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World Hemophilia Day in the shadow of coronavirus

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
While the world is affected by the coronavirus, people with a bleeding disorder are no exception and are highly bearing the impact.

World Hemophilia Day is an international awareness day for hemophilia and other bleeding disorders. It is held annually on April 17, the date of the birthday of Frank Schnabel, founder of the World Federation of Hemophilia.

Since 1989, World Hemophilia Day is the day the whole bleeding disorders community comes together to celebrate the continuous advances in treatment while raising awareness and bringing understanding and attention to the issues related to proper care to the wider public.

Adapting to change: sustaining care in a new world is this year's theme. The day is about bringing together the global bleeding disorders community. At a time when coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on people with a bleeding disorder, the objective has never been more important.

Hemophilia affects approximately 12,000 people in Iran, Mehdi Shadnosh, the head of the health ministry's management center for transplantation and special diseases, said in July 2020.

About 30 percent of new hemophilia patients are born with a new genetic mutation, meaning they may not have a family history, he lamented.

In Iran, health insurance covers between 80 to 90 percent of the treatment cost for hemophilia patients, and the rest is covered by the support package of the Ministry of Health, and almost all medical expenses for these patients are being paid, he explained.

Ahmad Qavidel, spokesman for the Hemophilia Center of Iran, praised the performance of the Health Ministry in providing access to medicine for hemophilia patients amid the coronavirus crisis and the pressure of inhumane U.S. sanctions.

Based on the daily monitoring of the Hemophilia Center of Iran, a total of 6 COVID-19 cases have been recorded in hemophiliac residents of Tehran, Gilan, Khuzestan, West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, and Fars provinces. Out of a total of 6 cases, one has recovered, 3 cases are in quarantine and 2 cases are hospitalized. Fortunately, there had been no reports of death among these patients.

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Duante Wright, a senseless death due to family and police negligence

BY JIM W. DEAN

America saw another tragedy in the senseless death of this young black man. Two lives are now destroyed, a 20 year old young man struggling with competency and responsibility issues, and a 26 year female police veteran who when attempting to tase the resisting arrest man, drew her service revolver from her right hip when the taser was on her left hip.

She correctly yelled 'taser' three times to warn off any other officers from jumping in front of her when she fired. To her horror, a gun blast went off where she revealed her shock on her bodycam audio.

Not only was the taser on her left hip, but it also had a rectangular boxed shaped plastic yellow grip as a double safety feature. It was designed to avoid this kind of mistake being made. No one can remember such an error being made before in a police shooting.

The officer quickly resigned, as did the chief of the

department. After two days the officer was arrested and charged with second degree manslaughter.

The incident happened just miles away from the ongoing George Floyd murder trial, which triggered angry crowds converging at the police station and the looting of innocent businesses in the neighborhood, more young black men exploiting the situation for some personal gain. Fortunately, none of the stores were firebombed.

The investigation is basically over. A police officer made a terrible mistake which proper training should have prevented. But there is another side to the story that is not getting any attention, and in fairness to all, it should. The 20 year old Duarte Wright also made a big mistake that contributed to his death. He resisted arrest during what was to be a misdemeanor traffic stop, which is always a stupid thing to do. If he had not done so he would still be alive. Why did he do this?

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Hundreds march in Chicago, protesting police shooting of Adam Toledo, 13

Hundreds of people marched through the Logan Square neighborhood in Chicago o, calling for overhauls to the city's police department after the fatal shooting of 13-year-old Adam Toledo by a police officer in March.

Holding signs reading "Justicia Para Adam" and "We are Adam, defund the police," a large crowd listened as speakers denounced the Chicago Police Department and Mayor Lori Lightfoot.

Adam was shot and killed by a police officer, Eric E. Stillman, 34, in the early-morning hours of March 29. In video of the shooting, released on Thursday by an independent city agency that investigates police conduct, Adam is chased down an alley by a white police officer, who orders him to stop and show his hands. An analysis of the video, slowing down events that took place in the space of a second, shows the boy then appearing to toss a handgun nearby and raising his hands in the air, just before the officer

shoots him in the chest.

Jasmin Cardenas, who attended the march with her two small children, cried as she stood holding a sign supporting Adam and his family. She lives in Little Village, the predominantly Latino neighborhood where Adam was killed, and runs an after-school arts program that once worked with children at Gary Elementary, where Adam was a student. The neighborhood is sorely lacking in services for children and teenagers, she said, and needs nurses in the schools and more art programs to keep young people busy, NY Times reported.

With renewed national attention on police conduct amid the Derek Chauvin trial in Minneapolis, demonstrations also took place beyond Chicago on Friday night. In the Minneapolis suburb of Brooklyn Center, Minn., protests continued in front of that city's police department for a sixth straight night following an officer's fatal shooting of a 20-year-old motorist, Daunte Wright.

Iran rejects 'interventionist' remarks by Arab League, (P)GCC

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has strongly rejected "interventionist and irresponsible" remarks by officials of the Arab League and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

In a statement on Friday, Khatibzadeh highlighted the "destructive role of a handful of countries", saying, "These imprudent and irresponsible comments are part of their anti-Iran remarks."

The statement came after high-level Arab officials

leveled accusations against Iran following Tehran's decision to raise the uranium enrichment level to 60%. The Arab League expressed "extreme concern" over Iran's decision to enrich uranium up to 60% purity, calling it a "dangerous development."

Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul Gheit issued a statement accusing Iran of taking a step toward developing a nuclear weapon.

In addition, an official source at the pan-Arab organization also accused Iran of violating its obli-

gations under the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"This regrettable development comes as part of Iran's continued violations of its obligations under the nuclear agreement, which is currently at the center of intense negotiations to revive it," the official said, underlining the need to reach an agreement that will address the Arab countries' concerns related to Iran's regional activities.

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©File photo

Discover 7,000-year-old underground troglodyte

The underground troglodyte of Faridan, central Isfahan province, dates back to more than 7,000 years ago. It was discovered on January 8, 2017 under a hill overlooking a village near the city of Faridan.

The troglodyte refers to a type of architecture in which the process of reducing space is used to create an architectural space.

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Much of U.S. attitude toward Iran is irrational: American anthropologist

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - An American anthropologist says that the United States' approach toward Iran is mostly "irrational".

"Much of the American attitude toward Iran is, in my estimation, irrational," William O. Beeman, professor emeritus of the State University of Minnesota, tells the Tehran Times.

"In the United States, no politician can risk saying anything positive about Iran," Beeman notes.

The Joint Commission meetings of the remaining participants of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - Iran, China, Russia, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom - are ongoing in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

Political observers believe that the negotiations will not be easy due to a deep gap among Iran and the U.S.'s approaches.

Meanwhile Israel is making every effort to deepen this gap through picturing Iran as a threat in the U.S.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu and pro-right-wing Israel groups like the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) have tremendous power as lobbyists in Washington, and their hostility to Iran is unrelenting," Beeman asserts.

Following is the text of the interview:

What is your prediction about new rounds of talks to revitalize the JCPOA?

I have been surprised by the optimistic tone that has been adopted by the Biden Administration. Biden's envoy on Iran, Robert Malley, has been taking a very forward stance on the talks in Vienna.

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Leader asks the Army to enhance readiness

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, issued a message on Saturday asking the Iranian Army to boost preparedness for operations as much as necessary.

In his congratulatory message on the eve of Army Day, the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces urged Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi to “keep enhancing this preparedness to the required level and play a role.”

He also called on General Mousavi to send his warm regards to “dear Army staff and their respected families.”

On April 18, 1979, Imam Khomeini issued a message declaring April 18 as the “Islamic Republic of Iran’s Army Day,” and asked the Army to march in cities with all its power and military equipment.

United States should lift all sanctions, says MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— In a tweet on Saturday, Seyed Ali Aghazadeh, head of the Defense Sub-Committee of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament criticized the United States’ policy toward Iran, saying Washington should lift all sanctions against Iran.

“The definite policy of the Islamic Republic toward the United States is the lifting of all sanctions; the United States seeks to impose its false words on the Iranian nation, not to accept the word of truth!” the senior MP said.

“The U.S. proposals are also arrogant and humiliating,” the MP added. Iran has repeatedly said that it will return to the JCPOA only after the U.S. lifts all sanctions verifiably.

Negotiations are underway between Iran and the P4+1 group in Vienna for a possible revival of the JCPOA.

Rouhani congratulates Assad on Syrian National Day

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— In a message on Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani of Iran congratulated his Syrian counterpart Bashar Al-Assad on National Day of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Rouhani also expressed confidence that by using the great capacities of the two countries, valuable steps can be taken to establish peace and stability in the region.

The Iranian president also expressed hope that precious steps can be taken to “establish regional cooperation and to expand relations in all fields.”

He also wished health for the Syrian president and success for the brotherly nation and government of Syria.

The Syrian National Day falls on April 18.

Pakistani FM set to visit Iran soon

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi started a regional tour on Saturday that first took him to the UAE.

After concluding visit to Abu Dhabi, he is scheduled to travel to Iran, Qatar and Turkey, respectively.

The agenda is to strengthen bilateral relations and build consensus to advance the Afghan peace process.

At the Raisina 2021 virtual conference on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif asked Taliban to reform itself “based on democratic ways.”

He also noted, “It is needed that regional countries to set aside differences and focus on affinities.”

Zarif to visit Indonesia

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will travel to Indonesia on Sunday, the Foreign Ministry said on Saturday.

During the tour, the top Iranian diplomat will hold talks with senior Indonesian officials about Tehran-Jakarta ties and other issues of mutual interest, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said last week that efforts are underway to release an Iranian oil tanker that was captured in Indonesian waters in January.

On January 24, the Indonesian coast guard seized the Iranian-flagged MT Horse and the Panamanian-flagged MT Freya vessels in Indonesian waters for alleged unauthorized oil transfer.

‘Nuclear deal talks move forward’

Iran and P4+1 group made further progress in their efforts to end a years-long standoff between Tehran and Washington over the fate of the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), as Tehran said a “new understanding” was taking shape at key talks in Vienna.

Iran’s lead negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, said serious disagreements remain but that his country was working on a draft text for reviving the accord that could work as a framework for subsequent discussions.

“The drafting of the text can begin now, and the Iranian delegation has prepared and presented its text on the nuclear sphere and the lifting of sanctions,” Araghchi told Iranian TV, according to Press TV.

Earlier this week Araghchi said that Washington and Tehran had to specify the steps that they would each need to take in order to restore the JCPOA, including a tally of all Trump-era sanctions that the U.S. would need to remove from Iran’s economy.

Abandonment of the landmark deal in 2018 by the U.S., and reimposition of sanctions by then-President Donald Trump, pushed relations between the longstanding foes toward a breaking point.

In 2019 Iran responded to Trump’s so-called “maximum pressure” strategy by gradually increasing its nuclear activity, beyond the limits allowed in the JCPOA. The Islamic Republic started enriching uranium to 60% for the first time on Friday, after the April 11 attack on the Natanz nuclear site for which Israel is the chief suspect.

While the U.S. is yet to comment on the latest talks, which will resume on Sunday, the European Union and Russia, which along with China are trying help the two countries choreograph the restoration of the deal and full compliance to its terms, echoed Araghchi’s cautious optimism.

Enrique Mora, who’s leading the talks in Vienna on behalf of the EU, tweeted that the discussions had been “intensive,” and that “progress has been made in a far from easy task,” adding that the group needed to now focus on more detailed work, without elaborating.

It was “key” that all the parties are committed to seeing the U.S. rejoin the accord and that it’s fully implemented by both Washington and Tehran, said Mora.

Airborne division commander: We will take big steps in development path

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — General Yousef Ghorbani, commander of the Army Airborne Division, said on Saturday that Iran will never imagine that it has reached a zenith, noting the Islamic Republic is setting aims for greater steps.

“Our effort today is to take greater steps for the development and promotion of the airborne division in 1399,” Ghorbani told a press conference on the eve of Army Day. Iran’s calendar year 1399 ended on March 20, 2021.

He also said the airborne division is ready to transfer the ballot boxes in places that are hard to reach.

The presidential elections in Iran will be held on June 18.

General Ghorbani said, “This year, as in the past, we will show our strength by holding parades in our bases.”

Ghorbani added today Iran is manufacturing all spare parts for its helicopters and “we can overhaul our helicopters ourselves, which is a complicated procedure.”



He added, “We have the largest aerial fleet in West Asia today, and that is because of the efforts over the last forty years.” The general also said Iran is able to

optimize night vision systems. “We have updated our weapons systems today, and we’ve moved on to upgrade other equipment as well.”

Ghorbani went on to say that Iran is unrelenting in its efforts to upgrade its weapons systems. “We will never imagine that we have reached a great point.”

The airborne division play an important role when natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes happen.

“We saw what efforts were made by the airborne division in floods and earthquakes in recent years. Of course, these are missions other than our usual missions. Including our mission in extinguishing fires,” Ghorbani stated.

“We also do most of aerial emergency in 30 provinces, and most of the aerial emergency is carried out by the airborne division,” the military official said.

He also announced that the Army airborne division has rescued 2,000 people from death.

JCPOA isolated U.S., says Iranian MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— In an interview with the Tasnim news agency published on Saturday, Masoud Pezeshkian, representative of Tabriz people in the parliament, has expressed views on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions, commonly known as the 2015 nuclear deal.

Pezeshkian believes that in the world of politics, neither Iran’s words nor the United States’ words can be 100% implemented.

He said, “The U.S. and Trump wanted to ruin everything for us. Why couldn’t they? Trump wanted to humiliate us. Why couldn’t he? Did Trump achieve all his goals? If we lost in the JCPOA, why is Israel trying so hard that we leave the deal?”

The veteran pro-reform lawmaker believes that what the enemy is doing to get Iran out of the JCPOA shows that the nuclear deal has benefited Iran.

“Aren’t the conspiracies launched by Israel right now aimed at inciting Iran to leave the deal?” he asked.

He further said, “The fact that we did not achieve all our goals in the JCPOA is the right thing to say, because our enemies do not want us to achieve our goals in the nuclear deal.”

Pezeshkian, who was deputy parliament speaker in the previous parliament, said Iran achieved an accomplishment through the JCPOA. Citing an example, the

MP said, “The United States tried as hard as possible to issue a resolution against us (at the UN Security Council), but failed.”

He went on to say that one of the JCPOA accomplishments was that countries like China and Russia and even Europeans voted against the United States when the Trump administration took steps against Iran at the UN.

Pezeshkian also calls the 25-year cooperation plan between Iran and China as another achievement of the JCPOA.

“Under Obama, China and Russia voted against us at the UN Security Council,” he reminded.

Also being able to have dialogue with China and Russia is the JCPOA’s achievement in the MP’s opinion.

He went on to count the diplomatic successes that Iran has made via the JCPOA, saying, “The Europeans vote against the United States at the United Nations. Is it the rise of the JCPOA or its fall? I would like to say that one of the advantages of the JCPOA was that it isolated the United States.”

“The JCPOA was signed so that Iran would enhance its nuclear strength,” said Pezeshkian.

He also refuted claims that the JCPOA has undermined Iran’s nuclear program, citing remarks by nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi.

Iran’s rapid return to its pre-JCPOA state also illustrates this fact, the MP asserted.



Talks among Iran and the P4+1 is under way in Vienna. “A new understanding appears to be emerging and there is a common ground between the parties on the ultimate goal,” Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran’s chief negotiator, told Iranian media on Saturday afternoon.

China’s envoy to the talks also said earlier in the day that all remaining parties to the nuclear agreement have agreed to speed up work on issues such as which sanctions the U.S. will lift.

Iranian, Serbian foreign ministers meet in Tehran, sign cooperation document

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Serbian Foreign Minister Nikola Selakovic and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif met on Saturday afternoon in Tehran to discuss bilateral, regional and international

issues.

On the sidelines of the meeting, a cooperation document was also signed between the foreign ministries of Iran and Serbia. It was signed by Selakovic and Zarif.

According to Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh, Selakovic was also set to meet with President Hassan Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and the other senior Iranian officials.

Reviving the nuclear deal: 10 points to remind and 10 points to refrain

By Mehrdad Pahlavani

A long-term negotiated deal that its content was written with great care and sensitivity is again drown into a serious dispute.

The Iran nuclear deal confirmed in 2015 is grappled in a quagmire of operation, re-articulation, and how to be revived. All parties to the deal set out reasons to gain support for their terms and conditions in which stand against the others’ criteria.

Negotiations over Iran’s nuclear program that led to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in July 2015 started in 2003.

In the twelve-year timeframe, enough endeavors were made to take out a minimum precious deal that could turn all sides’ least demands into a reality. However, now it is on the edge of a full collapse.

Despite several players involved in the accord, Iran and the U.S. are key ones as their determination that led to victory of diplomacy over conflicts in the last decade. The glory of diplomatic activities abruptly twisted into a deadlock. Withdrawing from the deal and imposing maximum pressure on Iran was backfired by decreasing nuclear commitments, and these threatening adventures are still flip-flopping.

Parties to the accord did all their best to strike the 2015 deal but ceasing the current conflictual situation that might drag it into full collapse, several principal factors should be reminded to all parties.

1) Parties to the deal came to realize that the JCPOA is a cornerstone for a durable mutual trust. And the sustainability of mutual trust at this phase ultimately depends on the deal as a tester as well as an opportunity to partially overcome misperceptions, misunderstandings and

mistrusts.

2) Excessive conservatism in taking steps forward is equal to squandering time and short-term views are not in the interest of the parties.

3) States that articulated the content of the JCPOA are fully familiar with the antagonism of some regional countries in West Asia and beyond that have been making a lot of efforts to completely kill the agreement. If multilateral cooperation makes a setback for antagonism, it will set a dangerous precedent, poisoning multilateralism.

4) Parties to the deal wished favorable results and found their aims or goals in the deal. A full monitoring of Iran’s nuclear activities as well as lifting sanctions was the major goal of the deal.

5) All stakeholders, especially Iran and the U.S., withstood critics and spent a lot of precious time through negotiation and keeping talks continue. Now, the same major players need to unravel the current knot as Iran should get rid of sanctions and the new U.S. administration should revive its prestige; both are accessible through a sensible solution.

6) All stakeholders comprehend that staying out of the deal entails more costs than keeping the deal on its track. Withdrawing from the deal at least deprives them of regular trade and at worst, precipitates mistrust in the mentalities as a hinder to future plausible talks.

7) Parties to the deal found that Donald Trump’s withdrawal from the multilateral agreement has irritated all sides. It was neither based on an analytical decision nor brought any privilege to the U.S. The decision, as a stigma, tarnished the U.S. image and the remaining parties were put into trouble.

8) All sides comprehend that the deal is at the brink of full collapse. When it’s

heard that “the window is not open forever” it means time is flying. No single second returns.

9) Right now, there is somehow one X in the equation*** of the deal that gives a hint: who should take the first step. As Iran is nearing the June presidential election, Xs would be become more and more.

10) The more time spent to fully operate the deal, the harsher condition will come before it.

Preserving common achievements pave the way for a constructive situation in which leads parties to a result-oriented path, but insisting on common achievements is still imperfect. Parties to the deal should be more committed to constructive criteria and standards. Along with the aforementioned reminders that are conducive to a better way, some negative points should be refrained.

Those points that should be refrained are enumerated as follows:

1. The easiest and most accessible way is to refrain from harsh rhetoric, at least for a short time span. Official positions are the main data and signals which shape plans and analyses that subsequently steer policies.

2. Parties to the deal should refrain from making the situation more complex by adding new issues to the nuclear deal talks. Pursuing further concessions or putting more issues on the negotiation table means taking steps backward. Excessive demands will sound the alarm for the failure of diplomacy.

3. Negotiation is a tool to find a way. So, it is a forward-looking approach. Bitter backgrounds, especially those rooted in their common history, should be forgotten.

4. Parties should keep in mind their consideration and dismiss third-parties’ criteria, concerns, and considerations. If

more direct or indirect chairs added to the negotiation table, the more stumbling blocks will emerge.

5. Reviving the nuclear deal needs to focus merely on the nuclear deal. In other words, the expectation of stakeholders should be confined to the original deal. Negotiations for reaching the nuclear deal lasted 12 years. Adding new agenda will make negotiation an open-ended process.

6. Politics is about finding a rational way to overcome problems. Public humanoid senses should be avoided and being a stubborn player has nothing to do with politics.

7. The nuclear talks were launched due to an artificial accusation by an anti-Iran faction. An accusation that has never been proven. Such terrible scenarios are intended to make another artificial accusation against Iran, a dangerous plot that might trap the West.

8. At the first step a fair deal is the one that includes all parties’ benefits. And the second step should not harm other parties. Full operation of the deal can create a better West Asia. However, ambiguity pushes the region toward a wrong path.

9. The zero-sum game should be relinquished, and a win-win status, as a solid bottom for a long-term agreement, should be taken into account.

10. Materializing full demands overnight is just an illusion. Mediators including Qatar, Oman, and the EU should be given more foster positions. Two crucial parties, including Iran and the U.S., should allow mediators to be more active and creative. The “Oman talks” as a backdrop communication place was a successful experience for both sides. Simultaneously, mediators should be facilitators and refrain from any orientation and manipulation.

Another Vietnam, this time in Afghanistan

U.S. leaves Afghanistan empty-handed after two decades

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — As the United States accelerates efforts to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, Iran stands ready to draw on its relations with the Afghan government and the Taliban to help the war-torn country establish peace and security.

Over the last few days, exchanges of views between Iranian and Afghan officials have increased amid reports of Washington's decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by September 11.

On Friday night, Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar spoke by phone with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif to discuss the Afghan peace process less than a week after another telephone conversation with the Iranian foreign minister's special envoy for Afghanistan Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian.

Underlining the need to protect Afghanistan's democratic achievements over the past two decades and their connection to lasting peace, Zarif reiterated Iran's full support for the Afghan peace process during his phone conversation with Atmar, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Saturday.

The Afghan foreign minister, for his part, expressed satisfaction with the expanding relations between the two countries and appreciated Iran's "effective role" in the Afghan peace process.

The two ministers also underlined the need for accelerating the conclusion and signing of a strategic cooperation document between the two countries.

The conversation was held against a backdrop of international debate over the United States' upcoming withdrawal from Afghanistan. U.S. President Joe Biden announced on Wednesday that the U.S. should end "forever war" in Afghanistan, a tacit acknowledgment that the U.S. war in Afghanistan turned to another Vietnam War.

"We went to Afghanistan because of a horrific attack that happened 20 years ago. That cannot explain why we should remain



there in 2021," the U.S. president said. "We were attacked, we went to war with clear goals," he noted. "We achieved those objectives. Bin Laden is dead and al-Qaida is degraded in Afghanistan, and it's time to end this forever war."

But as the U.S. prepares for a withdrawal from Afghanistan's endless war, Afghanistan seems far from being a stable, peaceful country. Clashes between the Afghan government's forces and the Taliban still continue unabated, with the latter vowing to increase attacks against the U.S.-led foreign troops in the country after Biden outlined a drawdown that will begin May 1 and conclude by September 11.

The U.S. president said his troops will leave Afghanistan "responsibly, deliberately and safely" but this did not dissuade international observers from saying that the U.S. withdrawal will further complicate the situation in Afghanistan. Afghanistan continues to be one of the "deadliest places in the world to be a civilian", according to Michelle Bachelet, the

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Afghan peace talks are not moving smoothly. The talks are due to go ahead on April 24 and run through May 4, known officially as the Istanbul Conference on the Afghan Peace Process, and the co-conveners said they were committed to supporting a "sovereign, independent and unified Afghanistan," according to the UN.

Having established working relations with both the Afghan government and the Taliban, Iran stepped in and intensified talks with the Afghans with the purpose of helping them reach a lasting peace. This was on full display over the last week when Taherian spoke by phone with Atmar.

The two diplomats exchanged views on the current developments in Afghanistan, especially the trend of intra-Afghan peace talks as well as the Istanbul meeting, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement last week. Taherian also highlighted Tehran's all-out support for efforts to realize peace and lasting stability in Afghanistan.

The previous day, Taherian had also discussed with Chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah the latest developments in Afghanistan and the current trend of peace talks in the country.

Although Biden refused to allude to Iran when speaking about the responsibility of other countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, India, China and Russia in helping the Afghans overcome the difficulties of reaching a peace deal, Iran stands ready to make use of its diplomatic tools to help stabilize Afghanistan in the future.

Iran enjoys relations with both sides of the conflict, the Taliban and the Afghan government. And both sides seem to view Iran as a reliable peace broker. Earlier this year, a Taliban delegation led by deputy head of the group's political bureau Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar visited Tehran. They met with Zarif who told them that Iran welcomed the idea of formation of an all-inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic and political groups in Afghanistan.

On Friday, Zarif said the Taliban's plan for reviving an "emirate" in Afghanistan is not viable, underlining the need for the militant group to engage instead in an all-inclusive diplomatic process aimed at achieving "broad-based" peace in the war-ravaged country, according to Press TV.

Speaking at a panel discussion session of India's flagship Raisina Conference, Zarif said Iran held talks with the Taliban to convince the group that "there is a need for a broad-based, inclusive peace in Afghanistan, and that the Taliban should be a part of that peace" instead of attempting to "control" the process.

The chief diplomat also said that Iran pressed upon the Taliban that his country is prepared to provide any forum for the Taliban and other groups in Afghanistan — particularly the government of Afghanistan — to engage in a serious talk for a movement forward; not threats, not violence, but working for peace within the constitutional framework of Afghanistan.

Iran rejects 'interventionist' remarks by Arab League, (P)GCC

→1 On Wednesday, the (P)GCC secretary general echoed similar concerns. In letters to the negotiating parties in Vienna — China, Russia, France, the U.S., UK, and Germany — Nayef Al-Hajraf said the Iran nuclear deal talks in Vienna must address the concerns and interests of the Persian Gulf countries to boost security and stability in the region.

Al-Hajraf claimed that the (P)GCC is a major contributor to strengthening the security and stability of the region, and that the negotiations currently underway in Vienna should not be limited to the Iranian nuclear program, but rather should include Iran's alleged "destabilizing" behavior, and ballistic missiles, according to Arab News.

The (P)GCC chief also expressed concerns over Iran's decision to enrich uranium to 60%, warning that Iran's announcement of uranium enrichment is a dangerous and worrying indicator for regional and international security.

Al-Hajraf also called on the "international community to shoulder its responsibilities toward this dangerous and threatening development to regional and global peace and security."

"These remarks aimed to derail nuclear deal talks"

Iran hit back at these remarks. Khatibzadeh said these statements are meant to derail nuclear talks in Vienna.

"These statements are not aimed at calling for cooperation; rather, they seek to disrupt the trend of technical talks

in Vienna," he said.

"The secretaries general of these institutions should know that Iran is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and all of Iran's nuclear activities are monitored by the safeguards programs of this agency," said the spokesman.

"Naturally, the development of this program (Iran's nuclear program) will continue in line with the Islamic Republic of Iran's legitimate rights and national interests aimed at meeting peaceful needs," he added.

"These entities had better avoid turning a blind eye to the existing realities and, instead, focus their concerns on parties violating the 2015 nuclear deal and UN Security Council Resolution 2231," he said.

Khatibzadeh urged chiefs of these institutions to turn their attention to the military and illegal nuclear activities of the Israeli regime and pay due regard to the dangers posed by the hundreds of nuclear warheads of this regime and its refusal to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the biggest threat to regional peace, stability and security rather than getting on board with Israel when it comes to constantly leveling accusations against Iran.

Diplomats from Iran and the P4+1 are in the Austrian capital of Vienna to discuss ways to revitalize the JCPOA.

Over the past few weeks, they held several rounds of intensive talks aimed at bringing Iran and the U.S. back to full compliance with the nuclear deal.

Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, who heads Iran's negotiating team in Vienna, held numerous meetings with diplomats from the P4+1. On Friday, the heads of the Russian and Chinese negotiating teams visited the residence of Iran's chief negotiator and deputy foreign minister in Vienna to hold trilateral talks with him, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The Friday meeting was held as part of ongoing consultations between Iran and the P4+1 negotiators in the Austrian capital.

Technical talks and discussions between the JCPOA parties on the removal of sanctions and nuclear issues are still underway at different levels.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry also rejected reports claiming that the Vienna talks have been stopped.

"It should be noted certain reports that the negotiating teams have decided to stop the talks and return to their capitals are not true, and the talks are still going on," the statement said.

Iran has urged the U.S. to lift all the sanctions imposed under Donald Trump, while the U.S. has shown little interest in removing all of these sanctions.

Iran criticizes UN for politicizing WMD non-proliferation regimes

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has criticized the UN Security Council for being silent on the abuse of non-proliferation and disarmament regimes pertaining to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Majid Takht Ravanchi made the remarks in a Friday meeting of the UN body. He described the WMDs as "the most immoral and inhumane weapons ever developed by mankind and their development, production, stockpiling and use have rightly been prohibited."

He pointed out that the only absolute guarantee against the use of these inhumane weapons is in fact their total elimination and to ensure that they will never be developed.

"This noble objective clearly proves the inherent value of non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and their essential role in maintaining international peace and security. Nevertheless, the authority of such regimes and the credibility of relevant international institutions have seriously been challenged and undermined in the past decades, ironically in most cases, not by those seeking to develop WMDs but by those who have abused non-proliferation regimes to advance their own

interests. The Security Council was dead silent when chemical weapons provided by the West were used by Saddam in his aggression against Iran, killing thousands of Iranian and Iraqi citizens," the Iranian diplomat said.

On March 16, 1988, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein ordered his air force to attack Halabja in northern Iraq with chemical bombs, using nerve agents such as VX and mustard gas to kill thousands of innocent civilians. The attack killed between 3,200 and 5,000 people and injured 7,000 to 10,000 more, most of them civilians.

The Halabja attack was part of the Al-Anfal Campaign in northern Iraq. The attack has been recognized as a distinct event of genocide conducted against the Kurdish people by the Saddam regime. The Iraqi High Criminal Court recognized the Halabja massacre as an act of genocide on March 1, 2010.

In March 2019, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the Iranian nation and Kurdish brothers in Iraq will never forget the Halabja and Sardasht chemical attacks.

"First they denied it happened—then they blamed Iran. When it was clear it was their own ally, using their own chemical weapons, they were silent. The West may like to forget about horrors of Halabja &

Sardasht—31 years ago today—but neither we nor our Kurdish brethren, ever will," Zarif tweeted at the time.

Takht Ravanchi said the Security Council also was dead silent when Iraq was invaded by Western countries based on completely false WMD-related claims.

"The Council is again silent when Syria has been under extreme pressure in recent years because certain powers are abusing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to advance their illegitimate interests in that country. Likewise, Iran was placed under unprecedented UN sanctions until 2016 only because of an unnecessary crisis manufactured by certain Western powers under the so-called proliferation concerns over our peaceful nuclear program. However, the Israeli regime, which has developed all types of WMDs and has refused to join international treaties banning these deadly weapons, is not held accountable by the Security Council because it is shielded by the U.S.," the Iranian ambassador continued.

Takht Ravanchi added, "The authority of non-proliferation regimes and the credibility of related organizations cannot be preserved and upheld automatically and in isolation, while disregarding these

bitter realities. The only absolute guarantee to that end is the strict application of non-proliferation norms to all, at all times and under all circumstances, and above all, without exploitation of the norms or politicization of or discrimination in their application, as well as the impartiality and professional work of the relevant multilateral machineries."

He called on the UN Security Council to resist all efforts to politicize and abuse non-proliferation norms.

"We must therefore resist the politicization and abuse of non-proliferation norms and related institutions; renounce flawed methodologies, fake and unreliable evidence or disregarding the chain of custody in relevant investigations; and reject biased and politicized conclusions and reporting by relevant mechanisms," Takht Ravanchi underlined.

"The draft decision on Syria submitted to the 25th Conference of the States Parties to the CWC contains all such elements, thus should be rejected. As a major victim in contemporary history of the most systematic use of chemical weapons, Iran once again condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances," he said.

SPORTS

Iran's Taremi wins UCL Goal of the Week

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Taremi's overhead kick goal against Chelsea was elected the "Goal of the Week" in the competition.



"This spectacular shot of Mehdi Taremi wins the goal of the week!", Can be read on tweet shared this Friday in the official Champions League account.

The FC Porto Iranian striker surpassed the competition from England's Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden, who scored in the match between Borussia Dortmund and Manchester City, and from Cameroon Choupo-Moting, who scored in PSG-Bayern match.

The Iranian goal, already close to the final whistle of the match, gave FC Porto the victory, but it was not enough for the Dragons to go to the next stage of the competition, since it had lost 0-2 in the first leg.

Although this edition of the Champions League has not yet ended, many already classify it as the best goal of the season. And there are also those who risk asking for the Puskas prize for the Iranian.

Iran's women return to FIFA ranking

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran's women's national football team returned to the latest FIFA Women's World Ranking released on Friday.

Iran had not been included in the ranking over the past months but have returned to the list after the world football governing body extended the permitted-inactivity period at the international stage from 18 months to 48 months to remain in rankings.

According to the latest ranking, Iran women's team remained unchanged in the 70th place among 167 countries.

The U.S. have confirmed their dominance of the women's game in the latest edition, followed by Germany, the Netherlands, France and Sweden.

The next FIFA Women's World Ranking will be published on 25 June.

Hosseini's goal chosen as Best Goal of ACL2021 Matchday One

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team captain Jalal Hosseini's goal was chosen as the best goal of the 2021 AFC Champions League Matchday 1.

With all the attacking ability on display in the 2021 ACL's opener between Persepolis and Al Wahda FSCC it might have come as some surprise that the tie's only goal was scored by a 39-year-old center-back.

But Hosseini has previous when it comes to crucial goals in the AFC Champions League and he rounded off a neat move with an adept strike.

He won the poll with 45 percent.

Esteghlal forward Mehdi Ghaedi came second with 38 percent. He rifled home from 30 yards out for his second goal of the game against Al Ahli Saudi.

Tractor striker Mohammad Abbaszadeh finished in third place with 17 percent after his goal against Pakhtakor.

Ex-Iran wrestler Fereydoon Ghanbari passes away

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Former Iran freestyle wrestler Fereydoon Ghanbari passed away on Saturday.

He was 44.

Ghanbari was hospitalized with pancreatitis at a hospital in Kermanshah, west of Iran but died after the surgery.

He won a gold medal at the 1997 Junior World Championships in Helsinki at the 83kg weight category.

Ghanbari also won a gold medal at the 2004 Asian Wrestling Championships in Tehran.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Ghanbari's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Pancreatitis is inflammation in the pancreas. The pancreas is a long, flat gland that sits tucked behind the stomach in the upper abdomen. The pancreas produces enzymes that help digestion and hormones that help regulate the way the body processes sugar (glucose).

2021 ACL Group C: Esteghlal believe they can advance to the knockout stage

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Al Shorta will be braced for a tough 90 minutes when they take on Esteghlal FC in Group C of the 2021 AFC Champions League on Sunday.

Al Shorta came up short against Qatar's Al Duhail on Matchday One as the Iraqis fell to a 2-0 defeat. Esteghlal, meanwhile, romped to a 5-2 win over Al Ahli Saudi FC of Saudia Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran side will be confident of winning another three points at the King Abdullah Sports City Stadium.

Despite the defeat to Al Duhail, head coach Aleksandar Ilic saw his side produce an improved performance in the second half and will be expecting his players to bounce back against Esteghlal.

The Iraqis must also be focused from the start if they are to stand a chance of beating Esteghlal, with the Iranian side capable of punishing the slightest of mistakes.

Esteghlal did very little wrong against Al Ahli and head coach Farhad Majidi warned that his side can only get better, the-afc.com wrote.

Unlucky to have been eliminated in the Round of 16 last year, Esteghlal believe they can advance to the knockout stage as group winners and another three points will be their target on Sunday.

Five new commercial attachés appointed

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran has appointed five new commercial attachés to be dispatched to the country's major trading partners in the near future, the head of the country's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced. "Currently, the commercial attachés for China, Armenia, Oman, Azerbaijan, and Russia have been appointed and will be sent to the mentioned countries soon," the TPO portal quoted Hamid Zadboum as saying. The official also announced plans for dispatching commercial attachés to Turkey, Pakistan, and India in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).



Referring to the significant role of commercial attachés in the target markets, Zadboum said: "The significance of the activities of commercial attachés for the private sector is so that the private sector considers them as their supporters and companions in target countries."

The private sector believes that the presence of commercial attachés in the target countries will reduce their export costs significantly and they can use the attachés' expertise and guidance to increase exports and remove existing barriers and problems, he added.

Back in February, Mojtaba Mousavian, the TPO's deputy head for export markets development had said that the number of Iranian commercial attachés will reach 10 in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22).

He noted that some markets like the neighboring countries plus China and India are the top priorities for dispatching commercial attachés.

Syria, Kazakhstan, and Lebanon are also the next countries to which TPO plans to send commercial attachés, the official said.

According to Mousavian, TPO has sent 69 commercial attachés to various countries over the past 25 years, and at best, even in one year, 25 commercial attachés were present at their mission.

The number, however, has now decreased, he said adding: "Considering the needs of the country's business community and the private sector and in order to develop and facilitate non-oil trade, the organization has been implementing new programs for increasing the number of commercial attachés, at least in the country's top trade partners."

Following the government's policies for increasing the country's trade with the neighbors over the past few years, the TPO, as the foreign trade representative of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, has been trying to send new commercial attachés to target markets every year.

In early December 2020, the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie had called on the government to choose the country's commercial attachés from among the private sector representatives.

Annual policy package for return of export revenues ratified

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's Supreme Council for Economic Coordination has ratified a package of provisions to clarify the regulations and procedures regarding the re-injection of non-oil export revenues earned during the Iranian calendar years of 1397-1400 (March 2018-March 2022) into the country's economy, an official with the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

According to Ehsan Ghamari, the general manager of TPO's Business Services Development Office, in preparing this package, the council has tried to remove obstacles in the way of the exporters for fulfilling their obligations, while the necessary support is also provided to them.



Central Bank of Iran (CBI) offers the country's exporters and importers foreign currency with official rates and expects them to return the equal of the currency that they have received into the country's economic cycle. The returned revenues are used to provide the foreign currency needed for importing raw materials, machinery, and equipment needed for producing export-oriented products.

According to Ghamari, having seven sections, the mentioned package covers regulations regarding the fulfillment of the exporters' obligations in the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019), the fulfillment of foreign exchange obligations in the years 1398 to 1400 (March 2019-March 2022), and the return of the revenues earned from the export of services.

The official noted that this is the first time that the council has prepared and approved the mentioned package at the beginning of the year to address the concerns of the country's exporters and to facilitate their activities.

Based on the CBI's previously approved regulations for the returning of the export revenues, exporters with annual exports of three to ten million euros were obliged to offer 70 percent of their revenues into the country's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) and those with exports of above 10 million euros per annum must offer 90 percent of the received foreign exchange at NIMA within a four-month period following their exports.

Representatives of the private sector, however, have repeatedly criticized CBI's strict policies in this regard, calling them counterproductive and the CBI on the other hand claims that the private sector is not fulfilling its commitments regarding the return of foreign currency earnings into the country's economy.

Industry Ministry's indigenization plan realized by 110%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The provinces of Tehran and Isfahan had the best performance in this regard, so that Tehran, with the indigenization of about \$1.1 billion worth of equipment and goods, recorded a brilliant performance.

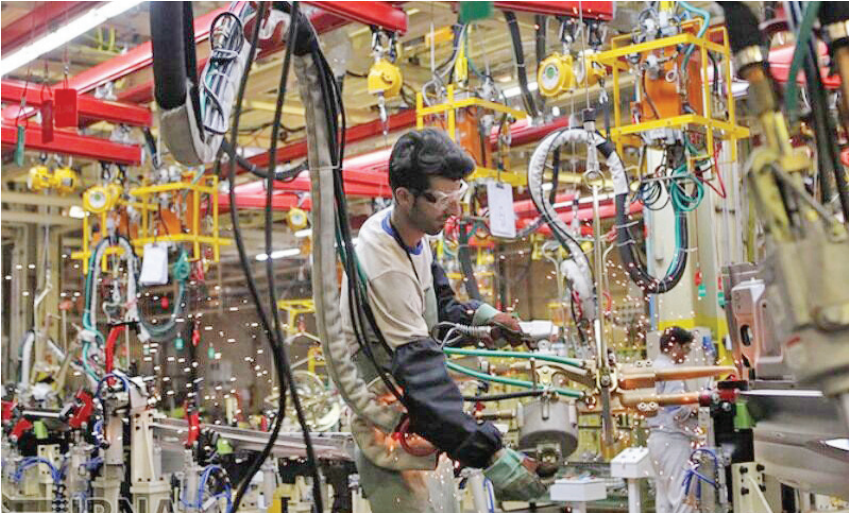
According to the official, the goal of the mentioned program was to indigenize the knowledge for the production of \$10 billion worth of commodities by the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2022).

The official noted that the Industry, Mining, and Trade ministry has it on the

agenda to indigenize \$3.4 billion worth of equipment in the current Iranian calendar year and the shares of various provinces in this regard will be determined in near future.

Earlier this week, Iran's Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki announced that relying on domestic production has saved Iran \$3.5 billion during the previous Iranian calendar year.

Since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry was tasked to pursue a program for indigenizing the knowledge for



the production of major industrial equipment.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said in October 2019 that government officials should ban the import of goods that are also produced domestically.

Back in 2019, when the mentioned program was started, the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister at the time Reza Rahmani had said that relying on domestic production was going to save \$10 billion for the country in two years.

India stresses fulfilling commitments for developing Chabahar

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Indian Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya has emphasized his country's determination for fulfilling its commitments for the development of Iran's southeastern Chabahar Port, IRNA reported.

Speaking in a meeting with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in India Ali Chegini, Mandaviya pointed to the good neighborliness and amicable relations between the two countries and welcomed the development of cooperation in the future, especially through Chabahar Port.

During the meeting, Chegini and Mandaviya discussed the capacities of cooperation between the two countries in the field of ports and maritime as well as measures taken to realize these opportunities, especially in Chabahar Port.

The Indian side also referred to the views of the participants in "Chabahar Day" event, which was held virtually in India on March 5, and stressed the significant role of the Iranian port as a suitable route for the transit of goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Touching upon the willingness of Indian companies



Iranian Ambassador to New Delhi Ali Chegini (R) and the Indian Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya.

for investing in Chabahar Port, the official expressed hope for paying a visit to this port with a delegation of Indian businessmen and entrepreneurs in the near future.

India is the only foreign country that is currently

Tehran housing market records an 85% annual growth

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The housing market in Tehran was the second-highest returning market in Iran among the country's four major markets in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) with 85 percent annual growth, ISNA reported.

As reported, the information obtained from Kilid website (which is a major platform for housing trades) indicated that the housing price index in Tehran grew by 85 percent in the previous year compared to its preceding year.

The highest monthly price increase of 12.5 percent occurred in the Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22-August 21, 2020), while the biggest monthly price decrease occurred in Azar (November 21-December 20, 2020) with a decline of 8.1 percent.

In the seventh month of the previous Iranian calendar year (September 22-October 21, 2020), the annual housing price index in Tehran grew by 121 percent, which was the highest increase compared to the same month of the preceding year.



Coronavirus has been reported to be a major factor affecting the housing prices in Iran as the pandemic has stoked concerns about losing one's savings and more people entered the housing market.

"People are turning to the housing market in order to protect their savings in the face of rising inflation. No one sees housing as a short-term consumer commodity. Even real consumers view purchasing a home as a long-term investment," says Mehdi Soltan-Mohammadi, a housing expert.

The average price of each square meter of residential properties in Tehran increased from 263 million rials (about \$6,262) in March 2020 to 530 million rials

(about \$12,620) in March 2021, which shows a 101 percent increase.

Housing prices in Tehran city also rose 78.9 percent in the eleventh Iranian calendar month (January 20 – February 18), as compared to the same month of the past year, according to the latest report released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

Fardin Yazdani, the planner of the Transport and Urban Development Ministry's Comprehensive Housing Initiative, however, believes that the housing prices in the Iranian market are not going to experience any sudden rise in the coming months and the market will stay stable. "Given the housing market situation and the trends in other parallel markets, there will be no significant change in the volume of housing transactions in the coming months," the portal of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Trade (TCCIMA) quoted Yazdani as saying in early March.

The housing market expert further explained that price jumps occur when the rate of price increases in a market

exceed the cost increase as well as the inflation rate, so apparently, no price jump is expected in the housing market in near future.

Excessive price increases have left the market with a kind of imbalance between purchasing power and the owner expectations considering the existing prices; therefore, the market has entered a relative recession and this slump in trading is expected to continue, Yazdani said.

He further referred to the liquidity growth and its impact on the housing market and said: "The liquidity growth will ultimately have its negative impacts on the asset market in the long run; as all the statistical data of the last two decades show, one of the most important and influential factors on the housing market has been the liquidity growth, which unfortunately continues to increase."

According to Parvaneh Aslani, director-general of Housing Economy Office of the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, home prices have registered a 200 percent growth over the past five years.

Commodities worth \$435m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 18,000 tons of commodities valued at \$435 million were traded at the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), showing 36 percent and seven percent growth in value and volume of trades, respectively, as compared to its previous week.

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and Public Relations Department, there were 602,142 tons of commodities traded on both open auction and mineral & industrial trading floors of the IME worth more than \$221 million.

On these two floors the IME sold 290,762 tons of steel, 2,540 tons of copper, 8,520 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 200 tons of cast iron and 300,000 tons of iron ore.

Furthermore, the exchange saw trade of 415,336 tons of commodities valued at almost \$215 million on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor.

Commodities purchased on this floor included 124,500 tons of vacuum bottom, 142,964 tons of bitumen, 74,529 tons of polymeric products, 38,105 tons of chemicals, 33,200 tons of lube cut, 2,592 tons of base oil, 150 tons of argon, 250 tons of insulation and 1,190 tons of sulfur.

There was also 1,038 tons of commodities traded



on the IME's side market.

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

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

As reported, over 33.39 million tons of goods valued at 3.12 quadrillion rials (about \$74.43 billion) were traded at the exchange's physical market, registering

27 percent and 127 percent of growth in terms of weight and value, respectively.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEDPIX falls 9,600 points on Saturday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 9,634 points to 1.233 million on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week.

Over 1.459 billion securities worth 15.208 trillion rials (about \$362 million) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.

The first market's index fell 8,752

points and the second market's index dropped 13,602 points.

TEDPIX fell 6,000 points, or 0.5 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.243 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Opal Kani Pars Mining and Processing Company, Social Security Investment

Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran Khodro Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, and National Iranian Copper Industry Company were the most widely followed indices.

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

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



Much of U.S. attitude toward Iran is irrational: American anthropologist

“Netanyahu and pro-Israel lobbyists’ hostility toward Iran is unrelenting”

➔ I believe Mr. Malley to be an honest broker. He is a lawyer and a political scientist and was one of the principal negotiators on the original JCPOA agreement in the Obama administration. His family background is Egyptian (his father) and American (his mother). His family has extensive diplomatic credentials. Everything I have heard from Mr. Malley has been realistic, honest, and forward thinking. Iranian officials are wary of American negotiators, but I believe that Mr. Malley genuinely wants to steer the United States and Iran to a mutually acceptable conclusion, and a return to the JCPOA.

Iran blames Israel for sabotage at the Natanz nuclear site. Why does Israel resort to these kinds of dangerous adventures?

The Netanyahu government has conducted these kinds of aggressive pre-emptive strikes against any nation they perceive to be an “existential threat.” They are very clear about this. They bombed supposed nuclear facilities in Iraq and in Syria in previous years. Their hostile attacks on Iran are completely consistent with their foreign defense policy. The mystery is how they are able to do this. I leave this to Iranian intelligence, but I note that during the American occupation of Iraq, Israel was able to infiltrate Mossad agents into Iran over the open Kurdish border - a border kept open by the Bush administration. As Iranians well know, there are thousands of native Persian speakers living in Israel and groups like the MEK committed to overthrowing the Iranian government are cooperating with them.

What does mostly shape American foreign policy, especially when it comes to Iran?

Much of the American attitude toward Iran is, in my estimation, irrational. It stems from the Iranian Revolution and the 444-day occupation of the American Embassy. There are people in Washington who will never forgive Iran for this event.

Secondly, Iran’s perceived hostility toward Israel is a major force in shaping American public opinion. I have written extensively about Hezbollah in Lebanon as a Shi’a defense force, but in the United States, Hezbollah is portrayed as an Iranian-supported attack force against Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu and pro-right-wing Israeli groups like the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) have tremendous power as lobbyists in Washington, and their hostility to Iran is unrelenting. During the Bush and Trump



administrations the United States also lobbied Saudi Arabia and the other (Persian) Gulf states with the idea that Iran was an active threat to their governments. Thus today, Iran is surrounded by nations that are fearful that if Iran gains economic and military power it will be a threat to them. I personally believe this to be untrue, but it is a widespread belief in the United States.

I have written extensively about this in many articles and a book: The “Great Satan” vs the “Mad Mullahs”: How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other. The result in the United States is that no politician can risk saying anything positive about Iran. If they do so, they will be immediately attacked by their political opponents. By contrast, any politician in the United States can attack Iran verbally and receive a positive reaction from many of their constituents. Iran has many friends in the United States, and people who travel to Iran return with overwhelmingly positive reports, but the numbers here are small. Let me also mention that there is a large Iranian immigrant community in the United States, many of whom are opposed to Iran’s current government. These groups have cooperated with neoconservative American politicians

in attacking Iran and Iran’s government.

Given Israeli sabotage in Iran’s nuclear facilities and U.S.- Israeli alliance, do you think Washington is a reliable partner in reviving the 2015 nuclear pact? We have a history of U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear deal. What guarantees should Iran seek in negotiations?

The United States has been an unreliable party in treaties and agreements for decades. Iran is right to be cautious. However, what can Iran do, really? The current sanctions situation is intolerable. For example, although there are exceptions to the sanctions for medicines and other humanitarian aid, they are effectively exceptions on paper. Because the United States controls world trade because of the dominance of the U.S. dollar as an exchange medium, it is difficult, if not impossible to purchase medical supplies, because the companies supplying these supplies are afraid to use international trade mechanisms to sell them. So, something really must be done.

Let me point out that I am in the firm belief that Iran does not intend to develop any nuclear weaponry. It would have to violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

“I firmly believe that Robert Malley and the U.S. negotiating team also do not believe seriously that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. However, they are using the Iranian uranium enrichment as a way to ‘sell’ the renewed negotiations to the U.S. citizenry, and U.S. politicians.”

Duante Wright, a senseless death due to family and police negligence

➔ He was outside of the car being handcuffed and then broke away and jumped back into the car over to side where his lady passenger was, in what seemed to be a position that he could kick at the arresting officers. This is the typical resisting arrest situation where the non-lethal taser is routinely used and has saved many lives.

News reports have only lightly covered that Mr. Wright had been arrested a year earlier for carrying a pistol without a license, and then did not show up to his court date, so he had two warrants out for his arrest for over a year. Where was his family then?

Although seemingly unemployed he was driving what looked like a new car, described as a recent gift from a family member, but he had an expired inspection sticker which a police patrol spotted and pulled him over.

So now we have a mistake that his family made. Someone gave him a car with an expired inspection sticker when they must have known he had warrants out for him, certainly his mother, and the person giving him the car.

The car donor remains unknown, and the mother has not spoken a word about knowledge of his warrants, which were not serious offenses. Duarte would have been fined

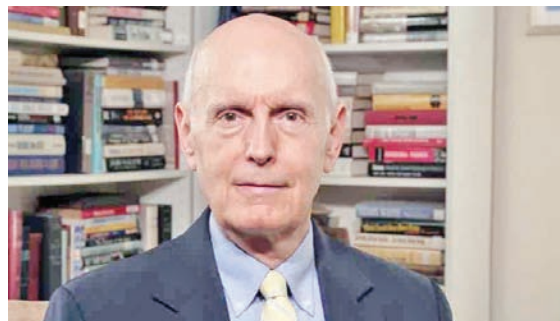
and maybe 30 days in jail for not showing up to trial.

The George Floyd trial triggered a passionate response in the black community, understandably so. The family quickly raised over a half million dollars in Go Fund Me donations, and with the George Floyd family getting a \$27 million wrongful death suit, the Wright family, the young man’s baby and unknown mother will be financially well provided for.

Nothing can undo the tragedy. All that can be done now is to try to learn how to avoid such events in the future. The police department has some embarrassing and painful issues to deal with for their responsibility, and I may be the only journalist to say the family also should deal with their responsibility for what happened.

This 20 year old man has a profile of a spoiled kid, high school dropout, zero work history, a baby out of wedlock, and friends that said he enjoyed ‘goofing off’. The family seems to have ignored helping him take care of his warrants, maybe feeling they were protecting him.

They made a big mistake. They must have known about his warrants, which him unemployable, so whoever gave him the car was an idiot, negligent, and also contributed



to his death.

To all the families out there covering for problem kids, do try to learn something from this. Covering for immature children, especially man-children, is hurting, and not helping them. It’s called misplaced kindness, where ‘tough love’ is needed instead. Jim W. Dean is Managing Editor of Veterans Today involved in operations, development, and writing. Jim comes from an old military family going back to the American Revolution.

UN should stop watching unlawful events: Falk

By Amir Muhammad Esmaeili

TEHRAN – Referring to the responsibility of Israel in the Natanz incident, Richard Falk said that the UN should stop watching “such unlawful events in a spirit of silent detachment, and take its own Charter responsibilities seriously.”

Natanz incident took place in a part of the electricity distribution network of Shahid Ahmadi Roshan facility in Natanz, a uranium enrichment center located in the city of the same name in Iran’s central province of Isfahan.

In his reaction to the incident that occurred in the Natanz nuclear site, Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Chief Ali Akbar Salehi said that Iran reserves the right to act against perpetrators of the Natanz incident.

Iran says it reserves the right to give the proper response to the Zionist regime’s act of sabotage in the nuclear facility at the right time and right place.

To know more about the issue, Mehr News Agency reached out to Richard An-



derson Falk, American professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University.

Following is the text of our interview with him:

In your view, who is behind the Natanz sabotage?

At this point, we have only the uncontested reports that Israel is responsible, having virtually confessed as much. Apparently, Israel used Mossad to carry out the attack on the Natanz underground nuclear enrichment facility on April 10, 2021. The attack came only a day after new more advanced centrifuges began operating at Natanz. The

attack took the form of a major explosion 65 meters below the ground.

What purposes are behind this sabotage operation?

On the basis of circumstantial evidence, contrary to the posture taken by Israel that the Natanz incident was directed at slowing Iran race to the nuclear weapons threshold, I believe the attack had as its primary purpose, a provocation designed to escalate tensions between Iran and Israel and encourage the U.S. to stick with the Trump approach to relations with Iran. More immediately, the attack is sure to complicate current efforts in Vienna to create the conditions leading to the resumption of U.S. participation in JCPOA through direct negotiations. As is widely understood, Iran has been demanding that its compliance with the JCPOA depends upon an American commitment to terminate the sanctions imposed during the Trump presidency in conjunction with its unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in 2018.

Iranian officials believe that the International Atomic Energy Agency

to do so and Iran relies on this Treaty to also exert leverage on the United States and other nations. But Iran has very few tools to leverage their advantage in the JCPOA talks. The Iranian government is using two of those tools--additional enrichment of uranium, and limiting of IAEA inspections. Iran is still fully compliant with the NPT, so it has not violated any actual international treaty, only the terms of the JCPOA, which is an agreement, not a treaty. The United States abandoned the agreement under Trump, and Iran has done what it could to exert its own options.

Let me also say that I firmly believe that Robert Malley and the U.S. negotiating team also do not believe seriously that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. However, they are using the Iranian uranium enrichment as a way to “sell” the renewed negotiations to the U.S. citizenry, and U.S. politicians. They keep saying: “We will never allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon.” And though they don’t really believe that Iran will ever do so, they can use this as a domestic justification for pursuing the talks to return to the JCPOA.

How do you assess the 25-year Iran-China partnership? Don’t you think that the U.S. has pushed Iran towards China by its sanctions and maximum pressure policy?

Yes, and Iran has embraced this agreement with China as yet another way to exert pressure on the United States. For many years Iran had a favorable balance of trade with China, due largely to the export of petroleum products. China has no particular reason to pay any attention to U.S. sanctions. They are being sanctioned by the United States themselves, so Iran is a natural partner for them. There is some danger in this arrangement for Iran. The Chinese are neither fools, nor benevolent benefactors. They always end up profiting at the expense of their partners. One needs only to look at their investments in Africa which largely turned out to be detrimental to the local economy. Iran can use this Chinese accord as a means to put pressure on the U.S. but must be very careful not to get “burned” by it in the end. The Iranian population is very wary of this. Iran has been exploited by foreign powers for centuries, and many Iranians see the Chinese as just the latest exploiters. One young hyperbolic Iranian wrote me and said: “I don’t want to be a slave in a Chinese work camp.” That is a gross exaggeration, but I think many Iranians have very serious concerns about this.

Russia, retaliating against Washington, asks 10 U.S. diplomats to leave

Russia asked 10 U.S. diplomats to leave the country in retaliation for Washington’s expulsion of the same number of Russian diplomats over alleged malign activity and suggested the U.S. ambassador return home for consultations.

The measures, part of a broader retaliatory package, were approved by President Vladimir Putin, as a response to an array of U.S. government sanctions imposed on Moscow a day earlier, including curbs to its sovereign debt market.

Though Moscow responded swiftly and with measures designed to hurt U.S. interests and shrink its diplomatic footprint, it left the door open for dialogue and did not kill off the idea, proposed by President Joe Biden, of a Putin-Biden summit.

It said it had options to hurt the United States economically and to shrink its diplomatic corps in Russia to just 300 people, but was holding fire for now, Reuters reported.

Russia-U.S. ties slumped to a new post-Cold War low last month after Biden said he thought Putin was a “killer” and Moscow recalled its ambassador to Washington for consultations. The envoy has still not returned almost a month later.

The Russian foreign ministry said John Sullivan, the U.S. ambassador to Russia, should return home for consultations too.

Washington said its own sanctions were payback for Russia interfering in last year’s U.S. election, cyber hacking, bullying Ukraine and other alleged malign actions.

Russia denies all the U.S. allegations.

Raul Castro confirms he is resigning as head of Cuba’s Communist party

Raul Castro has confirmed that he is resigning as head of Cuba’s Communist party, ending an era of formal leadership by him and his brother Fidel Castro that began with the 1959 revolution.

The 89-year-old Castro made the announcement on Friday in a speech at the opening of the eighth congress of the ruling party – the only one allowed on the island.

“I believe fervently in the strength and exemplary nature and comprehension of my compatriots, and as long as I live I will be ready with my foot in the stirrups to defend the fatherland, the revolution and socialism,” Castro told hundreds of party delegates gathered at a convention center in Havana.

He said he was retiring with the sense of having “fulfilled his mission and confident in the future of the fatherland”.

Castro did not say who he would endorse as his successor as first secretary of the Communist party.

Bahrain demonstrations continue for 20th consecutive night in solidarity with jailed activists

Bahrainis have rallied for the 20th night to reiterate their call for an immediate and unconditional release of political inmates amid concerns over the alarming situation of the country’s prisons in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

The demonstrations were held under the banner of “Friday of Prisoners’ Rage,” with participants denouncing Bahraini authorities’ mistreatment of imprisoned activists, and the miserable conditions of prisoners at detention centers across the tiny kingdom.

According to Press TV, the demonstrators carried Bahrain’s national flags as well as pictures of jailed political opponents, and chanted anti-regime slogans in several villages, including Karzakan, Karbabad, Hamala, Shahrakan, al-Dair, Karrana, Abu Saiba, Shakhura, Bu Quwah, North Sehla and Samaheej, as they called for the unconditional freedom of the prisoners.

Similar rallies were held in the villages of Dar Kulaib and Ma’ameer, where protestors held up the pictures of prominent opposition figure Zakia al-Barboursi, who was charged to five years in prison on February 6, 2019, and had her citizenship revoked in a politically-motivated case.

HRW decries U.S. resumption of arms sales to UAE

Human Rights Watch has decried the United States for the administration of President Joe Biden ‘backing out of its pledge’ and resuming arms sales to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is complicit in operations in Yemen that ‘amount to war crimes.’

In February, Biden called for “ending all American support for offensive operations in Yemen, including relevant arms sales,” but his administration on Tuesday decided to proceed with over \$23 billion in weapons sales to Abu Dhabi as it is close to completing a review of the Donald Trump-era weapons sales to the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

“Any re-examination of U.S. arms sales to the UAE should have determined that the risk they could be used to commit laws-of-war violations is high, especially given the evidence that the Saudi and UAE-led coalition have already used U.S. weapons in bombings unlawfully harming civilians and civilian sites in Yemen since the beginning of the war in 2015,” Afrah Nasser, a Yemen Researcher at HRW, said on Thursday.

“Many of those attacks may amount to war crimes.”

Resistance News

Turkey condemns Israeli raids on Gaza

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN — Turkey’s presidential spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, condemned the Israeli airstrikes on the besieged Gaza Strip.

Kalin posted on Twitter, “We strongly condemn Israel’s raids on Gaza during the Muslims’ holy month of Ramadan.”

He pointed out that Turkey confirms once again that it stands by the Palestinians against the Israeli oppression and calls on the Israeli authorities to stop these attacks immediately.

Meanwhile, Omer Celik, the ruling Justice and Development AK Party spokesman, also stated on Twitter, “We condemn this brutal attack that cannot be accepted by any humanitarian terms.” Celik noted that Israel has shown once again that it does not take into account any humanitarian values, stressing that Turkey will never forsake the Palestinians.

At dawn Friday and Saturday, Israeli warplanes launched a series of raids on the Gaza Strip. These raids caused considerable damage to property, without any injuries reported.

Some \$4.2m paid to corona-affected tourism, handicraft units in Zanjan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — More than 180 billion rials (about \$4.2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in loans has been paid to tourism and handicraft businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic in Zanjan province.

Amir Arjmand, the director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Zanjan said the financial facilities were paid within the framework of 547 projects to the businesses having 1,500 employed persons, IRNA reported on Saturday.

He also noted that 623 units were introduced to receive the facilities in the province, of which 76 cases were related to the field of tourism and 547 cases were related to the field of handicrafts.

“So far, the tourism units of the province that have succeeded in receiving corona facilities include travel and tourism services offices, eco-lodges, hotels and welfare, and intermediate service complexes.”



The official also said: “Identifying, training, paying facilities and supporting activists in the field of handicrafts and tourism facilities of the cities with the purpose of boosting production in this area and creating employment is our priority this year.”

Despite the difficult situations due to the coronavirus, the development of handicraft workshops, the development of tourism facilities and the increase in the issuance of licenses for handicrafts and travel services and ecotourism offices were considered last year.

The Iranian government paid 6.5 trillion rials (\$154.7 million) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic across the country in the past Iranian year 1399 (ended March 19), Tourism Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan has said.

Although the coronavirus outbreak has caused significant damage to the tourism industry, one of the ministry’s strategic plans is to diversify tourism products, which is expected to expand economic prosperity, he added.

Last August, the tourism minister said that the tourism sector of the Islamic Republic had suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The tourism ministry had approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million) to support corona-affected tourism businesses, covering as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector.

Tourism projects create over 1,700 jobs in West Azarbaijan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — In the past Iranian year (ended March 19), 1,767 jobs were created by investing in tourism-related projects in the northwestern West Azarbaijan province.

“The largest number of jobs is related to the issuance of licenses for handicraft producers, which has led to the employment of 549 persons,” Jalil Jabbari, director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of West Azarbaijan said, IRNA reported on Friday.



In the year ended in March 2020, some 312 job opportunities created by tourism development projects, he added.

Jabbari went on to say that 112 jobs have been created through projects implemented by the private sector and 30 jobs have been created through renovating national and world heritage sites in the province.

Part of the activities of the department in the past year has been focused on documenting, exploring, demarcating, layering and studying historical monuments, he said, adding, “this has created employment for 466 persons.”

Jabbari concluded that 30 jobs have been created in the accommodation and hospitality sector, six in the ecotourism accommodation sector, 34 in the travel services offices, and 35 in the handicraft production units.

36 properties, traditions in Ardebil added to national heritage list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of 36 movable, immovable, intangible, and natural sites in the northwestern Ardebil province have been registered on the national heritage list.

“Of these, seven immovable monuments include Jain Tower of Ardebil, Odolo Tomb of Bilesavar city, Zangi Castle of Namin City, Mansourieh Bath of Ardebil, Ardebil Barracks, Arbabi House (Morad Nejad), and Mostafavi House,” IRNA quoted Karim Lotfi, deputy director of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Ardebil, as saying on Saturday.

Referring to the registration of 10 movable properties in the list of national heritage in the last Iranian year (ended March 19), he said: “Baydaq (banner) No. 1 to 6 Aali Qapo, Baydaq No. 1 Tavar, Qosha Baydaq Tavar, Baydaq of Onchi Maidan Mosque are among these works.”



Lotfi referred to Chamchek Khatoon ritual ceremony of Kowsar city, Kildar Gildik Ashi cooking skill of Kowsar city, Khidir Nabi ritual ceremony of Khalkhal city, Qarqara ritual ceremony of Khalkhal city, the local game of Chiling Aghaji, cooking and preservation of Qorma food of Shahsavan nomads, the local game of Qaish Gotordi, the skill of cooking kheshil, the skill of preparing sweets of Qara Shiqalat, the skill of preparing and baking sweets of Roaste and the ceremony of Galin Chikhdi as 12 registered intangible works.

“The habitat of juniper trees in Sham-sabad village, old number one and two walnut trees of Guzlu Garmi, number one to three old walnut trees of Onar of Meshginshahr, fossil zone of landscapes of Meshginshahr city and the old walnut tree of Ardebil city are seven natural sites that were nationally registered last year.”

Discover 7,000-year-old underground troglodyte

→ 1 In other words, contrary to what can be achieved for the required space, in ordinary architecture by stacking materials, in the troglodyte architecture, these spaces are the result of digging parts of a mass and full volume.

For this reason, the creation of this work is called reduction architecture and in texts of the Architecture science it is called Troglodytic Architecture in Latin.

In the city of Faridan, and especially in its villages, because of the conditions provided by the available soil and land, troglodytes are found in abundance, and usually each tribe had a troglodyte. There are no reliable documents about the antiquity of these works, but according to the excavations and the opinion of archaeologists, the antiquity of these works, dates back to the Safavid period.

So far, about 500 troglodytes have been identified in the city of Faridan. Of these, four are unique troglodytes, which are the handicrafts of Damaneh city, the troglodytes of Moghan village, the troglodyte of Ghohk village and the troglodytes of Savaran village.

Troglodyte of Moghan village is located near Palas-jan river and inside Moghan village. Moghan village is located 20 km from Faridan and 140 km west of Isfahan.

One of the most important reasons for the significance of this place is its class architecture. In a way,

this troglodyte is built on 4 floors and has 9 entrances, of which 4 entrances have been accurately identified so far. The air conditioning of these four floors is done by a ventilation well that passes through all four floors.

The underground city has 9 entrances, the entrance for travelers and visitors starts from the second floor, from the entrance stairs we go down, a corridor with a narrow opening on the left can be seen and a little snake path turns to the corridor reaches the second floor where the space is brighter.

Inside the corridor, the second floor of the barns is visible. In the center of this corridor, there is a deep well that was used to supply drinking water to the residents and their livestock.

Also, in this part of the second-floor corridor, there is a staircase that leads the viewers to the third floor. In the middle of this corridor, there is an air conditioning well, which shows the ability of the traditional and masterful architects of that time.

To the right of the end of the second-floor hall is a room that, when we enter, at the end of the room we see a hole which is said to be connected to adjacent troglodytes.

Passing through this narrow corridor, we see the third floor, whose roof is different from the other floors, so that the roof of this floor is stronger than the roof of

the other floors. There is a water well at the end of this floor, also in the walls of this there is a small booth for storing weapons and ammunition.

At the end of the corridor of the second floor, which is larger than the other floors, there are small steps that lead the viewer to the first floor. In this floor, we see another of the nine entrances of this underground troglodyte, and then passing through the entrance, a place for residents to rest is seen.

The architecture of this floor is similar to other floors, but compared to other floors, it has slightly more left and right axis rooms. There is a corridor between this floor that leads to the fourth floor.

This underground troglodyte, which has an area of over 3,000 meters, has been built in the past to deal with natural disasters, as well as the invasion of enemies and the attack of predators. Due to the climatic conditions of the city of Faridan, which has very cold winters, the existence of these troglodytes was necessary to save the lives of the troglodyte makers and their livestock.

Another feature of this underground handicraft is the presence of cool summers and warm winters in its environment. Due to the construction of this troglodyte in the depths of the earth, its air temperature is always around 18 degrees, so in different periods, especially in winter, it did not need fuel for heat.

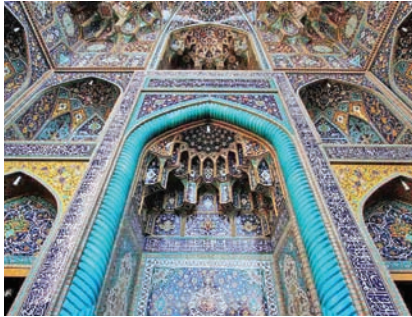
Goharshad Mosque: a 15th-century masterpiece of Islamic architecture

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The great mosque of Goharshad is a remarkable Islamic structure due to its age, architectural characteristics, and rich tile decorations. Made of brick and plaster in the 15th century, it used to be served as a free-standing mosque and currently serves as one of the prayer halls within the splendid Imam Reza Shrine Complex in Mashhad. On the margins of the main veranda’s entrance, there is an old inscription carved by calligrapher Baysunqur Mirza.

This comprehensive deed of endowment suggests that the mosque was built when Shahrokh, the Timurid king, was on the throne. The construction started in 1418 with the order of Queen Goharshad, the wife of Shahrokh. It took about 12 years to be completed under the supervision of capable Iranian architect Ghavameddin Shirazi by the use of the architectural and decorative manpower supplied from the Iranian cities of Shiraz and Isfahan.

Covering an area of 9410 square meters, the mosque consists of a large azure dome, two 40-meter minarets, four verandas, a courtyard with seven big bedchambers, and a large altar made of a stony dado and mosaic faience shell.

Standing in the courtyard one can recognize the ensemble’s exuberant color and



solidity among the tower-like minarets, merging with the outer corners of the portal screen extend to the ground together with the high foundation revetment of marble.

The entire court facade is faced with enamel brick and mosaic faience of the finest quality.

The entire surface of the minarets, walls, and the surrounding colonnades are decorated with fine mosaic and glazed tiles produced in a variety of colors including ultramarine, turquoise, white, clear green, yellow, light yellow, and ebony.

The lucid and vigorous patterns are artfully adapted to their decorative role, whether for eye-panels, or dome ornament

meant to be effective at a thousand feet.

This is accomplished by the energy of the faience floral patterns and brick geometrical schemes; by the emphatic rhythm of the arcades, open galleries, and deep recesses.

The northern veranda of the Goharshad Mosque or Dar al-Siyadeh, which has the shallowest veranda measuring 18x12 meters, was constructed with respect to the inscription on the portal in 1087 lunar hejira during the time of Suleiman Shah of the Safavid Dynasty.

The eastern veranda measuring 7x1 meters and the western one measuring 1x3 have rich tile work decorations. The mosque has a broad courtyard measuring 56x51 square meters which has been restricted by verandas and colonnades.

The mosaic faience of the courtyard is covered by dark stone and the rest of the surface is decorated with tiles of flora, artistic and arabesque designs.

The main dome of the building constitutes two dissociated onion-like layers with a short shaft and a hatchway diameter of 15 meters, circumference of 63, and thickness of 5.2 meters. The convex part of the dome’s shell is decorated with an inscription in Kufic script.

Moreover, the mosque has a public library

holding a large number of books. There is also a museum that represents various handicrafts including a collection of carpets and gold-woven works donated to the holy shrine of Imam Reza. Most of the gold-woven works date back to the 11th and 12th centuries. Among the precious artifacts of this museum are the handwriting inscriptions by Ali Reza Abbasi, the renowned Safavid calligrapher, and painter.

The Goharshad Mosque was renovated several times when Shah Abbas, the powerful Safavid king, was on the throne. He contributed a lot to the restoration, construction, and reconstruction of various religious and historic sites in the country. However, time marches on and the mosque was relatively ruined by a devastating earthquake that happened in 1803.

It was time for Qajars to undertake required renovations in the early 19th century.

Another disaster that happened by the 1911 Russian bombings resulted in severe damage to the mosque’s double-layered dome.

Distinctive in its beauty and architecture, the Goharshad Mosque is still standing firm to host millions of pilgrims every year and maintain its position as one of the most magnificent mosques of Central Asia.

Over 1,000 crafters in Kerman benefit from rural insurance

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The deputy director of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Kerman Province has said that 1,082 artisans working in the field of handicraft were introduced last Iranian year (ended March 19) to benefit from rural and nomadic insurance.

In an interview with IRNA on Saturday, Kazem Hosseinzadeh added that 604 crafters were also introduced to receive financial facilities from the banking sector amounting to 115 billion rials (about \$2.7 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

He went on to say that 93.5 billion rials were paid to handicraft artisans during the last year and jobs were created for 650 people, showing 108 percent rise year on year.

Most of the facilities granted to producers have played a supporting role in creating home-based businesses, and workshops that produced indigenous handicrafts of the province, he said, adding that a total of 6,045 persons received training courses.

The official underlined: “Today, in the field of international competition, the concept of commercialization and branding plays a prominent role in the field of export of goods and services, and the purpose of holding these workshops is to help marketing and



sell handicraft products in this province, which has received less attention in recent years.”

Referring to the revival of obsolete handicrafts during the past years, he said: “Last year, the field of cotton cloth weaving was revived in Sirjan city, and this field has a long history, which has been revived and revitalized by the artisans of this city.”

“Also, the ownership of the intellectual property rights of Khos weaving (home-made fabric) in Kah-

nooj city was received last year, which was a valuable measure in order to preserve and promote this indigenous art of Kerman province to create employment and sustainable development.”

Moreover, production licenses have been issued for 15 people and individual production licenses have been issued for 1,949 people and licenses for 1,496 handicraft artisans was extended, he added.

Referring to the introduction of handicrafts in Kerman province in the international arena, the official stated: “During the last year, the leading and indigenous handicrafts of the province were introduced virtually for the fans of three countries of Brunei, Indonesia and India, and arts such as embroidery, kilim, coppersmith, precious and semi-precious stones, knife making, pottery, and traditional blacksmithing were introduced to tourists and enthusiasts abroad in a webinar.

“The largest center for presenting handicrafts and home products will soon be established in Kerman with the joint cooperation of Kerman Municipality and Omid Entrepreneurship Fund with the aim of introducing more handicrafts in the province. At the moment, Kerman province has about 70,000 artists and craftsmen in 64 fields of handicrafts, most of whom work at home.”

\$714m earmarked to create jobs for the underprivileged

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A total

budget of 30 trillion rials (nearly \$714 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to create 60,000 jobs for the underprivileged individuals covered by the Welfare Organization, IRNA reported on Saturday.

“Our commitment last year (March 2020-March 2021) was to facilitate the employment of 56,716 people, while we were able to facilitate the employment of 59,304 people,” Zolfagar Yazdanmehr, deputy head of the Welfare Organization stated.

Some 1.6 million disabled people are covered by the Welfare Organization and about 240,000 women heads of households are also covered by this organization, while more than one million families receive pensions.

In Iran, there are 3 million women-headed households, out of a total of 22 million families, and most of them can be found



in less developed areas of the country, according to the UNDP office in Iran.

The Welfare Organization also will provide 35,169 residential units for the underprivileged families across the country over the current [Iranian calendar] year (started March 20).

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

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.

65% of nursing home residents vaccinated against COVID-19

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Some 65

percent of the elderly being kept in nursing homes have received coronavirus vaccine, Mostafa Seraj, an official with Welfare Organization has said.

Influenza vaccination has been done in all day-care centers under the Welfare Organization's control, and since early March, COVID-19 vaccines are being injected into these target groups, he added.

Currently, 900 nursing homes and care centers affiliated to the Welfare Organization are operating in the country, he noted.

Along with the vaccination of medical staff, 110,000 war veterans who were disabled during the Sacred Defense (the 1980-1988 war imposed by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein) and the elderly who are living in daycare centers will be vaccinated, Iranian Food and Drug Administration spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said on February 26.

According to the national vaccination document, vaccination against coronavirus started with priority given to health workers, vulnerable and high-risk groups, and then ordinary people will receive the vaccine.

Homegrown vaccines

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.



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; which is also going to be co-produced by the two countries.

The first shipment of the COVAX vaccine was also 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.

Selected cities, villages to become disabled-accessible

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Fifty-five

cities, five villages, and three metropolitan areas will be selected as pilots to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, Ebrahim Kazemi, head of the secretariat of the accessible-cities coordination headquarters has announced.

According to the national document on improving accessibility in cities for persons with disabilities, fifty-five cities, five villages, and three metropolitan areas should be considered as pilots until Iranian calendar year 1402 (March 2023-March 2024).

The national document includes a five-year action plan which analyzes the country's weaknesses and strengths being accessible for the people physically challenged, with the participation of representatives of the country's responsible bodies and NGOs.

The document describes strategies and plans to construct all buildings accessible to people with disabilities, and the country's headquarters for increasing the cities' accessibilities must follow up the strategies and regulations, he added.

Pointing out that one of the accessible cities in the country will be the capital of Tehran, Kazemi said that all cities are planned to be made accessible nationwide.

Yazd province was the first which improved accessibility the most, and it is planned to be introduced as the first Iranian accessible city, he highlighted.

Over 1.3m persons with disabilities live in Iran

Pirouz Hanachi, the mayor of Tehran,



said in December 2019 that over 1.3 million people suffering from disabilities live in the country and the figure rises by 50,000 every year.

Majlis [the Iranian parliament] approved both general outlines and details of a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities in January 2018. Development of disability-friendly cities, free transportation, health insurance, free education, job creation, housing loans, and fewer working hours are some of the articles of the law.

Since the approval of the law, education for students with disabilities has been provided in Azad universities, subsidies for patients with spinal cord injury as well as disability care centers have been increased, in addition to residential units to families having members with disabilities.

Asghar Shirzadi, chairman of the board of the Iranian association of the disabled, said in December 2020 that it still seems that the related organizations are not very willing to implement the law.

More than 5,000 tons of extraterrestrial dust fall to Earth each year

Every year, our planet encounters dust from comets and asteroids. These interplanetary dust particles pass through our atmosphere and give rise to shooting stars. Some of them reach the ground in the form of micrometeorites. An international program conducted for nearly 20 years by scientists from the CNRS, the Université Paris-Saclay and the National museum of natural history with the support of the French polar institute, has determined that 5,200 tons per year of these micrometeorites reach the ground. The study will be available in the journal Earth & Planetary Science Letters from April 15.

Micrometeorites have always fallen on our planet. These interplanetary dust particles from comets or asteroids are

particles of a few tenths to hundredths of a millimetre that have passed through the atmosphere and reached the Earth's surface.

To collect and analyse these micrometeorites, six expeditions led by CNRS researcher Jean Duprat have taken place over the last two decades near the Franco-Italian Concordia station (Dome C), which is located 1,100 kilometres off the coast of Adélie Land, in the heart of Antarctica. Dome C is an ideal collection spot due to the low accumulation rate of snow and the near absence of terrestrial dust.

These expeditions have collected enough extraterrestrial particles (ranging from 30 to 200 micrometres in size), to measure their annual flux, which corresponds to the mass

accreted on Earth per square metre per year.

If these results are applied to the whole planet, the total annual flux of micrometeorites represents 5,200 tons per year. This is the main source of extraterrestrial matter on our planet, far ahead of larger objects such as meteorites, for which the flux is less than ten tons per year.

A comparison of the flux of micrometeorites with theoretical predictions confirms that most micrometeorites probably come from comets (80%) and the rest from asteroids.

This is valuable information to better understand the role played by these interplanetary dust particles in supplying water and carbonaceous molecules on the young Earth.

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → چ

Non-repayable loans for e-bikes must increase: Tehran City Council chairman

While an important strategy to contain Tehran's air pollution is using clean energies, non-repayable loans to incentivize the owners to replace their motorcycles with electric ones is not sufficient and must increase, Mohsen Hashemi, Tehran City Council chairman, has said.

The scheme on encouraging the citizens to replace carbureted motorcycles with electric ones has started over a few years ago, however, the process has been evolving slowly, he said, adding, we hope to increase the use of electric motorbikes by allocating the necessary funds along with supporting the manufacturers next year (March 2019-March 2020). The handouts supporting the residents to purchase the motorbikes has been about 25 million rials (nearly \$600), which is not adequate anymore given the current economic condition, he stated, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

تاکید رئیس شورای شهر تهران بر افزایش وام بلاعوض خرید «موتورسیکلت‌های برقی»

محسن هاشمی رئیس شورای شهر تهران با اشاره به اینکه یکی از راه‌های کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران استفاده از انرژی‌های پاک است، گفت: رقمی که به عنوان وام بلاعوض خرید موتورسیکلت برقی برای تشویق دارندگان موتورسیکلت پرداخت شده است، پاسخگوی این شرایط نیست و این رقم باید افزایش یابد. وی تصریح کرد: جایگزینی کردن موتورسیکلت‌های برقی به جای موتورسیکلت‌های کاربراتوری از چند سال پیش آغاز شده است اما این کار با کندی پیش رفته است و امیدواریم در سال آینده با تخصیص اعتبارات لازم و حمایت از تولیدکنندگان، میزان استفاده از موتورسیکلت‌های برقی افزایش یابد.

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری تسنیم هاشمی با اشاره به میزان تسهیلاتی که تا به امروز به‌عنوان وام بلاعوض برای خرید موتورسیکلت برقی در نظر گرفته شده است، یادآور شد: با توجه به افزایش قیمت خرید موتورسیکلت برقی، رقم ۲ میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار تومان رقم قابل قبولی به‌عنوان وام بلاعوض نیست و باید این رقم افزایش یابد.

World Hemophilia Day in the shadow of coronavirus

→ 1 He further called on the government and the responsible bodies to consider the import of new medicine effective in the treatment of hemophilia, which reduces the treatment costs while increasing the quality of the patients' lives.

Hemophilia is a hereditary bleeding disorder, in which there is a partial or total lack of an essential blood clotting factor. It is a lifelong disorder, that results in excessive bleeding, and many times spontaneous bleeding, which, very often, is internal.

Hemophilia A is the most common form, referred to as classical hemophilia. It is the result of a deficiency in clotting factor 8, while hemophilia B (Christmas disease) is a deficiency in clotting factor 9. This illness is a sex-linked recessive disorder.

Every year, on April 17, numerous global landmarks light themselves up in red on World Hemophilia Day to help bring attention to those affected by inherited bleeding disorders.

People can also participate in the movement by changing their profile pictures to red color on social media platforms, primarily on Facebook, to spread awareness about Hemophilia.

Pandemic made 2020 ‘the year of the quiet ocean’, say scientists

The Covid-19 lockdown has produced the quietest year for the world's oceans in recent memory, according to a group of scientists working on a global map of underwater soundscapes.

Noise pollution from ship engines, trawling activities, oil platforms, subsea mining and other human sources declined significantly last spring, say the researchers, who are part of a collaborative network of 231 non-military hydrophones.

They believe the relative hush can provide valuable comparative data for an unplanned experiment in how sound affects whales, coral and other marine species.

Like light pollution on the land, human noise is a growing concern in the oceans because it has been proven to disrupt species that depend on sound for communication and navigation. Low-frequency signals can travel thousands of kilometres.

Studies in the north-east Pacific showed an increase of 3 decibels each decade in human-generated sounds below 100 hertz between the 1960s and early 2000s. By one reckoning, the volume of this audio pollution is now around the same level as the natural background noise of the ocean.

This faded substantially last year at the height of lockdown in March, April and May, starting – like Covid – around China and then spreading worldwide. The volume surged back to a new height in the summer as shipping companies rushed to make up for lost time. Sound levels have now stabilised close to the average for recent years.

Scientists have retrospectively declared 2020 “the year of the quiet ocean” and the data from this exceptional period will be published in the coming months in scientific journals.

“Be prepared for exciting results,” said Jesse Ausubel, the director of the Program for the Human Environment at the Rockefeller University. The oceans are unlikely to be as quiet as during April 2020 for many decades to come.

The softening of human sound was most evident in coastal areas and shipping lanes. Jennifer Miksis-Olds, the director of the Center for Acoustics Research and Education at the University of New Hampshire, said this created conditions for a “natural experiment. Since the Industrial Revolution, she said, human noise has masked the ambient sounds of wind, waves and ice and forced marine life to adapt in a similar way to customers in a noisy restaurant, who have to raise their voices or repeat themselves to be understood.

This is part of a bigger project. Ausubel is the founder of the International Quiet Ocean Experiment, a 10-year plan launched in 2015 to create a time series of measurements of ambient sound in many ocean locations. Part of the goal is create evidence to persuade ship operators, oil and gas facilities and jetski users to dampen their decibels for the sake of marine ecosystems.

“We'd like the word soundscape to become a lot better known. Sound is light in the oceans. It illuminates the ocean for many animals. They use it to communicate, to hunt, and can be harmed by noise at excess,” Ausubel said.

He and colleagues – including specialists at St Andrews – plan to expand the hydrophone network, particularly in the southern hemisphere, to more than 500 devices. Using modelling and data collaborations with shipping companies and other ocean users, they hope to produce a global map of ocean sound within the coming years. This should reveal important patterns, such as increases in noise along shipping lanes and near oilfields and windfarms, which could prove as important for ocean health and regulation as roadside air pollution monitoring, or water-contamination measurements near factories.

There is a long way to go. Currently, there are relatively detailed soundscapes of busy areas, such as the North Sea, and then piecemeal, one-off studies from other regions. Filling in the gaps will require a major effort to share data and make reporting consistent across time and place.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 160)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

آوردن – آور ۾ بردن	آینده ۾ گذشتہ	ایقامت
stay, residence	ایقامت کردن	آلکسی خیسماطولین، روسیہ
to stay, to reside	آلآن /al?ʔʌn/	بار
just now	برگشتن – برگرد /bargard/	برگشتن
time, occasion; luggage	تقریباً /taqri?ban/	چشم : با آن می‌بینیم
to return	almost	ایموند هرزیگ، انگلستان
almost	certainly /ha?man/	دستشویی
to be invited	lavatory	دعوت شدن
to drive	راندن – ران	زَن یان شَن، چین

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Iran's "Weekend" named best at ÉCU film festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN**—Iranian director Ario Motevagh's latest movie "Weekend" won the Best Non-European Independent Dramatic Short Award at the ÉCU — The European Independent Film Festival, which was held in Paris last week.



The film tells the story of Moniri and Kheradmand families, who are in the park for a picnic. But after finishing their meal, it is revealed that they are there for something else.

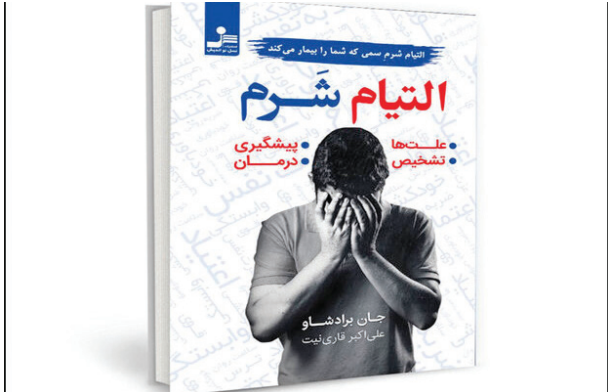
"Quatre Mains" by Lander Haverals from Belgium received the Best European Independent Film, while "Isolated People" by Jun Wang from China won the Best Non-European Independent Dramatic Feature.

ÉCU – The European Independent Film Festival is dedicated to the discovery and advancement of the very best independent filmmakers from around the world. The festival showcases films that demonstrate quality, innovation, and creativity in both form and content.

"Healing the Shame that Binds You" at Iranian bookstores

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN**—American educator, counselor, motivational speaker, and author John Bradshaw's popular book "Healing the Shame that Binds You" has recently been published by Nasl-e Noandish Publications in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Ali-Akbar Qariniat. In "Healing the Shame that Binds You", in an emotionally revealing way, Bradshaw shows us how toxic shame is the core problem in our compulsions, co-dependencies, addictions, and the drive to super-achieve. The result is a breakdown in the family system and our inability to go forward with our lives. We are bound by our shame.



Front cover of the Persian version of American author John Bradshaw's "Healing the Shame that Binds You".

Drawing from his 22 years of experience as a counselor, Bradshaw offers us the techniques to heal this shame. Using affirmations, visualizations, "inner voice" and "feeling" work plus guided meditations and other useful healing techniques, he releases the shame that binds us to the past.

This important book breaks new ground in the core issues of societal and personal breakdown, offering techniques of recovery vital to all of us.

Published in 1988, the book was the number-one New York Times Best Selling Book, with millions of copies sold and is still selling more than 13,000 copies every year.

Bradshaw's works are published in 42 languages. All over the world, corporations, institutions, treatment centers, therapists, and counselors use the theories and therapies presented in his workshops.

Photos of Gen. Soleimani mourners, former traceur from Iran among World Press Photo Awards' winners

→1 His injury when he fell was so severe that he could only blink and doctors said he wouldn't even be able to sit in a wheelchair. Saeid couldn't afford extended hospital treatment, but with the help of his family, he improvised rehabilitation equipment in his yard, and despite the doctors' predictions, was able to regain the mobility of his hands. Saeid regained more of his abilities and is now able to manage a wheelchair. He still likes to do things other people are afraid of.

Eslahi is a graduate of the University of Tehran with a master's degree in theater art and has been working as a photojournalist with Iranian news agencies since 2014.

Newsha Tavakolian's single photo shows women mourning during a commemoration service for Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani in Tehran on 4 January 2020 just one day after his assassination.

Tavakolian is a self-taught photojournalist and documentary photographer, working with Magnum Photos.

General Soleimani was assassinated along with a number of his comrades at Baghdad airport in a U.S. airstrike. Millions of Iranians



This photo by Newsha Tavakolian received third prize at the 2021 World Press Photo Awards in the General News category.

attended his funeral ceremonies. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called him a living martyr of the revolution before his assassination.

"The First Embrace", a single photo by

Danish photographer Mads Nissen, was named World Press Photo of the Year.

The photo shows 85-year-old Rosa Luzia Lunardi, who is embraced by a nurse, at Viva Bem care home, São Paulo, Brazil.

This was the first hug Rosa had received in five months. In March, care homes across the country had closed their doors to all visitors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing millions of Brazilians from visiting their elderly relatives. Carers were ordered to keep physical contact with the vulnerable to an absolute minimum. At Viva Bem, a simple invention, "The Hug Curtain", allowed people to hug each other once again.

"Habibi", photo series by Italian photographer Antonio Faccilongo was the winner of the World Press Photo Story of the Year award.

The photo series tells the story of Palestinian Nael al-Barghouthi, who was arrested in 1978 after an anti-Israel commando operation. He was released in 2011, married Iman Nafi, but re-arrested in 2014, and sentenced to life imprisonment. He has spent more than 40 years in prison—the longest-serving Palestinian inmate in Israeli jails. Meantime his wife keeps all her husband's clothes and belongings in place in their home in Kobar, near Ramallah, Palestine.

The winners of the World Press Photo of the Year and the World Press Photo Story of the Year awards receive prizes of €5,000 each.

Rotterdam film festival picks four Iranian films

"The Son" 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.

"Silence" tells the story of a modern playwright Nader, who follows in Mansour Hallaj's footsteps. Eleven hundred years earlier Hallaj said he is God and refused to answer the questions his statement provoked. Instead, he calmly awaited his execution. Now the tragic history repeats itself, once again accompanied by a curious crowd and an accepting silence.

The festival will also screen Shahram Mokri's "Careless Crime" and veteran Iranian filmmaker Masud Kimiai's acclaimed 1974 movie "The Deer" in Cinema Regained section.

"Careless Crime" goes back forty years to the uprising

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

"The Deer" is about Seyyed, who is a drug addict working small jobs in a theatre to pay for his heavy addiction. One day he is visited by an old friend, Ghodrat, for whom he was a role model and protector when they were teenagers.

Ghodrat has just been shot by the police when an armed robbery went wrong and is now looking for a safe place to lay low for a while. Hence, he comes to stay with the only person that he could trust, Seyyed. However, what he sees is miles away from the Seyyed that he knew and had in mind.

International Film Festival Rotterdam will be held in the Dutch city from June 2 to 6.

Sohrab Sepehri, great Persian poet and painter

Sohrab Sepehri (1928- 1980), was notable Iranian poet and painter. The third of five children, Sohrab was born to Mahjabin and Asad-Allah Sepehri. A painter, skilled calligrapher, tar maker and player, Sepehri's father worked for the telegraph and post office until he became paralyzed early in Sohrab's adolescence, leaving Sohrab's mother to take a position in the same office to support the family. A published poet, Sepehri's maternal grandmother ?amida Sepehri was wife to Malek al-Mowarrekhin and daughter to Mirza Mo?ammad Taqi Khan Lesan al-Molk Sepehr (1801/2-1880), the noted historian and author of Nasekh al-tawarikh.

For the first part of his life, Sepehri lived in their family home which had a large orchard, an experience he would later recount in his posthumously published book O?aq-e abi (The blue room, 2003). From 1933 to 1940, he attended the Khayyam School, where he started painting early on and wrote his first poem, a traditional quatrain, at the age of ten. In the summer of 1940 Sepehri took his first job at the Kashan Textile Factory and was then temporarily hired by the Ministry of Agriculture as a field worker to combat a plague of lotuses that had afflicted Kashan that year. In September 1943 Sepehri moved to Tehran to attend the Teachers' Training School. Graduating in June 1945, he returned to Kashan and in December found employment at Kashan's Office of Education, where he met the poet Moshfeq Kashani, who familiarized him with Persian prosody and encouraged him to write poetry. Never thinking highly of his poems from this time, Sepehri would later burn almost all of them. During this period, he studied the poetry of ?a?eb (1607-1675) and Bidel (1644-1721), both of whom would noticeably influence Sepehri's work. In summer 1947 he published his first book of poetry titled Dar kenar-e chaman ya aramgah-e ?eshq (Along the grass or love's resting place) with an introduction by Moshfeq Kashani.

In summer 1948, Sepehri met the poet and painter Manuchehr Sheybani (1923-1991) who introduced him to the works of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) and Nima Yushij (1897-1960), the first Persian modern poet successfully to break free of Persian classical prosody and its traditional imagery and conventions. According to Sepehri himself, the impact of this meeting changed his course: he quit his job, moved to Tehran, and enrolled at Tehran University's Faculty of Fine Arts.

While living in the capital, he worked for eight months for the then Anglo-Persian Oil Company and became more immersed in the works of Nima Yushij, as well as Freyerdun Tavallali (1919-1985), whose poetry was generally more lyrical than Nima's with more regular stanzaic patterns. His first poem in the manner of Nima, entitled "Bimar" (The patient), was published in September 1948 in the journal Jahan-e now. Founded in Tehran

in June 1946, this modern literary journal was edited by Morteza Keyvan (1923 -1954), an intellectual and political activist. Three other poems followed this one in 1949 in consecutive issues of Jam-e jam , another literary journal that folded after six issues.

In fall 1951, Sepehri published his first collection of Nimaic poetry titled Marg-e rang (The death of color). The early 1950s also marked the beginning of his friendship and acquaintance with other notable poets and painters, many of whom would become important figures in Persian modernism in their own right, namely Forugh Farrokhzad (1935-1967), Marko Gregorian (1925-2007, painter), Parviz Kalantari (b. 1931, painter), Bahman Mohasses (b. 1930, painter), Nader Naderpur (1929-2000, poet), Nosrat Rahmani (1929-2000, poet), Sadeq Tabrizi (b. 1938, painter), and Parviz Tanavoli (b. 1937, sculptor). Around this time, he also met Biyuk Mostafavi (1925-1992) a life-long friend to whom Sepehri later dedicated ?ajm-e sabz (The expanse of green, 1967).

In June 1953, Sepehri completed his bachelor's degree with honors, took a position as designer with the Organization of Public Health, and briefly collaborated with the art magazine Panja Khorus . This same year he participated in a number of group exhibits and published his third book of poetry, Zende-gi-e khabha (The life of dreams), with one of his own paintings on the cover .

In 1954 Sepehri took a position in the Office of Fine Arts and started to teach at the School of Fine Arts. During the course of the next two years Sepehri published translations of Japanese, French, and English poetry along with some of his own poems. In 1956 he participated in a group show at the Mehregan Club, and in August 1957 he traveled to Paris, where he enrolled in a lithography course at the Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts. His letters from this sojourn in Paris provide a candid vista into Sepehri's growing connection to nature and his painful awareness of people's disconnect from their surroundings, both themes characteristic of his later poems. On 14 April 1958 a number of his paintings were exhibited in the first Tehran Biennale. Four were selected together with works by other Persian artists and sent to the Venice Biennale. Later that spring Sepehri participated in the Venice Biennale (June 1958) before returning to Tehran, where he worked at the Ministry of Agriculture as a supervisor of audio-visual programs.

In January 1960 Sepehri briefly traveled to Tokyo before returning to Tehran to participate in the second Tehran Biennale, where he won the Grand Prize of Fine Arts. Very soon thereafter Homayun Sanatizada, director of the Franklin Book Program, purchased 150 of Sepehri's paintings. That August Sepehri used the proceeds from this sale to return to Tokyo for nearly six months to study woodblock printing with Unichi Hiratsuka (1895-1997),



one of the most noted names of the 20th century Japanese art. On his way home in late winter 1961 he traveled to India for the first of several visits, completing a journey that would leave a permanent mark in his creative life. Back in Tehran Sepehri had his first solo exhibit at Reza Abbasi Gallery and a group show at The Export Bank of Iran. In September he took a teaching position at the School of Decorative Arts, and gave up his post six months later. This would be his last government or public service position. This same year three of his poems appeared in an anthology of modern Persian poetry called Nemunaha-ye sher-e azad (Examples of free verse, Tehran, 1960). He also published his next book of poetry Avar-e aftar (The downpour of sunshine) with an introduction by himself. In May-June 1962 Sepehri had another solo exhibit at Farhang Gallery and published, along with a number of his own poems, translations of Chinese poetry in Sokhan , a prominent academic literary journal edited by Parviz Natel-Khanlari.

In 1963 Sepehri had six solo and group exhibitions. That same year Abby Weed Grey purchased a number of his paintings for the Ben and Abby Grey Foundation. These pieces were subsequently included in a show called Fourteen Contemporary Iranian Artists, which opened in Tehran before circulating in the United States for four years under the auspices of the Western Association of Art Museums. A selection of these and other paintings by Sepehri were later included in other exhibits funded by the Grey Foundation, namely Contemporary Art of India and Iran, which circulated throughout the United States by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Program from 1967 to 1969, and One World Through Art, at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds Gallery in 1972.

In 1964 the journal Musiqi (est. March 1939, Tehran), a prominent literary and cultural journal edited by Gholam-Hossein Minbashian, published Sepehri's translation of a Japanese play, and he designed the set for the production of the play Ahan (Iron) written and directed by Khojasta Kia. This same year he traveled extensively throughout India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In 1965 he had one group and one solo exhibition in the Borghese Gallery in Tehran, and published his poem "Seda-ye pa-ye ab" ("The Sound of Water's Footsteps") in Arash (est. November 1961, Tehran), a popular modern literary

journal of the 1960s edited by Sirus Tahbaz. The poem, which made a great impact at the time also, showed that the poet had at last found his own voice and style. The year also marked the beginning of Sepehri's decade-long work on his famous tree trunk painting series. For the next two years Sepehri continued his extensive travels, visiting Munich and London in 1965, and France, Spain, Holland, Italy, and Austria the following year. In 1966 he published "Mosafer" (Traveler), again in Arash, and translations of hymns from the Rig Veda.

The death of Forugh Farrokhzad in a car accident on 13 February 1967 had a profound impact on Iranian literati in general, and Sepehri in particular. As reflected in his famous elegy for her called "Doust" (Friend, ?ajm-e sabz, 1968), with her death Sepehri lost not only a close friend, but a fellow poet who shared much of his world vision and sensibilities, both emotional and poetic. In 1968 Sepehri published Ham-e sabz. Its release coincided with the opening of his exhibit at Seyhun Gallery in February 1968. In the next decade, he published few poems yet remained extremely active as a painter. In April and March 1969 he traveled to London, and then to Cagnes-sur-Mer in South of France where he exhibited his work at the town's International Art Festival. In late spring 1970, Sepehri went to New York and briefly stayed with his friend Manuchehr Yektai (b. 1921, painter and poet) in Long Island before moving to Manhattan in late August for eight months, during which time he had a group show in Bridgehampton. After a brief return to Tehran he was back in Manhattan by mid-May 1971 for a solo exhibit at Elain Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton, which opened on 10 July. He had an extended stay in Paris in 1974 and traveled to Greece and Egypt on his way back to Iran. In 1975 he participated in Tehran's First International Arts Festival, and later that year he received the Forugh Farrokhzad Poetry Award. From 16-21 June 1976 he participated in a group exhibit of modern Persian art at the International Art Fair in Basle, Switzerland. In winter 1977 Sepehri moved back to Kashan, and published Hasht ketab (Eight books), an almost complete collection of his published work since Marg-e rang with the addition of the new collection Ma hich, ma negah (We nothing but gaze).

In 1978 Sepehri had another solo exhibit at Seyhun Gallery. This would be his last exhibit before his untimely death. In fall 1979 Sohrab Sepehri was diagnosed with leukemia. He traveled to London with his sister Paridokht in December 1979, where they stayed until January 1980 for treatment, before returning to Tehran. On 2 April 1980 Sohrab was admitted to Tehran's Pars Hospital where he died at 6:00 PM on 21 April 1980.