

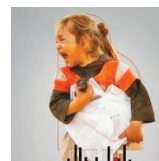
Israel's 'collapsing false prestige' will not recover *Page 2*



Iran suffer lack of preparation for FIFA World Cup qualification *Page 3*



Iran's eastern fields produce 16 bcm of gas in a year *Page 4*



Iranian pianist releases single in sympathy with Afghanistan school attack victims *Page 8*



Austria's controversial move damages its international standing

After flying the Israeli flag over Foreign Ministry building:

Can Austria be trusted in the nuclear talks?

© AFP

Iran is prime victim of climate change

BY M.A. SAKI

Iran has been suffering droughts for decades. It has been expedited over the last three decades.

The plateau of Iran is a chief victim of global warming which its main culprits have been pumping gas emissions into the atmosphere through their unclear technology.

It is painful to be victim of something in which you have the least role.

The world, especially countries located in arid and semi-arid regions, have been environmentally victimized by countries which have been just concerned about manufacturing and exporting their industrial products.

We have had abnormal persons like Trump who was saying during his presidency that climate change is a Chinese hoax. This is despite the fact that the U.S. as the biggest industrial country in the world is the chief culprit for the global warming and has been the biggest emitter since the industrial revolution.

Also, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is intentionally ordering deforestation of Amazon forests, which like oceans are the "lungs of the Earth". He is doing so to develop farming. Regrettably, he denies that he is making such orders. Bolsonaro is treating the Mother Nature the way he deals with the Coronavirus.

Rainfall in most parts of Iran has become a mirage. The new generation covetously asks about snowfall.

It is regretful that in the mountainous Zagros region in which water from smelting snow was flowing down the valleys almost until the end of spring are now looking for drinking water. Rivers, lagoons and even lakes are being dried up one by one and the ecosystem and the social life of people are being badly impacted.

The impact of climate change has reached a degree that even during the winter firefighters should be ready to douse fire that may take place in the forested mountains.

What is responsible for such a situation? Airplanes, car manufacturing companies, electricity generating facilities powered by coal and fossil fuels?

Iran is now the prime victim of climate change. It not unusual that the wishes of farmers, who wait for a year to reap the benefits of their crop, go up in the air because of droughts or suddenly storm comes and washes everything with itself.

Benefactors donate \$285m to deprived families in Ramadan

TEHRAN – Philanthropists contributed some 12 trillion rials (around \$285 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to support deprived families through a national campaign during the holy month of Ramadan (ended May 12 this year).

The campaign, called Iran-e Hamdel (literally meaning sympathetic Iran), was launched in order to support the needy and distribute warm meals, as well as Iftar packages during Ramadan.

During the third phase of the national campaign, 19 million warm meals and 4 million Iftar packages have been distributed among the needy in neighborhoods, mosques, and charities. Over 4,200 kitchens were operating to provide the meals.

Some 2.3 million food packages were also distributed in deprived and remote areas during the holy month.

The campaign was first launched in 2020 aiming to provide financial assistance to the needy affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has collected 1.5

trillion rials (nearly \$35 million).

The second phase of the sympathetic Iran movement with the aim of cooking and distributing 27 million warm foods among the deprived started on Eid al-Ghadir Khumm (August 9, 2020) until the end of Safar (the second month of the lunar-based Islamic calendar).

Iranian benefactors, charity centers, and religious organizations take part in the campaign by cash and kind contributions.

In a televised speech on April 9, 2020, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the coronavirus outbreak is a test for all the world, both for governments and for nations. The Iranian Nation shone brightly in this test, and at the peak of this national pride are the health professionals.

Besides the health professionals, volunteers, university students, and Basij forces have entered the battlefield against the disease and their services are indescribable, the Leader's Twitter account wrote.

Italian dock workers refuse to aid arms shipment to Israeli regime

Dock workers in western Italy have reportedly planned to withhold their cooperation with a weapon shipment process aimed at further armament of the Israeli regime amid its bloodletting in the Gaza Strip.

The longshoremen in the port city of Livorno took the decision after finding out that they could be unwittingly aiding one such shipment operation, Italian online newspaper Contropiano reported on Friday.

The workers were tipped off that some of the containers they were supposed to load onto a vessel destined for the port city of Ashdod in the occupied territories, contained "weapons and explosives."

They, therefore, decided to snub the process that involves a container carrier, dubbed Asiatic Island.

The "weapons and explosives...will be

used to kill the Palestinian population already hit by a severe attack this very night that has caused [the deaths of] hundreds of victims among the civilian population, including many children," the newspaper wrote.

It was referring to the recent serious escalation in the Israeli regime's military assaults against Tel Aviv-blockaded Gaza.

Since Monday, when the escalation began, Israeli warplanes and later artillery units began laying into the coastal sliver, killing more than a 100 people there.

Most recently, the attacks butchered an entire Gazan family, including eight children.

According to the daily, the Italian shoreline is regularly used for stopovers by vessels that are headed towards the occupied territories.

Archaeologists make final attempt to unearth Seleucid temple

TEHRAN – A team of Iranian archaeologists has commenced its final attempt to possibly unearth the ruins of the Seleucid Laodicea Temple believed to be buried under the modern town of Nahavand in Hamedan province, west-central Iran.

"An archaeological season, which would be the sixth and final effort to unearth Laodicea Temple, began this morning with the demolition of a wall of Dokhaharan's sanctuary given that one side of the wall had been cracked and the wall must

be demolished and strengthened," said Mohsen Khanjan who leads the excavation. "Currently, six archaeologists and eight workforces are present at the excavation site, which has previously yielded relics dating from the Seleucid era," he explained.

According to Khanjan, in addition to a Greek inscription, other significant objects such as bronze statues of Greek gods, a stone altar, column head, column shaft, column base, and pottery pieces had been discovered in the Dokhaharan neighborhood.

"Regarding those findings, we concluded that the history of the city of Nahavand goes far back in prehistoric times, on the contrary to what previously believed it only dates back to the Seleucid period." "The outcome of previous excavations determined that a Seleucid city was established on remains of a prehistoric settlement... and the sixth season aims to discover the main structure of Laodicea Temple, the official said.

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Iranians hold rally in solidarity with Palestinians

TEHRAN – A group of Iranian students and others from all walks of life held demonstrations in the northwestern city of Tabriz to show solidarity with the Palestinians amid the continued Israeli war on Gaza, one in which Israel killed many children and women. The demonstration came amid a global wave of rallies demanding an end to deadly Israeli air raids on the Gaza Strip.

Escalations in Palestine designed by Netanyahu to keep him in power: analyst

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

TEHRAN – Martin Love, an American political analyst, believes that the ethnic cleansing of the Arabs of Jerusalem is a plot designed by Netanyahu to save himself from corrupt charges.

"The escalation in Palestine, beginning with the assaults and ethnic cleansing on the Arabs of East Jerusalem in Sheikh Jarrah and around the al-Aqsa and Damascus Gate were in some part designed by Netanyahu to keep him in power for a while longer," Martin Love tells the Tehran Times.

The neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah has become the centerpiece of belligerent fighting between Israel and Palestine as Palestinians rallied around residents to resist the Israeli settlers encroaching on East Jerusalem.

Unrest in East Jerusalem has been on the rise since the beginning of Ramadan on 13 April, after the Israeli authorities installed metal barriers outside the Damascus Gate, blocking access to a public area for Palestinians.

"The escalation and bombings and killings of Gazans is a way for the Zionists to buy more time before they may be forced to change any policies," Love adds.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you evaluate the recent escalation in Palestine?

The escalation in Palestine, beginning with the assaults and ethnic cleansing on the Arabs of East Jerusalem in Sheikh Jarrah and around the al-Aqsa and Damascus Gate, was in some parts designed by Netanyahu to keep him in power for a while longer.

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ELECTION WIRE

Prominent candidates introduced

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — As the registration for the upcoming presidential elections closed on Saturday, the Tehran Times has decided to provide the respectful readers with brief introductions of prominent presidential candidates. This series of introduction will continue tomorrow.

Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi

Currently serving as the head of the Judiciary, Iran's chief justice was born in 1960. He is considered as a principlist politician. Raeisi has served in various positions in the judicial system, such as deputy chief justice from 2004 to 2014, and attorney general from 2014 to 2016.

He is also a member of the Assembly of Experts tasked to elect and monitor the performance of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. He was elected to the assembly for the first time in the 2006 election from South Khorasan province.

Raeisi is one of the politicians who is subject to the U.S and the European Union sanctions. He was blacklisted in November 2019.

He has stated that he is seeking to establish a "strong Iran" if elected president in the June 18 polls.

Gaining a reputation for countering the corrupt and the embezzlers in the Judiciary, he said that he is in the race to "dry the corrupt substrates from the root and turn inefficiencies into efficiencies."

Raeisi considers himself "part the people, with the people and by the people," and believes that with the help of the people, he can overcome the problems.

Ali Larijani

Ali Larijani, the former Parliament speaker, was born in 1957. He has served in various positions during his political career. From being the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting (IRIB) to being the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and chief nuclear negotiator in that position.

He is the longest-serving parliament speaker. He headed the parliament for three consecutive terms

He ran unsuccessfully in the 2005 elections, winning only 6% of votes.

He is referred to as a "center-right politician who has gradually distanced himself from the principlist camp" and a "conservative-turned-moderate."

Larijani believes that the main goal of the foreign policy should be to facilitate foreign relations for the economic development of the country.

"The experience of countries that have experienced economic leaps over the last 20 years shows that their foreign policy and economy have pursued the same goal and foreign policy has served the development of the country," Larijani said in a press conference on Saturday after registering to run for the presidential post.

He said that he is looking to unfreeze the blocked Iranian assets in banks worldwide as soon as possible.

"Good governance depends on less rhetoric and more effective rationality," the philosopher-turned politician believes.

Mohsen Rezaei

Major General Mohsen Rezaei was born in 1954. He led the Islamic Revolution Guards Corp for 17 years, from 1980 to 1997. He has received the first grade Order of Fath by the Commander-in-Chief three times, holding a record among military officials.

Rezaei ran for president twice in 2009 and 2013, losing to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hassan Rouhani respectively.

Stating that today is not a day to promise but a day to act, he believes that Iran needs a new path.

"We are ready to bring happiness back to Iranian families," he said at the press conference held after registering at the Ministry of Interior on Saturday to run for president.

The former IRGC chief said if he succeeds to win the presidency, his administration will be seeking to bring back economic stability.

"I'm not here to cover up the truth. We will tell everything to the people honestly," he claimed.

Stating that he has come to "shield" people against difficulties and not to use the people as shields, Rezaei said that he has plans to bring welfare for the people.

"We will initiate a structural change in the administration of the country," he promised.

Examining competence of presidential candidates begins Sunday

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council began examining the competence of the presidential nominees on Sunday. The procedure will last for five days.

Should the candidates have complaints, the Guardian Council will extend the examination procedure until May 25. The final names will be announced on May 26-27.

The campaigns will officially start from May 28 until June 16.

The registration for the presidential election closed on Saturday, with 592 nominees.

According to the election officials, 40 of the candidates were women.

Rouhani, Erdogan exchange views on Palestine

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— In a telephone conversation with his Turkish counterpart on Sunday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani emphasized that the issue of Palestine is the most important issue of the Islamic Ummah.

Rouhani reiterated the need to call on the international authorities such as the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to counter atrocities committed by the Israeli regime.

For his part, Recep Tayyip Erdogan called the Palestine crisis "very concerning and disappointing."

Erdogan confirmed Iran's position on the Palestine issue, stating that the international community must react strongly to these brazen attacks, and it is imperative that the Islamic world follow a common right and action in this regard.

Zarif describes Israel's atrocities as "barbaric"

Iranian FM says Palestine is not only Arab or Islamic issue, but international dilemma

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In his speech in the emergency virtual meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif emphasized the Palestinians' right to defend themselves, describing Israel's atrocities as "barbaric."

Zarif began his speech by thanking the organization for arranging the timely meeting.

He said that innocent men, women and children are being massacred by the deadliest and most sophisticated weapons.

"Homes are being demolished while their residents are trapped inside. Whatever remains of the infrastructure in Gaza—including power and water supply—is effectively destroyed," Zarif regretted.

The chief diplomat stated that the world is facing blatant and systematic violations of human rights, humanitarian law and international law.

"The massacre of Palestinian children today follows the purported 'normalization.' This criminal and genocidal regime has once again proven that friendly gestures only aggravate its atrocities. The sole aim of Israel's hypocritical gestures is to divide Muslims and isolate the people of Palestine. Make no mistake: Israel only understands the language of resistance and the people of Palestine are fully entitled to the right to defend themselves and to defy the bullying of this racist regime," he reiterated.



He described Israel's atrocities as "barbaric acts" that have proven once again that the only peaceful path to peace in Palestine is "the holding of a referendum among all residents of Palestine, including displaced Palestinians and refugees."

He also called Palestine not only an Arab or Islamic issue, but also an international

dilemma.

Zarif called on the international community to condemn the Israeli regime in the strongest terms and compel it to "end the destruction and siege of Gaza."

"We should continue to work actively in the United Nations to urgently convene an emergency session of the General Assembly

"The massacre of Palestinian children today follows the purported 'normalization.' This criminal and genocidal regime has once again proven that friendly gestures only aggravate its atrocities," Zarif notes.

Parliament speaker calls on people to participate in June presidential elections

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Speaking at a parliamentary session on Sunday, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of the parliament, asked people to flood the ballot boxes in the June 18 presidential elections.

He also advised the candidates to follow ethical principles in the presidential campaigns.

Failure to use the opportunity to participate in elections to influence "one's own destiny will harm the interests of the people" in all social classes," the speaker remarked.

He noted that low participation has no winners.

Ghalibaf highlighted that the people should build the future with their own free will.

"Today is a good opportunity for us to join hands with every ideology and attitude and with every political faction to build a strong Iran, as the Leader said," he pointed out.

'Candidates should refrain from making unfair claims against rivals'

Speaking on the importance of upholding moral principles in the presidential campaigns, the top parliamentarian noted that the candidates should seriously refrain from making unfair claims against rivals.

"Such actions will blacken the situation in the country and disappoint the people about the future. The Iranian people themselves know better than anyone that the main power of our land is in the support of its people.

Increasing this popular power will directly lead to the national interest in various international arenas against the enemies of the people," he stressed.

Ghalibaf said that the people attach great importance to the fact that the president, as the highest executive official of the country, plays the most important role in the lives of the people.

Speaking about the successful registration of candidates and the variety of nominees from various political factions, he said that the large number of candidates from different political groups indicates that the country's political elites, with different tastes, have accepted both the electoral process and the position of the presidency, and have sufficient authority to bring about change.

He said, "The seriousness of the competitive environment and the high participation of the people in line with the interest of the country is the demand of all sympathizers of Iran."

The top MP stated that a transformation of the electoral passion into a massive participation in the elections is possible if the candidates and their loyalists realize that it is important to create hope and draw a clear horizon for the country and provide operational solutions to achieve them.

It is necessary to increase participation in the election, he added.



The presidential elections will be held on June 18.

According to Jamal Orf, the Deputy Minister of Interior, over 592 candidates have registered for the elections, 40 of which were women.

Many prominent political figures have registered to bring about a fresh change in the administration, including Judiciary chief Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi, special advisor to the Leader Ali Larijani, former secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, and central bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati.

MP reveals Iran's next step: Launching metal uranium factory



Noting that enriching uranium to up to 60% is for the purpose of obtaining molybdenum for radiopharmaceuticals, he said that the country needed this level of enrichment, as it was predicted in the aforementioned law.

The senior MP noted that according to the timetable predicted in the law, the optimization of the Arak reactor is in progress as well.

Amoei said that an interaction has taken place between the Islamic Republic and the International Atomic Energy Agency,

in which the agency has no access to Iran's nuclear facilities based on the protocols, but has kept the cameras monitoring the operations. However, he said, Iran will not provide information to the IAEA inspectors on a quarterly basis unless an agreement is reached and that will be dependent on the Europeans to stop pressure on Iran.

Iran began enriching uranium to 60% purity right after the Israeli Mossad spy agency conducted an act of sabotage on the Natanz nuclear facility on April 13.

Iran's Ghalibaf: Israel is 'greatest evil'

"The heart of Islam beats for Palestine"

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Speaking at a parliamentary session on Sunday, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf harshly condemned the recent bombardment of Gaza by the Israeli usurper regime and stated that Islam's heart is beating for Palestine.

"The Zionist regime is the greatest evil and the stain of the record of the arrogant world," he noted.

Criticizing the recent brutal and criminal attacks on the Palestinians, Ghalibaf said that the illegitimate and criminal regime of Israel has maximized the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and continues its operations in the Sheikh Jarrah area with "the aim of genocide against the Palestinians."

The senior parliamentarian said that Israel has directly

targeted the defenseless people and residential areas with the most brutal attacks.

"The heart of Islam beats for Palestine. The Islamic Ummah and the resistance movement will stand up for the Palestinian cause with strength and self-confidence, and will punish the criminal Zionist usurpers," he highlighted.

Expressing Iran's support for all resistance fronts and popular uprisings, he called on the regional leaders to rush to help Palestine.

"We will support any action to stop the Zionist crime machine so that zeal, courage and honor flow in the veins of the Muslim youth. The Palestinian people will not be alone for a moment. Unsuccessful plans such as the 'deal of the century'

with the commitment of some Arab leaders will not work. It is imperative that all regional leaders rush to the aid of the resistance forces as soon as possible and prevent the genocide of the Palestinian people," he insisted.

On May 6, 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.

Israeli forces stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, and dispersed the Palestinian worshippers elsewhere in East Jerusalem.

Israel has been heavily bombing Gaza for seven consecutive days.

Army commander: Nile to Euphrates dream degraded to keeping Israeli terrorist camp

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Commander of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi stated that the "Sword of Quds" war is a clear sign that the holy Quds will be liberated from the usurpers hands soon.

"We do not have the slightest doubt in the fulfillment of the divine promises, and we know that the truth will triumph over falsehood, oppression and tyranny, and the tyrant and falsehood will be destroyed," he

said.

Mousavi stated that when the envisioned leader promised that the Zionist regime would not see the next 25 years, many may not have imagined that a day like today would come so quickly.

"The Zionists, who once dreamed of dominating the region, are now desperate and stuck in battle with the resistance forces, and the dream of reaching the Nile to the Euphrates has been reduced to the night-



mare of maintaining the Israeli terrorist garrison," he noted.

The top military official warned the traitors and compromisers of the region that the blood of the children of Gaza "will drown the compromisers of the deal of the century."

"We consider the continuation of the crimes of the Zionist regime as the result of the procrastination and betrayal of the compromisers of the deal of the century," Mousavi remarked.

Austria's controversial move damages its international standing

After flying the Israeli flag over Foreign Ministry building: can Austria be trusted in the nuclear talks?

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – In a highly controversial move, the Austrian government sided with Israel by flying the Israeli flag over a number of government offices, a move that smeared Austria's international reputation and undermined trust in its ability to continue to be impartial venue for international events.

In the midst of the Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people all across occupied Palestine, Austria suddenly grabbed the international headlines after it announced that the Israeli flag will be flown over government offices in a show of support for Israel.

In a statement sent to AFP, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz denounced the retaliatory attacks from the Gaza Strip against Israel, saying that he supports Israel in the face of these attacks.

"Israel has the right to defend itself against these attacks. To show our solidarity ... we have put up the Israeli flag," on the chancellery and the Foreign Ministry, the statement added."

Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg also was keen to keep up with his young boss. "We strongly support the security of Israel," he said.

The Austrian position was met with a combination of anger and condemnation in the region. Iran and Turkey, which work hand-in-hand with other countries to stop the Israeli crimes against civilians in Palestine, both rejected the Austrian ill-advised move.

Ibrahim Kalin, a spokesman for the Turkish presidency, criticized Kurz's move, saying it will only encourage Israel to continue its attacks on the Palestinian people.

"This is what encourages Israel to continue its attacks on Palestinian people," Kalin said in a tweet, according to Anadolu Agency. "I hope those Austrians and Europeans with a sense of reason and morality



will reject these disgraceful politics."

Turkey's Vice President Fuat Oktay also denounced the Austrian position, saying it will tarnish the image of Kurz.

"With this attitude, the Austrian chancellor has put his signature under Israel's massacre in Gaza," Oktay asserted.

In Iran, the resentment was even more evident. Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, was shocked to see the Israeli flag fluttering over Austrian government offices.

Araghchi, currently in Vienna to lead the Iranian negotiating team in the Vienna nuclear talks, expressed dismay at Austria's decision to hoist the Israeli flag.

"Vienna is the seat of IAEA & UN, and Austria so far [has] been a great host for negotiations. Shocking & painful to see flag of the occupying regime, that brutally killed tens of innocent civilians, including many children in just few days, over gov-

ernment offices in Vienna. We stand with Palestine," he said on Twitter.

In the meantime, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was paying a visit to Spain on the first leg of a tour of several European countries including Austria. He was planning to visit Austria for bilateral talks. But the foreign minister canceled the visit at the last minute in protest over the Israeli flag display.

The cancellation raised serious doubts about Austria's reputation as a fair host for international meetings. Austria used to boast about its ability to build relations with all countries and play host to important international events such as the Iran nuclear negotiations. To be fair, Austria has been a capable partner in facilitating or at least playing host to some most important international events. But the continuation of this status hinges on Austria's ability to avoid

taking sides in international conflicts, especially those Austria has no real interest in embroiling itself in.

Araghchi gently reminded the Austrian government that he is conducting talks in Vienna when he said he voiced resentment at the display of the Israeli flag. Araghchi is holding important nuclear talks within a distance of a few meters away from the Austrian Foreign Ministry building. So, the Austrian government must have taken into the account the fact that the flag display would elicit pushback from Iran.

Iran has every right to ponder over whether there has been an intention on the part of Austria to stymie progress in the talks. Israel has been doing everything in its power to derail the Vienna talks. The Israeli officials descended on Washington in the wake of the Biden administration's decision to resume talks with Iran to dissuade it from entering talks with Iran but they failed to do so.

Israel then began a campaign of harassment against the Palestinians in the West Bank, namely in Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, which resulted in the current tragic war on the Gaza Strip, one in which Israel killed a large number of children and women. Israel has sought to use this war to encourage the Biden administration into halting talks with Iran based on claims that Iran had supplied Gaza with rockets. So, is the Austrian government, wittingly or unwittingly, playing into the hands of the Israeli regime's plan to undercut the Vienna talks?

Regardless of the nuclear talks, Austria now risks being fallen into disrepute in the eyes of hundreds of millions across the globe for its support for an armed-to-the-teeth regime cold-bloodedly killing civilians and putting the lives of journalists in grave danger.

FM Zarif holds talks in Rome

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif arrived in Rome on the second leg of his tour of several European countries.

The top Iranian diplomat was expected to meet with Italian and Vatican officials.

During the trip, the top Iranian diplomat was set to hold consultations on the enhancement of mutual cooperation and bilateral ties, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Issues of mutual interest at the international level are expected to feature high in Zarif's talks with officials in Rome.

The chief Iranian diplomat has embarked on a tour of several European countries which began with a visit to Spain where he met with Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation Arancha Gonzalez Laya.

In Spain, he also met with Spain's Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism Maria Reyes Maroto, who also co-chairs the Iran-Spain Joint Economic Cooperation Commission.

In his Thursday meeting with Laya, Zarif discussed the latest status of Tehran-Madrid relations in various political and economic fields.

Foreign Minister Zarif reviewed bilateral relations in different spheres, and said the potential for Iran-Spain economic cooperation is beyond the current level.

He then underlined the necessity of exploring avenues



for promoting collaborations in different economic areas by removing some of the existing barriers.

Zarif also highlighted the significance of developing cooperation in the field of small and medium-sized enterprises as well as the tourism industry and its infrastructure for activation of Iran-Spain economic relations.

The Iranian foreign minister elaborated on Tehran's viewpoints regarding the regional issues, especially the need for intra-regional interaction among countries and other important issues of the region including Yemen, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Zarif's trip to Europe was also scheduled to include a visit to Austria, where diplomats from Iran and world powers are negotiating over how to revive a 2015 nuclear deal officially

known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). But the visit was canceled after the Austrian government decided to show solidarity with Israel by flying the Israeli flag over government offices, something that elicited a strong response from Iran.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who is in Vienna for nuclear talks, expressed dismay at Austria's controversial decision regarding the Israeli flag.

"Vienna is the seat of IAEA & UN, and Austria so far [has] been a great host for negotiations. Shocking & painful to see flag of the occupying regime, that brutally killed tens of innocent civilians, including many children in just few days, over government offices in Vienna. We stand with Palestine," Araghchi said on Twitter.

A spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry told Al Jazeera that Zarif canceled his trip to Austria in protest over the Israeli flag being hoisted over Austrian government buildings.

Saeed Khatibzadeh confirmed that the visit was canceled but he did not say why.

"Mr. Zarif did not consider the trip expedient in these circumstances, and therefore the visit's arrangements were not finalized," Khatibzadeh told the ISNA news agency without elaborating.

Stephanie Liechtenstein, a Vienna-based journalist, also claimed that the cancellation was due to the Israeli flag.

Russia says Vienna talks 'good but not easy'

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – A senior Russian diplomat participating in the Vienna nuclear talks has said the negotiations are making progress but with difficulty.

Russian ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations Mikhail Ulyanov said the negotiating partners are conducting talks in various informal settings.

"So far so good but not easy. The work on restoration of the JCPOA continues, including during this weekend," the Russian diplomat said on Twitter.

He added, "The Vienna talks on JCPOA are conducted in various informal settings, as well as in the working groups on sanctions lifting, nuclear issues and practical measures to restore the deal. The drafting process is underway. If the need arises a Joint Commission can be convened."

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 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Almost all parties to the negotiations said progress was made during the talks, though this progress did not amount to a complete revival of the JCPOA.

Iran is in close contact with China and Russia as well as the three European signatories to the JCPOA. On Friday, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who is leading the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, met with the Chinese envoy to the Vienna talks, Wang Qun. During the meeting, the two diplomats discussed the latest

developments concerning the talks.

Also on Friday, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation, Kazem Jalali, met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. The meeting focused on the current situation surrounding the nuclear deal. The two sides also stressed the importance of coordination and efforts of all members of the JCPOA for a sustainable implementation of the nuclear deal in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231.

During the meeting, Jalali praised Russia's "principled and rational stance in support of the JCPOA and UNSC Resolution 2231 and its opposition to the illegal U.S. actions and sanctions" against Iran.

The fourth round of Vienna nuclear talks began in early May when negotiators from Iran and the P4+1 groups of countries as well as the U.S. returned to the Austrian capital after a short stay in capitals which included briefing and consultation meetings with senior officials.

Shortly after the beginning of the fourth round, Iran expressed readiness to extend a technical deal with the International Atomic Energy Agency giving the UN nuclear watchdog access to Iran's nuclear facilities. The February deal is set to expire on May 21. But Iran said it is open to discussing an extension of the deal.

Araghchi had 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.

The February deal between Iran and the

IAEA allowed the latter to continue its monitoring access to Iranian nuclear sites 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.

The deal was reached during a two-day visit by IAEA Director-General Mariano Grossi to Iran. During the visit, Grossi met with Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Under the deal, Iran and the IAEA agreed: "1. That Iran continues to implement fully and without limitation its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA as before. 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."

The deal was reached only two days before Iran started the implementation of the nuclear law.

The parliamentary 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.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, announced last week that extending Iran's cooperation deal

with the International Atomic Energy Agency is one of the country's options. He made the remarks 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.

Speaking at a weekly 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." Ulyanov has also 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 extended," 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."

However, Ulyanov later said on Twitter that the Vienna talks make progress and the negotiators aim at completing the process as soon as possible. "Hopefully by May 21. It's very difficult but doable," he said.

SPORTS

Iran suffer lack of preparation for FIFA World Cup qualification

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN – Iran national football team will participate in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification without playing warm-up match ahead of the significant event.

Dragan Skocic's team will hold a training camp in Kish Island before leaving Iran for Bahrain on May 31.



Iran will have a difficult task in Bahrain since the team are third in Group C.

The 'Persian leopard' will meet Hong Kong on June 3 in centralized venue in Bahrain.

Iran will also face Bahrain, Cambodia and Iraq every three days. The National Team have already played Uzbekistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Syria under leadership of Skocic and the team were supposed to play one more friendly ahead of the qualifiers.

Iran are third in their group of five, but have a game in hand over their opponents.

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

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

Italian ambassador to Iran Perrone visits head of volleyball federation

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN – Italian Ambassador to Iran Giuseppe Perrone visited Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) Saturday evening and met with IRIVF President Mohammad Reza Davarzani to discuss volleyball matters including the upcoming 2021 Volleyball Nations League in Italy.

Also attending the meeting included Head of Economic and Commercial Section of Italian Embassy David Balloni, Head of Cultural Section Yaroslava Romanova, IRIVF Supreme Advisor Vahid Moradi and IRIVF International Affairs Director Sarah Hessabi.

This meeting was held to discuss various volleyball matters including the 2021 VNL in Italy, the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship in Bulgaria and Italy and the FIVB Boys' U19 World Championship in Iran.

Iran is preparing its men's national team for the 2021 VNL in a secure bubble in Rimini, Italy and the men's junior squad for the U21 World Championship, while the qualified Italy will also be taking part in the Boys' U19 World Championship in Iran.

In the meeting, Davarzani reported on the preparation process of the national volleyball team, long-term goals and world honors of Iranian Volleyball to the senior officials from the Italian Embassy.

Giuseppe Perrone, in his determined effort of using sport as an effective tool to bring nations together, pointed to the cultural commonalities between Iran and Italy and said, "Many Italians who have once traveled to Iran are willing to visit Iran again."

He also congratulated Iran Volleyball on achieving its long-term goals and said, "I am happy for having one Italian staff in your national team (assistant coach Tomaso Totolo)."

At the end of the meeting, they all watched the training stint of the Iran senior men's national team onsite.

Referees to officiate at FIFA World Cup qualification

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN – A number of Iranian referees were chosen to officiate at the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

Alireza Faghani will referee Group H matches in centralized venue South Korea. He will be assisted by Mohammad Reza Mansouri and Mohammad Reza Abolfazli.

Moud Bonyadifar was chosen to officiate Group E matches in Qatar. Ali Mirzabegi and Saeid Ghasemi will assist him.

And Hossein Akrami will officiate a match between Japan and Myanmar. He will be assisted by Alireza Ildorom and Hassan Zahiri.

Mehdi Taremi chosen AFC Int'l Player of Week

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN – Iranian striker Mehdi Taremi was chosen as the AFC International Player of the Week, the-afc.com wrote.

He was directly involved in four goals in a match against Farense, taking his personal scoring tally to 22 in all competitions this season, one more than his 21 for Rio Ave in 2019-20.

The Porto forward won the poll with 64 percent of the votes. Tottenham forward Son Heung-min came second in the poll will 11 percent.

Sepahan move top of the IPL table

S P O R T S d e s k TEHRAN - Sepahan football team came from a goal down to beat visiting team Mes Rafsanjan 4-1 in Matchday 23 of Iran professional League (IPL) on Sunday.

Mohammad Soleymani gave the visiting team into the elad with a header just nine minutes into the match but Sepahan midfielder Giorgi Gvelesiani equalized the match in the 25th minute.

Mohammadreza Hosseini and Omid Noorafkan were on target in the 28th and 33rd minutes thanks to Mes players' blunders. Sajad Shahbazzadeh scored Sepahan's fourth goal in the 39th minute. Yasin Salmani who came off the bench found the back of Mes net in the 83rd minute.

Sepahan moved up top of the table with 48 points. Persepolis are second with 45 point and one game in hand.

Iran’s eastern fields produce 16 bcm of gas in a year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Managing Director of Iran’s East oil and Gas Production Company (EOGC) has announced the production of 16 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas - 43 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) - in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Farshid Kheibari, EOGC’s production goals for the mentioned year were realized by 104 percent and even in some days the output exceeded 63 mcm/d, Shana reported.

EOGC was established in December 1998 in line with the policy of decentralizing the management in Iran’s oil industry.



The company is operating projects mainly in the east of the country. Currently, it is active in Khorasan Razavi province and is in charge of production from Mozdouran sour gas reservoir as well as Shourijeh B, Shourijeh D and Gondbadli sweet gas reservoirs in the northeastern city of Sarakh.

Referring to the need for accelerating the implementation of gas storage development projects as strategic projects in the oil industry, Kheibari also announced the storage of 1.856 bcm of gas in Shourijeh D reservoir in the previous year.

“Due to the increase in the country’s gas consumption and in line with the Oil Ministry programs for providing sustainable gas for domestic and industrial sectors during winter, as well as the need for gas imports, especially in the northeast of the country, last year we managed to store 1.856 billion cubic meters of gas in Shourijeh D in the first eight months of the previous year (March 20-November 20, 2020),” Kheibari explained.

“A total of 2.5 billion cubic meters of gas was reproduced during the previous year’s cold season, which compared to the same period of the preceding year increased by about 28 percent in terms of storage and 18 percent in terms of reproduction,” he added.

Sustainable energy supply in the north and northeast regions which are significantly far from the main centers of gas production in the south of the country and the need to reduce dependence on gas imports has always been one of the main concerns of the Oil Ministry.

In this regard, according to NIGC plans, the capacity of the two storage facilities, Sarajeh and Shourijeh, is planned to increase to over seven billion cubic meters in near future.

Greenhouse farming being developed in Bushehr province

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, cultivation in greenhouses is being developed in Bushehr province, in the southwest of Iran.

Khosro Omrani, the deputy head of the province’s agriculture department, said, “In order to develop greenhouse farming in Bushehr province, good efforts have been made and in recent years we have witnessed a fivefold increase in the area under greenhouse farming in the province.”

The official also stated that the capacity of cold storages in Bushehr province is increasing by over 130 percent.

Mentioning the 11-percent growth in the agricultural output of the province, Omrani put the annual agricultural production of Bushehr at 1.584 million tons.



While the agriculture sector plays a significant role in the promotion of the Iranian economy, drought in recent years has prevented this sector from being developed as expected.

To tackle this condition, the Agriculture Ministry has taken some measures and defined some programs, such as the improvement of irrigation systems.

One of the major programs that the ministry has defined and is seriously pursuing is the development of greenhouses throughout the country.

As reported, 80 percent of the country’s greenhouse fruits and vegetables are exported.

The significance of boosting agricultural export is obvious when taking the country’s recent approach to boost non-oil exports into account. The development of greenhouses is a very fruitful measure in this due.

Production of products in the greenhouses is today one of the most profitable methods in the agriculture sectors of the countries, in a way that they have defined it as one of their major production strategies because while greenhouses provide stable production of high-quality products, developing them is a proper way for tackling drought and for optimal use of water resources.

In Iran, the need for the development of greenhouses is now highly recognized, as the country is seriously following up on two main objectives of strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance, and boosting non-oil exports.

While many supportive measures are being taken to this end, Iran should also benefit from the experiences of those countries that enjoy significant achievements and progresses in the field of greenhouses.

Iran preparing for a strong comeback to oil market

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran is gradually boosting crude oil production to get ready for a strong comeback into the global market as the talks with world powers over the 2015 nuclear deal show signs of progress.

According to a Bloomberg report, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) officials have stated that the country’s oil fields are going through overhaul operations and connections with oil buyers are being re-established.

“In the most optimistic estimates, the country could return to pre-sanctions production levels of almost four million barrels a day in as little as three months,” the report said.

Iran and other signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal, including the United States, are currently negotiating in Vienna and the two sides have signaled that an agreement is within reach.

If successful, the negotiations could



reactivate the nuclear deal that Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from in 2018.

That would require the U.S. to lift all the sanctions imposed by the former president.

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

The increase in the production has been followed by a boost in exports so that in late April Reuters reported that Iranian crude oil exports in the mentioned month had remained above the level of exports during the same period in 2020.

Earlier this month, Iran’s First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri said the country was able to increase its oil exports up to 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) once the U.S. sanctions are lifted.

“Oil sales have dropped a lot, but now the situation is better, and we are in control. We will be able to increase oil exports to 2.5 million barrels per day after the removal of the sanctions,” Jahangiri said.

Energy Ministry taking serious measures to manage water resources

→ 1 the territory of rivers and water resources is clear, and we can move towards a system of governance in such specific regions; we need to move in a direction where we could be able to establish an organization of drainage basins..... this is a method and experience that has been done in the world and works perfectly.”

“Some prerequisites are necessary in order to reform the country’s water structure, preliminaries such as implementation of water shortage adaptation plans in the provinces, passing the bill of the comprehensive water law, the integration of urban and rural water and sewage companies, etc.,” Ardakanian explained.

Although we need such prerequisites to change the structure, establishing these prerequisites also requires some preparation, he added.

According to Ardakanian, the formation of expert committees in drainage basin regions is one of the most

essential steps that must be taken to be able to benefit from the existing capacities of water organizations in those regions.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Energy had submitted a proposed bill for water resources management to the cabinet committee for infrastructure, industry, and environment.

Swarming water-related problems are threatening many arid and semiarid regions of the world, and Iran is no exception.

Integrating such problems with health, environmental, political, socioeconomic, and sustainability issues have greatly increased demand for managing water-related problems in Iran over the past few years.

And in this regard, the government has been taking some measures for changing the way the country’s water resources have been managed so far.



ICCIMA presents proposal package for next govt.

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has stated the private sector’s expectations from the next government in the form of a proposal package during the 14th meeting of the ICCIMA board of directors.

According to Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, from the perspective of the private sector, the first priority of the future President should be to accelerate the country’s economic growth in a sustainable, stable, and comprehensive manner.

ICCIMA is going to officially publish its



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie proposed policy package which is mainly focused on increasing the country’s economic

growth in a report addressed to the next government, the official said.

Curbing inflation, restoring people’s trust in the system, providing accurate and honest statistical-analytical reports on the country’s economic condition, and controlling tensions in international relations were some of the major demands of the private sector highlighted in the ICCIMA’s proposal for the next government.

Privatization, managing the forex market, development of non-oil exports, completing semi-finished projects, eliminating redundant bureaucracy, and fighting against corruption

were also among the issues addressed in the mentioned proposal.

Iran’s next presidential elections will be held on June 18, 2021, according to the deputy interior minister in charge of elections.

Candidates hoping to run in the next elections began applying since earlier this month for approval. The final list is to be announced by the Guardian Council in early June.

Under Iran’s law, an incumbent president cannot run for a third term if he has already served for two consecutive terms in office. Rouhani was first elected in 2013 and reelected four years later.

Cryptocurrency mining using household electricity to face heavy fines

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Ministry’s spokesman for the electricity sector said that those cryptocurrency miners, who use household electricity, will have to pay a heavy fine if identified.

In addition to paying the mentioned fines, those miners must also compensate for the damages they cause to the electricity network, Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi added.

This year, electricity supply is facing two issues: reduction in the power generation of hydropower plants due to reduced rainfall and mining cryptocurrency using household electricity.

Unauthorized mining of cryptocurrencies creates problems in supplying electricity due to the damage to the local power grid and transformers, Mashhadi Rajabi noted, adding continued activity of these miners will definitely make the power supply more difficult and there is a possibility of blackouts due to the damage they cause.

Following the Iranian government’s approval of cryptocurrency mining as an industrial activity in 2019, numerous companies started mining cryptocurrency across the country thanks to the extremely low-cost electricity, and now Iranian power plants started to see this industry as an opportunity to increase their revenues.

In January 2020, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade issued 1,000 plus licenses for cryptocurrency mining units.

With cryptocurrency mining taking a toll on Iran’s electricity industry, energy authorities voiced concerns about the enormous pressures exerted by such activities on the electrical grid, so some power plant companies



proposed to offer their excess electricity exclusively to the cryptocurrency miners.

In order to reduce the pressure on the national grid, the government agreed to the proposal but said the power plants will not be able to benefit from the government subsidies on their fuel supplies.

In last July, Rajabi Mashhadi announced that Power plants were also allowed to mine cryptocurrencies.

He said that entities have to apply for the necessary licenses from the Industry Ministry and comply with the tariffs set for crypto mining.

Following the mentioned announcement, the head of Iran’s Thermal Power Plant Holding Company (TPPH)

announced that his company is going to hold a tender for offering the electricity output of three power plants for cryptocurrency mining.

“The Necessary equipment has been installed in three power plants of Ramin, Neka, and Shahid Montazeri, and the auction documents will be uploaded on the SetadIran.ir website in the near future,” Mohsen Tarzatabal said at the time.

Tarzatabal noted that creating stable sources of income has become one of the main goals of Iran’s electricity industry in recent years, explaining: “Unfortunately, constant price hikes and the obligation for supplying electricity with stable prices to subscribers have caused a large gap between revenues and expenditures in the country’s electricity industry, and we need new sources of income to fill this gap.”

He pointed to the sale of electricity to cryptocurrency miners as one of the ways to earn money in the electricity sector and said: “According to the laws and regulations announced by the cabinet and the Energy Ministry, we have been allowed to allocate some capacity of our power plants for mining cryptocurrencies.”

According to Tarzatabal, the TPPH is only going to use the power plants’ expansion turbines for the mentioned purpose because they do not consume liquid fuels like gas oil, and only natural gas, which is cleaner, is used as fuel in these turbines.

These turbines are not connected to the national grid and the electricity generated by them is only used by the power plant itself,” he added.

TEDPIX loses nearly 800 points on Sunday

ECONOMY d e s k

TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 791 point to 1.188 million on Sunday.

Over 5.248 billion securities worth 34.909 trillion rials (about \$831 million) were traded at the TSE on Sunday.

As reported, the first market’s index dropped 217 points and the second market’s index fell 2,844 points.

TEDPIX gained 11,000 points, or one percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.183 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Barekat Pharmaceutical Group (BPG), Social Security Investment Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran Khodro Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, and Bank Mellat were the most widely followed indices.

Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi, the chairman of the Iranian parliament’s economic committee has said that the stock market is going to follow a positive trend in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

“[This year] the profits of major indus-

tries and influential companies in the capital market have been assessed positively, which is why the market will follow a positive trend this year,” Pour-Ebrahimi told IRIB.

The official said that part of the current negative trend in the market is due to psychological factors and the fact that people have lost their trust in the capital market.

“In the first half of the previous year, the government failed to manage and monitor the capital market and did not do its job properly, which is why the capital market [index] witnessed such a severe decline,” he said.

The government must act in such a



way that the people’s trust is restored and the capital market is taken out of the current psychological atmosphere, he stressed.

China is the most urgent national security issue, says ex-U.S. ambassador to Sanaa

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Noting that the U.S. has its critical interests in West Asia, the former U.S. ambassador to Sanaa says that Beijing is the “most urgent national security issue” to Washington.

“The U.S. clearly considers great power competition, especially with China, as its most urgent national security issue,” Gerald Michael Feierstein tells the Tehran Times.

For decades, the United States has been engaged in West Asia. Regional powers, including Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, have tried to change the balance, seeking new allies and competing more fiercely with one another. But beyond the headlines, China has been the biggest rival to the U.S. in West Asian policies. In fact, Beijing is the largest buyer of the region’s oil.

For Washington, this means West Asia is reemerging as a scene of great power competition.

China’s deepening alignment with Iran and friendly links to anti-American groups pose long-term risks to the U.S. The Biden administration has no way but to impose costs on China and Iran to keep their budding strategic partnership. It should also be recognized that most of Washington’s West Asian allies and partners—including Israel and the Persian Gulf states—are reluctant to take sides in a U.S.-Chinese geopolitical rivalry.

“Nevertheless, as we see right now in the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian violence, the U.S. has critical interests in the Middle East (West Asia) that will always require its engagement,” Feierstein remarks. Following is the text of the interview:

It seems Saudi Arabia is changing its foreign policy when it comes to Qatar, Iran, and Yemen? What is the main cause of this policy shift?

I think there are a number of factors that are influencing a desire in Riyadh to reduce



“I think there are a number of factors that are influencing a desire in Riyadh to reduce regional tensions. These include a need to focus on domestic challenges, a recognition that an outbreak of open conflict in the region would be damaging to Saudi Arabia, and an interest in coordinating more closely with what the Saudi leadership recognized as changing U.S. positions.”

regional tensions. These include a need to focus on domestic challenges, a recognition that an outbreak of open conflict in the region would be damaging to Saudi Arabia, and an interest in coordinating more closely with what the Saudi leadership recognized as changing U.S. positions.

Is America going to get rid of West Asia and focus on other areas in Asia to confront China? Is West Asia important yet for policy-makers in the U.S.?

The U.S. clearly considers great power competition, especially with China, as its most urgent national security issue. Nevertheless, as we’re seeing right now in the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian violence, the U.S. has critical interests in the Middle East (West Asia) that will always require its engagement.

In Trump’s presidency, Persian Gulf Arab countries witnessed sharp disagreements. Do you expect a kind

of harmony between these countries during Biden’s term?

The issues that are challenging the region today, for example, the social and economic challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising climate change and environmental challenges, favor regional cooperation and coordination. This recognition may be driving what we are seeing at the moment in reduced tensions among the regional states. The Biden administration will support steps to reduce regional tensions, including between Saudi Arabia and its neighbors.

Given your experience in West Asia, what is the logic of states and regimes’ behaviors in the region? How could a Western observer understand West Asia?

I think it’s important to recognize that each state in the region is unique in its history, culture, and traditions and that we shouldn’t make broad general statements about the drivers of decisions in individual countries. A Western observer should keep that in mind when trying to understand the dynamics at play in the countries in the region, or more broadly in the world. To understand a country, one needs to study that country, its history, and its people.

Given U.S. experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, do you think America will continue its so-called the democratization move in the region, especially when we talk of Washington’s Arab allies like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE?

As an American, I believe that democratic systems of governance offer the greatest stability and opportunity for citizens and that, therefore, the U.S. should promote democratic reforms when raising governance issues. The U.S. should be seen globally as an advocate for human rights and civil liberties. But it’s also true that each country needs to make its own decisions about the best way to manage its affairs and what the best approach to governance might be.

Escalations in Palestine designed by Netanyahu to keep him in power: analyst

The conflation of Judaism and Zionism is utterly absurd

→ 1 This has been a cynical game for some time since he cannot be fully prosecuted and jailed on a variety of corruption charges as long as he holds office. But he and the Zionists probably did not expect what appeared to be a general Palestinian uprising on both sides of the Green Line, especially in Gaza with many volleys of more effective homemade missiles raining on all parts of central Israel. The escalation and bombings and killings of Gazans is a way for the Zionists to buy more time before they may be forced to change any policies, but this time they may have miscalculated because it is possible Palestinians are not going to quiet down and chaos could prevail west of the Jordan River virtually forever until the Occupation ends. One would hope the PA would be thoroughly dismantled and Abbas exposed for what he has long been – a quisling.

Israel says Iran is a threat to West Asia while we see Israeli sabotage operations against Iran and killing people in Palestine. Who is the real threat?

Iran has never been an active threat in the Middle East (West Asia) unless one considers a prosperous Iran a threat that makes no sense. Therefore, we see decades of attempts to not let Iran prosper, to undermine the Islamic Republic by the U.S., the EU and of course, the Zionists. A person would have to be blind and deaf to not to know that Israel and the support of Israel by the U.S. is the real block to calm and peace in the Middle East (West Asia). Imperialism and Colonialism have one aim: to divide and conquer. The divided part is not currently working very well, if at all, in Palestine for the very first time since the Nakba, it seems. The PA and Abbas must be obliterated. It has been a past century of utter SHAME that Muslims across the world have so far failed to come together and work together towards shared benefits. The Islamic Ummah must rise and prevail.

“A person would have to be blind and deaf to not to know that Israel and the support of Israel by the U.S. is the real block to calm and peace in the Middle East (West Asia).”

How do you see Western media cover when it comes to conflicts in Palestine?

The mainstream Western media, particularly the New York Times and Washington Post, are still spouting the same garbage about Palestine and Iran and the Middle East (West Asia) generally. It is so predictable and ignorant. However, there are a few fair media outlets in the West and a handful of superb reporters and thinkers and writers, even a few in the U.S., who do understand the real dynamics underway and are not afraid, to tell the truth. More and more, we will see this going forward as more Western citizens wake up to the realities in the Middle East (West Asia). One big problem is that Americans and Brits and others generally

“It has been a past century of utter SHAME that Muslims across the world have so far failed to come together and work together towards shared benefits. The Islamic Ummah must rise and prevail.”

have been dumbed way down by the usual media gibberish and propaganda that they understand very little.

The concern today is that President Biden, perhaps senile but certainly under the Zionist influence, is still saying what we have heard so often when “Israel” has erupted in violence: “Israel has a right to defend itself.” But by murdering civilians in Gaza and the West Bank? What a joke that is.

Why do successive administrations in the U.S. try to turn a blind eye to Israeli crimes?

Successive U.S. administrations are corrupted by their members’ own ignorance, various Israel lobbies like AIPAC and money. It is totally corrupted. AIPAC, for example, should be registered as a foreign agent liable to taxes in the U.S. One can posit that this corruption of governance could be the end of the U.S. influence eventually.

How could Israel label its critics with anti-Semitism to marginalize them?

Anti-Semitism is a powerful concept when applied to others, given the Holocaust and so many references to it. Practically anyone who has advocated for the end of Apartheid has been smeared as anti-Semitic when all they have been against Zionism as a corrosive, criminal ideology. The conflation of Judaism and Zionism is utterly absurd, and many Jews in Iran would tell anyone if they were asked. Even Jimmy Carter has been called an anti-Semite for nearly 20 years! Most all decent journalists and writers focusing on the Middle East (West Asia) have been called anti-Semitic at one time or another. This is another crude absurdity. It is a ploy that is losing its effectiveness nowadays.

It is worth saying that Western governments that continue to spout the usual platitudes about “Israel” are slowly losing credibility even at home. But the process has been way too slow and many continue to suffer as a result. Zionism is failing, will fail.

Pro-Palestine rallies hit U.S., Europe, Australia

Israel’s deadly bombardment of the blockaded Gaza Strip has sparked protests worldwide in support of the Palestinian nation and in condemnation of the occupying regime’s aggression.

Israeli aerial assaults have killed at least 174 people, including 47 children and 29 women, in Gaza over the past week and wounded nearly 1,000 others.

However, the Times of Israel said while Tel Aviv may claim tactical gains through razing high-rise buildings in Gaza, Palestinian resistance groups are “proving the strategic victor”.

On Saturday, thousands of protesters took to the streets of major cities across Europe to vent their anger at the Israeli crimes against the Palestinians. There were similar gatherings in the U.S., Australia and Iraq.

In London, over 100,000 demonstrators carrying placards reading “Stop Bombing Gaza” and chanting “Free Palestine” converged on Marble Arch, near the British capital’s Hyde Park, to march towards the Israeli embassy.

The police said nine officers were injured as they tried to disperse the crowd outside the Israeli mission, adding that 13 people

were arrested.

“This time is different. This time we will not be denied any more. We are united. We have had enough of oppression,” Palestinian Ambassador to the UK Husam Zomlot told the protesters. “Today we are saying enough, enough with the complicity.”

In Paris, police fired tear gas and water cannons to disperse a pro-Palestinian rally, which was held despite a ban by authorities.

“You want to prohibit me from showing solidarity with my people, even as my village is being bombed?” said Mohammed wearing a “Free Palestine” T-shirt.

Hundreds of people also took part in authorized protests in other French cities, including Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier, Toulouse and Bordeaux.

Protesters in the German capital, Berlin, shouted “Boycott Israel” and threw paving stones and bottles at the police, leading to several arrests.

Other demonstrations took place in the cities of Frankfurt, Leipzig and Hamburg.

They came a few days after Israeli flags were burnt in front of two synagogues in the cities of Bonn and Muenster.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas vowed “unwavering” protection of synagogues, saying, “There must be no tolerance for attacks against synagogues in our country.”

In Madrid, some 2,500 people, many of them young people wrapped in Palestinian flags, marched to the city center, chanting slogans such as, “This is not a war, it’s genocide.”

The Association of the Spanish-Palestinian Community held the “Jerusalem” rally on the 73rd anniversary of the Nakba Day (the Day of Catastrophe), when the Israeli regime proclaimed existence and drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland in 1948.

“They are massacring us,” said Amira Sheikh-Ali, a 37-year-old Palestinian origin. “We’re in a situation when the Nakba is continuing in the middle of the 21st century.”

“We want to ask Spain and the European authorities not to collaborate with Israel, because with their silence, they are collaborating,” said Ikhlass Abousousiane, a nurse of Moroccan origin.

Danish police violently arrested Palestinian supporters who were protesting in

front of the Israeli embassy in Copenhagen and dispersed them with tear gas.

According to Anadolu news agency, the protesters were about to leave the subway station in Copenhagen for the Israeli embassy when they were attacked by police.

In Athens, around 500 people rallied, but there were minor scuffles after Greek police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowd.

Shouting “Freedom to Palestine” and waving Palestinian flags, the participants marched to the Israeli embassy that had been cordoned off by police buses.

Similarly, the Australians marched in Sydney and Melbourne to condemn the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

In Sydney, protesters chanted slogans like “Free, free Palestine” and “Free, free Gaza”.

“I see an uprising,” said Sydney protester Walla Abu-Eid. “I see people who are no longer going to remain silent. People who are fed up, people who are responding to oppression and violence by standing up for themselves.”

In Iraq, several cities witnessed protests, with the participants burning Israeli and American flags.

Fighting between Taliban, Afghan forces resumes as three-day ceasefire ends

Fighting between the Taliban and Afghan government forces has resumed after a three-day ceasefire, announced to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan, came to an end.

Local officials confirmed that clashes between the warring sides began on Sunday on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah, the capital of the southern province of Helmand.

“The fighting started early today morning and is still ongoing,” Attaullah Afghan, head of the Helmand provincial council, was quoted by AFP, as saying.

He said Taliban fighters attacked security checkpoints on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah and other districts.

Lashkar Gah has been the scene of intense fighting since the United States officially began the process of withdrawing its remaining troops from Afghanistan on May 1.

According to Press TV, all foreign troops were supposed to have been withdrawn by that time as part of an agreement the U.S. had reached with the Taliban in Doha last year. However, President Joe Biden pushed that date back to September 11, angering the Taliban.

As the violence escalated, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani urged the Taliban to announce a permanent truce, saying that the withdrawal of foreign troops has now left no reason for the group to continue killing their own people.

However, according to the Ministry of Defense, at least 40 people were killed and wounded on Saturday in separate Taliban attacks in nearly ten provinces despite the ceasefire.

“The Taliban violated the ceasefire in several areas and provinces and it caused casualties among civilians and military personnel,” said the ministry spokesman Rohullah Ahmadzai.

He said that Taliban leader, “Mullah Hibatullah has no authority on all factions of the group and his loyalists are not abiding by his orders.”

Quds war enters new phase as Palestinian Resistance movement unveils Ghasem missile

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN**—Spokesman for the military branch of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad announced the use of new missiles in the fight against the occupying regime, including the “Ghasem” missile.

Abu Hamzah, spokesman for the Al-Quds Brigades stated that in the recent war on Gaza, advanced missiles were used.

One of these missiles is the advanced “Ghasem” missile, which was used in the missile attack on Saturday, May 15.

Abu Hamza, while announcing that the missile radius of the Palestinian resistance today reaches Tel Aviv, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and other occupied Palestinian cities, clarified, “We still have many surprises that will astonish the enemy.”

“We tell the stupid Netanyahu and the commander of his stupid army that we are waiting for your ground forces to enter the Gaza Strip to show you some of our anger,” he reiterated.

Islamic Jihad has released a video of the missile, which is equipped with a 400-kilogram explosive warhead, and announced that it has targeted the Zionist regime’s ground forces in the east of Khan Yunis.

The Israeli army announced on Saturday evening that from 7 am to 7 pm, 278 missiles and rockets were fired from Gaza into the occupied cities.

Since the beginning of the conflict between the Zionist regime and the Palestinians last Monday night, 10 Zionists have been killed and dozens more injured in the “Sword of Quds” resistance operation.

Resistance News

Hamas: We won’t rest assured until al-Quds’ is liberated

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— Hamas lays emphasis on its determination towards restoring Palestinians’ right to the holy occupied city of al-Quds, despite escalation in the Israeli regime’s aggression.

We won’t rest assured until al-Quds and the al-Aqsa Mosque’s liberation, Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Palestinian resistance movement’s Political Bureau, said in late Saturday, Al Jazeera reported.

“The current Palestinian generation can do this,” he added.

The regime occupied the Palestinian territory of the West Bank, where al-Quds is located, in 1967.

The Israeli military and illegal settlers intensified the regime’s violations against Palestinians across al-Quds, including on the al-Aqsa Mosque’s compound -- Islam’s third-holiest site that is situated in al-Quds’ Old City -- after the beginning of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

The military attacked thousands of worshippers on the compound, and also tried to evict Palestinians from al-Quds’ Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

According to Press TV, Gaza, where Hamas is headquartered, rose in protest afterwards. Since Monday, the Israeli military has taken the coastal sliver under unrelenting, hugely deadly, and indiscriminate assaults.

Scores of Palestinians have died during the violations targeting the West Bank, while the attacks on Gaza has led to the martyrdom of 139 others, including 39 children and 22 women.

On Saturday, Salemeah Marouf, head of the Gaza-based Government Information Office, said, only during the previous night, the regime had carried out as many as “300 attacks” against Gaza.

The damage afflicted on the territory since Monday, the official added, could so far be estimated at \$260 million.

Haniyeh, however, said, “Resistance is our strategic option,” adding that the Islamic resistance groups in Gaza would not stand idly by, while the regime carried out such violations against the al-Aqsa Mosque.

Mount Sabalan one step closer to be World Heritage

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran is preparing an all-inclusive dossier for its Mount Sabalan to have the inactive stratovolcano registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The pick is situated in Ardebil province in the extreme northwest of the country.

With its pristine nature, different architectures, bas-reliefs, valleys, and rivers, as well as its nomads and mountainous life with special culture and lifestyle, Sabalan seems qualified for being on the prestigious list; IRNA quoted the provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi as saying on Sunday.



The inclusion of Sabalan on the list could promote and boost tourism in the region, attracting more domestic and foreign tourists to the province, the official added.

At 4,794 meters in elevation, Sabalan, also called Savalan, is the third highest mountain of Iran, after Dama-vand and Alamkuh. A composite volcano, a beautiful lake is formed on Sabalan's top. Even though Sabalan is covered with snow most time of the year, there are many hot springs in the foothills of this vast mountain.

Sabalan is highly regarded in the culture of local people, as well. Many believe it to be the birthplace of Zoroaster, as many books mention him descending from this mountain.

Sabalan has become one of the centers of beekeeping and growing herbal plants because of this vegetation.

With 24 entries, Iran ranks 10th in the world in terms of the number of historical monuments and sites registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Amongst the UNESCO-designated sites in Iran are “Arg-e Bam” (Bam Citadel) that represents an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement, “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 Washmagir.

Archaeologists make final attempt to unearth Seleucid temple

→ 1 In the fifth season of excavation, 12 trenches were dug tightly based on speculations and discoveries made during the four previous seasons... the season, however, yielded some new clues on the ancient sanctuary.

The archaeological project also aims at solving the problems of the residents of the districts near the site, who haven't been allowed to construct buildings for over 50 years.

In 1943, archaeologists discovered an 85x36 centimeter ancient inscription of 30 lines written in Greek calling on the people of Nahavand to obey the laws of the government. The inscription indicated the existence of the Laodicea Temple, which had been built by the Seleucid king who ruled Asia Minor, Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC), for his wife Queen Laodicea.

Two of the inscriptions as well as four bronze statuettes, unearthed at the site, are on display in the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran. And, column capitals and bases are currently being used as decorations in Nahavand's Hajian Bazaar and several other parts of the city.

Antiochus was the most distinguished of



the Seleucids. Having made vassal states out of Parthia in present-day northeastern Iran



and Bactria (an ancient country in Central Asia), he warred successfully against the

Egyptian king Ptolemy V and in 198 BC obtained possession of all of Palestine and Lebanon.

He later became involved in a conflict with the Romans, who defeated him at Thermopylae in 191 BC and Magnesia (now Manisa, Turkey) in 190 BC. As the price of peace, he was forced to surrender all his dominions west of the Taurus Mountains and to pay costly tribute. Antiochus, who early in his reign had restored the Seleucid Empire, finally forfeited its influence in the eastern Mediterranean by his failure to recognize the rising power of Rome.

The Seleucid Empire was a Hellenistic state ruled by the Seleucid dynasty which existed from 312 BC to 63 BC; Seleucus I Nicator founded it following the division of the Macedonian Empire vastly expanded by Alexander the Great. Seleucus received Babylonia (321 BC) and from there expanded his dominions to include much of Alexander's near-eastern territories. At the height of its power, the Empire included central Anatolia, Persia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and what is now Kuwait, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

Oldest Achaemenid fire temple unearthed in Georgia, Georgian Orientalist says

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The ruins of the oldest Achaemenid-era (c. 550-330) fire temple has been unearthed in Georgia, senior Georgian Orientalist Alexander Chulokhadzheh said.

“The fire temple was located in the center of an ancient town, and given that the excavations are still in the early stages, archaeologists are expected to achieve other discoveries in this area,” IRNA quoted Chulokhadzheh as saying on Saturday.

He made the remarks on Friday during a webinar in which several Iranian and Georgian cultural experts, Orientalists, and archaeologists exchanged views on the Greater Iran.

Measuring eight by six meters in area, the fire temple was discovered in Grakliani Hill that is situated some 20 kilometers from Tbilisi, he explained.

Moreover, two completely intact fireplaces and two mortars with undamaged handles have been discovered at the fire temple that is highly expected to date from the time of Xerxes I (r. 486 – 465 BC), he added.

The expert pointed out that the ruins of the three Achaemenid palaces have been discovered in Georgia so far, adding “The presence of the Achaemenids in this land was not only political but also had cultural, social, religious and economic aspects.”

Iranian elements in Georgian art and archeology

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, ancient Georgian tribes had close cultural contacts with Near Eastern civilizations from the 18th century BC. Iranian elements appeared from the middle of the second millennium BC, as they did in the art of the entire Caucasian region.

Some objects, such as a bronze rhyton from eastern Georgia were brought from the territory of ancient Iran, while bronze animal- and disc-headed pins, as well as pendant bells and openwork birds, were derived from ancient Iranian styles. Daggers, swords, axes, adzes, pick-axes, and bidents also have close Iranian parallels.

Iranian elements continued to appear in weapons, horse harnesses, and bronze ornaments until the end of the second and the beginning of the 1st millennium BC

but the vast majority of objects date from the 8th-7th centuries BC when the influence of the Luristan bronzes is noticeable.

At the end of the 6th century, the Colchian kingdom was established in western Georgia. In the 4th century BC, the Iberian state was formed in eastern Georgia. According to Herodotus, Colchis was not directly incorporated into the Persian Empire as one of its satrapies, but it paid tributes and was required to render gifts. It also provided auxiliary troops when required to do so. Probably, Colchis was used by Persians as a buffer state between their empire and the nomads of the southern Caucasus; Persian kings gave luxurious diplomatic gifts. Iranian elements in ancient Georgian art and archeology gradually ceased from the 4th century CE when Christianity became the official religion of the Georgian states.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and India.

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No:1400/108-23/26
Renewal

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject Of Tender:
Purchasing MV& LV SWITCHGEAR, Dry transformer with enclosure, MV&LV voltage power cable, UPS& Battery, Isolated trans, Duct Split, Industrial Laptop... Plus Installation and Commissioning in accordance with the technical specifications and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents :
From **Tuesday 18 May 2021 (1400/02/28)** until **Monday 24 May 2021 (1400/03/03)** by **02:00 P.m.** with Presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

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

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

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender :
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 29.960 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 7.490.000.000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m. on Saturday 26 of June 2021 (1400/04/5)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:
The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes on **Saturday 26 of June 2021 (1400/04/5) at 10:00 a.m** in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

Time and place of opening Envelopes :
The envelopes A & B of the participants will be opened on **Sunday 27 June 2021 at 03:00 p.m. (1400/04/6)** in the office of Financial Vice President the participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.
For more information, please see:
www.iriboffice.ir and http://iets.mporg.ir Tel: 00982122167463 Purchasing (Kala) Dept., IRIB

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No:1400/115-16/07

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender:
Supply, Installation and Commissioning of hardware and network items for server storage and processing resources with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
From **Tuesday 18 May 2021 (1400/02/28)** until **Monday 24 May 2021 (1400/03/03)** by **02:00 p.m.** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

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

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

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 17.500 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 4.375.000.000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation package/envelope separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m. on Saturday 26 of June 2021 (1400/04/05)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

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Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Plan aims to reverse rural-to-urban migration

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated to Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, will launch a plan to create suitable jobs in villages, aiming to reverse the rural-to-urban migration trend.

Called “I will return to the village”, the plan provides special facilities to the villagers who migrated to the cities and help them make a living returning to their place of birth.

Many rural residents migrate to the cities due to unemployment and the hope of making a better future, Seyed Amir Hossein Madani, Managing Director of Barakat Foundation said.

With the implementation of this plan, the migration of 20,000 people from urban to rural areas is planned, he further stated, YJC reported on Sunday.

Downward trend of migration from rural areas to cities

Currently, 26 percent of the country's population lives in villages, around 39,000 villages have more than 20 households and 23,000 villages have less than 20 households.

Thus, more than 97 percent of the country's rural population lives in villages with



over 20,000 households.

Many efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend

of migration from rural areas to cities.

Rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism are alternatives or complementary economic activities

that could further stimulate rural development while decreasing rural community dependency on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, or mining).

Mohammad Omid, the vice president for rural development, said in November 2020 that for the first time in the country, the migration of people from rural areas to cities has reached zero.

A total of 220 trillion rials (nearly \$5.6 billion) has been approved for the development of villages in the current year (March 2020-March 2021), Omid said.

Some 140 trillion rials (about \$3.3 billion) have so far been spent, he noted, adding, the unemployment rate in rural areas has reached 7.4 percent, which has decreased by over one percent compared to last year.

In October 2020, Omid stated that the rural development projects worth 130 trillion rials (nearly \$3 billion) inaugurated on the occasion of the National Day of Villagers and Nomads.

He went on to state that 6,750 construction projects will come on stream in various fields such as roads, communications, etc. In addition, a total of 26,512 projects will be launched throughout the country.

IRGC smashes large gang smuggling drugs to Europe

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has smashed a large gang which was smuggling narcotics to Europe, IRIB reported on Sunday.

In this operation, 590 kilos of heroin, which were skillfully embedded in iron profiles and stored in a shed in the suburbs, were seized in the northwestern city of Tabriz.

Five members of the gang, who were involved in smuggling and transit of narcotics to Europe, have been arrested, three of whom are citizens of a neighboring foreign country and the rest are Iranian.

Naser Aslani, an official with the anti-narcotics police, said on Thursday that more than 43 tons of narcotics have been confiscated from smugglers across the country over the past two weeks.

Also, 939 vehicles and 30 weapons were confiscated as well, he stated, adding, meanwhile, a total of 12,992 culprits have been arrested in connection with plans implemented for dealing with drug trafficking.

Most recently, the police have disbanded two large smuggling gangs in the eastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, discovering around 1.1 tons of narcotics.

Battle continues despite sanctions, pandemic

Iran has carried on a battle against narcotics in spite of being highly affected by cruel sanctions and COVID-19 pandemic, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against narcotics, said on April 13.

Last year (March 2020 – March 2021), amid the pandemic, Iran participated in more than 20 regional and international events online, in cooperation with the UNODC office in Tehran, he highlighted.

The counter-narcotics agencies and police forces succeeded in detecting about 1,150 tons of various types of narcotics by strengthening the mechanisms for monitoring



and exchanging information between the responsible organizations.

This volume of discoveries is a new and unprecedented record in the fight against drugs, which shows a growth of about 41 percent compared to 2019; some 90 percent of the substances found were opium, 26 percent heroin, and 48 percent morphine.

This success has been achieved with the martyrdom of 10 law enforcement and counter-narcotics forces in the global front against drug transit.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in the drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Third of global food production at risk from climate crisis

A third of global food production will be at risk by the end of the century if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at their current rate, new research suggests.

Many of the world's most important food-growing areas will see temperatures increase and rainfall patterns alter drastically if temperatures rise by about 3.7C, the forecast increase if emissions stay high.

Researchers at Aalto University in Finland have calculated that about 95% of current crop production takes place in areas they define as “safe climatic space”, or conditions where temperature, rainfall and aridity fall within certain bounds.

If temperatures were to rise by 3.7C or thereabouts by the century's end, that safe area would shrink drastically, mostly affecting south and south-eastern Asia and Africa's Sudano-Sahelian zone, according to a paper published in the journal One Earth on Friday.

However, if greenhouse gases are reduced and the world meets the goals of the Paris agreement, in limiting temperature rises to 1.5C or 2C above pre-industrial levels, then only about 5%–8% of global food production would be at risk.

Matti Kummu, an associate professor of global food and water at Aalto University and lead author of the paper, said: “A third of global food production will be at risk. We should be worried, as the climate safe space is quite narrow. But there are measures we can take in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. And we should empower people and societies in the danger zones, to reduce the impact and increase their resilience and adaptive capacity.”

Although rising temperatures could increase food production in some areas that are currently less productive, such



as the Nordic regions, that would not be anywhere near enough to offset the loss of important food producing regions in the south, said Kummu.

“There will be winners as well as losers, but the wins will be outweighed by the losses, and there is just not enough space for food production to move – we are already at the limits,” he said.

Livestock farming would be affected, as well as the risks to crop production, he said, and many areas were likely to suffer large increases in water scarcity. The researchers examined the impacts of climatic changes on 27 of the most important food crops and seven types of livestock.

By the end of this century, in a high-emissions scenario, there could be as much as 1.5m sq miles (4m sq km) of new desert around the world, the research found.

Under 1.5C to 2C of warming, the boreal forests of northern America, Russia and Europe would shrink from their current 7m sq miles to about 6m sq miles by 2100. In a high emissions scenario, only 3m sq miles would remain, the researchers forecast.

The paper adds to previous research that has found that global heating is already having an impact on agricultural productivity.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

97% of Iran affected by long-term drought: expert

Based on the data collected over the past decade approximately 97 percent of the country is affected by long-term drought, director of the national drought warning and monitoring center, Sadeq Ziaeeian, has said.

Some 12.7 percent of the country is hit by extremely severe drought, 53.6 percent of the country is affected by severe drought while 24.8 percent of the country is facing moderate drought and 5.9 percent of the country is withstanding mild drought, ISNA news agency quoted Ziaeeian as saying on Wednesday.

He went on to say that extremely severe long-term drought has had negative effects on 14.2 percent of the country's total population, severe long-term drought has hit 47 percent of the country's population, 30.7 percent of the country's population is affected by moderate long-term drought and 5.1 percent of the population is stricken with mild drought.

۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تأثیر خشکسالی است

صادق ضیائی‌ان رئیس مرکز ملی خشکسالی و مدیریت بحران سازمان هواشناسی اعلام کرد: بررسی داده‌های ۱۰ ساله خشکسالی بیانگر آن است که ۹۷ درصد مساحت ایران تحت تأثیر خشکسالی بلندمدت است.

ضیائی‌ان در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا گفت: از این مقدار ۵۳.۶ درصد مساحت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۱۲.۷ درصد با خشکسالی بسیار شدید، ۲۴.۸ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵.۹ درصد مساحت با خشکسالی خفیف مواجه هستند.

وی ادامه داد: ۱۴/۲ درصد جمعیت ایران با خشکسالی بسیار شدید بلندمدت است همچنین ۴۷ درصد جمعیت کشور با خشکسالی شدید، ۳۰.۷ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی متوسط و ۵/۱ درصد جمعیت با خشکسالی خفیف دست و پنجه نرم می‌کنند.

Iran asks Russia for clarification on death of Caspian seals

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is negotiating with Russia to officially receive a clarification on the death of 170 Caspian seals which found dead on the shores of the Republic of Dagestan in early May.

“We are pursuing the cause of the seals’ death, holding talks with Russia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,” the Department of Environment (DOE) deputy chief for marine ecosystems, Davood Mirshekar, said, IRNA reported.



He expressed hope that Russia would provide a proper response sooner.

Mirshekar also announced the development of a national action plan to protect the endangered Caspian seal.

The National Action Plan is carried out under the supervision of the DOE with the cooperation of non-governmental organizations and all responsible bodies, he further stated.

Pointing to empowering non-governmental organizations for the endangered Caspian seal protection, he stated that a center called the Caspian Seal Rescue Center is active not only nationally but also at the regional scale, and its activities include coordinating the region to protect Caspian seals.

Holding workshops and training courses for different target communities, including students, experts, administrators, military and law enforcement agencies, as well as creating alternative livelihoods to protect Caspian seals and empower housewives in the Caspian Basin are also on the agenda, he explained.

Caspian seal, the sole marine mammal inhabiting the Caspian Sea, is endangered according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), as recently demonstrated to have declined by more than 90 percent since the start of the 20th century.

According to the latest census conducted in 2016, the population of Caspian seals has reached less than 70,000; while their population once stood at about one million in the country.

The oil spill, industrial waste as well as heavy metals, agricultural pesticides, radioactive waste, wastewater, and household waste entering the sea, and noise pollution caused by oil and gas refineries, and excessive boat traffic have pushed the species toward extinction through poisoning them.

Caspian seals population shrinking alarmingly

Amir Shirazi, a representative of the Caspian seal medical and research center in Iran, told IRNA in December 2019 that despite the sharp decline in this endangered population, hunting and exploitation of seals in Russia continues to be a serious problem that needs to be tackled.

The population of the valuable species in the Iranian part of the Caspian Sea has also fallen sharply, which is mainly caused by being caught in the fisherman's net, he lamented.

Due to the occupation of the Caspian coastline in Iran by government agencies and individuals constructing villas and settlements, the Caspian seals can only rest on small parts of the shores of Miankaleh Wildlife Refuge and Ashuradeh Island if there are no fishermen, he lamented.

Caspian seals included on CMS

Caspian seals are included in Appendices I and II of the Convention of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

As per Appendix I of the Convention, poaching and illegal fishing activities are banned to save the animals from extinction, while Iran has not had a share in illegal fishing of the species since the very beginning, she concluded.

Over the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP12) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), administered by UN Environment on October 28, 2017, Caspian seals were included on Appendices I and II of the Convention.

According to the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals Website, Appendix I comprises migratory species that have been assessed as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Appendix II covers migratory species that have unfavorable conservation status and that require international agreements for their conservation and management, as well as those that have a conservation status that would significantly benefit from the international cooperation that could be achieved by an international agreement.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 184)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

■ **واژه‌های غیرفارسی** – در زبان فارسی، تقریباً مانند همه‌ی

زبان‌های جهان، واژه‌هایی از زبان‌های دیگر وجود دارد. مثال‌های زیر

کلماتی از زبان‌های تُرکی، مَنگولی و چینی در زبان فارسی است:

تُرکی: اتاق، بشقاب، قاشق

مَنگولی: آقا، خانم، میز

چینی: چای، سینی

■ **کلماتِ عَرَبی در فارسی** – در زبان فارسی، از کلمات عربی

بسیاری استفاده می‌شود، مانند: احترام، ادبیات، استراحت، استفاده،

اسم، اغلب، بعد، بعضی، تاریخ، تخفیف، تصحیح، تقریباً، جمعه، جمله،

حاضر، حال، درس، دقیقه، ساعت، سلام، سؤال، شروع، شغل، صبح،

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If the right usurped from us is given back to us we shall take it, otherwise we shall go on claiming it.

Imam Ali (AS)

NCPA Orchestra concerts to celebrate Iran-China 50 years of diplomatic relations

➔1 He has composed “The Persian Elegy”, an opera in English, and “Persian Nightingales” in his home quarantine during the pandemic in Khmelnytsky, Ukraine.



. China NCPA Orchestra in an undated photo

The pieces are scheduled to be recorded with the Khmelnytsky State Philharmonic Orchestra, which performs under the baton of Iranian conductor Parviz Yahyavi.

Iranian vocalist brothers Ali and Mohammad Saeidi are scheduled to work on “Persian Nightingales”.

Naxos Records, a Hong Kong-based German record label specializing in classical music, has so far released three volumes of Rahbari’s album, “My Mother Persia”.

The first volume features melodies and improvisations in Iranian traditional styles, including a violin concerto entitled “Nohe Khan” by soloist Paula Rahbari.

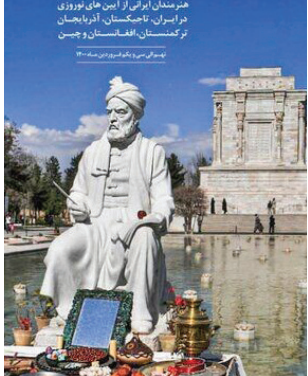
“Mother’s Tears” and “Children’s Prayer” are other tracks on the volume.

The Prague Metropolitan Orchestra and the Antalya State Symphony have collaborated with Rahbari on this album.

Rahbari, the former conductor of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, performed selections from the album at Aspendos Hall in Antalya in April 2018 along with the Antalya State Symphony Orchestra and prominent Iranian vocalist Mohammad Motamedi.

Noruz art exhibition reopens as COVID-19 curbs eased

A R T TEHRAN — An exhibition displaying artworks on the traditions and rituals for the Iranian New Year celebration Noruz at Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center reopened on Saturday as the Iranian government has eased curbs on regular activities in the new wave of COVID-19.



A poster a Noruz traditions and rituals art exhibition at Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural .Center

Fifteen cartoons, 15 posters and 120 photos by Iranian artists are on view at the exhibition, which had shut down a few days after its opening on March 29 due to a big rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

Noruz traditions and rituals in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and China are the central themes of the exhibition, which has been organized in collaboration with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO.

Noruz was initially registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009, as a common tradition for Iran, Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

Later in a meeting held in Tehran in January 2014, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Iraq put in requests officially to be added to the list.

The rites that accompany the festivity vary from place to place, ranging from leaping over fires and streams in Iran to tightrope walking, leaving lit candles at house doors, traditional games such as horse racing or the traditional wrestling practiced in Kyrgyzstan.

UNESCO comments that Noruz promotes the values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families, as well as reconciliation and neighborliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and various communities.

Iranian pianist releases single in sympathy with Afghanistan school attack victims

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k pianist Bardia Sadrenoori has released a single titled “Afghan Child” in memory of the children killed in the terrorist attack on the Sayed Al-Shuhada School in Afghanistan.

The single has been composed based on the melody of the song “My Land” made by Davud Sarkhosh, the Rad No-Andish Art and Cultural Institute announced on Sunday.

In a statement published by Sadrenoori, he refers to his 2019 music video “Child Worker” expressing his uncompromising dedication to children.

He said, “I wrote an introduction for the video stating that child laborers are children that possess the same purity and aspirations of childhood.

“In a world that claims to protect human and children’s rights, the heart of every free human being aches when innocent and pure children with all their



Cover of the single “Afghan Child”.

childhood aspirations are butchered in the worst possible way as a result of all the political games, inefficiencies, and the trading of death for personal interests.”

Sadrenoori added “The killing of dozens of innocent girls merely seeking education in their school made me ask myself what humanity is coming to.”

“Not finding an answer to my question, I preferred to resort to my skills to express myself via music.”

The horrific attack in Afghanistan left 68 dead and more than 150 injured as the government blamed the Taliban for the inhumane massacre.

The Taliban denied the allegation and issued a statement condemning the attack.

In a statement published earlier last week, Oscar-nominated Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi also criticized the world for not speaking out against the terrorist attack in the Afghan capital of Kabul.

More Iranian movies added to Rotterdam festival lineup



“The Rain Falls Where It Will” by Majid Barzegar.

A R T TEHRAN — The International Film d e s k Festival Rotterdam has picked three more movies from Iranian filmmakers to screen during its 50th edition, which will take place in the Dutch city from June 2 to 6.

“The Crown Jewels of Iran”, director Ebrahim Golestan’s 1965 short, and “Chess of the Wind”, Mohammadreza Aslani’s 1976 drama have been selected to be showcased in Cinema Regained, a section dedicated to restored classics, documentaries on film culture, and explorations of cinema’s heritage.

“The Crown Jewels of Iran” was commissioned and then banned by the culture ministry under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Iran’s last monarch, featuring dazzling edits and camera movements and a charged narration assaulting economic disparities.

Starring Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, “Chess of the Wind” is about the decadence of a family in the Qajar dynasty of Iran. The first lady of a noble house has died and now there is a conflict among the heirs for taking over her heritage.

The Cannes Film Festival has previously screened the film in its classics. It was restored by Cineteca di Bologna at L’Immagine Ritrovata and the Film Foundation’s World Cinema Project.

“The Rain Falls Where It Will” by Majid Barzegar will be competing in Harbour, IFFR’s newest program, which offers a safe haven to the full range of contemporary cinema that

the festival champions. This section echoes Rotterdam’s port city identity.

Do we prolong life or death by trying to keep a dying family member with us as long as possible? This film is inspired by contentious medical-ethical concerns.

In the opening scene of “The Rain Falls Where It Will”, nurse Sara decides it is time to euthanize her friendless patient. She calmly adds a drug to the intravenous line, just like she does with the other hopeless cases she encounters. However, everything changes on a new assignment. Is it truly this comatose man’s last week? Sara talks to concerned family members and cares for her patient in stylish shots that sometimes last minutes, thus lending this Iranian drama intimacy. Barzegar finds space for both melancholy and hope, mixed with a pinch of the supernatural.

Earlier, the festival announced that four movies from Iranian cinema had been selected for its 2021 lineup.

“The Deer” directed by Masud Kimiai, “The Son” by Nushin Meraji, “Silence” by Amir-Ali Navai and “Careless Crime” by Shahram Mokri will also be screened in various sections of the festival.

French New Wave movie “The 400 Blows” picked for Fajr Classics Preserved

A R T TEHRAN — “The d e s k 400 Blows”, François Truffaut’s directorial debut and a movie from the French New Wave cinema in 1959, has been selected to be screened in Classics Preserved, a non-competitive category at the 38th Fajr International Film Festival.

The film tells the story of Antoine Doinel, a young boy who is growing up in Paris during the 1950s.

Misunderstood by his parents for being truant from school and stealing, and tormented by his teacher in the school for discipline problems, Antoine frequently runs away from both places. He finally quits school after his teacher catches him plagiarizing Balzac. He steals a Royal typewriter from his

stepfather’s workplace to finance his plans to leave home, but, having been unable to sell it, is apprehended while trying to return it.

The stepfather turns Antoine over to the police and Antoine spends the night in jail, sharing a cell with delinquents and thieves. During an interview with the judge, Antoine’s mother confesses that her husband is not Antoine’s biological father. Antoine is placed in an observation center for troubled youths near the seashore. A psychologist at the center probes reasons for Antoine’s unhappiness, which the youth reveals in a fragmented series of monologues.

While playing football with the other boys one day, Antoine escapes under a

fence and runs away to the ocean, which he has always wanted to see. He reaches the shoreline of the sea and runs into it. The film concludes with a freeze-frame of Antoine, and the camera optically zooms in on his face, looking into the camera.

The film displays many of the characteristic traits of the French New Wave Movement.

“The 400 Blows” received numerous awards and nominations, including the Cannes Film Festival award for best director, the OCIC Award, and a Palme d’Or nomination in 1959, and was also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay in 1960.

The film had 4.1 million admissions in France, making it Truffaut’s most successful film in his home country.



“The 400 Blows” by French director François Truffaut will be screened in the Classics Preserved category of the 38th Fajr International Film Festival.

It is widely considered one of the best French films in the history of cinema. In the 2012 Sight & Sound critics’ poll of the greatest films ever made, it was ranked 39th. It was ranked 13th in the directors’ poll on the same list.

The Fajr International Film Festival will take place in Tehran from May 26 to June 2.

Chloe Benjamin’s bestselling novel “The Immortalists” published in Persian

A R T TEHRAN — American writer Chloe d e s k Benjamin’s bestselling novel “The Immortalists” has recently been published in Persian by Ketabe Khucheh in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by the prolific Iranian translator Mahsa Malekmazban, who has previously translated Paul Auster’s “Sunset Park” and Nora Ephron’s “Heartburn”.

It’s 1969 in New York City’s Lower East Side, and word has spread of the arrival of a mystical woman, a traveling psychic who claims to be able to tell anyone the day they will die. The Gold children — four adolescents on the cusp of self-awareness — sneak out to hear their fortunes.

The prophecies inform their next five decades. Golden-boy Simon escapes to the West Coast, searching for love in the 1980s in San Francisco.

Dreamy Klara becomes a Las Vegas magician, obsessed with blurring reality and fantasy. Eldest son Daniel seeks



A poster for the Persian translation of Chloe Benjamin’s bestselling novel “The Immortalists”.

security as an army doctor post-9/11, and bookish Varya throws herself into longevity research, where she tests the

boundary between science and immortality.

A sweeping novel of remarkable ambition and depth, “The Immortalists” probes the line between destiny and choice, reality and illusion, this world and the next. It is a deeply moving testament to the power of story, the nature of belief, and the unrelenting pull of familial bonds.

Published in 2018, “The Immortalists” was a New York Times Bestseller, #1 Indie Next Pick for January 2018, Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Selection, #1 Library Reads pick and Amazon Best Book of the Month.

Benjamin’s first novel, “The Anatomy of Dreams”, received the Edna Ferber Fiction Book Award and was longlisted for the 2014 Flaherty-Dunn First Novel Prize.

Her novels have been translated into over twenty-three languages. A graduate of Vassar College with an M.F.A. in fiction from the University of Wisconsin, Benjamin lives with her husband in Madison, WI.

Fajr film festival announces Iranian lineup for official competition



A combination photo shows scenes from the Iranian films “Gisum” (L), “Shahrbanu” (C) and “Major”.

A R T TEHRAN — Three d e s k movies by Iranian filmmakers will be screening in Cinema

Salvation, the official competition of the 38th Fajr International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Sunday.

“Major” written and directed by Ehsan Abdipour, “Shahrbanu” directed by Maryam Bahrololumi, and “Gisum” directed by Navid Behtoui will compete with 12 other films from overseas filmmakers.

The story of “Major” is set in the southern Iranian port Bushehr as a German sniffer dog disrupts the order of the city after arriving in the wharf.

The film has been produced by actor Hamid Farakhnejad, who also plays the leading role in the film.

Directed by Maryam Bahrololumi, “Shahrbanu” is about a mother of three

children who has been sentenced to life imprisonment for drug trafficking. She spends 11 years in prison before being released on a temporary basis to attend her son’s wedding where she experiences other life and family challenges.

Fereshteh Sadr-Orafai stars as Shahrbanu in the film. She won the award for supporting actress for her role in director Narges Abyar’s political love story “When the Moon Was Full” during the 21st Iran Cinema Celebration in 2019.

“Gisum” narrates the story of a France-based Iranian woman who returns to homeland after 30 years to search for her missing father. In her search, she travels to northern Iran with her husband and a group of old

friends, which discover many of her untold secrets.

The Fajr International Film Festival is scheduled to take place in Tehran from May 26 to June 2.

The organizers previously announced that Oscar-winning Hungarian director Istvan Szabo’s latest movie “Final Report”, Italian director Claudio Noce’s drama “Padrenostro”, Ukrainian-Armenian filmmaker Roman Balayan’s movie “We Are Here We Are Close”, Finnish filmmaker Antti J. Jokinen’s romance historical drama “Helene”, Bulgarian director Ivalyo Hristov’s drama “Fear” and Polish director Piotr Domalewski’s drama “I Never Cry” have been selected to compete in the event.