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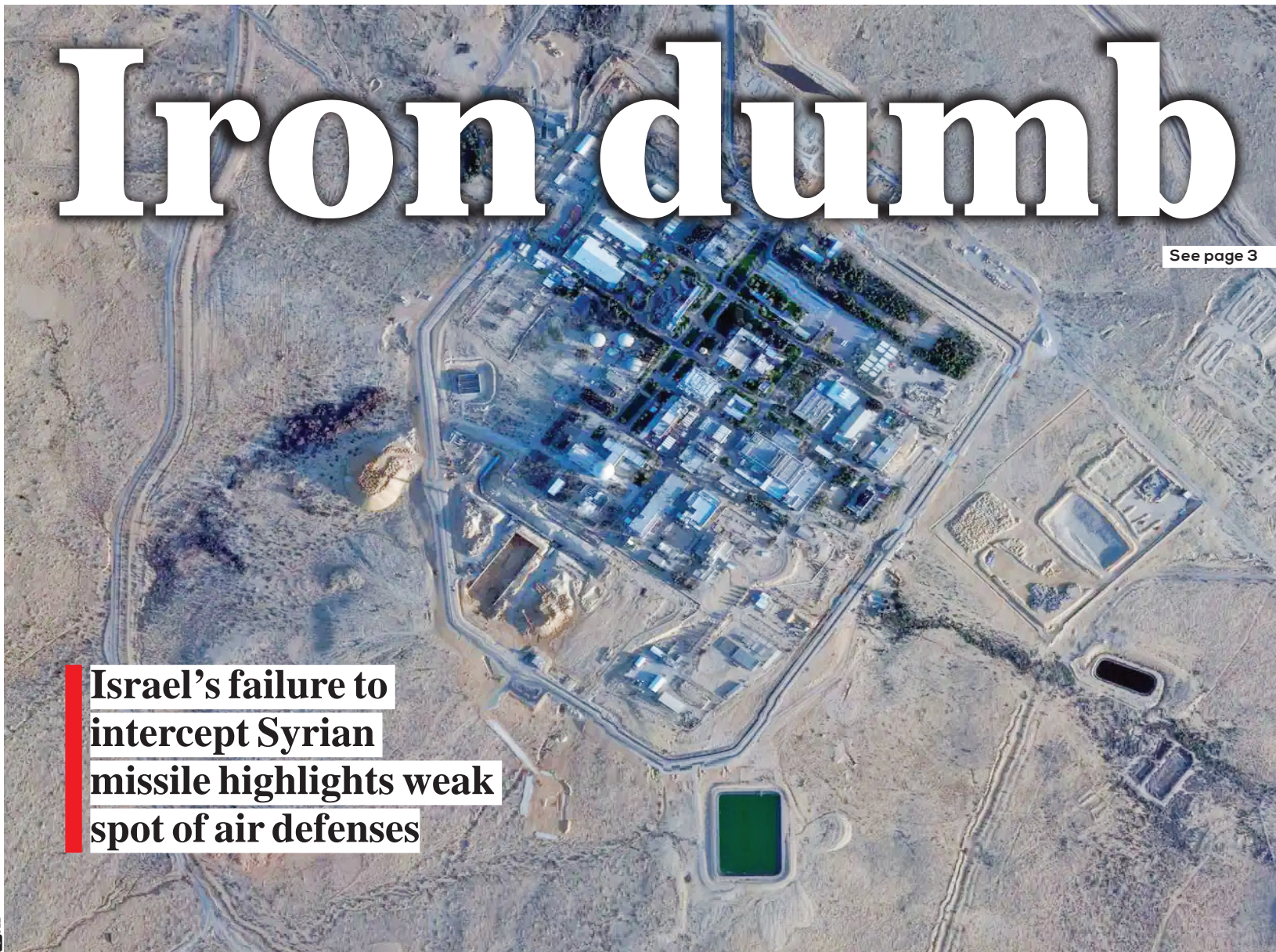
**Rostami wins gold at Asian Weightlifting Championships** *Page 3*



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**Israel's failure to intercept Syrian missile highlights weak spot of air defenses**

**Iran realizing the rights to participate at Beach Soccer World Cup**

**BY FARROKH HESABI**  
Iran beach soccer national team are pursuing their right to participate in the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Russia 2021.

Following the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announcement, and based on two agreed criteria, Japan, Oman, and United Arab Emirates have been chosen to represent the AFC in the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup. It was shocking that Iran, as one of the Asia's best, were not selected among the continent's representatives as the team who have all the necessary criteria to be among the selected teams.

In determining the AFC's representatives for the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Russia 2021, the AFC Executive Committee agreed to the AFC Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee's recommendation of utilizing the point system, which ranks the performances of the Continent's top eight teams in the last three editions of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup. Accordingly, the three mentioned teams were selected as Asia's representatives.

However, the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) in a letter has questioned the AFC's decision not to include the country's beach soccer among the top three teams.

"Based on the ranking of the point system and the teams' performances in the last three editions of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup, Iran are the second-best team of Asia," a source close to the FFIRI told the Tehran Times.

"It is bizarre that Oman and the UAE have been preferred to Iran. We have carefully reviewed and analyzed the AFC Technical Report in 2015, 2017, and 2019. Based on the calculation of the overall ranking for the top eight teams of each edition, Iran are the second best team. It's a purely mathematical system, and it's impossible to obtain different results from the same formula. We believe that Iran definitely have the right to participate in the 2021 World Cup," the source added.

Mehdi Taj, the former president of the FFIRI, is the chairman of the AFC Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee. The Iranian football federation expects him to use his position to realize the rights of the beach soccer national team.

The AFC has not responded to the FFIRI's letter so far. The 2021 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup is scheduled to take place in Moscow from Aug. 19 to 29.

**Let's reverse the destructive trend of planet**

**BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI**  
TEHRAN – It is the duty of each and every one of us on Earth to be determined to reverse the destructive trend of this planet. Having a healthy planet is not a choice, it is a necessity.

In a message on the occasion of World Earth Day 2021, Kioumars Kalantari, head of the natural environment and biodiversity of the Department of Environment stressed that we must reverse the destructive trend of the planet.

Held annually on April 22, the event is the world's largest environmental movement. It was started in 1970 after 3 million gallons of oil spilled off the coast of California the year before.

In Iran, World Earth Day 2021 is held on April 22-29 with the national theme of "preserving the planet, increasing productivity for sustainable development".

Not a specific day, but every day belongs to the earth. A land that provides us with the blessings

of clean air, clean water, beautiful scenery, and everything we humans need. Therefore, we must think and pay attention to the preservation and protection of this valuable treasure every day and every moment, Kalantari wrote.

Ecosystem regeneration is the ability of an ecosystem-- specifically, the environment and its living population-- to recover from damage. The healthier and richer the biodiversity of an ecosystem, the more useful and efficient the ecosystem services will be. Improving the health of ecosystems means improving the health of the earth and the life of all its inhabitants.

There is a strong link between the threat of more pandemics and humanity's destruction of nature, according to the WHO. Reversing both trends will have multiple benefits, including climate change, but will require concerted effort.

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**Yemeni Army hits Aramco, Malik Khalid Air Base**

The spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces informed that Saudi Arabia's Aramco and Malik Khalid Air Base have been targeted.

The operation has been done by three drones including two Qasif-2-K and one Samad-3, he said on Friday.

Saree said that the drones hit their targets with precision.

He said that the attack has been a response to Saudi Arabia's continued aggression, siege, and ongoing crimes against the Yemeni people.

According to MNA, the Yemeni military official warned the Saudi regime that it would witness a wider and larger operation if it continues aggression and siege against the Yemeni nation.

Malik Khalid Air Base is leading a military coalition in the aggression on Yemen since 2015.

The Saudi kingdom and its allies have been waging the war for more than seven years in a futile attempt to restore Yemen's former Ri-

yadh-allied officials.

Tens of thousands of Yemenis have perished during the aggression that has been accompanied by a crippling siege of the Arab world's already poorest nation.

The Abha airport that is based in a city of the same name and the nearby King Khalid Airbase, located close to the city of Khamis Mushait, are the two locations, from which most of the Saudi-led coalition's attacks against Yemen originate.

The new retaliation came shortly after Saree said the Yemeni defense forces were preparing for a large-scale counteroffensive to avenge the blood of Saleh Ali al-Sammad, the first president of Yemen's Supreme Political Council.

The spokesman made the remarks on the third anniversary of Sammad's martyrdom on April 19, 2018 in an attack by Saudi warplanes against his vehicle in Yemen's al-Hudaydah Province.

**Isfahan's Imam Mosque restoration reaches final stage**

TEHRAN – The project to restore the dome of Isfahan's iconic Imam Mosque has entered its final phase, according to Fereydoun Allahyari, head of the provincial department for the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry.

"Restoration of the historical dome of Imam Mosque, which entailed several stages, including the repair, reconstruction, and substructure of the lower parts, began in 2010 after its tiles went inflated. And now, the reinstallation of the tiles

has been commenced on the huge dome," CHTN quoted Allahyari as saying on Thursday.

The official voiced hope the restoration project, which is carried out at a height of 50 meters, comes to an end within the next four months following more than ten years of efforts.

Originally named Masjed Shah ("the Shah Mosque"), the big, grand, and imposing Imam Mosque stands tall at the southern end of the UNESCO-registered Imam (Naghsh-e Jahan)

Square. Its construction began in 1611 during the rule of the Safavid King Shah Abbas the Great who reigned from 1588 to 1629. The mosque's topmost dome was completed in the last year of his sovereignty.

The monument is not only impressive because of its sheer size and incredible decorations but also helps to get a good impression of the needs and challenges of always ongoing restoration works.

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**Pakistan FM Qureshi visits Imam Raza shrine in Mashhad**

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi paid his respects at the shrine of Imam Raza (AS) in Mashhad on Thursday and met the custodian of Astan Quds Razavi Ahmed Marvi.

The meeting focused on the need for unity among Muslim world and upholding the reverence of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

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**China seeks to balance U.S. naval power, Turkish expert says**

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**

TEHRAN – A Turkish political pundit says that China tries to curb the U.S. naval power by developing an alternative route to the U.S. energy corridor sovereignty in West Asia.

"China also purposes such as, balancing the U.S. naval power by developing an alternative route to the U.S. energy corridor sovereignty, to shorten the route that takes Middle Eastern (West Asia) oil to Chinese ports and to facilitate access to oil," Tahsin Yamak tells the Tehran Times.

Yamak, expert on international political economy, says China is to increase its influence in West Asia by "deploying near the Strait of Hormuz and disabling the Strait of Malacca by building strategic ports."

On April 16, the White House welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide's visit to the United States who was the first foreign leader to visit Washington since Joe Biden was elected president. It was announced that the cooperation in the region would be strengthened.

The talks provided Biden, a Democrat, a chance to work further on his pledge to revitalize U.S. alliances that had frayed under his Republican predecessor Donald Trump.

China topped the agenda, underscoring Japan's central role in U.S. efforts to face Beijing.

Meanwhile, China is extending its influence in West Asia through cooperation agreements with regional powers.

"The Strategic Cooperation Agreement, signed between China and Iran on March 27, 2021, is important in achieving China's goal under OBOR," Yamak says.

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## Iran only backs Yemen politically, Foreign Ministry says

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN**— The Ministry of Foreign Affairs **d e s k** issued a statement on Friday declaring Iran's support for United Nations efforts to bring an end to the war in Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition.

In the statement, the ministry reiterated that the Islamic of Republic of Iran only provides political support to the Yemenis against the Saudi-led invasion.

The statement came after former petroleum minister Rostam Ghasemi claimed Iran provides military advice to the Yemenis.

Since the start of the Saudi-led war on Yemen in March 2015 Iran has been pushing for an end to the war on Yemen, which the United Nations has described as the worst humanitarian disaster in the contemporary history.

## U.S. willing to lift only financial and oil sanctions: WSJ

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — As the nuclear negotiations are **d e s k** progressing in Vienna, there are so much to be discussed. It seems that the main dispute is over the specifics. Iran insists on removing all sanctions, but the U.S. has shown a positive signal to removing oil and finance sanctions only.

According to people familiar with the matter, the Biden administration has indicated that it is willing to ease sanctions against crucial elements of Iran's economy, such as oil and finance, in order to further narrow gaps in nuclear talks.

Despite the progress, senior diplomats have warned that weeks of tough talks over the 2015 nuclear deal lie ahead, and that progress is shaky. Domestic politics in Washington and Tehran, as well as Iran's refusal to meet directly with the U.S., complicate the talks in Vienna.

Senior officials concluded five days of talks in Vienna this week, with delegations returning home until negotiations resume next week. According to those involved in the negotiations, progress has been made as the U.S. has set out more clearly the contours of the sanctions relief it is willing to provide.

Tw people connected to the delegates reported that the United States is willing to lift terror sanctions against Iran's central bank, national oil and tanker firms, and other primary economic sectors such as steel and aluminum. According to a senior European official, Washington has also indicated future sanctions relief for industries such as textiles, automobiles, transportation, and insurance, all of which Iran was expected to benefit from under the 2015 deal.

According to people familiar with the matter, U.S. officials in Vienna summarized the forms of sanctions relief being discussed, but did not provide a specific proposal.

The two countries disagree over Iran's request that the United States remove its broad "international terrorist group" classification of the IRGC. According to internal sources, the U.S. is not currently considering lifting terror sanctions against the IRGC.

According to officials, the United States' designation of Iran's Leader Seyed Ali Khamenei's office as a terrorist organization is also likely to cause friction.

An Iranian official said a return to the nuclear agreement would only end 800 new U.S. sanctions and terror designations, just about half the 1,500 that Iran estimates have been imposed on its economic sectors, institutions, companies and individuals.

## Iran has not made any irreversible nuclear moves: U.S. general

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — A top U.S. general said on Thursday **d e s k** that Iran had not done anything in its nuclear program that was irreversible, Reuters reported.

"They've done nothing that is irreversible," Marine General Kenneth McKenzie, head of the U.S. Central Command, told reporters.

Since May 2019, one year after the Trump administration quit the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran has removed bans on its nuclear activities in response to the U.S. abrogation of the agreement and imposition of primary and secondary sanctions.

In late 2020, the Iranian parliament approved a legislation obliging the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to speed up nuclear activities as the United States is refusing to lift illegal sanctions on Iran. For example, it asked the AEOI to enrich uranium to the purity of 20 percent and install advanced centrifuges and suspend the voluntary Additional Protocol to the NPT.

When voting for the legislation, the Iranian parliament gave the U.S. side some time to remove sanctions. However, it said if it did not do so Iran would take such steps.

Also, in response to the sabotage operation at the Natanz nuclear facility on April 11, for which Israel's Mossad intelligence service is the prime suspect, Iran decided to enrich uranium to 60 percent and replace damaged IR1 centrifuges with advanced ones.

Despite all these moves, Iran has been insisting that if the U.S. lifts illegal sanction, it will reverse its remedial measures.

Hopes are rising for a possible revival of the 2015 nuclear agreement as the new Biden administration has expressed willingness to return to the multilateral agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA — the four permanent members of the UN Security Council — plus Germany have been holding talks in Vienna to resuscitate the agreement. The sides plan to meet in Vienna next week.

On Wednesday, a senior State Department official told reporters that there had some progress during the second round of indirect talks with Iran. "There are still disagreements, in some cases pretty important ones," the official said, according to Al Arabiya.

Asked about claims by Israel that the U.S. was not fully transparent about revitalizing the nuclear deal, the official pushed back and said this was not true.

In a report on April 18, AXIOS reported Israeli military intelligence and senior officials in the Mossad briefed a meeting of the security cabinet that talks in Vienna will lead to the U.S. returning to the JCPOA, two officials who attended the meeting said.

The Israeli regime is pressing the Biden administration not to take the sanctions pressure off Iran.

The two intelligence agencies gave similar assessments on where the Vienna talks stand, AXIOS said.

"We are not very optimistic to say the least," a senior Israeli official who attended the meeting said. "We will not be surprised if within weeks the U.S. and other world powers sign a deal with Iran."

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has told "Fox News Sunday" that the Vienna talks were "constructive" and that there is a real effort to get back to mutual compliance of the 2015 nuclear deal.

In the coming two weeks the Israeli national security adviser Meir Ben Shabbatt, IDF chief of staff Aviv Kochavi, head of Israeli military intelligence Tamir Hayman and Mossad director Yossi Cohen will visit Washington for talks with their counterparts on Iran, officials told AXIOS.

# CENTCOM chief: Iran 'currently possesses one of the most capable militaries' in West Asia

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Two days **d e s k** after his admission that the U.S. has lost air superiority to Iran, Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Gen. Kenneth McKenzie spoke at a press conference held at the Pentagon on Thursday, reiterating that Iran knows how to use advanced military equipment.

Responding to a question about the range and precision of the Iranian military equipment, McKenzie stated that the Iranian military equipment has grown both qualitatively and quantitatively.

"Over the last five to seven years, the Iranians have made remarkable qualitative improvements in their ballistic missile force, while it has grown quantitatively as well. Their numbers, depending on how you choose to count the weapons, something a little less than 3000 of various ranges. Nonetheless their accuracy has become much better than it used to be. That is very concerning to me."

Elaborating on what he means by that,



he said, "We saw they demonstrated in the attack on Al-Assad air base in January of 2020, where the Iranian missiles generally hit within tens of meters of the targets they chose for them. That is very concerning to me."

He went on to explain significant military achievements by Iran, saying that the Islamic Republic has invested heavily in its drone program, making significant accomplishments over the last five years.

In response to a question about the Iranian nuclear program, he said "They have done nothing that is irreversible up to this point."

In response to a question to clarify what he means about the Iranian nuclear program he said, that is a question for the Department of State, but his brief comment would be that Iran wants to see what happens in the negotiations with the United States.

On Tuesday, April 20, Gen. McKenzie admitted that "For the first time since the Korean War, we are operating without complete air superiority."

## Saudi Arabia has shown 'positive signals' for dialogue, says Iran's Khatibzadeh

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — In a virtual meeting through **d e s k** Clubhouse social media platform, hosted on April 20 by Al-Jazeera analyst Ali Hashem, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh answered questions by reporters from credible media around the world.

The Clubhouse session lasted for 100 minutes.

"It is in the interest of Iran and Saudi Arabia and regional stability and peace that we find a way to resolve disputes," said Khatibzadeh in response to a question about recent reports on possible Iran-Saudi Arabia dialogue.

Khatibzadeh clarified, "We are working on building dialogues on the region," refusing to confirm or deny news of meetings between Saudi and Iranian officials.

He affirmed that Iran always welcomes any positive dialogues between countries in the region and between actors in global politics.

There have always been efforts by Iran to try to create cooperation and dialogue with Saudi Arabia, he remarked.

"I can say that there have been many positive signals from Saudi Arabia as well," he said, stressing that "there is a desire in Iran to restore relations with Riyadh."

The Iranian official pointed out "we have many points for discussion with Saudi Arabia, including the files of Yemen, and Iran has supported from day one internal dialogue in Yemen and supported the efforts of the United Nations there, and we expect Saudi Arabia to help stop this human tragedy and support the efforts of the United Nations."

Khatibzadeh stated that Iran has always played a constructive role in the region.

"We always try to have a strong region, and what happened in Yemen is not because of Iran's policy, but because of Saudi Arabia's war on those countries."

**'Iran doesn't interfere in Lebanon'**

Regarding the situation in Lebanon, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman pointed out that "the situation in Lebanon is like the situation in the rest of the countries of the region, and we are far from Lebanon and we do not interfere with what is happening inside the country."

Khatibzadeh said that he believes the U.S. policy during Donald Trump's presidency was to portray the region as a battlefield.

"Iran is always working to separate the conflict with America from its policy in the region, and we do not want to make the region an arena for conflict with America," the spokesman remarked.

Al-Jazeera analyst Ali Hashem pointed to some published reports that some meetings have been held between Iranian security officials and countries such as Jordan and the UAE, asking whether this is the same regional dialogue that Iran has been seeking for a long time.

In response, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "In our region, there are indigenous and endogenous initiatives and frameworks, such as the letter of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, which was brought to Iran by the Emir of Kuwait, and the Hormuz Peace Initiative, which can be pursued."

**'China is one of Iran's main partners'**

Responding to a question about the envisioned long term cooperation plan between Iran and China, Khatibzadeh noted that the agreement is a roadmap, and it was worked

on for four years, stressing that "this agreement does not reflect on Iran's relations with other countries. Our relationship with China is separate from our relationship with other countries. China is one of our main partners, and it is natural for us to sign such agreements."

**'Verification of sanctions removal takes time'**

Regarding the possible lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran and the Vienna talks, Khatibzadeh explained that "it is natural that we are in a position today that we should verify America's removal of sanctions, and we will not accept the removal of sanctions on paper only, and upon verification we will return to our full commitments to the nuclear agreement."

He added, "We want to verify the removal of sanctions on oil, trade and banking relations, and this is not an easy task and what we are looking at in the Vienna negotiations is to look at how to verify the removal of sanctions."

The spokesman then explained the procedure, stating that the first step is the negotiations with P4+1. "First, we have to negotiate with the 4+1 countries and these countries should negotiate with the U.S., and this needs arrangements to negotiate the way in which the sanctions are lifted."

He also said that nobody can predict the timing of reaching conclusions on the revival of the JCPOA and verification of the lifting of sanctions.

Referring to the temporary agreement between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency on snap inspections within the Additional Protocol to the NPT, which expires in May, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "Iran is in no hurry to negotiate, but at the same time does not want protracted talks."

He continued, "There is always light at the end of the tunnel, but the devil is in the details."

**U.S. failed to turn Iran into Venezuela**

Khatibzadeh also said, "The 'maximum pressure' policy put in place by former U.S. President Donald Trump has failed, and everyone knows that it did not reach its desired results, despite all the losses suffered by our economy and our people."

He continued, "Maximum pressure failed, and they failed to stop the peaceful Iranian nuclear program and failed to make the Iranian economy similar to the Venezuelan economy, and here we are."

He explained why Iran does not care about the U.S. Congress move in continuing the "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran.

"We started to develop the economy and make progress in this regard. Therefore, we do not care about U.S. domestic policy, and if the U.S. Congress wants maximum pressure on us to continue, we are not afraid of that."

**'Nuclear weapon contrary to Iran's ideology'**

Regarding the nature of the Iranian nuclear program, Khatibzadeh stressed that "Iran's position has been very clear from the beginning that it does not aspire to work on building a nuclear weapon, and this issue is contrary to Iran's ideology. That is why Iran has always insisted that its nuclear activities will never be diverted to a weapons program."

**'Iran, Russia have excellent relations'**

On the quality of ties between Tehran and Moscow, the Iranian diplomat said, "We have excellent relations



with Moscow, and we have various joint projects and we expect that there will be a draft of various agreements with Russia, and visits have taken place between officials to reach that."

**Iran supports inter-Afghan talks**

Khatibzadeh also said that "the security and stability of Afghanistan is the security and stability of Iran", and therefore what is happening in Afghanistan has always been important for Iran.

Recalling Iran's support to achieve peace in Afghanistan, the diplomat referred to the Bonn Conference in 2001 in which Iran played a key role in helping establish the government in Afghanistan and helped Afghans to draft their current constitution and promote the rights of various groups, including women, minorities and ethnicities.

He pointed to Iran's approach to the Taliban, saying "The Taliban can be part of Afghanistan's future, but not all of Afghanistan's future" and that is why Iran supports inter-Afghan dialogue.

Regarding a plan by the U.S. to pull out its troops from Afghanistan by September 11, Khatibzadeh said the exit should be done in a responsible way to achieve the desired results. However, he described U.S. policy in Afghanistan as "still vague".

The spokesman also blamed the current situation in Afghanistan for the wrong policies of the United States and called for a responsible U.S. withdrawal.

**'Referendum is the final solution to Palestine'**

In the final part of this virtual conversation, Khatibzadeh was asked several questions by analysts and journalists aware of the issues in Iran and the region.

One question was about the prospects of the disputes between Iran and Israel in which the spokesman said the root of the regional problems lie with the Israeli regime, calling the Israel regime an existential threat to countries and people in the region and a source of terrorism in West Asia.

While insisting that Iran does not recognize the Tel Aviv regime, Khatibzadeh reiterated Iran's long-held position that the final solution to the Palestinian issue lies in holding a referendum with the participation of all original inhabitants of Palestine to determine their fate. He added that the Zionist regime is the main cause of many bloody wars in the region.

## Pakistan FM Qureshi visits Imam Raza shrine in Mashhad

➔ 1 Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah

Mahmood Qureshi paid his respects at the shrine of Imam Raza (AS) in Mashhad on Thursday and met the custodian of Astan Quds Razavi Ahmed Marvi.

The meeting focused on the need for unity among Muslim world and upholding the reverence of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

He said Muslim scholars must play their role in discouraging the growing trend of Islamophobia and expressed satisfaction that the Iranian leadership was committed to working with Pakistan at international level to protect the honor of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Qureshi expressed gratitude to the Iranian government for the special facilities being provided to Pakistani visitors as thousands come every year for the pilgrimage of shrines of Imams.

Writing on his Twitter account, Qureshi said, "Humbled to pay my respects at the Shrine of Hazrat Imam Raza (AS), praying for peace and prosperity of and for unity of the Muslim Ummah. Pakistan is grateful to Iran for the excellent arrangements for

more than half a million Pakistani Zaireen who visit Mashhad every year."

The custodian of Astan Quds Razavi thanked the foreign minister for launching a comprehensive policy for the convenience of the pilgrims.

Pakistan's ambassador to Tehran Rahim Hayat Qureshi and consul general in Mashhad were also present.

Earlier, the foreign minister was received by the Deputy governor general Khorasan Razavi on his arrival at Mashhad airport from Tehran.

**Zarif calls talks with Qureshi 'excellent'**

Before departing to Mashhad, Qureshi held talks with senior Iranian officials including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Zarif called his talks with his Pakistani counterpart "excellent".

Describing Qureshi as "my brother and friend" on his Twitter message on Wednesday night, Zarif said during the Pakistani chief diplomat's visit to Iran the two countries "opened new border crossing and signed MOU on border markets."

Zarif also said the two countries of Iran and Afghanistan "agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation and regional coordination on Afghanistan, Palestine, multilateralism, and fighting anti-Muslim bigotry."

Foreign Minister Qureshi also wrote a similar tweet, saying, "Great to meet brother Javad Zarif for a multi-faceted discussion on trade, connectivity, cultural cooperation, establishment of border sustenance marketplaces, opening up new border crossings and greater people-to-people. Together we will work towards curbing the spread of Islamophobia."

In his meeting with President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday, Qureshi and the Iranian president exchanged views on the ways to strengthen the two countries' relations.

Qureshi, who visited Tehran for an official visit on Tuesday, conveyed greetings on behalf of the Pakistani leadership to Rouhani and lauded the Iranian president's role in leading the nation during his tenure, a Pakistani Foreign Office statement said, according to the Dawn.

"Qureshi discussed with President Dr Rou-

hani the ways and means to strengthen close bilateral relations, rooted in shared history, culture, faith and language," according to the press release. He also underlined Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision to strengthen ties with Iran in diverse fields with an emphasis on expanding mutually beneficial economic cooperation and development.

**"Commitment to deepen relations with Iran"**

On Twitter, Qureshi said he had shared with the Iranian president Pakistan's commitment to deepen relations with Iran in trade, investment, connectivity and border management for mutual economic development.

On Wednesday, Qureshi also met the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

During their conversation, Qureshi highlighted the excellent Pakistan-Iran relations and reiterated Islamabad's commitment to strengthen ties.

Speaking about parliamentary cooperation, the minister emphasized the importance of frequent exchanges to develop common understanding on various issues.



## SPORTS

## Rostami wins gold at Asian Weightlifting Championships

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Kinoush Rostami claimed a gold medal at the 2020 Asian Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Thursday.

Rostami won a silver medal in the snatch with a lift of 167kg in the 89kg weight class.

The Iranian also won a silver at the clean and jerk by lifting 206kg.

Rostami, Rio 2016 Olympic gold medalist, lifted a total of 373kg to finish first.

Kazakhstan's Nurgissa Adiletuly won the silver medal with a total of 372kg and the bronze medal went to Sarvarbek Zafarjonov from Uzbekistan who lifted 368kg.

The rescheduled 2020 Asian Weightlifting Championships (AWC) are taking place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from April 16-25, 2021.

## Iranian woman volleyball player Shirtari joins CD Aves

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran international setter Negin Shirtari joined Portuguese volleyball club CD Aves.

Shirtari, 23, represented Iran volleyball team in the 2019 Asian Women's Volleyball Championship, where the Persians finished in seventh place.

She is the first Iranian woman player to join a Portuguese team.

Iranian men volleyball players Mohammadreza Beik and Ehsan Ahmadi currently play for Sporting Clube das Caldas.

Komeil Akbari also plays for Castelo da Maia.

Iranian women volleyball players have already started to play at the European leagues.

Maedeh Borhani, Zeinab Giveh, Farnoosh Sheikhhi and Mahsa Saberi have played abroad.

## Sepahan edge Nassaji: IPL

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Sepahan football team defeated struggling Nassaji 1-0 on Matchday 21 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Thursday.

Ehsan Haji Safi scored the solitary goal of the match in the 25th minute with a long-range shot.

Sepahan defender Mohammad Nejhadmehdi was sent off in the 45th minute.

Aluminum and Paykan shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw in Arak. Mohammad Khodabandelou was on target for the visiting team in the 43rd minute and Hamed Pakdel scored for Aluminum after the hour mark.

Naft Masjed Soleyman defeated Mes Rafsanjan courtesy of a goal from Sasan Hosseini in the 59th minute.

Sepahan sit top of the table with 44 points, three points ahead of Persepolis who have one game in hands.

## Iranian trio shortlisted for AFC Int'l Player of Week

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Three Iranian players were shortlisted for the AFC International Player of the Week.

Mehdi Taremi, Milad Mohammadi and Ali Gholizadeh are vying with Ritsu Doan (Arminia Bielefeld, Japan), Sam Kerr (Chelsea, Australia), Yui Hasegawa (AC Milan, Japan) and Parvizjon Umarboev (Lokomotiv Plovdiv, Tajikistan) to win the award.

**Mehdi Taremi (FC Porto, Iran)**

74 minutes, 1 goal, 8 duels won, 2 interceptions (1-0 v Nacional)

Five days after his sensational UEFA Champions League goal against Chelsea, last week's winner Mehdi Taremi was at it again in league action, this time chopping off a clearance from Nacional goalkeeper António Filipe before tucking away the winning goal in a 1-0 triumph. His third in as many matches.

**Milad Mohammadi (KAA Gent, Iran)**

90 minutes, 2 assists, 89% pass accuracy, 88% duels won (7-2 v Zulte-Waregem)

A blistering display from the Iranian left-back, who set up two goals, won 15 of 17 duels and barely missed a pass as Genk ran riot to put seven goals past Zulte-Waregem in the final went of the regular season in Belgium.

**Ali Gholizadeh (RSC Charleroi, Iran)**

89 minutes, 1 goal, 44 passes completed, 7 successful dribbles (2-3 v Eupen)

After a strong start, Charleroi's Belgian Pro League season ultimately petered out to a 13th-place finish, but no one would have been disappointed in the efforts of Ali Gholizadeh, who curled home a lovely goal to cap a memorable individual campaign.

## Iran U21 volleyball team coaching staff completed

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Behrouz Ataei, head coach of the Iranian men's U21 volleyball team, has recruited coaching staff following a consensus decision made at the meeting with IRIVF President Mohammad Reza Davarzani.

Ataei, 51, met the IRIVF President and Secretary General Milad Taghavi to discuss a key point on forming coaching staff of the Iranian men's U21 team and the relevant matters. After the meeting, IRIVF has announced staff coaches and technical staff to take charge of the squad in preparation for their title defense of the World Championship to be held later this year.

They comprise Behrouz Ataei (head coach), Mostafa Karkhaneh (Technical Advisor), Alireza Toloukian, Hossein Kazemini Mehran Zare, Vahid Sadeghi (coaches), Hossein Khuryani and Amin Ali Akbari (Statisticians), Mehrdad Sa'adat Mehr (Therapist), Mahmoud Mohammadi (Masseur), and Akbar Mohammad (Team Manager).

In 2019, Behrouz Ataei steered the Iranian men's U21 team to the historic World Championship title in Riffa, Bahrain after pulling off a hard-fought 3-2 win against Italy in the final showdown.

The Iranian national men's U21 team will commence their intensive training on May 1, 2021 to get ready for the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship, which will be held in Italy and Bulgaria between September 22 and October 3, 2021.

Among the qualified 16 teams, Iran and Korea are the only two teams from Asia to strut their stuff in the top-tier championship.

## Iron dumb

## Israel's failure to intercept Syrian missile highlights weak spot of air defenses

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Top-secret Israeli nuclear reactor of Dimona hit global headlines Thursday after a mysterious missile coming from Syria landed in the vicinity of the facility, setting off air raid sirens and causing Israeli officials to give conflicting reports on what happened near the nuclear facility.

The Israeli military identified the projectile as an SA-5 surface-to-air missile fired by Syrian forces against Israeli aircraft. An Israeli military spokesman admittedly said that the missile reached the Dimona area, 200 km (125 miles) south of the Syrian border.

Although the spokesman said the missile did not hit the reactor and exploded some 30 km (19 miles) away, the fact that a missile flew from Syrian territories all the way to Israel's secretive nuclear reactor raised alarm bells in Tel Aviv, prompting Israeli official to acknowledge their failure in intercepting the missile.

The Syrian missile that fell near Dimona was a sizeable blast that could be heard in Jerusalem, about 150km (93 miles) away from the site, according to Al Jazeera.

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said Israel's anti-missile systems had attempted to intercept the SA-5 but were unsuccessful.

Commenting on Thursday's incident, he said, "In most cases, we achieve other results. This is a slightly more complex case. We will investigate it and move on."

Gantz claimed that the missile landed deep into Israel as a result of errant Syrian anti-aircraft fire. The Israeli defense minister's remarks further exacerbated concerns over the effectiveness of Israel's much-vaunted air defense capabilities.

This failure happened in the midst of Israeli military buildup over the past weeks. Israeli media have boasted about Israel's efforts to strengthen air defenses around the Dimona facility and the Red Sea port of Eilat in anticipation of a possible long-range missile or drone attack, according to Reuters. Israelis have been boasting about their air defense systems, including the Iron Dome air defense system, which was designed to



intercept and destroy rockets and artillery shells. However, the system failed to protect Israel from missiles and rockets, bringing into focus the shortcomings and inabilities of Israel's military.

Israeli military officials have sought to portray their capabilities in the field of air defense as superior and impervious to attacks. But Thursday's missile proved otherwise. They are now focusing on how a Syrian missile traveled more than 120 km to land in a close distance of a heavily fortified nuclear reactor thought to be producing or hosting nuclear warheads while their various air defenses failed to intercept it.

The Israeli failure heavily damaged the reputation of Israel's air defense capabilities given that the missile entered Israel's aerospace amid heightened tensions with Iran, which accused Tel Aviv of acts of sabotage against various Iranian targets including a key Iranian uranium enrichment facility. In addition, earlier this month, Israel targeted Iranian commercial ship Saviz in the Red Sea exactly on the same day Iran and the P4+1 - Russia, China, France, and the UK plus Germany - resumed talks in physical

format in the Austrian capital of Vienna to revive a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Israeli commentators criticized the government of Benjamin Netanyahu for demonstrating incompetence in thwarting the missile flying toward Dimona, calling on the government to tell them the truth that there is no functioning government in Israel.

Eran Etzion, a former Israeli diplomat who served as deputy head of the National Security Council in the Prime Minister's Office, echoed this call on Thursday, describing the Dimona missile as a "wake-up call" for Israel.

"Israel is in a dangerous twilight zone - there is no cabinet, no functioning government, the Knesset is paralyzed, there is no Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, [the attorney general of Israel, Avichai] Mandelblit is a salt man in Sodom, the High Court is leaning aside like the Tower of Pisa in high gear," Etzion wrote in an op-ed for the Israeli Zman news website, according to Al Mayadeen.



"Protection of national security, involving persons, property, society and the environment, from harmful consequences of sharing and releasing classified nuclear information is the overall objective of a Member State especially when cooperates with the Agency or any other States. Indeed, such information should be classified, protected and secured with appropriate measures by the IAEA," Gharibabadi stated.

He added, "Protecting the confidential information, which is made available to the Agency by means of verification activities, is crucial to ensuring, inter-alia, the security of sensitive information. Therefore, public release of and/or access to classified safeguards information, especially regarding nuclear materials, activities and facilities of a Member State, is a very highly sensitive matter precisely related to the rights and interests of that State including on the subject of its national security."

Gharibabadi noted that Iran considers protecting the confidentiality of information as a fundamental issue.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran acknowledges the fact that protection of confidential information has long been a fundamental issue in the deliberations about the Agency's internal regulations. However, despite existing normative regulations, the leak of or unauthorized access to confidential information of the Agency in the last two decades, has been a critical challenge on the way of cooperation between the Agency and the Islamic Republic of Iran," Gharibabadi stated, noting, "During the past two decades, despite all

progress in this field, Iran's concerns about the lack of proper implementation of the confidentiality obligations by the Agency have been frequently notified, which are yet to be properly addressed."

According to Gharibabadi, the responsibility for protecting confidential information lies with the IAEA.

"Undoubtedly, the Agency is responsible for the preservation and protection of the confidential information and Iran has the right to request the Agency for placing any supportive policies, plans and procedures or revising the existing ones in this regard. In fact, the credibility of the verification regime and the future prospect of cooperation between Member States and the Agency absolutely relies on the policy and ability of the Agency in protecting the confidentiality of safeguards information," he continued.

Gharibabadi expressed concern about the leakage of the information that Iran provided to international inspectors in good-will.

"Disclosure of confidential information, especially regarding Iran's nuclear activities and facilities, which has been provided to the Agency's inspectors in good-will and as a transparency and confidence-building measure, is of serious concern," the Iranian ambassador said.

He added, "A State may request the classification of a particular document as safeguards confidential, and that in no event would such a document be declassified without that State's consent. Through these documents, the Board also endorsed that the Agency Statute and the Staff Regulations and Rules impose on Agency current and former staff members an obligation not to disclose any confidential information known to them due to their official position. The Agency itself, as an international person with juridical personality, has international duties, the breach or non-observance of which may engage Agency responsibility."

The Iranian ambassador underlined, "Providing the Agency with necessary information and monitoring and verification tools should not be done at the cost of compromising the rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran and obligations of the Agency for preservation and protection of sensitive and confidential information."

## Deputy FM of Iran meets OPCW director-general

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand met with Fernando Arias, the director-general of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

During the meeting, the Iranian diplomat highlighted the importance of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

"It is incumbent upon member states to live up to their obligations under the convention regarding the exchange of chemical materials and equipment for peaceful purposes," Baharvand said, according to the statement.

Baharvand further stressed the importance of removing trade barriers between

member states and not imposing economic sanctions on one another.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 25th annual conference of the OPCW States Parties in The Hague.

During their discussions, the two sides exchanged views on ways of enhancing cooperation between Iran and the OPCW.

He reiterated that Iran has been the main victim of chemical arms in the contemporary era.

"Although more than three decades have passed since the bitter experience of chemical weapons being used by the regime of [former Iraqi dictator] Saddam Hussein against Iranian military troops as well as civilians and even Iraqis themselves, still this harrowing memory cannot be forgotten as those injured in the chemical attacks are still suffering, especially at a time when

they have numerous problems gaining full access to drugs and medical equipment due to unilateral and cruel sanctions," said the Iranian official.

"Iran condemns the use of chemical weapons in any part of the world and under any circumstances, and, at the same time, respects the ideals of the Chemical Weapons Convention," Baharvand added.

"Undoubtedly, it is not possible to have a world free from chemical arms without completely destroying chemical weapons arsenals," he noted.

He also expressed hope the United States, as the only country to officially possess chemical weapons, would make good on its commitments and destroy its chemical arms as soon as possible under the full supervision of the OPCW.

He called on the OPCW director-general



to keep using his good offices to make it possible for Iranians wounded in chemical attacks to gain full access to all medicines and equipment required, and to neutralize cruel sanctions imposed in that domain.

Baharvand then called on the OPCW to maintain its technical and expertise-oriented nature, and warned certain countries against using OPCW mechanisms for political gains.



## Over \$1.9b of agricultural projects inaugurated

➔1 The inaugurated projects include some pressurized irrigation systems, several projects for increasing irrigation efficiency and water consumption management, some fish and shrimp breeding plants, improvement and organization of fishing ports, and several dairy production units.

Back in February, Rouhani had inaugurated 372 greenhouse projects as well as two livestock complexes worth 49 trillion rials (about \$1.16 billion) in the 47th series of inauguration ceremonies in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).



The mentioned projects, inaugurated concurrently with the Fajr Ten-Day celebrations (from January 31 until February 10), created direct job opportunities for 11,850 people.

Of the total investment made in the mentioned projects 15.4 trillion rials (about \$366.6 million) was provided by the private sector and the rest was made by the government.

Also in July 2020, Agriculture Ministry had announced plans for creating 2,500 hectares of new greenhouses in the country.

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

Iran is situated in a dry plateau with limited water resources, so most of the country's development projects in the agriculture sector have been focused on decreasing and managing water consumption by introducing new irrigation methods.

## Monthly electricity consumption up 22%

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Electricity consumption increased 22 percent in Iran during the past Iranian calendar month (March 21- April 21), as compared to the same month in the past year, the managing director of Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (TAVANIR) announced.

Mohammad-Hassan Motevalizadeh also stressed the necessity of power consumption management in the country, and said, "Based on a constructive, the buildings of the Energy Ministry are required to save 50 percent of their electricity consumption, and this procedure is being followed in other governmental bodies."

He further announced the sending of SMS and educational brochures to high-consuming subscribers and said, "God willing, we will pass this year with the least problems through cooperation of the people."

Referring to the increase in electricity consumption due to the arrival of premature heat, he added, "At the same time, the electricity generation by the hydropower plants has decreased by about 40 percent due to lack of rainfall."

Previously, the managing director of TAVANIR had announced a 33-percent increase in electricity prices for high consuming subscribers who would not reduce their consumption by the Iranian calendar month Ordibehesht (began on April 22).



Motevalizadeh had said the increase in electricity prices will be done according to the government's decree in recent years.

He said that based on the "power of Hope" program the electricity subscribers are categorized in three groups of high consuming, normal consuming and low consuming, adding that after the implementation of this program seven million low-consuming subscribers were subject to a 100-percent discount, and the number of the high consuming subscribers was decreased by six percent.

He said, "Since the start of this program in last August, the subscribers have had some good cooperation with us, and we hope that the hot season coming this cooperation will increase."

Implementation of a program by the Iranian Energy Ministry for rewarding efficient electricity subscribers with a 100 percent discount on their bills, has reduced the number of high-consuming subscribers across the country by 6.1 percent.

According to TAVANIR, this program called "Power of Hope" was aimed to change the attitudes of household consumers towards the proper use of energy resources and consequently protect the environment.

The Energy Ministry started the implementation of the mentioned program in mid-August 2020.

In late August 2020, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian had announced that the Power of Hope program was expected to reduce the country's electricity consumption by 10 percent.

"This program will be implemented to both reward low-consuming subscribers and to encourage others to consume less and it is expected to reduce power consumption by 10 percent," Ardakanian said in a press conference on the occasion of the Government Week (August 23-29, 2020).

The minister noted that according to a cabinet decision, all the subscribers that cooperated well with the Energy Ministry's consumption management programs this summer are to be awarded.

"To do so, home subscribers were divided into three categories, which include low-consumers, normal-consumers, and high-consumers," he said.

Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi announced on Monday that the implementation of the "Power of Hope" program has increased the number of low consuming subscribers by four percent.

He said, "It seems that the Power of Hope program is on its way and the subscribers have been informed about this issue."

Mashhadi went on to say that in the warm seasons (beginning of June to the end of September), the consumption pattern changes, i.e. the low-consumption pattern for normal areas increases from 200 kWh to 300 kWh and from 80 kWh to 100 kWh.

# Annual trade with neighbors exceeds \$36.5b

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran's non-oil trade with its 15 neighbors reached \$36.502 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Iran traded 82.535 million tons of commodities with the neighboring countries in the mentioned year, Rohollah Latifi said.

Last year, the country exported 67.84 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$20.357 billion to the neighboring countries, while importing 14.7 million tons of goods worth \$16.145 billion.

Iraq was Iran's top export destination by importing 25.67 million tons of commodities worth \$7.448 billion from the Islamic Republic, while the lowest volume of exports was made to Bahrain with only \$8.473 million, according to Latifi.

After Iraq, the main export destinations for Iranian products and goods were the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, and Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the highest volume of



Iran's imports from neighboring countries was made from the UAE with 5.136 million tons of goods worth \$9.757 billion, and the lowest volume of imports belonged to

Bahrain from which only \$946,808 worth of goods were shipped in.

According to the official, despite the difficulties created by the outbreak of coro-

## Iran oil exports in April still above 2020 levels: report

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian crude oil exports in April have remained above the level of exports during the same period in 2020, Reuters reported, stating that this is an indication of recovery in Iran's oil exports as talks for reviving the 2015 nuclear deal progress.

According to Reuters, Iranian oil exports have risen since late 2020, despite U.S. sanctions.

In this regard, Geneva-based Petro-Logistics told Reuters that the Islamic Republic's crude oil exports in April had eased month-on-month so far to around 500,000 barrels per day (bpd), but were high relative to 2020.

The firm initially put March exports at less than 600,000 bpd. "Exports have continued at these elevated levels longer than we expected," said Petro-Logistics Chief Executive Daniel Gerber. "And with constructive talks occurring in Vienna, we may never see a return to the 2020 lows."

Tehran has been negotiating its conditions for reviving the nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with the world powers since

early April and the talks will resume next week based on the progress achieved so far.

A source at another company that monitors oil shipments has told Reuters that exports in the first two weeks of April looked to be just below 500,000 bpd, down from 600,000 bpd from March, but the figure could be revised.

"These export levels can come in very lumpy, and I would not draw any conclusion yet," he said.

There is no definitive figure for Iranian exports, Petro-Logistics and other firms assess them by tracking tanker shipments.

Iran has been ramping up its oil production over the past few months following the recent developments in the White House and also the recovery of the global markets from the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The latest report by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) put Iranian crude output for March at 2.304 million barrels per day indicating a 137,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the previous month.

Based on OPEC data, the country's average crude output



in the first quarter of 2021 stood at 2.190 million barrels per day indicating a near 197,000-bpd rise compared to the figure for the last quarter of 2020.

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

## Annual steel ingot output exceeds 22.5m tons

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's major steel producers have managed to produce over 22.54 million tons of steel ingots in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), registering an eight percent rise year on year.

As IRNA reported, the mentioned companies produced over 2.04 million tons of steel ingots in the last month of the previous year (February 19-March 20), 17 percent more than the figure for the same month in the preceding year.

As reported, Mobarakeh Steel Company had the best performance with a production of 9.8 million tons of the mentioned product



while the highest production growth was registered by Sirjan Steel World Company with 141 percent growth.

The country's major steel producers also manufactured 14.588 million tons of steel products last year to register a three-percent rise year on year.

Mobarakeh Steel Company was the biggest producer of such products among the country's top companies with 8.032 million tons of output, followed by Sirjan Steel World Company.

Rebars, rectangles, belts and coils, wide sheets, galvanized sheets, and beams were the main steel products manufactured by the mentioned companies.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all

the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

Iran is currently the tenth largest steel-maker in the world and is estimated to climb to seventh place by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

According to the former Acting Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Hossein Modares Khiabani, the production capacity of the country's steel chain increased from 123 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 230 million tons in the previous year (ended on March 20).

## Manufacturing of 16 major industrial products increases noticeably

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — As announced by Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, manufacturing of 16 major industrial products was increased noticeably in the country during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

The ministry's released data indicates that despite the severe sanctions and restrictions imposed on businesses by the coronavirus condition, 16 out of the 25 selected industrial items have seen an increase in production in the previous year due to the efforts of the country's producers.

Last year, the production of passenger cars increased by 19.1 percent and the production of other products in this field, including vans with an increase of 6.5 percent, production of combine harvesters with an increase of about 44.5 percent and production of tractors with an increase of 15.9 percent was outstanding.

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

Last year the indigenization of the knowledge for the production of \$3.2 billion worth of such equipment in various provinces was on the agenda, which increased to more than \$3.5 billion, the official stated.

He mentioned investment in industrial sectors and the increasing trend of production of important industrial prod-



ucts as measures taken by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry in the previous year which was named the year of "Surge in Production" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei.

"The country's industrial sector was able to grow significantly in a situation where the outbreak of the coronavirus had created unfavorable conditions for the country's productive sector; fortunately, we have witnessed a good leap in the production of products needed by people to fight this disease," the official stressed.

## TSE witnesses 3% drop of its main index in a week

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 36,000 points, or three percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.207 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Social Security Investment Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Iran Khodro Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company,

and Bank Mellat were the most widely followed indices.

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

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

After several days of decline, TEDPIX had risen 2,824 points to 1.219 million on Tuesday.

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.





# China seeks to balance U.S. naval power, Turkish expert says

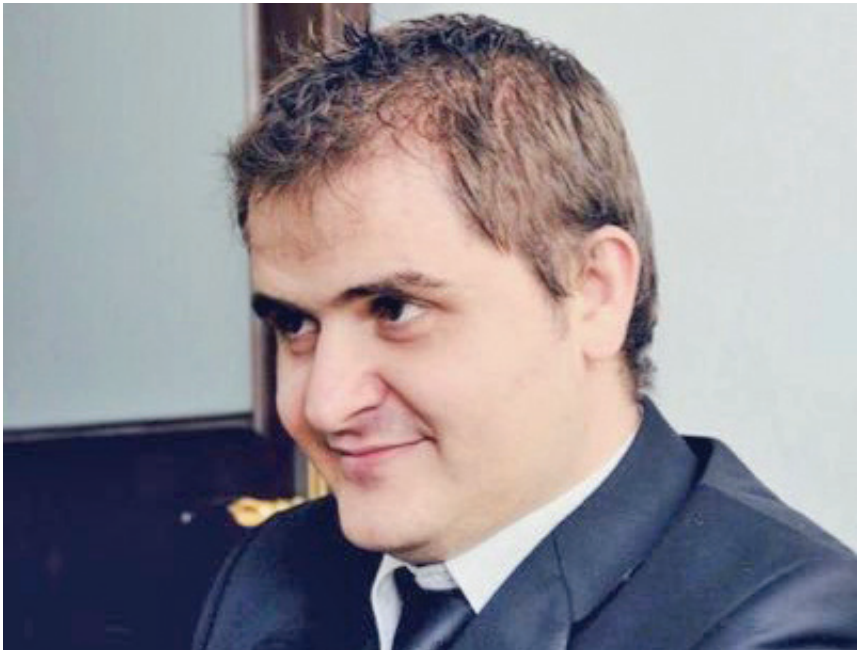
➔ **1** Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you see Iran-Turkey economic relations? Do you think these two countries can help to build a regional economic bloc in the future?**

Although there is a strong interaction between Iran and Turkey in many areas, the basic dynamics of the relations are “competition” and “cooperation”. According to this, if “cooperation” is forefront in relations, economic relations also increase. If “competition” is prominent in relations, economic relations also decrease. Of course, we should also say that there are cyclical events that support and/or hinder this situation. In the energy trade between Turkey and Iran, the international sanctions imposed on Iran have a significant impact, and this determines the volume of economic relations. Even in the process of continued sanctions against Iran, Turkey continues to import natural resources from Iran. However, we also see that economic relations contracted during these periods. For example, in the 2013-2015 periods when international sanctions were imposed on Iran, the foreign trade volume between the two countries decreased from 14.9 billion dollars to 10.2 billion dollars. After the Trump administration announced that it would impose sanctions on Iran’s oil industry, the volume of 9.7 billion fell to \$ 3 billion from 2018 to 2020. As can be seen from the numbers, the economic relations between the two countries are of low intensity and far behind their potential. With the end of the Trump administration in 2021, an important opportunity has emerged for the strengthening of relations between the two countries. In this process, I think that diversifying foreign trade and increasing foreign trade volume should be an important agenda for both countries. On the other hand, increasing the economic relations between the two countries both in terms of quantity and quality has an important potential for the development of regional relations. The economic cooperation that is currently ongoing between Iran and Turkey is important to turn into a strategic alliance contained political and social aspects. If this occurs, this situation can provide an important improvement towards the solution of the chronic problems in the Middle East (West Asia) region. This case may ease the solution of many issues such as the Syrian Crisis, humanitarian immigration from the Middle East (West Asia) and Asia to Europe, and global terrorism.

**Do you believe the Chinese Belt and Road initiative can lead to a rapprochement between countries in the region, including Arab states, Iran, and Turkey?**

The “One Belt One Road Initiative”, which was shared with the world public in 2013 and also called the “Modern Silk Road”, is an important project to expand China’s economic sustainability, cultural engagement and political influence. With the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), Maritime Silk Road (MSR) and Digital Silk Road (DSR) projects to be implemented within this project; China aims to make sustainable economic development and to strengthen regional integration with the Middle East (West Asia) and Europe, especially Asia-Pacific. China also purposes such as balancing the U.S. naval power by



developing an alternative route to the U.S. energy corridor sovereignty, shortening the route that takes Middle Eastern (West Asia) oil to Chinese ports and to facilitate access to oil, to increase its influence in the Middle East (West Asia) by deploying near the Strait of Hormuz and disabling the Strait of Malacca by building strategic ports. The Strategic Cooperation Agreement, signed between China and Iran on March 27, 2021, is important in achieving China’s goal under OBOR. The relations that China is trying to strengthen with other Middle Eastern (West Asian) countries, especially Saudi Arabia, are also related to the Belt and Road Initiative. In response to these long-term moves by China, it is important that the new U.S. President Biden welcomed the Japanese Prime Minister Suga as the first foreign leader, and it was announced that the cooperation in the region would be strengthened. It is understood from this that the USA will seek new collaboration opportunities and initiate moves in line with its goal of balancing China. After the attempts in the Asian region, it is obvious that the USA will direct its route to the Middle East (West Asia) region, where it gives a central role in the context of global hegemony strategy. It is not possible for the USA to allow Chinese expansionism in the Middle East (Middle East) region, where it started to dominate with the Eisenhower Doctrine in the 1950s. The USA has noticed that the passive attitude it has displayed in the region during the Arab Spring is causing it to be in trouble in the future. It is likely that the USA will enter into new collaborations with other (Persian) Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, which is the keystone of the regional balances. In this period, we can say that the struggle for global hegemony between China and the USA will increase. This situation will not allow the One Belt, One Road Initiative to achieve rapprochement and strengthen reconciliation between Middle Eastern (West Asian) countries in the short term.

**What is your comment on the recent meeting between foreign ministers of Israel, the UAE, Greece and Cyprus? Is Israel approaching Turkey’s Mediterranean rivals?**

A: It is possible to see this negotiation process as a continuation of the United Arab Emirates-Israel Peace Agreement

signed between these countries on August 13, 2020. The main purpose of this agreement, led by former U.S. President D. Trump, was to establish a new order in the Middle East (West Asia) centered on Israel’s security. However, with Trump losing the U.S. presidential election on November 3, 2020, this issue lost its popularity and place on the agenda. However, it is understood that the active political figure of the Trump administration era, UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, continues to maintain the position he achieved in this process and the idea of his country being the pioneer of Arab states. As a country with the longest coastline in the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey argues that resources should be determined by the consensus of all the littoral states of equitable sharing. Against Turkey using the legitimate rights stemming from international law, Israel seeks to guarantee its own security by cooperating with Greece and Cyprus and getting more shares in the Eastern Mediterranean. The purpose of Israel and the UAE is, in collaboration with Greece and South Cyprus, it is to ensure that Turkey’s alone in this area. Greece’s opposition to Turkey is already apparent. At this point, this move of Israel and the UAE is ordinary and not surprising. However, it does not seem possible to derive a strategic cooperation model from the regional forum initiative carried out by these countries that have no idea for fair sharing of resources in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**What is the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Turkey’s economy? What were the government’s policies to contain the pandemic?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely damaged human health, employment, and welfare in particular. In the pandemic year 2020, the world economy has decreased significantly, and global poverty and inequality have increased. Turkey’s economy, because of the pandemic, like the rest of the world economy, has had a rough year. Turkey grew by 1.8% in 2020 and has been one of the few countries that have been successful in this field. Turkey has announced packages containing various fiscal measures such as minimum wage support for employees, short-term work allowance, prohibition of dismissal, tax

deductions, providing direct support to strategic organizations. Incentive programs and public-backed credit practices to ensure economic sustainability have put pressure on inflation. The monetary policy moves of the Central Bank of Turkey to ensure price stability was not sufficient. Another problematic area throughout this period was the rise in exchange rates. The moves towards providing currency stability have not been successful due to the significant decrease in gross reserves. Exchange rates continued to rise in the pandemic year. Another negative impact of the Covid-19 Crisis on Turkey’s economy is the increased social expenditures in response to the declining tax revenues have increased the central government’s debt stock and budget deficit. The increase in exchange rates due to the pandemic reflected positively on exports and this situation caused the current account deficit to decline to a certain extent. However, the massive loss in tourism revenues negatively affected the current account balance. Bur, some of this loss was partially compensated by the decrease in oil prices. Turkey in 2020, a \$ 36 billion current account deficit in the foreign trade deficit of \$ 50 billion. Employment creation capacity in this process is greatly reduced in Turkey and despite the partial decrease, unemployment figures remained high. Despite all policy that taken, the Crisis has affected Turkey deeply as in other countries, and its effects still continue.

**Is Turkey going to bet on Eastern economies rather than the dream of joining the European Union? How can Erdogan prioritize Asian economies?**

Firstly, become a member of the EU will not be correct to express or define as a dream for Turkey. Despite all the adaptation efforts to become a member since the AK Party came to power in 2002, a negotiation being conducted with Turkey has been largely disrupted by some EU member states’ political obstacles and the Cyprus problem. Another agenda defining the EU-Turkey relations is cooperation in the area of management of international migration. The main migration routes leading to Western Europe, which is located on an important transit country, Turkey, is one of the main partners in the EU’s management of migration flows. Therefore, due to the high economic interdependence and the ongoing forced cooperation due to migration, Turkey-EU relations will continue in a controlled and pragmatic way. Thus, the EU-Turkey relations take it as a strategic model of economic cooperation would be more appropriate. On the other hand, it is seen that the COVID-19 pandemic causes problems in the global economic system, and this led to transformation. It has been understood in the moves that EU member states have taken against each other that in major crisis situations, the nation-state idea can prevail over the partnership concept. Therefore, models of cooperation with many political preconditions like the EU have lost their former appeal. This is being replaced by new win-win-based cooperation models. In these models, the idea of mutual gain and respect for national sovereignty is at the forefront. Turkey, starting from the closest neighbor of Asian countries, could lead to the development of a local cooperation model.

## Russia to pull back troops from Ukraine border

Russia on Friday begin returning troops to permanent bases inside the country, pulling them back from near the border with Ukraine, Russia’s RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Thursday’s announcement comes after weeks of tensions between Moscow, Kyiv and the latter’s Western allies over a major Russian military build-up near its western border with Ukraine and in annexed Crimea, which reportedly involved tens of thousands of troops.

Russia has argued that the build-up was defensive, while Ukraine – backed by Germany and other Western powers – has accused Moscow of attempting to provoke hostilities.

“I believe the objectives of the snap inspection have been fully achieved. The troops have demonstrated their ability to provide a credible defence for the country,” RIA quoted Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu as saying.

“In this regard, I have decided to complete the inspections in the southern and western military districts,” he added.

The deployments took place against the backdrop of renewed clashes in Ukraine’s conflict-stricken eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, where government forces have battled Russian-backed separatist forces since the rebels seized a swath of territory there in April 2014.

It was not immediately clear whether the rebasing order covered all of the forces involved in the recent military build-up.

The Russian military has not publicly declared the number of additional troops that it has moved, but the European Union’s top diplomat Josep Borrell said after EU foreign ministers were briefed by Ukraine’s foreign minister that the number was higher than 100,000.

According to al Jazeera, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed the announcement.

## India’s COVID cases spiral as health system staggers

India is reporting record number of coronavirus cases – and deaths – amid an alarming shortage of medical oxygen and beds in its hospitals as a brutal second wave of the virus overwhelms its under-funded, fragile healthcare system.

On Friday, the world’s second-most populous nation reported a single-day high of nearly 332,730 new cases and record 2,263 deaths.

Hospitals across northern and western India, including the capital New Delhi, say they are fully occupied and running out of oxygen supplies. The death toll in a devastating fire at a hospital in western India rose to 14 as authorities continue to evacuate coronavirus patients away from the facility’s premises.

According to an official from the Vijay Vallabh Hospital, a spark from an air conditioner triggered the fire, which was exacerbated by the heavy oxygen supply running in the facility’s ICU.

The bodies of victims of the fire were being cremated at a nearby crematorium.

India’s Cadila Healthcare Ltd has received restricted emergency use approval from local regulators to use a Hepatitis C drug as a treatment for moderate COVID-19 in adults, the drugmaker said.

The approval follows promising results from a late-stage study of the drug and comes in the middle of a massive wave of COVID-19 cases in India, which has overwhelmed its health system and left many hospitals short of critical oxygen supplies.

## Israel confirms Syrian missile landed near Dimona nuclear reactor

Israel has acknowledged that its air defenses failed to intercept a missile fired from Syria on Thursday that traversed 125 miles of its highly protected airspace and landed near its secretive Dimona nuclear reactor.

The surface-to-air missile was believed to have been fired by Syrian air defenses against Israeli jets that were bombing a site near Damascus, but the path it flew initially led to speculation that Israel’s most sensitive site may have instead been a target.

The defense minister, Benny Gantz, claimed the missile had landed in Israel as a result of errant Syrian anti-aircraft fire. In doing so he raised concerns about the effectiveness of his country’s vaunted air defense capabilities, which have been entrusted to counter such threats.

Gantz said Israel’s anti-missile systems had attempted to intercept the SA-5 but were unsuccessful. “In most cases we achieve other results. This is a slightly more complex case. We will investigate it and move on,” he said.

Israeli officials claim that the impact of the missile was likely to have been inadvertent, and are now focusing on how its various defense systems failed to intercept it. The missile landed around 20 miles short of the Dimona site, in Israel’s Negev desert.

Israel has some of the most tightly protected airspace in the world and has shot down drones and missiles at various points over the past decade, including during a similar incident in early 2017 in which one Syrian missile downed an Israeli jet and another landed in the country’s north.

## Resistance News

### 100 Palestinian casualties in confrontations at Bab al-Amud

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** TEHRAN—The streets of Occupied Jerusalem witnessed violent confrontations on Thursday evening between rioting Jewish settlers backed by the occupation police and Jerusalemite young men. Dozens of Palestinians were injured in the clashes.

The Palestine Red Crescent said that the latest statistics of clashes in the vicinity of the Old City in Jerusalem amounted to 105 injuries, of which 21 were taken to hospital for treatment, one of whom was hit in his head.

It added that the injuries recorded on the tenth day of Ramadan were described as moderate to minor.

The Israeli police fired stun grenades and rubber bullets at the youths while the Israeli mounted police forces chased citizens in the Sultan Suleiman and Nablus streets and sprayed them with wastewater.

Meanwhile, the settler extremist “Lehava” organization called for a demonstration at the Bab al-Amud.

On Thursday evening, the occupation police arrested 44 Palestinians, including minors.

Furthermore, the Israeli police brutally assaulted two young men and prevented ambulance crews from reaching them.

## Muslim woman burned in acid attack in New York in another hate crime

In yet another disturbing case of anti-Muslim hate crime in the U.S. that has come to light a month later, an unidentified man threw acid on a Muslim woman of Pakistani origin as she walked home.

The incident happened in Long Island, a suburb of New York City, on March 17 when 21-year-old college student Nafiah Ikram and her mother were getting out of their car and the assailant rushed up to them and threw caustic acid, before whisking away.

Nafiah, a medical student at Hofstra University, was immediately rushed to the hospital.

The attack, according to reports quoting the victim’s family, left her severely burned and nearly blind.

A statement from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Muslim civil rights group, said the attack left her hospitalized for 15 days, with severe burns to her face, eyes, neck, and hands.

The screaming caused the acid to go into Ikram’s mouth, preventing her from breathing, according to a GoFundMe set up for the victim.

Her parents, it added, ran to help her, burning their hands and arms in the process.

“He knew how dangerous the acid was,” the GoFundMe said, adding that if the acid had got into her lungs or her parents were not there to call 911, she would have succumbed.

Police have launched a hunt to nab the accused, accord-



ing to reports, exactly a month after the shocking incident took place.

The attack, which comes amidst growing incidents of hate crime targeted against people of color, especially Asian-Americans and African-Americans, has been widely condemned by rights activists in the U.S.

“My whole life changed in a matter of five minutes,” the victim said in an interview to WCBS-TV. “We don’t realise what we have until it’s gone.”

“I can just see colors, but that’s it,” she said in the interview. “I want to know, like, what’s the reason? Like, what

could I have possibly done to somebody?”

While Nafiah has begun to talk again, she struggles to eat or drink, because acid burned her throat, according to her father.

Padma Lakshmi, an Asian-American television celebrity, took to social media to say that she was close to victim’s family.

“This is their only daughter; she has her whole life ahead of her,” Lakshmi wrote. “This is the nightmare of any parent for this to happen to your child.

CAIR is demanding that the attack be investigated as a “hate crime”, although police have appeared reluctant to do that.

“CAIR (New York) is disturbed and shocked at the brutality of this crime, and law enforcement must do everything to apprehend the suspects,” the organization’s Legal Director Ahmed Mohamed said in a statement.

“Our community deserves safety. Amidst the rising hate crimes engulfing the state, it is important that this acid attack by an unknown individual be investigated as a possible hate crime,” it added.

Hofstra University also released a statement, saying it is “shocked by this horrific attack.”

A GoFundMe campaign has so far raised over \$300,000 to help cover Ikram’s medical expenses.

(Source: Press TV)



## Tens of manuscripts on Sadi poetry being kept at Mashhad museum

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A total of 300 manuscript books on Sadi poetry are being kept at the Astan Quds Razavi Museum, a vast cultural heritage exhibition located in the holy shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, northeast Iran. “300 copies of manuscript books containing the works of the Persian poet Sadi is currently being kept at the Astan Quds Razavi Museum,” an official with the museum said on Thursday, IRNA reported.

The official made the remakes on the occasion of the Sadi National Day, adding “the oldest of these manuscripts is one dated only 70 years after Sadi’s death.”

Abu-Muhammad Muslih al-Din bin Abdallah Shirazi, known by his pen-name Sadi, was one of the major Persian poets of the medieval period. Sadi is known as a mystic and metaphysician in the history of Persian literature. He is recognized for the quality of his writings and the depth of his social and moral thoughts. The ancient scholar has gained worldwide fame, not only in the Persian-speaking countries but in western societies, with his poems being quoted in a multitude of sources.



Sadi’s best-known masterpieces are Bustan (The Orchard) completed in 1257 and Gulistan (The Flower Garden) in 1258. Bustan, as his best-known work, was completed in 1257. It includes 4,000 verses in 183 stories about the virtues such as justice, kindness, love, modesty, liberality, generosity, satisfaction, and happiness, and the ecstatic practices of dervishes addressing all people to have a better and happier life.

A year after the completion of Bustan, Sadi composed his masterpiece Gulistan. Gulistan, comprised of 8 chapters is mainly in prose. The book widely addresses kings’ morality, dervishes’ behavior, benefits of contentment, silence and talking in proper time, love and youthfulness, weakness in old age, and education. Sadi attempts to advise people to live freely and to improve the quality of their lives in Gulistan. It is one of the most effective books in prose in Persian literature.

Sadi’s other works include Ghazals (love poems or Lyrics; sonnets), qasidas (longer mono-rhyme poems or Odes), quatrains, and short pieces in prose in both Persian and Arabic. He is known as one of the greatest ghazal-writers of Persian poetry besides Hafiz.

# Isfahan’s Imam Mosque restoration reaches final stage

**→ 1** The craftsmanship continues and is intricate with amazing views both on the façade and the interior. The monument boasts perfect proportions and iconic blue-tiled mosaics.

A very picturesque huge entrance portal welcomes people to the mosque. It is built to face the square though the mosque is oriented towards Mecca. A short corridor connects the square to the inner courtyard that is surrounded by four imposing iwans (porticos) with a pool dedicated to ritual

ablutions nesting in the middle. The walls of the courtyard feature sunken porches framed by seven-colored tiles of deep blue and yellow. Each iwan leads into a vaulted sanctuary covered with particularly fine floral motifs on a blue background.

The mosque’s interior and exterior walls are fully covered with a polychrome, mostly dark blue, glazed tile revetment above a continuous marble dado. Throughout the whole mosque, except for the sanctuary dome and portal iwan, Shah ‘Abbas was



keen to minimize labor costs and time by introducing a novel technique called “haft-rang” (seven colors).

Isfahan has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into “half

the world”; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. The city is home to many versatile artisans who underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.

## French archaeologist Pierre Amiet, famed for intensive Iranian studies, dies at 98

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – French archaeologist Pierre Amiet, who joined several excavations in Iran, has died at the age of 98, ILNA reported on Friday.

He was very interested in the archeology of ancient Iran, especially Elam, and came to Iran in 1963 and collected resources to write his book on the Elamite civilization, the report said.

Later, the archaeologist traveled to Iran several times to write a book about the ancient Susa.

Born in Strasbourg in 1922, he came to his interest in archaeology through his father’s interests. After World War II he studied at the Ecole du Louvre where he received his License es Lettres.

During this period his association with R. de Mecquenem, L. Le Breton, and G. Contenau led to his continuing interest in the excavations and collections connected with Susa in southern Iran.

In 1958 he was named Conservator of the Musees de Chambrey; in 1961, assistant to Andre Parrot in the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the Louvre. In 1963 M. Amiet visited Iran to study the seal collection in the Archaeological Museum in Tehran and to visit Susa. The next year he published his book, Elam. His lecture, Les Objets d’Art inedits de Susa (Iran) au Musee du Kouvre, covered some of his current research on unpublished materials from Susa.

The UNESCO-registered Susa was one of the city-states of ancient Elam (2700 – 539 BC), which later became a winter capital of the Persian Achaemenid kings, who ruled Iran from c. 550 to 330 BC. Elam was an ancient



country in southwestern Iran approximately equivalent to the modern region of Khuzestan province.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Susa has been continuously inhabited since 4,200 BC placing it among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world.

Besides, there are traces at Susa of a village inhabited around 7,000 BC and painted pottery dating from ca. 5,000 BC at the site.

The archaeological site includes the ruins of the Achaemenid palace complex of Darius I, the Great, and is located on a fifteen-meter-high artificial raised 100-hectare terrace. It has suffered greatly in the past seventy years.

Susa became part of the Persian Empire under Cyrus II, the Great in 538 or 539 BC. During the balance of the Achaemenian period (to 330 BC), Susa functioned as one of the rotating capitals (a winter capital) of the Achaemenian Kings. It is said that Alexander of Macedonia captured Susa in 330 BC and plundered the city, seizing some 40,000 talents of gold and silver from the treasury.

According to UNESCO, “the excavated architectural monuments include administrative, residential, and palatial structures” and the site contains several layers of urban settlement dating from the 5th millennium BC through the 13th century CE. Relics unearthed from the region demonstrate that even the earliest potteries and ceramics in Susa were of unsurpassed quality, decorated with birds, mountain goats, and other animal designs.

Different archaeological seasons in Susa have yielded ample relics including pottery, arms, ornamental objects, metalwork, bronze articles, as well as clay tablets. Susa is also a gateway to several worthy destinations such as the UNESCO-tagged zigurat of Tchogha Zanbil, the ruins of Achaemenid Apadana Castle, Shush Castle (Akropol), Prophet Danial Shrine, Museum of Susa, the archaeological mount of Haft Tapeh.

First Announcement



Khuzestan Steel Company

EXTENTION OF INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER IN TWO STEPTS

No. :431668

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE

10,000 MT UHP Grade Graphite Electrode 600 mm with  
respective nipples

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

Description: UHP Grade Graphite Electrode with respective nipples as per following specification

BUIK Density:	1.65 -1.75 g/cm³	Specific Resistance	4.5-6.5 uΩm
Real Density:	2.22 -2.25 g/cm³	Bending Strength:	110-140 Kgf/cm²
Porosity:	21 -27%	Young's Modules:	7.8 - 11.8 GPa
Ash Content:	0.2 % Max.	Co-efficient Of Thermal expansion:	0.3-1 10 <sup>-6</sup> /°C

Graphite Electrode Dimensions:

Electrode Diameter: 600 mm

Electrode Length: 2400 mm

Nipple Specification:

Nipple Diameter:	317.50 mm	Number of Thread:	4 Thread per Inch
Nipple Length:	457.20 mm	Thread Type:	Tapered Thread
Socket Depth :	234.60 mm		

INTRESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF: EUR 50 "FIFTY EURO" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

1) ACCOUNT No.0100013543943 AT "EXPORT DEVELOPMENT BANK OF IRAN

AHVAZ CENTRAL BRANCH"

2) ACCOUNT No.1902-750-4019644-1 AT "EGHTESAD NOVIN BANK- OF IRAN AHVAZ

SHARIATI BRANCH" OR

Rials 15.000.000,"TWO MILION RIALS" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT NO.:

1) ACCOUNT No.0102513186002 AT "MELLI BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"

2) ACCOUNT No.0100304453001 AT "SADERAT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC

BRANCH"

AND PRESENT THE PAYMENT RECEIPT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

Consumption Material & General Goods PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY (KSC)

KM 10 AHWAZ - BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI ROAD P.O.BOX: 1378 POST CODE: 61397-31398 AHWAZ-IRAN

Note1: BIDDER SHALL SUBMIT WITH TENDER A BID BOND ISSUED BY AN IRANIAN BANK OR BY A EUROPEAN FIRST CLASS BANK, IN THE AMOUNT OF 240,000,000,000 Rial OR 800 000 EUR FOR 10,000 MT GRAPHITE ELECTRODE Dia 600mm AND MAY REDUSED IN PROPORTION WITH THE QUANTITY OF BIDDERS OFFER.

Note2: ALL BIDS MUST BE INFORMED US WHICH PARTICIPATE IN OUR TENDER UP TO 30th Apr, 2021. WHEN YOUR COMPANY IS CONFIRMED AND THE TENDER DOCUMENT IS SENT TO YOU, YOU MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE AFORESAID ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE 17th May, 2021.THE OPENING DATE OF ENVELOPES WILL BE AT 10:30 AM ON THE 18"May,2021 IN THE BUYER'S CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHWAZ-IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER. Note 3: FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT WITH FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Tel No. : +98 61 3213 6159 / 3213 6190

Fax No. : +98 61 32908130

Mr.M.FARZINEJAD EMAIL: m.farzinejad @ksc.ir OR

VISIT http://WWW.KSC.IR

First Announcement



Khuzestan Steel Company

EXTENTION OF INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER IN TWO STEPTS

No. :431667

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE

3,000 MT UHP Grade Graphite Electrode 450 mm with  
respective nipples

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

Description: UHP Grade Graphite Electrode with respective nipples as per following specificatio

Real Density:	1.65 -1.75 g/cm³	Specific Resistance	4.5-6.5 uΩm
Real Density:	2.22 -2.25 g/cm³	Bending Strength:	110-140 Kgf/cm²
Porosity:	21 -27%	Young's Modules:	7.8 - 11.8 GPa
Ash Content:	0.2 % Max.	Co-efficient Of Thermal expansion:	0.3-1 10 <sup>-6</sup> /°C

Graphite Electrode Dimensions:

Electrode Diameter: 450 mm

Electrode Length: 1800 mm

Nipple Specification:

Nipple Diameter:	241.30 mm	Number of Thread:	4 Thread per Inch
Nipple Length:	355.60 mm	Thread Type:	Tapered Thread
Socket Depth :	183.80 mm	Nipple Type	241T4L

INTRESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF: EUR 50 "FIFTY EURO" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

1) ACCOUNT No.0100013543943 AT "EXPORT DEVELOPMENT BANK OF IRAN

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Fax No. : +98 61 32908130

Mr.M.FARZINEJAD EMAIL: m.farzinejad @ksc.ir OR

VISIT http://WWW.KSC.IR



# Iranian-made “Sputnik V” to be available by mid-June

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iran will release jointly-produced Russian “Sputnik V” vaccine by the end of spring (June 21), Kianoush Jahanpour, head of the Information Center of the Ministry of Health, has announced.

A shipment of cell bank for the production of “Sputnik V” vaccine delivered to Iran today, and the production process will start soon in Actoverco pharmaceutical company, Jahanpour wrote on his Twitter account on Thursday.

The first batch of Iranian-Russian vaccine will be available by the end of spring.

Three Iranian companies are volunteering to co-produce the Sputnik V vaccine in Iran and were introduced to the Gamaleya Institute through the Iranian Embassy in Russia. One of these companies is ahead of the others, of course, all three companies have the ability to produce this vaccine, he explained.

As soon as the production line is ready, the Russian side provides cell bank to the companies; so that the first vaccine products in Iran will enter the market after 45-60 days, he noted.

Iran started mass vaccination against COVID-19 with Sputnik V vaccine on February 9.

So far, 667,202 doses of coronavirus vaccine, including the first and second



**Iran is currently producing vaccines jointly with three countries of Cuba, Russia, and Australia, these vaccines can also be released by September.**

doses, have been injected in the country. Iran is currently producing vaccines

jointly with three countries of Cuba, Russia, and Australia, he noted, expressing hope

that these vaccines can also be released by September.

**Sixth shipment of Sputnik V arrived**

Alireza Raeisi, spokesman for the National Headquarters for Coronavirus control announced on Thursday that the sixth batch of “Sputnik V” vaccine, including over 100,000 doses, has been sent to the country, IRNA reported.

Of the total vaccines imported so far, we have received about 420,000 doses of Sputnik V, some 650,000 doses from China, and 125,000 from India. We also received 700,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine from South Korea, so that a total of 1.895 million doses of vaccine have been provided to the Ministry of Health, he explained.

**New cases and mortalities**

In a press briefing on Friday Health Ministry’s spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 24,092 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,335,905. She added that 1,823,958 patients have so far recovered, but 5,038 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 453 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 68,366, she added.

So far, 14,854,140 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

## \$23m allocated to waste management in coastal provinces

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — A total of 1 trillion rials (nearly \$23 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been earmarked to tackle the issue of waste management in northern coastal provinces, deputy head of Iran’s municipalities and village administrators said.

Highlighting that solving the waste problem in the country requires the participation of the private sector and the public, Ali Ghorbani said that the first step in the development of the country is delegating authority to the people through supervision and planning.

“We should try to increase the per capita value added tax in the coastal provinces by tourism flourish,” he noted, IRNA reported on Thursday.

**Waste generated in coastal provinces snowballing at 7,000 tons a day**

The amount of waste generated in the northern provinces of the country, neighboring the Caspian Sea, is snowballing at a rate of over 7,000 tons a day, holding accountable for 14 percent of the total daily 50,000 tons of waste produced in the country, Khabaronline reported in January 2019.

In the past few years, the amount of waste produced in



the three northern provinces of Mazandaran, Golestan, and Gilan has risen sharply to alarming rates, Sirous Vatankhah, secretary of energy technologies development headquarters at the vice-presidency for science and technology, told ISNA that there is a significant relationship between the prevalence of various diseases and the amount of waste generation, which must be considered a “danger sign” that

needs urgent measures to contain the issue.

Diseases such as tetanus, typhoid, intestinal parasites, bloody diarrhea, poliomyelitis or infantile paralysis, and skin lesions are among the diseases caused by solid waste pollution in water, air, and soil.

On the other hand, a large part of these thousand tons of waste is ending up in the Caspian Sea and the forests, which can lead to many changes in the environmental cycles.

Moreover, Hossein Niaz Azari, a member of the parliament, said that some 104 aquatic species have been living in the Caspian Sea in the past years, while most of them have gone extinct due to the high amount of waste entering the sea.

Deputy environment chief Masoud Tajrishi has referred to the poor waste disposal in the coastal cities of the country, saying that “Unfortunately, we face not only the problem of identifying a proper place for waste disposal but sewers being discharged into all rivers and lakes.

In such case, mostly tourists who are littering the northern coast are blamed, however, the other main reason behind this is the lack of proper equipment for waste management and recycling, he added.

## Climate crisis has shifted the Earth’s axis, study shows

The massive melting of glaciers as a result of global heating has caused marked shifts in the Earth’s axis of rotation since the 1990s, research has shown. It demonstrates the profound impact humans are having on the planet, scientists said.

The planet’s geographic north and south poles are the point where its axis of rotation intersects the surface, but they are not fixed. Changes in how the Earth’s mass is distributed around the planet cause the axis, and therefore the poles, to move.

In the past, only natural factors such as ocean currents and the convection of hot rock in the deep Earth contributed to the drifting position of the poles. But the new research shows that since the 1990s, the loss of hundreds of billions of tonnes of ice a year into the oceans resulting from the climate crisis has caused the poles to move in new directions.

The scientists found the direction of polar drift shifted from southward to east-

ward in 1995 and that the average speed of drift from 1995 to 2020 was 17 times faster than from 1981 to 1995.

Since 1980, the position of the poles has moved about 4 metres in distance.

“The accelerated decline [in water stored on land] resulting from glacial ice melting is the main driver of the rapid polar drift after the 1990s,” concluded the team, led by Shanshan Deng, from the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Gravity data from the Grace satellite, launched in 2002, had been used to link glacial melting to movements of the pole in 2005 and 2012, both following increases in ice losses. But Deng’s research breaks new ground by extending the link to before the satellite’s launch, showing human activities have been shifting the poles since the 1990s, almost three decades ago.

The research, published in the journal

Geophysical Research Letters, showed glacial losses accounted for most of the shift, but it is likely that the pumping up of groundwater also contributed to the movements.

Groundwater is stored under land but, once pumped up for drinking or agriculture, most eventually flows to sea, redistributing its weight around the world. In the past 50 years, humanity has removed 18tn tonnes of water from deep underground reservoirs without it being replaced.

Vincent Humphrey, at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and not involved in the new research said it showed how human activities have redistributed huge amounts of water around the planet: “It tells you how strong this mass change is – it’s so big that it can change the axis of the Earth.” However, the movement of the Earth’s axis is not large enough to affect daily life, he said: it could change the length of a day, but only by milliseconds.



Prof Jonathan Overpeck, at the University of Arizona, US, told the Guardian previously that changes to the Earth’s axis highlighted “how real and profoundly large an impact humans are having on the planet”.

Some scientists argue that the scale of this impact means a new geological epoch – the Anthropocene – needs to be declared. Since the mid-20th century, there has been a marked acceleration of carbon dioxide emissions and sea level rise, the destruction of wildlife and the transformation of land by farming, deforestation and development.

## Let’s reverse the destructive trend of planet

**→ 1** There is a strong relationship between the loss of natural ecosystems and the risk of pandemics, described in the recently published reports on pandemics and the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).



The main report identifies over a million species at risk of extinction, not to mention the threats to the life-support functions of ecosystems – clean water and air, flood control and climate regulation, food, medicines, and much more.

It puts mining alongside timber extraction, settlements, and agricultural expansion as leading to deforestation and forest degradation, and driving new contact among people, animals, and their microbes.

About five new infectious diseases in people are identified every year, and 70 percent of emerging diseases are caused by microbes of animal origin, says the IPBES.

Restoration measures could halt biodiversity loss, after which recovery begins, avoiding around two-thirds of future terrestrial biodiversity losses caused by land-use change.

**Biodiversity in Iran**

According to Iran’s Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity published on its website, Iran is located in West Asia and borders the Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf, and the Gulf of Oman. The mountains enclose several broad basins, or plateaus, on which major agricultural and urban settlements are located. With an area of 1,648,000 square kilometers, Iran ranks eighteenth in size among the countries of the world.

Despite the fact that much of Iran is dry, the wetlands of Iran are globally significant. Large populations of migratory birds winter at these wetlands or use them on their way. The complex and varied climates, topography, geological formations, and anthropological management of natural resources have led to a varied and unique biological diversity in the country.

In the Iranian ecosystems approximately 8,000 species of plants, 197 species of mammals, 535 species of birds, 227 species of reptiles, 21 species of amphibians, 160 species of freshwater fishes, and 710 species of marine fishes have been recorded. Iran is one of the most significant countries in West Asia for the conservation of biological diversity. Habitat diversity in the country allows for a wide range of animals to inhabit in Iran.

Regarding the ecosystem diversity of marine and coastal zones in the North and South of the country, it consists of 25 ecological types and units, in which the most important are coral reefs, bays, and small islands.

**Threats to biodiversity**

There are many plans underway to protect Asiatic Cheetah, wetlands, Central Zagros Mountains, Caspian Hyrcanian Forest biodiversity from extinction and degradation either designed and put in motion nationally in collaboration with international entities.

However, water scarcity, land degradation, and pollution are three main threats to Iran’s biodiversity. Iran faces a serious water shortage caused by inadequate natural water supply resources and the development of water infrastructures such as dams.

Soil loss is another threat to biodiversity brought about by water salinization, sedimentation, erosion, desertification, deforestation, inadequate land-use planning, and overgrazing.

In rapidly urbanized areas, air pollution originating from vehicle emissions and industrial effluents has become a serious environmental and public health hazard concern. The sand and dust storms in recent years have taken on new dimensions in Iran and have changed from a local problem to a national issue. The primary source of the dust storms that are regularly and negatively impacting Iran’s air quality lies in the neighboring countries as well as dried-up wetlands inside the country.

**Biodiversity matters**

Biodiversity is important for water resources, agricultural and aquaculture productivity, and as a result the food security, human health, climate, and economy. The livelihoods of millions of people in Iran are completely dependent on the biodiversity of their surroundings.

## LET’S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 165)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

### 8-year-old boy battling cancer achieves dream of becoming a fireman

Arian, an eight-year-old boy suffering from cancer, got to fulfill his wish of becoming a firefighter.

Arian celebrated his eighth birthday on Friday with Ahvaz city’s officials, citizens and firefighters in attendance. He was appointed as a commander of operations for one day, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

At a symbolic ceremony, a fire alarm was sounded and the young commander while dressed in full firefighters’ uniform, was dispatched to the scene along with firefighters and eight fire engines.

Arian’s firefighting operations were well done and the little boy’s wish of becoming a fireman finally came true thanks to Ahvaz fire department.

### آرزوی آتش نشان شدن پسر ۸ ساله مبتلا به سرطان برآورده شد

آرین، پسر هشت ساله مبتلا به بیماری سرطان، که آرزوی آتش نشان شدن داشت، برای یک روز فرمانده عملیات آتش نشانی شد و به آرزویش رسید.

به گزارش ایرنا، آرین روز جمعه سالروز هشت سالگی خود را با حضور جمعی از مسئولان، شهروندان و نیروهای آتش نشان شهر اهواز جشن گرفت، و از سوی رئیس سازمان آتش نشانی و خدمات ایمنی اهواز برای یک روز به فرماندهی عملیات منصوب شد.

در مراسمی نمادین، آژیر خطر عملیات اطفای حریق به صدا درآمد و این فرمانده خردسال به همراه نیروهای آتش نشان و هشت دستگاه خودروی اطفای حریق به محل حادثه اعزام شدند. و عملیات اطفای حریق به فرماندهی آرین به خوبی انجام شد.

شهر تاریخی ری، در جنوب تهران، یکی از شهرهای مهم و بزرگ ایران در دوره‌های گذشته بوده است. ری امروز تا مرکز تهران بیشتر از ده کیلومتر فاصله ندارد و در واقع شهری در داخل شهر تهران است.
زیارتگاه حضرت عبدالعظیم، امامزاده حمزه و امامزاده طاهر، همچنین آرامگاه بسیاری از بزرگان و دانشمندان ایرانی، که در شهر ری قرار دارد، آرایش و احترام زیادی به این شهر بخشیده است.
یکی از دانشمندان ری محمد زکریای رازی است. او از معروف ترین پزشکان جهان در یازده قرن قبل می باشد و کتاب های زیادی در پزشکی و چند رشته ی دیگر نوشته است. دانشگاه های بزرگ جهان قرن ها از کتاب های او استفاده می کردند.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter paradise.  
*Prophet Muhammad (S)*

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Note: Some of the following art exhibitions are being organized online in order to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus.

**Painting**

■ An exhibition of paintings by Hani Najm is currently underway at Negar Gallery. Entitled "From Far Away TO Near-by", the exhibit will be running until April 28 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, East Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

■ Paintings by Mohammad Tabatabai are currently on view in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery. The exhibit titled "The Lost Time" will run until May 5 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Arthibition Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a number of Iranian-Armenian artists including Vazgen Avanesian, Misha Shahbazian, Hacoop Vartanian, and Yervand Tehapetian. The exhibit entitled "New Jolfa" will be running until May 2 at the gallery that can be found at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golnabi St., off Shariati Ave.

■ Somayyeh Darvishi, Parisa Damavandi, Mina Asadi, Elnaz Tavangar, Amir Mianji, and several other artists are displaying their paintings in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery. The exhibition will continue until April 27 at the gallery, which is located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

■ A collection of paintings by Sepideh Todiei is on display in an exhibition at Entezami Gallery. The exhibit named "Vortex" will run until April 28 at the gallery located at 608 Shariati Ave. near Motahhari St.

■ Kahfi Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Iraj Shayestepur. The exhibit can be visited on the gallery's Instagram page Kahfi.art. gallery.

**Multimedia**

■ Reyhaneh Afzalian, Kolsum Salehi, Parinaz Gudarzian, Mahsa Leilabi, and Mitra Velai are showcasing their paintings and drawings in an exhibition at 009821 Projects Gallery. Named "Scratch", the exhibit will be running until May 5 at the gallery located at No. 25, 18th Alley, Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ A group of artists, including Maryam Ehterami, Marjan Jafari, Kimia Lotfi, Mona Hashemi, and Negar Roshan, is showcasing the artworks in various media in an exhibition at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit titled "Medusa" runs until April 27 at the gallery that can be found at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

**Drawing**

■ A collection of drawings by Fati-meh Farahani is on display in an exhibition at Golhaye Davudi Gallery. The exhibition entitled "Sarir" will be running until April 28 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.

■ Calligraphic painting

■ Ravi Gallery is hosting an exhibition of calligraphic paintings by Saghar Moshiri Amin. The exhibit named "Street" runs until April 30 at the gallery located at 9 Dastan Alley, Ezzatollah Entezami St., off Movahhed-Danesh St. in the Aqdasieh neighborhood.

# Tribeca Film Festival picks “The Ballad of a White Cow”

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – “The Ballad of a White Cow” co-directed by Iranian filmmakers Behtash Sanaeiha and Maryam Moqaddam will go on screen at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City.

The film is about Mina, a young woman who lives alone with her deaf child while her husband had been executed for a murder charge a year ago. She tries to get her life together, take good care of her child and make both ends meet. However, her life gets more sorrowful when she finds out that her husband was innocent.

As Mina battles for a public apology from the judges who served her husband's death sentence, a stranger, Reza, appears on her doorstep, explaining that he has come to repay a debt he owes to Babak. Mina gradually opens up to him, unaware of the terrible secret tying them together.

“The Ballad of a White Cow” is the story of a woman's struggle for justice, recognition, and independence in the world of today.



A scene from “The Ballad of the White Cow” by Behtash Sanaeiha and Maryam Moqaddam. After “Acid Rain,” Moqaddam and Sanaeiha co-wrote and co-directed 2018's multi-prized doc feature, “The Invincible Diplomacy of Mr. Naderi”.

“The Ballad of a White Cow” is their second joint feature as co-directors. It is produced by Gholamreza Musavi and Etienne de Ricaud.

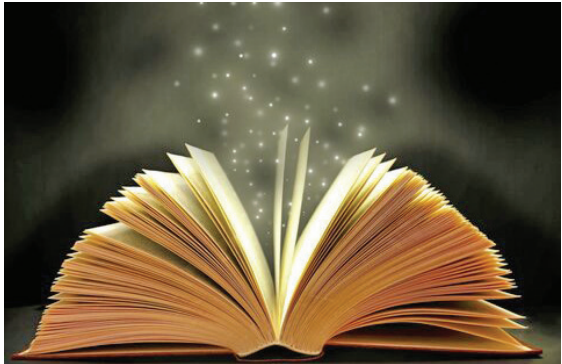
The film will be screened at the Tribeca Critics' Week, a section of the festival that presents a curated slate of feature films from film critics including Eric Kohn, Hunter Harris, and Tre'vell Anderson.

“Ailey” by Jamila Wignot and “Rita Moreno: Just a Girl Who Decided to Go for It” Mariem Pérez Riera, both from the U.S. will also go on screen in this section.

“The Ballad of a White Cow” has also been selected for the official competition of the 71st Berlin International Film Festival in June.

Back in February, Totem Films, a Paris-based international sales and co-production company, announced that it purchased the rights to sell the film and it brought the drama to the market at the European Film Market (EFM) in early March.

Tribeca Film Festival will run from June 9 to 20.



→1 Karimi dwells in the teenage world, with a text written in a language familiar with the youth while distancing herself from any stereotypes and instead of raising issues based on logical instances in an individual's daily life. An excerpt from the book reads:

“It is said that when a person has a blessing, most of

## A new definition of Hijab in the book “Oven of Friendship”

the time he/she does not know its value, for example, if the rain always falls on time and the sky is always sunny when needed, and the winters are full of snow and the summers are always full of blessings, then we will never be able to understand the purpose of droughts or floods, and so we will never be able to appreciate the constant rain or the adequate sunshine and we will not be grateful for them.”

Following the logic of her narrative, the author impels the reader to be alert to the fact that wearing hijab in Iran is a blessing that can be easily practiced and with a reference to the Goharshad Mosque massacre in which Iranian King Reza Shah killed over 2000 innocent people for protesting against his westernization policies and the banning of Hijab, the author writes:

“We have never been beaten and insulted for wearing a headscarf or wearing a chador. Now imagine how for years in this country, women, and girls were stripped of their headscarves, beaten and humiliated only because they wanted to maintain their hijab”

Karimi makes the argument that due to the restrictions placed on wearing Hijab, for many years Muslim women in this country were not allowed to leave their homes and even barred from attending schools or universities: “Imagine now that you are reading and flipping through this book, in another country like France, a girl is banned from going to school and continuing her education because of her hijab. What would you say to her?”

Qadr Velayat Publishing Institute has made the book “Tanoor Doosti” available in a thousand copies for distribution.

## “Dream about Sohrab”, “Walnut Tree” join Iranian lineup at Moscow film festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Iranian movies “Dream about Sohrab” and “Walnut Tree” have been selected for the Films around the World section of the 43rd edition of the Moscow International Film Festival, which is currently underway in the Russian capital.

“Dream about Sohrab” by Ali Qavitan traces the mysticism and philosophy in the poetry of Sohrab Sepehri (1928-1980), second only to poet Nima Yushij, who is known for his pure style of blank verse.

As a talented artist and a gifted poet, Sepehri came to prominence with the publication of his collection “The Water's Footfall” in 1965. His works have been trans-

lated into the English, French, Italian and Spanish languages. He died of leukemia in Tehran in 1980.

Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's war drama “Walnut Tree” is based on the true story of the profound tragedy of Iraq's chemical attack on the Iranian town of Sardasht in 1987.

It tells the story of Qader Mulanpur, a man who was away when his family was affected by the chemical attack in a village near Sardasht. His effort to save his pregnant wife and their three children is in vain and they die one by one from the fatal wounds sustained as a result of the chemical attack.

Earlier last week, the festival announced

that Nushin Meraji's debut movie “The Son” will be screened in the main competition.

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

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

The Son is competing with 13 more movies including “Blue Heart” by Miguel



A scene from “Walnut Tree” by Iranian director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian. Coyula from Cuba, “The Time of Indifference” by Leonardo Guerra Seragnoli from Italy, “The Inner Glow” by Andres Eduardo Rodriguez and Luis Alejandro Rodriguez from Venezuela, and “The Women” by Nobuteru Uchida from Japan. Moscow International Film Festival will come to an end on April 29.

## Iranian bookstores offer “The Man Who Loved Books Too Much”

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN**— “The Man Who Loved Books Too Much: The True Story of a Thief, a Detective, and a World of Literary Obsession” by American author Allison Hoover Bartlett has recently been published in Persian by Salees Publications in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Mojtaba Veisi.

The book is the true story of an infamous book thief, his victims, and the man determined to catch him.

Rare-book theft is even more widespread than fine-art theft. Most thieves, of course, steal for profit. John Charles Gilkey steals purely for the love of books. In an attempt to

understand him better, journalist Allison Hoover Bartlett plunged herself into the world of book lust and discovered just how dangerous it can be.

John Gilkey is an obsessed, unrepentant book thief who has stolen hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of rare books from book fairs, stores, and libraries around the country. Ken Sanders is the self-appointed “bibliodick” (book dealer with a penchant for detective work) driven to catch him. Bartlett befriended both outlandish characters and found herself caught in the middle of efforts to recover hidden treasure. With a mixture of suspense,

insight, and humor, she has woven this entertaining cat-and-mouse chase into a narrative that not only reveals exactly how Gilkey pulled off his dirtiest crimes, where he stashed the loot, and how Sanders ultimately caught him but also explores the romance of books, the lure to collect them, and the temptation to steal them. Immersing the reader in a rich, wide world of literary obsession, Bartlett looks at the history of book passion, collection, and theft through the ages, to examine the craving that makes some people willing to stop at nothing to possess the books they love.

## “The Cow”, a pioneering masterpiece of Iranian cinema

**Part 1**

The 1960's was considered to be the new era in the Iranian filmmaking. It was the decade Forugh Farrokhzad's excellent short/documentary “The House is Black” (1963) and Ebrahim Golestan's seminal film “The Brick and the Mirror” (1964) were made. Nevertheless, the inception of New Iranian Cinema was often associated with Dariush Mehrjui's “Gaav” (aka The Cow, 1969). The Cow, which works both as a poignant human drama and subversive cinema, grabbed the attention of the West and inspired more filmmakers to explore the contemporary social themes of Iran.

In 1968, the Iranian government established the Ministry of Arts and Culture to work out the censorship requirements and the final product of “The Cow” was immediately banned for its 'negative' portrayal of rural Iran. The film was allowed for a domestic release only after the inclusion of a disclaimer, stating that the events portrayed in the film happened long before Shah's regime. “Gaav” was smuggled out of Iran and won the critics prize (FIPRESCI) in 1971 Venice Film Festival (and also won a prize in the Berlin Film Festival).

In “The Cow”, writer/director Darius Mehrjui blends Italian neo-realism sensibilities and the sensibilities of an absurd



folktale. There's an incredibly realistic portrayal of rural Iran's socioeconomic situations and at the same time there are also some marvelous surrealistic, eerie touches. In the opening credits, we see two abstract figures – one human, other an animal – moving & blending together. This image conveys the central conceit of the tale. The narrative opens with the scene of roving children from a small village, accompanied by a grown-up bully, mercilessly harassing a mentally disabled guy. The sparsely populated village is visualized through the shots of passive spectators, a donkey cart, a dog, cluster of clay and stone houses, a mosque and a pond, around which all the lively activities in the village take place. A middle-aged character who keeps an eye on all the movements in the village through his window brings a light

comedic touch. The faces of the village people (especially women & old people's) seem to be burdened by the hard realities of poverty. Islam (Ali Nassirian) looks like the decision maker in the village. The chief and others looks up to him in the time of crisis. The only lively factors of the village are: Masht Hassan (Ezzatolah Entezami) and his cow. Hassan adores his pregnant cow like a child, taking her to graze in the open fields and washing her after a long day of work. The affection he has for the cow is more than the love he possesses for his wife (he just addresses her as 'woman'). The ownership of the cow has also brought Hassan a distinct identity and social status in the village. The threat to this identity is signaled by a threat standing on the far horizon. When Hassan takes his cow outside for grazing, he sees three men from nearby village (called 'Bolouris') in a distant, small mountain range looking at his cow. He conveys this event to the villagers, who are all worried over the cattle-rustling group. Although Mehrjui conveys ominous feelings about the Bolouris in those initial shots, the real threat they present to the villagers is cloaked in ambiguity. Hassan sleeps in the cow shed, fearing a raid from the Bolouris. The next day Hassan goes to his work after confirming that the cow is safe. Later in the day, Hassan's wife discovers the cow lying

dead in the shed and her loud cries brings every person in the village. The villagers debate on how to convey this shocking news to beloved Hassan. Islam comes up with the suggestion to tell Hassan that his cow has wandered off and a fellow has gone after it. He also proposes to bury the cow in the old well. Islam and his villagers perceive how their plan had only made things much worse when Hassan gradually descends into insanity.

The screenplay of “The Cow” was co-written by popular Iranian writer Gholam Hossen Saedi. Saedi, who specialized in psychiatry, has said to have traveled with renowned Iranian thinkers like Jalal Al-e-Ahmad to Iran's remote villages and wrote many ethnographic essays about his travels. Hamid Dabashi, the Iranian American professor, in his book ‘Masters & Masterpieces of Iranian cinema’ mentions the heavy influence of the Saedi's short story collection “The Mourners of Bayal” in grounding the characters and realities of a village life. Mehrjui and Saedi's script of “The Cow” offers a clear-eyed portrait of the dynamics in the village as well as they have imbued a Kafkaesque feel in Hassan's transformation (in the later half). “The Cow” isn't devised as a representation of a single idea. The villagers' fear for outside threat is positioned alongside their thieving and lying activities.