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U.S. refusing to lift all sanctions on Iran: report

TEHRAN – The United States still refusing to lift all the sanctions it has imposed on Iran and this refusal may bring Vienna's nuclear talks to a halt, according to Iran's state TV.

The news came amid ongoing nuclear talks between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries in the Austrian capital of Vienna over how to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). During the Vienna talks, Iran has called

on the U.S. to lift all the sanctions it has imposed on Iran after signing the JCPOA. However, Press TV said that the U.S. is not considering removing all the sanctions.

Citing an informed source on Tuesday, Press TV even said that the United States' continued refusal to terminate all the sanctions it has imposed on Iran will definitely bring the Vienna negotiations on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal to a halt.

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Over 140m Kwh of electricity generated from renewable sources in a month

TEHRAN – Iranian renewable power plants generated over 140 million kilowatt-hours (Kwh) of electricity in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- April 20), IRNA reported.

Electricity generation from renewables in the said month led to economizing on the consumption of natural gas by 40 million cubic meters while saving 31 million liters of water and also prevented the emission of 91,000 tons of Green

House Gases (GHG).

Iranian households and small businesses have been welcoming renewable energies over the past few years, so that according to the Energy Ministry data, by the end of the mentioned month over 5,012 wind and solar units with a total capacity of 69,320 kilowatts have been put into operation by consumers all around the country.

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Docudrama "Qassem" on General Soleimani's life story produced

TEHRAN – Iranian director Mehdi Farsi has recently completed a docudrama entitled "Qassem" that provides a deep insight into the life story of Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani, the former chief of Iran's Quds Force.

The film was broadcast on Tuesday from the Mostanad Channel, an IRIB channel dedicated to screening documentary films.

"Qassem" chronicles the life story of General Soleimani from childhood until his assassination in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad in January 2020.

A great part of the production underlines the key role General Soleimani played in the leadership of the resistance axis in Iraq against the ISIS terrorists.

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Inspiring midwives on COVID-19 frontline

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI

Midwives along with the nurses have been on the front line fighting COVID-19, offering essential health services while being at high risk of infection.

International Day of the Midwife is celebrated on May 5 under the theme of "Follow the Data: Invest in Midwives" to advocate for investment in quality midwifery care around the world, improving reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health in the process.

Midwives are able to provide integrated services for all age groups due to the abilities and skills they acquire while studying, and therefore, according to the World Health Organization, they play a very important role in 52 vital indicators in reducing mortality and improving maternal, infants and children health.

18 midwives lost their lives fighting the pandemic

There are 17,567 midwives working in the country's hospitals, 30 percent of whom work in coronavirus hospitals, Qasem Janbabaie, deputy minister of health, has said.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, 3,100 midwives have so far been diagnosed with the disease, and 18 have lost their lives, he regretted.

Services provided by midwives include pregnancy screening, common cancer screening for women, pre-pregnancy care, pregnancy, and postpartum, high-risk maternity care, first-hour breastfeeding, and an active role in establishing child-friendly and mother-friendly hospitals, he stated.

He further highlighted the dedicated role of midwives in the fight against the pandemic, which is so precious, and appreciated their devotion.

From the beginning of the pandemic until March 20, out of a total of 573,285 natural deliveries, about 370,000 natural deliveries were performed by midwives in coronavirus hospitals, and about 15,000 pregnant mothers suspected of infection received services at these hospitals, he said.

The world short of 900,000 midwives

The world is currently facing a shortage of 900,000 midwives, which is one-third of the world's midwifery workforce. The COVID-19 epidemic crisis has exacerbated these problems as the health of mothers and infants has been overshadowed, midwifery services have been disrupted, or midwives have been employed in other areas of health care.

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Why Oshnavieh is heaven for archaeologists?

TEHRAN - Having numerous gardens, Oshnavieh county, which is surrounded by towering mountains in northwest Iran, lies on a thick layer cake of civilizations that emerged and disappeared during millennia. Moreover, the county is known as the cherry capital of the country as well.

Situated in West Azarbaijan province, Oshnavieh boasts some 100 sites registered on the national cultural heritage list. It is also home to archaeological sites and hills, tomb chambers, and bas-relief carvings belonging to the Kingdom of Urartu (860 BC – 590 BC).

The main reason why Oshnavieh is called an archaeologist's paradise is that it was once a prosperous settlement for the Urartu kingdom, whose entombed relics still draw the attention of archaeologists and even illegal excavators to the region.

Over the past couple of years, Oshnavieh

and its surrounding areas have witnessed series of unauthorized, unprecedented drillings and excavations committed by unauthorized diggers and antique dealers, and smugglers.

The Urartu kingdom rose to power in the mid-9th century BC, but it went into a gradual decline and was eventually conquered by the Iranian Medes in the early 6th century BC. The Urartians were succeeded in the area in the 6th century BC by the Armenians.

Urartu, an ancient country of southwest Asia centered in the mountainous region southeast of the Black Sea and southwest of the Caspian Sea. Today the region is divided among Armenia, eastern Turkey, and northwestern Iran. As mentioned in Assyrian sources from the early 13th century BC, Urartu enjoyed considerable political power in the Middle East in the 9th and 8th centuries BC.

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'Over 300 Yemeni journalists killed in 6 years of Saudi-led war'

The Yemeni Media Union says more than 300 journalists and correspondents have lost their lives as a result of the devastating military campaign Saudi Arabia and a number of its allies have been waging against the Arab country since 2015.

The union, in a statement released on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, announced that 337 Yemeni members of the press, including 47 citizen journalists and 290 war correspondents, have been killed in the course of Saudi-led coalition airstrikes on their homes and workplaces within the past six years.

It noted that the Saudi-led coalition has committed 584 violations against Yemeni journalists during the same period, adding that it has deliberately targeted correspondents and media staff over exposing the atrocities, violations and horrific crimes of the Riyadh regime and its allies.

The statement highlighted that Saudi Arabia ranks 170th out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index of the press freedom organization

Reporters without Borders (RSF), stressing that the kingdom is one of the most dangerous regimes in the world that represent a serious threat to the freedom of the press and media.

Moreover, 23 media centers have been destroyed, 30 broadcast towers targeted, eight television channels suspended, broadcast signals of seven television stations jammed and three news sites hacked as a result of the Saudi-led onslaught.

The union added that two official newspapers have also stopped publishing, while 143 Arab and foreign journalists have been banned from reporting. Saudi-backed militants have also looted press institutions such as the main offices of al-Jumhuriya newspaper in Ta'izz city as well as Akhbar al-Yom daily in the southern port city of Aden.

Additionally, hundreds of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts belonging to media organizations, media professionals, and human rights activists have been suspended.

Football federation headquarters handed over to an Iranian company

BY FARROKH HESABI

TEHRAN - Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) and Persepolis football club have lost their main buildings in Tehran due to the FFIR's failure to clear debts related to former national team head coach Marc Wilmots contract.

The Belgian coach was appointed in May 2019 with a three-year contract to lead Iran in their quest for a sixth FIFA World Cup appearance but left

his position just after six matches in charge due to what he called 'serious contractual violations by the Iranian Football Federation.'

In November 2019, the Iran football federation, led by former president Mehdi Taj, decided to borrow €2 million from Iran's Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta), Iran's major state-owned investment company. The federation borrowed the money to pay part of Wilmot's

wage at that time.

In December 2020, the SSIC asked for the money to be taken back. Since the FFIRI was unable to pay the debt, the SSIC took necessary steps to seize the federation's assets, including the building of the federation and the building of the Persepolis club, whose documents are legally in the name of the Iranian football federation.

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Iranian handicrafts: Darayi-Bafi of Yazd

TEHRAN – The history of Yazd, which is known for its atmospheric alleyways, forests wind-catchers, and mud-brick houses, has entwined with the history of its textile industry.

Darayi-Bafi is one of the subcategories of the traditional textile industry of Yazd. Icut is a Malayan word with the meaning of "to tie and dye", but in Farsi, it is called Darayi and is an old technique for painting fabric.

According to Visit Iran, the yarns are dyed before they are woven into fabrics when it comes to Darayi-Bafi.

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Al-Quds sparks the flames of resistance again

BY KHALID AL-QADDUMI

In this piece, I want to address the messages and implications of the Bab al-Amoud uprising and some of the developments in Palestine.

Al-Quds (Jerusalem) once again showed that it is the center of conflict which sparks the flames of resistance to occupation.

This conflict per se reveals resistance identity and ideology as well as its humanistic features.

The braves youth of al-Quds made us feel proud again. The Palestinian youth taught a harsh lesson to the occupying soldiers who use to arrest children and girls.

Yes, it is a matter of political crisis the Zionist regime is facing.

Israel held a national election for the fourth time in two years, hoping to break a seemingly endless cycle of elections and a political deadlock that has left the country without a national budget during a pandemic.

To that end, Netanyahu insults the Palestinians and is going to sue the far-right Zionists in his cabinet as a signal that he will support their efforts to attack Al-Aqsa Mosque.

On this basis, he spares no effort to disrupt the prayers of the Palestinians in the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Israeli occupying regime also supports extremist settlers from terrorist movements such as Lehava, another version of the Kach extremist movement, believing in the desecration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

But the Zionists faced fearless heroes who prevented them from entering the Mosque. The Palestinian youth prevented the Zionist settlers from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque and succeeded in reopening Bab al-Amoud and protecting Al-Aqsa Mosque after entering the Mosque.

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Iranian, Syrian FMs discuss presidential election in Syria

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— In a telephone conversation on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Syrian counterpart Faisal Miqdad discussed issues of mutual interest as well as regional and international issues.



In the telephone conversation, Zarif, while announcing Iran's support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Syrian government, stressed the need to respect the country's constitution and the legitimacy of the Syrian presidential election.

Syria will hold a presidential election on May 26. Miqdad presented a report on the internal situation in Syria, preparations for the presidential elections and the country's relations with its neighbors, and invited Zarif to visit Syria.

Regional issues, including the developments in Iraq and Palestine, as well as the comprehensive fight against terrorism and the condemnation of the Zionist regime's attacks on Syria, Palestine and Lebanon, were among the other topics of dialogue between the two chief diplomat.

Referring to the International Day of Al-Quds, the two sides also reaffirmed their full support for the Palestinian people.

International Quds Day falls on May 7, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan.

Guardian Council mulling new criteria for presidential candidates

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In an attempt to separate out large numbers of people who nominate with very basic or no credentials, Iran's Guardian Council has revised the criteria for individuals intending to run as presidential candidates.

Hadi Tahan Nazif, a legal jurist on the Guardian Council, said that during a Wednesday meeting, all members of the vetting body reached a consensus on addressing the disorder that emerges in the registration of presidential candidates each four years and defining relevant criteria.



He cited the fact that every four years, a significant number of individuals show up at election headquarters, declare their candidacy, and simply register by holding photographs and a copy of their identification cards.

Tahan Nazif stated that the Council agreed to amend an earlier interpretation of the Constitution to clearly identify and announce the requirements used to assess a political and "religious rajol" who is resourceful and has managerial skills.

The Iranian Constitution states that the country's president must be a political and religious rajol, a term borrowed from Arabic that literally translates as "man." Some constitutional scholars argue that the term should not be interpreted literally, and that a woman of high political standing and/or history should not be considered a "political rajol" and therefore be entitled to run for president if she meets the other criteria as well.

Other precise information, according to Tahan Nazif, were also decided upon.

"After much deliberation," he said, "it was determined that presidential candidates be expected to have minimum qualifications in terms of educational degree, job and managerial experience, and minimum and maximum ages."

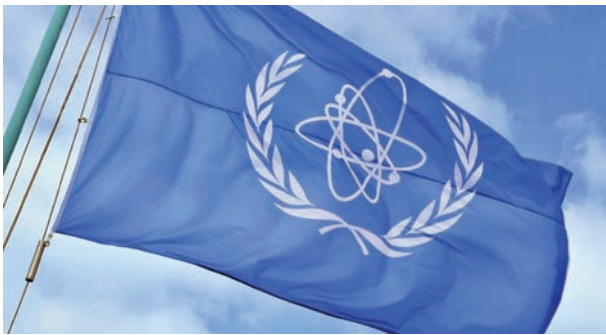
'Top military brass can field candidacy'
The qualifications were announced as follows: all candidates must be between the ages of 40 and 70, hold a master's degree or its equivalent, have at least four years of work experience in management positions (with relevant criteria), and have no criminal record.

Notably, top military officers with the rank of general or higher are permitted to run as well.

The Iranian presidential elections will be held on June 18.

IAEA inspectors to travel to Iran: WSJ

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a tweet on Wednesday, Laurence Norman, the Wall Street Journal's reporter in Brussels, claimed that a team of the International Atomic Energy Agency will visit Iran in the coming days.



"I understand a senior team from @iaeaorg will be back in Tehran in next few days to follow up on safeguards probe of nuclear material. Lots of questions given to Iran about material, where it came from, where it is now etc. Low expectations of clear #Iran answers," Norman tweeted.

This would be the first public visit by the IAEA since Iran announced plan to enrich uranium to 60%.

The visit comes amid negotiations in Vienna to revive the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA).

Tehran strongly protests Belgian court verdict against Iranian diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — After the Belgian Court of Antwerp sentenced Asadollah Asadi, an Iranian diplomat to 20 years of jail, the Iranian Embassy in Belgium released a statement condemning the sentence and questioned the authority of the Belgian court.

The statement released by the Iranian Embassy reads as follows:

"In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful
The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Brussels refers to its previous Press Release dated 4 February 2021 on the verdict of the Court of Antwerp in the case of the Iranian diplomat, and seizes the occasion to state the following regarding the current developments:

As stated in the previous Press Release, the Islamic Republic of Iran has strongly protested the violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) by Germany and Belgium, and deems the actions on the part of the said governments to be a stark contravention of customary international law and established diplomatic practices.

The verdict of the Court of Antwerp of 4 February 2021 indicated that the Belgian judicial system does not heed the binding nature of commitments under the Vienna Convention. The Islamic Republic of Iran has officially rejected the Belgian court's competence in two Note Verbales to Belgium and Germany on the grounds of the court's violation of the immunity of Mr. Asadi's person as a diplomat under the



1961 Convention.

In line with the above notes, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to resort to all legal mechanisms, including the Vienna Convention's optional protocol concerning the compulsory settlement of disputes."

Asadollah Asadi is an Iranian diplomat, who was arrested while returning to his residence in Austria on a highway in the German state of Bavaria on June 10, 2018. He was accused of being involved in an attempted bombing at a gathering

of the so-called National Council of Resistance of Iran (a Mojahedin-e-Khalgh organization branch) in Villepinte, north of Paris.

On February 4, 2021, Asadi was sentenced to 20 years in prison for "attempted murder and involvement in terrorism."

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, had condemned the verdict, stating that "the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the announcement of the Belgian Court of Antwerp to issue a 20-year prison sentence for Asadi"

He had said that Belgium and some European countries are heavily influenced by the MEK.

He had noted that as Iran has stated several times, all stages of Asadi's detention, the judicial process, the issuance of the recent sentence are illegal and in flagrant violation of international law, particularly the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

The international community considers the MEK a terrorist group. Its members joined Iraq's Saddam Hussein in the war against Iran in the 1980.

For decades, the infamous group has carried out various attacks against Iranian civilians and government officials.

Following concerted lobbying by groups affiliated with Saudi Arabia and other regimes hostile to Iran, the U.S. State Department removed the MEK from its list of designated terrorist organizations in 2012

Sanctions are broken, says president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— Speaking to his cabinet on Wednesday, Iranian president Hassan Rouhani said that the sanctions are broken and soon to be lifted.

He also stated that the people are witnessing the result of their resistance in Vienna.

"As the head of the executive branch, I declare in front of the people that the sanctions have been broken, and if we stand together, the sanctions will be lifted soon," Rouhani said, stressing that the other side has no choice but to return to all of its JCPOA commitments.

He also praised Seyed Abbas Araghchi and his negotiating team, saying, "What our negotiators accomplished in Vienna in terms of sanctions was a major accomplishment, and if the other side completely returns to the rule of law, its obligations, and [UN

Security Council] Resolution 2231, I believe things will be resolved soon."

The president affirmed that the talks are proceeding in the right framework and direction.

He clarified that nearly a year before the historic Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed in 2015, Iran and six world powers were on the verge of reaching a nuclear deal, but Israel and some reactionary countries in the region advised the U.S. to hold off for a few months.

According to Rouhani, they told the U.S. that "we would reduce oil prices so that Iran is forced to agree to whatever you say."

And that is how they were able to delay the signing of a deal, he remembered.

He said that they continued to plot against Iran even after the JCPOA was signed, and that one of their plots was successful during the 2016 U.S. election, which saw Donald

Trump ascended to the presidency.

Rouhani was referring to President Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018, when, under heavy lobbying from Israel and Saudi Arabia, he pursued an aggressive policy of sanctions and threats against the Islamic Republic.

"The Zionists worked hard to get Trump elected, and they knew [Trump] was an incompetent person who could be easily duped," he said. "They turned him into a mercenary and abandoned the JCPOA, assuming the deal was done for good."

'Quds Day will be Zionists' mourning day'

Elsewhere in his remarks, President Rouhani called this year's International Quds Day, which falls on May 7, will be a "mourning day for the Zionists."

Quds Day falls on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadam.



"The Zionists are the enemies of the country, stability, the Palestinian people and of their neighbors, and they are the executioners and tyrants of [modern] history, who have displaced millions of people," President Rouhani said.

He said Quds Day, named by the late founder of the Islamic Republic's founder, Imam Khomeini, to champion the Palestinian cause, is a source of pride for the Islamic Republic of Iran and a legacy of the late Imam.

Vienna arena for U.S. to change behavior, says Iranian diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Former Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman and a presidential candidate, Ramin Mehmanparast, spoke with the Lebanese Al Mayadeen News Network on Tuesday stating that the United States administration must change its behavior if they want to reduce animosity with Iran.

Mehmanparast said that the U.S. policies are aimed at putting pressure on Iran, and perhaps the main desire of the United States is that there should never be a powerful country like Iran in the region and in the international arena, and it is the Americans who never provided any circumstances to make good relations with Iran.

Pointing to the Vienna talks, he said that these negotiations are a test for the United States.

"The Vienna talks are a test to see if the U.S. wants to change. If Biden and his government really want to go back to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), if they really want to lift the sanctions, if they want to show that they are taking steps to reduce the enmity with the Iranian people, the JCPOA is an arena for us to see and test them and check whether they are as they claim to be or not," the former Iranian ambassador to Poland said.

He noted that Iran does not look pessimistically nor optimistically toward the nuclear deal talks, but Iran merely analyzes the United States' behavior.

He elaborated by saying, "Now they claim that they want to lift the sanctions, and we are looking to see if they actually lift the sanctions in practice, and we see that they do not create obstacles on the way. But if they act badly and create obstacles in the nuclear deal, surely the judgment of our people is that it is not possible to cooperate with this United States who seeks to create obstacles and puts more pressure on our people."

'Iran needs to make relations with Eastern countries'

Responding to a question about the Islamic Republic's relations with Eastern countries, Mehmanparast said there is a wrong ideology among some political pundits that if Iran reaches an agreement with Western countries, it will no longer need Eastern countries like China, Russia, India, Korea, or Japan.

"In foreign policy, we seek to maximize national interests by having the best relations with countries, one part will be the lifting of sanctions and the other part will be extensive relations with neighbors, which will certainly have its own priority. We are neighbors with 15 countries through land and water borders," former spokesman said.

He highlighted the importance of establishing economic



diplomacy with neighbors, saying that there is a market of five hundred million people around Iran and the Islamic Republic must pay attention to these markets and meet their needs to help domestic production.

'Iran seeks best relations with neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia'

Regarding relations with Saudi Arabia, Mehmanparast told Al Mayadeen that Iran has always sought the best relations with its neighbors and that "we give a particular importance to Saudi Arabia."

He noted that Iran believes that the powerful countries of the region should stand together and work together to ensure the stability, security and development of the region.

"We consider the security of our neighbors as our own security, because if there is insecurity, this insecurity will return to our country. Unfortunately, over the years, there have been issues where we feel that the policy of the Saudi government is not in the direction of pursuing a good and ideal relationship with Iran," the former diplomat remarked.

He said that Iran welcomes Saudi Arabia's cooperation, if they want to cooperate.

"Even now, if the circumstances have been created in Saudi Arabia and they really want to cooperate well, we will definitely welcome it."

The diplomat stated that the reason for the Saudi's change of policy can consist of various factors, one of which could be a change of government in the United States.

Elaborating on that, he pointed to the behavioral differences between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, saying, "The fact that they feel that someone like Trump, who was an extremist and sought "maximum pressure" on Iran and the countries of the region as sources of income is gone. Biden has come and wants to change the politics of his region."

The former ambassador noted that another reason for this change of tone could be the result of the behaviors and policies that Saudi Arabia has pursued over the past few

Report: Zarif to travel to UAE



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Doha-based Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed news website quoted Iranian sources as saying that Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will soon travel to the United Arab Emirates.

The sources stressed that the trip is almost certain and is on the agenda of the Iranian foreign minister and will most likely take place late next week.

According to these sources, negotiations

between the two countries to resume and strengthen relations and reduce tensions in the region have begun long ago and the UAE is set to send its ambassador to Tehran in the next step.

The UAE cut ties with Iran five years ago, when the Iran-Saudi dispute nosedived as protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran over the execution of Shia cleric. The storming drew strong response from officials in Tehran. These developments are taking place at a

time when there are signs of efforts by Iran and Saudi Arabia to reduce tensions in the region.

Some countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have repeatedly stressed the need to participate in negotiations to return to a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, but now, despite progress in the nuclear talks in Vienna, such an issue is not raised by these countries.

Last week, the Iranian foreign minister visited four countries in the region including Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman.

Saudi Arabia sets the stage for tactical outreach to Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – In a dramatic turnabout, Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler has called for better ties with Iran but is this renewed interest in mending ties between Tehran and Riyadh genuine or a tactical shift necessitated by developments in the international arena?

Iranian analysts and news media outlets have attempted to provide answers to this question over the past few weeks after a wave of speculations began in the wake of the emergence of several press reports in Western media suggesting that officials from Iran and Saudi Arabia held a direct meeting in Baghdad for the first time in years.

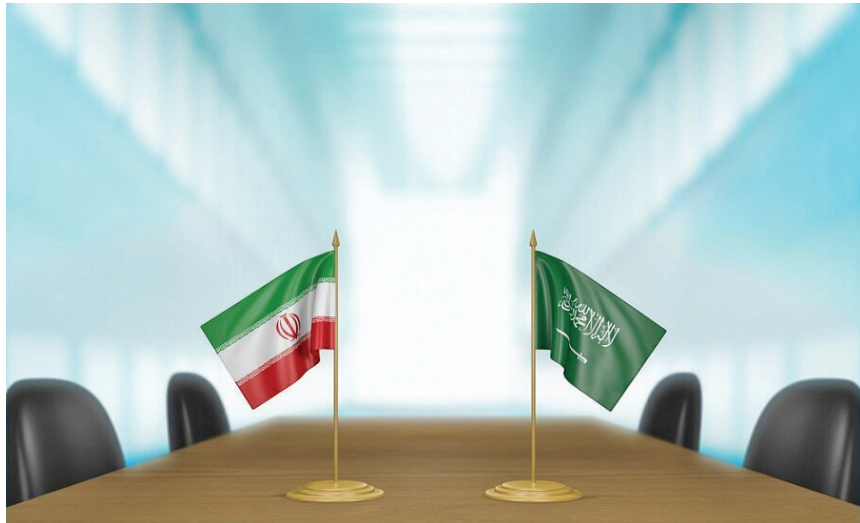
At the official level, the Baghdad talks were neither repudiated nor confirmed by Iran and Saudi Arabia, though some Iranian officials hinted that the reports of talks were true.

While the controversy over the Baghdad talks was still going on, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman further inflamed the debate by offering an olive branch to Iran after more than five years of tough rhetoric against the country.

"At the end of the day, Iran is a neighboring country. All we ask for is to have a good and distinguished relationship with Iran. We do not want the situation with Iran to be difficult. On the contrary, we want it to prosper and grow as we have Saudi interests in Iran, and they have Iranian interests in Saudi Arabia, which is to drive prosperity and growth in the region and the entire world," the Saudi crown prince said in a recent televised interview.

He also hoped that his country would be able to overcome some challenges affecting Iranian-Saudi relations and "build a good and positive relationship" with Iran.

Iran welcomed the Saudi change of tone without any hesitation. "The Islamic Republic



of Iran has been a pioneer in the path of amity and regional cooperation, and welcomes the change in Saudi Arabia's tone," Saeed Khatibzadeh, a spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said in a statement.

However, there are some concerns in Iran that this change is only another effort by bin Salman to use tactical de-escalation with Iran to weather the storm at least for now.

Saudi Arabia is increasingly coming under pressure from political circles in Washington since Joe Biden took office this past January. The pressure was particularly tangible in Yemen where the Saudi crown prince, also known as MBS, has been entangled in an endless war to eradicate what he calls Iran's influence there. The Biden administration has ended offensive military support for Saudi Arabia in the Yemen war, although the White House at the same time sought to help the Saudis to find a face-saving exit from the Yemen quagmire.

In addition, the Biden administration's stated policy of returning to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal has put Riyadh in a bind as the Saudis had thrown their weight behind Trump's campaign to kill the nuclear deal.

In order to cope with these challenges, bin Salman embarked on a new policy of toning down tough rhetoric against a number of neighbors; he started off with Qatar and then Iran and ultimately his new approach even included a scarcely veiled rapprochement with Yemen's Ansarallah, the very same group he has been fighting since 2015.

The new Saudi openness to dialogue with Iran is in part grounded in the belief that resolving some of Saudi Arabia's problems is contingent on better ties with Iran, not a genuine reconsideration that co-existence between Iran and Saudi Arabia is the only viable solution serving the interests of both countries.

During the Baghdad talks, the Saudi side

presented a list of offers and temptations, according to Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar.

Citing sources familiar with the matter, the newspaper said that at the talks the Saudis basically demanded an end to the missiles and drones launched by Ansarallah against Saudi targets, further reinforcing the belief that the talks were a necessity for bin Salman.

The Saudis also voiced readiness to accept a larger role by Ansarallah in Yemen. Furthermore, the Saudi delegation assured the Iranians that Riyadh does not want to normalize its relations with Israel, and is willing to open a new chapter in relations with Tehran, according to Al-Akhbar.

The Lebanese newspaper also said that the Saudi delegation let its Iranian team know that the Americans seek to reign in MBS even as they believe that he will rule Saudi Arabia for a long time.

Therefore, bin Salman seems to have found out that he has no other option but to reach an understanding with Tehran in light of his conviction that Tehran alone has the keys to get him out of his problems.

Bin Salman is busy setting the stage for this tactical shift. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan has paid a visit to Qatar and Oman shortly after his Iranian counterpart visited the two Arab states. Moreover, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud invited Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to visit Saudi Arabia.

The Saudis seek to create a unified front among Arab states on dialogue with Iran, according to The Arab Weekly.

Citing observers, the publication said formulating a unified Persian Gulf position on the dialogue with Iran may be the immediate and pressing objective of Saudi Arabia, with the aim of creating a momentum for the improvement of the dialogue's conditions.

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U.S. refusing to lift all sanctions on Iran: report

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The news came amid ongoing nuclear talks between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries in the Austrian capital of Vienna over how to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). During the Vienna talks, Iran has called on the U.S. to lift all the sanctions it has imposed on Iran after signing the JCPOA. However, Press TV said that the U.S. is not considering removing all the sanctions.

Citing an informed source on Tuesday, Press TV even said that the United States' continued refusal to terminate all the sanctions it has imposed on Iran will definitely bring the Vienna negotiations on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal to a halt.

The source said Iran is still emphasizing the full implementation of the deal's Article 29 and the termination of all the sanctions related to the nuclear deal and those re-imposed or relabeled during the term of ex-U.S. President Donald Trump.

"America's insistence on not terminating these sanctions will lead to a definitive halt in the negotiations" underway in Vienna, Austria, on revitalizing the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the source said.

According to the source, as the Iranian negotiating team has repeatedly announced during the Vienna talks, all the sanctions that were imposed on the Islamic Republic under any title after the JCPOA took effect – whether during the term of Trump or that of his predecessor Barack

Obama – should be removed and all the JCPOA articles should be precisely implemented.

The so-called Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) as well as visa and U-turn regulations are all in violation of Article 29 of the deal, the source said.

The source said the U.S. must lift all the obstacles in the way of normalizing Iran's trade ties with world countries in accordance with Article 29 of the JCPOA.

According to Press TV, the United States has not so far accepted to make the reforms needed to reduce the risks posed to economic and banking cooperation with Iran.

Iran believes that the U.S. refusal to remove the sanctions re-imposed under new labels on Iranian individuals and institutions on the U.S. Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) List is tantamount to circumventing the removal of the sanctions by the U.S., which will be rejected by Tehran, the source said.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has responded to the Press TV report, saying the Vienna talks would have been stopped had the U.S. insisted on keeping all the sanctions on Iran in place.

"If the United States had insisted on maintaining crippling sanctions against Iran, the talks would certainly have stalled by now," the spokesman said.

Nuclear negotiators from Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal held another meeting earlier this week and even made progress.

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.

"It was decided that after this meeting, the delegations would return to the capitals and that the talks would resume next Friday," the statement continued. "The parties agree that in the next round of talks, work should continue more quickly and seriously."

Last week, negotiators at Vienna talks announced the establishment of another expert group in addition to the existing ones. So far, the Vienna talks have resulted in the establishment of three expert-level working groups, one to identify the sanctions that the U.S. should remove in order to return to the JCPOA, and another to specify the nuclear activities that Iran should reverse. The third group was set up recently and is called "Expert Group on Practical Arrangements," which is formed with the aim of holding talks on the practical arrangements required for the removal of sanctions and then the U.S. return to the JCPOA.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran's chief negotiator for the nuclear deal talks, had said that these groups held bilateral and multilateral meetings to announce positions and study draft texts.

On Monday, Khatibzadeh said the two sides have drafted two texts about sanctions removal and the nuclear issue and they are ironing out the disputes. He also underlined again that all the U.S. sanctions on Iran should be lifted.

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Monday, the spokesman said, "We believe that all the sanctions that Trump has imposed on Iran are related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and all of them aimed at destroying the JCPOA and preventing Iran from benefiting from the deal."

Prisoner swap not part of Vienna talks, Russia says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Exchanging prisoners between Iran and the United States is not on the agenda of the Vienna nuclear deal talks between Tehran and the P4+1 group of countries, a senior Russian diplomat has said.

The comments came against the backdrop of speculations over a potential exchange of prisoners between Iran and the United States amid nuclear deal talks in Vienna.

Earlier on Sunday, the Beirut-based Al-Mayadeen news television reported that the U.S. agreed to release four Iranian nationals accused of bypassing sanctions and unblock \$7 billion of Iranian assets in the U.S. in exchange for Iran releasing four American citizens detained in Iran on charges of conducting espionage for the U.S.

The Biden administration wanted to avoid paying any sums of frozen Iranian money during the negotiations but the Iranian side insisted on the necessity of releasing part of the Iranian funds, according to Al-Mayadeen.

Al-Mayadeen also reported that similar security negotiations between the Iranian and British sides were underway with the British side discussing with Iran the release of 400 million pounds of frozen Iranian funds in the UK.

But Mikhail Ulyanov, who serves as the Russian envoy to the nuclear deal talks, said the issue of detainees was not on the table in the Vienna talks.

"American or Iranian detainees are not

a part of the Vienna talks," Ulyanov said on Twitter.

He was commenting on a commentary by a former American official who anticipated "some kind of unacknowledged deal" to pay Iran for the release of American prisoners alongside the return to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iranian and American officials both denied the reports of a prisoner swap. Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi said the news of the swap is not confirmed by Iran. But at the same time he underlined a comprehensive exchange of prisoners between the two countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly presented the issue of the exchange of prisoners, but the American side has rejected it under baseless excuses, according to Takht Ravanchi.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, also repudiated the Al-Mayadeen report, saying while the issue of prisoners has always been on Iran's agenda, the Sunday evening report by Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Mayadeen news network is untrue.

Khatibzadeh said the issue of prisoners is a humanitarian one and has not been pursued through nuclear talks aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive

Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Khatibzadeh said, "The issue of prisoners has been a humanitarian issue which has always been on the agenda of the Islamic Republic of Iran and has been pursued through other conversations and [diplomatic] channels separately from the JCPOA or related issues."

Khatibzadeh also denied reports that Tehran and London had been in talks over the release of Nazanin Zaghari, an Iranian-British national who was found guilty of propaganda activities against the Iranian government last month and sentenced to one year in prison, according to Press TV.

"There are no legal talks between us and Britain on this. The Judiciary must comment on the case," the spokesman said, adding, "What is being discussed is about issues related to relations between the two countries. Of course, the British government has presented its views to us on various issues, and we have given back very clear answers."

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price also denied the report on Sunday. "As we have said, we always raise the cases of Americans detained or missing in Iran. We will not stop until we are able to reunite them with their families," he said.

White House chief of staff Ron Klain similarly said the report was untrue, adding there was no agreement to release the four Americans.

"We're working very hard to get them



released," Klain told CBS's Face the Nation. "We raise this with Iran and our interlocutors all the time, but so far there's no agreement."

Diplomats from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries have been in Vienna since April to negotiate possible U.S. return to the JCPOA as well as the lifting of the U.S. sanctions on Tehran. So far, at least three rounds of talks have been held between the two sides, with the European signatories to the JCPOA shuttling between Iranian and American negotiating teams, who are conducting talks from separate hotels.

Meanwhile, three expert working groups have been established to study a range of issues such as sanctions lifting, reversal of Iran's nuclear measures, and practical arrangements needed by the U.S. to lift the sanctions. Almost all sides have said the talks are making progress, though so far there has been no immediate diplomatic breakthrough.

SPORTS

Football federation headquarters handed over to an Iranian company

→1 The FFIRI initially denied the sequestration of its main estate in the northern region of Tehran at that time.

However, on Tuesday, Iranian media reported that the ownership documents of the FFIR's building and half of the Persepolis club's building have legally been transferred to the name of the SSIC company.

The federation's newly-elected directors have confirmed the issue on Wednesday. They criticized SSIC officials for seizing the FFIR's assets for a debt that the former officials of the federation originally arouse.

Ebrahim Shakouri, executive director of Persepolis, also objected to the issue in a press conference.

"We have serious questions to ask from the FFIRI and Shasta in this regard. But what is certain is that we defend the rights of the Persepolis club and their millions of fans. The building legally belongs to Persepolis club, and we have not yet received any letter or order regarding the change of ownership of the club's building," Shakouri said.

"The debt of the football federation to Shasta Company has nothing to do with Persepolis club, and we should not suffer any loss in this matter," he added.

Hadadi likely to miss Olympics due to back injury

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi will likely miss the 2020 Olympic Games due to the spinal injury.

The athlete currently hold camp in the U.S. to prepare for the prestigious event but has suffered a spinal injury and will likely not be ready for the Games.

Iran Athletic Federation doctor Ashkan Ordibehesht has confirmed the news.

According to him, MRI has shown Hadadi's disc degeneration. Hadadi, a six-times Asian Championship winner and Asian discus record holder, is among the favorites to win gold at this year's Tokyo Games.

When Hadadi won his Olympic silver medal, it was the first time an Iranian had stood on the podium at the Games in any sport other than wrestling, weightlifting or taekwondo.

Azmoun, Taremi shortlisted for AFC International Player of the Week

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian forwards Sardar Azmoun and Mehdi Taremi have stolen the show for their clubs in the current week.

The Asia's superstars showed the rest of the world precisely what they are capable of.

The-afc.com has introduced the nominees based on their performances from April 29 to May 4.

Sardar Azmoun (Zenit, Iran)
73 minutes, 3 goals, 1 assist, 3 shot assists (3-2 v Lokomotiv Moscow)

How to win a league title in style. A hat-trick and Player of the Match honors against the second-best team in the league left Russian football fans in no doubt as to who the star man at Zenit is.

The Iranian striker is now a three-time Russian Premier League winner and, with 19 goals in 23 matches this campaign, looks set to retain the golden boot title he shared with Artem Dzyuba last season.

Mehdi Taremi (FC Porto, Iran)
84 minutes, 1 goal, 1 assist, 3 shot assists (3-2 v Famalicão)

Last week's AFC International Player of the Week winner with 47.6 percent of the votes, Taremi continued his remarkable purple patch, brilliantly setting up an early goal for Toni Martinez before rifling home a penalty kick at the hour mark.

The goal was Taremi's fifth in 20 days, taking his tally to 20 in all competitions this season.

The Iranian due will compete with Son Heung-min (Tottenham Hotspur, Korea Republic), Ji So-yun (Chelsea, Korea Republic), Eldor Shomurodov (Genoa CFC, Uzbekistan), Saki Kumagai (Olympique Lyonnais, Japan), Keisuke Honda (Nefçi PFK, Japan), Brad Smith (Seattle Sounders, Australia), Junya Ito (KRC Genk, Japan) and Koji Miyoshi (Royal Antwerp, Japan) to win the accolade.

Iran football team to travel to Bahrain on May 31

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran national football team will travel to Manama, Bahrain on May 31 to play their four matches at Group C of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

The 'Persian Leopards' will hold a four-day training camp in Kish Island from May 27 to 30 and travel to Manama a day later.

The competition will be held in centralized venue in Bahrain. Iran are third in their group of five, but have a game in hand over their opponents.

They sit on six points from four matches, having won 14-0 at home to Cambodia and 2-0 away to Hong Kong.

Iraq are top on 11 points, with Bahrain second on nine after five matches.

Fixtures:
June 3: Iran v Hong Kong
June 7: Iran v Bahrain
June 11: Iran v Cambodia
June 15: Iran v Iraq

Takhti Cup relocates from Chabahar to Tehran

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – The 41st edition of Takhti Cup has been moved from Chabahar, located in Sistan-Baluchestan Province, to Iran capital Tehran.

The prestigious wrestling tournament was originally scheduled to be held in the southeastern Iranian port from May 17 to 21.

The international event has brought the top wrestlers around the world to Iran over the past years.

Takhti, who was found dead in a hotel room in January 1968 at the age of just 37, claimed the gold medal in Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games and won two silver medals in Helsinki 1952 and Rome 1960 Olympic Games.

Urban Development Ministry provides land for 81,000 national housing units

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry has provided Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution with land for the construction of 81,000 housing units under the framework of the National Housing Action Plan.

According to Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami, the Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution is going to construct 100,000 housing unit under the mentioned plan of which so far, the land for 81,000 units has been provided.

The official noted that so far 56,000 applicants have registered with the foundation to receive the mentioned housing units.

The National Housing Action Plan aims to construct 400,000 small and medium-size apartments (70-100 square meters in size) across the country and particularly in Tehran, where housing prices have risen most sharply.

Nearly half of the total number of the said houses will be constructed in Tehran's suburban "new towns" such as Parand and Pardis, respectively located in the west and east of the city.



Back in March Eslami had announced that 510,000 residential units will be provided for the applicants under the framework of the National Housing Action Plan during the coming months.

Earlier that month, Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister for Housing and Construction Affairs Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh had said that the construction costs for the National Housing Action Plan are set based on the current year's construction material price list and haven't changed.

Mahmoudzadeh made the remarks in response to some rumors about the rise in the prices of such housing units as a result of the increase in construction costs.

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati and the transport minister held a meeting in early-March to discuss ways of financing the mentioned plan in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

In the meeting, which was also attended by the managing directors of some of the country's banks as well as the representatives of the Transport Ministry, Hemmati called on banks to participate in this plan and to provide housing facilities for improving the housing market.

The CBI governor emphasized his bank's strong support for the implementation of the government's housing-related plans and asked the bank directors to participate in such programs.

"It is essential that banks participate in housing-related programs as much as they can," he stressed.

'Directives by Govt. Economic Coordination Headquarters could balance stock market'

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The vice-chairman of the monetary and capital committee of Tehran Chamber of Commerce has said that the directives issued by the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters can bring calmness and balance to the country's stock market.

Back in early April, the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters, in its 216th meeting, approved some new directives for regulating the stock market which has been witnessing unprecedented fluctuations over the past few months.

Underlining the significance of the mentioned directives, Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), said: "This [approving the new regulations] shows the support of the government's three branches for the stock market and can calm the market and the shareholders and help restore its balance."

Following the meeting of the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters, last week Dehqan Dehnavi unveiled the government's new directive package dubbed "7+3". This package includes 10 new directives of which, according to the official, three are already being implemented and the rest will be implemented soon.

The new directives include allocation of one percent of the National Development Fund (NDF) resources to the stock market stabilization fund, lifting the ban on capital market financial institutions to use banking facilities, and granting five-year residency to foreign investors who buy shares in the Iranian capital market.

The above-mentioned directives have been implemented in the capital market as of April 27th, according to Dehqan Dehnavi.

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

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

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

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

Over 140m Kwh of electricity generated from renewable sources in a month

→ 1 The capacity of Iran's renewable power plants currently exceeds 920 megawatts (MW) of which solar power plants with 452.75 MW have the biggest share.

Wind power plants with 317 MW of energy production stand in second place, followed by small hydropower plants with a generation of 105.65 MW.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for about seven percent of the country's total energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next four years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

According to Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), the number of small-scale solar power plants across the country which are used by households or small industries is increasing noticeably as Iranian households and small industries are embracing the new



technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

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

According to the Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a significant role in developing the region's market for such energies.

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

Back in December 2020, SATBA Head Mohammad Satakin said the capacity of the country's renewable power plants was going to reach 1,000 MW (one gigawatt) by the end of the current government's incumbency (August 2021).

Monthly transit of goods via Shahid Rajaei port up 160% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Transit of goods through Shahid Rajaei port, Iran's largest and best-equipped container port, increased 160 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 20,231 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of commodities were transited via Shahid Rajaei port in the said 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 under-

standing (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.

'Production support, elimination of obstacles seriously pursued in South Pars'

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing Iran's giant South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf), said that realization of the motto of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20), which is "Production: Support and Elimination of Obstacles", is seriously followed up in South Pars for the stable supply of gas from the field.

Emphasizing the slogan of this year, Mohammad Meshkinfam said, "Like the previous years, we will try to produce the most possible gas from South Pars and materialize stable gas supply this year".

He said that the production support and removal of obstacles is a requirement for safe and sustainable gas production in South Pars, adding that to continue safe



and sustainable production, the production sector must be seriously supported and the obstacles to production must be removed.

Meshkinfam stated that important measures have been taken to remove obstacles and support safe and maximum gas production in South Pars, adding, "Since the beginning of this year, the necessary plans and proposals in this regard have been

announced to the Oil Ministry, and these cases are being considered."

He referred to the continuous meetings with the production and operation directors of the company and said in the weekly meetings, the bottlenecks and problems facing the production operations are announced and in accordance with these problems, planning and action are taken to solve them.

The POGC managing director has recently said that the production goals set by the Oil Ministry for the giant gas field in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) have been completely realized.

He said that the South Pars gas field's output even exceeded the ministry's production targets by 15 million cubic meters per day during the previous year's winter period.

"Fortunately, with the efforts of our

colleagues in the operations and support department, about 15 million cubic meters per day of gas was produced in excess of the target output approved by the Oil Ministry during the last winter," the official said on the sidelines of a meeting with the managers of POGC's operations and support department.

The huge South Pars field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

27,000 tractors handed over to farmers in a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran's Agricultural Mechanization Development Center said 27,000 tractors were handed over to the country's farmers in the previous Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20), IRNA reported.

According to Kambiz Abbasi, the number of new tractors added to the country's agricultural sector last year increased by 50 percent compared to the preceding year.

Based on the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), every year 22,000-24,000 tractors are planned to be handed over to farmers all over the country, the official said.

"However, the demand for such machinery has increased due to the shift in the farmer's approach and the Agriculture Ministry policies," Abbasi explained.

Back in April, Abbasi said that some 30 trillion rials (over \$714.2 million) has been allocated for mechanization of the country's agricultural sectors in the current Iranian calendar year.

Abbasi noted that the mentioned funding will be used to supply about 30,000 tractors, 800 combine harvesters, and about 50,000 different agricultural machines and equipment used in various sectors like horticulture, livestock, poultry, and aquaculture to the country's farmers.



The mentioned funds will be injected into the ninth credit line that has been opened so far for the development of the country's agricultural mechanization.

The official further noted that the Agricultural Mechanization Development Center plans to increase the country's agricultural mechanization coefficient to 2.3 horsepower per hectare in the current year.

Iran's agricultural mechanization coefficient has currently reached 1.65 horsepower per hectare.

"Our ultimate goal is to inject enough machines

TEDPIX gains 5,200 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 5,203 points to 1.172 million on Wednesday.

Over 4.262 billion securities worth 31.327 trillion rials (about \$745.8 million) were traded at the TSE (Iran's major stock exchange) on Wednesday.

The first market's index rose 6,193 points,

and the second market's index climbed 2,302 points.

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

"The demand side is now waiting for the internal and international political condition

to become clear, and investors will invest in the stock market again as soon as the horizons are clear," Amir-Aqaei has told IRNA.

According to Amir-Baqeri, traders came to the conclusion that it is likely that a stagnant atmosphere will prevail in the country's physical markets in the short run, and consequently the capital market has been affected by this issue.



Al-Quds sparks the flames of resistance again

➔ **1** Apart from their deep belief in the justice of their cause and divine help, another reason for the success of the brave Palestinian youth was the help of their brothers in the occupied territories, who are called the 1948 Palestinians. (Seventy years ago, during the 1948 war, the Zionists occupied 77 percent of Palestine, destroyed at least 413 Palestinian villages and towns displaced around 800,000 Palestinians such that only 156,000 remained in the 1948 occupied territories.)

Meanwhile, the resistance forces in Gaza also fired rockets at the criminal Zionists, forcing them to run down into shelters.

Al-Quds has always been an inspiring source for the resistance and inspiration to the revolutionaries and fighters in the historic land of Palestine.

Imam Khomeini realized the importance of Quds even before the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. On this basis, this cause became the compass for the resistance movement and those of his later followers.

Realizing the importance of Holy Quds, Imam Khomeini declared the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan each year as Quds Day, in which Muslims worldwide would unite in solidarity against Israel and support of the Palestinians.

We have always emphasized and reiterated that the cause of Quds is honorable and humiliating at the same time. This means that whoever accompanies and supports al-Quds will be honored and exalted, and whoever is in the line of al-Quds enemies will face embarrassment.

In a report published A few days ago, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Israel of pursuing policies of apartheid and persecution against Palestinians.

The report drew on years of human rights documentation, analysis of Israeli laws, a review of government planning documents and statements by officials.

Although the Zionist regime is described as racist, a White House spokesman dismissed the report, which is further evidence of the continuation of the U.S. policy in favor of the Zionist regime.

To summarize the implications and direct messages of the recent developments in Jerusalem, we must mention the followings:

1) The Zionist enemy continues its racist and terrorist policies and methods. Despite the power shift in the United States, the occupier regime has not changed its behavior and has intensified



terror acts and violence in Palestine and even in the region.

The new U.S. administration did not reverse any of the Trump administration's measures in West Asia; neither renounced the recognition of Jerusalem as the unified capital of the Zionist regime nor returned its embassy to Tel Aviv.

The new administration in the U.S. did not correct any of the wrongdoings of the previous administration and called the brave Palestinian youth in Jerusalem extremists. This is the real face of America with a constant bias towards the Zionist regime neglecting Palestinians demands and rights.

2) The current political crisis of the Zionist regime has been reflected in the behavior of the leaders of this regime.

To escape their domestic crisis, the Zionist authorities stir up the feelings of the extremists, and we saw that the extremist Jews living in the ancient city of Jerusalem were rudely expressing their views about the Palestinians in the media, saying, "Their villages must be set on fire." "And death to the Arabs."

But moderate Jews have also commented, saying, "You Palestinians should leave here, and we should settle down."

These cases clearly show the way of thinking and the aggressive nature of the Zionists,

That is contrary to the opinion of the Arab states that have normalized their relations with this regime, believing in a two-state solution and peaceful coexistence.

I do not know what kind of coexistence they are talking about; what kind of peaceful coexistence can be had with these instinctive criminals. They want to kill and burn the Palestinians so that they can settle down in the occupied territories.

In short, today, we are facing a very violent and wild Zionist society whose leaders are provoking extremist emotions. Perhaps this is the best sign and a direct and practical referendum on the type of solution because, according to the Zionists, this conflict cannot be resolved except on the lifeless body of the other side.

3) Based on what has been said, it is evident that we are facing the continuation of the Zionist-American aggression on the Palestinians, and the appropriate response is that we stick more and more to the rights of the heroic nation of Palestine.

That is why the brave people of Jerusalem rose to show their commitment and courage.

Now, given that we are preparing for the Palestinian elections, the brave Palestinian youth of Jerusalem insist on their inalienable right and declared that, like all Palestinians, they are no exception to these elections and will not allow the Zionist enemy to meddle in this regard.

4) History and our experience have shown that our unity as Palestinians was the only way to thwart all Zionist-American conspiracies against Palestine, as we saw how our unity frustrates Trump's plan for the so-called Deal of the Century.

So we have no choice but to stick to this

unity; otherwise, our destiny and future will be doomed to failure.

5) The final point is that the waves of this uprising are spreading to the West Bank, Gaza, and northern Palestine, especially the 28th of the holy Ramadan, the day after the Laylat al-Qadr (nights of destiny), will be a challenging day.

In the Hebrew calendar, this night coincides with the day of the gathering of Jewish extremists to enter Al-Aqsa Mosque by force.

As for the elections, I have to say that this is a Palestinian issue and must be managed collectively, and it should not be determined by one party or one person.

Hence, what the people of Jerusalem did was a direct referendum and a strong emphasis on the inalienable right to express their Palestinian identity, and no one can deprive them of this right. At the same time, there is no reason to postpone this election.

In this regard, we have informed the Arab-regional players and international parties about the way of voting in Jerusalem and updated them on the experienced proposals.

We must not allow the Zionist regime to interfere in our affairs, and it is the Palestinians who choose their own destiny.

There is no room to decide unilaterally. We should not pave the way for a power vacuum with these delays, especially if we agree that the source of legitimacy of each party, organization or leader, is people. Therefore, we do not need to create a power vacuum, which will disrupt national development and, consequently, prolong the crisis at the national level.

Given what has been said, the international community today has a responsibility to help the Palestinian people continue the experience of democracy. It should also end the expansionist Zionist occupation and crimes against the Palestinian people and its sanctuaries because Al-Aqsa Mosque belongs to the Muslim world, and even UNESCO itself has approved that this Mosque has no connection with the Jews.

In our view, Jerusalem means Nablus, Gaza, and Nazareth, and in other words, the whole of Palestine is a single and indivisible body. It is the inalienable right of all Palestinian citizens to decide their destiny, and no one else has the right to determine this destiny.

(Khaled al-Qaddoumi is the Hamas representative in Tehran. He wrote this article for the Tehran Times.)

Afghanistan a failure of goals to the U.S.: ex-White House adviser

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — An American academic and former advisor to the White House on Russian affairs says that Afghanistan has been a failure case to the U.S. policies.

"I see Afghanistan as a failure of goals. It was unrealistic to seek to build a stable democratic Afghanistan," John Colarusso tells the Tehran Times.

"This is a society in which tribal councils and elders have long asserted significant control."

After nearly 20 years, more than 2,300 U.S. troops dead, more than 20,000 wounded, hundreds of thousands of Afghans maimed or killed and \$2 trillion spent, U.S. President Joe Biden has decided the United States has seen enough of the war in Afghanistan.

U.S. officials say that all American and allied forces plan to withdraw from Afghanistan by September 11, the fateful date which led to the American invasion almost two decades ago. Biden's decision came as a result of nearly three months of White House analysis.

However, many political pundits rule out U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan put an end to America's endless wars.

"I do not think that American military action in various areas will cease. It might be diminished, but it will likely be re-applied in existing or new areas where American interests are threatened," Colarusso notes.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you assess Vienna talks?

That these talks are happening is itself important, whether one is optimistic or pessimistic about them.

Clearly, initial positions are hardline. But, there must be giving away from such initial posturing on both sides for the talks to proceed.

From the mixed reactions to the recently leaked tape of Foreign Minister Zarif, it is clear that factions within Iran do not want the talks to bear fruit. Similar factions exist outside Iran, both in the original five signatory nations as well as in Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Such outside parties have concerns that must be acknowl-



edged and ultimately addressed, but they are ancillary to the central concerns of these negotiations.

Leaking of tapes, attacks on Natanz - all of these are efforts to sabotage the talks.

But the talks have the crucial goal of limiting Iran's development of fissile uranium. Nuclear weapons are politically ambiguous: they may give a semblance of invincibility to the government possessing them, but they also make that same government into a target.

This is a dark fact that aspiring nuclear powers seem not to grasp.

How do you see Biden's first 100-day? Is there any significant change?

President Biden has brought competence and functionality back to Washington. The pandemic is being curtailed, and its economic effects have been blunted. There is guarded optimism in the air of Washington. It is a good time for Iran to seek contact with the U.S.

Do you think that China will be the greatest challenge to U.S. security, or the issue has been politicized?

Both. China clearly seeks to convert its wealth into political dominance in Asia. I see one serious problem: by establishing bases in the South China Sea, Beijing has

destabilized a crucial trade route that it needs for its economy. Creating railways and roads will hardly compensate for this blunder. Have China's actions been politicized? Yes, to some extent, but the recent meeting in Anchorage suggests that China bears a great deal of responsibility for her image in the world's press.

Do you think Biden can end the endless wars? Is Afghanistan the first step?

No, I do not think that American military action in various areas will cease. It might be diminished, but it will likely be re-applied in existing or new areas where American interests are threatened.

Withdrawal from Afghanistan must be seen as an experiment. If the Taliban or al-Qaeda renew their actions in Afghanistan or elsewhere, the U.S. is likely to respond militarily once more.

I see Afghanistan as a failure of goals. It was unrealistic to seek to build a stable democratic Afghanistan. This is a society in which tribal councils and elders have long asserted significant control. Any effort to stabilize Afghanistan had to employ this base of social control and stability, for which conventional elections seem ill-suited.

Don't you think that the U.S. needs close collaboration with its rivals (China, Russia, and Iran) to fight against terror instead of fruitless confrontation?

Ideally, collaboration among the U.S., Russia, and China over terrorism would be in the interest of these nations. Such efforts should be conducted even against the backdrop of hostile exchanges on other matters. But, in so far as terrorist attacks are also destabilizing, there might be a temptation on the part of two of these nations to see an attack on a third as to their advantage.

So, any accord to track and fight terrorism must be done with a moral commitment that removes this possible flaw.

I am optimistic about the links between the U.S. and Russia on this. It may be why President Biden wants a summit with President Putin. I am not qualified to express any particular opinion on the position of China with regard to this issue.

Syria's air defense units repel Israeli aggression, shoot down missiles near Latakia

The Syrian army's air defense units have intercepted and shot down a number of Israeli missiles near the country's western coastal city of Latakia, amid an upsurge in the Tel Aviv regime's acts of aggression against the Arab country.

"At around 2:18 a.m. (2318 GMT Tuesday), the Israeli enemy perpetrated an air aggression and hit several areas along the southwest coast of Latakia. Our aerial defenses intercepted the aggressor's missiles and downed some of them," the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) quoted an unnamed military source as saying on Wednesday morning.

The source added that one civilian was killed in the strike while six others, including a child and his mother, sustained injuries.

Footage from the attack showed a large fire and several loud explosions at the scene.

SANA said the Israeli airstrike hit a civilian plastics factory in Latakia.

The Israeli air assault was the first on Syria since Tel Aviv claimed last month that a "Syrian missile" had landed near the top-secret Dimona nuclear site in the southern part of the Israeli-occupied territories.

The regime admitted that its so-called Iron Dome missile system had failed to intercept the missile.

The Israeli military said back then that in response to the alleged launch, it attacked several missile batteries in neighboring Syria, most of which were intercepted and downed by the air defenses of the Arab country.

Israel frequently targets military positions inside Syria, especially those of the resistance movement Hezbollah, which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists since 2011.

The Tel Aviv regime mostly keeps quiet about the attacks on Syrian territories, which many view as knee-jerk reaction to the Syrian government's increasing success in confronting terrorism in its territories.

Erdogan and Saudi King Salman discuss ties over phone

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz have discussed bilateral ties in a call, the second conversation between the two leaders in less than a month.

In a brief statement late on Tuesday, Turkey's communications directorate said the two leaders "evaluated" matters on issues affecting both countries "and steps to be taken to further the cooperation".

According to al Jazeera, Turkey is seeking to improve ties with Saudi Arabia after they were thrown into crisis by the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by a Saudi hit squad inside the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

Last year, Saudi businessmen endorsed an unofficial boycott of Turkish goods in response to what they called hostility from Ankara, slashing the value of trade by 98 percent.

U.S.-run Ain al-Assad Airbase in Iraq comes under rocket attack

A rocket attack has hit the Ain al-Assad Airbase hosting U.S. troops in the western Iraqi province of al-Anbar, the third such incident to target the American interests in the Arab country in as many days.

The Iraqi army said in a statement on Tuesday that two rockets had landed at the base, but the attack caused no casualties, without giving more details.

The Iraqi TV al-Ahd television channel said rocket sirens had gone off at the sprawling installation.

No earlier than on Monday, at least six rockets hit the al-Balad Airbase that houses U.S. forces and warplanes north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

According to Press TV, a day earlier, an airbase similarly housing a United States-led coalition's forces at Baghdad International Airport came under rocket fire.

The triple back-to-back incidents have not been claimed by any party or individual yet, but the U.S. usually blames such attacks on Iraqi resistance groups.

Resistance News

Hamas military wing gives Israel 'final' warning on Sheikh Jarrah evictions

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN**— The military wing of the Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement has warned that the Israeli regime will "pay a heavy price" if it keeps up its acts of aggression against fellow Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds.

According to the Palestinian Information Center, Mohammed Deif, chief of staff and supreme commander of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, issued a rare and strongly-worded statement to deliver a "final" warning to the Israeli regime against the planned eviction of a number of Palestinian families from their homes in the neighborhood.

"This is our final warning; If the aggression against our people in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood does not stop immediately, we will not stand idly by and the occupation will pay a heavy price," he said.

"I salute our steadfast Palestinians at Sheikh Jarrah in occupied Jerusalem. The resistance leadership and al-Qassam are watching closely what is happening in the neighborhood," added the resistance commander.

Israeli forces have been demolishing Palestinian homes and structures in the neighborhood for the construction of a new settlement outpost in the area under an Israeli court ruling.

According to Press TV, the warning came a day after Israeli forces and settlers tried to force the Palestinians to abandon their residences in that area. They attacked Palestinian homes there, with 20 people sustaining injuries as a result and at least four men and one girl arrested by Israeli forces.

Hamas had already warned Israel against harming the inhabitants of Sheikh Jarrah, and urged Palestinians to intensify their presence in the streets of the neighborhood to prevent the implementation of "Zionist schemes."

Lavrov, al-Maliki discuss cooperation prospects between EAEU and Palestine

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Palestinian counterpart Riyad al-Maliki discussed the settlement prospects of the cooperation between Palestine and the Eurasian Economic Union on June 8, in Moscow, reports "Armenpress".

"We have discussed the possibility of establishing cooperation relations between

Palestine and the EAEU", Lavrov said.

"Our Palestinian friends are interested with it, we will support them on that issue", Lavrov stated, RIA Novosti reported.

Moscow has repeatedly stressed its readiness to assist the Israeli-Palestinian settlement along with other members of the Quartet, through a direct dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians and

on the universally accepted basis of the international law. Among other things, during the January 26 UN Security Council open debates the Russian top diplomat suggested holding a ministerial meeting involving Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia this spring or summer.

In March, Russia confirmed its readiness

to act as a mediator in direct talks and suggested Moscow as a possible venue. Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, who arrived to the Russian capital for talks with Lavrov in mid-March, told TASS in an interview that his country would definitely consider the possibility, but it depends on the parliamentary election set to be held in Palestine in May.

Why Oshnavieh is heaven for archaeologists?

➔ **1** According to Encyclopedia Iranica, the territory of the ancient kingdom of Urartu extended over the modern frontiers of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and the Republic of Armenia. Its center was the Armenian highland between Lake Van, Lake Urmia, and Lake Sevan.



Urartian archeological finds in modern Iran include castles, settlements, water channels, and other water constructions, rock chambers, rock graves, stelae, rock inscriptions, and building inscriptions.

Most impressive are the Urartian architectural remains with their different building forms and ground plans, mainly as castles and larger fortresses. They range in size from small, mostly rectangular castles or road stations to the extended fortification systems of large settlements.

Urartian pottery is mainly earthenware and, to a lesser extent, red polished ceramic, so-called palace-ware, since it is found only in the larger, central Urartian sites. Urartian pottery is mostly monochrome ware made by the potter's wheel.

Cuneiform inscriptions have been found on clay tablets, cylinder seals, and bullae; there are inscriptions on building stones, as at Bastam and rock inscriptions, others on stelae and clay vessels.

The Urartian rock chambers influenced the Achaemenid rock graves in layout and stonecutter techniques. The monumental scale of the Urartian rock cuttings and surface preparation for cuneiform inscriptions prepared the way for the Achaemenid monumental inscriptions, in particular, that of Darius at Bisotun.

Archaeological excavations suggest that agriculture entered into a new stage owing to the practice of irrigation by Urartus in northwest Iran. Thanks to the water management exercised, the Oshnavieh plain was so productive for a long time. The water supply system realized by the Urartu in the first half of the first millennium BC has been so remarkable that the contemporaneous people imitated them.

New properties in Mazandaran made national heritage

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A total of six aging structures and historical buildings in Mazandaran province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, CHTN reported.



The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Wednesday in a letter to the governor-general of the northern province.

Two banks and a high school across the province are among the properties added to the prestigious list. Miankat Gate, Kafer Keli caves, and a beekeeping area have also gained the status.

Stretched along the Caspian Sea and Alborz mountain range, Mazandaran is a popular destination for domestic holidaymakers, while it is home to more than 3500 villages and rural areas.

Historical monuments in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad gain former glory

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A total of ten historical buildings and aging structures across the southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province have undergone some rehabilitation works, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

A budget of 13 billion rials (about \$310,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the restoration projects, ILNA quoted Rahim Dadinejad as saying on Wednesday.

Choram Fort, Azizi Castle, Pataveh Bridge, and the ancient city of Belad Shapur were among the restored structures, the official added.



He also noted that In addition, the cultural heritage department of the province strives to add more valuable historical structures to the national heritage list.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and 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.

Karaj seeks to become national city of handicrafts

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Karaj, the capital of the northcentral province of Alborz, eyes to be named a national city of handicrafts, the provincial tourism official has said.

Due to Alborz's status as the capital of tribes and the presence of various ethnic groups living in this region, the handicrafts in this region are of great variety, Fereydoun Mohammadi added on Tuesday.

Being recognized as a hub for handicrafts gives several craftspeople, who are practicing different fields of handicrafts in workshops scattered across the province, the opportunity of promoting their works as well as help tourism development in the region, the official added.

Various forgotten and neglected handicrafts fields are also planned to be revived in the province, he explained.

Alborz province is surrounded by Mazandaran, Tehran, Markazi, and Qazvin provinces. Its name is driven by the Alborz Mountains. A significant part of the mountains is located in the north part of the province. Historical resources and documents as well as archeological studies indicate that Alborz



has a rich culture dating back to prehistoric times.

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

three ones come next.

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

Persepolis restorers start work on Seljuk-era inscription

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – A team of cultural heritage restorers from the UNESCO-registered Persepolis has commenced work on a Seljuk-era (1037–1194) inscription, which is located in Khorramabad, the capital of western Lorestan province.

"The lack of adequate restoration and protection caused further erosion and destruction of this historical monument," Mehr quoted Seyyed Amin Qasemi, the provincial tourism chief, as saying on Monday.

"Considering the sensitivity of the restoration of stone monuments, a specialized team of Persepolis restorers was invited to inspect the inscription and develop their proposal."

The inscription has written on a large stone with a height of 3.5 meters in Kufic, which is a type of Arabic script.

The Seljuk engraving is the symbol of the rich culture of people in this region. The main topic of the inscription is about cutting taxes, feeding livestock on the Shapur I pastures, and forbid some unpleasant customs.

The principal purpose of carving the Seljuk inscription

was the association of government with the people about informing the new rules. The place of this inscription has selected so that each caravan that was coming from the Iranian plateau could perceive the inscription.

Seljuk, also spelled, Seljuq, was a ruling military family of the Oguz (Ghuzz) Turkic tribes that invaded southwestern Asia in the 11th century and eventually founded an empire that included Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and most of Iran. Their advance marked the beginning of Turkish power in the Middle East.

Soaked in history and culture, Lorestan is one of the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran, which mainly acts as a gateway to the sweltering plains below in adjoining Khuzestan province. Most travelers just pass through on their way to the UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System. Lorestan is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples,



including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Iranian handicrafts: Darayi-Bafi of Yazd

➔ **1** In the past, natural pigments were used to dye the yarns, for example, Woad produced blue, Rubia and Cochineal produced red, tree barks and flowers produced yellow and minerals, and soil was used to produce black pigments. Today these sources are rarely used and have been replaced by chemical colors.

Some consider the Darayi to have originated from Indonesia. The oldest remaining piece of Darayi belongs to Egypt and goes back to the 11th century. There are paintings on the walls in the northwest of India that show women wearing Icut fabrics.



But in Iran, these fabrics were woven from a long time ago and their history in Yazd is known to be eight hundred years. There are two kinds of Icut: "Tar" or warp Icut, and "Pud" or weft Icut. In the case of warp Icut, then wrap yarns are colored before the weaving process and then are trenced over the loom. The patterns are then created during the weaving process. In the second technique, both warp and weft yarns are colored before the weaving. Naturally, the weft Icut is more elaborate and valuable.

The Darayi fabrics are usually made with a width of ninety centimeters and a height of about thirty centimeters and are finally cut depending on their usage. Until recent years silk yarns were used as both wraps and wefts of these fabrics, but today yarns such as viscose are used as the wraps, and synthetic silk or viscose rayon filaments are used as wefts. Scarves, beddings, tablecloths, and bundles are some of the usages of Darayi.

Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring to as a 'don't miss' destination by almost all native travel insiders.

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No:1400/108-18/01

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject Of Tender:
Purchasing Radio Transmitter Spare Parts with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents :
From **Saturday 08 May 2021 (1400/02/18)** until **Tuesday 11 May 2021 (1400/02/21)** by **02:00 P.m.** with Presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document :
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept., 4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex, Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali-Asr Ave, Tehran, Iran.

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it :
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No. IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB .

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender :
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 8.800 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 2.200.000.000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m.** on **Saturday 12 of June 2021 (1400/03/22)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:
The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes on **Saturday 12 of June 2021 (1400/03/22)** at **10:00 a.m** in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

Time and place of opening Envelopes :
The envelopes A of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened on **Sunday 13 June 2021 at 03:00 p.m. (1400/02/23)** in the office of Financial Vice President. In case of complete content in the envelopes A the participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.
For more information, please see:

www.iriboffice.ir and http://iets.mporg.ir Tel: 00982122167463

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Fakhra vaccine completes first phase of human trial

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The first phase of the Fakhra vaccine's human trial has been completed successfully and the second phase will start after the final analysis.

Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically-developed COVID-19 vaccine, named after nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was assassinated in November last year near Tehran, was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

After obtaining the necessary permits from the Ministry of Health, we will start injecting the vaccine through the second phase of human trial after the holy month of Ramadan (Began on April 13), project manager Ahmad Karimi said on Wednesday.

He went on to note that some 135 people have received the first dose today, IRNA reported.

In the first phase, 17,000 people from all over the country registered to receive the vaccine, 3,500 of whom were selected and 495 entered the screening phase, Karimi explained.

Finally, the clinical team selected 135 people for the injection, and fortunately, the health condition of each after vaccination is



favorable, he stated, adding, among those, 41 were women and the rest were men with an average age of 18 to 55 years.

Through the second phase, 500 people will be selected to perform the human trial, he concluded.

Domestic vaccines

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by Iranian researchers, started the third phase of the human trial last week by being administrated to 20,000 people. Developed by researchers at the Head-

quarters 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.

“Osvd-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 Wednesday, Health Ministry's spokesperson, Sima-Sadat Lari, confirmed 15,872 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 2,591,609. She added that 2,039,427 patients have so far recovered, but 5,499 remain in critical conditions of the disease.

During the past 24 hours, 349 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 73,568, she added.

So far, 16,511,987 COVID-19 diagnostic tests have been performed in the country.

Inspiring midwives on COVID-19 frontline

→ 1 A global survey of 194 countries found that severe shortages of midwives resulted in horrific global casualties in the form of preventable deaths. The analysis in this report showed that the full provision of care services provided by midwives by 2035 can reduce 67 percent of maternal mortality, 64 percent of infant mortality, and 65 percent of stillbirths, saving 4.3 million people a year.



According to a recent study by UNFPA, WHO, and ICM, investing in midwives is a cost-effective way of improving health outcomes.

Medical staff efforts in light of pandemic

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, Iranian nurses have been at the forefront of the fight against the disease.

Many healthcare workers lost their lives or mourned their colleagues in the fight against COVID-19 disease and in the path toward saving the lives of people and patients. They worked around the clock to significantly control the epidemic and minimize the number of deaths.

In this difficult struggle, the increase in the disease caused a large number of doctors and nurses to fall ill and leave the service cycle, and their colleagues had to work three shifts so that no to leave any patients untreated.

According to the statistics of the Nursing Organization, about 140,000 nurses are employed in the country's hospitals. Some 80,000 nurses have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and 110 nurses have died from the disease so far.

Maryam Hazrati, the deputy health minister for nursing, said in May 2020 that some 65 percent of 200,000 nurses in the country were at the forefront of the coronavirus fight.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has praised the Iranian nurses for playing an effective role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic during the 8th “Triad Meeting” of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), and the WHO which was held online on June 16-18.

188 higher education projects to be inaugurated

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Today, President Hassan Rouhani will officially inaugurate some 188 educational, research, and welfare projects in universities across the country via video conferencing, IRNA reported.

The projects include 34 educational places, 23 research centers, 19 training centers, and 14 technical and vocational universities, 24 green management plans, 9 welfare centers and etc., costing a total of 1,264 billion rials (about \$300 million) plus \$2.5 million.

With the opening of these projects, job opportunities will be opened up for about 1,000 people.

In November 2020, Rouhani inaugurated some 1,550 educational, training, and welfare projects throughout the country.

The projects included 1,422 educational places with 8,051 classrooms, 124 training centers, and 4 welfare centers, measuring a total of 1.1 million square meters.

Iranian universities performance

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

With 47 Iranian universities ranked among 1,527 top



universities of 93 countries in the world in 2021 rankings, Iran achieved a great improvement in the academic field.

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

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

According to statistics released by the International Web of Science Database, Iran's citation rank has always been on

the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

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

Two Iranian universities have been ranked among the top 100 universities in Asia, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities for July 2020.

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

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

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

Also, five Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top 1,000 universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

Tehrani benefactors release 51% more prisoners

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The number of prisoners of involuntary crimes released with the help of Tehrani philanthropists last year (March 2020-March 2021) has increased by more than 51 percent compared to a year before.

Last year, 634 indebted prisoners were released with the help of benefactors in Tehran province, which is 51 percent higher than that of a year before, Seyed Heshmatollah Hayat Al-Gheyb, the director general of Tehran prisons, said.

A total of 149 billion rials (nearly \$3.5 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been donated to pay the debt of the released prisoners, he stated.

9,398 inmates of unintentional crimes freed nationwide

Iranian benefactors helped release a total of 9,398 inmates of unintentional crimes across the country over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021), according to the Blood Money Organization.

Freeing prisoners of involuntary crimes is done in three ways; the first way is granting prisoners leave and the second way is providing a number of them with loans to be paid inside the prison.

The third way of assistance is the release of unintentional convicts by paying their debt; last year, a total of 35 trillion rials (nearly \$833 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been donated to pay the debt of the released prisoners.

Last year, Isfahan province topped the list for releasing the highest number of prisoners amounting to 677 involuntary

crime doers, while Sistan-Baluchestan at the bottom of the list.

As an annual tradition, benefactors come together in a ceremony to raise funds for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes during the holy month of Ramadan (which started on April 13 this year), through which, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has donated 5 billion rials (about \$120,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

Last year (March 2020-March 2021), heads of the three branches of the gov-



ernment and the private sector donated 6.5 billion rials (nearly \$150,000) to release prisoners who had committed involuntary crimes.

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

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

Freeing prisoners of involuntary crimes is done in three ways; the first way is granting prisoners leave and the second way is providing a number of them with loans to be paid inside the prison, and the third way of assistance is the release of unintentional convicts by paying their debt.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

‘Playing to learn’ scheme piloted in elementary schools

A plan dubbed “playing to learn” aiming at using educational games toward deeper learning was implemented for first time in elementary schools across the capital, with the Education Minister in attendance, Fars reported on Saturday.

Through the first phase of the scheme, 1,000 schools from 10 provinces nationwide will implement the playing to learn scheme, including Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Hamedan, Mazandaran, Kordestan, Kerman, West Azarbaijan, Qazvin, and Sistan-Baluchestan.

According to the report, schools regarding their proper environment and conditions volunteered and chose to hold game-based classes and assess the results, currently in each province 50 girls' schools and 50 boys' schools among state-run and private schools have piloted the scheme; 20 percent of which are private schools.

آغاز اجرای آزمایشی طرح «بازی و یادگیری» در مدارس ابتدایی تهران

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری فارس اجرای آزمایشی طرح «بازی و یادگیری» به منظور آموزش عمیق مفاهیم کتب درسی توسط بازی با حضور وزیر آموزش و پرورش در تعدادی از مدارس ابتدایی شهر تهران آغاز شد.

قرار است این طرح در ۱۰۰۰ مدرسه ۱۰ استان کشور اجرا شود در فاز اول اجرای طرح، استان‌های خراسان رضوی، شهر تهران، فارس، همدان، مازندران، کردستان، کرمان، آذربایجان غربی، قزوین و سیستان و بلوچستان قرار دارند.

ملاک‌های انتخاب مدارس اجرای پروژه بازی و یادگیری شامل اعلام آمادگی داوطلبانه مدارس با توجه به امکان سنجی محیط و شرایط مدرسه است که تعداد ۵۰ مدرسه دخترانه و ۵۰ مدرسه پسرانه انتخاب شدند و این مدارس از بین مدارس دولتی و مدارس غیردولتی انتخاب شده‌اند؛ همچنین در این فاز اجرا، حداکثر ۲۰ درصد مدارس غیردولتی شامل اجرای پروژه می‌شوند.

Amazon has ‘flipped’ and now emits more carbon pollution than it sinks

The Brazilian Amazon, where dense rainforest was long believed to be absorbing human-caused pollution, has emitted close to one-fifth more carbon dioxide (CO2) into the atmosphere than it has stored.

An alarming new study found that between 2010 and 2019, the Amazon released 16.6 billion tonnes of CO2, while sucking up 13.9 billion tonnes.

“We half-expected it, but it is the first time that we have figures showing that the Brazilian Amazon has flipped, and is now a net emitter,” the study's co-author Jean-Pierre Wigneron, a scientist at France's National Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA), told AFP. “We don't know at what point the changeover could become irreversible.”

The research was published on Thursday in the journal Nature Climate Change.

Researchers compared the volume of CO2 sunk into the forest to the volumes released by fires or cutting down trees.

Trees, especially the old growth forests which have been standing for millennia, store carbon and have had an impact on slowing the climate crisis being driven by man-made pollutants like the burning of fossil fuels.

However the reverse is also true: when forests burn, tree carbon matter is pumped into the air as CO2, adding to emissions levels.

The Amazon, one of the planet's richest regions of biodiversity and home to thousands of indigenous peoples, suffered the worst blazes in a decade last year.

The destruction of the rainforest has proliferated under right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro, whose government has weakened environmental protections and pushed development of mining, cattle-ranching and logging.

Mr Bolsonaro has frequently played down the Amazon fires, calling evidence produced by his own government showing thousands of blazes a “lie”.

The study also found that deforestation increased by four times in 2019 compared with 2017 and 2018, leaping from around 2.5 million acres to 9.6 million acres - an area more than twice the size of Connecticut.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 176)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

● تمرین ۱. “من” یا “تو” بگذارید و غلط‌ها را تصحیح کنید:

۱. () محمد در شعبه انقلاب حساب باز کرده است.

۲. () کارمند بانک به او دو دفترچه حساب داده است.

۳. () پدرش هر ماه برای او کارت پول می‌فرستد.

۴. () محمد می‌تواند از حسابش پول بردارد.

۵. () او فقط با دفترچه می‌تواند از بانک پول بگیرد.

۶. () محمد نمی‌تواند از بانک‌های ایران دلار بگیرد.

۳. □ با کارت پول □ با دفترچه

۴. □ پدرش □ مادرش □ هر دو

۵. □ دلار □ ریال □ هر دو

۶. □ لازم است □ لازم نیست □ گاهی لازم است

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■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
info@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One who rushes madly after inordinate desire, runs the risk of encountering destruction and death.
Imam Ali (AS)

Docudrama “Qassem” on General Soleimani’s life story produced

→1 The film also features a number of rarely-seen pictures from his significant presence on the Iranian frontlines during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

After the broadcast of the docudrama, Ebrahim Mottaqi from the Faculty of Law and Political Science at the University of Tehran and Mehdi Zakerian, an expert on international relations, attended a Mostanad Channel live broadcast to discuss General Soleimani’s influence on Iran’s diplomacy.

Several documentary films have been made about various aspects of General Soleimani’s life and career following his martyrdom.

“Liberation of Amerli” directed by Hamed Hadian is one of them, which premiered at the Cinéma Vérité festival in Tehran last December.

The documentary underlines the key role Iran’s Quds Force played in breaking the 89-day siege of the northern Iraqi town of Amerli by the ISIS terrorists.

Amerli, an Iraqi town of Shia Turkmen located in the Tooz District of Saladin Governorate, was besieged by the ISIS terrorists from June 2014, cutting off access to food, electricity and water.

On August 31, the Quds Force, the overseas arm of the IRGC under the commandership of Qassem Soleimani, joined the Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and the Popular Mobilization Units – Hashd al-Shaabi, breaking the siege, which was described by some top analysts as Iraq’s biggest victory against ISIS.

Another major documentary about General Soleimani is “Green Zone”, which studies the good conduct of the commander toward children.

Before his martyrdom, Soleimani had a regular program to visit the children of his soldiers. In addition, he frequently paid visits to the children of his comrades martyred during the Iran-Iraq war.

The short documentary directed by Behnam Bahadori was produced at the Children’s Department of the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization.

Roald Dahl’s “Matilda” comes to Persian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — British writer Roald Dahl’s bestselling novel “Matilda” has been translated into Persian by Mahbubeh Najafkhani.

The book has recently been published by Cheshmeh Publications in Tehran.

“Matilda” was originally published in 1988 with illustrations by Quentin Blake. It was later adapted for a film of the same title directed by Danny DeVito in 1996.

The Persian translation also carries the book’s original illustrations.

The novel tells the story of Matilda, an extraordinary girl who has supernatural abilities to move objects at a distance using her mental power.

The story unveils when she attends school and meets the evil principal who is a terrifying bully, and later gets to know her teacher who becomes her kind companion and supports her through her difficulties with her family.

Several screen adaptations of the story have so far been made. Dennis Kelly and Tim Minchin made the musical “Matilda the Musical” in 2010 based on the novel.

Dahl is best known for his children’s books, including “James and the Giant Peach” and “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory”, both of which have been turned into films.

The writer’s stories often feature evil adult enemies in conflict with the child characters, with unexpected endings and comical narratives.



Front cover of the Persian version of British writer Roald Dahl’s children’s novel “Matilda”

Iran’s Kabootar Khaneh, Pardis Kahneh honored at A’ Design Award and Competition

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k architectural projects Pardis Khaneh and Kabootar Khaneh have been honored with bronze A’ Design Awards at the A’ Design Award and Competition in Italy.

The structures have been designed and set up by Nima Keivani at Keivani Architects.

Pardis Khaneh and Kabootar Khaneh received the awards in the Architecture, Building and Structure Design Category of the competition.

The A’ Design Award and Competition is the world’s largest, most prestigious and influential design accolade, representing the highest achievement in design.

Pardis Khaneh located in Tehran is a nearly complete example of house architecture considering a residential atmosphere with regard to space psychology.

The design of the Pardis home has been inspired by the architecture of Iranian gardens, in particular the Takht Garden, a historical edifice in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz.

The architectural pattern of the Takht Garden is in a vertical form and also originated from the architecture of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

In this project, the designers have

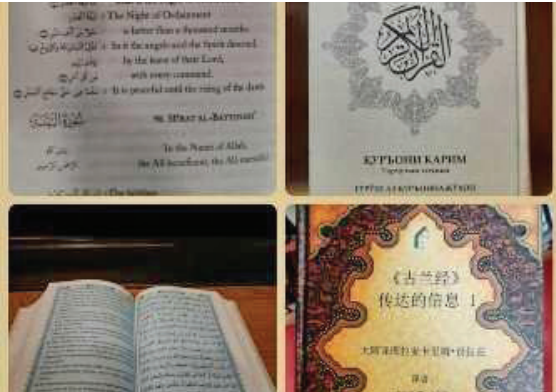


This combination photo shows views of the projects Pardis Khaneh and Kabootar Khaneh.

tried to revive the missing architecture of hanging gardens in a modern style. This way, a different dynamism of the building is seen all over the construction.

The facade can be reshaped continuously, and therefore, the visitor will perpetually face a new shape of the building. The wooden surface has a special design pattern inspired by the

Iran’s national library preserves rare translations of Holy Quran



This combination of photos shows copies of various translations of the Holy Quran. (file photo)

CULTURE TEHRAN — Rare copies of the translations d e s k of the Holy Quran in seven languages, some dating back hundreds of years, are preserved at the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI), the library announced on Tuesday.

Several of the translations have been done in the Western world, and some have been produced in Iran by cultural centers such as Al-Mustafa International University in Qom.

The collection includes a copy of the oldest known French translation of the Holy Quran dating back to 1647. It was translated by André Du Ryer, and is reported to have been the first-ever direct Quranic translation from Arabic to French.

According to the director of NLAI Department of Iranian and Islamic Studies, the copy of the French translation of the Holy Quran was first published in Paris in 1647 and was reprinted several times until 1775.

Due to its accurate translation of Quranic concepts, other

scholars have used it as a source to do translations in other European languages.

The library also has another copy of a French translation by Albert Kazimirski, which dates back to 1859.

It also holds a translation by French orientalist Claude-Étienne Savary, which was published in 1883.

A translation by George Sale, which was published in 1734, is one of the oldest English copies of the Quran available in the library. It is known to be one of the earliest direct translations of the Quran from Arabic to English.

The library also possesses a German translation of the holy book by Theodor Nöldeke, which was published in 1860.

The library has also accumulated a collection of Quranic dictionaries and encyclopedias and new translations of the Quran in numerous languages over the past few years.

One of them was produced by Finnish Islamic scholar Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila. His translations of the Quran and Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh came out in 1995.

Iranian movies competing in Grand River Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — Seven d e s k shorts by Iranian filmmakers are competing in the 13th Grand River Film Festival, which is underway virtually in the Canadian Region of Waterloo.

The films include “Atari” by Farhad Fadakar, “Borderless” by Behrad Sahebqarani, “The Heavy Shadow of the Crow” by Behnam Asadollahi, “Hermit” by Omid Mirzai, “Rahmat Creel” by Behzad Alavi, “The Recess” by Navid Nikkhah-Azad and “Wooden Sword” by Susan Salamat and Behzad Alavi.

The story of “Atari” is set in the 1980s when a teenage boy is promised an Atari by his father. Using this promise to entice

his friends sees his popularity grow, so long as the promise is kept.

“Borderless” is about a teenage girl named Delaram who has Down’s syndrome, a genetic disorder that has caused her to have a particular appearance and limited verbal expression. As a consequence, normal children and society think less of her. Delaram wants their judgments which, in her view, have created a border between them, to be removed.

In “The Heavy Shadow of the Crow”, five new humans grow in a dry, flat desert from under the soil around a crow and a chair, which calls to them.

“Hermit” tells the story of a man who lives on his own in an old bus in the desert,

struggling to make sense of his day-to-day life. The man, who is also plagued by ghosts, has his isolation interrupted by a lost hiker.

“Rahmat Creel” is about Rahmat Baqeri, a retired man that other people call Rahmat Creel. Every week, he goes to a lake near the city of Zanjan to fish. But his catch is different from the others.

“The Recess” revolves around Sahar, a 17-year-old student who is determined to skip high school during recess and go to the football stadium to watch the football match between Esteghlal F.C. vs. Al-Ain as part of the AFC Champions League, which is against the national ban prohibiting women from entering football stadiums in Iran.

“Wooden Sword” is about two little boys



“Hermit” by Iranian director Omid Mirzai.

who meet each other in a green space, and make friends. This is while their fathers have a big problem.

The Grand River Film Festival, a not-for-profit, volunteer-run arts and culture group dedicated to bringing the best independent cinema to the Region of Waterloo, will run until May 8.

Queens World Film Festival picks movies from Iran

A R T TEHRAN — Six movies from Iranian d e s k filmmakers will be screened in various categories of the Queens World Film Festival, which will take place from June 23 to July 3 across the Borough of Queens in the U.S. city of New York.

The 11th edition of the festival is a hybrid event with virtual and live screenings, the organizers have announced.

“The Forbidden Strings” by Hassan Nuri will be screened in the documentary feature competition, while “The Badger” by Kazem Mollai will be competing in the narrative feature section.

“The Forbidden Strings” is about Suri, Hakim, Akbar and Mohammed who have a collective dream to travel from Iran to their parents’ homeland of Afghanistan and perform at their first rock concert. Working as migrant laborers during the day, the group practices in a studio away from their families at night. Throughout their journey, the four young band members face the complicated nature of making politically-minded music that reflects their lived reality as migrants from Afghanistan.

“The Badger” tells the story of Sudeh, a 40-year-



“The Forbidden Strings” by Hassan Nuri.

old woman who faces a strange incident right before her second marriage. Sudeh and her son Matiar live in an old apartment. One day, she hires a pest control company to solve the termite problems in the apartment. While the pest control company is working, Matiar is recording the procedures, as this is his hobby. The

“It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet” published in Persian

A R T TEHRAN — “It d e s k Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet” by British veterinary surgeon and author James Herriot has recently been published in Persian.

Sirus Qahramani is the translator of the book published by Morvarid in Tehran.

Herriot is best known for writing a series of eight books set in the 1930s–1950s Yorkshire Dales about veterinary practice, animals and their owners, which began with “If Only They Could Talk” that was also translated into Persian by Qahramani and released by the publisher in 2019.

Over the decades, the series of books sold some 60 million copies.



Front cover of the Persian translation of James Herriot’s book “It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet”.

How on earth did James Herriot come to be sitting on a high Yorkshire moor, smelling vaguely of cows? James isn’t sure, but he knows that he loves it.

This second hilarious volume of memoirs contains more tales of James’ unpredictable boss Siegfried Farnon, his charming student brother Tristan, animal mayhem galore and his first encounters with a beautiful girl called Helen.

“He can tell a good story against himself, and his pleasure in the beauty of the countryside in which he works is infectious,” Daily Telegraph wrote about the book.

“Full of warmth, wisdom and wit,” The

Field wrote.

“It is a pleasure to be in James Herriot’s company,” Observer commented.

The franchise based on Herriot’s writings was very successful. In addition to the books, there have been several television and film adaptations of his books, including the 1975 film “All Creatures Great and Small” and the BBC television series of the same name, which ran 90 episodes, and the 2020 series of the same name.

“Let Sleeping Vets Lie”, “Vet in Harness”, “Vets Might Fly”, “Vet in a Spin”, “The Lord God Made Them All” and “Every Living Thing” are other books in Herriot’s series.