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27 Iranian universities among world's top for global impact



© File photo

Iran-China partnership to raise Chabahar port's global status

BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI

As Iran's only oceanic port on the Gulf of Oman, Chabahar port holds a great significance for the country both politically and economically. The country has taken serious measures for developing this port in order to improve the country's maritime trade.

In this regard, the Islamic Republic has been welcoming investors from all over the world to take part in the development of this port and benefit from its distinguished position as a trade hub in the region.

The recent agreement between Iran and China has increased the chances of this giant economy participating in the development of this port and to further contribute to the improvement of its global status.

This issue intrigued the Tehran Times to conduct an interview with Behrouz Aghaei, the director-general of Ports and Maritime Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province in southeastern Iran (where Chabahar lies). What follows is the gist of the interview with the official.

According to Aghaei, China's contribution to the development of Chabahar port would be a great opportunity for this port to further establish itself as a trade hub in the region since China is currently one of the world's most advanced countries in terms of maritime and port industries.

"Three of the world's top shipping companies and operators are Chinese companies, for instance, COSCO is currently the world's fourth-biggest shipping line which is operating at 45 ports worldwide," Aghaei said.

"China's entrance into Chabahar port could lead to significant growth in this port because shipping lines and operators are key issues in port development," he explained.

"The activity of Chinese shipping lines in Chabahar port could increase the port's trade exchanges with the world to a very significant level."

According to the official, China is currently having maritime trade exchanges with over 162 countries worldwide and the activity of Chinese renowned shipping lines in Chabahar port would mean linking of the port to more than 45 ports and over 162 countries.

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China is on its way to surpassing the U.S. in military power: Indian professor

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – A leading Indian academic says that China is going to outcompete the U.S. in military power by capitalizing immensely on weapons technology.

"China's major influence globally and in Asia will remain primarily economic; however, though China is still behind, it is on its way to surpassing the U.S. in military power with increased spending on weapons technology and developing several secretive weapons" Ashok Swain tells the Tehran Times.

"The world is moving towards being bipolar again, but the two poles of this bipolar world will be, to some extent, multipolar in character, he adds.

The UK-based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) has said that China will overtake the U.S. to become the world's largest economy by 2028, five years earlier than

previously forecast.

There is an ongoing discussion that China is emerging as a new superpower, replacing the U.S. from the global power structure.

China emerging strongly from the growing global economic crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Donald Trump's ally-alienating policies within NATO for the last four years have pushed this narrative forward considerably.

While there is no doubt that China has already become the global powerhouse economically, some pundits have doubt that Beijing can overtake Washington in terms of military power.

However, Swain believes that "China under President Xi has prioritized enhancing its military strength, and it will be foolish to downplay China growing military power."

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Israel uses 'apartheid' to subjugate Palestinians: HRW

Israel is committing "crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution" against Palestinians and the international community must reevaluate diplomatic relations with the state, a leading human rights group said in a report on Tuesday.

The 213-page report from Human Rights Watch (HRW) details how Israel has sought to maintain Jewish-Israeli hegemony over the Palestinian people from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

"While much of the world treats Israel's half-century occupation as a temporary situation that a decades-long 'peace process' will soon cure, the oppression of Palestinians there has reached a threshold and a permanence that meets the definitions of the crimes of apartheid and persecution," Kenneth Roth, executive director of HRW, said.

"Those who strive for Israeli-Palestinian

peace, whether a one or two-state solution or a confederation, should in the meantime recognize this reality for what it is and bring to bear the sorts of human rights tools needed to end it."

Israel dismissed the organization's report, calling it "propaganda".

"Human Rights Watch is known to have a long-standing anti-Israel agenda, actively seeking for years to promote boycotts against Israel," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

"Their decision not to share this report for review or comment with any Israeli authority is clear indication that it is a propaganda pamphlet, which lacks all credibility."

The HRW report follows a conclusion reached by Israeli rights group B'Tselem, which published a study last January that found Palestinians, divided into four tiers of inferior treatment, are denied the right to self-determination.

Zolfaqari Archaeological Museum undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – Zolfaqari Archaeological Museum, which is famed for showcasing some ancient salt men and their belongings, has undergone some rehabilitation works.

The Ruhr-Universität Bochum, and Zanjan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department are taking part in the project, which aims at strengthening the Qajar-era (1789-1925) structure, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The project involves strengthening gable sheets, repairing gable waterways, painting wooden doors and windows, and replacing worn-out materials, Amir Arjmand said on Tuesday.

The official also noted that the costs for this round of the restoration project including the materials and equipment will be paid by the German university.

In 2006, the former historical mansion of Zolfaqariha was converted into a museum to

house the ancient mummies, along with more than 2,000 registered items and relics.

The four salt men are the most unique items of the museum, which are preserved in special windows.

The Zolfaqariha Mansion was ceded to Zanjan Municipality in the post-revolution era, but it was later entrusted to Zanjan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department.

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© ISNA / Masoud Mohaghegh

Second phase of COVID-19 vaccination begins in Iran

TEHRAN – The second phase of vaccination against coronavirus began in Iran on Tuesday with vaccinating people above 80 years and those elderly with comorbidities.

"The vaccination will pace up, because, in addition to domestic vaccines, our orders will also be imported so that the target groups will be vaccinated according to the national document priority," Health Minister Saeed Namaki said, IRIB reported.

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Netanyahu may ignite a fire in the region: Iraqi analyst

BY MOHAMMAD SARRAF

TEHRAN – An Iraqi political commentator says that the prime minister of the Israeli regime is in a fragile condition and therefore he may ignite a fire in the region to save himself.

"He doesn't seem happy about entering jail; if he can't get away through immunity as a prime minister, then there is a risk that he could ignite a fire in the region to save himself," Feras Ali tells the Tehran Times.

"As some of his predecessors, he is facing corruption charges. This combination is a dangerous combination for a person like Netanyahu," he adds.

Israel is suffering a political crisis. Netanyahu is facing corruption charges and has failed to secure a solid parliamentary majority to form a government.

"Israel doesn't have a functional government as the different blocs can't have enough votes for a majority," Ali notes.

Political experts don't rule out Netanyahu's resort to war to distract his critics and opponents.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see Israel's recent escalation against Iran in terms of sabotage operations and assassinating Iranian nuclear scientists?

It's a desperate move to block Iran's peaceful nuclear advancement but it won't succeed. The Iranians are known to be patient and can endure a lot without going astray from the goal. If these attacks lead to something, then it's only making Iran's nuclear progress even faster as the Iranians will get more determined to achieve their natural right.

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Iran, P4+1 agree to expedite the process to restore JCPOA

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The new round of the JCPOA Joint Commission meeting began on Tuesday and ended in a positive manner, with all sides agreeing to expedite the process of reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

At the meeting, the negotiators decided to continue expert group meetings in the two areas of lifting sanctions and the nuclear measures required to be taken by Iran in an “intensive and rapid” way.



It was also decided to set up a third expert group called the “executive arrangements expert group” to discuss practical arrangements needed to implement the process of lifting of sanctions and then the return of the United States to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Mikhail Ulyanov, head of the Russian delegate and Russia’s ambassador to Vienna tweeted, “The discussions proved that participants are guided by the unity of purpose which is full restoration of the nuclear deal in its original form. It was decided to expedite the process.”

The Iranian delegate did not stop its active diplomacy and held two separate meetings before the Joint Commission meeting on Tuesday.

First, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran’s top negotiator, and his team met with their Russian and Chinese counterparts, a meeting described by the top Russian negotiator as “fruitful”.

ISNA reported that the three delegates called for the immediate lifting of the U.S. sanctions as a necessary condition for Washington to return to the JCPOA.

Another meeting was held between the Iranian delegate and the E3 (France, Germany and the United Kingdom).

It is expected that the Joint Commission will reconvene in the coming days.

Red lines of Iran were pointed out to the negotiating team, says MP

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— In an interview with Fars News Agency published on Tuesday, Mojtaba Zolnour, head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament, spoke about the Vienna negotiations and the committee’s recent meeting with Seyed Abbas Araghchi, head of the Iranian delegate.



The meeting between Iran’s top negotiator, Araghchi and the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the parliament was held on Sunday.

Talking about the important issues discussed in the previous meetings, the senior MP said, “During the meeting, Mr. Araghchi presented a report on the Vienna talks, the context of the agreements and the existing disputes, and about 24 members of the committee and non-committee members expressed their views and concerns within three hours.”

Emphasizing that the red lines of the Islamic Republic were reminded to the negotiating team, he said, “The Majlis (parliament) is concerned and will deal with the government wherever it is needed and will not hesitate to help when they need it.”

We will carefully examine the competence of presidential candidates, says Jannati

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Guardian Council Secretary Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said on Monday that examination of presidential candidates to confirm their competence will take place with due care.

Speaking at the extraordinary meeting of the council on Monday, Jannati said the examination procedure will be carried out in accordance to law.



He pointed out that an extremely important burden is on the shoulders of the Guardian Council, which is examining the qualification of the candidates.

“It is very important to check and qualify the candidates for the elections, and God willing, we will perform this task as carefully as possible, as in the past, according to law,” he said. Noting the importance of the elections in the Islamic Republic, the top cleric said that everyone should be sensitive to the elections that decide about the destiny of the nation and try to make them as glorious as possible.

Pointing to the importance of the elections, he said, “As we get closer to the elections, the activities of various political parties in the country to participate in this important arena increase, and thank God we are witnessing an increase in these activities.”

The presidential and council elections will be held on June 18.

According to Jamal Orf, the Deputy Interior Minister, more than 50,000 people have registered for the council elections.

Tehran says Iran and U.S. inspecting ways to swap prisoners

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In his weekly

press briefing on Tuesday, government spokesman Ali Rabiei talked about the idea of prisoner exchange between Iran and the United States.

Rabiei emphasized that Iran wants the U.S. to release the sanctioned Iranian prisoners in the United States.

He said the number of sanctioned Iranian prisoners who are being held unjustly in the U.S. is more than the American prisoners in Iran.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is pursuing this (issue) with humane and moral considerations that our judiciary emphasizes,” he remarked.

‘Incident at border with Turkey must be clarified’

In response to a question about the recent incident for two Iranian citizens at the Turkish border, the spokesman said that the incident is not good for the two sides’ diplomatic relations.

“The dimensions of this incident must be clarified. The investigation is still ongoing and our friends in Turkey are following up



on this issue in good faith and the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs are constantly sending documents to their counterparts. The Islamic Republic of Iran will certainly pursue this issue to protecting the rights of

its citizens,” he emphasized.

He added that right after the incident, Iran sent several notes of protest in various levels and a border meeting was held between the border forces of the two sides

Parliament Research Center stresses complete lifting of sanctions

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Parliament’s

Research Center issued a report on Monday assessing the ongoing talks between the Islamic Republic and the remaining members of the 2015 nuclear agreement, stresses the need for a complete removal of all sanctions against the country, an issue that is being addressed during negotiations concerning the agreement.

The center strongly rejecting any partial sanction removal. The report came one day before Iran and the P4+1 nations resume negotiations in Vienna for a possible revival of the nuclear agreement.

“What signifies for the Islamic Republic is that, in addition to the legal procedure that is required for removal of all the sanctions and implementation of relevant changes in the instructions that concern the U.S. Treasury Department (including its Office of Foreign Assets Control and Office of Financial Institutions), the Islamic Republic should be able to quantifiably and palpably draw the benefit that have resulted from this agreement,” the report said, according to Press TV.

The center recalled the precedent of the United States’ departure from the nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). It underlined that

failing complete removal of all the sanctions that prevent Iran from drawing the benefits, international companies would, this time around, end up treading even more cautiously, when it comes to engaging in transaction with the country.

“In practice, by partial removal of the sanctions in some sectors, including the petroleum sector, the likelihood may be created for Iran to return to the situation that existed before the U.S. departure, despite all the existing limitations. However, Iran’s banking relations and commercial transactions would be subject to more limitations and restrictions this time compared to the past,” the report noted.

“This is because, on the one hand, continued enforcement of part of the sanctions and sustained categorization of more than 500 Iranian persons and institutions as Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) raises the risk of engagement in commercial and banking transactions with Iran to even a higher degree than the time when the U.S. was in the JCPOA. This is because, foreign banks and financial institutions risk incurring heavy penalties by the U.S. for potentially failing to carry out the so-called due customer assessment processes that are required by Washington,” the center specified. “On the other, foreign companies and banks would be acting more cautiously than before, when it comes to dealing with

Iran and investing in the country, owing to their concerns about the likelihood that the sanction exemption periods may not be extended beyond their 120- and 180-day-long stretches or the U.S. may leave the JCPOA again.”

“Therefore, all in all, accepting the U.S. proposals would limit Iran’s benefits from the JCPOA more than the previous round,” the report said, and also warned that “as time goes by, Iran may even have a harder time benefiting from the deal due to the likelihood that the U.S. may levy new sanctions against the country under non-nuclear pretexts.”

Accordingly, based on the Research center’s assessment, all the sanctions, whether the ones that have targeted different Iranian sectors or those targeting various Iranian individuals have to be removed so the JCPOA and its benefits can truly materialize for Iran.

The center comprises the scientific source of Majlis decisions.

According to a legislation approved by the parliament, any incumbent government has to report on the results of negotiations and verification of any sanction relief process to Majlis. The legislative body will, in turn, take necessary decisions about whether the country should accept the situation or not.

Still no change in Raeisi’s position on presidential candidacy: Judiciary spokesman

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Judiciary

spokesman Gholam Hossein Esmaeili said on Tuesday there has been no change in Ebrahim Raeisi’s intention to run for president or not.

“So far no new thing has happened,” Esmaeili told a press conference.

on Sunday, 220 parliamentarians wrote a letter to Raeisi, the Judiciary chief, calling on him to run for the presidential post.

In the letter the MPs elaborated on the economic, political, social and cultural situation of the country and the qualifications needed by the next president, asking him to run for the presidential election.

Presidential and council elections will be held on June 18.

‘Ghalibaf does not intend to compete with Raeisi in presidential election’

A member of the Parliament Infrastructure Committee has said Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also does not intend to compete with Raeisi in the presidential polls.

Talking to ISNA in interview published on Sunday, Mojtaba Tavangar said Ghalibaf has even announced that he will present his plan and introduce his economic team to Raeisi for reforming the economy if he wins

the election.

Raeisi and Ghalibaf ran for the presidential post in the 2017 presidential election. However, Ghalibaf withdrew candidacy in favor of Raeisi in final days.

Tavangar said from 2018 and mid-2020 a young economic team were consulting with Ghalibaf preparing a comprehensive economic plan that some of these policies are now being followed in the parliament.

Since the parliament speaker does not intend to challenge Raeisi he plans to give his plans and his team to “Mr. Raeisi so that we can witness good economic events in the future government.”

Manouchehr Mottaki, the spokesman for the principals in for the presidential elections, have said that Raeisi is the principals’ “first priority”.

Reportedly, some potential candidates have also said they will withdraw the race if Raeisi enters the presidential race.

“Candidates should have economic plans”

MP Tavangar, who is a member of the high council for implementing Article 44, said presidential candidates “should have economic plans” and also “have a stance toward the country’s major economic issues

and clarify their policies about these issues.”

He added probably one of the problems by the presidential candidates in the past and the current president was that they had no “clear stance” toward “major economic issues.”

Even a restructure of budget planning went mostly unheeded despite an order by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to do so, he remarked.

Therefore, Tavangar said, anybody who claims he can run the country as president should “clarify his position about budget deficit, budget restructuring, foreign currency, banking reforms, energy subsidy and other major economic issues.”

“MP warns about populist slogans in presidential campaigns”

The MP also warned about deceiving the electorate through populist slogans and promises that cannot be implemented by president.

“In a condition in which people are under heavy inflation and deep recession it is not far from mind that populist economic slogans” being cherished by the people, the MP cautioned.

He suggested that this time in the presidential debates economic issues should be

in the Chaldoran area.

The spokesman noted, “The statements of the dear Iranian coolies who were harassed were recorded at the border and the Foreign Ministry in Tehran handed over its note to the Turkish ambassador on the same day.”

He stressed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior have been following this issue closely from the first moment of the incident and have had contacts with Turkish government officials as well as border officials.

“Follow-ups at the embassy and consulate level have been followed to this date,” Rabiei said.

On April 15, several media outlets said two Iranian citizens named Behnam Samadi and Hassan Kachanlou were tortured and abused by ten Turkish border guards at the zero-point border.

“Pursuing the rights of Iranian citizens has always been important to us, and we have been following this issue seriously since the first moment we became aware of it,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told a weekly press briefing on Monday.



discussed more seriously and the candidates provide answers to economic experts.

“The new president should also think about new economic resources and management of government expenditures.”

The other issue is economic stability, including foreign exchange rate, so that entrepreneurs can have a prediction about the future, and people would not have concerns about fluctuations in the value of foreign currency.

Tavangar also said in the current situation in which “confidence” in current executive officials “including the president” has been greatly “eroded” a new person as president can surely prove effective.

Rostam Qassemi announces presidential candidacy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Rostam Ghassemi, the oil minister in the Ahmadinejad administration, issued a statement on Tuesday officially announcing his candidacy for the June 18 presidential election.

In part of his statement prior to his press conference, Qassemi said, “We should turn secure economy to economic security.”

Qassemi also said he will extend his hand to all Iranians whose “hearts beat for Iran” with “different political persuasions” to help make the country prosperous.

On his possible government’s diplomacy, he also said, “We should change ‘begging diplomacy’ to the diplomacy of power.”

If the talks in Vienna for a possible revival of the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – does not reach a result by June 18 it will feature high in the debates and presidential campaigns. Qassemi was the chief of the Khatam-al Anbiya Construction Headquarters before becoming oil minister.

He said the United States “must return to the JCPOA without any preconditions.”

He added, “If I am elected (president) I myself will take the driver seat in the negotiations and negotiate with power.”

The former chief of the IRGC construction unit said he has crafted two plans. He said one plan is to increase the living standards of 50 million Iranians who have been pushed to the poverty and the other is to restructure economy and banking system.



He also insisted on the need to counter corruption and creating a transparent atmosphere to develop the economy. Last week Qassemi said if he fields candidacy, he will not withdraw in favor any candidate.

“I have not announced candidacy yet, but if I announce candidacy, I will not withdraw in favor of anybody,” Qassemi told a press conference on April 20.

He said he is fully aware of Iran’s situation and its capacities.

The former IRGC official said he has a “plan and a record”.

“The sacred defense era is my record. After the war I was active in reconstruction and I was one of the founders

of the Khatam-al Anbiya (Construction) Headquarters.”

He said he has a plan to overcome the “difficult living conditions” but his major plan is to restructure state institutions.

“We need to change the rail. I have drafted plans in many areas which are based on global experience.”

“Lifting sanctions is first priority and making them ineffective comes next”

In his April 20 press conference, he also said lifting sanctions is a “first priority” and making sanctions ineffective comes next.

Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA – started talks in Vienna on April 9 to possibly revitalize the agreement now that the Biden administration has expressed willingness to rejoin the multilateral pact. The next round of talks started on Tuesday. The delegations returned to their capitals last week for consultations. Though all sides have expressed optimism over the revitalization of the JCPOA there is no guarantee that the nuclear deal talks will bear fruit during the Rouhani administration, whose term ends in August.

“Now removing sanctions is the first priority and making them ineffective is the next priority. If I want to negotiate, I will strengthen the country’s economy,” Qassemi pointed out.

The former director of the IRGC construction unit added, “I see no ban on having relations with all countries in the world except the Zionist regime.”

Iran, Russia intensify consultations as nuclear talks kick off

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Russian Federation has played a constructive role in the nuclear negotiations leading to the signing of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

Even after the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the deal Russia continued to play that role.

Russia is a signatory to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) along with other remaining signatories such as China, France, Germany, Iran and the UK. The United States also was a party to the deal but it withdrew from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, imposing far-reaching sanctions on Iran.

Russia paved the way for Iran and the West to implement the nuclear deal. For instance, it was Russia that facilitated the transfer of Iran's enriched uranium outside of the country. In December 2015, Iran announced that it successfully transferred 11 tons of its enriched uranium to Russia, a move that helped Iran implement the JCPOA.

Following Trump's withdrawal, the nuclear deal began teetering on the brink of total collapse as the United States deprived Iran of the economic benefits promised in the nuclear deal. Russia, as a responsible party to the JCPOA, unequivocally condemned the U.S. non-compliance with the JCPOA and, at some point, it even sought to soothe tensions between Tehran and Washington when the three European signatories to the JCPOA - France, Germany, and the UK - were blandly issuing political statements calling on the U.S. to stop efforts aimed at killing the nuclear deal.

The Russian efforts to save the JCPOA were done despite the fact that Russian President Vladimir Putin had famously said on May 15, 2019, that he was no longer willing to play the role of firefighter to extinguish the fire the Americans lit by withdrawing from the JCPOA.

"We regret that the deal is falling apart... After the signing of the agreement Iran was and still is the world's most verifiable and transparent country



in this sense... Iran is fulfilling all of its obligations... Russia is not a fire brigade. We cannot rescue everything that does not fully depend on us. We've played our part," Putin said at the time.

A year later, Putin appeared to be assuming a new role in preventing a total collapse of the deal after he received an "important message" from Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on July 21. The message was delivered by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. At the end of his visit, Zarif said in a tweet that he "delivered an important message to President Putin," and held "extensive talks" with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on bilateral cooperation as well as regional and global coordination. According to Zarif, Iran and Russia had "identical views" on the nuclear deal.

Two days after Zarif's visit, President Putin and his American counterpart then-President Trump "thoroughly" discussed several "issues of strategic stability", including Iran's nuclear program, in a telephone call. "The situation with the Iranian nuclear program was touched on. Both sides emphasized the need for a collective effort to maintain

regional stability and the global nuclear non-proliferation regime," the Kremlin said in a statement after the call, which was described by Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, as "very encouraging."

In the meantime, Russian strongly supported Iran during its showdown with the Trump administration over the expiration of the UN arms embargo against Tehran, which the previous U.S. administration worked its butt off to extend but failed to do so.

Russia continued to defend the JCPOA after Joe Biden came into power. Russian officials highlighted the failure of the so-called "maximum pressure" campaign launched by the Trump administration against Iran.

"Why do almost all countries support restoration of JCPOA? Because it is a key element of the international non-proliferation architecture. The deal, if restored, can provide credible assurances of peaceful character of the Iranian nuclear program via intrusive IAEA verification," Ulyanov tweeted last week.

He added, "Some people oppose

JCPOA restoration. But is there a realistic alternative? No. Maximum pressure policy totally failed and just prompted development of the Iranian nuclear program beyond 2015 parameters. This is a matter of fact. Does anybody want this trend to continue?"

Highlighting the failure of the U.S. economic pressure has been a remarkable position with which Russia put diplomatic pressure on Washington to encourage policy reconsideration on Iran.

"Some people can't draw lessons from the mistakes of the past. Do we need further evidence to recognize total failure of maximum pressure policy? Did 'Pompeo's 12 points' materialize? The arguments of opponents of the JCPOA can't be taken seriously," Ulyanov wrote on Twitter in mid-March.

Now that Iran and the P4+1 have resumed nuclear talks, Russia also tries to positively influence the talks. Iran has appreciated this role by intensifying consultations with the Russians. On Tuesday, top Iranian nuclear negotiator Seyed Abbas Araghchi held a trilateral meeting with the Russian and Chinese envoys to the talks. The meeting was held hours before another meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, indicating the importance Iran attaches to consultations with the Russians and the Chinese.

Ulyanov, who represented Russia in the trilateral meeting, described it as "very fruitful."

"We compared notes and exchanged views on the way ahead towards full restoration of the nuclear deal. It was a very fruitful meeting," he tweeted on Tuesday.

On the other hand, Araghchi underlined the shared views of Iran, Russia and China on the nuclear talks.

"The heads of delegations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Russia and China stressed the common ground of the three delegations and the need for continued consultation and serious coordination between the three countries in these negotiations," the Iranian nuclear negotiator said in a statement after the trilateral meeting.

Zarif holds talks with Iraqi political, religious leaders

➔1 Foreign Minister Zarif then welcomed Iraq's regional role in strengthening regional relations and the cooperation of the countries of the region with each other, and expressed Iran's support for Baghdad's constructive role, according to a statement published by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The Iranian foreign minister further expressed concern over the ISIS terrorist group's recent activities in Iraq, and said a serious fight against these efforts requires that Iran and Iraq cooperate with each other once again.

He also stressed the significance of pursuing the case of the assassination of Lt. General Qassem Soleimani, Abu Mehdi Al-Muhandis and their comrades, and praised the Iraqi government's efforts in this regard as well as the country's judicial cooperation during the Iranian Judiciary chief's trip to Baghdad.

Emphasizing respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Foreign Minister Zarif reiterated Tehran's opposition to certain military actions in Iraq, including the ones against diplomatic missions, and announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to assist Iraq in preventing such actions.

In turn, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein expressed satisfaction with the trend of Iran's nuclear deal talks with the P4+1 group of countries and elaborated on Iraq's regional policy of bringing the viewpoints of regional countries closer together.

The Iraqi foreign minister also stressed the need to resolve certain trivial issues in the implementation of the agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two countries.

Following up the agreements reached during the Iranian president's visit to Iraq, settlement of Iraq's debts to Iran, transportation and railway issues, visa problems of Iranian businessmen, certain problems hindering the activity of Iranian technical-engineering companies in Iraq, and financial issues were among other issues discussed by the two ministers.

After meeting Hussein, Zarif met with Iraqi President Barham Salih and discussed issues of mutual interest, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

During his meeting with Salih, Zarif described Baghdad's role in regional issues as effective and important. He also expounded on Tehran's viewpoint on the necessity of the existence of a security system in the region with the presence of all Persian Gulf countries which has already been proposed by Iran within the framework of the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE).

Zarif touched upon the Tehran-Baghdad agreements in different fields, and highlighted the need to make the necessary arrangements to implement those agreements without any bureaucratic barrier.

The Iraqi president, in turn, described mutual relations as important and expounded on his viewpoints with regards to the immediate implementation of the agreements reached by both sides.

Among other topics discussed in the meeting were issues related to terrorism and extremism in the region, financial issues, mutual cooperation at regional level as well as cooperation with other countries.

In addition to Salih, the chief Iranian diplomat met



with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Muhammad al-Halbasi as part of his meetings with senior Iraqi officials in Baghdad. During the meeting, Zarif highlighted Tehran's emphasis on regional convergence, and welcomed Iraq's constructive role in that regard.

Zarif said the implementation of the Iraqi parliament's legislation on the withdrawal of foreign troops amounts to respect for Iraq's sovereignty.

"The Americans killed Hajj Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi (al-Muhandis) on the Iraqi soil," said Zarif.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif said the upcoming elections in Iran and Iraq symbolize democracy in both countries, and wished Iraq luck in holding a calm election.

The top Iraqi parliamentarian, in turn, highlighted the Iraqi government and parliament's role in helping shape a tranquil atmosphere in the region, and expressed hope the ground will be prepared to boost trade between Iran and Iraq.

Also on Monday, Zarif attended an Iftar banquet hosted by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on Monday evening.

In this meeting, Foreign Minister Zarif praised the Iraqi prime minister's special efforts to pursue the existing cases in bilateral and regional relations related to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and elaborated on the latest developments in Iran's negotiations with the P4+1.

The chief Iranian diplomat appreciated Iraq's support for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and a removal of the United States' cruel and unilateral sanctions on Iran.

Zarif also referred to certain problems with the relations of Iranian companies and economic groups working in the fields of commerce, transport, and technical-engineering services as well as financial issues, and called for Iraq's assistance in resolving them.

The Iraqi prime minister, in turn, stressed that Baghdad's view of Iran does not just fall within the framework of neighborliness, but Iran is a strategic partner of Iraq.

He pointed to Iran's support for Iraq in the fight against ISIS, and said the history will never forget the stance adopted by Iran.

The Iranian foreign minister also met with Iraqi Sunni leaders. He sat down with Secretary-General of

the Arabic Project party Khamis al-Khanjar as well as a host of Sunni representatives of the Iraqi Parliament and other prominent Sunni figures.

In the session, which was part of Zarif's meetings with Iraqi political and religious figures, the top diplomat touched upon Tehran's opposition to sectarianism as well as the necessity of unity in the Islamic community and among different groups, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Zarif also referred to the status of holy Quds in Iran's foreign policy, saying Tehran will continue to stand by world Muslims of different faiths despite all existing pressures.

He added Iran's behavior is defined based on partnership with its friends.

He underscored the need for a logical and rational relationship between Iraqi groups, saying Tehran respects the diversity of religious, ethnic and political groups in Iraq.

In addition to Khamis al-Khanjar, some other top members of the Arabic Project party were also present at the meeting where they discussed, in detail, their viewpoints about Iraqi issues.

The Iranian foreign minister also met with Iraqi Shiite and political leaders including former prime ministers. During the meeting, Zarif had a detailed exchange of views with these leaders and explained the views of the Islamic Republic regarding various issues.

He underlined the importance for all Iraqi factions to maintain unity in order to advance Iraq's goals and described Iraq's position in the region as important.

Zarif further emphasized the view of the Islamic Republic on supporting a united and powerful Iraq. He also explained to the participants the latest developments related to bilateral relations with Iraq and regional issues of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the developments in the dialogue with the P4+1 countries.

The Iranian foreign minister described his Monday talks in Iraq as excellent.

"Excellent talks in #Iraq with President @BarhamSalih, PM @MAKadhimi, Speaker Halbousi, FM @Fuad_Husseini & senior Sunni & Shia leaders. Emphasized that Iran's priority is its neighbors. We welcome Iraq's pivotal role in the region. More meetings in Baghdad & Erbil today," he tweeted on Tuesday.

Zarif's visit to Iraq came after several foreign news media outlets reported that Iraq has hosted a rare direct meeting between Iran and Saudi Arabia in early April. The chief Iranian diplomat thanked Iraq for facilitating talks in the region but he stopped short of confirming the April talks. "We thank the Iraqi government for its efforts to establish dialogue in the region, and we hope that these efforts will lead to more dialogue and more serious understanding in the region," Zarif pointed out.

Officially, Iran and Saudi Arabia were tight-lipped about the Baghdad talks, refusing to confirm the talks but they also refrained from repudiating them. According to the Western press reports, another round of talks between Tehran and Riyadh is expected to take place in the coming weeks.

SPORTS

Skocic critical of AFC's decision to choose Bahrain as hosts

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic once again criticized the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) over choosing Bahrain as centralized venue for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

In mid-March, the AFC awarded Bahrain hosting rights for Group C in Asian qualifying after deciding to keep the upcoming fixtures in one place due to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Iran had been scheduled to play three of their last four group fixtures at home, including their return match against Bahrain and the Croat believes that Iran is being "deprived" of its right to host the matches.

Iran are third in their group of five with six points, but have a game in hand over their opponents. Iraq are top on 11 points, with Bahrain second on nine after five matches.

"Choosing Bahrain as the centralized venue for the competition in Group C is not fair but all the teams have no way but to face us and we will undoubtedly have a strong presence and surpass this situation. In the 2021 AFC Champions League, the Iranian teams showed that how strong we are. I'm sure we will qualify for the next stage and God will help us," Skocic said.

"I'm satisfied with the performance of the Iranian clubs in the 2021 ACL. They showed their superiority and have earned good results so far. I am sure Iran national team will also show their dominance in the World Cup qualifiers," he stated.

Skocic says that COVID-19 has disrupted his plan to prepare the National Team but he is optimistic over the future of the team.

"To have all players in training camp at the same time is very difficult due to coronavirus pandemic. We failed to have all of them in the camp simultaneously since some of them were in quarantine and some of them were injured.

"Against Uzbekistan and Bosnia we just had two days to prepare our team. In the match against Syria, we injected fresh blood into the team. My expectations are very high but I will not be deceived by the wins in the friendly matches," the Croat added.

"I respect the fans and experts but as a coach you can't please everyone. I will not select the players just because they play in Esteghlal and Persepolis. We will monitor our players in the friendlies and will choose the best. We are strong in the attacking line but we need to be better in the other posts," Skocic concluded.



10 athletes to represent Iran at Karate 1-Premier League Lisbon

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — A total of 10 karate practitioners left Tehran early Tuesday to take part at the 2021 Karate 1-Premier League Lisbon.

Iran's women's team consists of Hamideh Abbasali, Taravat Khaksar, Fatemeh Sadeghi, Sara Bahmanyar and Rozita Alipour. Zabiollah Poorshab, Amir Mehdizadeh, Bahman Asgari, Sajad Ganjzadeh and Amirreza Mirzaei will represent Iran's men's team.

The Karate 1-Premier League Lisbon will be held from April 30 to May 2 at Altice Arena Sports Hall in Lisbon, Portugal. The event is included in the Olympic qualification process and it is one of the last opportunities for Karate athletes to make it to the Olympics by standings.

Some 740 karatekas from 87 countries have registered to participate in one of the most anticipated moments of the year.

Golmohammadi rues missed chances against Al Wahda

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team head coach Yahya Golmohammadi was left to rue his side's missed chances but vowed Persepolis would bounce back against Al Rayyan on Thursday.

The Iranian team lost to Al Wahda of the UAE 1-0 in Group E of the 2021 AFC Champions League on Monday.

"We started badly in the first half compared to our opponents who started well," said Golmohammadi. "Al Wahda were good in closing down the spaces in the opening half."

"I believe we improved in the second half and played a better game. The match was one sided but we did not convert the chances we had and lost the three points. If we had taken our chances, we could have at least earned a draw.

"I would like to congratulate Al Wahda for their performance. They were well organized and were defensively good. They were strong in the first half but that intensity diminished in the second half," he added.

"I'm not a firm believer in bad luck or hard luck, we just didn't have better concentration. Our only aim is to qualify top of the group and we will beat Al Rayyan," Golmohammadi stated.

Foolad coach not happy with defeat against Al Sadd

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Foolad coach Jesus Javier Noble was disappointed with the defeat against Al Sadd in Group D of the AFC Champions League on Monday.

The loss ended Foolad's chances of a first-place finish, but Javier Nobl said the Iran side will push to finish second and hopefully advance.

"I want to congratulate Al Sadd for the win, and wish them good luck in its final match," said Noble.

"It made us work hard on the pitch from left to right. We had some good chances in the first half, and in the second we hoped to open the scoring, but it had a nice goal. Right after Al Sadd scored, we had a golden opportunity but couldn't score," the Spanish coach added.

"We have a young squad, and this is the result of their best efforts. We have one match left and will try to win it. We have played all our matches with all we have, and we will keep giving our best, no doubt about that," Javier Noble said.

Iranian automakers to produce 1.2m cars by Mar. 2022

➔1 In the tire production sector, production of 330,000 tons of tires has been put on the agenda, to register a growth of 18.6 percent compared to the 278,200 tons produced in the previous year.

Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 900,714 vehicles in the previous year, which was 4.3 percent more than the figure of its previous year, the data released by Codal website showed.

According to the data, during the past year, IKCO manufactured 480,338 vehicles, which was 21.9 percent more than the output in its preceding year, which was 393,812 vehicles.



SAIPA manufactured 317,321 vehicles, with a 12.6-percent fall from 363,379 vehicles manufactured in 1398.

And Pars Khodro manufactured 103,055 vehicles in the past year, showing a 2.8-percent drop from the output of its previous year, which was 106,072 vehicles.

Last year, former Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani had called on the country's major automakers to increase production by 300,000, raising their total output to 1.2 million vehicles.

Speaking in a meeting with the heads of the country's two major carmakers, namely Iran Khodro (IKCO) and SAIPA, Rahmani noted that they need to carefully examine the causes of the current turmoil in the country's auto market and take serious steps to improve their sales process.

Value of IME's monthly trade up 54% year on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of commodities traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose 54 percent during the past Iranian calendar month (March 21-April 20), compared to the same month in the past year.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, 2.7 million tons of commodities worth \$1.5 billion were traded at the exchange in the past month, showing also a 350-percent growth in terms of weight as compared to the same month of the previous year.

On its metal and mineral trading floor, the exchange traded within that month 1.421 million tons of commodities worth more than \$790 million.

Commodities purchased were 1.097 million tons of steel, 11,780 tons of copper, 360 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 11,325 tons of aluminum, 400 tons of coke, 300,000 tons of iron ore, 200 tons of cast iron and 100 tons of lead.

Oil and petrochemical was the next trading floor on which the IME saw trades of more than 1.318 million tons of various types of commodities in both its domestic and export rings with a trading value of more than \$700 million.

On this floor the IME traded 354,567 tons of bitumen, 237,258 tons of polymeric products, 124,668 tons of chemicals, 12,446 tons of base oil and 460,100 tons of vacuum bottom.

There were also 10,040 tons of sulfur, 310 tons of argon, 500 tons of insulation product and 111,200 tons of lube cut traded on the same floor.

Moreover, on its agricultural trading floor the IME saw trade of 2,500 kg of saffron.

The last trading floor was the IME's side market with 3,754 tons of commodities - not listed on the exchange's main spot market - sold on it.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iran-China partnership to raise Chabahar port's global status

➔1 Aghaei further mentioned China's great development in terms of container ports, saying: "Six of the world's top 10 container ports are in China which means about 60 percent of the world's container operations are taking place in this Asian country."

Research shows that the Chinese ports are going to register the world's largest growth in terms of container trade by 2024, he said.

Asked about the possible impacts of the Chinese investment in the port on the Islamic Republic's current co-operation with India, the official said: "The first and most important issue that the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has taken into account when considering investment offers by foreign trade partners, is the port's economic independence."

"India currently works with us as an



operator in this port and the country does not have an exclusive right over any part of this port," he explained.

"We have always welcomed other countries to come and participate in the development of this port beside India."

Not only China, but any other country that is willing to invest in Chabahar is welcomed by Iran provided that the economic independence of the port and the interests of the Islamic Republic are ensured, the official stressed.

"We have called Chabahar port the "Gate of Nations" and that is an indication of our view about this port's future; Chabahar is going to be one of the top trade hubs in the region, linking the West Asian nations to CIS countries."

"Our priority is to cooperate with those countries which are able to be more beneficial for the country's trade and economy," Aghaei emphasized.

Iran, Ukraine to discuss agricultural co-op in online meeting next month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA), and Ukraine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) are planning to hold an online B2B meeting between the traders and businessmen of the two countries on May 24.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the two sides are planned to discuss agricultural cooperation between Iran and Ukraine during the online meeting.

In last November, Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) had hosted a webinar with the representatives of the private sector from Ukraine's Kharkiv city in which the two sides expressed readiness for expanding trade through barter trade.

As reported by the TCCIMA portal, in the event which was organized by the TCCIMA in collaboration with the Kharkiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), the two sides discussed the expansion of mutual economic relations and mulled over ways of boosting the trade exchange between the two countries, which is currently

less than one billion dollars, to over \$5 billion a year.

In this regard, Hesamedin Hallaj, TCCIMA deputy head for international affairs, referred to the close relations between Iran and Ukraine over the past decades and stressed the need for the development of economic relations between the two sides.

The official emphasized that the private sectors of the two countries can use each other's shared capacities and experiences to improve the current business relationships.

He mentioned the barter trade of minerals and mining products along with oil and gas products as well as the trade of industrial equipment as great opportunities for companies in the two countries to boost trade exchanges.

He further underlined the potentials and capacities of Iranian and Ukrainian companies in the fields of aerospace, industrial automation, mining, agricultural machinery, as well as urban transportation, and invited the private sectors of the two sides to cooperate in these areas.

After the officials of the two countries delivered their



speeches, businessmen, and representatives of companies from the two countries talked about their business activities and expressed readiness for joint cooperation.

Some B2B talks were also held between the companies of the two sides.

Annual steel exports fall 13% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's export of steel during the previous Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20) declined 13.1 percent compared to the figure for the preceding year, data released by the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) showed.

Based on the mentioned data, the country exported nine million tons of steel in the previous year while the exports in the Iranian calendar year 1398 stood at 10.362 million tons, IRNA reported.

According to ISPA, over 2.839 million tons of steel products were also exported in the mentioned year, registering an 18-percent decline year on year.



As ISPA data indicated, the exports of steel products, intermediate steel and sponge iron all declined last year, and despite significant output growth and the demand decline in domestic

construction sector, the exports of the mentioned products did not increase due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Based on the Industry Ministry data, major Iranian steel producers managed to produce over 22.54 million tons of steel ingots in the previous calendar year, registering an eight percent rise year on year.

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.

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

The country produced 7.5 million tons of crude steel in Q1 2021, to maintain its place as the 10th biggest steel producer in the first three-month of 2021, Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced referring to the data released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

Rouhani holds talks with private sector on economic issues

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, on Monday, attended a meeting with the representatives of the country's private sector at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) to discuss economic issues.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the meeting was attended by the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie and a number of businessmen and entrepreneurs.

Speaking in the meeting, Shafeie underlined some of the country's major issues in the economic sectors including the country's water shortage and drought as well as the issues related to the stock market.

Mentioning the country's water situation in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) the official said: "The first important point is the situation of the country in terms of water shortage this year and the serious risks of its advancement; The amount of rainfall [since the beginning of the current water year]



up to April 21 has been only 113 mm, which is 43 percent less than the average of 199 mm last year; On the other hand, no province has received more than average rainfall so far."

According to Shafeie, the rate of rainfall decline is very high in many provinces. For example, the rainfalls

in Khorasan Razavi province during this water year have decreased by 58 percent, for Fars province 50 percent, Kerman province 70 percent, Kermanshah 47 percent, and Hormozgan 90 percent.

Even in Golestan province, rainfalls have decreased by 42 percent and in Gilan and Mazandaran provinces a 20 percent decrease in registered.

"Based on forecasts, the crop year 1399-1400 can be called the driest year in the last forty years," the official said.

"In such a situation, access to water supply will be limited and economic sectors are facing serious problems which will become even more difficult if it is not managed."

The second issue that the ICCIMA head addressed was the problems faced by the stock market, about which Shafeie said: "What is important now is restoring the government's credibility and the people's trust in the stock market as a healthy institution."

TEDPIX jumps 15,600 points on Tuesday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — After several days of decline, TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), jumped 15,685 points to 1.202 million on Tuesday.

Over 6.034 billion securities worth 43.746 trillion rials (about \$1.04 billion) were traded at the TSE on Tuesday.

The first market's index rose 13,771 points, and the second market's index climbed 230,801 points.

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.

Unprecedented fluctuations in the Iranian stock market over the past few months have led shareholders, experts, and scholars to call

for the government to increase its support for the market, some shareholders want the government to guarantee the return of their stocks, some believe providing infrastructure is the best way to help this market.

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

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

So far, the government has repeatedly stated that the activities carried out in this market are not aimed at interfering in stock exchange transactions or directing the market, but are efforts for reducing the

bubble created in the market and to prevent further decline of the stock market index.

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

The current trend of stock exchange trading will continue until relative stability is established in the market and the investors are expected to return to the market, the capital market expert Amirali Amir-Aqaei



stated.

"The demand side is now waiting for the internal and international political condition to become clear, and investors will invest in the stock market again as soon as the horizons are clear," Amir-Aqaei told IRNA last week.

China is on its way to surpassing the U.S. in military power: Indian professor

→ 1 Following is the text of the interview: **How do you see the fate of confrontation between China and the U.S.? Do you think that China can surpass the U.S.?**

China has recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic-induced global economic crisis. There is no doubt that China has already become the global economic powerhouse, and it is expected to surpass the U.S. as the world's biggest economy by 2028 or even before. The former U.S. President Donald Trump's ally-alienating policies within NATO between 2017 to 2020 have pushed China's position upward firmly at the global power table. China is undoubtedly acquiring economic and military strength superior to the U.S. sooner than later. Still, there are some doubts over its internal political stability in the long run and its ability to make alliances with other regional powers in different parts of the world. Though China has been enjoying political stability for a long, the Chinese people lack similar trust and confidence in their political system as the Americans have in theirs. The lack of complete political legitimacy might be a challenge for internal security. It might be a hindrance also in commanding the respect of other countries in its competition for getting the global superpower status.

Some experts say that Chinese influence in Asia and the world at large will remain economic while others predict that China resorts to military tools to curb the United States. What is your comment?

China's major influence globally and in Asia will remain primarily economic; however, though China is still behind, it is on its way to surpassing the U.S. in military power with increased spending on weapons technology and developing several secretive weapons. China is not bound by the Immediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) between Moscow and Washington, and it has already acquired the largest number of ballistic missiles. China is particularly the world leader in medium-range missiles and has immense capability to strike with its nuclear weapons anywhere it wants. Though



“The 25-years strategic pact has made the relationship between China and Iran more long-term and strategic.”

China is estimated to have only 320 nuclear weapons, but is a big unknown and has never given any number of its warheads officially. Nuclear weapons are also part of its ongoing project to modernize its military to close the gap with the U.S. China already has a larger navy than the U.S. China under President Xi has prioritized enhancing its military strength, and it will be foolish to downplay China growing military power.

Why does the U.S. try to portray the world in a monopolar state supposing itself as the only legitimate leader of the world?

The concept of a monopolar world has disappeared for nearly a decade now, and

the U.S. has already realized it. The U.S. has basically accepted that China has become a bigger economic player and soon going to outcompete it militarily. The U.S. is only engaged now in pursuing a policy to contain China using its better political and cultural influences worldwide. One of the strategies in the post-Trump period has been to strengthen its old alliances across the Atlantic and create a new partnership in the Asia Pacific region. China has developed some working alliances with Russia and, at the same time, getting new allies from Asia to Europe and from Africa to Latin America. China is using its enormous economic power and the Belt and Road Initiative to build alliances. So, the

“The U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal was extremely foolish morally, legally, strategically, and diplomatically.”

world is moving towards being bipolar again, but the two poles of this bipolar world will be, to some extent, multipolar in character.

What will be the impact of the 25-year partnership between Iran and China on bilateral ties and the region as well?

The U.S. President Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal was extremely foolish morally, legally, strategically, and diplomatically. This prompted Iran to explore a 25-year strategic pact with China, involving both military and economic cooperation. President Joe Biden had promised in his campaign as a candidate to return to the Iran nuclear deal. However, after coming to power, he dithered, which led to Iran and China signing the 25-year partnership agreement in the last week of March. This \$400 billion pact is a significant agreement for Iran and also China as well to get its foothold in West Asia/Middle East region. At the same time, there are signs of progress of improved U.S.-Iran relations in the future and the revival of the nuclear deal. It is in Iran's best interest to develop a strong partnership with China and maintaining a good relationship with the U.S.

Given that certain Asian countries, including Japan and South Korea, are U.S. allies, do you predict any possibility to form economic blocs in Asia to confront America's presence?

The U.S. has long economic and military cooperation with Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Through Quad, the U.S. is trying to include India into a similar type of alliance, and speculations are there to make Quad Asia's NATO. While the U.S. is building an economic and military bloc in Asia, China has a robust economic partnership with several ASEAN countries and Pakistan. Some other countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal are also increasingly coming within China's economic influence. The 25-years strategic pact has made the relationship between China and Iran more long-term and strategic. So, China is already engaged in creating an economic bloc (if not military) in Asia to counter the U.S. and its allies.

Netanyahu may ignite a fire in the region: Iraqi analyst

→ 1 And these escalations have, without a doubt, an American green light. The Israelis are too small when it comes to Iran to dare to take such a bold step without U.S. backing. And as Ayatollah Khamenei said, a couple of years ago, the era of hit and run is long gone. The Israeli occupation leaders are living in a bubble, but they will be awakened by the decisive and rightful Iranian response. The Iranians are the only country taking direct action against a U.S. military base since 1945, so if they dare to stand up to the USA, then they will for sure be able to defend themselves against Israeli aggression.

Is Iran or Israel a real threat to West Asia? Which of them has waged wars on its neighbors?

Iran has not initiated a war for about 2500 years. But the Israeli occupation is a regime surviving by warfare and was founded on genocide and warfare. Thus, it's very clear who the threat is in the region. Iran is one of the foremost countries when it comes to the defeat of Daesh in the region as Tehran sent its best advisors to the different frontlines in the war on terror. The great commander Soleimani spent more time on the frontlines against Daesh than in Iran in his last years. And besides, Israel continually violates regional countries sovereignty. Israel is also responsible for the assassination of scientists and different commanders in the region in addition to its wars. Recently they've not waged a regular war, but that's not because of any human rights accord or so. It's more because the resistance front has managed to build up a deterrence that the Israelis understand. The weakest point in the Israeli regime is, after all, domestic security. Their most advanced security machinery has not been able to defend the settlements from the range

of the resistance front.

How do you see the fate of normalization between certain Arab countries and Israel? Do you predict a durable peace for West Asia while Israel continues its expansionist projects?

The normalization is not going to give the region any durable peace. The old peace treaty between the Israeli occupation and the two Arab countries Egypt and Jordan is good proof of this. Despite having a peace deal, the Israeli occupation have furthered its plan of the annexation of the West Bank. The U.S. legitimized their occupation of the Golan Heights and gave all of Jerusalem. Despite this, some regional countries normalized ties with them. Some of them got empty promises. I think these countries were forced to normalize their ties with Israel. Most of them had already secret ties with Israel; they only made it official now. Anyhow, this won't change anything as these Arab states do not represent their nations who fully support the Palestinian cause.

Do you think that Netanyahu and his government can maintain the position they had during the Trump administration? What are Netanyahu's main challenges domestically?

When it comes to Israel, there is no difference really between the Republicans or the Democrats. Both sides support Israel. The new administration has not shown any interest in moving back U.S. embassy to Tel Aviv from Jerusalem or take back the U.S. recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli land. Yet I agree there are small differences, just as there is a small difference between sugar-free coke and regular coke. Netanyahu's problem is mainly

internal. Israel doesn't have a functional government as the different blocs can't have enough votes for a majority. They are probably facing their 5th elections since 2019. Besides that, as some of his predecessors, he is facing corruption charges. This combination is a dangerous combination for a person like Netanyahu. He doesn't seem happy about entering jail; if he can't get away through immunity as a prime minister, then there is a risk that he could ignite a fire in the region to save himself.

What are the differences between Biden and Trump when it comes to their plans for West Asia?

The only apparent difference is the method. The U.S. always prefers Israel's interests above all in the region. So, it's actually about how you do that. With Trump, you had a gambler who didn't care about what's a political right; he said what he liked and did what he wanted openly. Like when he honestly said that U.S. troops are in Syria for the purpose of Syrian oil. A Biden administration would probably do the same in Syria as they are doing by continuing the policy of Trump there. But they're not honest about why, they are using pretty words like human rights and democracy instead to fool people. As far as I see it, Biden could pose a bigger threat for naive people he could easily fool. Let's take a quick look at the Iran nuclear deal as an example. It was accepted and ratified by a U.S. administration whose VP was Biden. Yet U.S. never implemented the deal in full back then. And now Biden is trying to delay U.S. implementation of the deal with different excuses. While in reality, he could easily, with a presidential waiver, return the U.S. to the JCPOA by abandoning all the Trump era sanctions.

Yemen's army continues advancing toward Marib

Amid the continued advancement of the Yemeni army in the city of Mar'ib, the Saudi-led coalition has begun to build new military camps in Shabwah and Al-Wadeeah areas to deploy more troops in the city.

The latest measures by Saudi-led coalition comes after Yemeni army backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees took control of strategic areas including al-Toomah al-Olia hill, over four kilometres away from the western neighborhoods of the city of Marib.

The Yemeni army has also intensified its retaliatory attacks against Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, Yemeni troops launched an attack with a drone of Qasif K-2 against King Khalid airbase in Asir in retaliation for the ongoing Saudi war and siege, Press TV reported.

Yemenis say their army will continue its operations to liberate all the Yemeni lands, including the oil-rich province of Mar'ib the last stronghold of Saudi Arabia in northern Yemen.

Saudi king invites Qatar's ruler to visit

Saudi Arabia's King Salman has invited Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to visit the kingdom, the emir's office has said, in the latest sign of improving relations between the neighbours and former rivals.

Riyadh and allies broke off ties with Qatar in June 2017 over claims it was too close to Iran and was stoking regional unrest, allegations Qatar has always denied.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic and trade ties and imposed a land, sea and air blockade on the Gulf state.

But in January, the blockading countries agreed to re-establish ties with Qatar following a flurry of diplomatic activity by former US President Donald Trump's administration.

According to al Jazeera, the emir received a letter from King Salman "including an invitation to visit" Saudi Arabia, his office said in a statement on Monday. It did not say if Sheikh Tamim had accepted or when the visit would take place.

Biden made 67 'false and misleading claims' in his first 100 days in office

The fact-checkers at The Washington Post released their assessment of President Biden's "false and misleading claims" in his first 100 days in office.

"After four years of a presidency that swamped Americans with a gusher of false and misleading claims, the Joe Biden era has offered a return to a more typical pattern when it comes to a commander in chief and his relationship with the facts — one that features frequent spin and obfuscation or exaggeration, with the occasional canard.

According to the report, Biden has made "67 false or misleading statements" in all the speeches, interviews, tweets, and public statements he has made as president. That, however, pales in comparison to former President Trump, who, according to the Post, made 511 falsehoods in his first 100 days in office.

The Post tallied four "Four Pinocchio" ratings from the president, three of them were false claims he repeated about Georgia's election reform bill. The other was an inaccurate knock at the Trump administration claiming that "federal government contracts awarded directly to foreign companies went up 30 percent," which actually averaged between 8.4-11 percent under the previous president.

The claim deemed by the Post as perhaps the "strangest" of Biden's, which he made twice, was that he "traveled 17,000 miles" with Chinese President Xi Jinping when they were both vice presidents.

Erdogan to Biden: U.S. must look in mirror before accusing Turks of genocide

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called on US President Joe Biden to reverse a decision to name the 1915 massacre of Armenians by the former Ottoman Empire "genocide," warning that the declaration would harm bilateral ties.

In a statement on April 24, Biden honored "all those Armenians who perished in the genocide that began 106 years ago today," becoming the first U.S. president to formally refer to the killings as "genocide."

"The U.S. president has made baseless, unjust and untrue remarks about the sad events that took place in our geography over a century ago," Erdogan said after a cabinet meeting on Monday.

"I hope the U.S. president will turn back from this wrong step as soon as possible," he added.

Erdogan stressed that the move would hinder ties, advising the United States to "look in the mirror."

The majority of the deaths occurred by diseases brought over from Europe. War, slavery, and displacement also contributed to the decline of the populations of the indigenous community.

Erdogan said, "While all these truths are out there, you cannot pin the genocide accusation on the Turkish people."

Resistance News

Sheikh Sabri: Israel uses an ethnic cleansing policy in J'lem

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, head of the Higher Islamic Council in Occupied Jerusalem, has said that the Israeli occupation state uses "a scorched earth and ethnic cleansing policy" against the Jerusalemites in the holy city through displacing them from their homes.

Talking in particular about Israel's new plan to evacuate Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in next May from its local residents, Sheikh Sabri affirmed that the Sheikh Jarrah residents would defend their right to their homes through documents backing their position.

"The Israeli occupation authority (IOA) and its courts have no right to evacuate the homes of Sheikh Jarrah," he said.

"The occupation does not follow fair laws, and it avoids delving into the issue of the land ownership because the settlers are unable to prove their ownership of the area," the Jerusalemite official added.

He accused the IOA of manipulating its laws to lay its hands over large areas of Jerusalem in order to completely Judaize it and change its demographic reality.

He appealed to the international community and its human rights institutions to necessarily intervene to stop Israel from evacuating Sheikh Jarrah of its residents and put an end to its ethnic cleansing policy in Jerusalem.

OPCW ignores critics of its cover-up, imposes sanctions on Syria

By Robert Inlakesh

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has revoked Syria's privileges at the agency, accusing it of repeatedly using chemical weapons during the civil war, yet refuses to properly address complaints of a cover-up by the organization over their sole on-the-ground investigation of any such attack.

On April 7, 2018, an alleged chemical weapons attack was reported from inside Douma, Syria, according to reports on the ground. Days later, the U.S., the UK, and France bombarded Syria in "response," without any clarification that any such attack had taken place.

The significance of the alleged Douma attack was not only that it led to Western airstrikes on Syria, but also that it was the first alleged chemical attack that the OPCW had sent an on-the-ground team to investigate.

Despite the OPCW now concluding that there was a chemical attack that took place, the leaked 'original report' put together on the incident reveals that the studies conducted had found no evidence of a chemical attack using chlorine gas.

Two whistleblowers also spoke out from inside the OPCW, creating greater doubt about the credibility of the OPCW's publicly stated

conclusions. A leaked engineering assessment, conducted by the OPCW, on the two gas cylinders found at the site of the alleged Douma attack interestingly found that the evidence had been tampered with.

The first head of the OPCW, Jose Bustani, has also applied pressure and challenged the way the organization has handled the reporting, along with experts in the field such as Theodore Postol, an award-winning professor of Science, Technology and National Security Policy at MIT.

Recently, award-winning investigative journalist Aaron Mate addressed a United Nations Security Council panel, laying out a detailed analysis—which he says casts doubts over the OPCW's current position—on whether there was a chlorine gas attack in Douma. When, at the end of the meeting, it came time for the representatives from both the U.S. and UK to answer a direct question posed to them by Mate, they had already left the meeting.

An EU lawmaker, Mick Wallace, was also attacked as having repeated "fake news" when he questioned the OPCW Director-General Fernando Arias and said the following: "Why will you not heed calls from renowned international figures... to meet with all the investigators?" He went on to state, "This problem is not going away. Are you going to investigate all aspects in a transparent

manner?"

It's safe to say that there are large question marks surrounding the OPCW's findings, but what of those "moderate rebels" in Syria claiming to have witnessed a massacre of Syrian civilians with chlorine gas?

The allegations of a Douma chemical weapons attack came from within territory held by a Saudi-backed extremist group, Jaish al-Islam. The terrorist organization, described as "moderate rebels" by Western media outlets, had a track record of placing Syrian civilians — men women and children — in cages outside of areas where militants were stationed in order to deter airstrikes from the Syrian government and its allies. The group also had been accused of starving and brutally executing Syrian civilians, on top of shelling civilian neighborhoods under Syrian government control and filming themselves opening fire upon civilian airliners.

At the time of the reported chlorine gas attack, it was clear that the Syrian government and their allies were on the verge of taking the rest of "rebel" -held Eastern Ghouta. The claims of a chemical weapons attack directly caused Western airstrikes, as happened just a year prior when a supposed chemical weapons attack also occurred in an area known as Khan Sheikhoun.

There was clearly a motive for the extremist

organization, Jaish al-Islam, to claim that such an attack occurred in Douma, especially as they were losing the battle against government forces. In the case of the Syrian government, there would be no reason to risk committing such an atrocious crime when they were days away from complete victory, inviting Western airstrikes. This was simple to see, with the most elementary-level understanding of the Syrian war, yet these types of common-sense arguments weren't even taken into consideration by the international community.

Now, after ignoring all the credible critics, from journalists to EU lawmakers and whistleblowers to the ex-director general of the OPCW itself, the organization sees it fit to impose sanctions on Syria for committing chemical attacks. Interestingly enough, they note multiple attacks as their justification and not just the Douma attack, and when pushed on it, the director general pointed to human rights reports to support his argument.

It is clear that the OPCW has taken a serious blow to its credibility and has decided to back Western imperialism over the truth, a shameful decision that serves as part of the justifications provided for the West applying its murderous sanctions on Syria.

(Source: Press TV)

Iranian handicrafts: Zanjan filigree

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Filigree is one the most important applied arts of Iran's Zanjan province. It is a kind of metalwork, and researchers have traced it back to 550 to 330 BC.



The tools used in filigree making are very similar to those of goldsmithing. The first step of filigree making is to pass stocks of silver, gold, or copper through a rolling machine to turn them into thin threads with a thickness of about one or two millimeters.

Then two to three threads are woven together to create chains or passed through a roll that gives them grind edges. The mold of the desired shape is then made by putting thick strips of metal around a cast iron or iron base. Then the iron base is heated and a layer of wax is applied to it. The wax is used to hold the small pieces of thin threads together.

Now the mold will be put on the iron base, and the small pieces of threads are laid according to a beautiful design. Finally, the iron base is heated once more so that the wax melts away. The work is detached from the base. A mixture of borax and silver powder is then poured, and they are heated until the mixture melts and attaches the silver pieces. The silver grows matted and loses its shine during this process. Therefore, it will be washed with acetic acid and polished later.

Many filigree artifacts have been discovered in Susa, Dura-Europos, Hamedan and Jeyhoun treasures which prove that this craft was practiced from ancient times.

Very few historic records exist about the filigree of Zanjan, however, explorers who have visited there have mentioned beautiful filigree handicrafts and jewels.

Based on these records, the 16th century is the first recorded history for filigree. Today most filigree products are of silver, which is obtained by melting silver objects that are old and obsolete. Some other components that are used include natural wax, aqua regia, alum, and sulfuric acid.

Today gold filigree is practiced to create jewelry such as earrings, rings, etc., and silver filigree to create dishes. The most common motifs that are used in Zanjan filigree are paisley, hederia, and blossoms.

Restoration begins on UNESCO-tagged Soltaniyeh Dome

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Three restoration workshops have been set up at the UNESCO-tagged Soltaniyeh Dome in northwestern Zanjan province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The workshops in the historical site were temporarily closed from mid-autumn to late winter due to the city's harsh weather conditions, during which the restorers prepared and crafted their needed materials inside the temporary units in the site, CHTN quoted Amir Arjmand as saying on Tuesday.

Other than restoring and repairing tiles, stones, bricks, plaster works, and other decorations of the dome, skilled restorers and experts are providing training to interested people in these workshops, the official added.

Although the dome's restoration work is still ongoing in the workshops after several years, there is still no clear date for its completion since the quality of the work is important, he explained.



The 14th-century Gonbad-e ("The Dome of") Soltaniyeh is highly recognized as an architectural masterpiece particularly due to its innovative double-shelled dome and elaborate interior decoration. The very imposing dome stands about 50 meters tall from its base. Covered with turquoise-blue faience tiles, the stunning structure dominates the skyline of Soltaniyeh, an ancient city in Zanjan province, northwestern Iran.

Meaning "Town of the Sultans", Soltaniyeh was briefly the capital of Persia's Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century.

The monument is, in fact, the mausoleum of Oljaitu, also known as Muhammad Khodabandeh, who was the eighth Ilkhanid dynasty ruler from 1304 to 1316.

According to UNESCO, the mausoleum's interior decoration is so outstanding that scholars like A.U. Pope have described the building as "anticipating the Taj Mahal".

The UN cultural body has it that the Mausoleum of Oljaitu is an essential link and key monument in the development of Islamic architecture in central and western Asia. The fairly large dome is the earliest extant example of its type in the country and became an important reference for the later development of the Islamic dome.

Zolfaqari Archaeological Museum undergoes restoration

->1 Nestled in central Zanjan, the historical house belonged to Zolfaqar Khan Asaad al-Dowleh, the son of Hassan Qoli Khan.

He was one of the wealthiest personalities in the city in the Qajar era and the Zolfaqari household was one of the most well-known families in the city.

The house consisted of the interior and exterior sections and a garden but was later divided into two sections by Zolfaqari Street. The garden was turned into a park, and only the central part of the exterior section has remained.

The remained structure is a two-story building, with halls, bedrooms, and living rooms being influenced by Iranian and European styles of architecture.

In 1993, miners in the Douzklakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages in Zanjan Province, accidentally came across a mummified head, dated to 300 CE. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to the Ancient History Encyclopedia.

However, in 2004, the miners discovered yet another "saltman," which was followed by further excavation unearthing remains of a human body along with a large number of



artifacts made of wood, metal tools, clothing, and pottery.

In 2005, a systematic excavation began, three more mummies were excavated, and a sixth remained in situ due to lack of funds for its storage. The context of the remains suggested that a collapse in the mine had caused the death of the miners in question.

The first mummy dubbed the "saltman," is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive.

This particular "saltman" was originally dated based on the archaeological material found with him. Later, the mummy was carbon dated, which placed him in 500 CE (1750 BP, that is, "before present" or 1750

years ago), the Sasanian Empire's height. The second "Saltman" was carbon-dated to 1554 BP, which placed him in the same era as the first "saltman," the Sasanian era.

The third, fourth, and fifth "saltmen" were also carbon dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The individual "saltmen" has a few secrets of their own, for instance, the first "saltman" that was discovered had the blood type B+, and 3D imaging of his skull revealed fractures around his eye and other damage that occurred before death by a hard blow to the head. His clothing (the impressive leather boot) and his gold earring show a person of some rank; the reason for his presence in the mine remains a mystery.

Saltman No. 5 had tapeworm eggs from the Taenia sp. genus in his system. These were identified during the study of his remains. The find indicates the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, and this is the first case of this parasite in ancient Iran and the earliest evidence of ancient intestinal parasites in the area. The best preserved and probably the most harrowing of the bodies is "saltman" No. 4. A sixteen-year-old miner, caught in the moment of death, crushed by a cave-in.

Weaving kilims revived in southwestern Iranian village

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Once fallen into oblivion, the art of weaving kilims has been revived in the ancient village of Gankhak-e Sheykhi in Bushehr province, southwestern Iran.

Until two years ago, there were fewer than 10 weavers active in this field in the village, but now weaving kilims is being practiced by over 60 female crafters, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The choice of colors and patterns using in the kilims weaving in this village is minimal and they are not woven based on a premade pattern, which makes them unique and a good choice for modern decorations, IRNA quoted Leila Rahimi as saying on Monday.

However, organizing training courses is also very important and needs to be taken into account, the official explained.

Reviving this field could contribute to the empowerment of the female villagers since weaving kilim has been mostly their main profession and a source of income for them for years, she added.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr Province is one of Iran's most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush

palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qasemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a "world city of [diverse] handicrafts". Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a "world city of filigree". And Qasemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer-garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the calendar year 1398 (ended March 19, 2020). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported



officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Roofing covers to protect ‘city of the mouthless’

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A series of custom-made roofing covers have been constructed over Shahr-e Yeri, a unique archaeological site in northwest Iran, which is sometimes referred to as the "city of the mouthless".

The installation of shielding structures is part of an extensive project aimed to protect the 400-hectare archaeological site against harsh natural conditions, IRNA reported.

Shahr-e Yeri is one of the earliest settlements in the country, which is situated near Pirazman village of Meshkin Shahr in northwestern Ardebil province. The ar-



chaeological site was inscribed on the list of national heritage sites in 1931.

The site embraces an Iron-Age fortress, three prehistorical temples, and tens of stones on which bizarre-shaped mouthless faces have been carved.

During its heyday bodies of the dead were buried with special ceremonies and rituals in compliance with religious beliefs... however, the majority of the tombs were found empty of skeletons due to illegal excavations, according to the Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies.

More than 10,000 ancient petroglyphs and rock-carved arts have been discovered in and near Meshkin Shahr over the past

couple of years. Some of the objects bear depictions of human beings in archery, cavalry in rhythmic and magical themes. There are also petroglyphs depicting mountain goats, boat anchors, shooting and scenes of war, and scenes of deer hunting in individual and collective forms.

Rock arts can be seen around mountainous regions across Iran where roaming life and livestock farming are prevalent typically. The rock-carved figures of animals and associated tools are regarded as good clues to help shed light on daily life in the distant past, though some figures might be symbolic.

West Asia’s longest glass suspension bridge being built in Kordestan

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — West Asia's longest glass suspension bridge with a length of 450 meters is being constructed in the village of Negel, western province of Kordestan, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The suspension bridge is a part of a bigger tourist complex including a zip line, eagle zip line, bungee jumping, and rafting, which is unique in the country, Yaqub Guylani announced on Tuesday.

The complex also includes a restaurant, pergola, amusement park, and eight accommodation units, the official added.

A budget of 500 billion rials (about \$12 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to the project, which aims at attracting more domestic and foreign tourists to the region, he explained.

A suspension bridge made of curved sheets of glass,



which is the first of its kind in the world, was inaugurated in Ardebil province, northwest Iran in January 2020.

A peek into Pan Bafi of Alamut

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Pan Bafi, which falls under the category of traditional textiles, is a prominent handicraft being practiced in Alamut in Qazvin province.

Also called Navar Bafi or Kart Bafi, it is the art of weaving a kind of narrow strip with a width of one to two centimeters.

According to Visit Iran, these handicrafts, which are mostly woven by Alamut women, are quite durable and tight and can be used for more than one purpose. But they are

often used in the clothing and clothes design industry for decorating the collars, edges of skirts or sleeves, belts, shoelaces, ties, baby swaddling clothes, and other accessories.

And if it is made from thick yarns, the Pan Bafi can be used to set up tents or tie the muzzles of horses or camels, too. The basic materials of Pan Bafi are natural and, occasionally, synthetic yarns. But they are usually woven from a kind of silk yarn called "Kaj" yarn.

In Pan Bafi, the wraps are stretched either

vertically or "Istadeh", or laid on the ground or "Khabideh". The stretching of the wraps is done according to the predesigned patterns. Some of them are "Chashm e Khorus" or the eyes of the rooster, "Hasht Chapar", "Bist o Noh Chapar", "Modakhel", "Nimeh Modakhel" and "Pichak".

The patterns and designs of Pan Bafi are most commonly created from the memory of their weavers. The most unique trait of Alamut strips is their fineness, high quality, special technique, magnificent skills, and strength.



Persian ground jay: Iran's desert treasure

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Iran is one of the world's richest in biodiversity, despite the diverse fauna and flora of the country, there are only two endemic species, one of which is the beautiful and rare Persian ground jay.

Persian ground jay, the only endemic bird species of Iran, is considered one of the most precious animals of the country's deserts.

In Farsi, Persian ground jay's is called "Zagh-e-Boor" (literally meaning blonde chough). Local people in Lut Desert also call it "Soose' le'ng" which drives from its jackhammer type of feeding while scavenging at the roadsides.

The Persian ground jay is baby brown type in color and around 24 centimeters in length and weighs 85 to 90 grams. It has a boldly patterned and slightly curved slim bill adapted for digging and probing and relatively short, glossy black upper tail coverts.

They are active during dawn and dusk, avoiding the noon heat. Persian ground jay shows adaptations to ground living such as long, strong legs adapted to fast running and the ability to leap and bound onto boulders and rocks with great agility. Their long, curved thick bills are adapted for digging and probing. While capable of flight, they prefer running, and will readily perch on trees and bushes.

Breeding occurs in the first half of March. When the Iranian ground Jay bonds with the opposite sex the pairing is long-lasting and



The Persian ground jay is baby brown type in color and around 24 centimeters in length and weighs 85 to 90 grams. It has a boldly patterned and slightly curved slim bill adapted for digging and probing and relatively short, glossy black upper tail coverts.

can stay together all year. Persian ground jay usually lay four small eggs, each one-inch-long, light cream-colored mottled with reddish-brown dots.

It has a beautiful musical voice. When you hear it singing constantly in low sound, be sure that it is driving you away from its nest; it also opens its head feathers like a

crown and also opens its tail, and attracts attention till the danger goes away.

Where can Persian ground jay be found?

This Persian species lives in desert and semi-desert areas, mostly on the Iranian plateau, though its range spreads southeastward to the Iran-Pakistan border.

Over the past years, the species have been observed in different provinces of Iran, including Semnan, Isfahan, Tehran, Yazd, Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, Kerman, Fars, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Golestan.

While the highest density of the bird can be found in Khar Turan National Park in Semnan Province. The closer you get to the eastern central deserts of Iran the better chance of observing them you stand.

Threats to Persian ground jay

Although Persian ground jay is the only endemic bird living in Iran, in Lut Desert, little information exists about it. However, the survival of this animal can be described as the least concern.

Of course, this does not mean that the species' life is not in danger. Due to human involvement, such as habitat destruction and improper use of natural resources are among the causes of death and population decline of these birds.

Another danger is that they can be hunted by other animals (including eggs) such as foxes, snakes, and livestock that reduce the area's vegetation. Due to the fact that Persian ground jay lives in uninhabited areas, they are less likely to be hunted by humans.

Second phase of COVID-19 vaccination begins in Iran

→ 1 The domestic companies are endeavoring to produce vaccines jointly with three countries of Cuba, Russia, and Australia, he added.

While Iran continues efforts to mass-produce local candidates, several foreign vaccines have already been imported and others are expected soon.

Mass vaccination against COVID-19 started on Iranian citizens with the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine on February 9.

So far, 718,510 doses of coronavirus vaccine, including the first and second doses, have been injected in the country.

Domestic vaccines

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers, started the third phase of the human trial on Sunday by being administrated to 20,000 people.

Developed by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, the vaccine was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and started to be mass-produced



on March 29.

Meanwhile, a vaccine developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute (Razi Cov Pars) is expected to become the second Iranian-made vaccine to be administered among the population in early August; which

started the clinical trial on February 27.

Iran has also started human trials of Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine, named after nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh (he was assassinated in late November near Tehran), that was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

"Osvid-19", the fourth domestic vaccine produced by Osvah Pharmaceutical Company is also undergoing human trials, which will also be available in early September.

New cases and mortalities

In a press briefing on Tuesday Health Ministry's spokesperson, Sima-Sadat Lari, confirmed 20,963 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,438,193. She added that 1,907,190 patients have so far recovered, but 5,287 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 462 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 70,532, she added.

So far, 15,435,147 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

27 Iranian universities among world's top for global impact

→ 1 Alzahra University, Amirkabir University of Technology, Kashan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services, Kordestan University of Medical Sciences, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, and the University of Tabriz are the next seven universities with the highest rate of global impact.

The overall ranking is led by the University of Manchester for the first time. Three Australian institutions complete the top four, including the University of Sydney, RMIT University, and La Trobe University.

Iranian universities hosting students from 133 countries, Afshin Akhoundzadeh, head of the office for non-Iranian students at the Organization of Student Affairs said on April 16.

Iranian universities shine at world rankings

Times Higher Education has published its annual ranking of the world's top universities for 2021, listing 47 Iranian universities, which shows an increase of 7 universities compared to the last year.

Six Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

With 47 Iranian universities ranked among 1,527 top universities of 93 countries in the world in 2021 rankings, Iran achieved a great improvement in the academic field.

Some 21 Islamic countries were also listed in the ranking. However, Iran holds the highest share with 47 universities.

With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

According to statistics released by the International Web of Science Database, Iran's citation rank has always been on the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

Iran ranks first in terms of the number of universities in the region and among Islamic countries, according to Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2020.

Two Iranian universities have been ranked among the top 100 universities in Asia, according to Webometrics Ranking of World

Universities for July 2020.

Moreover, 7 Iranian universities have been listed among the best 1000 worldwide; including, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, Tarbiat Modares University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology.

In June 2020, THE Asia University Rankings 2020 ranked five Iranian universities among the top 100 universities worldwide.

The Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking has placed 36 Iranian universities in the list of over 1,000 major universities worldwide in 2020 compared with 26 universities in 2019.

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Iran urges Afghanistan to resume talks on Hamoun wetlands

Iran and Afghanistan should resume negotiations on the water rights of Hamoun wetlands, YJC quoted Masoud Tajrishi, deputy chief of the Department of Environment, as saying on Friday.

Commenting on Afghanistan's injudicious dam construction on its tributaries Tajrishi also noted that low precipitation levels in the region has added insult to the injury.

"Iran and Afghanistan should reopen talks over the remaining water in Helmand River and discuss the water rights of the wetlands in Iran."

He further underscored the importance of reaching a formal agreement with Afghanistan as the exposed lake bed is the main hotspot for debilitating sand and dust storms which cause great discomfort both for Iranians and Afghans as well.

افغانستان برای دادن حقابه هامون باید به میز مذاکره بازگردد

به گزارش روز جمعه باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان مسعود تجریشی معاون محیط زیست انسانی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: ایران و افغانستان برای برای دادن حقابه هامون باید به میز مذاکره بازگردند.

تجریشی با اشاره به سیاست های مسئولان افغانستان برای سد سازی در بالادست تالاب اظهار کرد: متأسفانه وضعیت بارش ها در منطقه در شرایط مطلوبی نبود و به همین علت شرایط وخیم تر شده است.

ایران و افغانستان برای حل مشکل آب باید به میز مذاکره بازگردند تا برای آب باقی مانده در رود هیرمند مذاکره کنند.

وی ادامه داد: ما باید پیگیر این آب باشیم و به یک تفاهمی برسیم چرا که این گرد و غباری که در سیستان و بلوچستان وجود دارد، حتی مردم افغانستان را نیز تحت تأثیر قرار می دهد.

Climate crisis 'moving Earth's axis', study finds

Some things in life feel permanent, like the Earth's axis. The invisible skewer our planet revolves around sticks out of the middle of the Arctic at the top, and the middle of the Antarctic at the bottom - doesn't it?

No. The locations of the North and South Poles aren't static, and due to the climate crisis, they are moving around more than ever, scientists have said.

This can have small impacts on how long our days and nights are, though the fluctuations are so small the changes are imperceptible.



Scientists don't fully understand what drives this movement, but they do know the way water is distributed on the Earth's surface is one key factor which can affect the process, which is known as "polar wander" or "polar drift".

New research reveals that melting glaciers redistributed enough water to cause the direction of polar wander to turn and accelerate eastwards during the mid-1990s.

"The faster ice melting under global warming was the most likely cause of the directional change of the polar drift in the 1990s," said Shanshan Deng, a researcher at the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and an author of the new study.

Vincent Humphrey, a climate scientist at the University of Zurich who was not involved in the study, explained how the Earth spins around an axis a bit like a spinning top.

He said if the weight of a spinning top is moved around, the top would start to lean and wobble as its rotational axis changes.

The same thing happens to the Earth as weight is shifted from one area to another.

Researchers have been able to determine the causes of polar drifts since 2002, based on data from the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (Grace), a joint mission by NASA and the German Aerospace Centre, launched with twin satellites that year and a follow up mission in 2018.

The mission gathered information on how mass is distributed around the planet by measuring uneven changes in gravity at different points.

Previous studies have also revealed that more recent movements of the North Pole away from Canada and toward Russia to be caused by factors like molten iron in the Earth's outer core.

Other shifts have been caused in part by what is called the terrestrial water storage change - the process by which all the water on land, including frozen water in glaciers and groundwater stored under our continents, is being lost through melting - driven by the climate crisis - and groundwater pumping.

The authors of the new study said this water loss on land contributed to the shifts in the polar drift in the past two decades by changing the way mass is distributed around the world. In particular, they examined changes that occurred in the mid-1990s.

In 1995, the direction of polar drift shifted from southward to eastward. The average speed of drift from 1995 to 2020 also increased about 17 times from the average speed recorded from 1981 to 1995.

The research team said they have managed to wind modern pole tracking analysis backwards in time to learn why this drift occurred. The new research calculates the total land water loss in the 1990s before the Grace mission started.

Using data on glacier loss and estimations of groundwater pumping, the team calculated how the water stored on land changed. They found that the contributions of water loss from the polar regions is the main driver of polar drift, with contributions from water loss in nonpolar regions. Together, all this water loss explained the eastward change in polar drift.

"I think it brings an interesting piece of evidence to this question," said Dr Humphrey. "It tells you how strongly this mass change is - it's so big that it can change the axis of the Earth."

Dr Humphrey said the change to the Earth's axis isn't large enough that it would affect daily life. It could change the length of day we experience, but only by milliseconds.

But the faster ice melting couldn't entirely explain the shift, Dr Deng said. While the team didn't analyse this specifically, she speculated that the slight gap might be due to activities involving land water storage in non-polar regions, such as unsustainable groundwater pumping for agriculture.

Dr Humphrey said this evidence reveals how much direct human activity can have an impact on changes to the mass of water on land. Their analysis revealed large changes in water mass in areas like California, northern Texas, the region around Beijing and northern India, for example—all areas that have been pumping large amounts of groundwater for agricultural use.

"The groundwater contribution is also an important one," Dr Humphrey said. "Here you have a local water management problem that is picked up by this type of analysis."

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 170)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

to begin vi شروع شُدن

dear عزیز

to send فرِستادن – فرِست

to pass گذشتن – گذر

amount (of money) مَبْلَغ

excuse (someone), apology مَعذِرَت

national مِلّی

thanks مَنون : مَشکُر



دلر



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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Every religion has its distinct characteristic, and the distinct characteristic of Islam is modesty.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Music video featuring “Combat”, “Homeland” released in memory of Gen. Soleimani

TEHRAN — A music video featuring the song “Combat” and “Homeland” was released in memory of Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani on Tuesday.



Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani (file photo).

The music video has been produced in a collaborative effort between IRIB’s Music Center and the Art and Cultural Organization of Tehran Municipality.

The songs for the music video have been selected from “The Soldier”, a symphonic poem released by the Art and Cultural Organization of Tehran Municipality last December to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Commander Soleimani.

The symphonic poem was composed by Arman Mehraban with lyrics by Ali-Mohammad Moaddab. Amir-Hossein Samiei sang the symphonic poem with the IRIB Symphonic Orchestra conducted by Arash Amini.

In February 2020, only one month after his martyrdom, the courtyard of Tehran’s City Theater Complex hosted some open-air performances named “The Soldier” on the military life of the commander.

Following his assassination last year on January 3, Soleimani has become a symbol of heroism, patriotism and sacrifice. He has drawn the attention of numerous artists, filmmakers, directors and documentary producers, and has since become the main character of several theatrical productions and movies.

Hungarian festival picks five films from Iran

TEHRAN — Five Iranian movies are competing in the various section of the Mediawave on the Road Online Film Festival, which opened in the Hungarian city of Komarom on Tuesday.



“Just for the Record” by Vojin Vasovic.

“Tire-Lever” by Akbar Ruh and “I Will Wait” by Mohammad Shervani will be screened in the short competition of the festival, which will run until June 9.

“Tire-Lever” shows that sometimes people make decisions in order to live and survive in difficult conditions that questions humanity.

“I Will Wait” is about Soheila who leaves her infant at her neighbors in order to earn enough money, but they get upset with the baby and don’t want to take care of the infant. Soheila has to find a way for the baby so that she can continue at her work until her husband comes back from the war.

“The Mountain” co-produced by France and Iran and “Just for the Record” co-produced by Iran and Serbia will be competing in the animation category.

“The Mountain” directed by Amir-Mehdi Gharshi shows that human life is like a tumultuous path that everyone is doomed to follow.

Directed by Vojin Vasovic, the story of “Just for the Record” is set in an abandoned attic, in which dictaphone robot REC desperately tries to connect to dōa bird that stops on its window.

“Dusty Dream” directed by Soleiman Rahimi is competing in the documentary section.

This is a documentary about the traditional brick factory and families and even children whose lives and work are intertwined.

Poetry night replaces literati’s annual meeting with Leader over COVID-19 case rise

TEHRAN — Literati’s annual meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei was replaced with a poetry night on Tuesday due to a big rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

The poetry night named “Visiting the Moon” was held at in the courtyard of the Art Bureau in Tehran, the art Bureau announced.

The gathering, which was held with a limited number of poets and literary figures, was broadcast live on IRIB Channel 2.

Yusefali Mirshakkak, Ali Ensani, Morteza Amiri Esfandagheh, Abbas Baratipur, Hadi Saeidi Kiasari, Mohammad-Mehdi Sayyar and Qasem Sarrafan, were among the invitees.

“We hope the wretched virus misery will come to an end soon, and with God’s help, the meeting with the Leader will be organized as usual in next Ramadan,”



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei glances at a book by Tehran-based Afghan writer Mohammad-Sarvar Rajai (C) during his annual meeting with poets and literati on May 20, 2019. (Leader.ir)

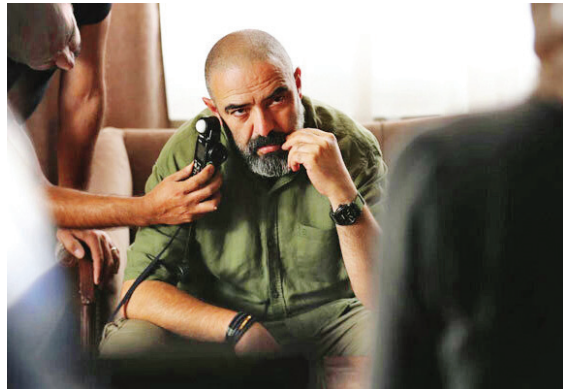
the Art Bureau said in its press release.

The annual meeting of the poets and literati with Ayatollah Khamenei is organized on the eve of the birthday of Imam Hassan (AS) on Ramadan 14. However, the meeting has been canceled over the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the meeting, the poets and writers usually recited excerpts of their latest works.

The poetry night “Visiting the Moon” was also held last Ramadan in the courtyard of the Art Bureau. The organizers played a recording of last year’s speech by Ayatollah Khamenei during the gathering.

In his meeting in 2019 with the literati, the Leader criticized Persian media and Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) for their disregard of the standard language, using “faceless language” and foreign terms and words, and addressing the cultural officials and literati, warned, “Don’t let the Persian language fall into decay and ruin.”



Hassan Majuni acts in a scene from “The Badger” by Kazem Mollai.

TEHRAN — The Riverside International Film Festival has selected to nine Iranian movies to screen various sections of the non-profit event that opened on Tuesday in the Inland Empire region of Southern California.

“The Badger” directed Kazem Mollai and “Metamorphosis in the Slaughterhouse” by Javad Darai are competing in the feature films section.

“The Badger” is about Sudeh, a 40-year-old woman who faces a strange incident right before her second marriage. Sudeh and her son Matiar live in an old apartment. One day, she hires a pest control company

Iranian movies line up for Riverside festival

to solve the termite problems in the apartment. While the pest control company is working, Matiar is recording the procedures, as this is his hobby. The next day, Matiar gets kidnapped after school, and the kidnapper asks Sudeh to pay 10 Bitcoins for her son. Tremendous pressure is put on Sudeh, but the truth hidden beneath will surprise everyone.

“Metamorphosis in the Slaughterhouse” tells the story of Shadi, a little girl that her parents have been accused of murdering a girl in the village, and villagers killed her parents to seek revenge. Her uncle adopts her and now Shadi must face the problems that people of the village have caused.

“Radde” by Ali Lavari-Monfared, “Ava’s Silence” by Seyyed Gholamreza Nematpur, “The Blue Bed” by Alireza Kazempur, “Quit” by Sina Ravi, “A Boy Has Disappeared” by Aida Alimadadi, “Goodnight Melika” by Alborz Pursayyad and “The Guardian Angel” by Afshin Eisai have been selected for the short film competition.

“Radde” revolves around an alone fisherman who lives on an abandoned Wharf with derelict ships. Suddenly he finds a fish who tried to commit suicide himself and the fisherman wants to save its life.

“Ava’s Silence” is about Ava, a young girl who has to work in her father’s auto shop as a mechanic because of her father’s illness. Ava is looking forward to her brother returning from military service in a border area so she can marry Abbas.

“The Blue Bed” tells the story of Zahra, a middle-aged woman who visits a temporary marriage agency and signs up to have a young working girl. She picks her up to take her home but the girl, Negar, who has never had a female client before, becomes suspicious of Zahra’s intent and sexual orientation.

“Quit” is about a girl who is forced to distribute drugs by her father and brother. She remembers her mother because of an accident and then decides to stop distributing drugs because of her mother. This decision causes her to be killed by the drug dealer.

“A Boy Has Disappeared” is about a seven-year-old boy named Daniel whose parents are divorced, and who is sexually abused by his dad during his monthly visits. He overcomes this tragedy by his imagination, revolving around his having the ability to cause himself, as well as the objects around him, to disappear.

“Goodnight Melika” tells the story Melika, a teenage girl who is the child of divorce. She lives with her mother. His mother intends to remarry and wants to evict her daughter. Melika accidentally finds out that her mother told her fiancé that she had never had a child, and this causes Melika mental damage.

“The Guardian Angel” is about a girl who is caring for her ailing father. She must go to far-fetched lengths to emigrate from Iran.

The Riverside International Film Festival will run until May 1.

Fajr Intl. Film Festival picks Istvan Szabo’s “Final Report”

TEHRAN — Oscar-winning Hungarian director Istvan Szabo’s latest movie “Final Report” will be screened at the 38th Fajr International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

“Final Report” is Szabo’s 18th feature film. It is about a retired renowned professor of cardiology who has dreamed of being an opera singer since childhood and returns to the village where he was born upon retirement to become the local General Practitioner.

In “Final Report”, Szabo presents a different definition of retirement, accompanied by the film’s capable actor, Klaus Maria Brandauer, who has starred in many of his films and is also of retirement age.

His belief in this film is that work should not stop at any stage of life, and his performance as a director at the age of eighty-three emphasizes the liveliness of cinema.

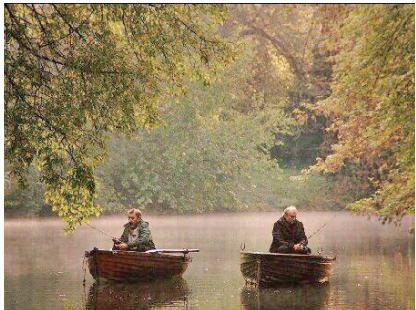
“If someone still wants to be with others in the future [after death], the cinema is what will remain,” Szabo said in his latest interview about the film.

As the most internationally recognized Hungarian filmmaker since the 1960s, Szabo has produced many films to represent several political conflicts of the European history as well as his own personal struggles in life.

Szabo’s 1981 film “Mephisto” won the Oscar for best foreign-language film.

Szabo’s other films “Colonel Redl” (1985) and “Hanussen” (1988), with “Mephisto” are described as his trilogy.

“Meeting Venus” directed by Szabo in 1991 was his first English-language film. His credits also include “With Sweet Emma,



Hungarian director Istvan Szabo’s movie “Final Report”.

Dear Bobe” and “Sunshine”.

The 38th Fajr International Film Festival will be held in Tehran from May 26 to June 2.

“The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio” comes to Persian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — “Shoot!: The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio, Cinematograph Operator” by Italian writer Luigi Pirandello has recently been published by Farhange No in Tehran.

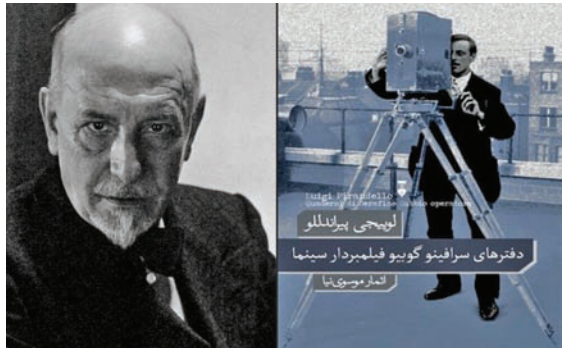
The book has been translated into Persian by Asmar Musavinia.

Originally published in Italian in 1915, “Shoot!” is one of the first novels to take as its subject the heady world of early motion pictures.

Based on the absurdist journals of fictional Italian camera operator Serafino Gubbio, “Shoot!” documents the infancy of film in Europe — complete with proto-divas, laughable production schedules, and cost-cutting measures with priceless effects — and offers a glimpse of the modern world through the camera’s lens.

The book is a classic example of Nobel Prize-winning Sicilian playwright Pirandello’s literary talent, and genius for blurring the line between art and reality.

From the film studio Kosmograph, Pirandello’s Gubbio steadily winds the crank of his camera by day and scribbles with his pen by night, revealing the world



This combination photo shows writer Luigi Pirandello and the front cover of the Persian version of his book “Shoot!: The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio, Cinematograph Operator”.

both mundane and melodramatic that unfolds in front of his camera.

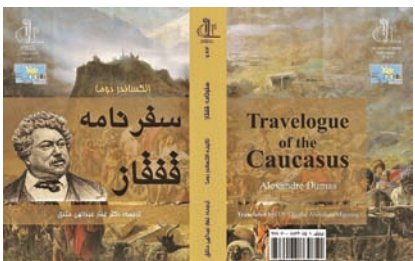
Alexandre Dumas’ travelogue of Caucasus published in Persian

TEHRAN — University of Tabriz Publications has recently published French writer Alexandre Dumas’ “Tales of the Caucasus - The Ball of Snow and Sultanetia” in Persian.

Ghaffar Abdollahi Matanaq is the translator of the travelogue first published in 1903.

It is a chronicle of his 1858 trip across the Caucasus, and details his experiences hunting, attending Russian dances, skirting around battles, and braving the harsh elements.

An enjoyable and interesting read, “The Ball of Snow” is highly recommended for



Cover of the Persian translation of French writer Alexandre Dumas’ “Tales of the Caucasus - The Ball of Snow and Sultanetia”.

fans of travel writing. Sultanetia is a novella inspired by a classic Russian novel.

Dumas (1802-1870) was a famous French writer. He is best remembered for his exciting romantic sagas, including “The Three Musketeers” and “The Count of Monte Cristo”.

His father’s aristocratic rank helped young Alexandre Dumas acquire work with Louis-Philippe, the Duke of Orleans, as a writer, finding early success. He became one of the leading authors of the French Romantic Movement in Paris.

Despite making a great deal of money

from his writing, Dumas was almost perpetually penniless thanks to his extravagant lifestyle.

His novels have been translated into nearly a hundred different languages, and have inspired over 200 motion pictures.

Many of the earliest books, particularly those dating back to the 1900s and before, are now extremely rare and increasingly expensive.

Many of his novels, including “The Count of Monte Cristo”, “The Three Musketeers”, “The Man in the Iron Mask” and “The Vicomte de Bragelonne” were serialized.