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# Bibi's big mistake: Fall of fake regime?

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**Iran rejects Pentagon's claim, denounces U.S. 'unprofessional' behavior in Hormuz**

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy has reacted to a claim by the Pentagon that the IRGC speed-boats unprofessionally came close to an American vessel.

The IRGC Navy said in a statement on Tuesday that IRGC boats did not act unprofessionally and while they were conducting a regular and conventional operation, they encountered seven American Navy vessels committing "provocative, gratuitous and unprofessional behaviors such as flying helicopters, firing flares and aimless shooting."

The statement said the IRGC boats maintained a legal distance from the American vessels in accordance with international maritime regulations and warned them against "dangerous and unprofessional behavior."

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## Iranian COVID-19 vaccine enters large-scale production phase



**Electricity projects worth over \$320m put into operation**

TEHRAN - Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian inaugurated major electricity projects worth 13.45 trillion rials (about \$320.2 million) across the country on Tuesday, in the sixth week of the ministry's A-B-Iran program in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

The inaugurated projects include the national electricity network's new dispatching center, numerous power network modification and optimization projects, as well as installing new PV systems for nomadic households.

The national electricity network's new dispatching center which has been completed with 11.44 trillion rials (about \$272.3 million) of investment is using world's latest technologies in Energy Management System (EMS), Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and Wide Area Management System and Control (WAMS) systems.

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TEHRAN - The first batch of COVIRAN BAREKAT, equaling 300,000 doses of the first homegrown COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, was unveiled in a ceremony on Tuesday.

The first large-scale production line of the vaccine with a capacity to produce three million doses is ready for operation, ISNA reported.

The second production line with a capacity to produce 17 million doses of the vaccine will be launched by the next two months.

COVIRAN BAREKAT was unveiled on December 29, 2020, and started to be mass-produced on March 29.

Iran is among the first countries which started developing a vaccine against coronavirus, and now four companies are endeavoring to release their products by September and inoculate the whole population.

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## Israel likely to intensify tensions before a JCPOA revival: professor

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

An American professor says it is possible that Israel as the chief opponent of the 2015 nuclear deal can raise tension over a possible revival of the agreement before it tones down its rhetoric or stop its malicious acts.

Noting that both Iran and the U.S. want to get back to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Karl Kaltenthaler tells the Tehran Times that "It will possibly raise tensions before it would lower them."

Iran and the five remaining parties to the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), coupled with the United States have started talks in Vienna, to convince the Biden administration to return the multilateral agreement.

Kaltenthaler says Israel and Saudi Arabia do not want the United States to move back into the nuclear deal but Tehran and Riyadh are in the process of normalizing ties and the sides have so far held talks in Baghdad. Israeli officials have warned about military escalation if the JCPOA is revived. After targeting Iran's ships and some sabotage operations in the Iran nuclear facilities, the world is witnessing Israeli aggression against Palestinians.

It seems that since the Israeli regime have failed to find a solution to its domestic crises and its international isolation it resorting to violent acts to start a war. Its attacks on the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are examples.

Following is the text of the interview:

**The Vienna talks are going on. Are you optimistic about the results? What will be the impact of any possible agreement on West Asia?**

I believe these talks are the start of a process that both the Iranian government and the Biden Administration want to work. Both sides want to get back to a deal where there is sanctions relief for Iran in exchange for verifiable commitments by Iran to not develop the capability to produce nuclear weapons. After some initial posturing by both sides, it seems like they are both working on getting to a deal. In terms of the impact of the deal for the Middle East (West Asia), it will possibly raise tensions before it would lower them. Israel and Saudi Arabia do not want the United States to move back into a nuclear deal with Iran.

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## Tehran, Yerevan discuss ways to deepen tourism ties

TEHRAN - Iranian tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan and Yerevan's ambassador to Tehran Artashes Toumanian on Monday discussed ways to deepen ties in the realms of tourism and cultural heritage. The officials exchanged views on how to boost travel when the coronavirus is controlled with help of vaccines.

"We are ready to increase the tourism ties between the two countries. It seems, within the next few months, the tourism sector would resume as [COVID-19] vaccination is underway worldwide," Mounesan said.

The Iranian minister attached great importance to tourism as a tool, which can foster peace and friendship between various nations.

"We pay special attention to tourism with our neighbors because we believe tourism, in addition to economic matters, helps to promote friendship between the nations. Such relationship with Armenia has been improved after the

[implementation of] a visa waiver [program]."

The envoy, for his part, said many Armenians are not being introduced to Iran's attractions. "The people of Armenia do not know much about Iran's tourist attractions, if [enough] information is provided and tourism officials and tour operators of the two countries work in this regard, they would be interested in traveling to Iran."

Joint work on the restoration of historical sites and monuments was another issue discussed in the Tehran meeting.

"The arena of Iranian cultural heritage is important to us because it dates back to thousands of years ago," Toumanian said.

"We have good experience in the field of intangible cultural heritage and there are many similarities between the two countries in this regard. Armenian specialists can also help to restore the engravings of Iranian churches," the ambassador explained.

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## UN says Daesh committed genocide against Iraq's Izadis

A UN team investigating Daesh (ISIL terrorist group) atrocities in Iraq says it has established evidence that the crimes committed by the terrorist group against Izadis amounted to "genocide".

Karim Khan, the head of the UN team, said there was "clear and convincing evidence" that the crimes committed by Daesh against the Yazidi people as a religious group "clearly constituted genocide".

The team, he told the UN Security Council, identified the perpetrators "that clearly have responsibility for the crime of genocide against the Yazidi (Izadi) community."

Back in August 2014, Daesh terrorists overran Sinjar, killing, raping, and enslaving large numbers of Izadi Kurds.

The region was recaptured in November 2015. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad, an Izadi woman who was enslaved and raped by Daesh, urged the UNSC to refer the genocide against her people to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or create

a special court.

"It is time for the international community to do, more than listen. It is time to act. If world leaders have the political will to act on this evidence, then justice is truly within reach," Murad, who won the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, told the Security Council Monday.

Referring to the report of the UN team, Murad said, "The Council must now prioritize and accelerate concrete action to address the findings."

Khan is a British lawyer who is due to become the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor next month.

According to Press TV, the report of the team, which started work in 2018, also found the "repeated deployment of chemical weapons by ISIL (Daesh) against civilian populations in Iraq between 2014 and 2016, as well as the testing of biological agents on prisoners."

## Russia says Iran's deal with IAEA likely to be extended

TEHRAN - A top Russian diplomat at the Vienna nuclear talks has said that a February deal between Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog will "most likely" be extended.

Russian ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations Mikhail Ulyanov told Laura Rozen that the deal has a good chance to be extended.

"I think the February understandings most likely have a good chance to be ex-

tended," he said, adding, "But, as of the moment, our task is different- we need to reach an agreement on restoration of JCPOA by 21 May."

The Russian diplomat was referring to a February deal between Iran and the IAEA which allowed the latter to continue its monitoring activities in Iran ahead of the implementation of a parliamentary nuclear law obligating the Iranian government to

strictly restrict cooperation with the IAEA in case the West failed to lift sanctions.

According to a joint statement issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, the IAEA and AEOI agreed: "1. That Iran continues to implement fully and without limitation its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA as before."

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## Bribed normalisation: The reverse effects

BY BATOUL SBEITY

In mid-August of 2020, former U.S. President Trump started brokering the normalisation of ties between the Wrong State (Israel) and a series of Arab nations, with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco forged open and official ties. From the outward, it may seem as though the Wrong State has the upper hand and is dictating the rules of engagement on its own terms, but this couldn't be further from the truth- indeed, the Wrong State is only escaping forward.

When it was established in 1948, the Zionists realised they needed to expand in order to survive; they did not tolerate being limited by the borders that were given to them, such that in front of any siege or war, they were not to be threatened or overtaken. This reality manifested itself with the new 1967 borders of the Wrong State, that saw the annexation of the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

The peak was reached during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, that saw the Wrong State for the first time attack the heart of an Arab capital- Beirut. Indeed, when Ariel Sharon led the Israeli Army into the heart of Lebanon during the invasion and was asked what the borders of this state signify, he said the borders are wherever their tanks stand.

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## Presidential candidates register at Interior Ministry

TEHRAN - As the registration of presidential hopefuls opened on Tuesday, some political figures showed up to register. Registration process opened on 8 am to 6 pm. The registration will continue till May 15. Many prominent figures, including Judiciary chief Seyyed Ebrahim Raiesi, are expected to show up in the coming days.

**Dear readers,**  
The next issue of the Tehran Times will be published on Saturday, May 15.



ELECTION WIRE

Hopefuls start registering for president

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN— Mohammad Hassan Nami, Saeed Mohammad, and General Hossein Dehghan were among the first figures who went to the Ministry of Interior to register as presidential hopefuls.

Former Minister of Communications in Ahmadinejad's administration showed up at the ministry on Tuesday to register.



Nami Mohammad Dehghan

Nami showed up early, minutes after the registration opened. He declared that his motto is "law and order in the light of moral virtues." He also said he is running independently.

Saeed Mohammad, former director of the Khatam-al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, was the second famous political figure who came to the ministry to register at 11:30.

He said that his registration in the first hours of the process shows his good intentions.

He added that he is determined to proceed forward with his presidential bid.

**'The independent general shows up with his wife'** Gen. Hossein Dehghan was the third person who showed up at the ministry to register.

Dehghan, defense minister from 2013-2017, said that he did not wait for anyone, and his decision won't be influenced by any external factors.

"I came early, as I believe we have to start our work as soon as possible," Dehghan pointed out.

He added that his administration will represent honesty, and the great Iranian nation deserve a better life.

Iran: Tehran-Riyadh dialogue conducted by special envoys

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN— Speaking at his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei said that special envoys for the governments of Iran and Saudi Arabia are conducting negotiations, adding the talks will continue until they reach a conclusion.



"In order to clear up misunderstandings and disputes, two rounds of negotiations have been held between the two countries so far. In addition to bilateral issues, regional issues were also discussed, but we are not able to go into details until the talks are concluded," the spokesman said.

He added that Iran is determined to clear up all misunderstandings that troubles the neighbors.

"(The path of) diplomacy is currently open between us and neighboring countries, and in some cases there are positive signs," Rabiei added.

He emphasized that all sides still need to work harder to ensure that stability is restored to the region and that lasting peace is established for all nations in the region.

Zarif: Referendum only solution to Palestine issue

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN— In a tweet on Tuesday afternoon, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif condemned the brutal act of aggression by the Israeli regime against the Palestinians, reiterating Tehran's long-held principled position that only a referendum can solve the complicated decades-long Palestinian issues.



In a video message, Zarif said that attacking Al-Aqsa Mosque and killing worshippers is the "biggest sign of the racist and criminal nature of the usurping regime," which has always been a major cause of insecurity and instability in the region.

"There is only one just solution to the Palestinian issue, and that is to refer the question of Palestine to the will of the people of this land and to refer to a referendum," he suggested.

Zarif had also reacted to the attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque on May 10 in a tweet in which he said:

- It wasn't enough for the Israeli regime to
  - Steal people's land & homes;
  - Create an Apartheid regime;
  - Refuse to vaccinate civilians under illegal occupation.
- It had to shoot innocent worshippers inside Islam's 3rd Holiest Mosque upon Islam's Holiest Eid.  
#AlAqsaUnderAttack," he tweeted.

Bibi's big mistake: Fall of fake regime?

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN— With Benjamin Netanyahu losing the battle to the Knesset, "the army that will never taste victory" is on its path to losing yet another battle to the Palestinians in al-Quds. The main question however is why now?

The 71-year-old Israeli prime minister is known for his thirst for power. He has run Israel into the grounds for 15 years, but mostly, he is known for his idiocy. From awfully wrong predictions, such as "Iran will have a nuclear bomb in five years from now" to losing the 33-day war to the Lebanese Hezbollah, along with losing the 22-day war to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The old fox is charged with bribery, fraud, and breach of trust. When you are Israel's longest-serving prime minister you make stupid decisions. There is a long list of Netanyahu's increasingly desperate attempts to maintain power. From accepting gifts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from wealthy friends such as Hollywood film producer Arnon Milchan and Australian billionaire James Packer to attempting to orchestrate favorable coverage in a major Israeli newspaper in return for restricting distribution of a free pro-Netanyahu tabloid.

His recent effort, however, was to get into a full-fledged war with the Palestinians just before celebrating their most important religious Eid, Eid al-Fitr, which falls on May 14. There is an Islamic saying by one of the Imams that says "Thank God who has made our enemies fools." When you look at the recent developments in al-Quds, you realize that Bibi Netanyahu falls exactly under that saying.

On Sunday, Israel's channel 7 announced that the Israeli security cabinet has passed a plan that allows the government to launch massive airstrikes on the Gaza Strip without having the need to attack the area on



the ground.

Let's recap for just a brief moment. How did it all begin?

It all started on May 6, when the Israeli Supreme Court decided a forced eviction of the Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem. The Palestinians protested over the unfair ruling, as they were forced to leave their homes. Sheikh Jarrah have witnessed many tragic scenes over the past few days; and what makes it even more tragic is that it all happened in the holy month of Ramadan, when the Palestinians were fasting. Israeli forces stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, and dispersed the Palestinian worshippers elsewhere in East Jerusalem.

On May 9, the Israeli forces raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque by throwing tear gas and stun grenades into the mosque, as the defenseless Palestinians were busy worshipping. The Islamic Jihad, Hamas' fellow resistance movement, warned the Israeli regime against further aggressive actions, stating that all Palestinian resistance groups align their

actions with what is occurring in al-Quds. Therefore, on May 10, they fired 150 rockets into Israel from Gaza. Clearly surprised, the Israeli army said that they have only succeeded to intercept only one rocket.

The recent developments can be interpreted as one of Netanyahu's desperate efforts to stay in power. Sami Abu Shehadeh, Palestinian Knesset member and leader of the Balad party, has said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu allowed for an "escalation" in a bid to remain in power, according to Al Jazeera.

"In order to survive this political crisis he finds himself in now, and in order for him not to lose control and not to lose his seat as prime minister ... he is ready to do anything," Shehadeh said.

"What is happening here is a clear political decision that Netanyahu is responsible for to keep power," Shehadeh pointed out.

What Shehadeh raised is something we should carefully consider. He is referring to a possibility that Bibi announces an emergency situation. Having failed to form a coalition

government, Reuven Rivlin, the Israeli president asked Netanyahu's arch nemesis, Yair Lapid, to form a government. If Lapid fails to secure a majority in the 120-seat Knesset, Israel will witness its fifth election in two years, but that is only one of his failures in domestic politics.

He has failed to bridge the ideological differences in Israel due to various reasons.

First is the sabotage attack on the Natanz nuclear facility. It did not work, as Iran began producing enriched uranium with 60% purity, sending a loud and clear message that Israel should be scared of Iran, not vice versa. The act of sabotage at the Natanz nuclear site backfired horribly on Israel. It accelerated the process of negotiations, with all sides coming to a mutual understanding about the deal.

Second, the Biden administration has deep ideological differences with Netanyahu, despite Biden's friendship with Bibi. On the issue of the Vienna negotiations, Israel has repeatedly stated that it opposes the idea of negotiations, let alone the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). They have had various interviews, sent private messages through various channels, and so on, but the Biden foreign policy team is determined to revive the nuclear deal. Therefore, he played his last card.

Bibi had no chance. He had lost the gamble. Therefore, he put all his cards on the deck, starting a dangerous battle with the Jerusalemites in a crucial time of the year. Clearly, he doesn't know that the timing of the battle has ignited a passion in the Palestinians to resist harder.

As the Leader of the Islamic Revolution rightly predicted in his speech on International Quds Day on May 7, "the downward spiral leading to the decline of the hostile Zionist regime has started and will not stop."

It is just a matter of time.

53 Democratic leaders tell Biden to lift Iran sanctions

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN— Fifty-three Democratic Party leaders have sent a letter to U.S. President Joe Biden urging him to rejoin the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

They said Monday that they have "strong support" for an initiative in the Biden administration to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which former President Donald Trump quit.

"Lifting Trump's bad-faith sanctions - which he explicitly imposed on Iran in order to make a return to the JCPOA next-to-impossible - should not be treated as a concession to Iran, but rather as an effort to restore U.S. credibility and enhance American security," they wrote, according to The Hill.

The U.S. return to the deal, backed by other world's major power, is yet to materialize in the Biden Democratic administration.

The Democrats argued that Trump's withdrawal "made America less safe," saying, "America's credibility has been severely damaged and its national security damaged."

"The Obama administration did not only prove that diplomacy with Iran works, it also proved that no other policy tool advances American security more effectively than diplomacy," they wrote to Biden. "We urge you to continue on this proven path of success."

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison (D) and Democratic Ohio congressional candidate Nina Turner were among the most notable signatories.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal in 2018 and started imposing the harshest sanction on Iran in history.

Trump did this despite the fact that the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency was fully cooperating with the terms of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In fact, the Trump administration violated international law as the JCPOA is endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

A leading Indian academic says Trump's exit from the JCPOA violated all legal, strategic and diplomatic norms.

"The U.S. President Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal was extremely foolish morally, legally, strategically, and diplomatically," Ashok Swain tells the Tehran Times.

**'Nuclear talks moving to crucial stage'**

The top European Union diplomat said on Monday that negotiations in Vienna between world powers and Iran are moving into a crucial stage and the next few weeks will be critical to saving 2015 nuclear deal.

U.S. officials returned to Vienna last week for a fourth round of indirect talks with Iran on how to resume compliance with the deal.

"I am optimistic, there is a window of opportunity that will stay open for a couple of weeks, (until) end of the month," EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell, who is chairing the talks, told a news conference in Brussels.

"But a lot of work is needed, time is limited and I hope that the negotiations will enter into a phase of nonstop (talks) in Vienna," he said following a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas described the negotiations as tough and laborious, but added that all participants were conducting them in a constructive atmosphere.

"However, time is running out. We aim for the full restoration of the Iran nuclear deal as this is the only way to guarantee that Iran will not be able to come into possession of nuclear weapons," Maas said in Brussels.

**IAEA says technical talks with Iran going on in parallel to Vienna negotiations**

The director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Monday that talks on the technical aspects of Iran's peaceful nuclear program are going on in the Austrian capital Vienna in parallel to political talks on the revival of the landmark nuclear deal clinched by Tehran and world powers in July 2015.

"We are in the midst of technical talks

with Iran parallel to the ongoing political talks in the Austrian capital," Rafael Grossi told reporters on Monday.

Representatives of Iran and the other five signatories to the nuclear agreement -- Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China -- have been engaged in the Vienna process since early April with the purpose of finding ways to bring the United States back to the JCPOA and prepare the ground for its full implementation.

They wrapped up another round of talks in Vienna on Friday apparently without any breakthrough, with both sides agreeing to speed up the diplomatic process.

Besides re-imposing the anti-Iran sanctions lifted by the JCPOA, the U.S. targeted the Iranian nation with several sets of additional bans under new pretexts and labels.

Now, with Trump gone, Biden's administration says it seeks to rejoin the deal, but it has so far refused take meaningful action to regain Iran's trust and come back to compliance.

In excessive demand, the U.S. says Iran should first resume the nuclear commitments it has suspended in resorting to its legal retaliation rights defined in Article 26 of the agreement before Washington lifts the sanctions. Tehran has firmly rejected that demand, saying it is up to the US, as the party that abandoned the JCPOA, to take the first back toward the deal by lifting all the anti-Iran sanctions practically and verifiably.

In his Monday remarks, Grossi pointed to a three-month deadline given to the IAEA by Iran based on a temporary technical understanding reached between the two sides in February and said "patience" is required to achieve outcomes from the ongoing political talks in Vienna.

"But in the event that a political agreement is not reached before May 20, I will start direct talks with the Iranians to ensure that the inspections will be completed," the UN nuclear agency chief added, according to globalsec.org.

In February, Iran halted its voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol that allowed the IAEA to carry short-notice

inspections at its nuclear sites.

Later in February, Iran and the IAEA reached a technical understanding under which Iran continued to keep the camera footage at its nuclear sites for up to three months in a goodwill gesture in support of diplomacy, waiting to see whether the other parties to the JCPOA can manage to bring the U.S. back into full compliance with the deal.

That deadline would come to an end on May 21, while the prospects of reaching an agreement to bring Washington into compliance with the JCPOA look uncertain.

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, who is the head of the Iranian delegation to the Vienna talks, told NHK on Friday that the Islamic Republic may consider extending the deal with the IAEA on inspections of its nuclear sites.

**'Vienna negotiations taking time but constructive'**

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas also said on Monday that time is of the essence in the Vienna talks but emphasized that despite lengthy negotiations, they are conducted in a good atmosphere.

"The negotiations are tough and laborious but all participants are conducting the talks in a constructive atmosphere," Maas said on the margins of a meeting with his European Union counterparts in Brussels.

"However, time is running out. We aim for the full restoration of the Iran nuclear deal," he added.

**EU says Vienna talks on JCPOA revival moving to crucial stage**

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell also on Monday expressed his optimism about the Vienna talks, saying the negotiations are moving into a crucial stage and the next few weeks will be critical to saving the nuclear deal.

"I am optimistic, there is a window of opportunity that will stay open for a couple of weeks, (until) end of the month," Borrell, whose deputy Enrique Mora is chairing the talks in Vienna, told a news conference.

"But a lot of work is needed, time is limited and I hope that the negotiations will enter in a phase of nonstop (talks) in Vienna," he added after a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

Pakistan FM lauds moves by Iran, Saudi Arabia to reduce tensions

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN— Pakistan's foreign minister on Tuesday praised the de-escalation process between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"The path for de-escalation is not short but Tehran and Riyadh have started this move," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said, according to IRNA.

Pakistan's chief diplomat made the remarks in a press conference in Islamabad as he was elaborating on the recent visit by Prime Minister Imran Khan to the Saudi Kingdom.

Prime Minister Khan made a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia starting on May 7 to reset ties. Khan's visit to Riyadh was a significant move to rebuild relations between the historic allies following recent setbacks, analysts said.

Pointing to his meeting with the Saudi foreign minister in Riyadh while accompanying Khan in visit to Saudi Arabia, he said during the visit Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan-al-Saud briefed him on the steps taken by his country in regard to Iran.

Foreign Minister Qureshi said "flexibility" on the part of Iran and Saudi Arabia is highly encouraging, and Pakistan feels that the wish for strengthening Islamic unity, especially in allaying concerns between Iran and Pakistan, is being realized.

He added, "We are hopeful about these attempts."

Qureshi also called visit by the Turkish foreign minister to Riyadh and also the Saudi decision in inviting Qatar's foreign minister to visit the Kingdom are all indications in line with reducing tension between regional

countries and they show common view by the sides that the only path to stability in the region is peace and security.

On April 29, Pakistan's prime minister welcomed moves by the Saudi crown prince for trying to heal the rift with Tehran and said efforts by Riyadh to mend ties with Tehran will benefit the Islamic community.

Qureshi also said he plans to visit Baghdad in future days to follow peace negotiations because Baghdad has been the focus of certain diplomatic moves in the recent weeks to reduce tensions in the region.



# Iran rejects Pentagon's claim, denounces U.S. 'unprofessional' behavior in Hormuz

→1 The IRGC Navy statement came a day after Pentagon press secretary John Kirby accused Iran of committing "harassment" against the American navy in the Strait of Hormuz. Kirby claimed that the Iranian vessels maneuvered at high speed toward six U.S. Navy ships in the Strait. According to Kirby, the encounter led to a U.S. Coast Guard cutter firing two volleys of warning shots as Iranian boats sped toward the U.S. vessels. But the IRGC statement said Kirby's account of the encounter was "untrue" and aimed to create a perception of American responsibility toward preventing miscalculations. "The Americans must avoid untrue stories and unprofessional behaviors and seriously abide by international regulations as well as the maritime and band control laws in the strategic region of the Hormuz Strait and the Persian Gulf," the statement said. The IRGC Navy also said it will continue its missions in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf and it is ready to "decisively and



courageously respond to any miscalculations on their [Americans] part."

The Monday encounter also elicited a response from Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who asked the U.S. Coast Guard that whose coast they are supposed to guard.

"@USCG: Exactly whose coast are you supposed to be 'guarding'?" he asked on Twitter.

Zarif's tweet reflects a longstanding Iranian policy that the U.S. should move away from the West Asia region, especially the Persian Gulf where the U.S. has deployed a remarkable number of military assets. Iran has called on the Persian Gulf's Arab states to enter dialogue on how to secure the region's security without the presence of foreign military troops. To this end, Iran has presented the Hormuz Peace Endeavor, an initiative aimed at maintaining security in the Persian Gulf through cooperation among its littoral states.

## Zarif lambasts Israeli regime for shooting innocent worshippers

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister on Monday criticized the Israeli regime for pursuing inhumane policies against the Palestinian people during the holy month of Ramadan.

Zarif said Israeli forces are shooting worshippers at a holy place and on a holy occasion.

"It wasn't enough for the Israeli regime to -Steal people's land & homes; -Create an Apartheid regime; -Refuse to vaccinate civilians under illegal occupation. It had to shoot innocent worshippers inside Islam's 3rd Holiest Mosque upon Islam's Holiest Eid. #AlAqsaUnderAttack," the chief Iranian diplomat said on Twitter.

The tweet came amid international outcry over Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Israeli security forces, along with Jewish settlers, besieged and attacked one of the holiest sites in Islam on Monday, injuring more than 700 Palestinians in the West Bank alone.

Israeli authorities have imposed restrictions on the Palestinian residents of al-Quds (Jerusalem), effectively preventing them from practicing their faith since early Ramadan. They also tried to evict Palestinian families from Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and give their ancestral homes to Jewish settlers.

The international community strongly condemned Israel for confiscating Palestinians' homes and urged it to put an end to its atrocities against the Palestinians.

Facing an increasingly violent Israeli crackdown, Palestinians peacefully staged protests against Israeli atrocities. They turned in large numbers in the al-Aqsa mosque. Some 90,000 Palestinians participated in a Ramadan prayer called Tarawih in the al-Aqsa mosque in what appeared to be a message to Israeli authorities that the Palestinians will not acquiesce to Israeli measures.

In addition to suppressing the Palestinian protests in Jerusalem, Israel also launched a bombing campaign against Gaza that resulted in the killing of dozens of innocent people. Israel bombed Gaza because it showed solidarity with the Jerusalemites by launching rockets on Israeli targets. Israel killed more than a dozen in Gaza and it vows to continue its killing campaign against the Palestinians.

On Tuesday, the Israeli army threatened to intensify raids on the Gaza Strip. The Israeli army spokesman said that his army will intensify its raids during the next twenty-four hours, indicating that the military campaign



### The international community strongly condemned Israel for confiscating Palestinians' homes and urged it to put an end to its atrocities against the Palestinians.

on the Strip will continue for several more days. Meanwhile, a large number of countries and international organizations have called on Israel to stop its crackdown against Palestinians.

"The Secretary-General expresses his deep concern over the continuing violence in occupied East Jerusalem, as well as the possible evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighborhoods. He urges Israel to cease demolitions and evictions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian and international human

**Abul Gheit held Israel responsible for this "dangerous escalation" of the situation in Jerusalem and called on the international community to act immediately to stop the violence.**

rights law," a spokesperson for the UN secretary-general said in a statement on Monday.

"Israeli authorities must exercise maximum restraint and respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. All leaders have a responsibility to act against extremists and to speak out against all acts of violence and incitement. The Secretary-General urges that the status quo at the holy sites be upheld and respected," the statement added.

Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul Gheit also condemned Israeli indiscriminate attacks on Gaza. He said Tuesday that the airstrikes launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip were "indiscriminate and irresponsible." In a statement, Abul Gheit held Israel responsible for this "dangerous escalation" of the situation in Jerusalem and called on the international community to act immediately to stop the violence.

The European Union also reacted to the Israeli atrocities, calling for an immediate halt to violence in East Jerusalem.

"The significant upsurge in violence in the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem as well as in and around Gaza needs to stop immediately," the European Union said in a statement on Monday.

Arab and Muslim countries also denounced Israel's moves against the Palestinians. But the international outcry did nothing to stop an Israeli leadership hellbent to score political goals by spilling the blood of Palestinian children.

Sami Abu Shehadeh, Palestinian Knesset member and leader of the Balad party, said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu allowed for an "escalation" in a bid to remain in power, according to Al Jazeera.

"In order to survive this political crisis he finds himself in now, and in order for him not to lose control and not to lose his seat as prime minister ... he is ready to do anything," Shehadeh said.

"All the escalation we are seeing now has a clear political target from Netanyahu's point of view, and he is ready to do anything to keep himself in power including this massacre that we are going to see in Gaza," he said.

"What is happening here is a clear political decision that Netanyahu is responsible for to keep power," Shehadeh pointed out.

So far, Netanyahu has failed to put together a cabinet even though he has led Israel to hold four general elections in a relatively short period.

## Russia says Iran's deal with IAEA likely to be extended

→1 2. To a temporary bilateral technical understanding, compatible with the Law, whereby the IAEA will continue with its necessary verification and monitoring activities for up to 3 months (as per technical annex). 3. To keep the technical understanding under regular review to ensure it continues to achieve its purposes."

On Sunday, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who is leading Iran's negotiating team in Vienna, said the deal may be extended.

He told Japanese broadcaster NHK that Iran hopes enough progress will be made so that there will be no need for an extension. But he said that if needed, Iran will consider an extension at a proper time.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, announced Monday that extending Iran's cooperation deal with the International Atomic Energy Agency is one of the country's options a day after the top Iranian negotiator signaled a readiness to extend the deal.

Khatibzadeh elaborated on Araghchi's comments, underlining that what Araghchi said was that the parliamentary nuclear law was binding and it will expire on May 30.

The nuclear law stipulates that the Iranian government should take certain nuclear measures such as raising the level of uranium enrichment to 20% and suspending the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran's deal with the IAEA came a few days before the law came into force.

Speaking at his Monday press conference, Khatibzadeh said, "What Dr.

Araghchi said in the interview with NHK is that the law of the parliament is binding and the date of May 30 regarding the agreement between Iran and the IAEA is definitive."

The spokesman said Iran is not in a hurry to reach a conclusion in the Vienna talks but at the same time it seeks to prevent them from becoming draining.

"We do not want any date to prevent Tehran's executive instructions from being strictly implemented for the negotiating team," he pointed out. "In this interview, Dr. Araghchi pointed to only one of the choices for the date of May 21. If the talks are on the right track, with the coordination of both parties and Tehran's approval, this date can be extended."

Khatibzadeh said the decision regarding the extension of the February deal will not be made by the Iranian negotiating team. Instead, it will be made in Tehran.

At the same time that Araghchi hoped that the technical agreement would be extended, his American counterpart Wendy Sherman also expressed hope that this agreement would be extended.

"I am hopeful that we can reach an understanding so that the IAEA technical agreement that expires with Iran at the end of May can be extended," Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman told a meeting at the Atlantic Council on May 7, according to Rozen. "I'm hopeful that we make enough progress that it can stand as the Iranian election gets underway in June."

Diplomats from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries as well as the U.S. are in Vienna to discuss the measures needed to be taken to bring Tehran and Washington back into full compliance with the JCPOA. The Iranian negotiating



team held Monday a tripartite meeting with the three European signatories to the JCPOA – France, Germany and the UK – who act as intermediaries between Iran and the U.S. during the Vienna talks.

Also, three expert-level working groups are examining the measures needed to get Iran and the U.S. back to compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal.

In addition, the U.S. and Russian delegations held bilateral meetings to discuss developments related to the JCPOA. The Russian delegation also met with the European signatories to the JCPOA.

"Met with Political Directors of France, Germany and U.K. who lead their respective delegations at the Vienna talks on full restoration of JCPOA. We had a constructive exchange of views on the current state of affairs and issues to be settled in order to achieve our common goal," Ulyanov said on Twitter after meeting the Europeans.

As regards his discussions with the U.S. delegation, the Russian diplomat said they were businesslike and useful.

"The Russian and the US delegations at the Vienna talks on JCPOA met again to exchange views on the progress made, as well as the way ahead. As always, the discussion was businesslike and useful," Ulyanov tweeted.

Almost all parties to the Vienna talks

have said some progress has been made in the talks but they also have said the talks are coming up against some difficulties.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Khatibzadeh said, "The talks in Vienna have entered the phase of drafting texts in the field of sanctions lifting and nuclear measures. Besides, a third working group whose work is being pursued more calmly is working. It is wrestling with different details, and these fluidities and details do not allow us to make public announcements, because the talks are going on and reach a different conclusion every day."

He also said that as part of its commitments, the United States has accepted much of what it ought to do. Khatibzadeh said there are also some sanctions that the U.S. is not willing to lift, but Iran has made it clear that these sanctions were imposed to destroy the JCPOA and prevent Iran from reaping benefits from the JCPOA and thus must be removed.

"It is no secret that we have serious differences in this area. We are in talks with the Joint Commission of JCPOA and Tehran is examining this issue. Reports are reviewed in Tehran, and the positions are notified to the negotiating team every day, and they follow up," he noted.

There are disagreements between the U.S. and Iran over which sanctions should be removed. The U.S. wants to keep some sanctions in place to use them as leverage to expand talks beyond the JCPOA, something that Iran has vehemently rejected. The sanctions have been put into three baskets – green, yellow, and red, depending on how clearly they are inconsistent with the deal. Green will be lifted; yellow must be negotiated; and red will stay, according to The New York Times.

## SPORTS

### Daei, Hejazi the best Iranian players of century: IFFHS

SPORTS TEHRAN – Ali Daei and late Naser Hejazi have been named as the best Iranian player and goalkeeper of the XXth century (1901-2000) respectively by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS).



Daei represented Iran football team from 1993 to 2006 and made 149 matches. He holds the record for the most number of international goals with 109 strikes.

Hejazi, was Iran's custodian from 1968 to 1980. He made 62 appearances for the Iranian national football team. Hejazi passed away in May 2011 due to lung cancer.

### Iran's women's football team to play Belarus

SPORTS TEHRAN – Iran's women's football team will play a friendly match against Belarus in Tehran, capital of Iran.

The match has been scheduled for June 8. The warm-up game will be held as part of preparation for the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualification in September.

Iran coach Maryam Iran دوست has invited 30 players for the one-week training camp which started on Tuesday in Tehran.

"In my opinion, a friendly match is better than 10 training session," Irandoost told Iran football federation's website. "The friendly match will help us to identify our strengths and weaknesses, what we need."

Iran are 70th in FIFA ranking while Belarus sit on 54th place. "We have difficult task ahead due to shortage of time. We are going to shorten the gap between the Asian top teams such as Australia, South Korea and Japan. The friendlies can play a significant role in our preparation," she stated.

### Akbarian to officiate Tehran derby

SPORTS TEHRAN – Mohammadreza Akbarian will take charge Esteghlal and Persepolis clash in Tehran derby. He will be assisted by Alireza Ildorom and Mahdi Alighadr in this match.

The match will be held on Friday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium. Akbarian has been named as FIFA International Referee since 2013.

Persepolis and Esteghlal are favorites to win title of 2020/21 Iran Professional League season.

The match will be 95 competitive meetings between the teams. Esteghlal have won 26, Persepolis 24 and the remaining 44 games finished as draws.

### Esteghlal, Persepolis in potential title decider

SPORTS TEHRAN – In one of the long-awaited encounters in Iranian football, Persepolis will lock horn against Esteghlal in the Iran Professional League (IPL) at the Azadi Stadium on Friday in Tehran.

The Tehran derby is even considered one of the most exciting matches in the world's club competitions. COVID-19 has changed many things in Iran, including the football venues' ambience in the match days with crowds temporarily frozen out of the matches. However, it is still exhilarating and breathtaking as both teams share a great rivalry and hate to lose a Shahrvard (derby) game.

This is also one of the most important season games for both clubs and could give them a huge lift for the remaining part of the season. Esteghlal had a poor start to their season, but they have somehow captured their form under the new coach Farhad Majidi and got good results in the AFC Champions League (ACL) group stage last month.

However, in their return to the domestic games, the Blues suffered a bitter 2-0 defeat against struggling team Zob Ahan. If Majidi's side beat Persepolis, they could close the gap with their rival to five points with one game in hand and probably believe they can even overtake both Persepolis and current IPL leaders Sepahan.

Persepolis, on the other hand, although they started the season slowly, they have managed to find their consistency and form with Yahya Golmohammadi and can tie on points with Sepahan on the top of the table if they beat Esteghlal on Friday.

Persepolis shared the spoils with Sepahan in a controversial match on Sunday. The Reds have had a lot of success in the last four years, and some of the current key players of the team have been integral to their successes, including four consecutive IPL titles and two ACL finals in three years.

Persepolis defense has been quite solid in this season, like the previous seasons, and it has been one of the main reasons they have been successful under leadership of Golmohammadi.

The key battle will be between the solid defense of Persepolis against the Esteghlal's threatening attacking trio, Mehdi Ghaedi, Check Diabate, and Arsalan Motahari.

The Tehran derby result will be decisive for the title, with just a handful of matches left to play.

### Mousavi reaches agreement with Fenerbahce

SPORTS TEHRAN – Iran international middle blocker Seyed Mohammad Mousavi has reached an agreement with Turkish volleyball team Fenerbahce, volleyball, it reported. The 34-year-old player has most recently played in Italian volleyball club Piacenza.

Turkish media reports suggest that Mousavi has reached an agreement with Fenerbahce for the next season.

Mousavi will represent Iran national volleyball team in the 2021 Volleyball Nations league and 2020 Olympic Games.



## Gas condensate output expected to reach 1.3m bpd by Mar. 2022

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran's gas condensate production is expected to reach 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022), the Iranian Oil Ministry announced.

Iran is currently producing over 550,000 barrels of gas condensate on a daily basis, part of which is directly exported to foreign destinations, and a part is used as the feedstock for domestic refineries.

Gas condensate, also called condensate, is a low-density mixture of hydrocarbon liquids that are present as gaseous components in the raw natural gas produced from many natural gas fields. Some gas species within the raw natural gas will condense to a liquid state if the temperature is reduced to below the hydrocarbon dew point temperature at a set pressure.

Most of Iran's gas condensate is produced from the country's giant South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf waters.



Iran used to export much of its condensate to Asia, with South Korea and Japan being major customers, but U.S. sanctions in 2018 led to a sharp decline in the exports.

Therefore, back in May 2020, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said that his ministry planned to halt direct gas condensate exports to create products with more added value.

Zanganeh said the plan is to process the condensate in the country's refineries in order to produce products like naphtha and gasoline and to supply feedstock to local refineries.

"All the gas condensate will be refined in the Persian Gulf Star and Siraf refineries ... to gasoline and feedstock for petrochemical units," Zanganeh said.

Persian Gulf Star Refinery currently receives 420,000 barrels per day (bpd) of gas condensate.

Zanganeh said South Pars and other nearby fields can produce up to one million bpd of gas condensate.

In early February 2020, the minister had said that about 130,000 bpd of the country's gas condensate were used as feedstock for the country's petrochemical plants and 80,000 bpd go to domestic refineries, apart from Persian Gulf Star.

## 15 idle mines to be revived in Qom province by next March

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — As announced by a provincial official, 15 idle mines are planned to be revived in Iran's central Qom province by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Mahmoud Sijani, the head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, said, "When reviving the idle mines, the issues of processing and value-added are of high significance, and given the existence of 45 idle mines in the province, it is hoped that we can revive these mines through a long-term planning."

In terms of paying facilities to the mines, the official stated that there is no limit in this due, and 11 trillion rials (about \$262 million) of facilities will be paid in the current year.

The head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced that 253 idle small-scale mines were revived throughout the country in the previous Iranian calendar year.



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

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

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

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

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

The program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO's missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several provinces. Khodadad Gharibpour, IMIDRO's former head had mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of "Resistance Economy", saying that IMIDRO is strongly determined to carry out it.

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

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

# Electricity projects worth over \$320m put into operation

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The National Dispatching Center manages the entire power grid, including power plants, transmission lines and substations throughout the country.

Also, according to the mega project for modification and optimization of the power network in 10,000 villages during the current year, the power grid connecting 560 villages with 70,000 households will be optimized in the first phase.

Also, based on a program for supplying nomadic households with solar power, the Energy Ministry plans to provide such households with portable PV systems. According to the mentioned program, 20,000 nomadic households will benefit from solar power through PV systems.

The first phase of the A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020), during which 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion) were put into operation across the country.

In the second phase of the program that



was carried out in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) 250 water and energy projects worth 500 trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) were inaugurated in several provinces.

The third phase of the program was officially started in early April and like the previous phases, this year, too, the Energy Ministry is planning to inaugurate numerous water and electricity projects in various

provinces every week.

In the last week of the previous Iranian calendar year (which was the last week of the second phase of the A-B-Iran scheme) Ardakanian had inaugurated several new systems for improving services in the water and electricity sectors.

The mentioned systems were put into operation in various areas including resource consumption improvement, asset utilization, human resource management, financial resources management, and reforming work processes in order to create transparency and to facilitate and accelerate affairs while eliminating possible bottlenecks.

A smart system for improving the Energy Ministry's support and emergency centers called Homa, as well as a new customer services system called Chavoush were also among the launched systems.

A mechanized network monitoring system called Sanam was also put into operation; this system is aimed at monitoring the electricity networks of various provinces in order to reduce electricity losses and improve the efficiency of the country's power network.

## Domestic knowledge-based companies to build ICT, electronic equipment for ports

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iranian knowledge-based companies have signed four deals with the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) for manufacturing electronic as well as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment for the country's ports.

The signing ceremony was attended by the PMO Head Mohammad Rastad as well as the head of the mentioned companies and officials from the country's maritime industry, IRIB reported on Monday.

According to Rastad, the mentioned projects will be completed and the equipment will be unveiled by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Rastad underlined the technological needs of the country's maritime and port sectors and said: "Currently, fields like ports and commercial maritime shipping have some equipment requirements that we must meet."

The mentioned equipment is required in areas like port operations, loading and unloading of goods from ships, as well as storage of goods in warehouses, and finally ensuring safety and protection of the marine environment, he explained.

The official noted that PMO has held numerous meetings with the country's knowledge-based companies for brainstorming on the issues and the technological needs of the ports and maritime sectors and to be able to benefit from their capabilities and capacities in this regard.

According to Rastad, the U.S. sanctions on the industry have acted as a driving force for PMO to push for domestic production of the products needed in the industry and to move toward self-sufficiency.

"We had a lot of problems during the sanctions, many of the foreign manufacturers that had sold equipment to us did not meet their obligations and refused to provide after-sales services, and this caused us a lot of problems in this area," he said, adding: "We are now moving in a direction where our dependence on foreign products has decreased."

"In the meetings we had with industrial and knowledge-based companies, they announced their readiness to produce the needed equipment and therefore we are moving towards complete self-sufficiency in port and maritime industries."

Back in April, Rastad had announced that his organization plans to take all the necessary measures for supporting



the companies active in various maritime sectors during the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21).

"In line with the current year's motto which is "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles", PMO has put it on the agenda to provide necessary supports for domestic producers," he said.

## Industry Ministry allows approved producers to export steel products

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has issued a three-month waiver for some approved steel production units to be able to export steel products especially long sections, ILNA reported.

The mentioned waiver will come into effect as of May 15, the report said.

The Industry Ministry had restricted the exports of steel products and obliged all steel producers to offer their products at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

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



(ISPA) showed.

Based on the mentioned data, over 2.839 million tons of steel products were exported in the mentioned year, registering an 18-percent decline year on year.

As ISPA data indicated, the exports of steel products, intermediate steel, and sponge iron all declined last year, and despite significant output growth and the demand decline in the domestic construction sector, the exports of the mentioned products did not increase due to the pandemic.

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

Mobarakeh Steel Company had the best performance with a production of 9.8 million tons of the mentioned product while the highest production growth was registered by Sirjan Steel World Company with 141

percent growth.

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

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

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

## TEDPIX jumps 21,900 points on Tuesday

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 21,934 points to 1.179 million on Tuesday.

Over 5.986 billion securities worth 47.423 trillion rials (about \$1.129 billion) were traded at the TSE on Tuesday.

The first market's index rose 19,664 points, and the second market's index climbed 31,903 points.

A capital market analyst says that TEDPIX is going to improve over the next 1.5 months in comparison to the first 1.5 months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

Rouzbeh Shariati believes reaching a possible agreement on the nuclear deal, the stability of the national currency, as well as the less attractive situation of the parallel markets are the important factors that would contribute to the improvement of the capital market.

"Prospects of a political agreement and positive signals from

Vienna have reduced the foreign currency exchange rates in the domestic market. The stock market, however, had already anticipated this agreement. In fact, the anticipation of the agreement has already caused the correction of prices in the capital market," the analyst said.

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

Following the rising concerns over the market conditions, in early April, the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters, in its 216th meeting, approved some new directives for regulating the stock market.

Also in late April, senior officials including the parliament

speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati, Finance, and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand, and the Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi gathered at the country's parliament to explore ways for supporting the stock market and resolving its current issues.

After the mentioned meetings, SEO unveiled a new directive package dubbed "7+3" which 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.

## East Azarbaijan ranked 2nd in terms of reviving stagnant production units

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Reviving 107 idle production units, East Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of Iran, was ranked the second in the country in terms of making such units active during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), a provincial official announced.

Morteza Niroomand Oskuei, the managing director of the province's Industrial Parks Company, said that the number of revived units was the same as planned.

The official said that the mentioned units were inactive mainly because of the banking, insurance, and tax problems, and returned to the production cycle through the serious support of this company and other related provincial organizations.

He announced that over three trillion rials (about \$71.42 million) were invested to revive

those units, and reviving them created jobs for 1,612 persons.

As announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, 1,500 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the past year.

According to Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were also established across the country during the mentioned year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and exec-



utive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."

Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: "The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest

in the productive sectors."

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

According to the official, there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran's industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

Iran's industrial parks play a significant role in making the country independent through boosting production, which is a major strategy of Iran to combat the U.S. sanctions.

In fact, strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.



# Bribed normalisation: The reverse effects

→ 1 With the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, in addition to the seed of the resistance movements that grew in Lebanon and Palestine, the balance of powers in the region began to shift gradually; what was considered an 'undefeatable' army, that sought to expand 'from the Nile to the Euphrates' by time began to deteriorate, culminating in the unilateral withdrawal of the Wrong State from Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005.

With this, the central idea of consolidating their presence, as a State that is capable of life began to diminish; they were unable to expand practically on the ground, since the growth of the real resistance movements and the environment of enmity that surrounded the Wrong State created rules of engagements, that increased in favour of the resistance movements, despite what was considered a betrayal through the normalisation tactics with the Arab States, that started at the Camp David Accords (with Egypt), to the Wadi Araba Treaty (with Jordan) and the Oslo Accords (with the PLO itself).

In facing this situation, the Wrong State began to substitute its expansion territorially with expansion through penetrating the political sphere, which includes the use of intelligence to conduct security missions, assassination attempts of resistance figures and Iranian scientists, and the increased open normalisation of ties with surrounding Arab states.

Indeed, this shift from territorial expansion to political interference has demonstrated the Wrong State's diminishing power; the evidence for this is that all the previous assassinations attempt of the Iranian nuclear scientists to stop nuclear programme, led to more nuclear enrichment and advancements.

In addition, the normalisation of ties with Arab State's has not succeeded; the evidence for this is that after four decades of the historic treaty with Egypt, economic relations between the signatories have been very limited, whilst 85% of Egyptians oppose diplomatic recognition of the Wrong State.

Indeed, the Palestinian Authority themselves, who have on many levels compromised with the Wrong State, cannot see eye to eye with America's plans - from the Deal of Century to brokering the open normalisation of ties.

The reality is that America, the entity fighting the battle on behalf of the Wrong



State is withdrawing from the region because their plots have been defeated, their presence has become increasingly limited and under surveillance, whilst the balance of power is not in their favour. The balance will continue to shift in favour of the Axis of resistance, and the proof of that is America's continued shrinking presence in the region.

This shift is a reality, whilst the West can't shift the balance to their favour on the ground, so they resort to illusionary actions and fake talks, and the open normalisation of ties is an example of this. The West are seeking to solve the issue with sound bombs, but the reality is that it has changed nothing. The reality is that America is leaving because they have no other choice, what is left for them is their gang actions of boycotts, embargoes, and sanctions - they really have nothing else to do or talk about.

Indeed, the normalisation of ties we are witnessing cannot and should not be considered as a weakening factor for the Axis of resistance, the same Axis that managed to penetrate with its few numbers and resources into the whole region that was all situated in the American camp to begin with, and to thwart all the American plots of giving birth to a 'New Middle East', one after the other.

Additionally, it is not the case that the (Persian) Gulf states, Sudan and Morocco were ever a part of the Axis of Resistance for the resistance to have 'lost' anything, and it is also not the case that the Wrong State has gained any new allies in their fight against the Axis; the (Persian) Gulf states were coordinating with the Wrong State under the cover and it is now simply a case of exposure.

Indeed, the governments of the UAE, Bahrain and the others that followed are

**“The normalisation of ties we are witnessing cannot and should not be considered as a weakening factor for the Axis of resistance, the same Axis that managed to penetrate with its few numbers and resources into the whole region that was all situated in the American camp to begin with, and to thwart all the American plots of giving birth to a ‘New Middle East’, one after the other.”**

## Israel likely to intensify tensions before a JCPOA revival: professor

→ 1 Also, both countries do not want Iran to be out from under sanctions pressure claiming that that frees up more Iranian money for weapons, support of proxies, etc. Thus, while a nuclear deal between Iran and the United States could improve relations between those two states, it might actually prompt states like Israel and Saudi Arabia to take measures to weaken Iran or scuttle the deal. This is more likely to come from Israel than Saudi Arabia because Israel is a more capable military force in the region and has more political leverage in Washington compared to Saudi Arabia.

**Israeli officials warn about a war if the U.S. reaches an agreement with Iran over restoring the JCPOA? Given Israel's repeated sabotage operations against Iran and the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists, do you expect more escalation after the agreement?**

I think it is entirely possible that Israel will try to stop the movement toward the deal. Also, even if a deal is reached between the United States and Iran, Israel will continue to look at Iran as a very significant threat to its national security and will try to stop any Iranian efforts to develop the know-how or capacity to develop nuclear weapons or missiles that threaten Israel.

**Apparently, Saudi Arabia is going to change its policy towards Iran as it showed more flexibility to Qatar. Are Saudis getting directions from Washington to change their foreign policies? And do you expect the end of the war in Yemen?**

The Saudis are feeling somewhat isolated on Iran now as the Trump policy of giving Saudi Arabia the benefit of the doubt on most matters is no longer the

policy of the U.S. government. Biden has a much more negative perspective on Saudi Arabia than Trump did. It seems that Saudi Arabia sees what can be done to reduce tensions with Iran because they feel vulnerable. That can easily change and I would not be surprised if it does. Iran is not about to abandon its allied forces in the Middle East (West Asia), such as the militias in Iraq or the Houthis in Yemen. The Houthis, in particular, are a matter of grave concern for Saudi Arabia. I am not convinced that the Saudi posture toward Iran will really change that much.

**U.S. administration is going to pull its troops from Afghanistan. Do the Americans want to focus on China instead of West Asia?**

Yes, that is part of it. China is viewed as the biggest threat to U.S. national security in the American national security establishment. The other reason why the U.S. is pulling out of Afghanistan and arguably from the Middle East (West Asia) is that Biden believes that there is no longer the stomach in the American electorate for "forever wars." A great deal of the U.S. security establishment believes pulling out of Afghanistan is a mistake and will diminish U.S. national security. There certainly was no consensus that it was the smart thing to do.

**Biden recognized the Armenian genocide. Politically what was his purpose? What will be the possible consequences?**

There has been a great deal of pressure on American politicians for some time to recognize the Armenian genocide. The Armenian lobby is fairly strong in the U.S. This is part of the reason for the decision. But part of it is also based on the changing nature of the



U.S.-Turkish relationship. Turkey under Erdogan is not viewed as a steadfast ally of the U.S. anymore. Erdogan's authoritarian politics, his aggressive policies in the region, and his willingness to buy weapons from Russia despite being part of NATO have all been major irritants in Washington. Thus, part of the rationale for the decision was to signal to Erdogan that U.S. patience with Turkey is waning. The last aspect of the decision to mention is the expected minimal fall-out from the decision. Turkey needs the U.S. more than the U.S. needs Turkey. Turkey's precarious economic situation, general diplomatic isolation from the West, and lower importance in the fight against ISIS have really decreased Erdogan's ability to leverage his position against Washington.

**The reason why the U.S. is pulling out of Afghanistan and arguably from the Middle East (West Asia) is that Biden believes that there is no longer the stomach in the American electorate for "forever wars."**

## Amnesty International demands end to Israel's brutal repression of Palestinians in al-Quds

Amnesty International has called for the cessation of the repeated, unwarranted and excessive force used by Israeli forces against Palestinian protesters in occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, which is boiling over with anger over the planned expulsions of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

"Evidence gathered by Amnesty International reveals a chilling pattern of Israeli forces using abusive and wanton force against

largely peaceful Palestinian protesters in recent days. Some of those injured in the violence in East Jerusalem (al-Quds) include bystanders or worshippers making Ramadan prayers," Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International, Saleh Higazi, said.

He added, "The latest violence brings into sharp focus Israel's sustained campaign to expand illegal Israeli settlements and step up forced evictions of Palestinian

residents - such as those in Sheikh Jarrah - to make way for Israeli settlers. These forced evictions are part of a continuing pattern in Sheikh Jarrah, they flagrantly violate international law and would amount to war crimes."

According to Press TV, the senior Amnesty International official further said the Tel Aviv regime must not be allowed to continue its rampage against Palestinians, who are simply defending their right to

not active governments that pose real threats, they are just a 'number' from the many countries running policies that are not even in their hands and have always been puppets of their masters who direct them; hence they lack effectiveness.

Whilst the normalisation of ties in some respects is empowering the West, through facilitating actions that would otherwise not be easily done under the cover, such as preparing the setup and facilitation for them to conduct security and military missions in the open, it is benefiting the Axis of resistance in some important and prominent respects. That is, despite the collapsed and despaired state of the Arab countries, the people of Egypt and Jordan after all these years are predominantly against such normalisation, in addition to the (Persian) Gulf states, Sudan and Morocco, which isn't different from the mainstream public opinion of the Arab world that are and will by default consider normalisation a red line and betrayal; indeed, this fact is not being understood by America and their puppets.

This enhances the ability of the resistance to win the hearts and minds of the people of the region and facilitating relations with the people, as the resistance's credibility surfaces, and its increased popularity and acceptance allows it to navigate with more tools and expand its capabilities in the region.

The reality is that the masses of the people want those who walk the talk, who hold the flag up high, and it is becoming crystal clear who the real forces on the ground and who the traitors are, whilst pressure from the nations people against the corrupt doings of their government will mount onto a threaten against them.

Indeed, the normalisation of ties in the apparent is not about opening the way for certain victories, for the normalisation has always existed and the sole reason it has gone public is because the masters of the (Persian) Gulf states have asked them to do so. It is also imperative to see such developments in light of the real work being achieved on the ground. On the balance, the Wrong State's achievements are not real, therefore the curve illustrating their power is declining, nor are they able to reverse the power of the resistance and its development; even if it stays where it is, it is time high for the Wrong State to reach zero point, even without there being a physical war.

## Palestinian resistance launches Operation al-Quds Sword as Israeli airstrikes kill 25 in Gaza

Palestinian resistance factions say they have launched 'Operation al-Quds Sword' in retaliation for the Israeli regime's acts of aggression against Palestinians in Jerusalem al-Quds, saying their goal is to liberate the holy city from Israeli occupation.

The factions operating under the Joint Operations Room announced in a statement that resistance fighters have fired hundreds of rockets towards the occupied territories as part of the operation.

The rocket fire was in retaliation for the Tel Aviv regime's raids on al-Aqsa Mosque and Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, they said.

"Operational-Quds Sword is meant to achieve the liberation of the holy city, and is in response to the Occupation's crimes against its residents as well as cries by its freedom-loving locals," the statement stressed.

Israeli sources confirmed that as many as 250 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip towards the occupied territories, adding the Israeli military conducted waves of bombardments against 130 targets in the besieged enclave that they claimed killed 15 Hamas members.

The Joint Operations Room said Palestinian resistance factions launched precise strikes against Israeli-occupied lands, struck an Israeli car near the Gaza border and later carried out intense missile strikes against targets in the coastal city of Tel Aviv in addition to other places.

Furthermore, a senior leader of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement said his fellow fighters will continue to stage retaliatory rocket attacks against the Israeli-occupied territories as long as the regime and its military forces press ahead with their brutal hostilities in the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds and the al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

## Turkish politician calls for solidarity with Palestine

Condemning Israel's inhumane attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque, leader of Turkish Vatan Party has urged Ankara to show solidarity with Palestine.

In a statement issued, Vatan Party chief Dogu Perincek said that "the oppression that Palestinian people is facing is beyond condemnation."

"Israel attacked all humanity and Asia at forefront of humanity at Al-Aqsa Mosques," the statement added.

Pointing to U.S. support for Israel, Perincek noted in his statement that "the U.S. and Israel not only are threatening Palestine, but also Asian countries especially Turkey, Russia, Iran and China with their weapons."

According to the Turkish politician, the U.S. and Israel are facing people of the region and Turkey not only in Jerusalem, but in the Mediterranean, the Aegean and north of Syria.

In recent days, Israeli forces have stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque, assaulting Palestinian worshippers and fired sound bombs that caused a fire to break out in trees inside the Al-Aqsa compound.

After a raid by the Israeli police on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem left hundreds of Palestinians wounded, resistance forces in Gaza responded by firing a barrage of rockets at Jerusalem.

## Resistance News

### Al-Qassam Brigades strongly responds to dawn Israeli airstrike

**INTERNATIONAL** TEHRAN — Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, said Tuesday it had launched a salvo of rockets towards the occupied city of Ashkelon in response to the dawn aerial attack on apartments in the west of Gaza City.

"If the enemy persists in attacking civilian homes, we will turn Ashkelon into an inferno," al-Qassam Brigades said in a communiqué.

According to a statement released by Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon, 26 Israelis were injured, some seriously, after Palestinian rockets struck three buildings in the heart of Ashkelon.

Israel's Channel 13 said that Ashkelon city saw 10 minutes of unprecedented rocket fire.

Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper claimed that at least 50 rockets from Gaza landed in Ashkelon within few minutes and injured a number of Israeli residents.

Earlier Tuesday morning, an Israeli airstrike on an apartment building in Gaza claimed the lives of an elderly woman and two other civilians, including her special needs son.

### Haneyya to Erdogan: We will defend Al-Aqsa and Jerusalem

**INTERNATIONAL** TEHRAN — Ismail Haneyya, the political bureau chairman of Hamas, on Monday afternoon briefed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over the phone on the dangerous developments in Occupied Jerusalem and the courtyards of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Haneyya also informed Erdogan of the Israeli plans for the displacement of the indigenous Palestinian residents from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Occupied Jerusalem, calling for an emergency Islamic summit to check the Israeli schemes.

Haneyya said, "Our decision and the decision of our people is to defend the Al-Aqsa Mosque and defend Jerusalem."

He stressed that he would not allow in any way the Judaization of the holy city or altering its landmarks, pointing out that the real goal of the Israeli occupation is to change the religious character of the city and to end the Islamic presence in it.

The Hamas leader appreciated Turkey's position on all official and popular levels in support of Al-Aqsa and the Jerusalemites.

For his part, Erdogan affirmed that his country has already started contacts with various international institutions and the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the issue.



## Moveable properties in Qom made national heritage

**TOURISM** TEHRAN – A total of 10 historical moveable properties in Qom province, have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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



Ancient teapots, cups, vases, and pots, all discovered in the Sarm Tepe, an ancient hill near Kahak, are among the properties added to the prestigious list.

The ancient items are being kept in the historical Zand Mansion. The country's second-holiest city after Mashhad, Qom is home to both the magnificent shrine of Hazrat-e Masumeh (SA) and the major religious madrasas (schools).

Apart from sightseers and pilgrims who visit Qom to pay homage at the holy shrine, the city is also a top destination for Shiite scholars and students who come from across the world to learn Islamic studies at its madrasas and browse through eminent religious bookshops.

The city's antiquity goes back to the Sassanid era (224 CE–651) and several historical mosques, mansions, and natural sceneries have been scattered across the city as well as towns and villages nearby.

## Archaeologists resume work on Sassanid site of Vigol

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN – The ancient site Vigol in central Iran, which had previously yielded a Sassanid-era fire temple, is being excavated for the second time by archaeologists.

In [the Iranian calendar year] 1389 (March 2010 – March 2011), Iranian archaeologists discovered the central part of a Sassanid (Zoroastrian) fire temple with its relatively intact bedding fire-place, CHTN quoted Mohsen Javari, who leads the excavation, as saying on Monday.

In this season, the completion of the plan of the fire temple and its related spaces is on the agenda, the archaeologist said.

"Situated in the central Iranian plateau, this fire temple is considered as one of the exceptional examples of its kind. And available evidence indicates the presence of a religious center of the Sassanid period in this area."

"So, this excavation and its results are of special importance in the field of Sassanid archeology," he said.

In 2005 the site of Vigol was identified and a joint team of archaeologists from the universities of Isfahan, Tehran, and Kashan led by Javari began their work on 120 hectares of the ancient site. Vigol is located approximately 10 km north of Aran-Bidgol near Kashan.

In many ways, Iran under Sassanian rule witnessed tremendous achievements of Persian civilization. Experts say that during the Sassanid era (224-651 CE), the art and architecture of the nation experienced a general renaissance.



Rock-carved bas-reliefs are widely deemed as the most impressive and best-known works of Sassanians, of which about thirty are known from the first two centuries of Sassanian rule. The largest number is in Fars, in the majestic silent valley of Naqsh-e Rostam, in the small bay of rocks at Naqsh-e Rajab, on the steep inclines of a gorge at Bishapur. There are also other examples across the country.

In 2018, UNESCO added "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region", which is an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran, to its World Heritage list. The property comprises eight archaeological sites, including fortified structures, palaces, and city plans in Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan, all located in modern Fars province.

UNESCO says that the archaeological landscape reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which had a significant impact on the architecture of the Islamic era.

In that era, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, as scholarship was encouraged by the state; many works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the official language of the Sassanians.

Encyclopedia Britannica states that a revival of Iranian nationalism took place under Sassanid rule. Zoroastrianism became the state religion, and at various times followers of other faiths suffered official persecution. The government was centralized, with provincial officials directly responsible to the throne, and roads, city building, and even agriculture were financed by the government.

The dynasty was destroyed by Arab invaders during a span from 637 to 651.

# UNESCO to assess Hamedan caravanserais for World Heritage

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is set to assess two historical caravanserais, which are located in the west-central province of Hamedan, for inclusion in the World Heritage list.

"The UNESCO assessors are projected to visit Safavid-era (1501–1736) caravanserais of Farasfaj and Taj-Abad by mid-June to evaluate them as a part of a shortlist of Iranian historical caravanserais for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list," the provincial tourism chief has said.

Unlike most caravanserais in Iran, which have rectangular-shaped designs, Taj-Abad has a circular plan, which is extremely rare among Iranian caravanserais, and it makes it one of the most interesting historical monuments in the province, CHTN quoted Ali Malmir as saying on Tuesday.

A popular attraction in Tuyserkan, Farasfaj, also known as Shah Abbasi Caravanserai, is nestled in the pristine nature of the region, the official explained.

In 2019, the tourism ministry announced that Iran is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravanserais for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In this regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.



caravanserai is a compound word combining "caravan" with "sara". The first stand for a group of travelers and sara means the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629,

he ordered the construction of network caravanserais across the country.

Such roadside inns were originally built in various epochs along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world to shelter people, their goods, and animals. The former Silk Roads may be the most famous example dotted by caravanserais.

For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age!

Iran ranks 10th in the world in terms of the number of historical monuments and sites registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Before the Islamic Revolution, Persepolis, Naghsh-e Jahan Square, and Choghaznabil were the only three UNESCO-listed monuments, but today the number has been increased this number to 24 historical sites, of which "Arg-e Bam" (Bam Citadel) represents an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement, is located in Kerman province.

"Bisotun" in western Kermanshah province, which is notable for its Achaemenid-era inscription carved on a limestone cliff, lavish "Golestan Palace" in downtown Tehran which is a masterpiece of the Qajar era (1789 to 1925), and millennium-old "Gonbad-e Qabus" which is a mudbrick tomb tower for Qabus ibn Wushmagir, are among the other UNESCO-designated sites in Iran.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there's a scattering of historical curiosities.

Hamedan never falls short of offering cultural heritage sites to its visitors. Scenic natural landscapes, traditional restaurants, public gardens, and colorful outdoor markets, and more importantly, its hospitable people make for an unexpected slice of the city.

## Tehran, Yerevan discuss ways to deepen tourism ties

→ Talking about the coexistence of religions in Iran, Mounesan said: "In different cities of Iran, including Yazd, there are places of worship for Muslims, Jews, and Christians, which makes a nation proud. We have even managed to register several churches on the World Heritage list."

### Armenian churches

To the untrained eye, Iran's earliest churches may seem modest structures to some but they bear testimony to a vast panorama of architectural and decorative scenes associated with Armenian culture blended with other regional cultures: Byzantine, Orthodox, Assyrian, Persian, and Muslim.

St. Thaddeus, St. Stepanos, and the Chapel of Dzordzor are three photogenic ancient churches that constitute the Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran,

which were collectively inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage in 2008. They are dotted in fresh and green lands of northwest Iran and are important pilgrimage sites for Armenian-Iranians and others from across the globe.

Also known as the Qareh Klise ("the Black Church"), St. Thaddeus, as one of the oldest surviving Christian monuments in the country, is situated in Chaldoran county some 20 kilometers from Maku, adjacent to the borders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey.

The Chapel of Dzordzor stands tall on the outskirts of Maku. The name narratively originates from a famous painter Hovans Yez, known as Dzordzortzi, who supervised the chapel's restoration for a while.

The ancient Church shows off elaborate bas-reliefs of flowers, animals, and human figures on its façade



and exterior walls. It bears verses of Old and New Testament in Armenian calligraphy as well.

## Millennia-old tomb, relics unearthed in southwestern Iran

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN – An ancient tomb in Chitab, southwestern Kohgiluyeh, and Boyer-Ahmad province has been discovered accidentally by local farmers.

While working on their agricultural lands, the farmers stumbled upon an ancient tomb, which is estimated to date back to the first millennium BC, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Also found in the tomb were three 3,000-year-old clay utensils, Rahim Dadinejad announced on Tuesday.

A team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts is exploring the ancient tomb and to continue agricultural activities, a temporary water canal has been



designed to reach agricultural farms, the official added.

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.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, embracing settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It also hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name of Iran, formerly known as Persia, mostly conjures up the first Persian

Empire, ruled by the Achaemenids (ca. 550 – 330 BC) and sites such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. However, there are tens of prehistorical sites as the Burnt City in Sistan-Baluchestan, Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Susa, and Chogha Zanbil in the Khuzestan province, and Ecbatana in Hamedan which predate the Achaemenid period.

From a wider point of view, Iranian history can be divided into Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. The Medes unified Iran as a nation and empire in 625 BC. The Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that put an end to the mighty Sassanid Empire (224–651) was a turning point in the history of the nation.

## Qajar-era Hosseiniyeh undergoes restoration

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN – Parts of the Qajar-era (1789-1925) Aminiha Hosseiniyeh in the northwestern province of Qazvin has undergone restoration, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The basement of the historical structure as well as its sash windows are planned to be restored within six months, Ehsan Nurani announced on Tuesday.

Aminiha Mansion was built in 1858 by Mohamadreza Amini, one of Qazvin's reputable merchants. Parts of the building were endowed as a Hosseiniyeh, a place used for religious mourning ceremonies.

Located in the historical texture of Qazvin, the monument was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1948.

Qazvin was once the capital of the mighty Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98. It is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored car-



avanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options. For most

travelers, Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley.

Also known as the castle of the Assassins, the 12th-century Alamut castle is nestled on top of a peak. It was once a shelter for the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124) who was a spiritual leader of an Islamic sect. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book "The Valleys of the Assassins".

Qazvin is also home to one of the biggest roofed caravanserais of the country, Sa'd-al Saltaneh caravanserai. Dating back to the Qajar era, it's a place for discovering tens of Hojreh or shops, cafes, yards, and a stunning mosque. It's a place for visitors who want to experience the culture, culinary, and hospitality of Iran.

## Amazing Kang is where the roof of one house is the yard of another

**TOURISM** The hill-stepped village of Kang is a heaven for photographers and travelers who seek off-the-beaten tracks.

The village is home to tens of bizarre-shaped houses that the roof of one is a yard of another on the highlands of Mount Binalud in northeast Iran.

Kang, with an antiquity of more than 3,000 years, is situated at a distance of some 30 km from Mashhad, the capi-

tal of Khorasan Razavi province. The village is also adjacent to Nishapur, known for its turquoise handicrafts and mines.

The village offers its visitors a bizarre scene of architecture that can more or less be found in other parts of the country; each house is built on another's rooftop, most of which having porch-balconies and earthen roofs.

Upon getting there and all along the

way towards atop, sightseers can perpetuate their visit by capturing amazing pictures of hospitable people and their hillside houses.

Kang is a contender as 'Khorasan's Masuleh' that is also a homogenous stepped village of stacked mud-brick homes in northern Iran.

The millennium-old Masuleh is arranged to be assessed by UNESCO experts for becoming a World Heritage.





# Iranian COVID-19 vaccine enters large-scale production phase

→ 1 Out of 16 vaccine production cases, four cases received a code of ethics and are undergoing clinical trial. It is hoped that another three to four cases will succeed in receiving license by September.

Iran is also currently producing vaccines jointly with three countries of Cuba, Russia, and Australia.

One of the vaccines is the Cuban-Iranian Soberana-02 vaccine, and the other is the Russian-Iranian Gamaleya vaccine, while the third joint vaccine will be produced in Iran in cooperation with Australia.

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

## Homegrown vaccines

The second Iranian coronavirus vaccine, Razi Cov Pars, which started the clinical trial on February 27, will be mass-produced in early August.

Fakhra vaccine, the third homegrown vaccine, was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

On January 27, Health Minister Saed



Namaki said Iran will soon be one of the world's important manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Two European countries and three regional

countries have asked to purchase COVIRAN BAREKAT, Mohammad Mokhber, the head of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has said.

Tests performed on volunteers who received COVIRAN BAREKAT showed that the immunogenicity of the vaccine is about 90 percent.

With the outbreak of coronavirus, Iran surged its production to meet the country's need for self-protective equipment along with medical and pharmaceutical items to fight against the virus, at a time when other developed countries were struggling with a severe lack of personal protective tools.

Iran is one of the top five manufacturers of coronavirus antigen-based rapid detection kits in the world; as homegrown antibody rapid test, which can detect coronavirus in 15 to 20 minutes, was unveiled in Tehran on November 17, 2020.

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, told the Tehran Times in September 2020 that some of the knowledge-based companies reached a production capacity of more than 200-300 thousand diagnostic kits per day, which surpassed the country's need for diagnostic kits, and there is a great export potential.

## ICRC ready to support Iran's IRCS for vaccinating refugees

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN – The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is ready to support the Iranian Red Crescent Society for vaccinating refugees living in the country against the coronavirus.

"To this end, we have put in a request to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to increase the budget necessary for vaccinating these vulnerable groups," ILNA quoted Daniel Munoz-Rojas, the deputy representative of the ICRC in Tehran, as saying on Tuesday.

Iran is hosting a large number of Afghan refugees. So, we, as the International Committee of the Red Cross, support the Iranian Red Crescent Society for offering services to the refugees," he added.

However, it should be noted that vaccines are provided by governments and the International Committee of the Red Cross is not in charge of buying and importing the vaccines, he explained.

On Sunday, IRCS head Karim Hemmati said he has asked the ICRC to provide 2 million doses of coronavirus vaccine to be used for Afghan refugees.

The population of Afghan immigrants residing in Iran is about two to three million, some of whom sometimes have problems with identity cards or do not have identification



codes, Hemmati added.

"If these people are among our priority groups, they will be vaccinated. For example, if an Afghan national is part of the medical staff in Iran, they will be vaccinated," he noted.

At the end of 2018, Iran hosted close to one million refugees, making it the sixth-largest refugee host country in the world. The country was also the eighth largest refugee-hosting country in the world in 2019, hosting 951,142 Afghan refu-

gees and 28,268 Iraqi refugees, according to the UNHCR.

One of the largest and most protracted urban refugee populations in the world is living in Iran; about 97 percent of refugees live in urban and semi-urban areas, while three percent are residing in 20 refugee resorts run by the UNHCR's main government counterpart.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, undocumented Afghans have access to free primary health services and similarly free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like nationals.

Some 120,000 refugees residing in Iran are now covered by health insurance. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Despite the challenges, Iran has continued to generously give refugees access to education and health services. Iran is one of the handfuls of countries in the world that offer refugees the option to enroll in national health insurance for essential secondary and tertiary public health services in the same way as Iranian nationals.

The national insurance scheme allows for free COVID-19 treatment and hospitalization. It also subsidizes the cost of surgeries, dialysis, radiology, laboratory tests, outpatient care, and more.

## Area of forests the size of France has regrown worldwide since 2000

An area of forests larger than France has regrown around the world since 2000, new data suggests.

A mapping study undertaken by the Trillion Trees project found that almost 59 million hectares of forests have grown back worldwide since the turn of the millennium.

The regrown forest area could store almost 5.9 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide, which is more than the annual emissions of the US.

But environmentalists warn "vastly" more

hectares of trees are being burned and cut down each year.

The study is a joint venture between WWF, BirdLife International and Wildlife Conservation Society, which looks at areas around the world where woodlands are regenerating.

They range from active restoration, where native trees and shrubs are planted, assisted natural regeneration, where the forest is encouraged to regrow by measures such as clearing invasive species or fencing land to

prevent grazing and "spontaneous natural regeneration" where trees come back of their own accord.

The study highlights areas such as the Atlantic Forest in Brazil, where 4.2 million hectares have regrown since 2000, through planned efforts to restore the forest, more responsible industry practices and human migration to cities.

In Mongolia's northern boreal forests, the study suggests 1.2 million hectares of forest have regenerated in the last 20 years,

in part down to work undertaken by WWF and the Mongolian government's increased emphasis on protected areas.

Central Africa and the boreal forests of Canada are also regeneration hotspots, according to the study, which examined more than 30 years of satellite data.

The survey comes after a report from WWF earlier this year which highlighted that forests almost twice the size of the UK was destroyed in global hotspots around the world between 2004 and 2017.

## Air pollution from food production linked to 12,700 deaths in U.S. each year

Air pollution from food production in the United States is linked to an estimated 15,900 premature deaths each year, according to a new study published Monday in the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.

Of those, an estimated 12,700 deaths -- around 80% -- are connected to production of animal-based foods.

Scientists have known for years that farming contributes to harmful air pollution, but experts say this study offers the first full accounting of deaths connected to the production of certain types of food.

"When we think of the big sources of air pollution in the U.S., our imagination usually turns to smokestacks and tailpipes," said Joshua Apte, an assistant professor at the

University of California-Berkeley, who was not involved in this study. "But it turns out that agriculture is also a major contributor to our air pollution and therefore we should care about it for our health."

The study focused on a specific type of tiny pollution particles known as PM2.5.

They linger in the air we breathe and measure barely a fraction of the diameter of a human hair. But despite their small size, the particles have been linked to millions of premature deaths globally, as well as serious cardiovascular and respiratory problems, especially in children and the elderly.

PM2.5 particles kicked up into the air by tilling and fuel combustion in farm equipment are part of the problem, but the study found the majority of premature deaths are linked

to ammonia emissions from livestock waste and fertilizer. Airborne ammonia reacts with other chemicals to form dangerous particulate matter.

"(It happens) mostly through ammonia, which is released when farmers use nitrogen fertilizer -- which they use a lot of -- or is released from animal manure," said Jason Hill, a professor at the University of Minnesota and a co-author of the study.

The premature deaths connected to pollution from agriculture are heavily concentrated in California, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and along the Upper Midwest's Corn Belt, the study found.

The researchers identified ways that both consumers and farmers can help reduce this type of pollution.

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## Clean air bill projected to create 10,000 green jobs

The clean air bill, proposed by the Department of Environment to curb air pollution, is projected to generate some 10,000 green jobs over the course of the sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021), an environmental official said. In line with the one of the articles of clean air bill units of Health, Safety, and the Environment (HSE), with regard to health and safety of the employees, customers, and contractors as well as the protection of the environment are bound to be established in all industrial and manufacturing enterprises, Shina Ansari told ISNA news agency.

"Accordingly, those graduates in the field of environment can apply for job opportunities in HSE units," Ansari added.

## ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی نتیجه اجرای لایحه هوای پاک

مدیرکل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ضمن اشاره به مواد قانون هوای پاک - که به پیشنهاد سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اخیراً به تصویب مجلس شورای اسلامی رسید- از ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی طی برنامه ششم توسعه از طریق اجرای مواد این قانون خبر داد. شینا انصاری در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا افزود: در ماده ۱۶ لایحه هوای پاک، کلیه مراکز و واحدهای صنعتی و تولیدی، برای انجام امور مربوط به سلامت و ایمنی مشتریان و کارمندان و کارفرمایان مکلف به ایجاد واحدهای سلامت، بهداشت و محیط زیست (HSE) و به‌کارگیری نیروهای متخصص این حوزه هستند بنابراین تعداد زیادی از فارغ التحصیلان محیط زیست می‌توانند جذب هسته‌ها و بخش‌های زیست محیطی صنایع متوسط و بزرگ کشور به منظور پایش صنایع شوند.

## Blood donation up 27% during Qadr nights

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN – Iranian people donated 141,148 units of blood during Qadr nights - the 19th, 21st, and 23rd of the holy month of Ramadan falls on May 13th, 15th, and 17th this year – an increase of 27 percent year on year.



The highest amounts of blood were donated in the provinces of Khuzestan, Bushehr, Qazvin, and Hormozgan, IRIB reported.

Communal praying and recitations of the Holy Quran were held across the country during Qadr nights observing health protocols amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The last 10 days of Ramadan are especially important because the Quran was revealed in this month on Laylat al-Qadr (Qadr Night).

Despite the prevalence of COVID-19, blood donation has increased by 40 percent since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21), compared to the same period last year, Peyman Eshghi, head of Blood Transfusion Organization, said on May 4.

Despite the difficult conditions of dealing with coronavirus, the blood donation rate at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan (April 13) has increased significantly compared to the previous years, he added, IRIB reported.

## COVID-19 recovered patients donate plasma

On April 6, Bashir Haji Beigi, spokesman for the Blood Transfusion Organization, said that some 15,039 plasma units have been donated since April 2020 by patients who have been recovered from COVID-19 throughout the country.

Following the outbreak of coronavirus, doctors, pharmacists, scientists, and others are looking for a way to control the virus, and so far, many studies and researches have been done in this regard.

One of the studies showed that the plasma driven from recovered patients can be used in the treatment of COVID-19 with the help of the patient's immune system.

Convalescent plasma therapy allows someone who has recovered from a coronavirus infection to donate their blood plasma to someone who is critically ill.

The best time for plasma donation is at least 14 and preferably 28 days after recovery, and donors should age 18 to 60 years.

## Blood donation in Iran

While blood donation in 70 countries still depends on replacement or paid donors, Iran is the first country in the region that has enjoyed voluntary blood donation by 100 percent since 2007.

More than 85 percent of all donated blood worldwide is used to produce blood products, while the rate is 65 percent in Eastern Mediterranean countries. Iran ranks among the highest-income countries in terms of converting more than 97 percent of the blood donated by people to plasma-derived medicinal products (PDMP).

Only 55 of 171 countries produce PDMP through the fractionation of plasma collected in the reporting country. A total of 90 countries reported that all PDMP are imported, 16 countries reported that no PDMP was used during the reporting period, and 10 countries did not respond to the question, according to WHO.

Iran currently has the highest blood donation rate in the Eastern Mediterranean region so that out of 9.9 million blood donation units in this region, more than two million belongs to Iran.

Also, the index of blood donation is 25 per 1,000 populations, while in the member states of the Eastern Mediterranean region, this number is 14.9 per 1000.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 181)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

valuable	آرزومند: دارای ارزش	
welcome	استقبال	
to welcome	استقبال کردن	
for this reason	به این دلیل	
educational	تحصیلی	تاتیانا مالینکایا، اوکراین
presence	تشریف رسی	
to come	تشریف آوردن: آمدن	
to go	تشریف بردن: رفتن	
to be	تشریف داشتن: بودن	جان ترهارد، هلند
contact	تماس	
to contact	تماس گرفتن (با)	
life, soul; a term of endearment	جان	سعید الضیاع، مصر
empty	خالی	
degree	درجه	
doctorate	دکتری	
interested	علاقه‌مند: دارای علاقه	
short-term	کوتاه‌مدت	ویکتور آتک، لبنان
period	مدت	
travel	مسافرت	
word	واژه (جمع، واژه‌ها، واژگان (vocabulary)	



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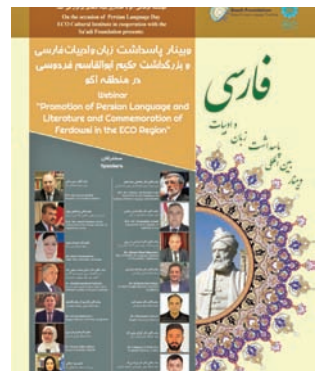
GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who is greedy is disgraced; he who discloses his hardship will always be humiliated; he who has no control over his tongue will often have to face discomfort.

Imam Ali (AS)

ECO, Sadi Foundation to organize intl. webinar on Persian literature

TEHRAN — The ECO Cultural Institute and Sadi Foundation in Tehran plan to organize an international webinar on the promotion of Persian literature on May 15.



A poster for the webinar on the Persian language by the ECO Cultural Institute and Sadi Foundation

The webinar, which has been organized to commemorate Ferdowsi Day, will commence at 12 a.m. with speeches by the Tajik president of the ECO Cultural Institute, Sarvar Bakhti, and Sadi Foundation director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, the foundation announced in a press release on Tuesday.

Afghan Ambassador Abdolghafour Lival and Tajik Ambassador Nizamuddin Zahedi will also deliver lectures during the opening ceremony of the virtual meeting.

The webinar is planned for discussions on the expansion of the Persian language and Persian epic poet Ferdowsi's status in the ECO member states.

Ismet Mammadova of the Baku State University, Ahmad Ghani Khosravi of Herat University and Mohammad Nasser of Punjab University are among the scholars invited to the colloquium.

Interested persons are invited to register on <https://webinar.ecieco.org/ch/persianlanguage> to attend the webinar.

Iran's Sadi Foundation is a Tehran-based organization that promotes the Persian language abroad.

The ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), which is affiliated with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), aims at fostering understanding and the preservation of the rich cultural heritage of its members through common projects in the field of the media, literature, art, philosophy, sports and education.

Founded in 1985 in Tehran by the leaders of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, the ECO is an Asian political and economic intergovernmental organization.

Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are other member states of the organization.

Iranian producer Elaheh Nobakht on panel of MENA Film Festival

TEHRAN — Iranian producer Elaheh Nobakht has been selected as a member of the jury for the 4th Mena Film Festival The Hague, which will take place in the Dutch city from May 20 to 23.



Iranian producer Elaheh Nobakht. (Photo by Sahar Qarib)

The Algerian-born Dutch director, Karim Traidia, and the secretary of the Casablanca Film Festival, Hamadi Keroum, who is a renowned Moroccan critic, are other members of the jury.

Nobakht is also the director of ELI Image, an international film production and distribution company.

As an active member of the Iranian Producers Association (IPA) and co-producer of "Holy Bread" she was selected for the IDFA competition for mid-films in 2020.

She is also the distributor of the film "Finding Farideh", a co-production between Iran and the Netherlands, which was Iran's submission to the Oscars in 2020.

Nobakht has previously been a member of the jury at the FIFOG International Festival in Geneva and the Beirut International Women's Festival.

The Mena Film Festival The Hague aims to portray a contemporary view of the cultural, political, social and artistic attributes of West Asia and Northern Africa through the eyes of filmmakers from these regions.

Mohammad Amin, the director of the 4th International Film Festival, said, "As part of the festival's objectives, the event aims to support young filmmakers and the independent cinema in North Africa and the Middle East [West Asia]."

Amin further added that this region's cinema has proven its ability to create a wider audience by succeeding in humanitarian objectives and through its efforts in helping achieve world peace.

Moscow State Museum of Oriental Art spotlights Qajar art

TEHRAN — An exhibition opening on May 15 at the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow will showcase a collection of artworks created during the Qajar dynasty that ruled in Iran from 1789 to 1925.

For the first time in Russia, more than 300 items from the richest Iranian collection of the museum, including paintings, ceramics, weapons, carpets and manuscripts, historical documents and photographs will be put on view at the exhibit entitled "Splendor of the Sunset: Iran of the Qajar Era", the museum has announced.

The collection of Qajar art of the State Museum of the Oriental Art is one of the richest in the world, along with the Louvre, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the State Hermitage.

The exhibition aims to introduce a little-known page of Persian art and history, the museum said in its statement for the event, and added, "The rulers of Qajar dynasty came to power in the last quarter of the 18th century after a long and bloody internecine struggle."

"By the middle of the 19th century they completed the reunification of the country but were unable to overcome its economic backwardness and resisted European colonial expansion."

The statement called the Qajar period an era of decline from the former Iranian glory due to increased external pressure from Russia



Qajar ruler Fathali Shah and his ministers are depicted in a painting by Mohammad-Ali Beik Naqqashbashi, which is preserved at the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow, Russia.

and Britain, the economic crisis, territorial losses and social tension within the country.

"European influence, technical innovations, reformist ideas and modern tastes penetrated the country, and the need for change and the importance of the education became obvious. But the inevitable influence of

the West in the current international situation did not destroy the Iranian national spirit and loyalty to traditions.

"Two main trends in the culture of the Qajar era — an interest in modernization and European achievements and a worship of one's own history, the glory of kings and

mythological heroes of the past, created a new cultural model, where the archaic and the unexpectedly modern were closely intertwined."

The State Archive of Russian Federation, the Marjani Foundation and the Kunstkamera, will contribute to the exhibition, which will showcase most of its objects for the first time.

The exhibition, which will run until July 25, explores different aspects of the life of Iranian society during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In a press release published on Tuesday, the Iranian cultural attaché in Moscow, Qahraman Soleimani, elaborated on the exhibit.

"The Qajar era art has been regarded across the world over the past few decades," he said and added that collections of artworks from this period have been put on display during exhibitions at the world's great museums.

He noted that one of these exhibits was previously organized at the State Museum of Oriental Art during the 1970s.

The museum has always regarded Persian arts by organizing various exhibitions artworks from Iran.

The latest one was "Plots and Images of Nezami", which was held from March 11 to May 3. Artworks inspired by Nezami Ganjavi, the Persian poet who lived during the 12th and early 13th centuries, were exhibited at the showcase.

Director Majid Majidi criticizes global silence over Afghanistan school attack



Iranian director Majid Majidi.

TEHRAN — Oscar-nominated Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi has criticized the world for not speaking out against the Saturday bomb attack outside a school in the Afghan capital of Kabul that claimed the lives of over 60 people including schoolgirls.

He made the remarks in a statement published by Iranian news agencies.

"There was no sound from you. No candles were lit. No flags were flown half-mast," He wrote.

"International organizations did not issue any statements, condemnation came from politicians, and no hashtag campaign was launched.

"Welcome to the 21st century with colorful slogans and concealed morals; a time when the color of human blood is different and people are valued based on their nationality

and religion.

"If you are from the West, you are honorable, and if you are an Afghan, you are forgotten, and if you are a Shia and Muslim, no one cares about your blood that has been spilled on the ground.

"I regret having to live in a time when justice is a meaningless word in this age of futility... I wish we had died and not seen the death of justice and humanity, and we would not have witnessed such tragic silence over the sad martyrdom of dozens of oppressed girls from the Afghan Hazara community."

Explosions on Saturday evening shook the neighborhood of Dasht-e Barchi, home to a large community of Shias from the Hazara ethnic minority.

The Taliban denied allegations of responsibility and issued a statement condemning the attack.

Iran to commemorate Persian poet Ferdowsi, Khayyam in virtual celebrations

TEHRAN — The director of the Khorasan Ravazi Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance has announced that the annual national celebrations and meetings to observe Ferdowsi Day and Khayyam Day will be held online due to the pandemic.

Speaking during a meeting organized by the Khorasan Ravazi branch of the Society of Cultural Works and Luminaries, Jafar Morvarid said that the annual meetings to celebrate Khayyam Day and Ferdowsi Day are to be held in Mashhad on May 15 and in Neyshabur on May 18.

Neyshabur is Khayyam's hometown, which also houses his tomb. He is primarily known to English-speaking readers through the translation by English writer Edward Fitzgerald of a collection of his quatrains in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

Abolghasem Ferdowsi is the composer of the Persian epic Shahnameh (The Book of Kings), the famous celebrated work of the poet in which Persian poetry is presented in a state-of-the-art form that continues to impress literature experts to this day. He is buried in Tus, his hometown that is located near the northeastern Iranian

city of Mashhad.

Morvarid said that the Society of Cultural Works and Luminaries will be fully cooperating with the organizers to ensure that the celebrations to honor the two renowned poets and their cities are held in the best possible form.

He added that the arrangements have been made in order to execute great celebrations with quality programs and features, including academic lectures by prominent figures.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi's message



A statue of Ferdowsi set up near his tomb in Tus, for these days will be read during the virtual meetings.

Ferdowsi Day is celebrated by Iranians as a day to safeguard the Persian language and literature, and the Shahnameh is honored as a book of life, which teaches nobility, wisdom and ethics.

"From Karkheh to Rhein" makeup artist Masud Valadbeigi dies at 86

TEHRAN — Makeup artist Masud Valadbeigi, whose collaboration in "From Karkheh to Rhein" and several other movies earned him wide acclaim, died of heart failure at Tehran's Mehrad Hospital on Tuesday. He was 86.

He was admitted to the hospital twice over the past two months, his son-in-law Nima Fallah told the Persian service of MNA.

Born in Kermanshah, Valadbeigi began his career with director and writer Nader Ebrahimi's TV series "Fire without Smoke" during the 1970s. A screen version of the series called "The Sound of the Desert" was released in 1975.

He also pursued an acting career in Iran's post-revolution cinema in the early 1980s by working with director Behruz Afkhami in the TV series "Kuchake Jangali" about the Jangali Movement, which took shape in the aftermath of the 1905-11 Constitutional Revolution under the leadership of Mirza Kuchak Khan Jangali in response to the period of political decay brought about by the advent of World War I and the occupation of Iran by Anglo-Russian and Ottoman troops.

As a makeup artist and an actor, Valadbeigi also collaborated



Makeup artist and actor Masud Valadbeigi in an undated photo.

with numerous celebrated directors, such as Ali Hatami, Mohammad-Ali Sajjadi, Masud Kimiai, Iraj Qaderi and Fereidun Jeirani.

His brilliant acting did not win him acclaim from critics and film festivals, but his skills in makeup earned three

Crystal Simorgh at the Fajr Film Festival for "The Last Act" in 1991, "From Karkheh to Rhein" in 1992 and "The Ugly and the Beautiful" in 1998.

During the 2000s, Valadbeigi also starred as Najdat ibn Amir, the leader of the Kharjites in Mecca, in the TV series "Mokhtarnameh", which was about an uprising organized by Mokhtar Saqafi after the events of Ashura, the 10th of Muharram, to take revenge against the killers of Imam Hussein (AS).

He also collaborated as a makeup artist in this project with top makeup designer Abdollah Eskandari.

"Makeup art in Iran is indebted to him," Eskandari said after expressing his condolences to his family in an interview with the Persian service of ISNA.

"He was a veteran makeup artist, a really kind and spirited man. I had the honor of working with him in 'Mokhtarnameh' and I saw closely how he was working with affection," he added.

He made a cameo appearance in the first season of the TV series "Setayeshi" in the 2010s, and his chronic illness brought Valadbeigi's activities in cinema and TV to a halt.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Richard Jacob Bernstein's book "Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?"

TEHRAN — American philosopher Richard

"Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?" at Iranian bookstores

Jacob Bernstein's book "Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?" has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

Ashian is the publisher of the book rendered into Persian by Hamid Qane'i.

Recently there has been an extraordinary international revival of interest in Hannah Arendt. She was extremely perceptive about the dark tendencies in contemporary life that continue to plague us. She developed a concept of politics and public freedom that serves as a critical standard for judging what is wrong with politics today.

Bernstein argues that Arendt should be read today because her penetrating insights help us to think about both the darkness of our times and the sources of illumination.

He explores her thinking about statelessness and refugees; the right to have rights; her critique of Zionism; the meaning of the banality of evil; the complex relations between truth, lying, power and violence; the tradition of the revolutionary spirit; and, the urgent need for each of us to assume responsibility for our political lives.

This short and very readable book will be of great interest to anyone who wants to understand the forces that are shaping our world today.

Bernstein, 88, has written extensively about a broad array of issues and philosophical traditions including American pragmatism, neo-pragmatism, critical theory,

deconstruction, social philosophy, political philosophy and Hermeneutics.

His work is best known for the way in which it examines the intersections between different philosophical schools and traditions, bringing together thinkers and philosophical insights that would otherwise remain separated by the analytic/continental divide in 20th century philosophy.

Throughout his life, Bernstein has actively endorsed a number of social causes and has been involved in movements of participatory democracy, upholding some of the cardinal virtues of the American pragmatist tradition, including a commitment to fallibilism, engaged pluralism, and the nurturing of critical communities.