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How govt. can really support stock market?

BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI
Unprecedented fluctuations in the Iranian stock market over the past few months have led shareholders, experts, and scholars to call for the government to increase its support for the market, some shareholders want the government to guarantee the return of their stocks, some believe providing infrastructure is the best way to help this market.

Some, on the other hand, believe that the government should not interfere in the stock market, saying the government's pre-ordered and unrealistic pricing of some state-owned shares is the main reason for the capital market's current downward trend.

Now the question is how the government can really support the stock market to help it get back on its trail?

So far, the government has repeatedly stated that the activities carried out in this market are not aimed at interfering in stock exchange transactions or directing the market, but are efforts for reducing the bubble created in the market and to prevent further decline of the stock market index.

Last week, in the 216th meeting of the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters, President Rouhani presented a report on the government's supportive measures for the stock market, saying: "This year, which has been named the year of supporting production and eliminating obstacles, the government is trying to remove obstacles to the growth of the capital market and will try to encourage people to enter this market with the necessary training and arrangements."

The government supports the capital market to direct liquidity into productive sectors and, in general, to de-centralize the economy and to help economic transparency, he said, adding that the government will continue to offer shares in state-owned enterprises and institutions in the capital market.

In its latest supportive decision, the government has approved to inject 240 trillion rials (about \$5.7 billion) of resources into the market in the form of bonds which most experts evaluate as a positive measure. It is said that these funds are gradually injected into the market and help increase the liquidity until new resources enter the market.

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Archaeological studies to start at Sassanid-era Sirvan

TEHRAN - The director general of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department of Ilam announced that the first season of archaeological studies at the historical city of Sirvan, which dates back to the Sassanid dynasty will begin in the coming days.

Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh stated: "This city, during its glorious days, was the capital of Masbaban province, one of the most important and prosperous cities of Iran in the Sassanid period and the presence of bridges, roads, yards, numerous castles and ancient settlements in this area, shows the importance of this city."

He also referred to other plans of Ilam in the current Iranian year (started on March 20) in the field of research and excavations and noted: "We have several more excavations for speculation for demarcation, which we predict will reach four excavations."

Referring to the plans of this province in the current Iranian year in the field of cultural herit-

age, Shanbehzadeh said: "We have 12 buildings that are being repaired alternately; such as the historical city of Seymareh, the historical city of Sirvan, Kanjan Cham Castle, Ashraf Al-Ashayer Castle, etc., which we are going to proceed the restoration this year as well."

The official went on to say: "We have handed over two buildings to the private sector, whose contracts will be concluded by the end of April; the building of the governor of Kahreh and also the castle of Kanjan Cham in Mehran city are two buildings that are to be used as residential and reception units." He also referred to the measures being taken in the field of museums in Ilam, and announced the start of constructing Ilam Archaeological Museum and said: "The land has been prepared and the perspectives and studies of this museum have been done and we hope its construction is started in the current year."

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Yemeni drone bombs King Khalid Air Base in Saudi Arabia: Army

The Yemeni army says it has carried out a new retaliatory drone strike on a major airbase in Saudi Arabia.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, who is the spokesman for Yemen's Armed Forces, said on Saturday a domestically-manufactured Qasf-2K (Striker-2K) combat drone targeted King Khalid Air Base with 'precision,' Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported.

The base is located near the city of Khamis Mushait in the southwestern province of Asir, which borders Yemen.

The general said a 'sensitive target' had been successfully bombed. He reiterated that the Riyadh regime's ongoing campaign and crippling blockade against Yemen gave the armed forces grounds for retaliation.

Yemen's Air Force conducted a number of operations against sensitive sites in Saudi Arabia last month, targeting the King Khalid Air Base

and Abha International Airport, situated in the same province.

Saudi Arabia, backed by the United States and other regional allies, launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 with the goal of reinstating a Riyadh-friendly government.

The war has killed hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed much of Yemen's infrastructure. Yemenis are facing malnutrition, hunger, and famine.

The popular Ansarullah movement, backed by the Yemeni Armed Forces and allied popular groups, has gone from strength to strength against the invaders, leaving them bogged down in the county.

With an all-out blockade on Yemen in place since the onset of the bloody war, the country is witnessing the world's worst humanitarian crisis, according to the UN.

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Russia-U.S. ties hit bottom under Biden presidency: researcher

BY MOHAMMAD ALI SAKI

TEHRAN - A Turkish academic says that U.S.-Russia relations have aggravated under the Biden administration due to Biden's remarks against Vladimir Putin.

"Under the new administration in the U.S., bilateral relations between Russia and U.S. hit bottom," Mehmet Cagatay Guler tells the Tehran Times.

"It was not going well either under the Trump

administration; however, it was certainly less tensioned," Cagatay Guler adds.

The Kremlin said on Friday it would expel 10 U.S. diplomats and blacklist eight current and former U.S. officials, including FBI Director Christopher A. Wray, Susan Rice, and John Bolton, in response to U.S. sanctions and expulsions.

The expected tit-for-tat measures by Russia deepen the strains between the two countries, but Moscow kept its response relatively proportional.

Russia's move came after Washington said it would expel 10 Russian diplomats and place sanctions on 32 Russia-related individuals and companies accused of interfering in the 2020 presidential election, spreading disinformation and other harmful actions. U.S. officials claim most of the diplomats on the expulsion list are intelligence officers working under diplomatic cover.

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Japanese professor calls Iran-China partnership epoch-making

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - A Japanese professor is of the view that the Iran-China partnership is "epoch-making" that shows the emergence of a non-U.S. economic axis in the world.

"It is literally epoch-making in the sense that it is a sign of the emergence of a non-U.S. economic bloc in the world," Kota Suechika tells the Tehran Times.

The professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Ritsumeikan University believes that "China's diplomatic initiative, backed by its rapid economic development, would bring about structural change to the world defined by the U.S. supremacy in the last 30 years."

On March 27, China signed a landmark 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership with Iran. The ground for such a partnership was laid during President Xi Jinping's visit to Iran in 2016. According to some reports, China plans to invest \$400 billion in Iran during 25 years.

The China-Iran partnership has been widely claimed as a game-changer in the region, and a cornerstone for China's footprint in West Asia.

Pointing to the partnership, the Japanese academic emphasizes that "the world is drifting from unipolar to multipolar."

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you assess President Biden's foreign policy when it comes to Iran in particular and West Asia in general? Do you see any real departure from the previous administration's policy?

The Biden administration is expected, inside and outside the U.S., to be "different" from the former - Trump administration - in political stances and policies, particularly diplomacy.

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National Army Day marked

TEHRAN - Iranian military units held a motorcade parade On Sunday in the capital Tehran to mark the National Army Day.

Various types of unmanned aerial vehicles, tanks, anti-aircraft batteries, advanced missile systems and different kinds of electronic warfare systems were put on display.

The National Army Day was also celebrated inside selected military bases in other parts of the country due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Army paraded the latest military achievements, including home-grown air defense systems.

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Army's weaponry, morality have never been better, says Rouhani

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN**— In a message on Sunday commemorating Army Day, President Hassan Rouhani emphasized his administration's efforts to equip the Army and other branches of the armed forces with modern arms amid the country's economic struggle.

"The morale of the military forces and their weaponry have never been better than they are today," the president said.

Rouhani also reminded the military forces that only by defending the principles of democracy, sovereignty, Islam, and republicanism the ideals of the Islamic Revolution can be fully realized.

In a message on Saturday commemorating Army Day, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei urged the Army to beef up its readiness as much as possible.

Envoy: Creating a 'candid picture' about lifting sanctions pursued in Vienna

Ambassador Kazem Gharibabadi says U.S. must list steps for sanctions removal to prove seriousness

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations says the United States must present a list of steps it would take to lift sanctions on Iran in order to prove its seriousness in the ongoing talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"What is being pursued and discussed in Vienna is presentation of a clear and transparent image concerning the removal of the sanctions," Kazem Gharibabadi told reporters on Sunday, IRNA reported.



"Identifying and listing the steps for the removal of sanctions are necessary in order to examine how serious Washington is in its claim about being willing to return to and fully honor the JCPOA, and to check whether it fits [Iran's] declared policy," he said, according to Press TV.

According to IRNA, Ambassador Gharibabadi also said, "What is being pursued in Vienna is creation of a candid picture about rescinding sanctions."

Gharibabadi, a diplomat who is currently engaged in the multilateral talks in Vienna, said Iranian negotiators act in accordance with the country's principles set out by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Iranian negotiators regularly report the results of the talks to senior officials for consideration and decision-making, the top diplomat added.

The talks began early this month and include the remaining parties to the JCPOA, namely Iran, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, while excluding the U.S., which unilaterally left the deal three years ago to give itself leeway to indulge in unprecedented rounds of sanctions on Tehran.

The new U.S. administration which has expressed willingness to rejoin the nuclear deal has also sent a team of negotiators to Vienna. However, there is no direct between the Iranian and U.S. negotiators. The U.S. team is residing in a nearby hotel.

The remaining members of the JCPOA and the EU, which acts as co-ordinator of the JCPOA Joint Commission, act as intermediaries.

Iran responded to the United States' "maximum pressure" campaign launched by Donald Trump in May 2018 by taking increasingly strong actions to advance its nuclear program – the latest of which was enriching uranium to purity of 60% – until the sanctions are rescinded.

Within the format of the JCPOA Joint Commission meetings, two expert-level working groups have been set up to lift the U.S. sanctions against Iran and coordinate Tehran's return to full compliance with its nuclear obligations under the deal.

Russia says working groups continue to work "on sanctions lifting"

Mikhail Ulyanov, the Russian ambassador to international organizations in Vienna, said on Sunday that the working groups continued to work "on sanctions lifting and nuclear issues in the afternoon yesterday and today."

"Their tasks are not easy but the process is going on," Ulyanov said via Twitter.

A day earlier, Abbas Araqchi, Iran's chief nuclear deal negotiator, said the participants reviewed the reports presented by the working groups and held "good discussions" about ways to lift sanctions.

"It seems that a new understanding is emerging and there is now common ground among all [the sides] on the final goal," Araqchi, who also serves as Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, said after the Saturday meeting.

Serbia says backs JCPOA, Iran's peaceful nuclear program

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Serbia's Foreign Minister Nikola Selakovic, who held talks with President Hassan Rouhani in Tehran on Sunday, said Belgrade had always supported and would continue to support the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – and Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Serbia, Selakovic added, remains determined to have friendly relations with Iran.

60% enrichment carried important political messages: Ghalibaf

'Responding to the terrorist attack on Natanz is a must and will be done at the right time,' asserts parliament speaker

→ 1 Calling the sabotage "nuclear terrorism", Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote a letter to the UN secretary general saying that this "war crime" must not go unpunished given its high risk of releasing dangerous materials.

"The deliberate targeting of a highly sensitive safeguarded nuclear facility—with the high risk of potential release of radioactive material—constitutes reckless criminal nuclear terrorism. Considering the possible indiscriminate human and environmental consequences of this international crime, those who planned, ordered, participated and carried out this cowardly act committed a grave war crime; one that must not go unpunished. Any power with knowledge of, or acquiescence in, this act must also be held accountable as an accomplice to this war crime," Zarif told the UN chief Antonio Guterres.

"We achieve whatever we want"

Ghalibaf said the recent nuclear steps proved that Iran can advance its policies.

"Today, we will achieve whatever we want with the grace of God Almighty in a short time," he pointed out.

He explained that enriching uranium to 60% purity is "within the framework of Article 1 of the Strategic Action Law."

Late last year the Iranian parliament approved a legislation tasking the government to remove bans on nuclear program in retaliation to illegal sanctions. At the time the parliament gave the Western parties some time to lift sanctions otherwise the legislation will go into effect step by step.

The parliament speaker went on to praise the efforts of Iranian scientists as they minimized the gap between decision-making and action in Iran's nuclear industry.

"This enrichment and this important achievement proved to our enemies that Iran's nuclear industry has become indigenous and that any ill-considered action and any pressure on the Iranian people's determination for scientific progress is completely ineffective and no one can stop the unstoppable progress of Islamic Iran," the senior parliamentarian pointed out.



"Decisive response"

He described the 60% enrichment as a "decisive response to the enemy's plan to weaken the country's upper hand in the negotiation process."

Currently, negotiations are under way in Vienna between Iran and the P4+1 group to possibly revive the 2015 nuclear agreement. The U.S. is also taking part in the negotiations through intermediaries as the Biden administration has expressed willingness to return to the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Ghalibaf stated that the "locks" on the nuclear industry were broken with the implementation of the law on Strategic Action for Lifting Sanctions and it gave power to the negotiating team to use this capacity to seek the goal of complete lifting of sanctions.

At such a situation "the enemy sabotaged Natanz to weaken Iran's negotiating position to empty the hands of the Iranian people, but the achievement of 60% enrichment showed to the other side that such actions, instead of considering them a threat to Iran's nuclear activities, in practice provide a unique opportunity to take higher steps towards the development of the nuclear industry," the parliament speaker noted.

Ghalibaf said over the past four decades the enemies have repeatedly experienced the repercussions of their intimidation against the Iranian nation and each time they faced more failure than before, adding the foes have clearly seen that any conspiracy makes the Iranian nation stronger.

The parliament speaker predicted such malign activities against Iran will continue but such acts will make the Iranian nation more determined.

"They will continue to carry out such actions, and feel sure that each time the Iranian people will become stronger and prouder."

The senior lawmaker added, "Responding to the terrorist attack on Natanz is a must and will be done at the right time."

"Enemy intends to prolong nuclear deal talks"

The parliament speaker also said, "Apart from terrorist acts, the enemy has also designed a strategy to prolong the negotiations so that it can completely suspend the entire political and economic structure of the country

without any results."

"Deception and pressure"

The speaker said by protracting the negotiations they want to impose their demands on Iran with a coordinated mix of "deception and pressure", and prevent the Iranian people from gaining access to a sanctions-free economy.

Iran has been insisting that all sanctions must be lifted in a verifiable manner.

An informed source has told Press TV that only the removal of all sanctions together against Iran will save the Vienna talks.

"It is not acceptable to Iran to divide the sanctions into removal, non-removable and negotiable," the source said on Saturday.

"In Tehran, nothing will be accepted but the removal of all sanctions, including those related to the JCPOA, reimposed and relabeled during the Trump era," the source added.

Ghalibaf also thanked the Iranian scientists who succeeded to enrich uranium to 60 percent in a short period of time, calling them a source of "honor" for the country.

"All the devotees of the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear industry who created this honor for the country," he said.

He also expressed hope that Iran's negotiators can protect the interests of the honorable people of Iran by "maintaining principles and succeed in achieving the goal of complete and tangible lifting of sanctions."

Iran's negotiating team is led by Abbas Araqchi, the deputy foreign minister for political affairs who helped craft the JCPOA in July 2015.

"Army is devoted to the nation"

Elsewhere in his remarks, the parliament speaker also congratulated the holy month of Ramadan to the Iranian nation, calling this month an opportunity to bring the hearts of the people together.

Ghalibaf, a former police chief, also congratulated Army Day, which fell on Sunday, April 18, to all the "brave men" in the Army.

"By devoting itself to the comfort, security and tranquility of the people, the Army has always achieved the slogan of the 'Army is devoted to the nation'," the senior MP remarked.

National Army Day marked

to electro-optic systems.

The Majid missile system used for intercepting and downing low-altitude targets as well as cruise missiles, and the Khatam artillery fire control system capable of striking various aerial targets at low altitudes were showcased as well.

The Damavand strategic and long-range system, which is used for downing various aircraft as well as cruise and ballistic missiles, was also put on display.

Speaking on the sidelines of the parade, Air Force Commander Aziz Nasirzadeh said the Iranian Army has undergone reforms in all sectors.

"Today, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a reformed army in all sectors, including structure, talent, tactic, and operational issues," Nasirzadeh explained.

Pointing to self-sufficiency as a unique characteristic

of the Army, he said, "Today, self-sufficiency has become institutionalized and needs (of the Army) are being produced inside the country."

Nasirzadeh also said the Air Force is ready to "respond to any threat" against the country by relying on talents, equipment and necessary training.

Ahead of the ceremonies, a message from Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was read out in which he extolled the contributions the Army has made to ensuring the security of the country.

The National Army Day was included in the Iranian calendar after a historic letter from the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, in 1979, in which he voiced his strong support for the Army and ordered its troops to hold nationwide parades on April 18 every year.

Ukraine trying to politicize accidental downing of passenger plane amid its tensions with Russia, says Iranian official

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — An informed official close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said on Sunday that Ukraine has tried to politicize the January 2020 accidental downing of its passenger plane near Tehran in an attempt to intensify pressure on Russia amid tensions between the two neighboring countries.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Nour News that Ukrainian officials had offered that Iran announce a technical glitch in its Russian-made Tor-M1

anti-aircraft defense system as the cause of the tragedy.

However, Iran rejected the proposal as it contrasted the reality and after which Ukraine pursued the path of politicizing the issue, he added, according to Press TV.

He also highlighted Iran's firm resolve to create transparency about all aspects of the incident, emphasizing that any politically-motivated attempt to exploit the downing is inhuman and contrary to legal and technical procedures.

IAEA confirms Iran has started enriching 60% uranium

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN**— The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Saturday that Iran has begun the process of enriching uranium to 60 percent fissile purity at the nuclear plant in Natanz, confirming earlier statements by Iranian officials.

"The Agency today verified that Iran had begun the production of UF6 enriched up to 60%... at the (above-ground) Natanz Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant," the UN nuclear watchdog said in a statement.

More information was given in a confidential IAEA report to member states obtained by Reuters.

"According to Iran's declaration to the Agency, the enrichment level of the UF6 produced at PFEP was 55.3% U-235. The Agency took a sample of the produced UF6 for destructive analysis to independently verify the enrichment level declared by Iran. The results of this analysis will be reported by the Agency in due course," the report said.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, confirmed the Reuters report, stating, "The level of UF6 enrichment produced by Iran has been 55.3%."

Iran decided to enrich uranium to a purity of 60% in response to an explosion that damaged some equipment at the larger, underground fuel enrichment plant at Natanz on April 11.



IAEA
International Atomic Energy Agency
Atoms for Peace and Development

The sabotage took place as Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – are holding technical talks in Vienna on a possible revitalization of the agreement as the new Biden administration has expressed willingness to rejoin the multilateral accord.

Israel has blamed Israel for the sabotage attack.

Multiple Israeli media outlets have quoted unnamed intelligence sources as saying Mossad spy service carried out the sabotage operation at the Natanz complex.

The Zionist regime's Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi said on April 16 that Israel will do "whatever it takes" to ensure that Iran does not acquire what he called "nuclear weapons".

Iran has called the sabotage "nuclear terrorism" and an instance of "war crime".

The 2015 deal had capped Iran's level of purity at 3.67% in return for the termination of economic and financial sanctions. However, former U.S. president Donald Trump abandoned

the JCPOA in violation of international law three years ago in line with his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

A year after Trump left the agreement and imposed the harshest ever sanctions in history on the Islamic Republic, the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) issued a statement saying Iran's "strategic patience" is over and started to gradually reduce Iran's commitment to the JCPOA.

Iran had in recent months already raised enrichment to 20% purity. It was done in accordance to a parliamentary ratification which obliged the government to step up nuclear activities as the West is refusing to lift sanctions on Iran.

"We are producing about 9 grams of 60% enriched uranium an hour," Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said on Friday.

"But we have to work on arrangements ... to drop it to 5 grams per hour. But then we will simultaneously produce 20% (uranium)," said Salehi, a nuclear physicist.

Earlier, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Iranian scientists had successfully started enriching 60% uranium.

"The will of the Iranian nation makes miracles that thwart any conspiracy," Qalibaf wrote on Twitter.

As a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran's nuclear activities are under the supervision of the United Nations nuclear watchdog.

Iran, P4+1 agree to continue talks as new understanding emerges

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran and the remaining parties to a 2015 nuclear deal agreed to continue nuclear deal talks as a top Iranian nuclear negotiator announced that the talks are leading to a new understanding.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who is leading Iran's negotiating team in the Vienna nuclear deal talk, said on Sunday morning that negotiations between Iran and the P4+1 group were to continue on Sunday in various formats and levels.

"Expert-level working groups will also continue to discuss the two areas of sanctions relief and nuclear issues," Araghchi said on his Telegram channel.

According to the chief Iranian negotiator, bilateral and multilateral meetings were held on Saturday between Iran and the delegations of the P4+1. Araghchi said he held three meetings with Enrique Mora, the European Union's coordinator and the chairman of the JCPOA Joint Commission.

Diplomats from Iran and the P4+1 - China, Russia, France, the UK plus Germany - are in the Austrian capital of Vienna to discuss ways of reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). On Saturday, the latest meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission was held.

In addition to the JCPOA Joint Commission, Araghchi also met with the heads of the delegations of the three European signatories to the Iran nuclear deal.

In the meantime, the expert groups continued their discussions. They briefed the Joint Commission on the results of their talks. Araghchi said the parties agreed to continue talks at the expert-level groups and convene a joint commission if needed.

Following the Saturday meetings, Araghchi said the talks are moving in the right direction.

"After days of intensive talks, it appears that we are now on the right track. But difficult way to go. Too soon to predict the result. Expert groups continue their hard work of clarifying important questions," he said on Twitter.

Earlier on Saturday, 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.

He said after almost three days of the joint commission's work, they have formed a commission once again to examine the progress of the discussions that have taken place so far.

The top negotiator noted that not only in the field of lifting sanctions but also in the nuclear issue they reviewed the working groups' report, adding that good discussions took place within the JCPOA Joint Commission.

He further noted that it seems a new understanding is being formed and there is an agreement on the ultimate goal among all parties, adding that the path that needs to be taken is a path that is now somewhat more well-known, according to the official website of the Iranian government.

The path will not be easy and there are some disagreements, he highlighted.

He stated that there are sometimes serious disagreements that need to be modified during the next negotiations.

As Iran has said many times, the Islamic Republic is not interested in long-term negotiations at all and as much as needed, discussions should be considered and negotiations would continue, Araghchi reiterated.

He went on to say that the negotiations have reached a stage where the

parties can start working on a common text and start writing the text at least in areas where there is a sharing of opinion.

Araghchi said that the Iranian delegation has prepared its desired text both in the nuclear field as well as sanctions lifting issue and has presented it to all other parties.

He further noted that the texts they have introduced can be the basis of negotiations and reach a final agreement.

The final agreement will not necessarily be the basis of their texts, but these texts will be the basis of negotiations, he underscored.

He highlighted that within the framework of these texts, they think that reaching an agreement will meet Iran's demands and the other party's demands for Iran's return to its commitments.

The path is clear and the time has come to start writing the text at least on shared opinions, he said.

On the other hand, Mora also hailed progress in the Vienna talks.

"After intensive talks, we have taken stock in the Joint Commission. Progress has been made in a far from easy task. We need now more detailed work. Key that everyone is committed to the same objectives: US rejoining the JCPOA and its full implementation," Mora said on Twitter.

Russia's representative to the international organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov, who is representing Russia in the Vienna talks, said the parties agreed to continue talks in order to avoid wasting time.

"The Joint Commission instructed expert-level working groups on U.S. sanctions lifting and nuclear issues to continue their activities on Saturday afternoon, Sunday and next week in order not to waste time and to make further progress in the negotiations on JCPOA restoration," Ulyanov tweeted.

The Chinese envoy to the talks offered more details about the continuation of the talks. He said the parties decided to pick up their pace in the coming days.

"All parties have agreed to further pick up their pace in subsequent days by engaging [in] more extensive, substantive work on sanctions-lifting as well as other relevant issues," Wang Qun told reporters.

Iran has called on the U.S. to lift all the sanctions that were imposed, reimposed, or relabeled by the Trump administration. "The United States must lift its anti-Iran sanctions altogether and in one step if it truly seeks to rejoin the 2015 nuclear agreement," Araghchi said two weeks ago.

However, the U.S. has shown little interest in removing the sanctions all at once. Iran made it clear that it will not accept any division of sanctions and that all sanctions must be lifted.

"Iran will not accept a division of the Trump-era sanctions into JCPOA-related [ones] and [those] unrelated to the JCPOA," a senior Iranian official told Press TV nearly two weeks ago.

"For Iran, all the American sanctions — including the Obama-era sanctions, the sanctions restored by Trump and the additional sanctions in the Trump-era labeled as non-nuclear — must be terminated," the official added. "Iran does not accept and recognize negotiations on a division of the sanctions," the official emphasized. "Iran's condition for returning to its JCPOA commitments is the lasting removal of all the sanctions."

The official said America and Europe must guarantee that the sanctions will not be restored on Iran again after removal.

The official further emphasized that "a short period of time" will not be enough to verify the termination of the sanctions.

MBS gamble

Saudi Arabia denies reports of talks with Iran in the latest effort to spurn de-escalation dialogue

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In the midst of a diplomatic war of words between Iran and the heads of two Arab organizations, Western media outlets claimed that Iran and Saudi Arabia have quietly begun talks in Baghdad to repair their relations, a claim that was rejected as untrue by sources close to both Tehran and Riyadh.

The Financial Times reported on Sunday that Saudi and Iranian officials held the first round of their bilateral talks in Baghdad on April 9 and the next round is scheduled to take place next week. Citing regional officials, the newspaper said the Yemeni Ansarallah's attacks on Saudi Arabia were discussed in the negotiations.

Reuters confirmed the Saudi-Iranian talks, saying they touched on Lebanon, which is facing a political vacuum amid a dire financial crisis.

Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with Iran in January 2016 after Iranian protesters, enraged by the Saudi execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimer al-Nimr, stormed its embassy in Tehran. Since then, Saudi Arabia have struck a tough tone on Iran and strongly supported former U.S. President Donald Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

The reported talks in Baghdad are thought to be the first serious contact between Tehran and Riyadh since 2016.

Saudi Arabia denied the talks. Citing a senior Saudi official, the Saudi-owned Arab News said no direct talks have been held with Iran.

The Beirut-based news channel Al Mayadeen also rejected that Saudi Arabia and Iran held talks in Iraq. Citing an Iranian source, the news channel said the

reports of Saudi-Iranian talks were untrue. However, an Iranian official told Reuters that the talks were "a low-level meeting to explore whether there might be a way to ease ongoing tensions in the region."

The talks are not surprising, at least from the Iranian standpoint; and the Saudi rush to deny the reports is also understandable. Iran has long been calling for talks with Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries as well. But the Iranian calls often fell on deaf ears in Riyadh largely because the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad bin Salman had been betting that the Trump pressures on Iran would make Tehran blink first and acquiesce to his demands, which center on allegations of Iranian interference in something none of Iran's business, i.e. the Arab world.

The Saudi crown prince, also known as MBS, brushed away all of Iran's offers of compromise over the past few years, adopting a wait-and-see approach toward Iran to see how Trump's pressures would end with Iran. These pressures failed to bring Iran to its knees, something that even Biden officials, the current allies of MBS, openly admit.

Regardless of MBS's close relations with the Trump administration, Iran continued to extend its hand to the Saudis after Trump lost the U.S. presidential election in November. Earlier this year, Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, expressed Iran's readiness to patch up relations with Saudi Arabia. He pointed out that if Riyadh seriously puts policy reforms on its agenda and concludes that the solution to problems lies in "regional cooperation," Iran will be the first country to welcome these reforms.

"We have always underlined that regional countries should arrive at a common understanding regarding

the regional problems," Khatibzadeh stated, noting that such understanding would help establish a "security mechanism" that could be used to govern the region.

"The Saudis may have some concerns, and by the way, we emphasize that we need to talk about these concerns," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

But the Saudis refused to seize on Iran's offers of cooperation. And now that Iran has resumed nuclear talks with the remaining parties to a 2015 nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - the Saudis are busy asking the negotiating partners of Iran to give them a seat at the negotiations room. They do so while Iran, as well as Russia, called on them to resolve outstanding regional issues separately from the JCPOA negotiations.

Nayef Al-Hajraf, the secretary general of the (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council, has recently sent a letter to the negotiating parties in Vienna — China, Russia, France, the U.S., UK, and Germany -, saying that 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. In addition, Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul Gheit issued a statement calling for a similar thing. Khatibzadeh strongly rejected the "interventionist" remarks of Al-Hajraf and Abul Gheit.

"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.



Rouhani congratulates Zimbabwe on Independence Day

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sent a message to his Zimbabwean counterpart to offer him and the people of the country congratulations on the Independence Day of the Republic of Zimbabwe, according to the Iranian presidency.

"I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to Your Excellency

and the hero people of your country on the Independence Day of the Republic of Zimbabwe, which is the fruit of anti-colonial and anti-racist movement," Rouhani wrote to President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

He added, "I am confident that four decades after independence, the people of Zimbabwe will be able to overcome the

problems and consequences of unilateral U.S. sanctions with resistance and perseverance, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will not withhold any assistance in this direction."

"I wish Your Excellency health and success and the people of the Republic of Zimbabwe prosperity and felicity," the Iranian president concluded.

SPORTS

Iran freestyle wrestling team crowned Asian champions

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran freestyle team claimed the title of the Asian Wrestling Championships in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Sunday.

The Iranian wrestlers claimed three gold, three silver and two bronze medals.

Hassan Yazdani won a gold medal after beating Deepak Punia from India 10-0 in the final bout of 86kg.

At the 92kg, Kamran Ghasempour defeated Tsogtgerel Munkhbaatar from Mongolia 10-0 in the final.

At the 97kg, Ali Shabaniengar was totally dominant in the weight class, steamrolling 2020 bronze medalist Alisher Yergali from Kazakhstan 12-2 in the final for his third technical fall in three matches.

Alireza Sarlak won a silver after he was defeated against India's Ravi Kumar at 57kg.

Mostafa Hosseinkhani lost to Nurkozha Kaipanov from Kazakhstan at the 74kg final.

At the 79kg final bout, Ali Savadkouhi lost to Korean Byungmin Gong 5-3.

Morteza Ghiasi Cheka added a bronze medal to Iran's tally with victory by fall over Nodir Rakhimov from Uzbekistan at the 65kg.

And Amin Taheri claimed a bronze medal at the 125kg after beating his Korean rival.

ACL Group E: Persepolis beat Al Rayyan

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's Persepolis football team came from behind to beat Al Rayyan of Qatar 3-1 in Group E of the 2021 AFC Champions League.

In the match held at the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Saturday, Naif Al Hadhrami rose highest to head home Abdelaziz Hatim's free-kick into the bottom right of the Persepolis net in the 19th minute.

Persepolis started the second half with heightened intensity and their determination paid off two minutes into the restart when Kamal Kamyabinia headed home the equalizer off Mehdi Torabi's corner.

Al Rayyan found themselves 2-1 down two minutes later as Siamak Nemati weaved his way down the right flank before finding Shahryar Moghanlou, who volleyed past Fahad Younis.

Moghanlou scored his second in the 57th minute, finding space inside the six yard box to collect Omid Alishah's pass before slamming the ball into an unguarded goalmouth.

Persepolis will now turn their focus to FC Goa on Tuesday while Al Rayyan will seek their first win against Al Wahda.

Persepolis, last year's ACL finalists, started the campaign with a 1-0 win over the UAE's Al Wahda.

Earlier on the day, India's Goa and Al Wahda played out a goalless draw.

Mehdi Taremi voted AFC Int'l Player of Week

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian striker Mehdi Taremi was voted as the AFC International Player of the Week.

The Porto forward won the poll with 82 percent.

Taremi has had Asian fans talking for much of the last two years, but he had the attention of the world on Tuesday, scoring a majestic bicycle kick in the final moments of Porto's UEFA Champions League quarter-final against Chelsea.

His second goal in four days, Taremi's wondergoal sadly couldn't keep Porto in the competition.

Sardar Azmoun came second with 11 percent.

Maritimo players Ali Alipour and Amir Abedzadeh were also on the list.

ACL Group B: Tractor, Sharjah share the spoils

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Tractor of Iran and the UAE's Sharjah football teams shared in a 0-0 draw in Group B of the 2021 AFC Champions League.

Tractor went into the game determined to pick up their first win of the campaign after a thrilling opening day draw against Pakhtakor, while Sharjah, who had already beaten Iraq's Air Force Club in their opener, looked to consolidate their position on top of the group but neither side could provide the cutting edge throughout the 90 minutes.

The draw leaves both sides exactly where they were - Sharjah atop Group B, now on four points while Tractor sit in third place on two points, with the latter facing Air Force Club next while the former face Uzbek side Pakhtakor.

Pashazadeh named Chooka Talesh coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Pashazadeh has been named as new head coach of Iran's First Division football team Chooka Talesh on Sunday.

He was appointed as the team's head coach a month after stepping down from coaching Iran Professional League team Machine Sazi.

The 47-year-old coach will lead the team until the end of the season.

Pashazadeh started his playing career at Esteghlal in 1992 and joined Bayer Leverkusen six years later.

He has started his coaching career in Admir Wacker II in 2006 and has also headed Rah Ahan, Parseh, Shahr-dari Tabriz, Aluminum Arak, Nassaji Mazandaran and Shahr-dari Tabriz.

ACL Group D: Foolad edge past Al Wehdat

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Foolad of Iran secured their first AFC Champions League group stage win in six years, defeating Jordan's Al Wehdat 1-0 in their Group D clash at King Fahd International Stadium on Saturday.

Foolad Brazilian forward Chimba scored a goal from the penalty spot before the halftime.

Chimba netted his fourth goal in eight days to extend a successful run which began with last Saturday's playoff victory over Al Ain.

The win sends the Iranian side into second in the group behind Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr, who they will face on Tuesday, while Al Wehdat remain without a goal after two matches in their first ACL campaign.

Tehran to host EAEU exclusive expo in mid-May

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said an exclusive exhibition of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states’ economic capabilities is planned to be held in Tehran on May 17.

According to Hamid Zadboum, the mentioned exhibition will be held if the coronavirus pandemic conditions get better in the country, the TPO portal reported.

Zadboum pointed to the Eurasia exhibition as a platform for representing the two sides’ export capacities, saying: “Hosting this exhibition is a great opportunity that can facilitate negotiations to achieve free trade with the union.”



Referring to the importance of the Eurasian exclusive exhibition for the Islamic Republic, the TPO head noted that official invitations have been sent to Eurasian authorities to attend this major event.

“Although the volume of trade between Iran and the five Eurasian Economic Union member states is not compatible with the two sides’ existing capacities, Iran’s trade with Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus is constantly improving and we have joint economic committees with all these countries,” he said.

It is necessary for Iranian and Eurasian traders to become more familiar with the capacities and benefits of cooperation in the context of free trade.

Underlining the significance of the Eurasian Union and its role in world trade, Zadboum said: “The union consists of five countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus, which come together with different capabilities and capacities; of these five countries, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Russia are of special importance for Iran due to their neighborhood.”

“The annual global trade of these five countries is more than \$850 billion, and economic and trade relations with this union, which also has a good political infrastructure, can be of great importance for the development of the country’s economic relations in the region,” the TPO head stressed.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a free trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members.

The free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides.

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran’s exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic’s plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

Exports from West Azarbaijan rise 62%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from West Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of Iran, increased 62 percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to an official with the customs department of the province.

Tohid Azarbad announced that commodities worth \$2.997 billion were exported from the province in the past year.

The official also said that the weight of exported items indicates just a one-percent growth year on year.

He further put the value of imports to the province at over \$719 million and said the imports fell 15 percent in terms of worth, and dropped 37 percent in terms of weight.

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



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

Iran’s non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, and that of import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

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

He further named Iran’s top sources of non-oil imports in the said time, as China with exporting \$9.7 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic, the UAE with \$9.6 billion, Turkey with \$4.3 billion, India with \$2.1 billion, and Germany with \$1.8 billion, respectively, and mentioned corn, cellphone, rice, oil meal and oil seeds, wheat, and raw oil as the major imported items.

Annual aluminum ingot production up 61%

→ 1 IMIDRO data show that among the country’s top producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance in the previous year producing 185,000 tons of aluminum ingots.

Aluminum ingot production in the country reached 41,000 tons in the last month of the previous year (February 19-March 20), registering a 38 percent rise compared to the 30,000 tons in the preceding year’s same period.

Annual production of the aluminum ingot in the country is planned to increase

63 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

In last April, during the inauguration ceremony of Iran’s biggest aluminum production complex (in the central Fars province), the former industry minister said the country’s aluminum production is expected to be doubled with that unit going operational.

The official put the value of the Iranian mining industry’s production at about \$22 billion, saying that the country is relatively self-sufficient in minerals and a great deal is also exported every year.



He went on underlying the country’s capacities in the sector, saying that Iran is ranked 18th among the world’s top aluminum producers, and with this new plant going operational the country will climb four places

to stand at 14th place.”

Iran plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

How can govt. really support stock market?

→ 1 It has been said that these resources that enter the market will also motivate shareholders, and therefore real investors will be encouraged to invest in the market.

In response to Rouhani’s remarks, stock market expert Amirali Amirbaqeri, believes that letting the supply and demand to determine the prices in the market is the most important support that the government can have for the capital market.

“The situation must develop in such a way that the country’s economy can continue to live in real life based on the real forces of supply and demand,” Amirbaqeri stressed.

Stating that the government as a regulatory body is



obligated to intervene in the market in certain circumstances, the expert said: these interventions should only be regarding the general issues and long-term outlook of the capital market.

In a healthy market, stock prices converge to the shares’ real value, and for this reason, the government should only facilitate this process and stop pre-ordered pricing for the shares related to some products such as steel.

“It should not be forgotten that the country is now in an economic war, and naturally various bodies such as the government and other institutions should act based on the country’s current situation,” Amirbaqeri said.

Issuance of mining licenses up over 18% in a year

Based on the mentioned data, 576 licenses had been issued in the Iranian calendar year 1398, IRIB reported.

During the previous year, 1,020 mineral exploration licenses were also issued in the country, which in comparison with 960 licenses issued in the year 1398, a 6.3-percent increase is registered in this sector.

As reported, the inaugurated mines have created job opportunities for 5,516 people in the previous year, 15.4 percent more than the figure for the preceding year.

Expenses for exploration operations also increased by 39.5 percent in 1399 compared to its preceding year; accordingly, the cost of exploration operations

last year was 1.549 trillion rials (about \$36.8 million) while the figure was 1.111 trillion rials (about \$26.4 million) in 1398.

Earlier this month, Head of the explorations department of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Ali Asgharzadeh had announced the identification of 1,700 new promising mineral zones across the country.

In the past few years with new resilient economy strategies coming into play, the mining sector has become a major point of focus for the Iranian government and various organizations and bodies active in this sector have been tasked to implement new programs for boosting this sector.

As a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in the country, IMIDRO has been playing a significant part in the mentioned planning.

The organization has been implementing several new programs in all the main fields of the mining industry including exploration, machinery development, extraction and also reviving the country’s idle mines.

According to the IMIDRO head, the organization has put the development of mines and mining industries on the agenda with three main strategies: increasing exploration operations, developing infrastructure, and reviving the country’s idle small-scale mines.

96% of Iran’s population enjoy natural gas

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said that 96 percent of the country’s population enjoy natural gas at the present.

Emphasizing the need to pay attention to the stability of the network, the creation and use of processes, Hasan Montazer Torbati said: “Iran’s 96 percent of population benefiting from natural gas is a unique statistic in the world.”

“Now that everyone recognizes NIGC as a leading organization, our task is much heavier, because now with 96 percent of the country’s population benefiting from gas, which is a unique statistic in the world, we should think more about network stability and processes and creation so that we will have a better and more dynamic organization”, the official further stressed.

As reported last week, the government has proposed to allocate 15 trillion rials (about \$357.14 million) for the supply of natural gas to over 8,000 villages across the country during the next Iranian calendar year 1400 (begins on March 21, 2021).

The mentioned budget will be spent on new gas supply projects in rural areas, and for the completion of semi-finished gas supply projects across the county with Sistan-Balouch-



estan, Hormozgan, South Khorasan, and Kerman provinces, as well as Khor and Biabanak cities, being the priorities.

Currently, over 32,000 villages across Iran are enjoying natural gas through the national network and the number is planned to reach 40,000 by the end of the next fiscal year (March 2022).

Over the past seven years, more than 290 trillion rials (nearly \$7 billion) has been allocated by the government to

connect over 18,000 new rural areas with over 1.6 million households to the national gas network.

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

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

One of the sectors with noticeable achievements in this field is gas supplying, while the number of villages supplied with natural gas has doubled during the past seven years since the current government started its activity.

Back in November, the managing director of NIGC had announced that gas will be supplied to 40,000 villages throughout the country by the end of the next Iranian calendar year.

Torbati stated that gas supply has been developed in the cities and villages of the country since seven years ago due to the increase in gas production in the South Pars gas field (Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf).

448 solar farms set up in South Khorasan in 4 years

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, 448 solar farms have been established in South Khorasan province, in the east of Iran, during the past four years.

Alireza Pouzeshi, the director of the projects for renewable energy and reducing powers loses in the power distribution company of the province, put the capacity of the mentioned solar farms at 4,338 kilowatts.

Iran’s installed capacity of solar farms stands at nearly 900 megawatts (MW), according to the Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

Highlighting that many good strides have been taken in this field in the country over the recent years, the minister said that the

significant increase in the capacity of the country’s power plants, which is the result of the efforts of domestic experts, can meet all the electricity needs of the country, while boosting Iran’s electricity export.

The share of solar power plants in Iran’s renewable electricity generation capacity has reached 49 percent, according to the data released by Iran’s Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA).

Renewables, including hydropower, account for seven percent of Iran’s total energy generation, versus natural gas’s 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next four years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renew-

able capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

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

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

According to the energy minister, the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a signifi-

cant role in developing the region’s market for such energies.

“Relying on the high potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, etc., the Energy Ministry has planned good measures in order to implement new policies for creating positive changes in the development of the country’s renewable energy sector,” the minister said.

Back in December 2020, Mohammad Satakin, who heads Iran’s Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), said the capacity of the country’s renewable power plants was going to reach 1,000 MW (one gigawatt) by the end of the current government’s incumbency (August 2021).

TEDPIX drops 9,000 points on Sunday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 9,000 points to 1.224 million on Sunday.

Over 1.116 billion securities worth 14.709 trillion rials (about \$350.2 million) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

The first market’s index fell 7,537 points and the second market’s index dropped 14,928 points.

TEDPIX fell 6,000 points, or 0.5 percent, in the past Ira-

nian 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.

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

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

Japanese professor calls Iran-China partnership epoch-making

“The world is drifting from unipolar to multipolar”

→ 1 Therefore, President Biden needs to meet such expectation by implementing more moderate and even cooperative diplomacy with the non-U.S. allies such as Iran and China.

But President Biden's first two months in his office have not shown it much despite his declaration “America is back”. This is perhaps due to his careful political stance in nature. As most Americans still believe the so-called “Iranian threat” to the U.S. national security, and also the Israel lobby continues to claim it, he cannot rush to make a dramatic revision of the U.S. diplomacy. At least, there is little incentive for him to quickly do it. However, I think, sooner or later, he is to move forward.

Why did Europe and countries like South Korea and Japan fail to confront U.S. unilateral sanctions on Iran when the Trump administration violated its obligations under the nuclear deal? How can Iran rely on a partnership with these countries again?

Japan has no reason to be an opponent of Iran. The history of the relations between the two countries told us it. But Japan and also South Korea are historically the U.S. allies in East Asia and economically and politically rely on Washington so that they have difficulties to establish their fully independent foreign policy, particularly their relations with countries that are regarded as threats by the U.S. In this sense, you can see that East Asian countries are far from coordinated because Japan and South Korea, and also Taiwan are taking a role in the containment of China's hegemonic foreign policy.

However, this implies, in turn, that the Iran-U.S. rapprochement is expected to foster



“While Japan and South Korea acknowledge China's economic and political significance in East Asia, they remain under strong U.S. influence.”

Iran's relations with Japan and South Korea. It depends on the new U.S. administration's attitude, especially about coming back to the JCPOA.

How do you assess the 25-year Iran-China partnership?

It is literally epoch-making in the sense that it is a sign of the emergence of a non-

“Japan and also South Korea are historically the U.S. allies in East Asia and economically and politically rely on Washington so that they have difficulties to establish their fully independent foreign policy.”

U.S. economic block in the world. In other words, the world is drifting from unipolar to multipolar.

Will China surpass the U.S. economically in the coming decades?

China's diplomatic initiative, backed by its rapid economic development, would bring about structural change to the world defined by the U.S. supremacy in the last 30 years. This does not guarantee a more stable and peaceful world but seems irreversible anyway.

Do's you expect Asian states from East Asia (Japan and South Korea) to West Asia (Iran and Turkey) to build an economic bloc in cooperation with China?

I do not think so. At least, it does not yet happen. As told above, while Japan and South Korea acknowledge China's economic and political significance in East Asia, they remain under strong U.S. influence. It is a common dilemma of the two countries between the U.S. and China.

How do people and media in Japan and East Asia in general look at developments in West Asia?

It's been about 20 years since I started research and teaching about the Middle East (West Asian) politics at Japanese universities. My impression is that Japan's concern for the region has been declining, especially among young people. This is perhaps because they are tired of hearing about the region. When the Middle East (West Asia) comes up in the news headlines, they are always about conflicts and terrorism. As a university professor, I will continue to conduct my research on the Middle East (West Asian) politics, but also introduce the positive aspects such as the people and culture of the region to my students. These young generations hopefully can build a better bridge between Iran and Japan in the near future.

Russia-U.S. ties hit bottom under Biden presidency: researcher

→ 1 As the two countries are exchanging harsh rhetoric, the Turkish expert says, “All the expectations and hopes disappeared following the statements and accusations of Joe Biden vis-à-vis Vladimir Putin.”

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you describe the nature of Turkey-Russia relations?

I would describe the two countries as having a history of both conflicts and cooperation. People often recall/define the nature of the bilateral relations as a strategic rivalry; yet, they have been unable to explain the rivalry or mostly get stuck with such terms and forget the cooperative part. Having geopolitical clashes or the imperial history of conflicts does not necessarily make them rivals. Considering the early Soviet years and even afterward, we see a long pattern for cooperation in various sectors, specifically the heavy industry. Today, this pattern continues with a small disguise in sectors like the energy and defense industry. In this context, we see common examples like TurkStream, Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant, S-400 missile defense systems, etc.

Furthermore, the amount of bilateral trade exceeding 20 billion dollars is worth mentioning when we talk about cooperation. On the other side, very much like the old times, the two countries are having geopolitical conflicts in multiple geographies. They have been at odds in Syria, Libya, Karabakh, and Ukraine. Their interests, policies, and the supported parties are particularly clashing in all those regions, yet we see continuing cooperation in previously mentioned areas. Also, while having conflictual positions, they somehow managed to get on the same page in Syria, Libya, and Karabakh. As such, several ceasefire agreements, joint patrols, and diplomatic mechanisms specifically established to pursue the dialogue can be regarded as indicators.

To sum up, while assessing Turkey-Russia relationship, both sides of the coin should be delicately considered and I would say those words (partnership, rivalry, enemies, friends, frenemies, etc.) do not adequately express the nature of the relationship.

How can Ankara establish a kind of balance in its relations with the U.S. and Russia?

Turkey has been, in fact, trying to maintain a balance in its relations with the U.S. and Russia. It is a very tricky policy to achieve considering Turkey's NATO membership and deeper ties with the West together with the geopolitical clashes having with both Russia and the U.S. These circumstances do not ease the ability of such policy but make it a necessity. Purchasing the Russian S-400 missile system would be counted as a balancing act in Turkish foreign policy. The U.S. refrained from providing desired technology and pushed Ankara for alternatives. Yet, it further put up the distance in the gap between Turkey-U.S. relations. Having disagreements and an undeniable significant partnership with both sides make the balance hard to ensure. Turkey, in this regard, tries very hard to achieve a balance, but as I said, it is very difficult in these circumstances and con-



uncture. In this context, we see, on the one hand, Ankara's fulfillment of NATO duties and the resistance put against Russia in multiple fields; on the other hand, purchase of S-400 and further cooperation with Russia. One thing that can be emphasized is that Turkey's commitments and efforts are mostly underappreciated by its Western allies, which allow a window of opportunity for other actors to benefit.

Why is Turkey trying to approach Ukraine while it may be considered a provocative move by Russia?

I do not believe Turkey is trying to approach Ukraine. Turkey has always had good relations with Ukraine. From the very beginning, Turkey has not recognized the annexation of Crimea and, at every opportunity, reiterated its support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine. This position and policy have not changed and will not change depending on third countries' perceptions or pressures. Russia has been deliberately taken steps acknowledged as provocative moves by Turkey in multiple fields -especially in Syria- and not altering its policy course despite the bilateral cooperation. Hence, it is not realistic to expect Turkey to act otherwise if such moves are seen as conflictual by others.

Besides, Turkey neither supports military conflicts between the two sides nor gives more support to one side against the other. It promotes peace and stability in the Black Sea region, where it also has crucial national interests. Understandably, following the Second Karabakh war, scholars and politicians in Ukraine started to argue what would happen if Turkish drones were used in Donbas or Crimea. The demand for drones was burst. Nevertheless, it dates before when Ukraine first showed its interest in Turkish drones. In short, neither Turkey's bilateral trade with Ukraine -regardless of the sector- nor leaders' statement regarding Ukraine's territorial integrity mean Turkey is approaching Ukraine.

How do you assess Russia-U.S. relations under Biden's presidency?

In a nutshell, under the new administration in the U.S., bilateral relations between Russia and U.S. hit bottom. It was not going well either under the Trump administration; however, it was certainly less tensioned. At the outset, after the green light on the extension of the New Start Treaty, politicians, scholars, and Russian media, in general, are

tempted to think that there could be a new page and enhancements in bilateral relations. On the contrary, we are experiencing diverse confrontations and harsher rhetoric. All the expectations and hopes disappeared following the statements and accusations of Joe Biden vis-à-vis Vladimir Putin. This was followed by the more proactive U.S. policies towards Ukraine. We saw the hints in the first talk of the leaders over the telephone. The increasing U.S. and NATO support to Ukraine brought another field of confrontation and aggravated the already tense relations. U.S. sanctions on Russia concerning the Navalny case worsen the relations further. Very recently, the U.S. imposed sanctions on Russia, following the talk between the two leaders on the situation in the borderline of Ukraine. Though it seems like a response to Russian cyber-attacks, it was mainly imposed due to the disagreements over the crisis along the Ukrainian border. Yet, it was not solely because of the Ukrainian crisis. The Biden administration holds Russia responsible for meddling in the elections of 2020 and seeks revenge for that. Overall, Russia-U.S. relations under Biden's presidency hit rock bottom, and it seems that it is getting worse.

What is the role of Russia and Turkey in supplying energy to Europe?

Both actors assume a significant role in Europe's energy supply security. However, Russia stands as the most important supplier state when it comes to European natural gas demand. EU receives 40% of its natural gas from Russia. It amounts to nearly 160 billion m3. Having Nord Stream II in the equation, Russia will have the potential to cover up %52 of the total EU's demand. Only Nord Stream pipeline with its two phases would be able to cover up to %22. The amount of supply and the interdependence are immense between the two sides. EU's energy supply security is mainly determined by Moscow. EU and also most of the other regional countries are highly dependent on Russian energy. This has been one of the main concerns of the U.S. In fact, in every opportunity, Washington raises and reiterates its concerns regarding the Nord Stream pipeline and the EU's increasing energy dependency on Russia. Having added the amount that will be delivered via TurkStream -under full capacity yearly 15.75 billion m3 - the European dependency on Russian gas will even be further increased.

Turkey, on the other hand, as a transit hub country, also plays a very crucial role in Europe's energy supply security. It hosts the longest part of the Southern Gas Corridor (TANAP) and TurkStream Gas pipeline. While the former transfers the Caspian gas, the latter links Russian gas to Europe. The delivery capacity of the TANAP to Europe is estimated to 10 billion m3 yearly; yet, it is projected to climb up to 25 billion m3 over time (excluding Turkey's domestic usage). Plus 15.75 billion m3 from the TurkStream, Turkey will have the potential to transfer up to 40 billion m3 natural gas yearly to Europe. In other words, it can deliver up to 10% of the EU's natural demand or the significant proportion of the cumulative demand of Europe.

U.S. lawmakers introduce bill to block Saudi Arabia's pursuit of nukes

A group of American lawmakers has put forward a draft legislation that seeks to prevent Saudi Arabia from acquiring nuclear weapons amid reports about suspected attempts by the kingdom to process uranium and move toward the development of atomic bombs.

The Stopping Activities Underpinning Development in Weapons of Mass Destruction (SAUDI WMD) Act was in-

troduced earlier this week by Senators Ed Markey and Jeff Merkley as well as Congressmen Ted Lieu and Joaquin Castro.

If approved, the measure would ask the US president to impose sanctions on foreign nationals or countries thought to have sold sensitive missile technologies to the Riyadh regime.

It would also “terminate most U.S.

arms sales to Saudi Arabia if it has received assistance in the construction of a nuclear fuel cycle facility not safeguarded by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or if the kingdom has received help in the most sensitive proliferation activities on its territory through the construction of an enrichment or reprocessing facility.”

According to Press TV, in August 2020,

the Wall Street Journal reported that Saudi Arabia, with Chinese help, had built a facility for extraction of yellowcake from uranium ore near the remote town of al-Ula.

The New York Times also said American intelligence agencies had spotted what appeared to be an undeclared nuclear site not too far from the town of al-Uyaynah.

Yemeni drone bombs King Khalid Air Base in Saudi Arabia: Army

→ 1 According to Press TV, the Saudi war has brought about the world's worst humanitarian crisis in Yemen, according to the United Nations. It has killed hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed much of the country's infrastructure, bringing the Yemeni people to the brink of famine and starvation.

The United States and its Western allies have also been deeply involved in the Saudi-led war by providing Riyadh with modern weapons, logistical support, and other forms of assistance.

The Sana'a government, which is run by the Ansarul-lah movement, has asserted on numerous occasions that Yemen's retaliatory attacks on Saudi Arabia will continue as long as the war coalition is bombarding and starving the impoverished country.

Sana'a has also rejected Riyadh's empty calls for peace while Yemen is still under attack and siege.

India's capital under siege from COVID-19, seeks emergency help from federal govt

India's capital New Delhi recorded 25,500 coronavirus cases in a 24-hour period, with about one in three people tested returning a positive result, its chief minister said, urging the federal government to urgently provide more hospital beds to tackle the crisis.

Arvind Kejriwal told a news conference the high number of cases in the capital was a concern.

“The bigger worry is that in last 24 hours positivity rate has increased to around 30% from 24%,” Kejriwal said. “The cases are rising very rapidly. The beds are filling fast.”

Kejriwal said intensive care unit beds are in short supply, with less than 100 left for coronavirus patients.

According to al Jazeera, the grim situation can only be tackled if the federal government, the city government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi work together, he said.

Nationwide, India reported 261,500 new cases on Sunday, taking the total number of cases to nearly 14.8 million, second only to the United States, which has reported more than 31 million infections.

The country's deaths from COVID-19 rose by a record 1,501 to reach a total of 177,150, the data showed.

Czechs expel 18 Russian diplomats

The Czech Republic is expelling 18 Russian diplomats over alleged links to an ammunition depot explosion in 2014, Prime Minister Andrej Babis said.

They have been given 48 hours to leave the country.

On October 16, 2014, there was a blast at a warehouse containing 58 tonnes of ammunition near the eastern Czech village of Vrbetice.

It was followed months later by another big explosion at a nearby warehouse with 98 tonnes of ammunition.

“The explosion led to huge material damage and posed a serious threat to the lives of many local people, but above all it killed two citizens,” Babis said.

Babis said Czech authorities had “clear evidence” linking GRU Russian intelligence agency officers from unit 29155 to the blasts, after receiving information on Friday.

China, U.S. agree on need for stronger climate commitments

China and the United States agree that stronger pledges to fight climate change should be introduced before a new round of international talks at the end of the year, the two countries said in a joint statement on Sunday.

The statement came after a meeting between Chinese climate envoy Xie Zhenhua and his U.S. counterpart, John Kerry, in Shanghai on Thursday and Friday, China's environment ministry said.

“The United States and China are committed to cooperating with each other and with other countries to tackle the climate crisis,” their joint statement said. The two countries will continue to discuss “concrete actions in the 2020s to reduce emissions aimed at keeping the Paris Agreement-aligned temperature limit within reach.”

Kerry arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday night under tight COVID-19 protocols and was transferred to a secluded hotel not open to the public. He subsequently traveled to Seoul.

According to Daily star, his stop in Shanghai was the first high-level visit to China by a Biden administration official since the new president took office, and followed a contentious exchange between officials from the two countries in March in Alaska.

Resistance News

10 Palestinian MPs behind Israeli bars

TEHRAN— The Israeli occupation authority (IOA) continues to detain 10 Palestinian lawmakers illegally in its jails, mostly in administrative detention.

The lawmakers are Ahmed Attoun, Hasan Yousef, Ahmed Saadat, Nizar Ramadan, Khaled Tafesh, Marwan Barghouti, Hatem Qafisha, Mohamed Maher, Khaleda Jarra and Yasser Mansour.

Their detention is arbitrary and not based on legal grounds. Palestinians consider their detention “a politically motivated and punitive measure that violates international law.”

Over the years, more than 70 Palestinian MPs, mostly from the Hamas Movement, were arrested and detained more than once because of their political and social activities.

Popular souvenirs to buy while visiting Iran

PART 1

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — One of the traditions of Ancient Persia is handicrafts, which are preserved in the culture of the nation and passed on from generation to generation.

Today handmade products are highly regarded outside Iran as a unique art. Popular way of Iranian handicraft are true masterpieces, and each of them has its own history.

Art is a fine industry in Iran and is famous for its unique handicrafts. There are presently nine million Iranians, involved in the production of handicrafts and other rural industries like Persian carpets, Kilim & Jajim, hand-made and hand-painted glassware and ceramics, pottery items and jewellery making. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has listed popular souvenirs to buy while visiting Iran as below.

Glazed Pottery

Glazed Pottery refers to a field of handicrafts that is shaped by clay or other mixed muds using hand, pottery wheel or slushing and baked in 800°C after they are dried. The resulted pottery is then glazed and re-baked in 900°C to 1100°C to create a glassy and permanent glaze on it.

Mamqan Embroidery

Mamqan Embroidery (Mamaqan Doozi) is a branch of embroidery conducted in East Azarbaijan Province of Iran using colorful khameh (a type of silky thread) and needlework on a piece of cloth.

The patterns are mostly abstract and inspired by the artists' personal perceptions and insights regarding nature, many of which include figurative flowers and plants. An ordinary 4-cm needle and a thimble are the only tools used by embroider to create the most novel designs on cloth and produce elegant and useful works of art.

Batik Dyeing

Batik is a technique of wax-resist dyeing applied to whole cloth. Batik is made either by drawing dots and lines of the resist with a spouted tool called a tjanting, or by printing the resist with a copper stamp called a cap.

Toreutics

Toreutics (engraving on metal) refers to artistic metalworking - hammering gold or silver (or other materials), engraving, or using repoussé and chasing to form minute detailed reliefs or small engraved patterns.

Elaborated Woodwork

Elaborated Woodwork refers to the production of elegant and delicate wooden products using thin wooden coating that is usually taken from nutty and unusable parts of the lumber.

Direct Heat Glassblowing

Direct Heat Glassblowing is a branch of glassblowing that is made by attaching several pre-made glass tubes or bars, shaped by a direct heat gas poker. The final product can be statue, kitchen utensil, kettle, etc.

Instrument Making

Instrument Making is the art of making and decorating Iranian traditional music instruments (Ood, Dotar, Setar, Dohol, Kamanche, etc.) using walnut wood, areca palm wood, and other material. Instruments such as string instruments, wind instruments, and percussion instruments are made by this technique.

Jajim



Jajim is a handwoven rug that is thick and has no lint, made of wool and cotton with long wrapping and stripped and colorful pattern. Jajim is woven by weaving machine, brush and reel and is used for ground cloth, mat, etc.

Kilim

Kilim Weaving is the art of wrapping and weaving different types of Kilim using natural, colorful fibers as well as repairing the weaved Kilims. Kilim is a flat tapestry-woven carpet or rug can be purely decorative or can function as prayer rugs. Modern kilims are popular floor coverings in Western households.

Filigree

Filigree is a form of intricate metalwork, popular in Zanjan and Isfahan. It may span from delicate jewelry to cast iron railings and balustrades. In jewelry, it is usually an ornamental work of fine wire of gold, silver, or copper applied chiefly to gold and silver surfaces, made with tiny beads or twisted threads, or both in combination, soldered together or to the surface of an object of the same metal and arranged in artistic motifs. Common motifs include Paisley, Rizeh Jeqe, Barg-e Farang, leaf, bosom, ivy, double ivy, triple spring, etc.

Archaeological studies to start at Sassanid-era Sirvan

→ **1** Shanbehzadeh also stated that “registration of historical, natural and spiritual monuments in the list of national monuments is one of our plans and we hope to be able to register 20 works this year.”

He also referred to tourism projects and said: “In this area, our focus is on ecotourism units. We have 16 projects that we are trying to complete and put into operation by the end of the government’s term. Among them is the four-star hotel in Ilam, which is located two kilometers from the center of the province, and several tourist complexes are under construction that has achieved over 70% physical progress, and I hope we can put them into operation in the next few months.”

Shanbehzadeh noted that in the field of development, the infrastructure of some tourist attractions in the field of water, electricity, and access route must be completed; Like Kafrin Strait, Lelar Tourism Complex, Abdanan Siaghav Twin Lake.

He went on to point out that they have planned to set up 15 handicraft workshops in Ilam this year, adding that the handicraft market in Sarablah



would also be launched in the coming weeks. “Also, the project of private stone and fossil museum in Ilam city has been completed and we have a plan

to inaugurate it on the agenda.”

Shanbehzadeh also noted: “We currently have 40 active eco-tourist units in Ilam, and the launch of another 20

units is underway, and we will do our best to provide the resources they need.”

Regarding the health tourism in Iran, Shanbehzadeh said, “we intended to revive the tourism memorandum between Ilam and Iraq, but corona outbreak interrupted it. Fortunately, Kuh-e-Sar Ilam Hospital received its health certificate from the Ministry of Health and can soon start its medical activity as a health tourism complex. Its accommodation section has also been activated and can accept foreign health tourists, especially from Iraq.”

He pointed out to the program that started last year for booming natural and adventure tourism in Ilam province and said: “This year, we plan to focus on this issue, considering the nature tourism capabilities of Ilam, which has made it known as the bride of Zagros, we will focus on it. Meanwhile, there are some very beautiful valleys such as special valleys in Ilam that are unique in Iran, and these, along with numerous mountains and waterfalls, have become an excuse for adventurous tourists to enter the province so that only during Nowruz this year, over 40 nature tours entered Ilam.”

First boutique hotel in Sistan-Baluchestan to be inaugurated

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The first boutique hotel in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan will soon be put into operation.

Mojtaba Mir-Hosseini, the deputy director of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Sistan-Baluchestan said that the first boutique hotel in the province will be opened in the historical citadel of General Mohammad Hosseini Khan Narui, located in the village of Qala-e-Naw, Zahak city.

The monument has been repaired and restored at the cost of 21 billion rials (about \$500,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) and is scheduled to be put into operation by the end of April.

He said: “Construction of the courtyard wall,

implementation of flooring and landscaping behind the building, construction of pavilions, WCs, separation of the walls of the citadel, implementation of access stairs to the upper floor, repair, restoration and equipment inside the citadel, including renovation of living rooms, kitchen, management rooms, handicraft salesrooms as well as installation of doors and windows of spaces, repair of internal stairs and correction of the height of stairs, landscaping, and parking in the space behind the citadel, etc. are among the ongoing measures.”

Mir-Hosseini added: “In fact, boutique hotels are hotels that display the rich history, tradition, and culture of the region, and such hotels are more popular among foreign tourists and are considered as tourist attractions.”



Bronze Age pottery jar discovered, seized in Alborz

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The commander of the Alborz Province's Cultural Heritage Preservation Unit announced the discovery and seizure of a Bronze Age pottery jar in the capital city of Karaj.



People reported of a historical object in a house, Alifath Fathian said on Saturday, adding that the forces of the protection unit were sent to investigate the case at the announced place.

According to preliminary studies, the discovered object is a pottery jar belonging to the Middle Bronze Age, he noted.



Agricultural Support Services Company

INVITATION TO RENEWAL OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

55/00/1564
19/04/2021



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below item of technical, through renewal of one step international tender.

ITEM	Name	PACKING	Quantity KG
1	Fipronil Tech (18.8-21.2) pct. (premix 20%)	200 kg drum	5500

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from **Sunday dated 18/4/2021** until **Monday dated 26/4/2021** (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 3580397822635006500000000000006.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on **Saturday dated 29/5/2021** (during official working hours) to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelops will be held on **Sunday dated 30/5/2021** at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidder's representatives at our purchasing committee hall (9th floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the bid bond amount should be in bank guarantee as follow:

1- € **20583** for **Fipronil Tech(18.8-21.2) pct.** (premix 20%) equivalent to Iranian Rials **5765000000**.

- The bid bond value will be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollar, based on Telegraphic Transfer rate in Sana rate website, www.sanarate.ir. It should be noted that this site lists the currency transactions, executed in Integrated Currency Transactions System [Nima website] on **12/04/2021**.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)



Vacancy Notice

The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R.Iran, intends to recruit an Assistant Representative at NOC level for its office in Tehran, Iran.

Details of the **Re-Advertised** vacancy can be found on UNFPA website on the following link:

<https://iran.unfpa.org/en/vacancies/re-advertised-national-post-assistant-representative>

Please apply online by 4 May 2021, 5 PM Tehran Time. This vacancy is open only for Iranian Nationals.

Notice:

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

Cuban coronavirus vaccine to start third clinical trial phase in Iran

SOCIETY
d e s k

TEHRAN – The Cuba-Iran Soberana-02 COVID-19 vaccine received a code of ethics to start the third phase of the clinical trial in Iran, according to the Ministry of Health.

Manufactured by Cuba's Finlay Vaccine Institute and Pasteur Institute of Iran, the vaccine is a conjugate vaccine with two injectable doses. It consists of the receptor-binding domain of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein conjugated chemically to tetanus toxoid.

The two first phases of the human trial have been conducted in Cuba, while the third phase will be performed on a population of 18 to 80 years in Iran, and Mexico.

On March 11, some 100,000 doses of the Cuban vaccine, were delivered to Iran, as part of Havana's cooperation program with other countries to develop the vaccine.

The vaccine is to be produced jointly with Cuba after vaccinating 50,000 Iranians and studying the results at the Pasteur Institute of Iran.

Alireza Raeisi, spokesman for the National Headquarters for Coronavirus control said that so far, a total of 1,895,000 doses of vaccine has been delivered to the country, including, 420,000 doses of Sputnik V vaccine from



Russia, 650,000 doses of vaccine from China, 125,000 doses from India, 700,000 doses of Astrazeneca vaccine from South Korea (from the World Health Organization's COVAX facility).

According to the latest announcement

of the Ministry of Health, 376,684 people have received the first dose of Corona vaccine and 121,803 people the second dose of the vaccine in Iran.

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.

New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Sunday, Health Ministry's spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 21,644 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,237,089. She added that 1,785,358 patients have so far recovered, but 4,766 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 405 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 66,732, she added.

So far, 14,386,423 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Wildfire prevention regulations to be prepared

ENVIRONMENT
d e s k

TEHRAN – Due to the hot season and the increasing risk of wildfires, fire prevention procedures will be prepared and announced to all the provinces soon, Jamshid Mohabbat Khani, commander of the protection unit of the Department of Environment (DOE), has said.

In this instruction, items such as vigilance, readiness, updating equipment, and preparing environmentalists' assistants are mentioned, he stated.

Also, responsible bodies such as firefighters, police, rangers who have can help us in the crisis, are also listed in this guide, he added.

The firefighting equipment is enough with the number of rangers, one of the tools that are very useful is the fire blower, so last year we provided 200 quality blowers to the rangers, he also stated.

Rainfall this year was lower than in previous years, so wildfires start sooner so that the most important and effective way to reduce wildfires is to inform the public and raise awareness, he highlighted.

Mohabbat Khani pointing out that wildfires are mostly caused by unintentional human error, said that over 90 percent of wildfires are ignited by humans unintentionally while setting fires in nature, smoking, and releasing plastic and glass containers.

Every fire causes a lot of damage to the environment and ecosystem; It is not only the plants that are destroyed but also the living organisms that are trapped in the fire, he lamented.

"We may also lose our human capital in fires, as last year we lost four environmental defenders in the wildfire," he regretted.



Wildfire risk raises

Every year, with the onset of summer, wildfire prevalence increases in forest and rangelands, which all residents and tourists should cooperate to minimize the impact, as they throw cigarette butts in nature, drop glass bottles which act like lenses and ignites due to sunlight, resulting in the destruction of a large area of natural areas, Hossein Abiri Golpayegani environmental activist said.

The amount of rainfall during the winter and spring of this year was very low, which will cause two major problems. First, the drying of shrubs will occur earlier than last year; the next problem is water scarcity because there was little rainfall this year, so water resources have dwindled and there are low water resources to extinguish the fire, he explained.

In recent years, environmental activists have made great efforts to raise awareness and education in order to reduce wildfires, as environmental organizations with practical and applied methods in the face of fire and its

timely extinguishing, holding workshops and training courses, he concluded.

Insufficient human forces to protect natural resources

Some 83 percent of the country's total land area amounting to 135 million hectares is covered by natural resources. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient human forces and facilities to protect our natural resources, Mohabbat Khani said in June 2020.

He noted that the number of rangers in Iran is one-tenth of the global standard, which is a ranger for every 12,000 hectares, while it should be a ranger per 1,000 hectares.

Regarding the people's role in wildfires and the lack of law in this field, Mohabbat Khani, said that last year (ended on March 19), 12 percent of fires were naturally set, on the other hand, 18 percent of fires were an act of arson.

Reza Aflatouni, the deputy director of the Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization for legal affairs, in June 2020 announced that people who deliberately set fire to forests and pastures are sentenced to at least 10 years in prison.

Farmers, ranchers, and gardeners must obtain permission from natural resources officials for burning their garden plant residues, he said.

Qasem Sabz'ali, commander of the forest protection unit of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization, said in April 2018 that some 15,000 hectares of forests burn in wildfires annually in Iran that 95 percent of them are caused by humans.

Forest wildfire brings a heavy economic burden amounting to 560 million rials (about \$13,000) per hectare for the country, he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei donates \$120,000 to free prisoners

SOCIETY
d e s k

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has donated 5 billion rials (about \$120,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to help release inmates of unintentional crimes.

As an annual tradition, benefactors come together in a ceremony to raise funds for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes during the holy month of Ramadan (which started on April 13 this year), according to the Blood Money Organization report released on Saturday.

This year, however, due to the outbreak

of the coronavirus, the ceremony will be held online or through TV shows.

According to the organization's report, the Leader has donated more than 36 billion rials (about \$864,000) over the past ten years, helping release over 1,000 prisoners of unintentional crimes in the country.

Last year (March 2020-March 2021), heads of the three branches of the government and the private sector donated 6.5 billion rials (nearly \$150,000) to release prisoners who had committed involuntary crimes.

President Hassan Rouhani, former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, and Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi made a total of 3.9 billion rials (around \$92,000) in contributions to free prisoners of unintentional crimes.

During the first nine months of last year, some 5,068 inmates of unintentional crimes were released from prison with the help of charities.

According to Asadollah Joolaei, head of Blood Money Organization, there are currently 12,874 inmates of unintentional crimes in the country's prisons.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

SDSs mitigation plan to take effect next year

Sand and dust storm (SDS) mitigation plan will be implemented in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan as of the next Iranian calendar year (beginning March 21), Department of Environment (DOE) chief has announced.

A total fund of \$150 million from the National Development Fund has been proposed to counter dust storms in Sistan-Baluchestan province, IRNA quoted Issa Kalantari as saying on Tuesday.

Referring to the SDSs hitting southeastern part of the country causing the residents severe health problems, he noted that the president is pursuing the issue and as long as the fund is provided the plan will go into effect.

طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای سیستان از اول سال آینده اجرایی می شود

رئیس سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای منطقه سیستان و بلوچستان از ابتدای سال آینده اجرایی می شود.

عیسی کلانتری روز سه شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: برای مبارزه با گرد و غبار این منطقه رئیس جمهوری تقاضای ۱۵۰ میلیون دلار اعتبار از صندوق توسعه ملی کرده است. وی بیان کرد: توفان ها و گرد و غبار مساله جدی در منطقه سیستان است و مردم سالها با این مشکل مواجه و از آن رنج می برند و رئیس جمهوری به شدت پیگیر حل این مساله هستند. طرح مهار گرد و غبارهای منطقه سیستان به محض تایید منابع مورد نیاز اجرایی می شود.

Magnitude 5.9 earthquake strikes southwestern Iran

SOCIETY
d e s k **TEHRAN** – A magnitude 5.9 earthquake jolted southwestern Bushehr province on Sunday, according to the Iranian Seismological Center.

The earthquake struck at 11:11 a.m. local time at a depth of 10 kilometers near the border with Fars province.

Five were injured but no fatalities have so far been reported in the aftermath of the quake.



Twelve other quakes measuring 3-4.5 on the Richter scale shook the area within 4 hours.

Some 6 villages in Genaveh city have suffered 20 to 30 percent damage due to the earthquake.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes of the world occur in Iran but more than 6 percent of the victims of the world earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes. This shows the high level of vulnerability in Iran, according to Mehdi Zare, a professor of engineering seismology.

Most recently, an earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale shook western Kordestan province on April 7. And a magnitude 5.1 earthquake occurred in northeastern Golestan province in September 2020, which left 34 injured.

210,000 food packages provided to the needy since Ramadan

→ 1 The campaign was first launched in 2020 aiming to provide financial assistance to the needy affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has collected 1.5 trillion rials (nearly \$35 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

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

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

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

Rise of atmospheric carbon dioxide continues unabated

Every day, the latest daily atmospheric carbon dioxide readings are recorded in parts per million from the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii.

Week by week they keep rising and make for grim reading. We are within a whisker of 420ppm, 50% more than the 280ppm of pre-industrial times, before we began to burn oil and coal in significant quantities.

When carbon dioxide levels were last at this level, 3.6m years ago, sea levels were 20 metres higher and vast areas now covered in ice were forested. Land where many of our coastal cities now stand and much of our food is grown were deep under water. Large areas in the tropics would have been uninhabitable because they would have been too hot.

Just as alarming as the carbon dioxide levels are those of methane, 30 times as potent a greenhouse gas. Despite pandemic-induced reductions in industrial activity last year, methane levels produced from fracking activities, leaky pipelines, cattle ranching as well as melting permafrost rose faster than at any time since records began 40 years ago.

It shows that all efforts to avoid overheating the climate taken so far are hopelessly inadequate and will not prevent the impending chaos.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 161)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

certainly.....	/hatman/ حَتْمًا	
lavatory.....	دستشویی	
to be invited.....	دعوت شدن	
to drive.....	رانندگی - ران	
driver.....	راننده (جمع: رانندگان، راننده‌ها)	
participation.....	شرکت	
to participate.....	شرکت کردن	
to wash.....	شستن - شو	
love.....	عشق	
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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The greatest Jihad is to battle your own soul.
To fight the evil within yourself.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

ICRO publishes book on 800 years of Iran-France relations

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Exploring the 800-year-old relations between Iran and France, the book authored by Safoura Tork Ladani has recently been published by Iran’s Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO). Authored by Ms. Safoura Tork Ladani, a faculty member of the department of France at Isfahan University, the book which is titled “History of Iran-France Relations from the Middle Ages to the Present” explores Iran’s relations with France since the middle ages, from the prosperous relations during the Safavid dynasty in the 17th century to the Pahlavi regime’s specific attention to French culture and civilization. The 40-year Iran-France relationship after the Islamic Revolution is named by the book as the most controversial historical period of the two countries mostly because of Iran’s endeavor to identify itself as an independent nation with its own cultural identity.

Some of the controversial topics covered in the book include France’s financial support as well as supplying of weapons to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war and its subsequent decision-making in line with the U.S. government in the Iran nuclear negotiations. Published by the Centre for Strategic Studies of Cultural Relations of the ICRO in 482 pages, the book is available online and is provided by the Iranian international publisher, al-Hoda Institute, at alhoda.ir which distributes international publications in several international exhibitions including in the Beijing and Frankfurt online International book fairs. While the Iranians still have some French in their culture, with the simplest being the use of the word ‘merci’ to say thank you during informal conversations, it is vastly important to uncover the historical details which have shaped the cultural influences of the west on Iran which remain to this day. This publication can be a step towards revealing Iran’s cultural interactions with other nations.

“No Choice” to compete in Belgrade film festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian film “No Choice” by Reza Dormishian will go on screen at the 49th edition of FEST, Belgrade’s international film festival, IRNA reported on Sunday.



The film centers on a 16-year-old homeless girl who repeatedly works as a surrogate mother for money. A human rights attorney tries to rescue her, but inevitably faces difficulties. The film has been recently screened in several international festivals including FEST, Tokyo International Film Festival, and Hong Kong International Film Festival. Organized by the Belgrade Festivals Centre (CEBEF), under the auspices of the City of Belgrade and with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Information, this edition of FEST will be held from May 7 to 16. The biggest and most famous film event in Serbia and the region will take place under the slogan ‘Back to the Future’ with the intention to contribute to a sizable return of audiences to cinemas.

Iran–China cultural ties drastically increased after Islamic Revolution: professor

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** — In a press interview, Persian language and literature professor Hassan Zolfaghari has said that the cultural cooperation between Iran and China has increased drastically after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Citing the recent 25-year document signed between Iran and China and the interest of the Chinese people towards Iranian culture, the professor stated that over 600 people have been trained in Persian language courses in China and more than 60 academics have graduated from Iran and returned to China for postgraduate and doctoral courses and are now working in the educational, cultural and media sectors.

Following the recent news coverage of the Iran-China 25-year cooperation, various narratives of the details of this cooperation started to surface on social media platforms with many critics labeling the document as China’s tool for dominance over Iran while many others hailing it as a new beginning for Iran’s socio-economic progress. The Iranian professor with a long history of academic activity as a university lecturer in China believes that the expansion of Iran-China relations requires collaboration in educational and research fields, specifically the further development of the Persian language and literature in China as well as cultural programs, including joint meetings and conferences which will provide the platform for the expansion of cultural relations between the two countries. According to Zolfaghari, there are currently



13 Persian language and literature course vacancies at universities in more than 10 Chinese cities including Beijing and Shanghai. The majority of the courses are in ‘Translation Studies’ and ‘Cultural Studies’ with at least 70 people graduating with a bachelor’s degree in Persian language and literature every year, while postgraduate and doctoral courses are also offered in universities of both Beijing and Shanghai. Referring to the period before the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Zolfaghari said in the past the Chinese sent their professors to Afghanistan and retrieved their Persian language

and literature teachings from Iran’s eastern neighbor but after the Islamic Revolution, this changed drastically with China’s cultural relations with Iran increasing 100 % in comparison to the period prior to 1979. Due to the significant commercial history of the Silk Road, Iran and China’s relations go back to the past and have existed since the pre-Islamic periods and the Sassanid era, when the Chinese had to cross the Iranian route to reach Europe, which demanded bilateral relations and the exchange of ambassadors between the two countries from the very beginning to pave the way for the

expansion of trade relations. “Along with these trade relations, cultural relations were also formed both after and before Islam, especially during the period when the Mongols took power in China, China’s relations with Iran increased both for the spread of Islam and for the spread of the Persian language.” Zolfaghari also stated that the spread of Islam in China was as a result of the spread of the Persian language and literature due to the fact that all Islamic scholars and promoters used the Persian texts and books for teaching Islam, and this has remained a custom in Chinese Islamic schools and seminaries where Persian textbooks are used for Islamic teachings. The current memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries’ Ministry of Culture includes the translation of over 100 volumes of Persian and Chinese literature text, many of which have already completed with the collaboration of Chinese and Iranian universities, including ‘Shahnameh’, ‘Golestan’ and ‘Bustan’. It must be noted that due to the inevitable fact that both nations have an Eastern civilization, the similarities and traditions between the two cultures are countless and therefore there is interest from both nations to develop cultural relations, however, Zolfaghari noted that the weakness of institutions causes delays in the development of these relations, nevertheless, the grounds exist for the expansion of these relations, especially in the field of contemporary literature.

“Butterfly Swimming” leads Iran’s box office



Iranian actor Amir Aqai acts in a scene of Mohammad Kart’s “Butterfly Swimming”

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN**—Mohammad Kart’s directorial debut “Butterfly Swimming” has hit a new record at Iranian box offices for online screening by grossing over 40 billion rials (over \$950,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar), Honaronline reported on Sunday. Although the film was pirated and illegally uploaded on some websites and Telegram channels just before its first streaming on Filimo, a major Iranian platform for the online movie screening, it has hit a new record at the Iranian box

office for online screening, the report added. “Butterfly Swimming” tells the story of Hashem, a gang member whose wife’s swimming video goes viral. Now Hashem and his brother-in-law Hojjat are looking for the person who uploaded the video on the net. The film is followed by Peyman Qasemkhani’s Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army” and Ebrahim Hata-mikia’s “Exodus”. “Butterfly Swimming” was supposed to go on screen in summer; however, due to the shutdown of the movie theaters during the COVID-19 pandemic in Iran, the screening was postponed. Back in July Rasul Sadr-Ameli, the producer of “Butterfly Swimming”, said that he has canceled the premiere of the film in support of the medical staff serving COVID-19 patients in hospitals across the country. “Based on the talks we had with members of the Screening Council of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the decision to stop the screening of the film was agreed upon,” he said. “We were negotiating with the Health Ministry to screen the film for health care staff in hospitals dealing

with the coronavirus to watch the film for free. However, due to the increasing death toll and the current situation we decided to stop the screening, and hope that in rescreening the movie at some future time the staff will have more free time to watch the film in peace and with less anxiety,” he explained. “When the movie theaters resumed activities and the film went on screen three weeks ago, the death toll numbers were low and we did not think they would increase in less than two weeks. We are waiting for this virus to be controlled so the rescreening can begin,” he concluded. Moreover, “Butterfly Swimming” was crowned best audience film at the 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival last February. Tannaz Tabatabai received the best-supporting actress award for her cameo role in the film, which also brought Amir Aqai the best supporting actor honor. The film also took first place in the top six selected by the Association of Islamic Revolution Writers and Film Critics from among the movies screened at the 38th Fajr Film Festival.

American festival picks Iranian shorts

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN**— Iranian shorts “Ava’s Silence” and “Recreation” will compete at the 54th edition of the Humboldt International Film Festival, which will open today in the U.S. county. Directed by Gholamreza Nematpur, “Ava’s Silence” is about a young girl Ava, who has to work in her father’s auto shop as a mechanic because of her father’s illness. She

is looking forward to her brother returning from military service in a border area so she can get married to her fiancé Abbas. “Recreation” by Navid Nikkhah-Azad tells the story of Sahar, a rebel who decides to run away from school, disguise herself and go to a football game. The movies will be competing with “God’s Daughter Dances” by Sungbin Byun from

South Korea, Hands Up” by Angela White, “Dandelion” by Jae Staten and “Alina” by Rami Kodeih, all from the U.S. The Humboldt International Film Festival is the oldest student-run film festival in the world. It has been bringing independent and alternative short films together for several years. The festival will be running until April 25.



A scene from “Ava’s Silence” by Gholamreza Nematpur.

Sohrab Sepehri, great Persian poet and painter

Part 2 Sepehri was buried on 22 April 1980 in the eastern courtyard of the shrine of Soltan Ali Mohammad Baqer (a.k.a., Sahn-e sardar) in Mashhad-e Ardahal, a village near Kashan. The inscription on his tombstone, taken from one of his famous poems “Vaha-i dar lahza” (An oasis in a fleeting moment, hajm-e sabz) with the calligraphy of Raza Mafi (1943-1982, painter, calligrapher), reads: If you come to call on me / Tread gently, step softly lest you crack / The fine porcelain of my loneliness. The original tombstone was broken in the mid-1990s and eventually replaced with another marker. Since the decade after his death, Sepehri’s burial ground has become an increasingly popular monument. In late 2004, a debate had started among members of the Persian literati and representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding a relocation of Sepehri’s resting place. By January 2009, the issue remained open. Sepehri never married and had no children. There are no records of a personal relationship anywhere in his writings or in any of his biographies published through 2008. For the greater part of his adult life, he lived with his mother and younger sister Parvaneh in a two-story house in North Amirabad Street of Tehran. He was a soft-spoken, calm, and unusually sensitive introvert with a high-pitched voice and an exceptionally captivating gaze. He was meticulous and orderly, as much about his daily life as his artistic production, never signing a canvas or sending a poem to print before he felt completely satisfied with it. As such, it was not uncommon for him to destroy paintings and manuscripts that, for him, never came to full fruition for one reason or another. He shied away from crowds and steered clear of personal confrontations, which is why he never attended opening nights of his exhibitions and never responded verbally or in writing to any number of negative critiques of his work. In the course of his development as a poet and painter, Sepehri went through different phases of preoccupation with one or another tenet of his personal poetics and ultimate world vision. For practical purposes, we can break these down into five general periods, the first of which is a classical one comprising various ghazals, quatrains and, foremost, his first book Dar kenar-e chaman ya aramgah-e eshq, a twenty-six page mathnawi (masnawi, a poem in couplet form). Written in classical meter, these works are replete with traditional tropes and imagery, and reveal the senti-



mentality of a teenage poet emulating his late 19th century Persian predecessors. Though Sepehri would later discard all of these poems as naïve, they remain nevertheless critically valuable as they demonstrate both his familiarity with prosodic and imaginal staples of Persian classical poetry, and the span of his linguistic and stylistic trajectory as a poet. The second phase of Sepehri’s poetic development begins with his discovery of Nima Yushij’s poetry in mid-1948. The regular stanzaic form of his poem, “Bimar,” portraying a hopeless man smoking in his sickbed, clearly reveal Nima’s influence in structure, language, and conceit, as do “Zendegi” (Life), “Jazira-ye talai” (The golden island), and “Sham-e balin” (Bedside candle), all published in Jahan-e now in Spring 1949. Sepehri’s Nimaic phase comes to full fruition in Marg-e rang (1951). With respect to meter, form, and subject matter, all the poems in the collection so self-evidently bear the stamp of Nima’s influence that in the case of “Morph-e gharib” (The alien bird, reprinted with some changes in Hasht ketab as “Morph-e moamma” (The riddle bird), “Darya va mard” (The sea and the man), “Naqsh” (Design), and “Sargozasht” (Tale) one could easily mistake them for Nima’s own. What distinguishes Sepehri from his

predecessor, however, is the absence of Nima’s urgent sense of social commitment, which is replaced in Sepehri’s work by an introspective self-contemplation that gives his voice a quality and tone comparable to those of mid to late 19th century English poets. Thus while in Marg-e rang Sepehri’s tone echoes the characteristic nostalgia and hopelessness of Nima’s poetic language, Sepehri’s symbols point to a romantic poet’s existential despair with respect to his personal path in life both as an artist and an individual, whereas Nima’s convey instead a socially committed poet’s perception of a people lost in the course of history and a nation with little, if any, future prospects. Marg-e rang furthermore represents the height of Sepehri’s romanticism, especially with respect to his use of elements of nature as mirrors of the poet’s emotions. “Ru be ghorub” (Facing sunset), a poem in which all the elements of the natural landscape at sunset uniformly reflect the persona’s depressive state, is arguably the best example of this conceit. Though less obvious, the influence of Fereyduun Tavallali is also noticeable in this collection, especially with respect to language. Sepehri’s third period in poetry starts around 1951 and ends in 1961 with the publication of Avar-e aftab, a compendium of three collections: Zendegi-ye khabha, previously published as an autonomous volume in 1952; the title collection of poems written between 1952 and 1958; and Sharq-e anduh (East of sorrow). The volume also includes an introduction by Sepehri himself, in which he argues for an inherent dichotomy between Eastern and Western worldviews, with the former being presented as one in which mankind’s intuitive connection with the organic laws of the cosmos are more overtly cultivated by the values and nuances of their ancient myths and pervading philosophies. With numerous references to Hindu mythology, Taoism, Confucianism, and Zen Buddhism, Sepehri argues for the comparably more favorable nature of the Eastern Weltanschauung. The decade of poetry comprised in this compendium constitutes the next and arguably richest formative period of Sepehri’s development. Having completed his studies, these were the years when Sepehri traveled abroad frequently and translated poems from French, English, Chinese, and Japanese and experimented widely with language, writing blank and metered verse, prose poetry (e.g., “Saya” ‘Shadow’), and poems written in folk and nursery rhyme meters (e.g., “Morph-e seda talai” ‘The bird with a golden voice’).