraqi president stated.

In continuation of his regional consultations, President Rouhani had a phone conversation with the Emir of Qatar on Tuesday night. The two sides congratulated each other on the holy month of Ramadan, and stressed the need to develop Tehran-Doha relations in all fields, with a particular reference to the economic and financial relations.

Rouhani also said the Americans should have known by now that the path of pressure and sanction against Iran is not a correct path.

“The Americans should return to the nuclear deal between the seven countries and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231,” calling it “the only solution” to revitalize the 2015 nuclear accord.

For his part, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani expressed his support for dialogue and negotiations to solve the problems and hoped that all parties of the JCPOA would return to their obligations and revive the international and multilateral deal.



SPORTS

Iran Greco-Roman wrestling team crowned Asian champions

**S P O R T S    T E H R A N** — Iran Greco-Roman wrestling team claimed the title of the 2021 Asian Wrestling Championships in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Wednesday.

Pejman Poshtam, last year's silver medalist at 77kg, walked off with the gold this time without a fight, as Daler Rrza Zade (TJK) defaulted due to injury, wiping away his chance to become Tajikistan's first-ever Asian champion in Greco.

A new Iranian face on the international scene emerged victorious in unheralded Nasser Alizadeh, who claimed the 87kg gold with a 3-1 victory Atabek Azisbekov (KGZ), who had to settle for the third Asian silver medal of his career.

At the 97kg, Mehdi Bali won the gold by beating Seungjun Kim from South Korea.

In the 130kg final, 2019 world junior and U23 champion Aliakbar Yousofi picked up his first major senior title when he scored two takedowns in the final two minutes to defeat Alimkhan Syzdykov (KAZ) 5-1.

Mehdi Mohsennejhad claimed a silver at the 60kg and Meysam Dalkhani wrestled with Kazakhstan's Sultan As-setuly and lost to him 8-3 in the final bout at the 63kg.

Poya Dadmarz won a bronze medal at the 55kg weight category. Hossein Asadi clinched a bronze at the 67kg. And Amin Kaviyaninejhad also seized a bronze medal at the 72kg.

Taremi scores sensational bicycle kick against Chelsea

**S P O R T S    T E H R A N** — Iranian international forward Mehdi Taremi scored an extraordinary last-minute goal for Porto but it was not enough for the Portuguese giants to book a place at the UEFA Champions League semifinals.

Sérgio Conceição's side had lost 2-0 to Chelsea last week at Seville's Ramón Sánchez Pizjuán Stadium.

Taremi played in the last 30 minutes and did something magical.

"I think we played a good match but we were a little bit unlucky. Porto had a good performance against Chelsea but it was not enough to qualify for the next stage," Taremi said in the post-match news conference.

"We started the campaign with the aim of winning title but we failed to do that and it's part of football," he added.

He became the first Iranian player to score a goal in the UEFA Champions League quarterfinals.

2021 ACL: Ghaedi, Abdi among six starlets to watch

**S P O R T S    T E H R A N** — With the newly expanded AFC Champions League 2021 group stage just around the corner, the-AFC.com picked six up and coming youngsters who could be set to break through in this year's edition of the competition.

Some of these starlets are established players for their club sides and some have even appeared in previous AFC Champions League seasons, while several are just breaking into the starting XI, but those U23 players are all eyeing a milestone campaign over the next three weeks.

Esteghlal and Persepolis forwards, Mehdi Ghaedi and Mehdi Abdi, are among the six starlets along with Nasser Al Dawsari (Al Hilal SFC), Ibrahim Bayesh (Air Force Club), Ibromkhmalil Yuldoshev (Pakhtakor), and Khalid Al Ghanam (Al Nassr).

Mehdi Ghaedi - Esteghlal  
Perhaps the most established name on this list, it is a testament to the talents of Ghaedi that at the age of 22, he is already considered Esteghlal's main man as they look to improve on last year's Round-of-16 exit.

Although he was both the team's most creative outlet with seven chances created and their biggest goal threat with seven shots on target taken in the 2020 AFC Champions League, the next challenge for the young attacker is to improve on his output of one goal and one assist.

Mehdi Abdi - Persepolis  
Another starlet looking to build on a promising 2020 AFC Champions League, Abdi's 42nd minute header against Al Nassr in the semi-final was voted as the fans' best goal of the tournament - while his debut goal, a 90th minute effort in the 4-0 thumping of Sharjah FC was nominated for 'The best last-minute goal' of the competition.

Iranians have scored six goals against Chelsea so far

**S P O R T S    T E H R A N** — Iranian players have a long history of scoring against English side Chelsea. Chelsea have conceded six goals from the Iranian players.

On May 18, 1973, Chelsea played a friendly match with Persepolis in Tehran and the match finished in a 1-1 draw.

Tommy Baldwin was on target for the visiting team in the 18th minute but Iraj Soleymani levelled the score with a long-range shot in the 90th minute.

Chelsea lost to Tehran Team 1-0 a few days later at the Amjadieh Stadium. Ali Jabbari was on target just three minutes into the match.

On Sept. 21, 1999, Hertha Berlin defeated Chelsea 2-1 at the Olympiastadion in the UEFA Champions League group stage. Iranian forward Ali Daei made a brace against the visiting team in the 2nd and 69th minutes.

21 years later, Alireza Jahanbakhsh scored a phenomenal overhead kick against the London based giants in English Premier League. On Jan. 1, 2020, Brighton held the Blues to a point on New Year's Day.

"When I saw the ball, I just tried to hit it as hard as I could and the bicycle kick was the only option. I'm going to watch it a couple more times," Jahanbakhsh said at the end of the match.

Tuesday night, Mehdi Taremi scored the sixth goal in the second-leg of UEFA Champions League quarterfinals.

Porto shocked Chelsea thanks to a stunning bicycle kick from substitute Taremi, but it proved too late for the Dragons to overturn their quarter-final first-leg deficit. Porto had lost to Chelsea 2-0 in the first-leg.

Natanz sabotage reveals Iran's strength

**P O L I T I C A L    T E H R A N** — The sabotage that targeted Iran's key nuclear enrichment facility was mainly meant to undermine Iran's nuclear program and throw a wrench into its scientific progress but the country emerged even stronger than before this week's sabotage.

While Western intelligence sources were boasting that the Israeli sabotage targeting the Natanz nuclear enrichment plant undermined Iran's ability to enrich uranium for nine months, Iranian authorities surprised the world by announcing the resumption of uranium enrichment at Natanz, not at the level of 20%, but this time at 60%, an unprecedented move that caught many international observers off guard given the fact that the Iranian government was in the midst of renewed diplomatic talks with the P4+1 (Russia, China, France, and the UK plus Germany) over how to restore a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The move to raise the enrichment level sparked debate over whether sabotage acts could hamper Iran's nuclear progress or, as some pundits said, undermine its position in the Vienna nuclear talks.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Israel, by sabotaging Natanz, wanted to derail the Vienna talks. "The Zionists want to take revenge on the Iranian people for their success in lifting the cruel sanctions, but we will not allow this and we will take revenge for these actions from the Zionists themselves," he said.

Mehdi Mohammadi, an advisor to the speaker of the Iranian parliament in strategic affairs, echoed a similar assessment. Accusing the United States of having a role in the sabotage, he said the U.S. wanted to take out Iran's leverage by attacking Natanz. "The U.S. goal in the terrorist attack on Natanz was to seize leverages of Iranian



power and evacuate the power accumulated by the implementation of the parliamentary law. The beginning of 60% enrichment will regenerate the leverages in a much stronger way," he said on Twitter.

But regardless of the what was the purpose of the Natanz sabotage, it revealed how Iran became even stronger scientifically in recent years. In addition, the sabotage showed that Iran still has many elements of power while its Western adversaries have exhausted almost all of their options vis-à-vis Iran. The U.S. has imposed far-reaching economic sanctions on Iran over the past few years. Now it has no significant sanctions to impose on Iran.

This is while Iran has just begun using its elements of power. When the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said in February that Iran may

raise the level of uranium enrichment to 60% some pundits said this may not happen soon.

But Iran followed through on its promise, boosting enrichment to 60%. In a meeting with the members of Iran's Assembly of Experts, the Leader had said that Iran "is determined to acquire nuclear capabilities commensurate with the needs of the country, and therefore, Iran's enrichment limit will not be 20%, and it will act [to raise the level of uranium enrichment] whenever the country needs, for example, we may even raise the [uranium] enrichment [level] to 60% for nuclear propulsion or other work."

Now that Iran has started 60% uranium enrichment, there are some voices in Iran calling for a further boost by raising the enrichment level up to 90%.

Malek Shariati, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's Energy Committee, who was the first lawmaker who publicly spoke

of potential sabotage at Natanz, said the next step after 60% enrichment would be enriching uranium up to 90%.

"60% uranium enrichment is only one phase of 20%. It does not require more technology and the next phase would be 90%," he said on Twitter, adding that raising the enrichment level to 60% is only one part of "Iran's credible response."

Whether Iran will further boost enrichment to 90% remains to be seen. Nuclear talks in Vienna are underway and it's likely that Iran and the West would reach an understanding about how to restore the JCPOA. But even these talks now may be suspended because some people in Iran are now calling for the suspension of talks.

Fereydoon Abbasi, the head of Iran's Parliament Energy Committee, said there is no need for the Vienna nuclear talks.

"In my view, these talks should not be held at the present time because the Islamic Republic's position is clear after the Parliament's [nuclear] law," Abbasi told the Tehran Times, referring to a nuclear law passed by the Parliament obligating the government to step up nuclear activities if the West failed to lift sanctions on Iran.

Abbasi said the Americans must lift sanctions and return to the JCPOA.

"The Americans must lift the sanctions and then return [to the nuclear deal] and that there is no need for technical talks. There is no need to say how they should lift the sanctions and how we should do our obligations. This can be done with a stroke of a pen," Abbasi, a nuclear scientist, told the Tehran Times.

He also said that following a possible lifting of the sanctions, Iran will need to verify that. According to Abbasi, it will take at least six months to verify the lifting of the sanctions. "After that, the U.S. can return to the JCPOA and Iran resume implementation of its commitments," Abbasi pointed out.

Iran to get first batch of 60% enriched uranium next week: ambassador

**P O L I T I C A L    T E H R A N** — Iran will accumulate the first batch of 60% enriched uranium within a week, a senior Iranian diplomat said on Tuesday after Iran announced that it is starting to enrich uranium to up to 60% purity in its most important step ever in the nuclear standoff between Tehran and the West.

The diplomat, Kazem Gharibabadi, who is Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, also said that Iran is using more advanced centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, which suffered a blackout on Sunday due to sabotage Iranian officials blamed on Israel.

"Enriching UF6 up to 60% will be done in two cascades of IR-4 and IR-6 centrifuges in Natanz. Modification of the process just started and we expect to accumulate the product next week. This will improve significantly both the quality and quantity of radiopharmaceutical products," Gharibabadi said on Twitter on Tuesday.

His tweet came hours after Iran announced that it will start 60% uranium enrichment for the first time ever. On Tuesday, as upon his arrival in Vienna for a new round of nuclear talks, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi announced that Iran has sent a letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) informing the UN body that the Islamic Republic intends to start enriching uranium to up to 60% purity. He underlined that another 1,000 centrifuges with 50% more capacity will be added to the existing machines in Natanz, in addition to replacing the damaged ones.

Earlier this week, an incident occurred at the Natanz nuclear facility for the second time in less than a year amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel. Iranian authorities said the incident was an act of sabotage that damaged the facility's electrical distribution grid and pointed the finger at Israel.

Following the sabotage, a batch of reports suggested that Iran's ability to enrich uranium at Natanz was hurt for several months, a claim that was rejected by Iran.

"Enrichment in Natanz is not stopped; Iran will react including by planning to implement several technical measures which the Agency will be informed this week. Replacement process of the damaged centrifuges including with the same machines with more capacity has immediately begun," Gharibabadi said on Twitter.

Gharibabadi's tweet about the start of 60% uranium enrichment elicited a response from his Russian counterpart, Mikhail Ulyanov, who said Iran has always been transparent about its nuclear measures.

"As always Iran is very transparent in its deviations from JCPOA. Needless to say that we aren't happy with this but we are used to think big. We need to focus not on current difficulties but on restoration of JCPOA. If we succeed, this and other problems will be settled soon," Ulaynov said on Twitter, referring to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal by its acronym.

A few hours earlier, the Russian ambassador had said the next meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission will discuss the latest nuclear move by Iran.

"The meeting of the Joint Commission of JCPOA is postponed for one day. It will take place in Vienna on April 15 in physical format. No doubt that in addition to previous issues the Commission will address the latest steps of Iran in the nuclear field, including 60% enrichment," he added.

The meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday but it was postponed due to a European diplomat contracting Covid-19. It will be held in a charged atmosphere. Iran said the sabotage at Natanz was aimed to derail the Vienna talks.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the Israelis want to disrupt the ongoing nuclear talks in Vienna. The chief Iranian diplomat said, "The Zionists want to take revenge on the Iranian people for their success in lifting the cruel sanctions, but we will not allow this and we will take revenge for these actions from the Zionists themselves."

Underlining the need for Iranian people and officials to avoid falling in the "deceitful trap set by the Zionist regime," Zarif reiterated that the political and military officials of the Zionist regime had explicitly stated that they would not allow progress in lifting the cruel sanctions and now they think that they will achieve their goal, but the Zionists will get their answer in further nuclear progress, according to state news IRNA.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also accused Israel of sabotaging Natanz, saying Iran's move to raise the level of uranium enrichment was a response to the act.

He said on Wednesday that Iran's decision to enrich uranium to a purity of 60 percent and install IR6 centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear plant was a response to mischiefs against Iran, declaring that all Iran's activities are peaceful and under the supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog.

"If the Zionists conspire against our nation, we will respond. This (60% uranium enrichment) is the first step," Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

**Gharibabadi writes to IAEA director-general**  
Gharibabadi also wrote a letter IAEA director-general Rafael Grossi, calling the sabotage at Natanz a "nuclear terrorism."

"Such deliberate targeting of a highly sensitive safe-

tor general for the West Europe affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned the European Union's move as politically motivated, dismissing it as a double-standard approach on human rights issues."

"As we have already announced, Iran will, in reaction, suspend comprehensive talks with the European Union and cooperation thereof, including in the domains of [fighting] terrorism, narcotics and refugees," he said.

It was also stressed that Iran is considering imposing reciprocal sanctions as well.

The top Portuguese diplomat, in turn, said he will inform Brussels of Iran's protest.

Earlier on Monday, Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, condemned the EU

for putting the names of several Iranian officials and institutions on its human rights sanctions list.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns this move and considers it invalid," said Khatibzadeh, according to a statement issued by the ministry.

"Such acts are committed by those who claim to be supporters of, and falsely preach [respect for] human rights with political motives, but they have not only remained silent in the face of violations of Iranian people's rights due to the United States' inhuman and illegal sanctions, but also approved of such violations," he noted.

"Such acts are rejected and will further disgrace those who abuse lofty concepts such

guarded nuclear facility with high risk of potential release of radioactive material constitute irresponsible criminal nuclear terrorism," Gharibabadi said, adding that Iran's timely containment measures prevented what could have become a human and environmental catastrophe.

The Iranian diplomat pointed to Israeli threats against Iran issued by Chief of Staff of Israel's Armed Forces Aviv Kochavi, who has said he had instructed his forces to prepare a number of operational plans to strike Iran's nuclear facilities.

"Unfortunately, history of the Middle East [West Asia] is full of evidence of such vicious terrorist acts by Israeli regime under unbelievable eyes of the Agency and others wide shut. Israeli regime has twice conducted military strikes against the nuclear facilities of other states, namely Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. In fact, it is becoming accustomed to it mainly due to the combination of a number of shortcomings: lack of its compliance with its obligations under the relevant international agreements, lack of proper reaction to such acts on the part of the relevant international organizations, and deafening silence by the states proclaiming concerns about the safety and security of nuclear installations," Gharibabadi noted.

He added, "These are proofs beyond any doubt that Israeli regime does not recognize any limits in its inhuman activities and is not duty bound to any international rules and regulations. These acts are in gross violation of Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations which necessitate an appropriate response from the international community."

The ambassador said the Islamic Republic of Iran looks forward to effective preventive measures being taken by the Agency and its peace-seeking member states against such ruthless remarks and actions.

"The responsibility for any failure in this respect will lie solely with the Agency and others who indirectly render their support by closing their eyes on these reckless behaviors. It is highly imperative that this matter be immediately attended to by the Agency to not only safeguard the nuclear installations against such acts or threats, but also the credibility of the Agency. Undoubtedly, if the peaceful uses of atomic energy are threatened, the confidence of the non-nuclear weapons state on the rule of law at the international level would be severely damaged," he continued.

Gharibabadi noted that Iran will take all necessary measures to protect and defend its citizens, interests and installations against any terrorist or sabotage acts.

"Iran, as before, strongly warns against any adventurism by Israeli regime and will decisively respond to any threat or wrongful act perpetrated by this regime," he warned.

as human rights," said the spokesman.

"In reaction to this European Union move, the Islamic Republic of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs suspends comprehensive talks with the European Union, including human rights discussion, and all cooperation thereof, especially in the domains of terrorism, narcotics and refugees," Khatibzadeh noted.

"In reaction to this move by the European Union, the Islamic Republic of Iran is considering [imposing] reciprocal sanctions, which will be announced in due time," he said.

On Monday, the EU imposed sanctions on several Iranian military and security officials over their alleged role in human rights violations.

**P O L I T I C A L    T E H R A N** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has summoned the Portuguese Ambassador to Tehran, Carlos Costa Neves, to protest at the European Union's "impudent" move to blacklist a number of Iranian officials and bodies.

"Following the European Union's impudent move to put the names of several Iranian officials and institutions on its list of human rights sanctions, Portuguese Ambassador to Tehran Carlos Costa Neves, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency, was summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry and received a strong note of protest from Tehran over the European Union's illegal action," the ministry said in a statement. "Accordingly, the direc-



## Exclusive exhibit of Iranian products to be held in Erbil in mid-June

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**— An exclusive exhibition of Iranian products will be held in Erbil of Iraqi Kurdistan during June 9-12, the head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO)'s Arab and African office announced.

Farzad Piltan said that this exhibition will be held in line with the plans of the TPO, with the aim of introducing the country's export capabilities to the neighboring markets.

The construction industry, steel, casting, mining, home appliances, decoration and furniture, food and agriculture, detergents and health and pharmaceuticals will be among the most important topics of the exhibition, the official stated.

Iran had also held an exclusive exhibition of Iranian products in Sulaymaniyah of Kurdistan in late January 2020.



Having over 500 kilometers of shared borders, Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan can use this capacity to expand their trade relations, Iran's Commercial Attaché in Iraq Naser Behzad said on the sidelines of that exhibit.

He described Sulaymaniyah as the gateway to Iraqi Kurdistan and said: "Due to the stability and security of this region, it is possible to transport goods from this center to other neighboring provinces such as Erbil, Halabja, Diyala and Kirkuk and even other areas of Iraq."

"Having two official border crossings of Bashmaq and Parviz-khan and the great interest in Iranian goods in the region would be a reliable capacity for developing the two countries' trade relations," he stated.

Pointing out the fact that currently half of the goods available in the Sulaymaniyah market are Iranian products, the official said: "Food products, carpet, plastic products, machinery, building materials, agricultural and technical services especially in the fields of transportation, construction and urban development are important priorities for contribution of Iranian companies in this market."

More than 150 Iranian companies participated in the exclusive exhibition of Iranian products in Sulaymaniyah to showcase their latest products and services in this market.

## TEDPIX falls 1,300 points on Wednesday

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 1,320 points to 1.243 million on Wednesday.

Over 4.49 billion securities worth 39.208 trillion rials (about \$933.5 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market's index dropped 2,389 points, and the second market's index fell 2,248 points.

After several days of drops, TEDPIX had climbed on Tuesday. The index rose 18,457 points to 1.244 million.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Market analyst Alireza Tajbar believes that investors should consider the trend of stock exchange transactions in the past year as a criterion for their investment in the current year and to avoid entering the market directly.

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

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

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

# Iran capable of boosting electricity exchange with neighbors to 10GW

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian has said the country is capable of boosting its electricity exchange with the neighboring countries to 10,000 megawatts (10 gigawatts), IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Speaking in the monthly meeting of the members of the Iranian Energy Club which was held through video conference, Ardakanian put the country's current capacity for electricity exchange with the neighbors at 3,500 MW.

Referring to the positive measures taken by the Energy Ministry for expanding the possibility of energy exchange with neighboring countries, the minister said: "Now, we have the possibility to exchange electricity with all countries that share land borders with us."

The Energy Ministry, however, is also pursuing a plan for exporting electricity to the southern Arab neighbors through sea.

Ardakanian also mentioned the synchronization of the country's power grid with Iraq back in November 2019, and the plans for synchronizing of the electricity network with Russia through Armenia-Georgia or Azerbaijan, saying: "Whichever of these routes that is agreed on sooner will become operational."

"The Iran-Azerbaijan-Russia route is a more feasible route, and with the consent



of all three countries, an Iranian contractor has been selected to study this project; the relevant contract was prepared and signed, and the primary studies are hoped to begin soon," Ardakanian explained.

According to the official, in addition to Iraq and Russia, negotiations are also underway with Afghanistan and some new projects have been defined in order to expand the two country's energy

cooperation.

The mentioned plans are to be pursued in the two countries' upcoming Joint Economic Committee meeting which is going to be held in Kabul, he noted.

Referring to the follow-up on the negotiations with Qatar in previous years, he noted: "The chairmanship of the Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee has also been assigned to the Energy Ministry."

## Iranian heavy crude oil price rises 6% in March: OPEC

**→ 1** Based on OPEC data, the country's average crude output in the first quarter of 2021 stood at 2.190 million barrels per day indicating a near 197,000-bpd rise compared to the figure for the last quarter of 2020.

OPEC Basket prices also rose \$8.82 or 17.2 percent to reach \$60.22 a barrel in March from the same month in 2020.

In addition to the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the global oil industry which resulted in the drastic fall in oil prices, the Iranian oil industry has also been under pressure from the U.S. efforts to isolate the country by re-imposing sanctions.

The country, however, has been ramping up its oil production over the past few months following the recent developments in the White House and also the recovery of the global markets from the negative impacts of the

coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier in February, Fitch Solutions Incorporation, a subsidiary of Fitch Ratings, which is one of the U.S.'s three biggest credit rating agencies, forecasted a 6.8-percent growth for Iranian oil exports in 2021 if the U.S comes back to the 2015 nuclear deal.

In one of its latest reports dubbed "Iran Oil and Gas Report", Fitch also saw the Islamic Republic's crude oil exports double in 2022 compared to 2020.

"The prospects for the Iranian oil sector have brightened significantly following Joe Biden's victory in the U.S. presidential election on November 3. President Biden has indicated that he will seek to re-enter the U.S. into the Iranian nuclear deal, paving the way for a roll-back of secondary sanctions and recovery of around 2.0 million barrels per day (bpd) in oil production," the report said.



## Annual iron ore concentrate output touches 50m tons

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production

of iron ore concentrate in Iran during the previous Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20) reached 49.714 million tons, registering a five-percent rise compared to the preceding year, IRNA reported.

According to the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry data, of the mentioned figure 3.533 million tons were produced in the last month of the previous year (February 19-March 20).

As reported, the country's major iron ore concentrate producers had managed to



produce about 47.306 million tons of the mentioned product in the Iranian calendar year 1398.

Last year, major mining companies also

produced 902,454 tons of granulated iron ore, to register a decrease of 54 percent compared to the preceding year (1,965,733 tons).

Iran had produced 24.6 million tons of iron ore concentrate during the first half of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21, 2020), which was also four percent higher than the figure of the same period of time in the preceding year.

Also, the monthly iron ore concentrate output during the sixth month of that year had risen six percent on an annual basis.

In its outlook plan for the Iranian calendar year 1404 (2025-2026) Iran has envisaged

production of 55 million tons of steel per annum, and to achieve this target the country requires to extract 160 million tons of iron ore.

In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since September 2019.

The duty is aimed at encouraging the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

## Over 3,600 industrial projects with over 80% progress underway in Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — There are 3,639 semi-finished industrial projects with over 80 percent physical progress across Iran, Director General of Planning and Financing Office of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade Alireza Hadi announced.

According to Hadi, over 119 trillion rials (about \$2.833 billion) is needed to be invested in the mentioned projects which can provide job opportunities for 155,000 people, IRNA reported.

The number of projects with physical progress between 60-80 percent is 12,993 993 projects with a total investment of about 289 trillion rials (about \$6.88 billion) which can provide jobs for 463,000 people, the official said.

Nearly 19,185 projects also have physical progress between 20-60 percent with 579 trillion rials (about \$13.78 billion) of investment and the possibility of employment for 747,000 people are underway across the country, he added.



Hadi put the number of projects with less than 20 percent of progress as 28,909 projects, saying: "The investment needed for these projects is estimated at about 977 trillion rials (about \$23.26 billion), which

will create employment for 1.092 million people."

In total, so far 83,780 establishment licenses and more than 74,000 operation licenses have been issued in the country's industrial sector, according to the official.

The official further noted that currently, the Industry Ministry's priority is to fund pioneering projects with over 80 percent of physical progress.

Like the previous year, reviving idle units is also another important program that the ministry is pursuing in the current year which has been named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles."

Earlier this month, Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki announced that 1,500 idle industrial units were revived in the country during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

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.

## Commodities worth over \$3b exported from East Azarbaijan

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — As

announced by a provincial official, commodities worth over \$3 billion were exported from East Azarbaijan province in the northeast of Iran during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Habib Aminzadeh, the head of Industry, Mining and Trade Department of the province, said the commodities have been exported to 97 countries and named mineral fuels, mineral oils, mineral waxes, plastics, cast iron, iron and steel, edible fruits, cereals, flour, milk and confectionery, copper and copper products, sugar, glass and glass products and cocoa and its products as the major exported items.

The official further put the value of imports to the province at \$800 million in the previous year and said the imports fell 15 percent in terms of weight and 34 percent in terms of value in the previous year.

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

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

Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, and that of

import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

Among the country's non-oil export destinations, China was the first, with importing \$8.9 billion worth of products, Iraq was the second with importing \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates the third with importing \$4.6 billion, Turkey the fourth with importing \$2.5 billion, and Afghanistan the fifth with importing \$2.2 billion, Mir-Ashrafi announced, and named gasoline, natural gas, polyethylene, propane, and pistachio as Iran's major exported products during the past year.

He further named Iran's top sources of non-oil imports in the said time, as China with exporting \$9.7 billion worth



of products to the Islamic Republic, the UAE with \$9.6 billion, Turkey with \$4.3 billion, India with \$2.1 billion, and Germany with \$1.8 billion, respectively, and mentioned corn, cellphone, rice, oil meal and oil seeds, wheat, and raw oil as the major imported items.



# Requesting more concessions from Iran is deal-breaker: Entessar

➔ 1 Sabotaging Iran's infrastructural assets and facilities, including the country's nuclear plants and economic assets, will be part of Israel's long-term strategy to confront Iran. So far, Iran has not been able to devise a deterrent or retaliatory strategy against Israel. Absent such a strategy, Israel will most likely expand its war of attrition against Iran.

**Are you optimistic about the recent talks to revitalize the Iran nuclear deal?**

I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic about the prospects of recent talks in Vienna. However, there are significant obstacles on Washington's path to return to the Iran nuclear deal, or the JCPOA, as it existed before the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from it. The JCPOA has been comatose for some time, and it may be very difficult to bring this patient back from its current vegetative state to a semi-normal existence.

**Why is Biden refusing to take the first step to revive the nuclear agreement? What are the main challenges that he faces?**

There are several important reasons for the Biden administration's reluctance to take the first step and return to the JCPOA. First, Joe Biden wants to ascertain that Washington's return to the nuclear deal will lead to further concessions from Iran on several fronts, including in areas that limit Iran's defense capabilities and impinge upon Iran's national security



interests. Neither President Biden nor his top foreign policy planners support the Iran nuclear deal as it was originally agreed upon between Iran and the so-called 5+1 countries. Secondly, there exists significant opposition to the nuclear deal and normal relations with Iran in Congress, and the opposition to the deal is not limited to the Republicans either. For example, one can name Senator Chuck Schumer (the Senate Majority Leader) and Senator Robert Menendez (the Chair of the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee) as powerful Democratic senators who are among the staunch opponents of the Iran nuclear deal.

Even Senator Chris Murphy, who has been among the most vociferous critics of Trump's Iran policy, supports the U.S. return to the nuclear deal as a first step to expand the scope of the JCPOA to non-nuclear issues.

Thirdly, the Biden administration appears to be divided on what steps the U.S. should take towards Iran.

Fourthly, pro-war Iran hawks still exert considerable influence on the contours of Washington's Iran strategy. For them, the ultimate goal of U.S. strategy should be "regime change" in Tehran and the restoration of a compliant regime in Iran.

Last but not least, foreign lobbies representing the interests of Iran's regional adversaries in Washington have become more effective in recent years, and they frame their interests in the context of perpetuating and exacerbating tensions between Tehran and Washington.

**Do you predict Iran to leave the negotiation table if Israel continues its sabotage acts?**

I think as long as Iran sees the light at the end of the tunnel, it will continue negotiating with the 4+1 countries and indirectly with the United States. At present, effective diplomacy remains Iran's best strategy.

**Do you think putting new conditions, such as Iran's missile program, on the table will be helpful?**

No, that would be a deal-breaker. Requesting more concessions from Iran, especially concessions that will lead to the weakening of Iran's deterrent capabilities against obscenely-armed regional opponents, is a recipe for disaster and invites aggression against Iran's national interests and territorial integrity.

## West Asian endgame when the lying dead is in the morgue

➔ 1 Washington and the Israelis certainly collaborate closely on strategic matters, but I am not yet convinced that they were completely together on this latest sabotage attack. I am of the school that does not believe that the Zionist tail wags the imperial dog, and so I see some tensions in the relationship.

The US and Israelis have collaborated in previous attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, such as the 2010 joint CIA - Mossad cyber-attack which used the computer virus Stuxnet. However, in the current circumstances, Israelis leaders have made it clear they prefer the approach of Trump, who abandoned the JCPOA; while Biden seems to want to rehabilitate the agreement, or at least to de-escalate tensions with Iran.

Trump ramped up the rhetoric against Iran, but without and real follow through plan. He believe threats and bluster were a good preliminary to bargaining. The Biden regime seems to want a 'smart power' civility', while sub-contracting subversion and terrorism to proxies and client states.

Yet Biden is hampered by an inability to simply return to the treaty without demonstrating that he continues to exert some sort of leverage over Tehran. That is quite difficult in practice, because Tehran has complied with the agreement in a way that Washington has not. For that reason the Israeli attack on Natanz may not help find a face saving retreat for Biden.

US analyst and former weapons inspector Scott Ritter says the Israeli attack on Natanz was done "behind the back" of their US allies. He may be right. Despite this, the Biden regime seems unlikely to alter its strategic realignment. There may even be some continuity between the Trump and Biden regimes with respect to Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen

and Syria, as Washington's image has not been improved by the series of losing wars.

Trump, both in the West Asian wars and through his bungled management of the COVID19 epidemic at home, drove the 'leadership' image of the US amongst its allies to an all-time low.

That losing reality in West Asia, which the Pentagon understands very well, will not exactly sharpen the US appetite for more open conflict with Iran, which they understand would fail even more comprehensively. Nevertheless, it remains possible that Washington could simply 'green light' autonomous Israeli attacks, as providing some fodder for ambit claim negotiations. That could only work if Iran were to make the mistake of re-entering JCPOA negotiations.

Iranian believe that the International Atomic Energy Agency and JCPOA parties should clarify their stances and condemn this sabotage, as it's been done while Iran has been trying to revive the agreement in Vienna. Officials in these multilateral organizations do not generally take such initiatives, as it would threaten their positions. A courageous official would likely be removed by NATO state bullying.

I am of the opinion that the JCPOA is lying dead in the morgue, with no-one yet ready to collect the corpse and give it a proper burial. Iran has no real incentive to offer anything new. The JCPOA never had anything to do with the control of nuclear weapons. It was always an attempt to impose a partisan and asymmetrical regime of surveillance and control over the leader of the West Asian resistance bloc. That plan has failed and what matters now is the endgame.

Taking all these factors into account, the attack on Natanz



may have an unexpected outcome. It has already catalyzed Iran's resolve to upgrade its nuclear processing, increasing the improbability of resurrection of the JCPOA. However, the Biden regime, if it is set on strategic realignment, may effectively abandon that mechanism and look for another way to retreat from the brinkmanship.

*Professor Tim Anderson is an Australian distinguished author, university lecturer and Director of the Sydney-based Centre for Counter-Hegemonic Studies. In 2014, he was awarded Cuba's medal of friendship. His most recent books are: The Dirty War on Syria (2016); Countering War Propaganda of the Dirty War on Syria (2017); and the Axis of Resistance (2019).*

## Zionism is the Ebola virus of American political afflictions...

➔ 1 Palestinians are supposed to have an election this year for a parliament of sorts, as they did earlier this century, but one can bet the election won't be honored because, as likely, some of those who will be elected to represent the Palestinians will not be, well, kosher. They may even be devotees of HAMAS or some other resistance faction.

Also, and frankly it's better than the nothingness of Trump, the Biden regime alleges it will rejoin the JCPOA and drop at least some of the economic sanctions that Trump imposed on Iran. But Biden in his fog may recognize just one thing clearly: the U.S. is in no position to kick off a war with the Israelis against Iran, something the Zionists fervently want or else they would not object to ANY measures that would oblige Iran to scale back its peaceful nuclear advances, and especially its uranium enrichment activities. To try to spoil the emerging JCPOA revival, the Zionists (again) attacked Natanz, this time by screwing up its electricity

**About this recent attack on Natanz, Biden is silent when he ought to be outraged because it could mess up the JCPOA revival that he is trying to push.**

feed. The actual extent of the damage is so far not publicly known

About this recent attack on Natanz, Biden is silent when he ought to be outraged because it could mess up the JCPOA revival that he is trying to push. (And, by the way, deep gratitude to Russian warships which allegedly escorted some Iranian tankers leaving the Suez Canal to supply Syria with badly needed energy supplies like gasoline.) Of course Biden, if he had more marbles, would call a halt to the war on Yemen and as well end the U.S occupation and theft of Syria's oil and wheat production areas east of the Euphrates.

Biden and company really are severely schizophrenic. One the one hand, the Biden gang seems to want less chance of a lambent, new war in West Asia that the U.S. cannot afford, but on the other hand it's slamming China (obviously worried about growing alliances between China and Russia and Iran and the advances of the Belt and Road initiative and also Taiwan). But at the same time it's telling the corrupt Ukraine puppets that Russia must give back the Crimea and allow resupplied Ukrainian forces to mount fresh attacks on the Donbass. This could incite a world war. Russia is no pushover.

What the world witnesses here and there is a desperate U.S. which literally has been defeated by the Taliban in Afghanistan and can't quite admit it and leave quickly when it's evident to all. Even Syria under popular Assad, mightily damaged, still stands tall against the terrorists

who flooded the country over the past decade. And the Houthis have done remarkably well against the Saudis and the Emiratis.

The biggest question is why the various U.S. administrations persist and have persisted for so long against countries which, like Iran and others, far lesser countries, are NOT a danger to the United States or to the American people and never have been. If anything, these countries have merely challenged the horrific idea pushed by Zionist American Neocons of U.S. "empire" and their insistence on "full spectrum dominance" over the entire globe, something which has virtually bankrupted the U.S. and created widespread chaos.

If all a country can project to control other people and countries is potential force to instill fear, control does not truly exist – just the temporary chimera of it.

And does one have to guess why this concept of world dominance by the U.S. has been and remains so important to Zionists who infest government and Wall Street and advocate for it? The answer may well be because such dominance (and it needs constant provocation and attention and upset to maintain) provides a huge shield behind which bloody "leaders" in Israel like Netanyahu and Benny Gantz and others can continue to enact a kind of bloody slow dance of human and cultural genocide against the Arabs of Palestine and take the entirety of historical Palestine and expel all non-Jews. This shield limits visibility towards the things the Zionists are doing to others –

very bad things.

Emptying Palestine and filling it with anyone nominally a "Jew" (Ethiopians who are ill-treated in Israel are lately being sent to the West Bank to modify its demographic character!) has always been the ultimate aim of Zionists who early on were actually anti-Semitic. This was expressed over a century ago by Theodore Herzl even and a bit later by Vladimir Jabotinsky, the spiritual and intellectual leader of Zionist radicals and revisionists before 1948. (Netanyahu's father served as Jabotinsky's secretary.)

U.S. support for Zionism, amplified this century especially while the U.S. has been losing its luster (probably beginning with the loss of the war on Vietnam) will sink the U.S. such that it WILL become a failed state if it's not one already just hiding behind a proposed, obscene "defense" budget of \$753 billion for the coming fiscal year. It's a tragedy for most Americans like no other but not understood yet by many given the propaganda suffusing the U.S. mainstream media.

**To try to spoil the emerging JCPOA revival, the Zionists (again) attacked Natanz, this time by screwing up its electricity feed.**

According to the Buenos Aires Times, the government of President Alberto Fernandez sent London a stern note of protest over the plan to hold military exercises on the islands after receiving the news, threatening to file a complaint with the UN and the International Maritime Organization. Separately, the Argentine Hydrographic Service, which is a branch of the Ministry of Defense, issued a warning.

## Biden to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan by September 11

United States President Joe Biden will leave U.S. troops in Afghanistan past the current May 1 deadline but will withdraw them by September 11, U.S. officials said.

"After a rigorous policy review, President Biden has decided to draw down the remaining troops in Afghanistan and finally end the U.S. war there after 20 years," a senior administration official told reporters.

The new withdrawal date will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States carried out by al-Qaeda.

Biden, who will lay out his plan during a speech on Wednesday, has been signaling that he would likely miss the May 1 deadline negotiated by the Donald Trump administration and the Taliban as it became clear that withdrawing the remaining 2,500 troops would be difficult and potentially unsafe.

According to al Jazeera, the senior Biden administration official stressed that the pullout would not be subject to further conditions. "The president has judged that a conditions-based approach, which has been the approach of the past two decades, is a recipe in staying in Afghanistan forever," the official said.

As officials disclosed Biden's pullout plans, the U.S. intelligence community renewed deep concerns on Tuesday about the outlook for the U.S.-backed government in Kabul, which has struggled against a resurgent Taliban.

"The Afghan government will struggle to hold the Taliban at bay if the coalition withdraws support," said the U.S. assessment, which was sent to Congress.

"Kabul continues to face setbacks on the battlefield, and the Taliban is confident it can achieve military victory."

It remains unclear how Biden's move would affect a planned 10-day summit about Afghanistan starting on April 24 in the Turkish city of Istanbul that is due to include the United Nations and Qatar.

## Biden administration proceeding with \$23 billion weapons sales to UAE

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden is moving forward with over \$23 billion in weapons sales to the United Arab Emirates, which include advanced F-35 aircraft, armed drones and other equipment.

The Biden administration would proceed with the proposed sales to the UAE, "even as we continue reviewing details and consulting with Emirati officials" pertaining to the use of the weapons, a State Department spokesperson said on Tuesday.

The deals had been agreed to by former Republican president Donald Trump, but the Democratic president's administration had paused them for review.

In November, the White House informed the Congress about the planned \$23.37 billion package which contained products from General Atomics, Lockheed Martin Corp and Raytheon Technologies Corp, including 50 F-35 Lightning II aircraft, up to 18 MQ-9B Unmanned Aerial Systems and a package of air-to-air and air-to-ground munitions.

The sales were approved following the so-called Abraham Accords, a US-brokered agreement in September in which the UAE agreed to normalize relations with Israel.

Some U.S. lawmakers had criticized the UAE for its involvement in Saudi devastating war on Yemen, which according to the United Nations, has caused one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The sales' opponents had warned that the transactions were being rushed through, without sufficient assurances that the advanced weapons would not fall into the wrong hands or fuel instability in the Middle East.

## Israel's Mossad in Iraq attacked, a number of Israelis killed, wounded: Sources

Israel's Mossad spy agency has come under attack in Iraq, security sources say, with a number of Israeli forces killed or wounded in what was described as a "heavy blow" on the Zionist regime.

Iraq's Sabereen News, citing security sources, reported late on Tuesday that a facility affiliated with Israel's Mossad spy agency had been attacked by "unknown resistance forces" in the north of the country.

The Iraqi media said the attack resulted in the death and injury of a "number of Israeli forces," dealing a "heavy blow" to the regime and its spy agency.

The sources fell short of providing details on the location of the attack and the extent of damage, however, Sabereen said, "Tomorrow, we'll share some pictures of the operation."

Reacting to the incident, a high-ranking Iraqi military commander said in an interview with Russian TV network RT that they had not so far received any news about the attack.

Media outlets in northern Iraq have yet to comment on the attack. The incident came hours after an Israeli ship was attacked in the Emirati port of Fujairah, causing damage but no casualties.

## Resistance News

### Hamas: There is no going back on the elections

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** TEHRAN — Hamas Movement affirmed on Tuesday that there will be no going back on the election process and the Palestinians will choose their leadership that unite them and leads the stage of national liberation.

The Movement condemned the continued "terrorism" of the Israeli government against the Palestinian people and its leaders.

It called on the international institutions and the world community to impose a comprehensive boycott on Israel for its "state terrorism" and attempts to impose its control on the will of the Palestinian people through arrest and intimidation.

Meanwhile, Israeli occupation forces (IOF) raided on Tuesday the house of the prisoner Sheikh Shaker Amara, one of Hamas's leaders, in Aqbat Jaber refugee camp in Jericho.

Local sources reported that IOF stormed Amara's house, searched it and tampered with its contents. Amara is held in administrative detention in the Israeli prisons since May 2020.

Clashes erupted in the refugee camp and the Palestinian youths threw Molotov cocktails at the IOF soldiers near the entrance to the camp, according to the sources.

Amara is one of Hamas's leaders in Jericho city and he is a former prisoner who was arrested more than 13 times by the occupation. He was held in administrative detention during all his arrest period.

Hamas nominated the leader Amara on its electoral list, "Jerusalem unites us" for the 2021 Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

### Argentina lashes out at UK over planned military exercises in Malvinas Islands

Argentina has lashed out at Britain over its plan to hold military exercises and missile tests in the occupied Malvinas Islands, which the British call Falkland Islands, saying they are part of a "pattern" of "hostile acts" and an "unjustified show of force."

"Argentina rejects in the strongest terms the carrying out of military maneuvers, and the launching of missiles in particular, in Argentine

territory illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom," Argentina's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

This came after the United Kingdom's Foreign Office last week informed Argentina that it intended to carry out military drills, including Rapiers missile tests, in the occupied archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean, to which Buenos Aires and London both lay claims.

The Argentinean statement slammed the proposed maneuvers as an "unjustified show of force and a deliberate departure from the appeals" for Argentina and the UK to resume negotiations on the dispute.

It said the UK's military presence in the region contradicted another UN resolution, which urges the two sides "to honor the South Atlantic region as a zone of peace and cooperation."



## Iran suspends flights to and from France

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — All flights to and from France have been suspended due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, the spokesman of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) has announced.

Flights to and from 39 countries with special conditions are also canceled until further notice, Mohammad Hassan Zibakhsh said on Wednesday.

However, Iran's flag carrier IranAir is set to resume flights to and from the United Kingdom after months of suspension imposed to curb the spread of a novel coronavirus variant into the Islamic Republic, the official added.



Back in February, Iran suspended flights to and from 32 countries including Angola, Bolivia, Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Eswatini, French Guinea, Lesotho, Guyana, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sicily, Suriname, Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Zambia.

Earlier, Iran announced it would reduce the validity of negative COVID-19 PCR test results from 96 hours to 72 hours for inbound and outbound passengers.

The new regulation replaced a role that required to bar passengers from boarding if they do not have a negative COVID test within 96 hours of departure.

All passengers are subject to the medical screening on arrival, and if they are suspected of having the disease, non-Iranian nationalities will be quarantined at a place specified by the Health Ministry at their own expense and Iranian citizens will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the world to a standstill, and tourism has been the worst affected of all major economic sectors.

World tourist arrivals fell by 72% over the first ten months of 2020, according to data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in December.

Restrictions on travel, low consumer confidence, and a global struggle to contain the coronavirus pandemic are amongst factors contributing to the worst year on record in the history of tourism. Iran has also suffered the same fate as its foreign arrivals plunged 72% during the first eight months of 2020 when compared to 2019.

## Hegmataneh documentation underway according to schedule

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — An all-inclusive documentation of Hegmataneh Hill, which Iran expects to be registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list, is underway according to schedule, the tourism chief of Hamedan province said on Wednesday.

"The collection of file information on the ancient site, which was an important and time-consuming task, has been finished. Now, the production of maps is underway, and after this stage, we would start compiling a dossier for UNESCO," Ali Malmir said, ISNA reported.

Back in March, the deputy tourism minister, Mohammad-Hasan Talebian, announced there were some problems and issues on the way of developing the dossier that the ministry tries to remove.



The ruined Hegmataneh (Ecbatana) which is partly beneath the modern city of Hamedan (the capital city), is widely believed to be once a mysterious capital of Medes. According to ancient Greek writers, the city was founded in about 678 BC by Deioces, who was the first king of the Medes.

French Assyriologist Charles Fossey (1869 – 1946) directed the first excavation in Tepe Hegmataneh for six months in 1913. Erich Friedrich Schmidt (1897 – 1964), who was a German and American-naturalized archaeologist, took some aerial photos from Hamedan between 1935 and 1937.

According to the Greek historian Xenophon of Athens (c. 430-c.355), Ecbatana became the summer residence of the Achaemenid kings. Their palace is described by the Greek historian Polybius of Megalopolis. He writes that the city was richer and more beautiful than all other cities in the world; although it had no wall, the palace, built on an artificial terrace, according to Livius, a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

An inscription, unearthed in 2000, indicates that Achaemenid king Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-358) built a terrace with columns in Ecbatana. Some twelve kilometers southwest of Hamedan is Ganj Nameh, where Darius I and his son Xerxes had inscriptions cut into the rock.

Polybius, a Greek historian of the Hellenistic period noted for his work The Histories, tells that the builders used cedar and cypress wood, which was covered with silver and gold. The roof tiles, columns, and ceilings were plated with silver and gold. He adds that the palace was stripped of its precious metals in the invasion of the Macedonian king Alexander the Great and that the rest was seized during the reigns of Antigonus and Seleucus. Later, Ecbatana was one of the capitals of the Seleucid and the Parthian Empires, sometimes called Epiphaneia.

Ecbatana is deemed to be remaining a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, for decades or even centuries to come as the site of the ancient city lies partly within the modern city of Hamedan, which has never been excavated before.

# Rig-e Jenn: discover bizarre landscape named after elves!

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Situated in eastern Iran, Rig-e Jenn ("Dune of the Jinn") is a barren and desolate place dominated by enormous dunes that defy avid skillful sightseers, adventurers, and motorists driving 4WD vehicles.

The bizarre landscape is home to giant dunes, vast swamps that could pose a serious challenge even to passionate trekkers with arduous hikes and scarcity of water.

People who have been there believing that it feels almost like walking across an ocean floor without water. It is where eye-catching structures and shapes are only formed by constant winds blowing across vast areas of sand that can almost look unreal and "too" smooth.

Ones who set up camps are well rewarded when the sunsets. It's the right time for a very bright moon and extremely vivid stars to show off in the absolutely clear sky of the desert.

Also known as the "Desert of Spirits", it is not a place where a novice trekker goes alone! But why? Because it's in the middle of nowhere with no roads and some parts with no mobile coverage. Experts say even seasoned voyagers must plan prudently before setting foot on the desert.



Rig-Jenn is situated in a border area between Semnan and Isfahan provinces. In another world, it is part of Dasht-e Kavir (the central desert of Iran). The bizarre desert can be reached after hours first on asphalt roads, and then for some hours through uninhabited terrain.

Rig-e Jenn assumed its name from whom believed that it was haunted by spirits and the devil. This say-so was strengthened by, or probably originated from the fact that perhaps many had entered the desert and never returned.

## Bagh-e Narenjestan: an element of 'surprise' while in a city of poets and nightingales

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Named after the bitter oranges (called "Narenj" in Persian) that line the courtyard, Bagh-e Narenjestan is one of the most admired destinations in Shiraz.

The garden ("Bagh") and its scenic pavilion were built for the wealthy and powerful Mohammad-Ali Khan Qavam al-Molk in the late 19th century.

Also called Narenjestan Garden, Qavam House, or Narenjestan-e Qavam, the property was set, according to tradition, as a "Boruni" or public reception area of his family home. It got the nickname "Narenjestan" since the garden embraces an abundance of bitter orange (Narenj in Persian) trees.

For the time being, Narenjestan-e Qavam and its underground museum are open to the public as one of the main attractions of the ancient city.

It is an exemplar Persian Garden, which is a UNESCO World Heritage. The genuine concept of the Persian Garden that is deeply rooted in time interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.

The pavilion is connected to the Khan-e Zinat ol-Molk, which was once the "Andaruni" (private quarters) for the family, the two are linked via an underground passage that is not open to the public.

The basement of the pavilion is where archaeological relics have been put on a show. The relics have been put together by Arthur Upham Pope, an American scholar who taught at the Asia Institute in Shiraz between 1969 and 1979.

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, Shiraz has become synonymous with, poetry, nightingales, culture, and education. It was one of the most important cities in the medieval Islamic world and was the Iranian capital during the Zand dynasty when many of its most beautiful buildings were built or restored.

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.

### Under tourists' eyes

Here is a selection of comments that visitors to the garden have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

#### "A surprise!"

We went to the gardens on our last day in Shiraz and we were so glad we made the effort. The architecture here was different from anything we had seen in Iran.

The work on the building was very delicate, feminine, and white. We had never seen a corrugated tin roof before. A unique building! (Sue P from Perth, Australia; reviewed November 3, 2017)

#### "A traditional aristocratic house"

You will certainly enjoy visiting this place. The rooms are decorated with mirrors (aayeneh kari). The orange trees and the coffee shop are very pleasant. (Ghaferi from Los Angeles, California; reviewed March 2019)

#### "A must-see"

This is one of the places which I enjoyed the most in Shiraz. The building has so many beautiful rooms with decorations from floor to ceiling. A must-see in Shiraz. Allow at least one hour to see. (LarsSoholm from Skanderborg, Denmark; reviewed Feb. 2019)

#### "Majestic Mansion"

The historical Narenjestan-e Ghavam Mansion in Shiraz dates back to 1880; and is called "Narenjestan" because of the large number of sour-orange (Narenj) trees that are planted in the garden area!

The Narenjestan Mansion consists of the Bagh-e Narenjestan (a small garden) with a beautiful stone pool and fountains plus the adjacent Naranjestan-e Ghavam pavilion. Both were set up by a wealthy Qajar era Shirazi family. The pavilion has richly decorated rooms, with mosaic-mirror walls, unique paintings, intricate tiles, and inlaid wooden panels.

Make sure to go there, and don't forget to visit its museum and its gift shop! (Shirazi35 from Portland, Oregon; reviewed October 29, 2017)

#### "Mirrors everywhere"

The walls and ceilings are made up of mirrors, which



gives us a spectacular impression because of the reflections. (Piotr M. from Warsaw, Poland; reviewed October 23, 2018)

#### "Nice for a late afternoon visit"

This house was quite small and didn't take more than a half-hour to enjoy. Doesn't quite compare to the houses in Kashan but was still beautiful. It's near the Pink Mosque and a few other sites so it's quite simple to include on your "must-see" list. (A. M. from Lisbon, Portugal; reviewed October 2018)

#### "Beautiful pavilion with small museum underneath"

The small, but traditional Persian garden here is beautiful and peaceful. The pavilion has some amazing glasswork and tiles that show how wealthy the family who owned the grounds were. Underneath there is a museum that houses some artifacts, including a gentleman that makes and plays traditional Persian musical instruments. (RohanL from Amman Governorate, Jordan; reviewed June 2018)

#### "Gorgeous"

Stunning tiles and mirrors. The gardens were nice to see too. The stained glass made gorgeous patterns when the sun shone...have a guide to fully understand the history. (tryingtogetheworld from Seattle, Washington; reviewed September 24, 2017)

## Police confiscate 254 ancient objects in southern Iran

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Iranian police have seized 254 historical relics from smugglers in the southern Fars province.

"In the first stage, the police forces recovered 211 historical objects from the house of a smuggler in Shiraz.... The relics included coins, rings, seals, daggers, headbands, arrowheads, etc. which date

back to various historical periods," CHTN quoted a senior police official as saying on Wednesday.

Secondly, the police managed to confiscate 43 items of historical and cultural objects from another smuggler. The relics date from various eras of Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, Sassanid, the police official explained.

The smugglers have been surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation and trial, he added.

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.

## 40 prehistoric, ancient relics restored to closest original states

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — A total of 40 Iranian relics, which date from the pre-historical times to the Islamic era, have recently been restored to their closest original states.

"40 historical and cultural objects have been restored in Markazi province. Dating from various prehistorical eras to the Seljuk era, the relics include a needle, arrowhead, clamp, crucifix, plate, cup, glass, coin, ax, a bird figurine, and so on," the deputy provincial tourism chief, Mohsen Rahmati, said on Tuesday.

"Repairation, eliminate of deposits, cleaning, stabilizing, and protecting against moisture were performed during the restoration projects, which cost some 300 million rials (\$714 at the official exchange rate of 42000 rials per dollar)," the official said.

Moreover, a Seljuk-era stucco, which belongs to the 12th-century Jameh Mosque of Saveh, was restored to former glory, he added.

Sometimes referred to as "a museum of Islamic architecture", the mosque is still a big source of charm for the faithful, sightseers, and buffs of history and Islamic architecture. It comprises a courtyard, porch, minaret, dome, and two archaic altars ornamented with Kufic calligraphic works.



## Vacancy Notice

**The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R.Iran, intends to recruit a Programme Analyst/Reproductive Health and Humanitarian for its office in Tehran, Iran.**

Details of the vacancy can be found on UNFPA website on the following link:

[https://erecruit.partneragencies.org/psc/UNDPP1HRE/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRS\\_HRAM.HRS\\_CE.GBL?Page=HRS\\_CE\\_JOB\\_DTL&Action=A&JobOpeningId=35447&SitId=1&PostingSeq=1](https://erecruit.partneragencies.org/psc/UNDPP1HRE/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRS_HRAM.HRS_CE.GBL?Page=HRS_CE_JOB_DTL&Action=A&JobOpeningId=35447&SitId=1&PostingSeq=1)

**Please apply online by 30 April 2021, 5 PM Tehran Time. This vacancy is open only for Iranian Nationals.**

Notice:

- "There is no application, processing or other fee at any stage of the application process".
- "UNFPA does not solicit or screen for information in respect of HIV/AIDS or disabilities and does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/AIDS status and disabilities".



# Iran, China explore ways to expand anti-narcotics co-op

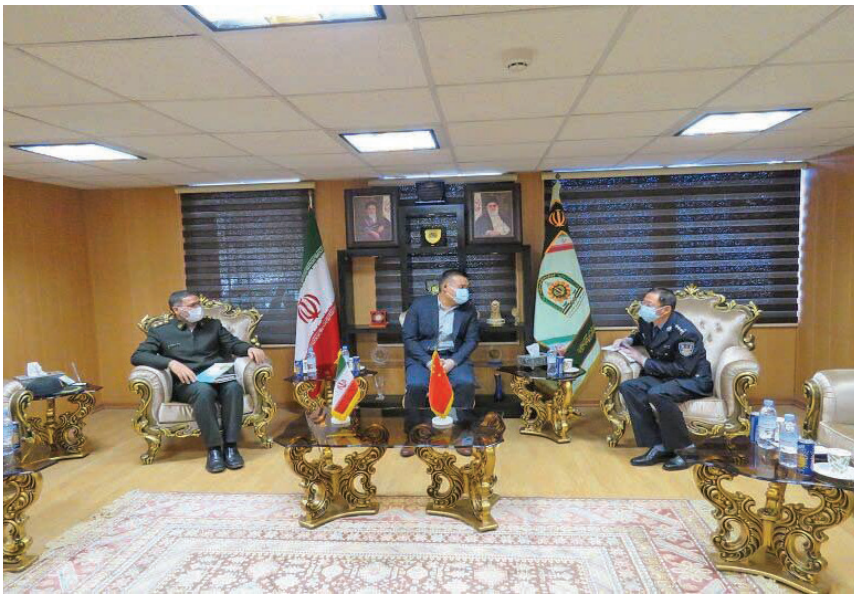
**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian deputy anti-narcotics police chief Naghi Mahmoudi in a meeting with the Chinese anti-narcotics officer in Iran discussed enhanced cooperation on fight against drug trafficking.

In a meeting held on Wednesday in Tehran, Mahmoudi emphasized the exchange of specialized information is one of the areas of joint cooperation that can greatly help in the fight against opium trafficking in the region and internationally.

He further expressed readiness to expand joint cooperation between the two countries in various fields, including the exchange of information on the main networks of drug trafficking and experiences related to police equipment, educational cooperation, detection of drug trafficking, training of detection dogs, and the pursuit of anti-narcotics cases between the two countries.

The Chinese anti-narcotics police force is fully prepared to increase the level of bilateral cooperation with Iran in the field of countering the transit and trafficking of narcotics at the international level.

Last year (March 2020 – March 2021), amid the pandemic, Iran has participated



in more than 20 regional and international events online, in cooperation with the UNODC office in Tehran, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against narcotics, said on Tuesday.

The counter-narcotics agencies and police forces succeeded in detecting about 1,150 tons of various types of narcotics, which is a new and unprecedented record in the fight against drugs showing a growth

of about 41 percent compared to 2019, he stated.

This success has been achieved with the martyrdom of 10 law enforcement and counter-narcotics forces in the global front against drug transit, he further noted.

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.

## Five countries seeking to purchase Iranian COVID-19 vaccine

→ 1 “We have achieved great success in developing vaccine; as clinical trials were conducted successfully, and the third phase of the human trial will start by the next two or three weeks, but what is more important is mass production of vaccines,” he noted.

Mokhber went on to say that the production line of three million doses of vaccine per month has been fully completed and we have gained valuable achievements in the field of research and development.

In the beginning, our scientists could get 100 doses of vaccine per liter of the virus, which increased up to 1,000 doses by now, he highlighted.

“In the first phase, we can produce 3 million doses of vaccine per month and we are determined to submit the first shipment of BAREKAT vaccine with a capacity of one million doses to the Ministry of Health and the Iranian people in May,” he said.

The second line of vaccine production with a capacity of 12 to 15 million doses will also be operational in two months, its construction stages have been completed and it is planned to be launched in mid-July, he added.

At the end of June, the vaccine production capacity will reach 18-20 million doses per month, which can definitely increase in case of any changes in condition, he also stated.

**Homegrown vaccines**  
The second Iranian coronavirus vaccine, Razi Cov Pars, which started the clinical trial on February 27, will be mass-produced in early August.

Fakhra vaccine, the third homegrown vaccine, was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

On January 27, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said Iran will soon be one of the



world's important manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Mass-vaccination**  
Iran started mass vaccination against COVID-19 with Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine on February 9, with the priority given to medical staff, the elderly, and people with underlying diseases; which is also going to be co-produced by the two countries.

The first shipment of the COVAX vaccine was delivered to Tehran in early April. “Currently, about 250,000 people in the country have been vaccinated and about 56,000 others have received the second dose of the vaccine,” Alireza Raeisi, spokesman for the National Headquarters for Coronavirus control said.

**New cases and mortalities**  
In a press briefing on Wednesday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 25,582 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,143,794. She added that 1,739,002 patients have so far recovered, but 4,539 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 304 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 65,359, she added.

So far, 13,964,570 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

## Over 35,000 housing units to be built for the deprived

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The Welfare Organization will provide 35,169 residential units for the underprivileged families across the country over the current [Iranian calendar] year (started March 20), IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Also, the construction of 10,000 housing units will also begin this year, Zolfaghar Yazdanmehr, deputy head of the Organization said.

In the Iranian calendar years of 1398 (March 2019- March 2020) and 1399 (March 2020-March 2021), 14,700 and 16,500 residential units have been provided to the deprived, respectively, he noted.

Earlier in April, some 5,700 residential units were inaugurated and provided to deprived families residing in rural areas of the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

These units have been built under a joint memorandum of understanding between the Management and Planning Organization and the Housing Foundation to build 115,000 residential units for low-income families across the country.

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

Thus, more than 97 percent of the country's rural population lives in villages with over 20,000 households.

Many efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend of migration from rural areas to cities.

Rural tourism, agritourism, religious



tourism, and ecotourism are alternatives or complementary economic activities that could further stimulate rural development while decreasing rural community dependency on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, or mining).

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

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

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

In October 2020, Omid stated that the rural development projects worth 130 trillion rials (nearly \$3 billion) inaugurated on the occasion of the National Day of Villagers and Nomads.

He went on to state that 6,750 construction projects will come on stream in various fields such as roads, communications, etc. In addition, a total of 26,512 projects will be launched throughout the country.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## All-Iranian COVID-19 diagnostic kits to be released within month

Iran will commercialize domestically-made COVID-19 diagnostic kits by the Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 22), secretary of biotechnology development of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology announced.

Following a call by the headquarters for the production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits, a contract was signed with five knowledge-based companies and manufacturing process began, ISNA quoted Mostafa Qane'ei as saying on Monday. Diagnosis is the most important part of coronavirus treatment, he highlighted.

Patients suspected to coronavirus are currently being identified by diagnostic kits that have entered Iran in the form of assistance and purchases by the World Health Organization, China and UNICEF, he said.

So, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology decided to manufacture the kits domestically, he noted.

Existing imported kits are sufficient for the next two months but after this period we will be faced with shortages of kits, however, the domestic ones will enter the market, he concluded.

## کیت‌های ایرانی تشخیص کووید ۱۹ ماه آینده روانه بازار می‌شوند

دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت: کیت‌های تشخیصی کووید ۱۹، فروردین ماه وارد بازار می‌شوند.

مصطفی قائمی، دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، اظهار داشت: به دنبال فراخوان این ستاد برای ساخت کیت‌های آزمایشگاهی تشخیص کووید ۱۹، با پنج شرکت دانش‌بنیان برای ساخت این کیت‌ها قرارداد منعقد شده است.

تشخیص، مهم‌ترین راه ورود به درمان بیماری کرونا است.

در حال حاضر بیماران مبتلا به کرونا به وسیله کیت‌های تشخیصی که در قالب مساعدت و خرید از طریق سازمان بهداشت جهانی، کشور چین و یونیسف وارد ایران شده‌اند شناسایی می‌شوند؛ اما ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری با انتشار فراخوانی از دانش‌بنیان‌های توانمند دعوت کرد تا به حوزه ساخت این کیت‌ها ورود کنند.

به گزارش از مرکز ارتباطات و اطلاع رسانی معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، وی افزود: کیت‌های وارد شده تا دو ماه آینده کافی هستند اما بعد از این مدت با کمبود کیت‌های تشخیص کرونا مواجه خواهیم شد. به همین دلیل با کمک توانمندی‌های داخلی این نیاز را مرتفع می‌کنیم.

## UNFPA introduces new representative to Iran

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) appointed Sathya Doraiswamy as a new representative to Iran, ISNA reported.

The new representative of the UNFPA met Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday to present his credentials at the beginning of his mission in Iran.

According to the Iran UN website, Doraiswamy has over 20 years of experience in academia, government, NGOs, and in the United Nations (UNHCR and UNFPA). He holds a Ph.D. in Health from the University of Bath, UK, and has worked and taught in Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and West Asia in various capacities.

Doraiswamy replaced Leila Joudane, former UNFPA Representative to Iran.

Joudane in November 2020 said that Iran's successful experiences such as free vaccination and control of the coronavirus pandemic in the face of sanctions in centers covered by the Welfare Organization can be a good example for other countries.

## Noisy environments can have detrimental effect on plants, study finds

As humans proliferate, we have penetrated deeper into wildlife habitats, creating a pervasive rise in environmental sound with our gadgets, traffic and industry. A growing body of research has shown how noise pollution adversely affects animal behaviour – but a study suggests the detrimental effects have trickled down to plants as well.

To investigate the long-term ecological effects of persistent noise, researchers chose the Rattlesnake Canyon habitat management area in New Mexico. Dominated by woodland plants, the area in the US south-west contains a high density of natural gas wells, some of which are coupled with compressors that run continuously and generate chronic noise at up to 100 decibels. That is as loud “as being next to the speakers at a Black Sabbath concert or standing right next to the train tracks as the train goes by”, said Dr Jenny Phillips, who was lead author of the study while at California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo. Other wells are devoid of compressors.

The vegetation and human activity across both types of wells are similar – so in 2007 one set of researchers compared vegetation in both contexts, finding that noise pollution disrupted the natural community in two ways: seedling dissemination and germination (known as recruitment) of the woodland species – pinyon pine – was reduced as the community of animals that feed upon and disperse the plant's seeds were adversely affected. Hummingbirds, meanwhile, thrived amid the noise, which led to increased flower pollination.

Twelve years on, researchers sought to assess the long-term ecological impact of this noisy ecosystem. They resurveyed the plots following initial data collection to determine whether the previously reported patterns for pinyon seedlings persisted, but also included analyses of another tree species, the Utah juniper, as well as other flora. However, out of those 115 plots initially surveyed, some had changed from noisy to quiet because compressors had been removed, and vice versa.

In terms of the pinyon – the researchers found seedlings were found less in noisy areas (in line with the 2007 findings) and the saplings (plants between two and 12 years old) had also grown more slowly in the persistently loud environment. The same pattern was observed in the juniper plants.

However, when looking at plots that were previously noisy but turned quiet, they saw more recruitment for juniper than for pinyon, according to the study published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

This disparate rate of recovery could be attributed to the different seed dispersers for each plant, said Phillips.

The California scrub jay eats the seeds of the pinyon, but they also bury them to save for later. Then they forget about the seeds and that is what keeps the forest regenerating.

“What we think is potentially happening ... is that jays are smart birds, they have episodic memory and they can remember negative experiences. So if they did explore an area a couple of years ago and if it's noisy, then they would remember that and not go back to that area,” she said.

Juniper seedlings were more often dispersed by mammals and other birds for which the noise was not quite as disruptive, she added.

“We don't really have the ability to say how severe the impacts [of noise pollution] are, especially if we're looking at the ecosystem level,” said Sarah Termondt, who was a study co-author while at Texas A&M University.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 158)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

■ **هفتی** = ۷ + فعل مثبت: نمی‌رفتم، فکر نمی‌کردم، کار نمی‌کرد، ...

● **تمرین ۳**. به منفی گذشته‌ی استمراری تبدیل کنید:

۱. من هیچ چیز برای خودم ..... (خواستن)
۲. دکتر هر روز بیماران را ..... (معاینه کردن)
۳. شما هرگز غذا را ..... (فراوش کردن)
۴. او در مدرسه چیزی ..... (یاد گرفتن)
۵. پسر هاک و دامن ..... (پوشیدن)
۶. ما شب‌ها در پارک ..... (راه رفتن)

### Ordinal Number

### عَدَدِ تَرْتِیبِی

عَدَدِ اصلی + ۱ = عدد ترتیبی:

پنج	۵ +	پَنجَم	fifth
بیست و هفت	۲۷ +	بِیست و هفْتَم	
چهل و نه	۴۹ +	چهل و نُهَم	
نود و پنج	۹۵ +	نود و پَنجَم	
سیصد و هشتاد و یک	۳۸۱ +	سیصد و هشتاد و یکَم	

عَدَدِ ترتیبی بعد از اسم می‌آید و اسم کسره‌ی اضافه می‌گیرد: درِیَسِ  
اَوَّلِ، تَمَرِینِ دَوَمِ، اِیستگاهِ سَوَمِ، نَفرِ دوازدهمِ، رَوِزِ بیست و یکمِ



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is reward for kindness to every living thing.  
Prophet Muhammad (S)

### 312 Iranian films submitted to Fajr Intl. Film Festival

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN**—A total of 312 productions have been submitted to the 38th annual Fajr International Film Festival, which is scheduled to be held from May 21 to June 2 in Tehran, with Iranian filmmaker Mohammad Mehdi Asgarpur as the director.

The entries consist of 190 documentary short films, 82 feature films, and 40 feature documentaries, the organizers have announced.

After calls for participation were announced 251 Iranian films were submitted to the festival by the end of March, after which the deadline was extended to April 7 and the total number of participants reached 312. April 10 was the final deadline for submissions.

The Fajr International Film Festival has a reputation for featuring productions that highlight moral values, as well as films that seek justice and freedom. The festival celebrates cultural diversity through displaying creative productions of renowned filmmakers as well as showcasing selected productions from beginners whose work possesses a high standard and has a potential for excelling in the film industry.

Productions from West Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Anatolia are the main focus of the festival, with a lot of attention and interest from the organizers towards Islamic featured films depicting the true teachings of Islamic prophets.

The unique platform provided by the Fajr International Film Festival in this diverse geographic region offers the opportunity for international collaboration on a professional basis for the advancement of media production and development of a regional filmmaking industry at the highest standards.

The previous edition of the festival was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### “White Winged Horse” leads nominations at ISFA Awards

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Mahyar Mandegar's "White Winged Horse" received nominations in eight categories, including best film and best director, at the 11th edition of the Iranian Short Film Association (ISFA) Awards, the organizers announced on Monday.

The movie is about a man who returns to his Iranian hometown, which was destroyed in the war 20 years ago. He is searching for his childhood sweetheart who had promised him, eternal love.

Written by Mandegar, the film has also been nominated for the award for best screenplay.

“White Winged Horse” is followed by director Iman Salehi's “Fear Moves Itself”, Sahand Kabiri's “Dash” and Maryam Es-mikhani's “Emergency”, each with five nods.

The ISFA award ceremony is planned to be held online within a month.

### Iran’s “The Son” to compete in Moscow film festival

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** —Iranian director Nushin Meraji's debut movie “The Son” will be screened in the main section of the 43rd edition of the Moscow International Film Festival.



*A scene from “The Son” by Iranian director Nushin Meraji*

The film is about forty-year-old Farid, who lives with his mother. He is very vulnerable and escapes loneliness, but in the meantime tries to prove himself independent and supportive of his mother.

However, her sudden death makes Farid frustrated. To escape from this unfamiliar situation, he clings to anyone he encounters outside home to make this loneliness bearable, but he does not know how to communicate and the situation gets worse each time.

The Son will be competing with 13 more movies including “Blue Heart” by Miguel Coyula from Cuba, “The Time of Indifference” by Leonardo Guerra Seragnoli from Italy, “The Inner Glow” by Andres Eduardo Rodriguez and Luis Alejandro Rodriguez from Venezuela, and “The Women” by Nobuteru Uchida from Japan.

Moscow International Film Festival is scheduled to be held in the Russian capital from April 22 to 29.

# Iranian writer Mahmud Dowlatabadi’s novel “Kelidar” published in Balochi

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian writer Mahmud Dowlatabadi's monumental 3,000-page saga “Kelidar” has recently been published in Balochi.

Translated by late Balochi writer and translator Vahedbaksh Badpa, the book has been published by Rabidan Publications in Tehran.

The Persian version of the book was published in five volumes consisting of ten books over the period 1978 to 1984.

“Kelidar” narrates the life of a nomadic Kurdish family that moved to Sabzevar, Khorasan. The story is set against the highly charged political climate in Iran after World War II, between 1946 and 1949. The locale of the story covers a rather vast area in this region with its surrounding plains, villages, and small towns, an area where Dowlatabadi was born and later chose as the stage for most of his fictional work.

Based on actual events, the novel follows the trials and tribulations of the Kalmisi family and is peopled with an array of supporting characters. It begins with a memorable scene, which is described in heroic, lyrical, and sensual language.

Maral, a young Kurdish girl, proudly and majestically leads her horse toward the town's prison to visit her father, Ab-dus, and her fiancé, Delavar. It is through Maral's visit to the town and her traveling back to the Kalmisis that the other main characters of the novel are introduced.

Maral's paternal aunt, Belqays, the



matriarch of the family and the linking thread for the novel's events and characters, and her husband, Kalmisi, have three sons and a daughter: Khan Mohammad, Gol-Mohammad, Beg Mohammad, and Shiru. Severe drought has deprived this sheepherding family of their livelihood, and the dry farming they have resorted to yields no crops.

Gol-Mohammad, the second son of the family, having just returned from mandatory military service and already married, falls in love with his cousin, Maral, and marries her. The marriage

plants the seeds of hostility in Maral's former fiancé, Delavar.

As the story progresses, the tension among different clans and families escalates, and in the course of quarrels and feuds over various issues, Gol-Mohammad kills a man from another family.

“Kelidar” derived its name from a mountain with the same name situated in proximity to the cities of Sabzevar, Neyshabur, and Quchan.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, “Kelidar” enjoyed immense popularity and created a stir in intellectual circles

even before the publication of its final volumes. The first three volumes appeared in the turbulent years before and after the revolution of 1979 and were a huge commercial success. Twenty thousand copies were sold before the publication of the complete five-volume set in 1984.

Dowlatabadi earned high critical acclaim for his complex depiction of characters, who often reveal their true nature through their physical characteristics and appearances; his vivid descriptions, his ability to offer a well-substantiated documentary on the physical, social, and political features of the region, his playful use of language, conveyed through the interplay of sand, cloud, and wind to describe the desert climate, and his creation of verbal rhythms and crescendos to accentuate the more dramatic moments of the story.

The novel, which was described by a critic as an “epic of decline”, also won the praise of commentators as a significant event in the history of modern Persian literature, the author has been also deemed a qualified nominee for a Nobel Prize in literature.

Mahmud Dowlatabadi was born in the Dowlatabad Village of Sabzevar in 1940. Self-educated and forced to work from childhood, Dowlatabadi spent part of his younger adult years as a stage actor in Tehran.

“Desert Strata”, “The Trip”, “The Legend of Baba Sobhan”, “The Cowherd”, “Aqil”, “Man” and “Missing Soluch” are among Dowlatabadi's noteworthy credits.

## Paulo Coelho praises Iranian village for naming alleys after masterpieces of world literature



*A sign bearing the title of Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho's “The Alchemist” is seen on a wall in the Iranian village of Rasulabad. (Paulo Coelho's Instagram)*

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN**—Paulo Coelho, Brazilian writer who is immensely popular

among Persian readers, has praised an Iranian village for naming its alleys after the masterpieces of world literature.

The Rural Council in Rasulabad, a village with Kurdish population in the western Iranian province of Hamedan, has selected Coelho's “The Alchemist”, Persian poet Sadi's Gulistan and Bustan, Persian poet Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery's “The Little Prince”, Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez's “One Hundred Years of Solitude” to name its alleys.

In addition, ““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,” Coelho wrote in his Instagram post on Tuesday.

“The initiative by book readers and literature lovers has given Rasoul Abad village a unique status and has made it known in the region,” he noted.

The Tehran Times published a report about the

initiative in Rasulabad on Monday.

The initiative was launched two years ago by Qobad Yari, a member of the Rasulabad Rural Council, after he saw the villagers' great deal of interest in reading, the Persian service of the IRNA said on Wednesday.

Therefore, he with supports from a number of other rural officials decided to name 30 alleys in the village after the masterpieces of world literature.

The signs of the alleys designed and created by Hamed Saniei-Aram bear the titles of the masterpieces inscribed in Persian, English and Kurdish.

“The Witch of Portobello”, “The Zahir”, “Manual of the Warrior of Light”, “Veronika Decides to Die”, “Aleph”, “Adultery”, “The Spy”, “Hippie”, “The Archer” and several other books by Coelho have been published in Persian. At least, three Persian translations of his “The Alchemist” have so far been published in Iran.

He visited Tehran and Shiraz, the southern Iranian city that is home to the mausoleums of the great Persian poet Sadi and Hafez, in 2000.

### Part 2

By Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak

In 1922, Mohammad-Ali Jamalzadeh (1892-1997) published a little book in Berlin entitled “Once Upon a Time”. With this book, the short story as it is known in Western literatures found its way into Iranian culture. In his preface, Jamalzadeh set forth his innovative ideas concerning “literary democracy” and his view of Persian literature as a “mirror of Iranian society.” Literature, he said, must be more accessible to the masses of the people and more reflective of their lives. Around the same time, the young poet known as Nima Yushij (1887-1960) was beginning to express his views about a new kind of poetry in his critical writings and through the example of his own poems. Together with Sadeq Hedayat (1903-1951), Jamalzadeh and Nima are today considered founders of modern Persian prose literature and poetry respectively.

The stories of “Once Upon a Time” provide a good sample of the main themes of modern Persian fiction. The first story, entitled “Persian is Sweet,” is about the language problem in modern Iran. Its characters, consisting of a Westernized Iranian, a traditional clergyman, and a local servant boy, fail to communicate even though they all speak Persian. The message is obvious; in order to foster the sense of a single national identity, Iranians must find a way to overcome the speech varieties that prevail in various geographical regions and among different social groups.

Another story in this collection, entitled “With Friends Like This,” laments the degenerate state of the country's government and army, which seem incapable of resisting foreign aggression and the resultant atrocities to which innocent and kind-hearted Iranians are subjected.

Hedayat is particularly important and enigmatic literary figure. His famous book, “The Blind Owl”, written in 1948, has attracted worldwide attention for innovative narrative technique and the depth of its message. Besides this haunting novella, Hedayat has written a large number of novels, short stories, and other literary works which often preset a realistic, if not always happy picture of life in Iran in the first half of the twentieth century. Influenced by such Westerners as Freud, Proust, and Kafka, Hedayat often paints a dark and dreary picture of a society that has broken away from its traditional way of life without being able to establish its place firmly in the modern world. He remains the single most important influence on the following generations of Iranian writers.

In poetry, it is Nima Yushij who is regarded as the father and the founder of the modern outlook in Iran. During a very productive poetic career of almost forty years, Nima diligently wrote poetry and single-handedly explained his critical views about it. Often misunderstood and ridiculed, Nima's poetry was different from anything that Iranians had been trained to recognize as poetry. As a result, for

## The modern literature of Iran



a long time, the phrase she'r-e now (New Poetry) meant nonsensical poetry.

Nevertheless, Nima finally succeeded in converting enough poets to his point of view to perpetuate the writing of poetry in the new way. This new way meant essentially three things. First, the poet was expected to be true to his observations, describing things as they are in nature not as they had been expressed by the old system of poetic expression. It should not matter that in classical poetry the beloved's hair is described in variably as pitch-black, her cheeks as rose- petal, or her stature is always compared to a cypress. Poets should be allowed to describe their beloved exactly as she appears to them. Secondly, Nima argued that the old idea of meter and rhyme was mechanical and therefore unnatural. He simplified and expanded the metrics of Persian poetry, and changed the use of rhyme from predetermined sound at the end of the line to one that would follow and highlight the meaning of the poem. Most importantly, however, he changed the conventional classification of poetry into genres such as ghazals, qasidahs or Masnavis. Poets would now make their poems as long or as short as they wished and would simply call their compositions poems rather than a specific kind of poem which dedicated formal and structural restrictions.

Following these pioneering authors, a large number of Iranian writers and poets have contributed to the gradual emergence of a modern literary tradition that is rich, diverse and far more accessible to modern readers- especially unfamiliar with the Persian language- than the classical canon. In poetry, it has attained to heights that are already comparable in aesthetic quality to the best examples to classical Persian poetry, far surpassing it in social significance. In fiction, the significance of the modern tradition a record of life in contemporary Iran, especially where it concerns the life of the poor and the downtrodden, cannot be overemphasized.

Although it is extremely difficult to ill such a vast body of literature through as small a sampling as is possible in a

brief introductory writing, the following poems and prose passages may help give an idea of the range of concerns covered by contemporary Iranian poets and fiction writers.

Yushij poem Makhola: In this poem by Nima Yushij the description of a flowing river running toward it manifest destination gradually merges with the expression of the poet's feeling about his mission as a poet who carries a familiar message to his readers:

Makhola, the figure of the tall river  
Goes heedlessly  
Roars ceaselessly  
Thrusts its body from rock to rock  
As a refugee  
Shunning the beaten path  
Rushes to the depths  
Rises to the heights  
Flows restlessly  
Together with the dark  
One lunatic accompany another.  
Its long it treads its way  
Joining many a stream  
No one, it's long, has heeded it  
And there it goes chanting its mute song  
Fallen from all eyes  
In this desert's lap.  
In the mute murmuring of its waters  
Makhola carries a familiar message  
And the world of a manifest destination  
Yet it flows  
Over what lies in its way  
A stranger trampling another.  
Goes heedlessly  
Roars ceaselessly  
To what home unknown  
A homeless vagrant tramping on its way.  
Farrohzad poem “The Bird was Only a Bird”: This poem by Forugh Farrokhzad, the most important female poet in the entire history of Persian literature, contrasts the condition of a bird with that of human beings:

The bird said: “What smells what sunshine, ah spring has come  
And I will go searching for my mate.”  
The bird flew away from the portico's edge  
Like a message it flew off and disappeared.  
The bird was small  
The bird did not think  
The bird did not read the paper  
The bird was not in debt  
The bird did not know people.  
The bird flew through the air above the red lights  
At the height of oblivion  
And experienced madly  
Blue moments.  
The bird, ah, was only a bird.