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Washington to pay \$7b in exchange for four spies

Vienna talks to lead to 'new deal': senior MP

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian lawmaker has said that the Vienna nuclear talks between Iran and world powers are expected to lead to a new deal, warning the Iranian negotiating team against falling into the American "trap."

The lawmaker, Alireza Salimi, who is a member of the parliament's presiding board, said the Vienna talks should proceed within the framework of a nuclear law passed by the parliament and in accordance with the policies articulated by the

Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

The nuclear law, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Nation's Rights," stipulates that if the remaining parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – Germany, France, China, Russia, and the UK – failed to facilitate Iran's oil exports and the return of Iranian oil revenues in two months,

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Baghdad ready to pay off gas debts to Tehran

TEHRAN – Iran and Iraq have reached an agreement on the ways for settling Baghdad's gas debts to Tehran, Iraqi Electricity Minister Majid Mahdi Hantoush announced after a meeting with Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian in Tehran on Sunday.

Hantoush who visited Tehran on top of a high-ranking delegation also met with Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Saturday evening.

"In the meetings we had, all the ways and solutions for the resumption of Iran's energy supply to Iraq were discussed, and certainly the cooperation [between the two sides] will continue," the Iraqi minister told the press. The official noted that Iran has not halted gas and electricity supply to Iraq, however there were some issues regarding the supply to power plants which were also discussed during this visit.

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TEHRAN — the Lebanese news network, Al Mayadeen reported that the Islamic Republic has agreed to release four Americans accused of spying for the CIA. In exchange, Washington will release four detained Iranians, in addition to unfreezing \$7 billion of Iranian assets in the U.S.

According to Al Mayadeen News Network, the Biden administration wanted to avoid paying any sums of frozen Iranian money during the negotiations. Yet, the Iranian side

insisted on the necessity of releasing part of the Iranian funds.

The report says that the four Iranians detained in the United States were helping to circumvent the sanctions.

Analysts say that the Biden administration needed to show the U.S. Congress that he is making progress in the nuclear deal. Hence, they were convinced to unfreeze \$7b in cash to bring back four American spies.

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Ex-Iran defender Nosrati lauds clubs' performance in ACL

BY FARROKH HESABI

Former Iran national team player, Mohammad Nosrati, believes that all four Iranian teams in the 2021 AFC Champions League had spectacular performances.

Nosrati, a former player of Persepolis and Tractor, praised the solid performance of the Iranian teams in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

Starting with Foolad Khozestan, who failed to qualify for the knockout stage, Nosrati said: "Nobody expected Foolad to play that much well. They were drawn in the most difficult group, in my opinion. Bad luck and inexperience were the main factors for Foolad's failure to reach the knockout stage. Both Al Saad and Al Nasr were great teams in Group D, but Foolad could have defeated both teams."

Nosrati, 39, who played several years for Tractor, also talked about the Tabriz-based teams: "I believe Tractor did a great job in the competition. They were empty-handed as they couldn't sign foreign players because of the Iranian football rules. Moreover, Rasul Khatibi, who has recently joined them as head coach, didn't have enough time to work with the team. They were deserved to qualify, and God helped Tractor and made their lovely fans happy."

"About Esteghlal, they were good in their all games except the last one against Al Shorta. They were very stressed because they had to win the game. The good news was that they qualified for the next stage as the leaders of their group," Nosrati added.

The former Persepolis player considered the Reds the best team in Asia.

"Persepolis were unique and excellent. They proved once again that they are the best Iranian team by far, and now we can say the best Asian team in the current AFC Champions League season."

"There are mutual understanding and full coordination between the players and technical staff, players themselves, and even between the team and the club's director. Both in tactical and mental issues, the team have matured enough. After experiencing two ACL finals in the past three years, Persepolis players are confident that they can win the trophy. They started the tournament very powerfully and finished it with authority. There is no easy match or easy group in a tournament like Champions League, and no one can diminish the value of Persepolis' extraordinary performance in Asia," he concluded.

Gigantic citadel in southern Tehran to be turned into a national base

TEHRAN – Qaleh Iraj, a gigantic mudbrick citadel in southern Tehran, is set to be turned into a national cultural heritage base.

Located in Pishva near the gates of the old city of Rey, southeast of Tehran, the monument (also known as Gabri fort by the locals) was once one of the largest military fortresses of the time.

"Qaleh Iraj is approved to be turned into the country's 100th base of the national cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts," IRNA quoted Pishva's governor, Hossein Abbasi, as saying on Sunday.

The official said that the monument is of high importance as it is one of the largest in the world. "Due to its rich historical and cultural background, Pishva is home to many ancient monuments and sites. And Qaleh Iraj, which is one of the largest brick forts in the world, is expected to date from the Sassanid period (224–651)."

"The bricks used in this castle date back to the Sassanid period and the artifacts discovered from this ancient castle date back to more than 3,000 BC."

"The establishment of this national base will pave the way for the continuous research and archaeological activities on the monument and its surroundings as well as better protection and preservation," he said.

Furthermore, the base is expected to provide the opportunity to study the cultural connection between the Iraj fortress with the surrounding sites inside and outside the city. Moreover, it will pave the way for the preparation of the site for a possible UNESCO registration.

Up to the present not much research has been carried out on this fortress, he noted. "So far, several seasons of documentation and excavation work have been done, which is very limited."

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Yemen reports another 'accurate hit' against Saudi airbase

Yemen's air force carries out another precision retaliatory attack using a kamikaze drone, against the King Khaled Airbase in Saudi Arabia's southwest.

Yemeni Armed Forces' Spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Saree reported the operation against the airbase in the kingdom's Asir region in early Sunday.

The operation, he said, used one of the air force's Qasef-K2 UAVs.

Saree called the reprisal, Yemen's legitimate response to a simultaneous war and siege by a Saudi-led military coalition.

The coalition has been trying unsuccessfully to restore power to Yemen's former Saudi-allied officials. Tens of thousands of Yemenis have died as a result of the warfare and the concomitant blockade.

The Yemeni forces that comprise the country's army and Popular Committees have, however,

never laid down their arms in their purpose to rid the country of the aggressors' presence.

They have stepped up their counteroffensives against sensitive Saudi locations, including the airbase that they target almost every week.

Saudi-allied militant cmdr., Daesh ringleader killed in Ma'rib

A ranking commander of the militants, who fight for the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in Yemen, and a ringleader of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group are killed in clashes with Yemen's defense forces in the west-central Yemeni province of Ma'rib.

The commander was identified as Saleh Dirham Ramadi of Brigade 129 of the militant divisions that have been aiding the coalition on the ground since it began its war on Yemen in March 2015, the Yemen News website reported on Saturday.

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Syrian expo to showcase Iran's potential in medicinal plants industry

TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies will attend the Agritex Exhibition for Agriculture and Veterinary Supplies 2021, which will be held in Syria on 19-24 June, to put the country's potential in the field of medicinal plants on display.

Production of Iranian products of medicinal plants is one of the export platforms, trade opportunities, and technological interaction with other countries.

Syria has long been one of the most impor-

tant and strategic countries to Iran, and with the beginning of economic rehabilitation, the creation of innovation centers, the technological interaction between the two countries has become more important.

One of the serious areas of economic interaction between Iran and Syria is the medicinal and aromatic plants industry, which includes herbal pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, food industry, flavors, perfumes, and other natural products.

The event is an opportunity for local and foreign companies specialized in the poultry and agriculture sector to brief on the various plant and animal products currently available in the domestic and foreign markets.

Knowledge-based companies also have the opportunity to visit major Syrian companies in the field of medicinal and aromatic plants, as well as important economic and industrial centers in Syria.

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Dedicated teacher holds classes on prairies during pandemic

Kolsoom Faqiri, 39, is a teacher who works in an elementary school in a village, suburb of Gorgan, the capital of northern Golestan province.

Since the outbreak of coronavirus and despite suffering from heart disease, she has held classes on vast plains and prairies near her house on a regular basis.

Minuscule difference between the Republicans and Democrats: ex-Senate candidate

BY MOHAMMAD ALI SAKI

TEHRAN — pointing to the JCPOA as a classic example of the political fraud among the Democrats and Republicans, and American analyst says that there is a minuscule difference between both parties.

"The actual differences between the Republicans and Democrats are minuscule, in reality, based more in theatrical rhetorical posturing than in actual substance," Mark Dankof tells the Tehran Times.

"The JCPOA is a classic example of the political fraud being visited upon both the American public and the honest signatories to the deal, including Iran," the former U.S. Senate candidate notes.

In 2018, U.S. Donald Trump formally pulled the United States out of the nuclear deal that his predecessor had made with Iran to lift sanctions in exchange for Tehran easing its nuclear activities.

But Joe Biden pledged in his election campaigns in the fall of 2020 to bring the United States back into JCPOA.

"But since his election, his aforementioned Zionist advisers have attached so many preconditions to reentry that Tehran has quite rightly rejected these preconditions as subterfuge," according to Dankof.

Now Joe Biden has spent his first 100 days as U.S. president focusing on a series of domestic and international issues facing the country - from immigration and the economy to Covid and U.S. return to the JCPOA.

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FICP names Zarif as presidential candidate

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN— Hossein Mar'ashi, spokesman for Functionaries of Iran's Construction Party (FICP), announced the final shortlist of its presidential candidates.

According to Mar'ashi, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, and Chairman of the Tehran City Council, Mohsen Hashemi Rafsanjani, are the party's candidates.

He said that the list has been sent to the Iran Reforms Front party for further consultations.

The presidential elections will be held on June 18.

Several esteemed political figures have announced candidacy, including Rostam Ghasemi, former Minister of Petroleum, Ezzatollah Zarghami, former head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, and Gen. Hossein Dehghan, former Defense Minister.

Parliament proposes bill to create two additional ministries

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — A group of members of the parliament have prepared a plan to establish two ministries, "Energy" and "Water and Environment".

In their letter, the MPs asked for the establishment of the Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Water and Environment, "considering the growing energy consumption in the current and future years and the need to diversify the country's energy resources and maximize the use of renewable resources."



The MPs stated that due to the shortage of water in the world and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the increasing importance of sustainable water supply, there is an urgent need to establish the Ministry of Water and Environment.

They noted that the competitive production of energy carriers in Iran, alongside their optimal consumption, in accordance with the principle of lack of organizational development in the government, they have submitted their plan for legal procedures.

According to Tasnim News Agency, the parliament had received the plan on April 6. It has been given to the Economics and Agriculture Committees to review it and, if submitted, bring it to the floor.

JCPOA talks moving forward, but slowly

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action wrapped up the third round of negotiations, with the delegates returning to their capitals for further consultations.

Director of the European External Action Service, Enrique Mora, called the progress in negotiations "moderate." He stated that the Joint Commission would reconvene next week.



He also stressed that "with more detail comes more complexity."

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent ambassador to the international organizations in Vienna, also stated that it is too early to be excited, "but we have reasons to be cautious and grow optimism."

A European diplomat talked to Reuters anonymously and said, "We have much work and little time left. Against that background, we would have hoped for more progress this week."

The anonymous source added that the sides have yet to come to an understanding on the most critical points."

The source noted that success was still possible, although not guaranteed

Chief negotiators will leave Vienna today for consultations in capitals and return next week (Friday). It is said that experts will stay in Vienna and continue talks within the working groups. In the meantime, the experts will likely continue to draft elements of a future agreement.

Khalilian announces presidential candidacy

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN— Former minister of agriculture who served in Ahmadinejad's administration from 2009 to 2013, announced that he would run for president in the upcoming presidential election.

In his statement, he described Iran as an "advanced and independent" country, declaring that he will bring justice back to the nation.

The presidential elections will be held on June 18.

Zarif thanks Leader for unifying speech

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN— In an Instagram post, Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif thanked the Leader of the Islamic Revolution for his insights on foreign policy.

He stated that foreign policy should be a field for unifying the nation, directed by the highest official of the country.

"Therefore, following the opinions and insights of the Leader is an undeniable necessity for foreign policy," he said in his Instagram post.

He expressed hope that he and his colleagues can work together with in the full implementation of the Leader's ideas for the progress of Iran.

Leader underlines high voter turnout in the upcoming elections

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution spoke with the people in a live televised speech, broadcasted by state TV Channel One, social media platforms, and networks abroad.

The Leader began his speech by honoring Imam Ali, lauding his "vast and unbiased" justice, bravery, and kind heart. He described Imam Ali (PBUH) "as solid as a mountain" in terms of mannerisms.

Noting the devotees the Islamic Revolution has trained over the years, he exemplified late Gen. Soleimani, stating that he was seeking martyrdom.

"When the enemies threatened to murder martyr general Soleimani, he said that they are threatening me with something I have been seeking for a long time (martyrdom)."

'Martyr Motahari produced thoughts, as well as spreading them'

In the second part of his speech, the Leader praised the work of the teachers and loving mothers during the coronavirus pandemic and lauding martyr Morteza Motahari, whose martyrdom is marked on May 2, which is known as the Teacher's Day in Iran.

He described Motahari's characteristics as a person who produced thought as well as spreading them. He referred to the late martyr as an active, dynamic person whose concern was to do his duties at their best.

The Leader advised teachers to pay attention to the thinking of their students and their audience. He remarked the national education system as one of the fruits of the Islamic Revolution, thanking teachers for being a part of this national education system.



"The teachers are the officers of the progress army," he highlighted.

The Leader called on the government to improve the livelihood of the teachers.

'Production depends on the workers'

Speaking one day after the International Workers' Day, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution praised workers, referring to them as the backbone of a "production-based" economy. He called on the media to pay more attention to the workers.

'improving domestic production makes sanctions ineffective'

On the issue of sanctions, the Leader stated that the best and most effective way to make sanctions ineffective is to improve

domestic production.

He remarked, "If we improve domestic production and follow up on it, the sanctions would become ineffective, then lifted."

'Election is an opportunity'

On the issue of the elections, he described the elections as an opportunity and stressed that the people should not be in despair.

The Leader highlighted the fairness of the elections, stating that the elections have all been fair and square in the history of the Islamic Republic.

"Elections are the presence of the people, and when the people are present, no power can shake the establishment," he noted.

He stressed that the elections should

not be ruined by vain talks and deceptive promises by candidates who are not aware of the country's current status.

'West wants to dominate Iran's foreign policy'

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader touched on the foreign policy issue, stating that Western countries dominated Iran's foreign policy during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty.

"Then came the revolution and rescued Iran from the West's reign. They, whether the United States or Europe, have been trying for 40 years to dominate Iran," the Leader remarked.

Explaining why the U.S. and Europe are angry with Iran, Leader said that the independence of Iran from their reign angers them.

"We communicate with China, they (the West) get angry. We try to make dialogue economically or politically with Russia, they get angry. They enter and put our poor neighbors under pressure. We have witnessed these things."

The Leader said that there are examples of leaders of Arabic and neighboring countries who wanted to travel to Iran, yet they changed their minds since the U.S. officials contacted them and prevented them from making dialogue.

The Leader stressed, "They oppose all of our diplomatic moves. We cannot be passive and act on their will. We need to be dynamic, independent, and strong."

He also highlighted the importance of the Quds force as the most crucial element to prevent "passive diplomacy" in West Asia.

Washington to pay \$7b in exchange for four spies

→ 1 Based on the reports received from Vienna, the United States, with the brokering of the European Union, had tried to put pressure on Iran to release the spies mentioned above without giving any points to Iran to avoid another Jason Rezaeian fiasco.

In the Jason Rezaeian case, Iran managed to force its will on the Obama administration when the United States paid \$1.7 billion in exchange for Jason Rezaeian and three other spies.

Rezaeian was charged with espionage and "œcollaborating with hostile governments."

Al Mayadeen also reported that similar security negotiations between the Iranian and British sides, with the British side agreeing to unfreeze 400 million pounds of frozen Iranian funds in exchange.

The Islamic Republic of Iran News Network (IRINN) quoted an informed source saying that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe will be

Speculations circling around the names of the four spies to be Siamak Namazi, Bagher Namazi, Emad Edward Sharghi, and Morad Tahbaz are the four spies Iran is going to return in exchange for \$7b.

Maximum turnout in elections frustrates opposition, says MP

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN— Speaking to ISNA, the representative of Natanz responded to questions about the presidential elections in the parliament.

"The atmosphere of electoral competition must move in a direction that brings people together to participate in the elections and provide the ground for the right choice," Firoozabadi said.

He noted that maximum turnout in the elections strengthens the foundations of the establishment and discourages the opposition from achieving its goals.

The parliamentarian said, "We are witnessing that the election campaign is taking place before the official start

of the registration of candidates, and several candidates from political parties or independently have announced their existence."

He referred to the election campaigns, expressing his joy over the recent hype in social media platforms about the presidential elections.

"Campaigns are also being formed, and candidates have started competing in cyberspace. Competitions are expected to intensify after the official registration of presidential candidates and the approval of the Guardian Council," he said.

He also forbade the candidates from resorting to demeaning measures such



as defamation, slandering, and character destruction. He called for a healthy, competitive election to find a solution to solve the country's problems.

"Efforts should be made to provide a

suitable environment for the people to participate in the elections and to select a competent and efficient person by forming a suitable competitive environment," the parliamentarian said.

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

According to an election official, more than 50,000 people have registered for the council elections, while the registration for the presidential election has not opened up yet.

According to the elections schedule released by the National Elections Headquarters, the registration will open on May 11 and will last for five days.

Tehran-Washington prisoner swap has nothing to do with Vienna talks

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — According to an informed source, the agenda on Vienna negotiations did not and has not included the prisoner swap between Tehran-Washington and Tehran-London.

At the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on May 1, the agenda was to discuss the names of the Iranian individuals and entities on the United States and European Union sanctions list.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said on May 1, after the Joint Commission meeting, discussions are underway about a long list of individuals and organizations put on the sanctions list and that Iran

wants them removed as well.

He stressed that there are disputes about a few names and entities.

"According to the agreements reached so far, sanctions on the energy sector or the car industry, financial sectors, banking systems, and ports should be lifted," Araghchi said after the JCPOA joint commission meeting.

This clarifies the Vienna negotiations agenda, denying claims that the Tehran-Washington and Tehran-London prisoner swap was discussed in the Joint Commission meetings.

According to Al Mayadeen News Network, Tehran and Washington have agreed to exchange four American

spies for \$7b and four Iranian prisoners.

The Iranian prisoners have helped circumvent the U.S. sanctions, while the American prisoners have been spying for the CIA.

Similar negotiations have taken place between Iran and the UK, resulting in the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, in exchange for London unfreezing 400 million pounds of frozen Iranian funds in London.

History suggests that these negotiations take place between top foreign policy and national security officials. Therefore, it cannot be expected that deputies would discuss such issues.

Dollar sinks against Iranian rial on hopes of deal in Vienna

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN— The US dollar has hit a new low against the Iranian currency rial mainly on unconfirmed reports suggesting that Iran and major powers would reach a deal in the Austrian capital to revive an international deal on the country's nuclear program, Press TV reported.

The dollar closed at 222,700 against the rial on Sunday, down over 4% on the day before and almost 12% lower than prices seen last month.

Market analysts said dollar's fall would continue on speculations that there would be an imminent agreement in Vienna on the revival of the JCPOA, the nuclear deal abandoned by the United States under a previous administration in 2018.

The revival of the agreement could allow Iran to increase its oil exports while facing no restrictions on its banking system and ports operations, according to sources close to the

US government which said on Saturday that Washington would lift oil, banking and ports sanctions from Iran to let Tehran resume compliance with the JCPOA.

However, unconfirmed reports published earlier on Sunday and citing Iranian sources suggested that the US might allow unfreezing of over \$7 billion of Iranian funds in other countries as part of a prisoner swap deal between the two countries.

A US state department denied there was any deal whatsoever on exchange of prisoners between Tehran and Washington.

Sliding currency prices caused a drop in the value of gold in the Iranian market. The benchmark bullion Bahar Azadi declined to 94 million rials while each gram of gold was selling for 9.42 million rials on Sunday, according to price websites and local news agencies.

Iran-Saudi Arabia talks may continue at ambassadors level

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN— the New York Times reported that the next stage of Tehran-Riyadh negotiations may take place as early as May, in Riyadh.

According to Mehr News Agency, the U.S. media made the claim citing Iranian and Iraqi officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Recent reports claimed that Tehran and Riyadh have held negotiations in Baghdad to solve disputes. Both Tehran and Riyadh have rejected the reports.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh reacted to the recent remarks made by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman about Tehran-Riyadh

relations and the region.

"Iran and Saudi Arabia, as two important countries in the region and the Muslim world, can enter a new chapter of interaction and cooperation to achieve regional peace, stability, and development by adopting constructive and dialogue-based approaches," Khatibzadeh said on Thursday.

Leader highlights Quds Force's role in strengthening Iran foreign policy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei addressed a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues including the role of Iran's elite Quds Force in the country's foreign policy and the U.S. efforts to prevent some Arab states from improving ties with Iran.

In a televised speech on Sunday evening, the Leader highlighted the role of Iran's elite Quds Force in helping Iran pursue active diplomacy in the West Asia region. Ayatollah Khamenei said the Quds Force has played a crucial role in strengthening Iran's diplomatic hand in the region.

"The Quds Force is the biggest effective factor in preventing passive diplomacy in the West Asia region," the Leader said, noting the Force has materialized Iran's independent and dignified foreign policy in the region.

"The Quds Force has been able to put into action the independent policy of the Islamic Republic in the region, which is based on honor," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out that the Quds Force has protected Iran from being a subordinate to the West. "The Westerners insist that the country's foreign policy be inclined toward them," he noted.

The Leader stated that during the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties Iran was a subject state under the influence of the West. The Islamic Revolution brought Iran out of this Western domination, a move that prompted the Westerners to pursue policies aimed at subjugating Iran.



Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that the Quds Force carries out the policy of the Islamic Republic and it prevented the country from falling under the domination of the West.

He noted, "The Western countries persistently want the foreign policy of Iran to come under their flag. They have been wanting this for years. Iran was under Western domination both in later years of the Qajar dynasty and under the Pahlavi rule. The [Islamic] Revolution liberated Iran from their domination and now they are trying to restore that dominion. Therefore, when the Islamic Republic establishes ties with China, they become upset, [and] when it establishes relations with Russia, they become upset."

"Over the past 40 years, the Westerners, whether Americans or British, have sought to revive their past domination over Iran. That's why they become angry when the Islamic Republic establishes relations with China," the Leader continued.

According to the Leader, the West also puts pressure on Iran's "hapless" Arab neighbors to prevent them from improving relations with Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei said there were several occasions when some of Iran's Arab neighbors wanted to improve relations with Iran but the American prevented them from doing so. In some cases, high-level Arab officials wanted to travel to Iran to improve relations but the Americans prevented them, the

Leader noted.

"They oppose any of our diplomatic efforts. Thus, we cannot act passively in the face of their demands. We must act independently, proactively, and ably," Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

The Leader also paid tribute to the late commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force, General Qassem Soleimani, describing him as a devoted man who loved martyrdom.

General Soleimani was assassinated along with his longtime comrade Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, the former deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). Top Iranian general was visiting Iraq at the invitation of Iraq's leader to deliver an Iranian reply to a Saudi message through Iraq. He left Tehran for Baghdad on January 3, 2020, and arrived at midnight at Baghdad airport, where al-Mohandes was waiting to receive him. After a short exchange of greetings, the two men left the airport but as they moved out of the airport in their motorcade, they were targeted with a number of missiles launched by an American drone.

The Leader said Americans had already threatened General Soleimani that they would kill him. But he responded by telling close associates that he was looking for martyrdom.

"They threatened Martyr Soleimani that we would kill you. He had told his friends that they were threatening me with something I was looking for in the mountains and highs and lows," the Leader pointed out.

Raisi holds large leads over others in opinion poll

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Presumptive presidential candidate Ayatollah Seyed Ibrahim Raisi is leading all other potential candidates in the upcoming presidential election of Iran, a recent poll showed.

A recent poll conducted by a reliable university opinion poll center showed that Judiciary chief Ayatollah Raisi is in the lead with 42%, according to Fars News.

Other potential candidates Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Expediency Council chief Mohsen Rezaei, and former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani received 22%, 20%, 10%, and 6% respectively.

The poll was conducted on April 29. Respondents were asked to rate the five most prominent figures who are thought to announce presidential bids. The fifth figure is Es'haq Jahangiri, who serves as the First Vice President of Iran.

Jahangiri and Larijani received the most negative ratings, according to Fars News.

Respondents were also asked to choose between Raisi and Zarif in an imaginative contest between the two. 67% said they will elect Raisi while only 27% said they would vote for Zarif. This may indicate a sharp decline in Zarif's perceived popularity.

Zarif's popularity against Qalibaf also shrank to 33%. 56% of the respondents said they would choose Qalibaf in a possible contest between him and Zarif.

The poll also showed that turnout in the upcoming election will, for now, stand at 47%.

Iran is slowly moving toward an early election fever, with several unofficial candidates privately organizing their campaign staff to prepare for one of Iran's most consequential elections that could determine Iran's trajectory for years to come.



jectory for years to come.

So far, none of these figures, except for Rezaei, have officially announced candidacy. Ayatollah Raisi has remained silent on whether he would run for president but public calls on him to run for office have intensified. Last week, a group of 1,400 university students called on Ayatollah Raisi to consider running for president. Raisi is widely seen as a figure who can upend the election dynamics given his experience in achieving more than 15 million votes in the most recent Iranian presidential election in 2017. Some conservative politicians believe that if Raisi announces the presidential bid, all conservative blocs, also known as the Principlists, will unite behind him, and thus he is the only conservative politician who has the ability to create partisan unity.

Manouchehr Mottaki, the former foreign minister of Iran who is currently coordinating the elections efforts of the

Principlists, said on Saturday that Raisi is "very likely" to announce a presidential bid. And that all political factions should encourage him to run for president.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is going to hold its 13th presidential election on June 18.

Recent polls show that Iranians attach importance to the upcoming election. A recent opinion poll conducted by the Iranian Students Polling Agency (ISPA) in the period between January 20 and February 18, showed that a remarkable portion of Iranian society still positively looks to the political changes that will be produced by the election in the next spring. The poll also showed that a large number of Iranian people hope that with the change of government, openness will be achieved in their individual and societal lives.

More than 1,500 people above the age of 18 have participated in the ISPA poll. They were asked the following question: "In your view, how much does the participation of people in the election can be effective in resolving the current problems of the country?"

More than 55% of the respondents said they believe that participation of the people in the June election will have a positive impact on resolving the current problems while less than 39% said that participation will be to no use. A breakdown of the second figure into two groups shows that 13% of respondents believe that the election will be "somehow ineffective" in changing the conditions of their lives. And 26% of respondents said the election will not be effective at all.

The ISPA poll shows in no uncertain terms that the majority of Iranian people pin hopes on the election's results and look forward to participating in the June election. According to the poll, those hoping the election will contribute to making their lives better have already made decision to vote.

Vienna talks to lead to 'new deal': senior MP

→1 the Iranian government would be obligated to stop inspections beyond the IAEA safeguards, including the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, which allows unannounced and intensive inspections of nuclear sites.

Iran reached an understanding with IAEA chief Rafael Grossi a few days before the implementation of the nuclear law. Under the deal, the IAEA is allowed to carry out necessary inspections and verifications for a period of three months. After that, the continuation of the inspections would be contingent on the West lifting sanctions and returning to commitments under the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran's deal with the UN nuclear watchdog will expire in May, potentially setting the stage for a new round of tensions between them unless the current Vienna nuclear talks lead to another deal before the end of that deal.

Salimi said the Vienna talks only have a window of three months opportunity to succeed, potentially hinting that if these talks fail to result in a deal within three months, they will not continue.

"In the Vienna negotiations, the law of the parliament and the policies announced by the Leader must be observed, and any agreement beyond the framework set by the parliament will not be accepted," he told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA).

He added, "Since the Vienna talks are supposed to lead to an agreement and

the parties will sign it, it must be ratified by the Islamic Consultative Assembly because it is a new and binding agreement, so if the legal issues mentioned in the agreement are not included, it will face problems in the Assembly."

He pointed out that the Vienna Agreement would have no value without parliamentary ratification.

"If the sanctions are to be lifted step by step, or partially, or if the lifting of sanctions is only for a period of 120 days and tougher sanctions are imposed, we will certainly not accept the Vienna agreement," he continued.

He also warned of an American trap, saying the Iranian negotiating team must avoid it.

"We advise the negotiating team not to fall into the American trap and to conduct the negotiations within the framework of the Strategic Action Law and the policies articulated by the Leader," the lawmaker concluded.

Nuclear negotiators from Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal held another meeting on Saturday to discuss the latest developments related to the issue of reviving the nuclear deal. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi led the Iranian negotiating team at the talks, which have been moving forward since they started in April. The main objective of the Vienna talks is to reach an agreement on how to revive the nuclear deal.

At the start of the meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, Araghchi said participants will discuss the outcome of the talks that were held at the level of expert groups.

"After this meeting, delegations will return to capitals," the top Iranian nuclear negotiator said.

Following the Saturday meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, it was agreed that the talks will be resumed on Friday, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Saturday.

According to the statement, participants discussed the latest developments related to the discussions of the three expert groups.

"In this meeting, the participants reviewed the latest status of consultations among expert-level working groups in the fields of sanctions removal, nuclear issues, and practical arrangements. It was decided that the delegations return to their capitals following this meeting, and resume the talks next Friday," the statement continued.

Based on an earlier decision by the Joint Commission on expediting the process of negotiations, the talks were held bilaterally or multilaterally in an intensive way this week, and the parties tried to minimize their disagreements over the drafts.

"The participants agreed that in the next round of talks, the process should move forward in a faster and more serious way," the statement noted.

Meanwhile, the Russian envoy to the Vienna talks, Mikhail Ulyanov, said these talks made "indisputable progress."

"The JCPOA participants noted today the indisputable progress made at the Vienna talks on restoration of the nuclear deal.



The Joint Commission will reconvene at the end of the next week. In the meantime, experts will continue to draft elements of future agreement," he said on Twitter.

He added, "At which stage the Vienna talks on JCPOA restoration are? It's too early to be excited, but we have reasons for cautious and growing optimism. There is no deadline, but participants aim at successful completion of the talks in approximately 3 weeks. Is it realistic? We will see."

Meanwhile, the Iranian top negotiator said parties have agreed that most of the individuals, entities, and institutions would be removed from the sanctions list.

"Some people are still in the sanctions list for various reasons and in this regard, negotiations are still underway," he said, noting, "According to the agreements reached so far, sanctions on the energy sector or the car industry, financial sectors, banking systems, and ports should be lifted."

"We have small technical points in the nuclear issue as well as sanctions, and we have details that need to be discussed," Araghchi pointed out.

SPORTS

Iranians win two bronze medals at Karate 1-Premier League

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian karate athletes Hamid Abbasi and Sajad Ganjzadeh claimed two bronze medals at the Karate 1-Premier League in Lisbon, Portugal on Sunday.

Abbasi won a bronze medal at the Female Kumite 68+ Kg. She defeated world champion Eleni Chatziliadou of Greece 3-1 in bronze medal match.

Ganjzadeh also defeated Mehdi Filali from France 3-2 at the Male Kumite 84+ Kg bronze medal match.

The competition has brought nearly 800 athletes from 87 countries together.



Dominant Persepolis maintain form in 2021 ACL

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Having twice stormed to the final in 2018 and 2020, Persepolis maintained their rampaging form on the continental scene, finishing as group winners in dominant fashion.

The nine-time Iranian champions opened brightly, claiming four straight victories, and despite suffering an unexpected 1-0 loss at Al Wahda, they bounced back to dispatch Al Rayyan 4-2 to seal their passage through.

Three of the four Iranian sides involved progressed, with last year's runners-up Persepolis, Esteghlal and Tractor advancing, leaving Foolad as the only eliminated Iran Pro League team, FIFA.com wrote.

Joining the trio in the knockout phase will be Riyadh-based duo Al Hilal and Al Nassr while Al Wahda and Sharjah of the United Arab Emirates both made it through. Tournament debutants Istiklol, meanwhile, took their group campaign by storm and progressed as group winners.

Moghanlou's goal nominated for Best Goal of 2021 ACL Matchday Six (West)

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Goal of Persepolis forward Shahriyar Moghanlou against Al Rayyan has been shortlisted for the Best Goal of 2021 AFC Champions League Matchday Six (West).

After a thrilling conclusion to the 2021 AFC Champions League (West) Group Stage on Thursday and Friday, the-AFC.com has announced the contenders for the best goal of the round.

Yahya Golmohammadi's side broke the deadlock in some style against the Qatari club when Moghanlou finished off a rapid break that saw Omid Alishah feed Mehdi Torabi down the left before receiving the return pass and setting up Moghanlou to score from the edge of the area.

Moghanlou has to compete with Abdullelah Alamri (Al Nassr), Michael Olunga (Al Duhail SC) Haitham Asiri (Al Ahli Saudi FC) and Igor Jesus (Shabab Al Ahli Dubai) to win the award.

Taremi voted AFC International Player of the Week

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Taremi defeated his countrymen Ali Alipour (Maritimo) and Allahyar Sayyadmanesh (Zorya Luhansk) to be voted as the AFC International Player of the Week.

Surely the most popular player in Asia in recent weeks, Taremi's recent purple patch continued as he powered home an 86th-minute penalty against Moreirense to save Porto from defeat in the league.

The FC Porto star now scored four goals in his last five matches, and 19 in all competitions this season.

Faraz Kamalvand named Saipa coach

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Faraz Kamalvand was named as new head coach of Saipa football team on Sunday.

Kamalvand, 45, was appointed as Esteghlal technical manager in early March and played a key role in the team's success, helping them qualify for the 2021 AFC Champions League Round of 16.

The former Tractor coach stepped down from his role as Esteghlal technical manager to lead Saipa for rest of the season.

Saipa are just two points above the relegation zone in Iran Professional League.

Kamalvand replaced Ebrahim Sadeghi who left the team following poor results.

Iranian teams learn fate at Asian Club League Handball C'ship

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian teams Shameli of Kazerun and Mes of Kerman have learned their rivals at the 2020 Asian Club League Handball Championship.

Shameli are drawn in Group A along with Saudi Arabia's Mudher, Al Arabi of Qatar, Al Najma of Bahrain and Kuwait's Al Salmiya. Mes of Kerman, Al Wahda of Saudi Arabia, Yemen's Al Qatn, Al Kuwait of Kuwait, Qatar's Al Duhail and a team from Uzbekistan are in Group B.

The competition will be the 23rd edition of the championship held under the aegis of the Asian Handball Federation.

The championship will be hosted by Saudi Arabian Handball Federation from June 12 to 21 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

It is the official competition for men's handball clubs of Asia and the winner will also qualify for the 2021 IHF Super Globe.

On August 9, 2020, the Asian Handball Federation (AHF) decided to postpone the championship due to COVID-19 pandemic. The championship was previously scheduled to take place from November 1 to 12, 2020.

253 idle small-scale mines revived in a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced that 253 idle small-scale mines were revived throughout the country in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Vajihollah Jafari, the plan for reviving idle mines in the previous year was realized by 126 percent, IRNA reported.

Saying that the mentioned mines have been reactivated as part of a comprehensive program for reviving idle small mines across the country, Jafari also announced that under the framework of the mentioned program 200 mines are planned to be put back into operation in the current year.

The official noted that the successful implementation of the said program in the previous year was achieved despite the problems created by the outbreak of coronavirus.

Emphasizing that the above goals have been achieved as a result of productive cooperation among the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, provincial industry organizations, Iran Mines houses, and private sector companies, Jafari noted that since the beginning of the program in March 2019 up to the end of the previous year, 303 mines have been revived.



As reported, under the framework of the mentioned program, 672 idle mines were identified and prioritized in the previous year, and diagnostic procedures were performed on 194 mines to determine the reasons for the halt in their production.

The program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO's missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several provinces.

Khodadad Gharibpour, IMIDRO's former head had mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of "Resistance Economy", saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

Reviving the small mines not only is a major step for supporting and boosting domestic production, it also plays a significant role in job creation throughout the country, Gharibpour said back in June 2020.

Following this program, so far various small-scale mines including chromite, manganese, hematite, and dolomite, iron ore, copper, and construction stone mines have been surveyed by monitoring and diagnosing the problems of the mines and providing solutions for resolving their issues.

Exports from Shahid Rajaei port rises 59% in a month on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Exports from Shahid Rajaei port, Iran's largest and best-equipped container port, increased 59 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Alireza Mohammadi Karajiran, the director-general of Ports and Maritime Department of Iran's southern Hormozgan province, where the port lies, said that 42,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of commodities were exported to different countries from Shahid Rajaei port in the said month.

Saying that 158 container ships berth at the port in the first month of this year, the official said that the port witnessed growth in all container sectors over the mentioned month.



Enjoying the most modern container terminals and port equipment, Shahid Rajaei accounts for 85 percent of the total loading and unloading at the Iranian ports.

Given its significant role in the country's import and export of products as well as transit and transshipment via Iran, the development of Shahid Rajaei Port has been among the most important development projects in the country.

In late December last year, Iranian Ports and

Maritime Organization (PMO) signed six memorandums of understanding (MOU) with domestic companies for investing 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) plus €800 million in development projects of Shahid Rajaei port's hinterland.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami, and the PMO Head Mohammad Rastad.

The mentioned investments will be made in a variety of projects including zinc, lead, manganese, and copper factories, the construction, and development of industrial components and parts production units, development and integration of the existing industrial units in the area, construction of an alumina refinery, as well as the construction of container manufacturing units.

Implementation and construction of production units in Shahid Rajaei Port will make this port a center for value-added production and a logistics center, which will upgrade the port's level to the third generation and significantly reduce transportation and storage costs.

The third phase of the port's development plan is going to go operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021), according to PMO.

Back in August 2019, PMO's Director of Engineering and Infrastructure Development Mohammadreza Allahyar had said that the port's capacity is planned to rise 2.1 million TEUs to reach 8 million TEUs.

Baghdad ready to pay off gas debts to Tehran

→1 "We reached good agreements on this issue and payment methods," he emphasized.

Upon arrival to Tehran, Hantoush held talks with Zanganeh to work out a solution for the settlement of Baghdad's gas debts to Tehran.

The visit of Iraqi delegation to Tehran came as the country is pressing for restoration of reduced gas supplies from Iran months after the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) reduced the flow to Iraq over arrears on previous payments.

Speaking in the meeting with Hantoush, Zanganeh mentioned the signing of two major deals between the two countries for the Iranian gas exports to Iraq and said: "So far, some 27 billion cubic meters of gas has been exported to Iraq... but the payment is facing problems and we hope we could reach a solution on the issue."

Hantoush for his part pointed to the good political and economic relations between Iran and Iraq and noted that his government is doing its best to settle the payments.

Iraq relies heavily on Iranian gas to feed



Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (R) and Iraqi Electricity Minister Majid Mahdi Hantoush (L) meet in Tehran on Saturday.

several power plants across the country, while Iranian electricity exports also account for a major part of the country's power supply.

The Islamic Republic, however, has recently slashed its gas exports to Iraq and threatened further reduction due to the Arab country's failure to meet its payment obligations.

Iraq is seeking to have the supplies restored as it needs them desperately to increase electricity generation in the run-up to a hot summer in the Arab country where demand for power is expected to soar to record levels.

Baghdad has been claiming that the main reason for the country's gas and electricity bills piling up has been the banking problems created by the U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic, saying the Iranian money is ready but it is frozen in Iraqi state banks due to the sanctions.

These claims, however, contradict the fact that the U.S. has wavered Iraq to import Iranian gas and electricity, which means the Iraqi government would be able to use legal financial facilities to pay its energy debts to Iran despite the sanctions.

Iran, Turkmenistan discuss expansion of oil co-op

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Iran's Khazar Exploration and Production Company (KEPCO) Ali Osouli met with Turkmenistan's Ambassador to Tehran Ahmad Ghorbanov to discuss expansion of cooperation in the oil industry.

Speaking in the meeting, Osouli underlined the long history of Iran-Turkmenistan relations as two neighboring countries with deep cultural ties and long common borders, and introduced some of the activities and experiences of KEPCO in the Caspian Sea region, Shana reported.

He pointed to the capabilities and achievements of his company in deepwater operations.

The official mentioned the formation of the South Caspian Oil Research Consortium, blocking and prioritization of exploration operations as well as signing an agreement with Azerbaijan for cooperation in Caspian Sea's Alborz block as part of the important measures taken by KEPCO over the past few years.

Osouli also referred to the establishment of shipbuilding facilities in northern Iran and the construction of Caspian platform and Amir-Kabir platforms, as well as the construction of multi-purpose vessels by Iran, saying: "In this field

[ship building], Iran has the potential to provide services and cooperate with Turkmenistan."

Ghorbanov for his part welcomed the expansion of cooperation between the two countries, especially in technical and engineering sectors, and underlined the important role of Turkmenistan embassy as a bridge of communication through which logical and executive proposals will be provided to Iranian companies operating in Turkmenistan.

Referring to the cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan, the Turkmen ambassador expressed hope that Turkmenistan would be able to use Iran's services and technical knowledge in deep-water operations and that a meeting of the two countries' economic committee would be held as soon as possible.

"There is great potential for expanding Turkmen-Iranian energy cooperation in the Caspian Sea, which could contribute to the two countries economic development," he emphasized.

KEPCO is a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) founded in January 1998. The company is active in a variety of oil and gas-related areas including exploration, development, and production in the South Caspian Sea and three littoral provinces of Mazandaran, Golestan, and Gilan in Iran.



KEPCO Managing Director Ali Osouli (2ndR) meets with Turkmenistan's Ambassador to Tehran Ahmad Ghorbanov (1stL) in Tehran on Sunday.

KEPCO supervises all the contracts signed by local and international companies regarding the exploration and development of hydrocarbon reserves in the area including the pertinent environmental matters.

Rouhani orders IRICA to facilitate clearance of basic goods

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has ordered the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) to take the necessary measures for the clearance of basic goods deposited at the country's customs.

According to IRICA Deputy Head Mehrdad Jamal Orounqi, in a recent meeting of the government economic coordination headquarters, some problems and issues were raised regarding the clearance of goods in the country's customs, and a report was presented to the president.

Following the mentioned meeting, Rouhani issued a decree ordering to investigate and resolve the mentioned problems and also agreed with the IRICA and Industry Ministry's proposals in this regard.

According to Orounqi, currently, over 5.2 million tons of basic goods have been piled up in the country's ports, of which 3.8 million tons are deposited at Imam Khomeini Port.

Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad had earlier said that the outbreak of the

coronavirus was the main reason for the delay in the clearance of goods from ports and customs.

The importers however say that the lack of foreign currency allocations for them has been a major challenge for clearing their goods.

Back in February, the Iranian market regulation headquarters approved six new directives aiming to enhance the clearance of goods at the country's customs.

The mentioned directives covered a variety of areas including the value of the goods, weight tolerance, abandoned goods,

banned goods, and foreign transit.

Also, to prevent the deposition of goods in special economic zones and customs, the IRICA was given the authority to take the necessary actions to clear basic and essential goods for transit, without requiring the owners to place order registration.

Earlier in January, Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Alireza Razm-Hosseini had said that his ministry was going to take necessary measures to accelerate the clearance of goods at customs to help regulate domestic markets.

East Azarbaijan province's annual steel export stands at over \$100m

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of annual steel export from East Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of Iran, is more than \$100 million.

East Azarbaijan province's steel industry, as the largest production hub of this product in the private sector of the country, has grown significantly in recent years.

East Azerbaijan, after Isfahan and Khuzestan provinces, where most of the steel production units are state-owned, ranks third in the country's steel production, with 85 percent of this production being done by the private sector.

With an annual processing of 5.5 million tons of steel, this province accounts for 24 percent of the total production of this widely used product in Iran and supplies it to the foreign markets as well.

The data released by the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) show that 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.

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.

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 pandemic.

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).

Commodities worth over \$400m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed trading of 686,963 tons of commodities worth over \$400 million during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, in the past week the exchange sold on its metal and industrial trading floor 320,769 tons of commodities worth more than \$212 million.

Commodities sold on this floor included 261,245 tons of steel, 3,460 tons of copper, 5,300 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 24 tons of precious metals concentrate, 520 tons of zinc and 150 tons of lead.

It's worth noting that the IME's open auction trading floor saw trade of 50,000 tons of fine iron ore.

The next trading floor was the oil and petrochemical on which the exchange sold 362,931 tons of commodities valued at more than \$187 million.

On this floor the exchange traded 91,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 142,940 tons of bitumen, 58,636 tons of polymeric products, 38,764 tons of chemicals, 26,000 tons of lube cut, 3,620 tons of base oil, 110 tons of argon and 1,000 tons of sulfur.

There was also 3,263 tons of commodities traded on the IME's side market.

As previously reported, the value of commodities traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange rose 54 percent during the past Iranian calendar month (March 21-April 20), compared to the same month in the past year.

The exchange's Public Relations and International Affairs Department reported that 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 rolls 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.

In the past 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.

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).

Minuscule difference between the Republicans and Democrats: ex-Senate candidate

➔ **1** Following is the text of the interview:
How do you see Biden's first 100 days?

Biden's first 100 days in office are an unmitigated disaster, but you would never know this from the fawning coverage he receives from an American Corporate Mainstream Media that loves Biden's synthesis of devotion to Globalism, Multi-national Corporate Capitalism, and the Zio-Wars of a declining American Empire, with a virulent Cultural Marxism that has a "Roman Catholic" American President appealing to his largely Jewish political and financial power base by demonstrating absolute fidelity to the ideology of LGBTQ and abortion-on-demand. His Administration's support of H.R. 5, the "Equality Act," would, if passed, impose the most radical Marxist cultural mandates on the American public ever witnessed.

Russia Today noted on April 17th that since Biden's Presidency began, illegal crossings into the United States via its southern border have surged to their highest level in two decades. That article noted that "Biden has suffered politically on the immigration issue, with just 29% of Americans in a Quinnipiac poll saying they approve of his handling of the border. Illegal border crossings and apprehensions of unaccompanied minors have surged to record highs after Biden's policies encouraged families to send their children to the U.S. with smugglers."

Then there is the economy.

The American economy has shown short-term improvement after the COVID-19 induced tanking of the last 14 months. What has gone largely unnoticed, however, except by the Washington Times and Pat Buchanan, is that Biden's enacting of a COVID-19 relief package of \$1.9 trillion in March without a single Republican vote in Congress was accompanied by a Biden proposal of a jobs and infrastructure program of \$2.2 trillion. He has now added an "American Families Plan" of another \$1.8 trillion.

The President's latest spending package also includes \$225 billion for child care, \$225 billion for a national paid family and medical leave program, \$200 billion to extend bolstered Obamacare subsidies in his \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package, \$200 billion for universal pre-K, and \$109 billion for two years of free community college for all Americans.

Buchanan notes that while Biden's \$6 trillion in total spending is spread over several years, it represents a claim on the nation's wealth equal to 30% of GDP — a figure comparable to FDR's New Deal and LBJ's Great Society.

But what will the end result be?

You will have American national deficits exceeding \$1 trillion. This will be combined with a national debt larger than the national economy itself and growing exponentially over time. The Federal Reserve will run its fiat money printing press night and day to produce the dollars to push the nation back to "full employment." Biden will also impose an excruciating level of taxation not seen since Lyndon Johnson's Great Society of the 1960s.

He proposes to raise the U.S. corporate tax by one-third to 28%, raise the personal income tax rate to 40%, double the tax on capital gains to 40%, and raise death and inheritance taxes to effect "a greater equality of wealth in America."

None of this worked for FDR, as the late John T. Flynn chronicled it decades ago.

What delivered the American economy from the Great Depression of the 1930s was — war.

This brings us to the Biden Administration's actual war and foreign policy posture, being crafted by three Zionist Jews: Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland. Ms. Nuland was the chief henchwoman of the Obama/Clinton/Biden sponsorship of the illegal coup d'état in Ukraine in February of 2014 that has made Joe and Hunter Biden rich via the Burisma scandal chronicled by the New York Post last October 14th.

This illegal coup, a part of a larger attempt to encircle Putin's Russia, has resulted now in a series of reckless provocations involving the Donbass and Crimea, the largest American and NATO military deployments and exercises in the Baltics and Eastern Europe ever witnessed,



and ongoing rhetorical demonization of Vladimir Putin virtually identical to the absolute pack of lies about the Russian President being currently sold to the global public by the April 24-30th cover story of The Economist. When one adds the Neo-Conservative demonization of Iran and China being undertaken by this Administration, it is obvious that the same Cabal controls American National Security and Foreign Policy regardless of the party affiliation of the particular Presidential incumbent in office at any given point in time. This is mercilessly obvious since the assassination of John Kennedy almost 58 years ago here in Texas.

If the United States finds itself in a new level of military conflict involving Russia, Iran, and China, or some configuration of these powers, the American Zio-Empire will collapse like a cheap suit. I would actually welcome this. I'm tired of American kids being sent into worthless foreign wars to kill innocent people; we have no reason to want to fight for reasons that have nothing to do with legitimate national defense.

What are the main disputes between the Republicans and Biden? Can Republicans prevent Biden's return to the JCPOA?

The actual differences between the Republicans and Democrats are minuscule, in reality, based more on theatrical rhetorical posturing than on actual substance.

The JCPOA is a classic example of the political fraud being visited upon both the American public and the honest signatories to the deal, including Iran. Trump illegitimately terminated American participation in the agreement and proved the word of honor of the United States Government isn't worth the paper it is written on. He subsequently commissioned the criminal assassination of General Soleimani in January of 2020 and undoubtedly approved of the assassination of Mohsen Fakhriadeh toward the end of the year.

Then Joe Biden campaigns in the fall of 2020 on a pledge to bring the United States back into JCPOA. But since his election, his aforementioned Zionist advisers have attached so many preconditions to reentry that Tehran has quite rightly rejected these preconditions as subterfuge.

The point is this: Whether Trump or Biden, Republican or Democrat, Israel, and its domestic Lobby run American foreign policy to the detriment of the average American and the rest of humanity globally.

Was Biden successful in containing the pandemic in comparison with Trump?

The media coverage of the COVID-19 "pandemic" was designed to help get Joe Biden elected. The American economy at the beginning of 2020 virtually guaranteed Trump's re-election. The economic shutdowns were in response to a death toll in the United States due to COVID-19 alone (no advancing age and pre-existing life-threatening conditions as factors) of only 10,000 people in a country of almost 333 million. If your readers will consult the COVID-19 fact page of LifeSiteNews or Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s Children's Health Defense, a very different picture emerges from the one painted by Joe Biden, Anthony Fauci, the CDC, Bill Gates, and Tony Blair.

A classic example of this GloboHomo coverage of COVID-19 resides in the Big

Pharma promotion of vaccines. Evidence linking health solutions involving hydroxychloroquine, or addressing the massive deficiency of millions in Vitamin D-3 and Zinc, were systematically suppressed and censored. At the same time, discussions of the real and potentially long-term deleterious effects of these vaccines upon recipients were also buried by Mainstream Media, Microsoft, Google, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

It is important to see that Mainstream Corporate Media coverage of "Truth" about COVID-19, its origins, and the vaccine industry of Big Pharma mirror the "Truth" fed to the American public on the Kennedy Assassinations and 9-11. This is the same media that routinely lies about Iran and Russia. News consumers, beware.

Do you predict Biden can make changes in the domestic American landscape via gun control and in the prevention of police violence against people of color? Why is gun control a tough problem in the U.S.?

The Democratic Party, Joe Biden, and the Gun Control Industry in the United States fundamentally misunderstand the problem of guns and violence in American society.

A striking irony is this one: Democratic Party lionizes the late 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy. They conveniently omit the fact that President Kennedy was a Life Member of the National Rifle Association (NRA). There was greater per capita ownership of firearms in those days than in the United States now, yet mass shootings and today's pervasive criminal use of weaponry were unheard of. Why?

I argue that this is because today's America is no longer shaped by an older traditional European Christianity, either Protestant, Lutheran, or Roman Catholic. It is now an alcohol and drug besotted post-Christian culture that has presently drifted into Neo-Paganism. All the signs are there, including rampant involvement in every form of sexual perversion imaginable and an increasing disregard for the sanctity of innocent human life, including the heinous practice of partial-birth abortion and increasing disrespect of the elderly. It is striking that this embrace of evil domestically finds its American Empire counterpart in a foreign policy rooted in militarism and the increasing number of war crimes being committed by the United States military and its Israeli and Saudi allies in the Middle East (West Asia). The post-Cold War NATO no longer maintains any pretense of being a defensive alliance. Like Biden and Trump, American Presidents no longer maintain the old doctrine of plausible deniability in their respective crimes, either with Biden and his pals Obama and Clinton in Libya, Syria, Kosovo, and Ukraine, or Trump with the Soleimani Assassination.

The official FBI statistics on racial crime in the United States and on police shootings belie the impression created by Corporate Mainstream Media in the United States where these matters are concerned. The June 2nd, 2020 essay of Heather MacDonald for the Wall Street Journal entitled "The Myth of Systemic Police Racism" demonstrates this. To the extent that urban American police departments have become progressively more militaristic in tactics and weaponry, one need look no further than the training

seminars being conducted routinely for American police departments in Israel. It is not an accident that subsequent police misconduct in the United States looks increasingly like the routine criminal misconduct undertaken by the Israeli police and military in their occupation of Palestine and Gaza. This ultimately will mean that the Israelification of American police departments will fit hand in glove with the 78 Fusion Centers in this country that blur the distinctions between Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement, even as the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith (ADL) provides political profiling of American citizens who possess "potential terrorist profiles" for these Fusion Centers and their surveillance databases.

The most pressing problem in this country with racially motivated violence involves the disproportionate involvement of African Americans in the criminal misuse of firearms and the disproportionate number of murders of blacks by blacks, Hispanics by blacks, and whites by blacks. One would never know this by the distorted coverage of Corporate Mainstream Media.

Why is this so? I argue that the increase in illegitimate births among African Americans from 25% in 1960 to over 75% 60 years later is at the heart of the problem. The African American father has been rendered irrelevant by an economic support system rooted in government subsidies. Drugs and sexual promiscuity, and lack of parental discipline and stability have dovetailed with access to illegal weaponry that has turned these communities into war zones. Police serving in these neighborhoods have understandably come to adopt a mentality of survival in the midst of these war zones. Combine these dynamics of moral and community disintegration with a proliferation of illegally obtained weapons and militarized police departments, and one can grasp the gravity of the situation.

Older Americans, especially with European Christian backgrounds and coming from rural areas and small towns, associate firearms with a way of life totally unlike their contemporary urban counterpart. They see the imposition of gun control, especially by un-Constitutional Executive Orders, as a threat to their 2nd Amendment Rights on the part of a hostile Federal government whose real agenda is to create a police state controlled by a political elite under the spell of Globalism. In their view, the same government that forces the children of traditional Christian families to endure LGBTQ propaganda in the public school courtesy of Biden's friends at the National Education Association (NEA), is the same government under Joe Biden that favors the legalization of transgender surgeries and therapies for minor children, that continues to marginalize them economically by exporting their manufacturing jobs overseas, even as massive illegal immigration continues to consume dwindling national resources at the expense of American citizens. They see also see gun control as the disenfranchisement of the law abiding by leftist political forces in government and the legal system who have pursued a revolving door "justice" system where multi-convicted violent felons are returned to the streets time and time again and whose rates of recidivism in violent crimes are staggering.

What is the attitude of black people toward the Biden administration after 100 days?

I have no reliable statistics to gauge this accurately. The overwhelming percentage of African Americans vote Democratic in Presidential elections, yet my impression is that Biden is not as popular among blacks who favor even greater amounts of Federal and State spending on social programs than what the President proposes. A candidate like Bernie Sanders might well produce a greater level of enthusiasm with this constituency. Among blacks with a profound commitment to Pentecostal and Fundamentalist Protestant faith, one suspects Mr. Biden's Cultural Marxism is not a selling point with them. It was deliberately ignored by Corporate Mainstream Media in the 2020 election that Mr. Trump did better than expected with these folks. That suggests a trend worth watching in future Presidential election cycles.

The real costs of Afghanistan war for the U.S.

The two-decade-long conflict in Afghanistan started in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a war which then went on to become America's longest.

Following President Joe Biden's declaration earlier this year that he was going to end the U.S.'s "forever war", there has been widespread reckoning over the war's lost lives and colossal expenditure.

Twenty years on, just how much has the war cost the U.S. and Afghanistan?

The cost in lives

Afghans have paid the highest price.

Since 2001, at least 47,245 civilians have been killed in the war as of mid-April, according to the Costs of War project at Brown University, which documents the hidden costs of America's War on Terror, ABC News reported.

Gun and bomb attacks targeting civilians surged to previously unseen heights since the intra-Afghan peace negotiations opened in Qatar last year, according to United Nations observers.

They have said the conflict also killed a total of 72 journalists and 444 aid workers.

The Afghan government keeps the toll among its soldiers a secret, to avoid undermining morale, but Costs of War estimates the conflict has killed between 66,000 to 69,000 Afghan troops.

The war has forced 2.7 million Afghans to flee abroad, mostly to Iran, Pakistan and Europe, according to UN figures. Another four million are displaced within the country, which has a total population of 36 million.

A total of 2,442 U.S. troops have been killed and 20,666 wounded in the war since 2001, according to the Defense Department. It's estimated that over 3,800 U.S. private security contractors have been killed. The Pentagon does not track their deaths.

The conflict also has killed 1,144 personnel from the 40-nation NATO coalition that trained Afghan forces over the years, according to a tally kept by the website iCasualties.

The remaining 7,000 allied troops also will withdraw by Biden's September 11 deadline.

The cost in dollars

The U.S. has spent a stunning total of \$US2.26 trillion (\$2.93 trillion) on a dizzying array of expenses, according to the Costs of War project.

The Defense Department's latest 2020 report said war-fighting costs totaled \$US15.7 billion over the years.

That covers the operating costs of the U.S. military in Afghanistan, everything from fuel and food to Humvees, weapons and ammunition, from tanks and armored vehicles to aircraft carriers and airstrikes.

Although a U.S.-led coalition first invaded the country to retaliate against Al-Qaeda and rout its hosts, the Taliban, the U.S. and NATO soon pivoted to a broader remit: nation-building on a massive scale.

Washington has poured over \$US143 billion into that goal since 2002, according to the latest figures from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

Of that, \$US88 billion went to training, equipping and funding Afghan military and police forces.

Another \$US36 billion was spent on reconstruction projects, education and infrastructure like dams and highways, the SIGAR report said. Another \$US4.1 billion has gone to humanitarian aid for refugees and disasters. The campaign to deter Afghans from selling heroin around the world cost over \$US9 billion.

Unlike with other conflicts in American history, the U.S. borrowed heavily to fund the war in Afghanistan and has paid some \$US530 billion in interest. It has also paid \$US296 billion in medical and other care for veterans, according to Costs of War.

Yemen reports another 'accurate hit' against Saudi airbase

➔ **1** The website also named the Daesh member as Saif San'ani, saying he used to act as the deputy of the terror group's senior intelligence official in Yemen.

According to Press TV, Daesh and its fellow Takfiri terror group of al-Qaeda have been trying to establish sweeping control over Ma'rib's Province under widely-reported support from the coalition.

The coalition has been trying unsuccessfully to restore power to Yemen's former Riyadh-allied officials.

Tens of thousands of Yemenis have died during the war and a simultaneous siege that the Saudi-led allies have been enforcing on Yemen.

The Yemeni forces that comprise the country's army and Popular Committees have, however, never laid down their arms in their purpose to rid the country of the aggressors' presence.

Last year, they liberated a strategic military base to the west of Ma'rib, a development that was followed by their overwhelming focus on the city and its surrounding province.

Resistance News

Hamas warns of harming residents of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — Hamas Movement has warned the Israeli occupation of any actions that would harm the people of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Occupied Jerusalem and held it responsible for the repercussions of these actions.

Fawzi Barhoum, Hamas's spokesman, said in a written statement on Sunday, "The mass displacement of our people in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and the seizure of their homes is an obvious targeting of the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem and the Palestinian presence in the city."

Barhoum argued that the absence of decisive and responsible positions by the Palestinian Authority towards this Zionist aggression and the Arab normalization encouraged the escalated violation of the Israeli occupation and provided an official cover for its crimes.

He added that confronting the "Zionist" aggression requires speeding up the official adoption of a national resistance strategy that strengthens the steadfastness of the Jerusalemites.

Hamas's spokesman called on Jerusalemites and the Palestinians of the 1948 occupied lands to intensify their presence in the houses, alleys and streets of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood to prevent the implementation of the "Zionist" schemes.

He called on the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the people of the Arab and Islamic nations to assume their responsibilities in protecting the Jerusalemites and supporting the resistance of the Palestinians.

N. Korea rejects 'spurious' U.S. diplomacy as cover for 'hostile acts'

North Korea has lashed out at U.S. President Joe Biden for his comments about Pyongyang's nuclear program, dismissing Washington's talk of diplomacy as "spurious" and warning of a corresponding response to its hostile policies.

In an address to the U.S. Congress last week, Biden called North Korea's nuclear program a "serious threat" and vowed to work with allies to deal with the issue "through diplomacy as well as stern deterrence."

The White House also announced that the president was open to negotiations with Pyongyang on denuclearization after US officials had completed a months-long review of North Korean policy and the challenges Biden would face as he sought to distance his approach from the failures of his predecessors.

In a statement released by the official KCNA news agency on Sunday, the North Korean foreign ministry censured

Biden's speech to Congress and said it was illogical and an encroachment upon Pyongyang's right to self-defense for Washington to call its defensive deterrence a threat.

"His statement clearly reflects his intent to keep enforcing the hostile policy toward the DPRK as it had been done by the U.S. for over half a century," said Kwon Jung Gun, a foreign ministry official, using the initials of the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Rome exhibit turns spotlight on Bushehr tourism

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — An online photo exhibit of the tourist attractions of Iran's southwestern Bushehr province has been held in Italy, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.



The exhibit showcases photos of the region's traditional rituals, historical sites, natural sights, maritime tourism, and anthropology, Sakineh Salari said on Sunday.

Organized by the Silk Road NGO in collaboration with Iran's cultural office in Rome, the exhibit will run until May 27, the official added.

Some webinars on the Persian Gulf are also being held on the sidelines of the exhibit, she explained.

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.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. Qajar era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Gang of excavators arrested in Zanjan

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian police have recently arrested a gang of illegal diggers in Khodabandeh county, northwestern Zanjan province.

Some digging tools [and treasure detector(s)] were seized from the two-member team, who were traced following reports by local people, said Hossein-Ali Fazli, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage, CHTN reported on Sunday.



The culprits were handed over to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation on the Iranian plateau is found from deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites in the Zagros Mountains, which dates back to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

2800 historical documents restored in National Library of Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A total of 2800 folios of manuscripts and historical documents were restored by panels of experts at the National Library of and Archives Iran throughout the past Iranian calendar year ended on March 20.



The restored documents include 110 endowment letters, 41 handwritten books, important letters related to the Qajar-era (1789–1925), and photographs of European queens and princes from the 1880s, Mehr quoted a senior official with the national library as saying on Sunday.

The National Library of and Archives Iran (NLI) is located in Tehran, Iran, with several branches scattered throughout the city.

The national library incorporates many different collections from older libraries, including many rare and valuable manuscripts. The central main branch is located in north-central Tehran. The library by itself is over 90,000 square meters, the largest library campus in West Asia. It encompasses five separate halls, each hall dedicated to a different faculty, including Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, Science and Science Education, and Health Studies.

Traditional Lenj boat to emerge as three-star hotel in southern Iran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — A traditional Iranian Lenj vessel is set to be turned into a three-star hotel in the port city of Kong, southern Iran.

"We want to show everyone that these Lenj boats can be rehabilitated, so we will use one of them as a floating three-star hotel after being fully restored and equipped with tourism amenities," Kong Mayor Ayoub Zarei announced on Sunday.

Last week, the Iranian cabinet approved a bill that may, according to cultural heritage experts, lead to the elimination of the UNESCO-listed traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf.

Members of government on Wednesday rectified a bill for the replacement of traditional commercial vessels with a capacity of fewer than 500 tons though the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tour-



ism and Handicrafts had previously notified that the traditional knowledge of shipbuilding and navigation was on the UNESCO list of intangible heritage.

Various activists, including the World Maritime Forum, Kang Municipality, ICOM officials, cultural heritage lovers, and the media, have repeatedly stated their opposition to the resolution.

Iranian Lenj vessels are traditionally hand-built and are used by inhabitants of the northern coast of the Persian Gulf for sea journeys, trading, fishing, and pearl diving. The traditional knowledge surrounding Lenjs includes oral literature, performing arts and festivals, in addition to the sailing and navigation techniques and terminology, and weather forecasting that is closely associated with sailing, and the skills of wooden boat-building itself. The navigational knowledge used to sail Lenjes was traditionally passed on from father to son.

Sassanid-era citadel to turn into cultural heritage base

→1 "Various antiquities, the cultural heritage, historical monuments, and arts represent segments of the national identity of the country yet they reflect ancient civilizations, genius, and creativity of our ancestors," the official explained.

Some estimate that the crumbling Iraj fortress dates from the Sassanid era (224–651), however, some experts believe that it belongs to the Kayanian dynasty era, a semi-mythological dynasty, which is mentioned in the Persian poet Ferdowsi's magnum opus, the Shahnameh.

Measuring about 3,000 square meters in area, the fortress has lost its towers some centuries ago – maybe by erosion, and only lengthy and tall clay ramparts have been left. Based on evidence from excavations in 2008, archaeologists believe that the Iraj fortress was likely abandoned shortly after construction.

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fortress has lost its towers some centuries ago – maybe by erosion, and only lengthy and tall clay ramparts have been left. Based on evidence from excavations in 2008, archaeologists believe that the Iraj fortress was likely abandoned shortly after construction.

The history of settlement in Rey dates from the 3rd millennium BC. It is featured in the Avesta (the original document of Zoroastrianism, an Iranian religion) as a sacred place, and it is also mentioned in the book of Tobit, of the biblical Apocrypha, and by classical authors.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Rey was one of the capital cities of the Parthian empire (3rd century BC–3rd century CE). It was captured by the Muslim Arabs in 641 CE. During the reign of the Muslim caliph al-Mahdi in the 8th century, the city grew in importance until it was rivaled in western Asia only by Damascus and Baghdad. Islamic writers described it as a city of extraordinary beauty, built largely of fired brick and brilliantly ornamented with blue faience (glazed earthenware). It continued to be an important city and was briefly a capital under the rule of the Seljuqs, but in the 12th century, it was weakened by the fierce quarrels of rival religious sects. In 1220



the city was almost destroyed by the Mongols, and its inhabitants were massacred. Most of the survivors of the massacre moved to nearby Tehran, and the deserted remnants of Rey soon fell into complete ruin.

Rey, however, retains enough history to give it a different sensibility, its key sight is the elaborately decorated Shah Abdol Azim Shrine. Beside the shrine complex is a lively bazaar, while further afield are a couple of minor historical attractions.

Museum of archaeology in Yasuj ready for inauguration

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The construction operation of an archaeology museum has been finished in the ancient city of Yasuj, the capital of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province.

"The construction project of Yasuj Archaeological Museum has come to an end after 14 years, and the museum is now getting ready to be inaugurated," the provincial tourism chief announced on Sunday.

The construction work commenced in [the Iranian calendar year] 1386 (2007), however, it did not fit into the schedule due to credit limits, Majid Safai explained.

"The museum has been constructed with an infrastructure of 2,750 square meters on a piece of land with an area of



11,000 square meters," the official said.

"3,000 museum objects is set to go display in the main hall of the museum with an area of 600 square meters."

Last year, the official announced that

the tourism sector of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is prepared to improve quickly after the coronavirus crisis ends.

He also noted that innovative plans and programs and various cultural festivals are being organized to attract tourists and travelers to the alluring destinations of the province.

The lesser-known province is a cradle for nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

From the Caspian in the northwest to Baluchistan in the southeast, the Iranian

Plateau extends for close to 2,000 km. It encompasses the greater part of Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan west of the Indus River containing some 3,700,000 square kilometers. Despite being called a "plateau", it is far from flat but contains several mountain ranges, the highest peak being Damavand in the Alborz mountain range at 5610 m, and the Dasht-e Loot east of Kerman in Central Iran falling below 300 m.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation in the Iranian plateau is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Authorities to free up lands surrounding historic ice storage

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Local authorities have approved to free up [private] lands, which are situated within the legal boundaries of a mudbrick ice storage near the Iranian capital.

"Surrounding lands of the Qajar-era (1789–1925) traditional Yakhchal (mudbrick ice storage) of Yaber Daghlani in the town of Pakdasht, near Tehran will be free up in near future," Pakdasht's tourism chief said on Sunday.

Some seven houses within the boundaries of the historical monument will be purchased from the owners to preserve and protect the structure, he said.

A budget of 60 billion rials (\$1.4 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, which aims at providing investment opportunities for the historical structure, Asadollah Tajik announced.

When there was no electricity, no refrigerators, and no appliances, people kept a huge amount of water next



to the high walls of Yakhchal, which cast a shadow that kept the water cool.

Spa tourism to take off the ground in Ilam

have been carried out so far in the area in close collaboration with the private sector, he explained.

The Dehloran plain is best known for the excavations conducted at several prehistoric sites, which elucidated the origins and development of sedentary agricultural villages and towns in the region, and for surveys documenting the history of settlement into the modern era.

As a relatively small and remote rural area, it has always been affected by political, economic, and technological developments in the adjacent regions of Khuzestan, the Zagros Mountains, and Mesopotamia. Be-

ginning as early as the 3rd millennium BC and throughout its subsequent history, it was under the political control of kingdoms in one or another of these regions according to Iranica Encyclopedia.

Although no cuneiform texts have been found at any of the Dehloran sites, the most prominent mound, Tepe Musiyan, is possible to be identified as ancient Urua, an Elamite city known from Mesopotamian texts.

Dehloran has been on a trade route linking the Zagros Mountains with Mesopotamia; in the 1st millennium, the route linking the Achaemenid capitals of Susa



and Ecbatana passed through the region.

From the 18th century, Dehloran has been a winter resort for the local tribes.

Relief foundation, IRGC join hands to create jobs for the deprived

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation in cooperation with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps will generate 50,000 jobs for the underprivileged individuals in the current Iranian calendar year (began March 20), IRIB reported on Sunday.

By the end of last year (March 2020-March 2021), 520,000 job creation projects had been launched across the country, 199,000 of which have been launched and supported by the Relief Foundation, Hojjat Abdolmaleki, deputy head of the foundation stated.

So that, the share of the Relief Foundation in the employment of the country is about 45 percent, he further noted.

Job creation for the deprived was piloted in 11 provinces last year with the help of the IRGC, which will be expanded, he concluded.

Most recently, Imam Khomeini Relief



Foundation and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to build 50,000 houses for the underprivileged families residing in rural areas.

The Foundation also has provided 9,305 housing units to the deprived families during Ten-Day Fajr celebrations (January 31-February 10, marking the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution).

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation works to provide employment in deprived areas and empowers financially struggling families, other services such as building or buying housing, cultural services, medical services, and other facilities are provided, for example, in the field of treatment, more than 80,000 patients of incurable diseases are currently under the Foundation's coverage.

Syrian expo to showcase Iran's potential in medicinal plants industry

➔ **1** Currently, over 5,700 knowledge-based companies are active in Iran, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency, in addition to export the items.

8,000 herbal species grow in Iran

So far, about 30,000 plant species are identified in the world, with Iran's share of about 8,000 species that its plant diversity is more than the whole of Europe.

Currently, about 2,300 species of medicinal plants have been identified in the country. While medicinal plants account for one-third of the medicines used in human societies, the share of world trade in these products is about \$124 billion and Iran's share is \$570 million, which is only 0.5 percent of the total.

The Sixth National Development Plan (2016-2021) envisages the rehabilitation of 9.6 million hectares of rangeland

and medicinal plant habitats and cultivation of medicinal plants in 100,000 hectares.

The per capita consumption of medicinal plants in Iran is about one kilogram of dried plants, in other words, 83,000 tons of medicinal plants worth 1.2 trillion rials (around \$29 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) are consumed in the country, while in Europe this amount is 900 grams and in the United States is 2.5 kilograms.

224,000 ha under cultivation of medicinal herbs

Hossein Zeynali, an official with the Ministry of Agriculture, has said some 224,000 hectares of area is currently under cultivation of medicinal herbs.

"During the last 2 years, we focused mainly on the development of a number of medicinal plants such as saffron, rosemary, and Persian cumin, that their cultivation is high in the country and brought an export revenue of 400 million

dollars annually," he said.

"Also, in the next two years, by increasing the quality or mechanization of these products, the comparative advantage of these products will increase compared to other countries, and we will certainly be the main exporters in the coming years."

Statistics show that the consumption of medicinal plants in the country has become processed, and decreased imports by \$50-60 million, on the other hand, increased the exports, he noted.

"Next year, we plan to completely cultivate Persian shallot in the Zagros forests, in addition to celery, so that increase exports and exchange rates while meeting the country's needs, he said, highlighting, for the development of medicinal plants, between 10 to 20 trillion rials (nearly \$238) are allocated annually."

DOE, Interpol to cooperate on fighting wildlife trafficking

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – The Department of Environment (DOE) and the International Criminal Police Organization will set up a joint committee in Iran to fight against wildlife trafficking, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Referring to the high rate of wildlife trafficking in Iran, Jamshid Mohabbat Khani, commander of the protection unit of the DOE stated that Iran's ranking in the fight against wildlife smuggling in the world is not desirable. "So, we have decided to form a committee in this regard this year with the cooperation of the Interpol."

"Related organizations that can be effective will also become members of this committee

so that we can follow up on the issue."

Mohabbat Khani expressed hope that the country's ranking in the field of wildlife trafficking should be reduced to lower ranks, and Iran should be one of the leading countries in the world as it is in the fight against other types of trafficking.

Over 74 wildlife species in the country are on the red list of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which shows the threats against the country's biodiversity.

Illegal hunting and wildlife smuggling not only threatens Iran's environment but also those who protect them, as over 140 rangers have lost their lives defending the

country's biodiversity.

According to the international standard, there should be one ranger per thousand hectares, but in Iran, there is one ranger per 12,000 hectares, which means that the number of rangers in Iran is one-twelfth of the world standard, while the rangers protect 11 percent of natural areas.

In addition to poaching, which is on the rise in Iran, illegal wildlife trade has found its way to Iran and unless responsible officials rise to the occasion, it could well have more drastic effects on the country's diverse but diminishing wildlife.

Illegal wildlife trade is indeed a lucrative but immoral job as in many cases high



prices paid for rare species. Vulnerable wild animals are pushed further to the edge of extinction when nature cannot replenish their stocks to keep up with the insatiable greed of humankind.

Iran imports 1m doses of COVID-19 vaccine from China

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Iran received the largest shipment of coronavirus vaccine, containing 1 million doses, from China on Sunday, IRNA reported.

Imported through consultation conducted by the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), the vaccines were handed over to the Ministry of Health.

However, the report did not mention the brand of vaccines and their manufacturer.

"Given the current situation, it is very difficult to purchase a vaccine. However, the Red Crescent Society has made special efforts to provide the vaccine," IRCS spokesman Mohammad Qousian said.

In less than a month, the Society has managed to import 1.4 million doses of approved vaccines into the country and provide them to the Ministry of Health, he added.

Earlier, four types of vaccines, including Sputnik V from Russia, COVAXIN from India, AstraZeneca Oxford from Russia, and AstraZeneca Oxford from South Korea, received emergency licenses in the country. Currently, five vaccines

have so far received emergency use permits.

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

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

Domestic vaccines

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers, started the third phase of the human trial on Sunday by being administered 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 Sunday, Health Ministry's spokesperson, Sima-Sadat Lari, confirmed 18,698 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,534,855. She added that 1,988,165 patients have so far recovered, but 5,443 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 394 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 72,484, she added.

So far, 16,101,399 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Marine species population increased in protected areas

According to the annual census, the population of marine species in habitats under the Department of Environment (DOE) supervision has increased, Ahmad Lahijanazadeh, head of marine environment affairs at the DOE has said.

The annual Census is the authoritative source of data determining the population and distribution of animal or marine species through counting them yearly.

Protecting marine habitats and listing them as protected areas are among the most important priorities of the DOE, he said, adding, all of the areas have been identified through environmental assessment and field surveys. The reproduction time is important, and the DOE forces stand guard and constantly supervise the area during this period, he noted.

He went on to say that annual census shows that the number of species in protected areas is increasing, probably due to favorable condition and full-time control.

افزایش گونه‌های دریایی مناطق تحت حفاظت سازمان محیط زیست

لاهیجان زاده گفت: براساس سرشماری سالانه تعداد گونه‌های موجود در زیستگاه‌های دریایی تحت حفاظت رو به افزایش است.

احمد لاهیجان زاده معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، در رابطه با اهمیت حفاظت از زیستگاه‌های دریایی اظهار کرد: حفاظت از زیستگاه‌های دریایی و شناسایی این مناطق در اولویت سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست قرار دارد و تمام این زیستگاه‌ها در قالب مطالعات جامع و تعقیب میدانی شناسایی شده‌اند.

وی با بیان اینکه در بسیاری از این زیستگاه‌ها زادآوری صورت می‌گیرد، افزود: زمان این زادآوری‌ها با شناسایی زیستگاه‌ها مشخص است و سازمان محیط زیست در این بازه زمانی حفاظت فیزیکی را انجام می‌دهد.

لاهیجان زاده گفت: براساس سرشماری‌های سالانه، تعداد گونه‌های موجود در زیستگاه‌های تحت حفاظت رو به افزایش است.

Glacial lakes threaten millions with flooding as planet heats up

An increasing number of people are being threatened by flooding caused by glacial lakes bursting, scientists have warned.

As the planet warms and glaciers recede, meltwater accumulates and forms lakes, often as a result of ice or moraine acting as a dam. Since 1990, the volume, area and number of these glacial lakes has increased by 50% globally. When these lakes become too full there is a risk that they may breach or overflow, releasing huge volumes of water and causing catastrophic flooding.



Some lakes are more dangerous than others, and more likely to result in what are known as glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Stephan Harrison, a professor of climate and environmental change at Exeter University, said: "The ones we're concerned about are the very steep mountain valleys in the Andes and in the Himalayas, where you have glaciers retreating up into their steep valleys with lots of opportunity for bits of mountainside to fall off into lakes."

The correlation between rising temperatures and glacial lake outburst floods is complicated. While glacial lake formation and growth can be attributed to anthropogenic climate change, the triggers that can cause disastrous flooding are often down to non-climatic factors such as moraine dam geometry, earthquakes, ice or rock avalanches into the lake or extreme rainfall.

Adam Emmer, a geographer at the University of Graz in Austria, said: "You need two conditions to generate a disaster – high magnitude GLOF, and exposed population as well as assets in its path. Population expansion along the potential GLOF paths and lack of building development regulations may be even more important driver of GLOF risk, especially in developing countries."

One of the parameters that makes a glacial lake potentially dangerous is the size of downstream population that could be exposed to flooding, and that number can range from few hundreds to hundreds of thousands, as in the case of Huaraz city located downstream of Lake Palcacocha in Peru. However, the many factors at play in an outburst flood make it impossible to estimate how many people might be at risk globally.

A 2016 study found there have been at least 1,348 recorded glacial lake outburst floods so far worldwide, of which 24% had some societal impact.

More than 12,000 deaths have been attributed to such floods. Central Asia was the most affected region, followed by South America, then the European Alps, Iceland, Scandinavia, north-west America and Greenland. The authors identify South America and central Asia as the regions most likely to experience large numbers of deaths, extreme damage to infrastructure, flooding of farmlands and the destruction of homes and roads.

Of the world's tropical glaciers, 70% are situated in Peruvian Andes, and they are melting rapidly, which has led to several glacial disasters over recent decades. The worst so far was the 1941 glacial lake outburst flood from Lake Palcacocha, which claimed at least 1,800 lives.

Subsequently, Peru started working on lake monitoring and implementation of hazard mitigation measures such as draining lakes, strengthening unstable moraine dams with concrete structures and artificial spillways, and installing early warning systems as early as the 1950s.

"Peruvian Cordillera Blanca [part of the Andes mountain range] is, in fact, the world's pioneer region of GLOF mitigation works," said Emmer. Despite this, "the biggest challenge is yet to come – communicating the risk and risk reduction measures to local communities and making them trust and accept it", he added.

Nepal, which is also highly vulnerable to glacial floods, started taking interest in GLOFs after two serious floods in the 1980s. In 1999, Nepal drained a rapidly expanding lake called Tsho Rolpa near Mount Everest to lower the lake levels, a first in the region.

"GLOF has been recognised as a big challenge for Nepal. In the past, there also have been efforts made to reduce the risk from individual lakes and two lakes have already been intervened in [around] the Everest region," said Arun Shrestha, a climate change specialist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

According to Shrestha, Nepal has documented records of up to 35 GLOF events, but the true number is probably higher. International communication and cooperation is also critical to preventing deadly floods; a study published last year identified 47 potentially dangerous glacial lakes that could affect Nepal if breached, but only 21 were in Nepal itself. Twenty-five were also identified in China and one in India.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 174)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

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۲. پسر من پنجره را می‌بندد.
۳. ما صدایی شنیدیم.
۴. همه‌ی چک‌ها را فرستاده‌ام.
۵. دوستان عزیزم را دعوت کردند.

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Culture Ministry honors composer Taqi Zarrabi, painter Amir-Hushang Jazizadeh

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance honored maestro Taqi Zarrabi and painter Amir-Hushang Jazizadeh on Sunday for their lifetime achievements in training several generations of students.



Painter Amir-Hushang Jazizadeh (L) and maestro Taqi Zarrabi (R) pose after accepting their medals from Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini (C) at the Girls' Music Academy in Tehran on May 2, 2021.

Zarrabi received the Abolhassan Khan Saba Medal, and Jazizadeh was decorated with the Isa Khan Bahadori Medal, both of which are being awarded by the Art Planning and Education Office of the Culture Ministry for the first time this year.

The honoring ceremony was organized on Iran's Teachers' Day at the Girls' Music Academy with a limited number of guests due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the medals has been named after Saba (1902-1957), a renowned Iranian composer, violinist and setar player who was best known for his efforts to train many students that turned into the most prominent figures of Iranian music, including Hossein Tehrani, Hassan Kasai, Gholamhossein Banan and Farhad Fakhreddini.

Another medal has been named after Bahadori (1905-1986) who was an eminent Persian painter and was the director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Isfahan for over 30 years. He is one of the most influential figures in the restoration of traditional Iranian arts.

Many students were trained by him when he presided over the Academy of Fine Arts. His artworks are currently on view in several prestigious museums in Iran and several other countries.

Persian poet Ahmad Shamlu's "Abraham in the Fire" published in Italian

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – "Abraham in the Fire" by Ahmad Shamlu, one of Iran's most influential literary figures of the 20th century, has been published in Italian.

The Rome publishing house Ensemble is the publisher of "Abrama Nel Fuoco" translated into Italian by Faezeh Mardani and Francesco Occhetto.

In a preface to the book, Italian writer Davide Brullo wrote, "Ahmad Shamlu's poetry explores the deepest furrows of the continuous and often bitter political-cultural metamorphosis that traces and distinguishes the path of the contemporary history of Iran.

"His constant and decisive presence in the artistic panorama of the country makes his literary heritage a rich and passionate testimony with multiple interpretative layers.

"A distinct voice that fixes the great transformations of its land and its time in an innovative and multicolored poetic language."

The collection contains 21 poems composed between 1970 and 1973. The original version was published in 1973.

The front cover of the book features the painting "Falling Angels" by Iranian artist Aidin Aghdashlu.

Shamlu (1925-2000) wrote under the pseudonym "A. Bamdad". He was one of the contemporary poets who openly defied the conventional restrictions of formal Persian poetry in favor of heartfelt free-flowing verse.

Earlier in 2019, Iranian translator Maryam Heidari said that she was translating a collection of poems by Shamlu into Arabic.

She said that the collection will be published by Al-Mutawassit, an Arab publishing house in the Italian city of Milan.

Shamlu was himself a prominent translator. His translation of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's "The Little Prince" has always been acclaimed by readers and critics.

Russian museum hangs artworks inspired by Persian poet Nezami

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – The State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow is showcasing artworks inspired by Nezami Ganjavi, the Persian poet who lived during the 12th and early 13th centuries.

The exhibition entitled "Plots and Images of Nezami" has been organized to celebrate the 880th birthday of the great Iranian poet.

About 60 museum items and artworks from private collections, including manuscripts, Persian paintings, graphics and illustrations, are on view at the exhibition, the museum reported.

The museum has erroneously called Nezami an Azerbaijani poet. However, his masterpieces have entirely been composed in Persian, without even a verse in the Azerbaijani language.

The artworks represent the truly boundless influence that Nizami's works have had and continue to have on the fine arts.

The exhibition, which comes to an end on Monday, has been organized to showcase how the humanistic ideas and aesthetic



A Persian painting representing a story from Nezami's works on display in an exhibition at the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow.

images of Nezami have been perceived and artistically interpreted in the culture of people around the world in the Middle Ages and modern times.

A rare manuscript of Nezami's masterpiece Khamseh (The Quintuplet), which is kept at the Central Library of the University of Tehran, was registered on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register list in 2011.

Nezami's reputation rests on his Khamseh which is a pentology of poems written in Masnavi verse form (rhymed couplets) and totaling 30,000 couplets.

These five poems include the didactic work Makhzan ol-Asrar (The Treasury of Mysteries), three traditional love stories of Khosrow and Shirin, Leili and Majnun, and Haft Paykar, and the Eskandar-nameh, which records the adventures of Alexander the Great.

Best known as Nezami Ganjavi, Abu Muhammad Ilyas ibn Yusuf was the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature, who brought a colloquial and realistic style to the Persian epic.

London Grosvenor Gallery showcases prints by Parviz Tanavoli

In an interview with Grosvenor Gallery director Charles Moore, Tanavoli elaborated about his print series.

"From the late 60s to early 70s and while I was collecting lion rugs, I went through tribal areas of Fars Province, who were the creators of these rugs" he said.

"It was during this period that I became acquainted with Qashqa'i and Lori weavers, and I noticed they weave their rugs by looking at another rug, and do not use cartoons like city weavers. That is how I decided to make my own rugs through the Qashqa'i and the Lori weavers of Fars," he added.

For the first rug, I gave one of my paintings to a young girl and ask if she can make a rug like that. A month later, the rug was ready and I couldn't believe my eyes, how good the weaver had transformed my painting into a pile rug. Later I gave the same painting to Lori weavers, although the subject was followed well, but in coloring and the weaving the rugs differed," he noted.

"The prints were made in the heating room (the basement of our house). Once I was sure the screen prints were the best models to give to the weavers to make into rugs, I decided to set a print-making studio in the basement of our house and

asked a few of my students to come and help me. I managed to set up a well-organized print shop, and spent most of my time there," he explained.

He said that all the prints were made during the summer of 1974, when Tanavoli and his students did not have to go to school.

In a statement for the exhibition, Shiva Balaghi, a cultural historian specializing in the modern and contemporary art of the West Asia and its diasporas, wrote, "Although Parviz Tanavoli is known as the father of modern Iranian sculpture, over the course of his seven decades as an artist he has created a diverse range of artworks from ceramics to rugs, from painting to prints.

"Through the years, Tanavoli's art has been deeply influenced by his work as a teacher, a researcher and a collector. And it is in his prints from the 1970s that one can clearly see the themes and motifs that would become central to his creative expression."

Tanavoli is among the four artists and art professionals selected by Asia Society this year to be honored with Asia Arts Game Changer Awards.

"White Winged Horse" named most innovative short at Canadian festival

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian director Mahyar Mandegar's movie "White Winged Horse" has won the Senior Youth Jury Award for Most Innovative Short Film at the 23rd Reel to Reel Festival in Vancouver, Canada.

The film, which received the award in the 13 to 18-year-old category, is about a man who has returned to his hometown in a war-torn region in search of his childhood love, who, 20 years earlier, had asked him to become a winged white horse.

The festival focuses on youth film productions and is held annually in Vancouver,

however, the awards ceremony for its 23rd edition was held online this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The jury described "White Winged Horse" as "exceptionally made" and added, "The film is very emotional and it's a wonderful way to characterize isolation."

In a video message addressing the organizers, Mandegar said "Your comments were all so heartwarming."

"It's a great honor and I am really happy to hear this news," he added.

"Kicksled Choir" directed by Torfinn Iversen from Norway received the Junior

Youth Jury Award for the Most Inspirational Short Film, while "Something to Remember" directed by Niki Lindroth von Bahr from Sweden won the Junior Youth Jury Award for Most Innovative Short Film.

"I Still Breathe" by Alfred George Baily from the UK won the Senior Youth Jury Award for Most Inspirational Short Film and "Maestro" by Victor Caire from France received the National Film Board Award for Best Animated Short Film.

"I Still Breathe" is a documentary response to the death of George Floyd and includes a series of deeply emotional



"White Winged Horse" directed by Mahyar Mandegar.

testimonies of young adults regarding their race and their passionate reactions to the brutal killing of George Floyd that shocked the world.

Iran holds Quran exhibition in Uganda

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** - An open-air exhibition of the Holy Quran is currently underway at the culture center of the Embassy of Iran in the Ugandan capital of Kampala.

The exhibition featuring rare beautiful copies of the Quran and books on Islamic sciences is being organized during Ramadan to provide an educational insight into the importance of this holy month and to raise the local people's knowledge of Quranic science and culture.

A variety of French, Chinese and Ugandan translations of Quranic books and religious publications in various fields are also on view at the exhibition.

In addition, a collection of calligraphy works and paintings on the holy Quran are on display at the exhibition.

The center also aims to provide a platform for religious



An organizer (R) talks to visitors at a Quran exhibition underway at the culture center of the Embassy of Iran in Kampala, Uganda.

thinkers, scientists and academics to have access to a collection of books and products on Islamic issues.

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions and the rainy weather in the region, a significant number of academics and cultural personalities visited the exhibition.

Sun Rise, a major Ugandan newspaper, has provided good coverage of the showcase.

The exhibition was visited by several notable groups and individuals such as university students, members of several cultural organizations, religious leaders and academics, including Professor Ochana Francis, the vice-chancellor of Kentim University.

The exhibition also offers educational books for the learning and memorization of the Quran for children.

The youth section of the exhibition was among one of the most visited sections.

"The Decadent Society" dominates Iranian bookstores

CULTURE d e s k **TEHRAN** – American writer Ross Douthat's book "The Decadent Society: How We Became the Victims of Our Own Success" has recently been published in Persian.

Hamidreza Gholamzadeh Natanzi is the translator of the book published by Soroush.

The book is a powerful portrait of how the Western world's wealthy, successful society has passed into an age of gridlock, stalemate, public failure and private despair.

Today the Western world seems to be in crisis. But beneath our social media frenzy and reality television politics, the deeper reality is one of drift, repetition and dead ends. The Decadent Society explains what happens when a rich and powerful society ceases advancing



This combination photo shows American writer Ross Douthat and the front cover of the Persian translation of his book "The Decadent Society".

— how the combination of wealth and technological proficiency with economic stagnation, political stalemates, cultural

exhaustion and demographic decline creates a strange kind of "sustainable decadence," a civilizational languor that could endure for longer than we think.

Ranging from the grounded space shuttles to the Silicon Valley villains, from the blandly recycled film and television — a new Star Wars saga, another Star Trek series, the fifth Terminator sequel — to the escapism the society furiously chasing through drug use and virtual reality, Ross Douthat argues that many of today's discontents and derangements reflect a sense of futility and disappointment — a feeling that the future was not what was promised, that the frontiers have all been closed, and that the paths forward lead only to the grave.

In this environment, we fear

catastrophe, but in a certain way we also pine for it — because the alternative is to accept that we are permanently decadent: aging, comfortable and stuck, cut off from the past and no longer confident in the future, spurning both memory and ambition while we wait for some saving innovation or revelations, growing old unhappily together in the glowing light of tiny screens.

Correcting both optimists who insist that we're just growing richer and happier with every passing year and pessimists who expect collapse any moment, Douthat provides an enlightening diagnosis of the modern condition — how we got here, how long our age of frustration might last, and how, whether in renaissance or catastrophe, our decadence might ultimately end.