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Zarif holds high-level talks in Azerbaijan

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has embarked on a tour of the South Caucasus region amid soaring border tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The chief Iranian diplomat began his tour with a visit to Baku where he met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday.

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Water projects worth over \$185m inaugurated

TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian on Tuesday inaugurated seven major water industry projects valued at 7.81 trillion rials (about \$185.9 million) through video conference in three provinces, IRIB reported.

Put into operation in the eighth week of the ministry's A-B-Iran program in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), the said projects were inaugurated in Hormozgan, Fars, and Kurdistan provinces.

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“Ambushing a Rose” published in eight languages

TEHRAN — Eight translations of “Ambushing a Rose”, a biography of Lieutenant-General Ali Sayyad Shirazi who served as commander of Ground Forces during the Iran-Iraq war, have recently been published.

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Eagle of Asia turns 55

BY MASOUD HOSSEIN

Iranians will never forget a special day in the 90s, when they emerged victorious over powerhouses Australia thanks to Ahmadreza Abedzadeh's performance between the sticks.

In any discussion about the Iran's best goalkeepers, the name Abedzadeh invariably comes up.

On Nov. 29, 1997, Iran staged an astonishing late rally to grab the last berth in the 1998 FIFA World Cup finals on the away-goals rule after a 2-2 draw with Australia in Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Abedzadeh, beyond a shadow of a doubt, played a significant role in the match and sent the Iranian team to the World Cup after 20 years.

Plucky Abedzadeh were jumping over the Australian stars and showed great fighting spirit in front of the 85,000 fans at MGC.

Led by young strikers Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell, the Socceroos spent the entire first half laying siege to the Iranian goal. With Stan Lazaridis and Robbie Slater making inroads on the flanks, and Aurelio Vidmar pushing forward from midfield, it seemed an Aussie avalanche was inevitable.

The nation will never forget Abedzadeh's smile during the game while the match could be chaotic for Iran. But the Captain kept the score level with some inspired goalkeeping.

The Iran and Persepolis legend turns 55 today.

His son, Amir Abedzadeh, who currently plays for Portuguese club Maritimo, is one of Iran's goalkeepers in the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

Amir always says that his father is his role model and it's completely true.

Ahmadreza Abedzadeh was a member of Iran national football team in the “Mother of All Games”, where the Persians defeated their old foes USA 2-1 at the elegant Stade de Gerland in Lyon.

As a Persepolis goalkeeper, Abedzadeh won four titles with the Reds in Iran football league but he had already claimed a domestic title with Persepolis archrivals Esteghlal as well as 1991 Asian Club Championship title with the Blues.

Abedzadeh had previously stolen the show in the 1990 Asian Games, helping Iran win the gold medal in Beijing after 16 years. Two years before, he saved three penalties in the 1988 AFC Asian Cup third-place match against China and sent the Iranians home with a medal.

Abedzadeh will stay in Iranians' heart forever.

Happy birthday to you, the Legend.

Israel losing the war of moral awakening

BY MAHMOOD MONSHIPOURI

The recent war between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza has raised many questions. Foremost among them is the question of why after 73 years of occupation, Israel cannot live with its Palestinian citizens and residents inside Israel proper and in the occupied territories. Israel, which is technologically, economically, and militarily stronger than its neighbors, today faces an unprecedented inter-communal strife that threatens their nation's social fabric and political cohesion. That along with some attacks on Israel emanating from Lebanon and other Palestinians in the West Bank have added a new layer of complexity to this conflict. Israel, as Thomas L. Friedman has noted <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/23/opinion/israel-hamas-biden.html>, has rarely faced that kind of multi-pronged threat since the

Jewish state was founded in 1948.

One nagging question persists: Has the rhetoric of a two-state solution provided a cover for Israelis to prolong their subjugation of the Palestinians? Palestinians living under occupation lack an army of their own. Neither do they own an airport to keep regular commercial transactions with the rest of the world. Meanwhile, Israeli right-wing forces have kept the forced eviction of many Palestinian families from East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Israelis, nearly one-fifth of Israel's population, feel less secure from crimes or attacks by Israeli extremists who have been encouraged by the country's burgeoning right-wing government and Western leniency (Michael Jansen, “United in Rejection,” Panorama: Gulf Today, May 21-27, 2021:38-39).

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Israel threatens to kill senior Hamas leader in Gaza

Israeli Finance Minister Israel Katz launched a threat to Hamas leadership on Monday and said that even the slightest breach of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas will prompt Israel to act forcefully, even targeting its leader Yahyah Sinwar.

Speaking to the Ynet studio in an interview, Katz — a senior Cabinet member and close ally of Prime Minister of the Zionist regime, Benjamin Netanyahu — said that Israel will come for “Yahyah Sinwar's head.”

Although Sinwar was seen in public since a ceasefire whose terms remain undisclosed took hold, Katz claimed that he was not given immunity from Israeli assassination as part of the agreement.

The Likud lawmaker also conditioned extensive rebuilding of the Gaza Strip and civilian assistance on the return of the bodies of soldiers Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul and captives Avera

Mengistu and Hisham a-Sayed, who are held by Hamas. However, Israel allows the entry of urgent supplies into the Palestinian enclave.

The finance minister rejected criticism from other members of the Cabinet who were not pleased with the results of the operation in Gaza.

Katz also praised the police for cracking down on Arab riots that erupted across the country and called to continue the efforts to eradicate protests in Arab society.

The fighting between Israel and Palestinian resistance in Gaza began on 10 May after weeks of rising Israeli-Palestinian tension in East Jerusalem that culminated in clashes at al-Aqsa, a holy site revered by Muslims. Hamas began firing rockets after Israeli authorities stormed the site, triggering retaliatory air strikes.

At least 243 people, including more than 100 women and children, were killed in Gaza, according to its health ministry

Iran seeks UNESCO status for ancient nomadic routes

TEHRAN — Iran is preparing a dossier for ancient routes and paths used by its Bakhtiari nomads to be submitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in near future, ILNA reported on Tuesday.

“A comprehensive archeological, ethnographic and ecological survey on the nomads' roads, scattered across Andika county in southern Khuzestan province, has been started,” Andika's tourism chief Seyyed Ali Musavi said.

Bakhtiari nomads live a life defined by the tradition of migration and the ability to adapt to climatic conditions and the natural environment, the official explained.

This tribal lifestyle is one of the most prominent characteristics and symbols of Bakhtiari culture, and it could be added to the UNESCO's prestigious list as one of the oldest living cultures, he added.

Iran has a culturally diverse society domi-

nated by a wide range of interethnic relations. It is home to about 20 ethnic groups who live in different regions of the country.

Apart from modern roads, highways, and bridges that are ubiquitous in modern Iran, there are still arduous paths, flattened by the feet of nomads and the hooves of their livestock in the ever-repeating movement of migration for millennia.

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Two-state solution: Settlement or prolongation of suffering

BY AHMAD ABAYAT

After a grinding war launched by the Israelis on the Gaza Strip and desecration of Muslim's first qibla, the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, many international organizations, humanitarian institutions and observers are raising questions about the settlement based on a two-state solution: Palestine and Israel.

The question that presents itself is: Does the two-state solution really lead to a viable settlement to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict? The conflict that has always concerned those in charge of proposing this initiative.

Before the recent escalation which was sparked after Israeli forces and the extremist Jewish settlers stormed the core sanctities of Islam and Christianity in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, no one in Israel could imagine dimensions of the crisis.

Now Israel is facing a global condemnation. The voices of the free people are placing the Israeli regime in an isolated position.

Israel did not take into account the repercussions of storming Al-Aqsa, arresting worshipers, putting them into prison, and humiliating them in front of the eyes and ears of the world. Most radios and televisions across the world covered the event.

It was not in the calculations of the authorities of the Israeli regime that the fire of their weapons, their militarism and their arsenal would not scare the Palestinians. Rather, Israel made Palestinians tougher and more resistant in the face of what they had suffered for over seven decades, including the occupation and seizure of property, slaughtering, displacement and destruction of their most valuable possessions and so on.

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Children in Tehran show sympathy with Palestinians

Children in Tehran gathered at Felestin (Palestine) Square on Monday evening to show sympathy with Palestinian children who are under Israeli brutal attacks.

The event was held with the theme of “Nightmare Is Not Children's Share.” According to statistics, Israeli air strikes have killed 243 people, including 66 children since May 10.



Hamas ascribes victory against Israel to Iran’s support

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hamas has said the Palestinians were “victorious” in the latest confrontation with Israel thanks to the support provided by Iran.

In an interview with Press TV on Monday, Hamas representative in Iran Khaled al-Qaddoumi said rockets fired from Gaza were in response to Israeli atrocities against Palestinians at al-Aqsa Mosque and the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem al-Quds.

Asked about who was the victor in the latest confrontation, al-Qaddoumi said, “It is not the matter of who is the victor. It’s the matter of how much the resistance fighters managed to thwart the goals of the Israeli regime and to convey the message of the Palestinian people to the international community.”

“The Zionist regime’s narrative is starting to be isolated,” he said, noting that there are Jews in the U.S. state of New York who oppose the Israeli atrocities as well as European nations who are questioning their governments’ support for the Israeli entity.

“Yes, we were the victors,” he finally said.

Al-Qaddoumi also dismissed the casualty figures given by the Israeli authorities, saying they were “not accurate”, and that Israeli fatalities were higher than the official numbers.

Israel said 12 people were killed by rockets fired from Gaza.

Foreign media outlets have said the firing of rockets at major areas in Israel have demoralized the settlers and the army.

Iranian military figures have likened the victory of resistance forces against Israel to Hezbollah’s win against the Israeli Army in the 33-day war in 2006. Hezbollah’s victory shattered the myth in the Arab public opinion that Israel was invincible.

According to al Jazeera, after Israel announced to unconditional ceasefire, thousands of people in Gaza and the Palestinian territories poured onto the streets to celebrate the ceasefire, waving flags and flashing ‘V’ signs for victory.

The ceasefire took effect at 2:00am on Friday (23:00 GMT on Thursday).

On to the achievements made by the resistance forces, the Hamas representative said they managed to attack “at least six airbases” in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Hatzerim airbase, as well as a battery of the Iron Dome missile system.

He said Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire after the rocket fire from Gaza eroded the morale of the Israeli army officers and left “70 percent” of Israelis hiding underground.

Referring to the barrage of rockets fired at Israel during the latest confrontation, al-Qaddoumi said the Israeli siege imposed on Gaza has helped the resistance fighters to find innovative ways to defend themselves.

He also attributed the Palestinians victory to the support provided by Iran to the Palestinian resistance, including rocket technology.

“This technology has been transferred [to us] also from other brothers in the Muslim Ummah,” he said, adding Iran “was on the top of them”.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry and top officials, including the Judiciary chief, parliament speaker, senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Armed Force Chief of Staff, have congratulated the Palestinian nation for succeeding to defeat the Israeli regime.

“The heroes of the nation of Ibrahim (PBUH) and Mohammad (PBUH) in oppressed Palestine rubbed the noses of the Zionists, who are the greatest enemies of God and humanity in our time. Iran will not hesitate to fully support the oppressed people of Palestine,” Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf tweeted.

Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi said, “Resistance missiles exposed the fragile security of the Zionist Israeli regime more than ever, and the strong will of the Palestinians overcame the Zionists’ multi-layered defense systems, turning the idea of Israel’s invincibility into a baseless assumption. Under these circumstances, the rootless government of Tel Aviv saw the continuation of the war as a further scandal inside and outside the occupied territories, and by surrendering to the resistance of the Palestinian people, took the lead in accepting the ceasefire.”

Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution and former foreign minister, said the historic victory proved the false aura of the occupying Zionist regime. Reiterating Iran’s decisive policy toward the Palestine issue, Velayati said Palestine is the Islamic world’s most important issue and this is unchangeable. He also said Intifada has changed the balance of power to the detriment of Israel.

Iran’s Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Baqeri also said the battle and confrontation of the Palestinian Mujahedeen against the occupiers of Jerusalem, which after 12 days led to the unilateral ceasefire by the Zionists and the victory of the oppressed Palestinian people in the geography of the Intifada, revealed that the “glass of life of the shameful occupiers” has come under the will of the Palestinian Mujahedeen, and it is the Islamic resistance that determines the fate of the battle.

Palestinian resistance fighters in Gaza succeeded to fire hundreds of rockets at different parts of the occupied territories despite the fact that the coastal strip has been under the Israeli blockade since June 2007.

Eventful 12 hours marks historical day for presidential election

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The 2021 election has been one of a kind so far, yet events occurred on May 24 and 25 made the presidential elections all the more interesting.

It all began at 00:00 of May 25, when Fars News published a list of seven candidates, stating that prominent figures such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Es’haq Jahangiri, Masoud Pezeshkian, and more importantly, Ali Larijani have been disqualified by the Guardian Council.

The list Fars News published consisted of surprising names, such as Abdolnasser Hemmati, the current head of Iran’s central bank, Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh, current presiding board member of Kish Free Trade Zone Organization, and Alireza Zakani, current head of the Parliament Research Center. Zakani had been disqualified in the 2017 presidential election.

The list published by Fars sparked lots of responses on social media, particularly on Twitter and Clubhouse. Many Larijani supporters rushed into Clubhouse sessions and called on the Guardian Council to approve Larijani, stating that there is no legitimate reason to disqualify him.

Rumors began to circulate on Twitter that Larijani has been disqualified because his daughter, Fatemeh Larijani, is currently studying in Ohio.

Abbasali Kadhodaie said on May 24 that the Guardian Council has invited a few candidates to listen to their plans, including Hemmati. He fielded candidacy, yet he did not announce which political party or faction he belongs to.

Another surprise on the Fars list was Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh, who had been off radar since the 2005 presidential elections, in which he entered and was disqualified. The Guardian Council later received an order from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to qualify him. Mehr Alizadeh is commonly known as a reformist in public opinion, yet the reformist front did not seem eager to

unequivocally support him.

Azar Mansouri, spokesperson for the “reformist front” said on Tuesday morning that the front did not appreciate the purported list, saying that the disqualifications will lead to decrease in participation in the presidential polls.

At around 11 in the morning, rumors exploded Twitter stating that President Rouhani has written a letter to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution requesting him to make changes in the list confirmed by the Guardian Council. This all came out after no official at the Ministry of Interior refuted or approved the list published by Fars.

When asked about the letter, Ali Rabiei, the government spokesman, said that he will ask and inform the media.

“So far as I know, the president only writes to the Leader on important occasions,” he remarked.

Mohammad Mohajeri, a principlist political activist who claimed that Rouhani has written to the Leader, said that the president has prevented the Ministry of Interior from releasing the names of the final candidates.

Mehdi Faza’eli, a media activist, tweeted on Tuesday expressing hope that Larijani will emerge victorious from this “test,” sparking speculation regarding Larijani’s disqualification. Pressures mounted on the ministry to announce the names and they did so at 14:15.

The list published by the ministry was the same that Fars leaked at operation 00:00. The official candidates were Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi, Mohsen Rezaei, Saeed Jalili, Abdolnasser Hemmati, Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi, Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh, and Alireza Zakani.

The list faced reactions from all around the world. The quickest reaction came from Ali Larijani, who had long been speculated to be disqualified. He released a statement minutes after the official announcement by the Interior Ministry saying that he thanks everyone supporting him. He said he accepts

Prominent candidates withdraw election race in favor of Raeisi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In separate statements released on Monday night, five presidential hopefuls, including Rostam Qasemi, Mohammad Hassan Nami, Alireza Afshar and Hossein Dehghan, withdrew from the election race in favor of Ebrahim Raeisi and the “Revolution Front”.

Dehghan, the former defense minister in Hassan Rouhani’s first administration, said after careful consideration and consultation with advisors he decided to quit the race in favor of Raeisi.

Ghasemi, the oil minister in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s second administration who was also chief of the Khatam-al Anbiya Construction Headquarters from 2007 to 2011, also issued a statement saying that he quits in favor of the “Revolution Front.”

Mohammad Hassan Nami, a former military officer, also issued a statement on Monday night announcing that he is quitting the election race in order to increase Raeisi’s share of votes.

Alireza Afshar, another principlist candidate who served as deputy interior minister during the Ahmadinejad administration, withdrew from the race in favor of Raeisi.

In a statement issued on Sunday night, he said that his



Ghasemi

withdrawal will help Raeisi win more voters.

The presidential election will be held on June 18.

On Tuesday, the names of presidential candidates confirmed by the Guardian Council were released by the Interior Ministry.

The candidates found competent to run for the presidential post are seven persons. They are Judiciary Chief Raeisi; Expediency Council secretary Mohsen Rezaei; former Supreme National Security Council secretary Saeed Jalili; Deputy Parliament Speaker Amirhossein Qazizadeh; MP Alireza Zakani; central banker Abdolnasser Hemmati; and former Physical Education Organization chief Mohsen Mehr-Alizadeh.



Dehghan

Government says unity lies in high voter turnout

these days. The government, not only as a duty but also as an understanding of the situation in Iran and the future needs of Iranians in today’s turbulent world, believes that maximum participation at this juncture will have more functions for Iran and Iranians than ever before,” Rabiei noted, responding to a question about election participation.

Rabiei pointed out that low turnout in elections is not in anyone’s interest and the main losers will be the people.

“No political group will win minimal participation,” he noted.

He added, “We deeply believe that unity makes sense in participation and not lack of participation. The government deeply be-

lieves that the Islamic nature of the political system requires that its republican aspect be protected. The government deeply believes that providing the conditions for political participation is a civil right and a duty of the rulers.”

He added in a religious democracy it is the rulers who have the duty to provide conditions for participation of people in the elections.

“From this day on, the government expects from all institutions involved in the election process to consider the need to strengthen national unity in the current situation of the country with foresight and commitment to the spirit of the constitution,” he said.

The government spokesman also asked

the authorities to provide the ground for hope especially in issues related to national interests and ensure the continuation of stability, security and progress of the country.

Responding to a question about Rouhani’s letter to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on rejection of certain candidates by the Guardian Council, the spokesman said that he will ask about it and inform the press later.

“So far as I know, the president writes to the Leader only on important occasions,” said the spokesman.

The names of the candidates were officially announced on May 25 by the Ministry of Interior after confirmation by the Guardian Council.

CANDIDATE PROFILE



Saeed Jalili

Age	56	Place Of Birth	Mashhad
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Education
PhD in political science with a thesis on “Foreign Policy of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Career
Director of the Inspection Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Director of Policy Planning at Leader’s office
Member of the Supreme National Security Council
Deputy Foreign Minister
Secretary of Supreme National Security Council
Member of the Expediency Council

Social Media Accounts
dr_saeedjalili dr_jalily
DrSaeedJalili drjalily.com

Supporters
Jalili is supported by a number of conservative factions, including the revolutionists

Political position on JCPOA
Jalili is a member of the council formed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to monitor the implementation of the JCPOA, which issues monthly reports to the Leader’s office. He basically agrees with the nuclear negotiations in principle, yet, he has different opinions than the current administration over various paragraphs of the JCPOA and concessions that Iran has given to the United States. Jalili has held various sessions over the past 4 years criticizing the current nuclear deal and offering solutions on how to bypass the sanctions.

Political position on interaction with neighbors and the West
He believes in negotiation with all countries, yet he believes that Iran must have the upper hand in the negotiations. Having had the experience of being Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator during Ahmadinejad’s administration, he is familiar with negotiation techniques.



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Tuesday, government spokesman Ali Rabiei responded to various questions regarding the June presidential elections.

“There is talk of a presidential election



Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi

61 years

Judiciary chief

Independent



Saeed Jalili

56 years

Member of the Expediency Council

Principlist



Mohsen Rezaei

66 years

Secretary of the Expediency Council

Principlist



Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh

64 years

Member of the Kish Free Zone board

Reformist



Alireza Zakani

56 years

Legislator

Principlist



Abdolnasser Hemmati

63 years

Head of the Central Bank of Iran

Moderate



Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi

50 years

First Vice Speaker of Parliament

Principlist

SPORTS

Skocic names Iran squad for World Cup qualifiers

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Dragan Skocic has named his 26-man team for the 2022 World Cup qualification in Bahrain.

The team will begin the two-day training camp in Tehran on Tuesday and then travel to Kish Island on Thursday to continue the training until May 31.

Iran will meet Hong Kong, Bahrain, Cambodia and Iraq, respectively from June 3 to 15 in Group C.

The 'Persian Leopards' are third with six points in their group of five, but have a game in hand over their opponents.

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

Squad

Goalkeepers:

Alireza Beiranvand, Payam Niazmand, Amir Abedzadeh, Mohammadreza Akhbari

Defenders:

Shoja Khalilzadeh, Mohammadhossein Kanaanizadegan, Morteza Pouraliganji, Majid Hosseini, Sadegh Moharrami, Milad Mohammadi, Jafar Salmani

Midfielders:

Ehsan Haji Safi, Saeid Ezatollahi, Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Ahmad Nourollahi, Kamal Kamyabinia, Vahdi Amiri, Danial Esmaeilifar, Saman Ghoddos, Mehdi Torabi

Forwards:

Mehdi Taremi, Sardar Azmoun, Kaveh Rezaei, Karim Ansarifard, Ali Gholizadeh, Mehdi Ghaedi

Iran No. 8 shirt awarded to Croatia ambassador to Tehran

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic awarded Iran No. 8 shirt to Croatian Ambassador to Tehran Drago Stambuk.

Skocic met his countryman in Croatia Embassy in Tehran on Monday.

Skocic was accompanied by his assistants Mladen Zganjer and Marijo Tot in the meeting.

Iran national football team's training camp started on Tuesday in Tehran and the team will depart for Manama on May 31 to take part at the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

The 'Persian Leopards' will meet Hong Kong, Bahrain, Cambodia and Iraq, respectively in the qualification.

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

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

IPL: Persepolis come from behind to beat Zob Ahan

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team came from a goal down to defeat Zob Ahan 2-1 in Iran Professional League (IPL) Monday night.

Sina Asadbeigi scored for the hosts in the 37th minute, taking advantage of a poor clearance of Persepolis goalkeeper Hamed Lak.

Persepolis, who look to win the IPL title for the fifth time in a row, put Zob Ahan under pressure and eventually leveled the score in the 69th minute.

Substitute Shahryar Noghanlou headed past Zob Ahan goalie Shahab Gordan with a well-taken pass from Ahmad Nouroollahi in the 69th minute.

With nine minutes left, Mehdi Abdi scored a goal with a header to give Persepolis all-important three points.

Foolad and Tractor shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw in Ahvaz. Foolad forward Sasan Ansari scored a goal just three minutes into the match but Abolfazl Razzaghpour equalized the match in the 34th minute.

In Abadan, Esteghlal earned a late win over 10-man Sanat Naft. Arman Ramezani scored the winner in the dying moments of the match.

Sepahan sit top of the table above Persepolis with 48 points thanks to their superior goal difference.

Esteghlal are third with 37 points

Karim Bagheri added to Iran coaching staff

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football club announced the addition of their coach Karim Bagheri to Iran national football team coaching staff.

Bagheri has been named as Dragan Skocic assistant as a temporary coach.

Iran will participate at the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification, which will be held from June 3 to 15 in Bahrain.

After the competition, Bagheri will return to his former position at Persepolis.

Persepolis football club, in a statement, announced that they have accepted to release their coach with the aim of helping the National Team.

Sardar Azmoun voted RPL Player of the Year

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun has been voted as the best player in Russia by his peers in the vote organized by Sport Express.

A total of 11 players from each of the 16 Russian Premier League clubs got to vote for the three best footballers of the season, giving their first choice three points, second two points and third one point.

The top 10 players in the poll were:

1. Sardar Azmoun (Zenit, 222 points)
2. Artem Dzyuba (Zenit, 121)
3. Nikola Vlasic (CSKA, 93)
4. Christian Noboa (Sochi, 76)
5. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (Rubin, 70)
6. Jordan Larsson (Spartak, 65)
7. Grzegorz Krychowiak (Lokomotiv, 62)
8. Djordje Despotovic (Rubin, 22)
9. Vedran Corluka (Lokomotiv, 21)
10. Yaroslav Rakitskiy (Zenit, 19)

Iran presidential lineup

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Interior Ministry finally issued the much-awaited list of candidates who were found eligible to run for president, ending a wave of rumors and speculations over the potential array of candidates in the June presidential election.

The ministry said in a statement that it received the list of candidates whose qualifications were confirmed by the Guardian Council. The list included a number of prominent figures such as Saeed Jalili, Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, Alireza Zakani, Seyed Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi, Mohsen Mehrizadeh, Mohsen Rezaei, and Abdolnaser Hemmati.

These candidates are now allowed to start election campaigns and promote themselves in the eyes of millions of voters across the country.

The list of candidates came as a surprise to many observers as it did not include some prominent figures who have been widely thought to be qualified for the 13th presidential election of the Islamic Republic. Former Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, First-Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, and Saeed Mohammad, the former chief of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps' engineering conglomerate Khatam al-Anbiya, were among the disqualified candidates.

According to Fars News, the election vetting body disqualified at least 18 candidates who are principlist or close to the principlist faction. It also rejected 14 candidates who are



reformists or close to the reformist faction.

This was a clear indication that the Guardian Council refused to vet candidates on the basis of their political affiliation. In fact, the council set a clear example of impartiality and abiding by law by disqualifying Larijani, who currently serves as an advisor to the Leader on international affairs.

Larijani was widely promoted by moderate and reformist political circles as a candidate whose ties to the establishment enable him to earn qualification from the council and turn the tide in favor of reformists and their moderate allies in the government of Hassan

Rouhani.

But the Guardian Council made it clear that its vetting process is by no means subject to political or "expediency" considerations. Instead, it would examine the candidates in strict accordance with the law.

In fact, the disqualification of Larijani indicated that the council never discriminates against candidates from different political and social backgrounds. At the end of the day, Larijani has held high-level posts in the Islamic Republic for years and now is currently serving as an advisor to the Leader. This is another indication that the Guardian Council

can discharge its legal duties even when it comes to disqualifying high-level figures.

This brings us to the issue of the fluidity of the vetting process, which is more subject to present-day considerations than to past experiences. In some cases, the Guardian Council confirms individuals who have been disqualified in the past and vice versa. This does not mean that council's criteria for screening are changing from time to time. The standards and criteria of the Guardian Council are subject to law as a yardstick for who will be qualified or disqualified.

Regardless of the standards, the council performs its duty in legal but quiet ways. Usually, the oversight body does not publicly reveal the reasons behind its decisions regarding the candidates. And this has paved the way for some political factions to unfairly blame it for disqualifying certain candidates. Despite these criticisms, the council continues to protect the confidentiality of the vetting process. This has much to do with protecting the privacy of candidates.

If the council reveals the reasons behind the disqualifications, the disqualified candidates' reputation may be damaged; at the end of the day, the vetting process also includes security details about the candidates. That's why the Guardian Council continues to vet candidates in a legal way while protecting the candidates' reputation from being undermined by a formal process that is designed to increase social and political cohesion.

EU welcomes extension of surveillance deal between Iran, IAEA

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** — The European Union on Monday welcomed a decision by Iran to extend a surveillance deal between Tehran and the UN nuclear watchdog, calling the decision "good news."

Political Director of the European External Action Service Enrique Mora expressed satisfaction at the statement issued by Rafael Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), regarding the extension of a February monitoring deal between Iran and the IAEA.

"Good news from @RafaelMGrossi on the prolongation of the technical understanding reached between @iaeaorg and Iran. It allows for a bit more space to reach an agreement in Vienna. We resume tomorrow. We will redouble efforts to get full JCPOA implementation soon," Mora said on Twitter.

Grossi said Monday he had agreed with Iran to extend by one month the necessary verification and monitoring activities carried out by the Agency in the country, according to an IAEA statement.

Director General Grossi made the announcement after reaching the agreement with Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

"Under their agreement, the information collected by the Agency monitoring equipment covered by a Technical Understanding signed last February will continue to be stored for a further period of one month up to 24 June. They also agreed that the equipment will continue to operate and be able to collect and store further data for this period," the IAEA statement said.

"I am happy that, through our continued dialogue, we were able to agree on this matter today," Grossi said during the meeting.

"I welcome this development. The expiration of the Technical Understanding, which enabled the Agency's verification and monitoring, would have been a serious loss at this critical time," he added. "This agreed way forward ensures continuity of knowledge for a limited period of time."

On Monday, Iran confirmed that it had extended the February deal.

"Due to the ongoing technical negotiations on the settlement of safeguards issues between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which are taking place in parallel with the Vienna talks, the storage of surveillance cameras data will continue for one month from May 24 so that the necessary opportunity is provided for the progress and conclusion of the negotiations," Secretariat of Iran's Supreme National Security Council said in a statement.

The top security body also underlined the continued suspension of the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in accordance with a parliamentary nuclear law obliging the Iranian government to restrict cooperation with the IAEA

unless the West lifts sanctions on Iran.

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

Iran and the IAEA reached in February a temporary deal allowing the Agency to continue its monitoring of Iran's nuclear facilities for a period of three months, which expired on Monday. The deal was reached during a two-day visit by IAEA chief Grossi to Iran.

On Monday, Grossi was informed of Iran's decision regarding the February deal. "Iran's decision on the continuation of the data-recording for utmost one more month was informed today to @rafaelmgrossi the Director General of the IAEA," Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations, said in a tweet.

He added, "The pre-recorded data of the past 3 months will still be kept at the AEOI (IRAN). We recommend the negotiating countries to seize the extra opportunity provided by Iran in good faith for the complete lifting of sanctions in a practical and verifiable manner."

The extension came amid intensive nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA. Nuclear negotiators from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries as well as the U.S. have just concluded the fourth round of talks aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal. They will begin the fifth round soon, which is expected to be decisive.

The European Union said on Monday that the Joint Commission of the JCPOA will resume in a physical format on Tuesday, 25 May, in Vienna.

"The Joint Commission will be chaired, on behalf of EU High Representative Josep Borrell, by the Deputy Secretary General/Political Director of the European External Action Service, Enrique Mora. It will be attended by representatives of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and Iran. Participants will continue their discussions in view of a possible return of the United States to the JCPOA and on how to ensure the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA," the EU said in a statement.

The negotiating teams returned to Vienna on Monday night in preparation for the fifth round of talks. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, announced that he has left Tehran for the Austrian capital to participate in the next round of the nuclear negotiations.

On Sunday, he briefed Iranian lawmakers on the outcome of the Vienna talks. "The deputy foreign minister presented a

report on the latest state of the Vienna talks," Abolfazl Amoei, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told reporters on Sunday.

"This meeting was held in the presence of our country's chief negotiator Araghchi in order to review the latest status of the Vienna talks and in line with the parliamentary oversight status," Amoei continued. "This meeting was held for a relatively long time with the presence of the members of the Committee and after the fourth round of negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P4+1 group of countries. During the meeting, Mr. Araghchi presented a report on the negotiation process. During the meeting, the deputy foreign minister gave explanations to the deputies regarding the course of several rounds of negotiations."

The spokesman added, "According to Mr. Araghchi, in these negotiations, the negotiating team of the Islamic Republic of Iran, due to its diplomatic logic regarding the lifting of the sanctions, has been able to bring a large part of the sanctions to a stage where the Western and American sides accept that they should be lifted."

Araghchi himself said that his meeting at the Parliament had lasted for 4 hours.

"Yesterday I spent 4hrs before our Parliament's National Security/Foreign Policy Commission to brief MPs on Vienna talks. Very tough. But useful. Bottom line is same: Having left JCPOA, U.S. must first provide verifiable sanctions lifting. Iran will then resume full implementation. Is the U.S. ready?" the top Iranian nuclear negotiator said on Twitter.

Following the end of the fourth round of talks, Araghchi said the negotiations have made progress and that the negotiators reached a position where they can reach a general conclusion.

"During these discussions, we tried to reach a conclusion on the issues at stake, either to resolve the differences or to decrease them, and the result is that we are in a position where we can have a general conclusion," he said.

He continued, "There are some key issues that need to be resolved and there is agreement on the rest; the texts have been well written and so now is the time to go back to the capitals and have the final consultations and then continue the negotiations."

Ali Rabiei, spokesman for the Iranian government, also echoed the same assessment. He said on Tuesday that a general understanding have taken shape about the unresolved issues.

"General understandings about the differences have been made and the remaining details are minor. After reviewing and evaluating the negotiation process, the Supreme National Security Council, after consulting at the highest levels of the establishment, concluded that the negotiations are moving forward and in order to show the goodwill and seriousness of the Iranian side, it agreed to extend by one month the agreement reached between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency," Rabiei explained.

Interior Ministry announces presidential candidates

P O L I T I C A L **TEHRAN** — In a statement on Tuesday, Iran's Interior Ministry officially announced the candidates who have been qualified by the Guardian Council to run for president,

putting an end to a wave of speculations over who will be confirmed.

The statement said seven candidates were approved to run for office. The candidates are as following: Saeed

Jalili, Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, Alireza Zakani, Seyed Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi, Mohsen Mehrizadeh, and Abdolnaser Hemmati.

The candidates are now allowed

to start election campaigns and then stop campaigning 24 hours before the election day.

The 13th presidential election will be held on June 18.

Zarif holds high-level talks in Azerbaijan amid soaring Baku-Yerevan tensions

→1 In the meeting, the two sides expressed content with the growing bilateral ties in recent years, calling for further promotion of mutual relations, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

"Also on the agenda of the talks were the latest developments pertaining to Tehran-Baku relations, joint economic projects, Iran's participation in operations to clear mines and reconstruct liberated areas, the latest developments related to a statement on a ceasefire between Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic and the recent border tensions between the two countries, communication corridors, rail links between Iran, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the necessity of implementing a six-way regional cooperation initiative along with other issues of mutual interest," the statement added.

On Monday, Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said Zarif will also pay a visit to Armenia.

Zarif's tour came after border tensions escalated between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with Yerevan accusing Baku of

encroaching on its territories.

In mid-May, Armenia accused Azerbaijan of advancing into its southern territory. Armenian Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has said Azerbaijan's armed forces crossed the state border of the Republic of Armenia and advanced as far as 3.5 kilometers in Syunik province.

"This is unacceptable to the Armenian side, because it represents an encroachment on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia. It still remains to be seen why such an action was possible, but it should be noted that this is an act of subversive infiltration. It should also be stated that our armed forces responded early this morning with appropriate tactical maneuvers and other necessary measures," Pashinyan said in a meeting with Armenian military officials.

On the other hand, the Republic of Azerbaijan has confirmed that it deployed troops to areas bordering Armenia but said this deployment occurred inside Azerbaijan's territories.



The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry accused "official circles" in Armenia of using border tensions for pre-election purposes.

Khatibzadeh has said Iran was "closely and sensitively" following border tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan and hoped that the dispute would be settled in peaceful ways.

PMO raises annual investment attraction target by \$119m

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) plans to increase the attraction of private sector investment in the country's ports by five trillion rials (about \$119 million) in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), an official with the organization said on Tuesday.

According to PMO's Deputy Head for Ports and Economic Affairs Farhad Montaser Kouhsari, the organization has increased the target for attracting investment in the current year from 160 trillion rials (about \$3.8 billion) to 165 trillion rials (about \$3.9 billion).



"This goal will be achieved by creating a proper space for investment in the ports and by providing the necessary incentives for investors, as well as awarding production and conversion projects," Montaser Kouhsari said.

The official noted that his organization has revised its contracts to minimize the risk of investment and provide significant incentives to the investors.

Underlining the significance of attracting investment in port infrastructure projects, Kouhsari said: "Ports' access to transport networks and the improvement of infrastructure in the ports' hinterland play an important role in facilitating and accelerating operations in ports."

"In fact, the existence of appropriate logistics is the prerequisite for increasing the efficiency of ports in the country," he added.

He further mentioned establishing logistic parks and special economic zones in the hinterland of the country's ports as a good way for developing the country's productivity and supporting domestic production.

Considering the significant role of ports in the promotion of foreign trade especially export, Iran, which has adopted the strategy of boosting its non-oil export to counter the U.S. sanctions on its economy, has many programs underway for the development of its ports.

In this regard, the PMO has put the attraction of investment to the ports on agenda, and despite the restrictions and limitations created by the outbreak of the coronavirus, investment-making in the Iranian ports increased significantly over the previous Iranian calendar year.

TEDPIX climbs after several days of drop

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 9,747 points to 1.105 million on Tuesday, after several days of fall. As reported, 5,603 billion securities worth 42.983 trillion rials (about \$1.023 billion) were traded at the TSE on Tuesday. The first market's index increased 7,338 points, and the second market's index rose 19,800 points.

Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi, the chairman of the Iranian parliament's economic committee has said recently 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 industries 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 IIRB.

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.



Meanwhile, the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has said predictability of the economy is a prerequisite for the stability of markets adding that the central bank welcomes the prosperity of the capital market.

"Stability of all markets along each other is of utmost importance for the central bank, therefore the bank supports the stability of the capital market," Abdolnasser Hemmati said in a meeting with the representatives of the capital market.

He emphasized that the approach of the Central Bank is to support the capital market, stating: "One of my personal economic beliefs is that our problem in economics is the underdevelopment of financial markets and capital market in particular."

According to Hemmati, inflation expectations affect the bank interest rates and consequently the market, therefore it is hoped that lower inflation expectations will lead to lower inflation and lower interest rates.

"All markets are highly sensitive to change and inflation expectations, and this is not limited to the capital market," Hemmati said.

The Iranian capital market has been going through some turbulence over the past few months and in this regard, the government and related entities have been taking serious measures for stabilizing the market.

29 mining projects ready to go operational

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Vajihollah Jafari has announced that 29 projects in mines and mining industries are ready for inauguration across the country.

Jafari noted that 13 of the mentioned projects are related to the steel chain, six are related to the copper chain, and 10 are implemented by Iran Minerals Production and Supply Company (IMPASCO) in other fields like producing minerals and machinery.

According to the official, more than \$1.9 billion worth of projects in the steel, copper, lead, and zinc, gold, ferrochrome, nepheline syenite, phosphate, and mining infrastructure sectors will be operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (ends in March 2022).

He further said that six development projects will be inaugurated this year in the country's copper industry which includes the development of Sarcheshmeh Copper Mine, and several projects in copper concentrate



units.

Back in February, Jafari had announced that his organization will inaugurate 23 development projects in mines and mining

industries soon.

Jafari said these projects worth over \$355 million would create direct jobs for 1,053 persons, and indirect jobs for 2,655 persons.

Water projects worth over \$185m inaugurated

→1 Water supply to several rural areas in the mentioned provinces, some wastewater and water treatment plants, some surface water collection facilities, as well as a tunnel for water transfer were among the inaugurated projects.

Under the framework of the A-B-Iran program, the Energy Ministry has inaugurated many projects to supply drinking water to the country's rural areas.

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

In the second phase of the program that was carried

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

The third phase of the program was officially started on April 6 and like the previous phases, this year, too, the Energy Ministry is planning to inaugurate numerous water and electricity projects in various provinces every week.

Last week, Ardakanian inaugurated 10 electricity projects worth 3.36 trillion rials (\$80 million) in 10 provinces, in the seventh week of the A-B-Iran program.

The inaugurated projects comprised of 8,142 sub-projects including numerous electricity supply projects, as well as power network modification and optimization projects.

The said projects were put into operation in Fars, Ker-



man, and Kermanshah provinces through video conference, IIRB reported.

Tehran, Yerevan explore expansion of transport co-op

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran and Armenia are exploring ways for expanding transport and trade co-operation as the Islamic Republic is looking for using Armenia as part of its South-North transit corridor.

The two countries, which eye boosting mutual trade up to \$1 billion annually, have exchanged several trade delegations over the past few months to discuss areas of cooperation.

In this regard, heading a delegation, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami traveled to Yerevan on Monday to meet with Armenian officials and negotiate ways of expanding ties.

Using the country as part of the South-North transport corridor which extends from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, construction of Tabriz-Jolfa and Yerevan-Tbilisi railways,

creating opportunities for Iranian companies for participation in Armenian projects, investment in transit and logistics development projects, and finally reducing tolls were among the issues discussed during the meetings between Eslami and Armenian officials.

Upon Arrival, Eslami met with the Armenian Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan in Yerevan, during which the two sides addressed some of the above-mentioned issues.

Following the meeting, Eslami announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the removal of transit barriers between the two countries.

Based on the MOU, at first, transshipment is going to be eliminated so that the trucks of the two countries can commute easily, and secondly, conditions will be created so that by eliminating transit tolls, the Iran-Armenia

route becomes more attractive for traders to use for transiting their goods, the official explained.

"Today's geopolitical condition and the situation in the region have created new opportunities that have been discussed in trilateral or quadrilateral interactions; now is a good time to improve the country's transit and transportation status with new agreements," Eslami said.

Eslami and Kerobyan had also discussed promoting joint investment in border areas, especially in industrial parks of the mentioned regions as a great potential for boosting the two sides' trade.

"By expanding cooperation and boosting the level of investment and trade to \$1 billion, Islamic Republic of Iran can immediately become a trading partner of

Armenia," Eslami said.

The Iranian Minister also mentioned some positive talks held between Iran and Armenia in the field of infrastructure in both railway and road sectors and added: "Today, good talks were held at the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and executive decisions were made for cooperation in the two sectors of railways and roads."

"Considering the decisions made, it is hoped that the cooperation between the two countries will increase both in terms of size and value."

Eslami was accompanied by Head of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization Darioush Amani, and Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Saeed Rasouli in his visit to Armenia.

Thermal power plants' output to increase 3,500 MW by Friday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — As announced by the managing director of Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH), the output of the country's thermal power plants will be increased by 3,500 megawatts (MW) by the end of the current Iranian calendar week (Friday).

Making the remarks in a meeting of the Energy Committee of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Monday, Mohsen Tarzatabal stated that the 35-percent decrease in the amount of rainfall has severely limited the output of hydropower plants, and said: "We are trying to complete the repairs of the thermal power plants by the end of this week to add 3,500 MG of new generation capacity."

Saying that there will be about 10,000 MW shortage of electricity generation in this year's summer peak consumption period, the official explained, "Last year, due to problems related to gas supply to power plants, we were not able to start repairs of thermal power generation units on time, and inevitably the steam units using liquid fuel were kept in production cycle."

Last month, Tarzatabal had announced that 69,000 megawatts (MW) new capacity of thermal power plants will enter the network by mid-June and after the end of the overhaul operations.

"The overhaul operations of the power plants are now underway and efforts are being made to complete this before the peak load", he stated.

As announced by the official, the efficiency of Iran's thermal power plants will reach 40 percent by the end of current



Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Tarzatabal also said that the conversion of gas-fired power plants to combined cycle ones, applying gas turbines with new technology, upgrading the gas units and scrapping the worn-out power plants are some of the programs to increase efficiency in thermal power plants.

Referring to the announcement of the new energy document to the electricity industry, he said: "According to this document, by Iranian calendar year 1420 (started in March 2041) the efficiency of the country's thermal power plants should reach 50% percent, which will require heavy investments."

On April 16, the official had announced that the efficiency of Iran's thermal power plants has reached a new record high of 39 percent for the first time in the history of the country's electricity industry.

IME's monthly worth of trades up 16%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose 16 percent in the past Iranian calendar month (ended on May 21).

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, 2.925 million tons of commodities valued at \$1.828 billion were traded at the exchange in the previous month, indicating also a six-percent rise in terms of weight.

The IME witnessed trades of 1.464 million tons of commodities worth more than \$1.044 billion on its mineral and industrial trading floor.

On this floor the exchange traded 1.189 million tons of steel, 12,780 tons of copper, 480 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 48 tons of precious metals concentrate, 11,690 tons of aluminum, 239,000 tons of iron ore, 1,000 tons of zinc, 400 tons of coke, 10,000 tons of sponge iron and 250 tons of lead.

The other trading floor of the exchange was the oil and petrochemical on both domestic and export rings of which customers purchased more than 1.449 million tons of commodities valued at almost \$770 million.

Commodities traded on this floor were

412,630 tons of bitumen, 238,686 tons of polymeric products, 155,372 tons of chemicals, 12,238 tons of oil, 490,300 tons of vacuum bottom, 4,450 tons of sulfur, 350 tons of argon, 150 tons of insulation and 132,500 tons of lube cut.

Moreover, the IME saw trade of 11,505 tons of commodities on its side market within this month.

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

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

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

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

Israel losing the war of moral awakening

➔ 1 The Israeli government has also sealed its borders with Gaza, rendering the latter the largest prison in the world for nearly 2 million Palestinians who live in one of the world's most densely populated areas under rampant unemployment, abject poverty, and humiliating conditions. Living under military rule has prompted Hamas to fire rockets at civilian targets in Israel (The New York Times, May 23, 2021). Neither acts—occupation or the firing of rockets at civilian centers—are warranted, as military strategy and tactics have often proven counterproductive in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Under such conditions, the peace process has become a distant prospect, and the pursuit of Greater Israel will prove to be a destabilizing and disruptive possibility. There is a need for a new beginning and new policy proposals for what should come next. The Palestinian issue continues to galvanize the Arab public and remains central to the Arab identity narrative in the growing social media and new public sphere (Monshipouri, Middle East Politics, 2019). The lingering vestiges of the plight of the Palestinians as stateless people are felt throughout the larger Arab world and continue to cast a shadow of skepticism over a right-wing regime in Tel Aviv that ironically seeks to normalize its relations with its Arab neighbors.

Despite enjoying a vast power differential with their neighbors, Israelis today face a new reality: the status quo is untenable in the wake of a new wave of moral awakening in the Arab world and beyond.



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The brutal, untenable reality of the occupation has again shown its ugly face and has attracted an international spotlight as never before.

Israel's military power over the past 73 years has failed to upend the Palestinians' quest

for a dignified life—one that is free from living under the yoke of occupation and

inhumane treatment. The unrest in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza have sent similar reverberations throughout the region, as many people in the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa took to streets in a show of solidarity with the Palestinians who have survived daily indignities for more than seven decades. Working under occupation and suspicion, suffering from the daily humiliations of being stopped and harassed repeatedly at checkpoints, and not enjoying equal rights and privileges in Israel have all rendered life miserable for many Palestinians and are likely to fuel further destruction, conflict, and bloodshed between the Israelis and the Palestinians in the coming months and years.

The younger generation of Jews living in the West are less sympathetic to the lingering occupation and now more than ever are likely to question the ongoing domination of Israelis over the Palestinians. The brutal, untenable reality of the occupation has again shown its ugly face and has attracted an international spotlight as never before. The Biden administration will squander a great opportunity should it choose to condone or abet the Israeli confiscation of Palestinian territories. If the two-state solution is given a low-key status, or pursued lackadaisically, the fragile ceasefire between the two sides will be short-lived and both parties will be back to square one in the not-too distant future. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be left to fester; it is simply in no country's interest in the region that it does.

Two-state solution: Settlement or prolongation of suffering

➔ 1 However, the measured and calculated response of the resistance factions and the global uprising in support of the defenseless Palestinian people, and the marches of peoples for this painful catastrophe undermined the claims by Israel and its influence in the United Nations.

Israelis had assumed that the Palestinian cause has lost color with the passage of time as some Arab countries normalized their ties with Israel, including the Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan.

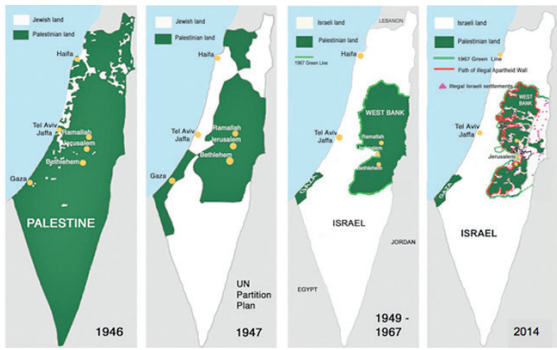
The Israelis are well aware that they cannot resort to any legal move or seek the help of any international body to legitimize their measures and policies, whether in the International Court of Justice, Amnesty International and other bodies that they should be held accountable.

In the recent crisis in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, where the Palestinians have been facing discrimination since 1972, an Israeli plot to displace them and build settlements on the ruins of their homes under the claim that the land on which their homes were built by the Jordanian government was rented. These are intended to legalize their existence and occupation.

The international community, including the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Security Council, as well as the United States of America, European countries, and official and unofficial bodies have talked a lot about the two-state solution to resolve the crisis between Israel and Palestine, but our question is about the seriousness of this initiative and can it be applied in practice on the ground or just launching a slogan to prolong the crisis and distract the Palestinians from their demands until they steal the last inch of their land.

Much effort has already been made in the path of putting an end to such a situation, including nearly three decades of diplomacy; the Oslo Accords, the Camp David summit, the Clinton Parameters, the Taba summit, the Arab Peace Initiative, the road map for the Middle East, and Abbas and Olmert's talks in the context of the Annapolis process, and John Kerry's efforts to achieve peace and other relentless attempts.

The Israelis believe that the formation of a Palestinian state that unites its people, houses the displaced, and brings them together with various orientations, will open



of the gates of hellfire on them.

The Zionist regime considers the formation of any future Palestinian government is synonymous with facing a huge human force that is not stopped by the F-35 fighters or cruise missiles and is not prevented by tanks like Super Sherman nor Merkava.

Some Israelis who are in a state of euphoria and deluded by the idea of building a state based on their military power designate the Palestinians as terrorists groups willing to cut settlers into pieces while others (in the best cases) who are more realistic believe that the Palestinians are a people who do not compromise their cause and do not accept trading their homeland despite the fact that the world has abandoned them.

So, the formation of a Palestinian state means an arsenal of weapons and a formidable military force, and the Palestinians will not give up their right.

They were fighting with stones, but with the establishment of the state, they would target Israel with missiles, fighters, and all that they would possess.

The first presumption is difficult as Israelis cannot accept to continue their life with threats that comes to them from everywhere.

Accepting a Palestinian state means living alongside the Palestinians in their vicinity, and not to continue bombing, killing, displacing or desecrating the sancti-

ties of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the rest of the holy sites for Muslims and Christians until hearing the last Palestinian breath out.

Based on this fact, how can we expect "Israel" to accept the idea of ??a "two-state solution", which means the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza alongside itself?

It should be noted that the West Bank, including Jerusalem, for the Jews, is the core and essence of the biblical land. Will Israel give it up? Why? And under which pressures?

Another obstacle facing the two-state solution is settlement operations; the presence of settlers, and the absolute control of "Israel" over more than half of the West Bank, according to the Oslo agreement, makes it difficult for the establishment of a Palestinian state with real sovereignty, due to lack of independence, security and economic components as it is surrounded by Israel from four sides; in addition to its sky and what is under its land (i.e. from its six sides, not the four)., "Israel" will never abandon Jerusalem due to political, religious, economic and tourism considerations.

One of the other main obstacles to achieve the two-state solution (a Palestinian state with full sovereignty over the borders of June 4, 1967) is the idea of ??return to homeland -- the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland from which they were forcibly evicted.

The right of return is the essence of the Palestinian cause. Although the Palestinian political leadership constantly reiterate the "right of return," they are fully aware that this will not be achieved in light of the circumstances that Palestine is experiencing at regional and international levels.

Consequently, in the event that they are unable to return refugees to their homeland, what is the benefit of the two-state solution if half of the Palestinian people remain homeless and scattered?

With all this evidence that we have mentioned, it makes it impossible for Israel to accept this level of embarrassment; and even though it is now not in a position to be forced to make all these concessions, knowing that this step can end its existence.

EU cuts Belarus' air links to bloc over diversion of Ryanair flight

The European Union (EU) has banned Belarusian flights from using the bloc's airspace, shortly after Minsk forced a flight carrying a dissident figure to land and arrested him.

EU leaders decided at a meeting in Brussels on Monday to cut Belarus' air links with the bloc, also banning EU aircraft from flying in Belarusian skies.

Belarus on Sunday ordered a fighter jet to make a Ryanair flight -- en route to Lithuania -- to land in Minsk over a bomb threat that later turned out to be a hoax. The plane was carrying dissident journalist Raman Protasevich, who was arrested along with an associate of his, Sofia Sapega, once the plane was grounded.

The flight was heading from Greece's

capital, Athens, to Lithuania's Vilnius. It proceeded to fly to Lithuania after a seven-hour stop.

Protasevich, 26, has been charged in Belarus with promoting extremism on the Telegram channel "Nexta." He stands accused of organizing and reporting on protests challenging the re-election of President Alexander Lukashenko back in 2020.

Back in October last year, Belarus' Supreme Court designated Nexta as an extremist channel. In February this year, Belarus issued an extradition request to Poland, where Protasevich and another journalist, Stepan Putilo, were believed to be based. Protasevich faces up to 15 years of imprisonment under Belarusian law.

The EU leaders also warned they would adopt further "targeted economic sanctions" against the Belarusian authorities. Some 88 Belarusian officials and seven companies are already on an EU blacklist over a crackdown on opposition.

Furthermore, Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, announced that the EU's three-billion-euro investment and economic package for Belarus would remain on hold. She also called for a full investigation by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Separately, U.S. President Joe Biden supported Brussels' measures against Belarus, and U.S. Congressmen urged the Biden administration to prohibit U.S. airlines from

entering Belarusian airspace over the incident.

Meanwhile, Belarus' state TV said on Monday that Protasevich had confessed to organizing "riots."

"I am treated quite well," he was aired saying. "I continue to cooperate with the investigation and I am giving a confession concerning the organization of mass riots in Minsk."

Russia has so far thrown its weight behind Belarus in the case, with foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova saying in a Facebook post on Monday, "We are shocked that the West calls the incident in Belarusian air space 'shocking,' accusing Western nations of 'kidnappings, forced landings and illegal arrests.'"

million in financial aid from the WHO, accusing it of mismanaging the coronavirus pandemic and being too trusting of China.

However, the Joe Biden administration has resumed working with the UN organization.

The WHO's funding shortfalls come amid widespread reports that wealthier countries, including the United States, are hoarding millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines, a practice that international health experts say is undermining the global response to the pandemic.

Amnesty International condemned wealthier countries last month for failing a "rudimentary" test of global unity by stockpiling vaccines.

Texas gets ready to allow unlicensed carrying of handguns

Texas is poised to remove one of its last major gun restrictions after American lawmakers approved allowing people to carry handguns without a license, and the background check and training that go with it.

The Republican-dominated Legislature approved the measure Monday, sending it to Gov. Greg Abbott, who has said he will sign it despite the objections of law enforcement groups who say it would endanger the public and police.

Gun control groups also oppose the measure, noting the state's recent history of mass shootings, including those at an El Paso Walmart, a church in Sutherland Springs, and a high school outside Houston.

Texas already has some of the loosest gun laws in the country and has more than 1.6 million handgun license holders.

Supporters of the bill say it would allow Texans to better defend themselves in public while abolishing unnecessary impediments to the constitutional right to bear arms. Once signed into law, Texas will join nearly two dozen other states that allow some form of unregulated carry of a handgun, and by far be the most populous.

The National Rifle Association was among those supporting the measure, and a spokesman called it the "most significant" gun-rights measure in the state's history.

"A right requiring you to pay a tax or obtain a government permission slip is not a right at all," said Jason Ouimet, executive director of the NRA Institute for Legislative Action.

Texas already allows rifles to be carried in public without a license. The measure sent to Abbott would allow anyone age 21 or older to carry a handgun as long as they don't have violent crime convictions or some other legal prohibition in their background. But there would be no way to weed them out without the state background check currently in the licensing process.

The bill would not prevent businesses from banning guns on their property, and federal background checks for some gun purchases would remain in place. Texas has no state requirements for background checks on private guns sales.

Texas has allowed people to carry handguns since 1995, and has been reducing the cost and training requirements for getting a license for the last decade.

Political turmoil in Mali: UN urges immediate release of detained president, premier

The West African country of Mali seems to be in the grip of a fresh political unrest, with the country's military reported to have arrested the president and prime minister. The development has prompted calls from the United Nations for calm as well as the "immediate and unconditional" release of the detained leaders

The move has stirred fears of a new coup.

Interim President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane were taken by soldiers to the Kati military camp on the outskirts of the capital Bamako, AFP cited two senior officials, who declined to be named.

Just before being taken away by the military officers and before his line was cut, Ouane managed to tell AFP in a phone call on Monday that soldiers had "come to get him."

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also expressed concern over the detentions and called for calm.

Reports suggest that Defense Minister Souleymane Doucoure is also under arrest.

The detentions have drawn condemnation from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union, the UK and the U.S. They urged for the unconditional release of Mali's top politicians in a joint statement which was also signed by the UN.

The detentions came just hours after a government reshuffle, which aimed to appease critics of the interim government amid anger at the military's dominance in the transitional government and the slow pace of promised reforms. The reshuffle saw ex-defense minister Sadio Camara and ex-security minister Colonel Modibo Kone, who took part in last year's coup, replaced.

The arrests raised fears of a second coup after a putsch in August ousted president Ibrahim Boubakar Keita following weeks of protests against his handling of the Takfiri insurgency and perceived government corruption.

The caretaker government was installed after the 15-nation West Africa bloc ECOWAS threatened sanctions on the country.

Resistance News

Palestinian man killed by Israeli undercover unit in West Bank

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN — A Palestinian man was shot and killed by undercover Israeli forces early on Tuesday in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, hours before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in the country for talks.

Ahmad Jamil Fahd, from al-Amari refugee camp, was shot by the Mustarbeen unit in the Umm al-Sharayit area, Palestinian witnesses said, and was left to bleed to death before an ambulance could arrive.

The undercover unit is made up of Israelis who are disguised as Palestinians and often conduct raids to arrest or kill.

According to a spokesman for the Palestinian health ministry, Fahd was shot multiple times at close range.

The killing took place on the same day that Blinken, who said his trip was to support "efforts to solidify a ceasefire", met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. He is scheduled to meet Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas later in the day.

An Israeli security official told AFP news agency during "attempted arrests" of "activists in Ramallah one of the people aiding the activists was killed by border police".

However, an official from the Fatah movement in al-Amari refugee camp told local Palestinian media that Fahd was not wanted by the Israelis.

Amin Abu Radaha said Fahd, a former prisoner in an Israeli jail, was in the Umm al-Sharayit neighbourhood with his friends, and left his car for 20 minutes in order to buy knafeh sweets.

"As soon as he returned to the car, undercover Israeli forces shot him and left him bleeding until he was martyred," Abu Radaha said.

The official added the Israeli unit was after Fahd's uncles, who are wanted by Israel's domestic intelligence agency, the Shin Bet.

Khalil Rizk, a representative of the family, said the Israeli forces committed a crime and executed Fahd.

WHO in 'imminent danger' due to funding shortage: top expert

The World Health Organization (WHO) is facing a critical funding shortage, which is impeding its urgent operations and putting the UN body in "imminent danger" amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, according to its top emergency expert.

"The funding shortfall of more than 70% when only received funds are considered has left the organization in real imminent danger of being unable to sustain core functions for urgent priorities," Mike Ryan, executive director of the health emergencies program at WHO, told the annual assembly of health ministers on Tuesday.

He renewed the WHO's appeal in February for \$1.96 billion for 2021 to fund its global pandemic response.

"[The] underfunding and earmarking of funds risks paralyzing WHO's ability to provide rapid and flexible support to countries and is already having consequences for current operations," the expert added.

The WHO had to suspend its crucial aid to about 10,000 healthcare workers across conflict-hit Yemen in November last year because of a "financial gap."

"Due to an unprecedented financial gap, WHO & health partners have been unable to continue their financial support to the health care workforce in Yemen. Up to 10K health workers are affected," the WHO's Yemen office tweeted at the time.

In April 2020, the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump moved to withhold \$400

Iran seeks UNESCO status for ancient nomadic routes

➔1 Migration is a way of life for nomads because herding cattle is their main source of income. In spring they with all their belongings head for the cooler pastures usually in mountain hill-sides where the grass is abundant for their flocks of sheep and goats. And in autumn they return to previous tropic plains as their well-fed livestock getting stronger to bear the winter.



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 Wushmagir.

Tourism minister cuts ribbon on traditional restaurant

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan on Monday inaugurated a traditional restaurant during his visit to Sari, the capital of the northern Mazandaran province.

Constructed in a piece of land covering 834 square meters in area, the traditional restaurant is expected to generate 18 job opportunities, CHTN reported.

The minister was scheduled to inaugurate 78 tourism-related projects -- virtually or in-person -- during his two-day visit to the northern province, the report added.

Last year, Iran joined an online campaign launched by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to promote gastronomy as an essential part of tourism. Experts say that food is not merely an organic product with biochemical compositions.



For members of each community, food is defined as a cultural element. The Iranian cuisine, usually embellished with fragrant herbs, varies from region to region, however, it principally accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

Dizi (a lamb, chickpea, and potato stew made to a centuries-old recipe), fesenjoon (chicken poached in an earthy sweet-and-sour sauce of ground walnuts and pomegranates) are amongst the most popular traditional dishes of the country. Traditional Iranian dishes are usually not overpowered with spices though kitchens are embraced with ranges of subtle and yet contrasting flavors such as a combination of sweet and sour or mild.

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

30 historical sites, monuments under restoration across Sistan-Baluchestan

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Restoration work is currently underway on some 30 historical sites and monuments, which are dotted across the lesser-known Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Historical houses, mansions, strongholds, castles, graveyards and windmills are amongst travel destinations being restored, ILNA quoted Mansoureh Molla-Elahi, the deputy provincial tourism chief, as saying on Tuesday.



The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

It possesses special significance because of being located in a strategic and transit location, especially Chabahar which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters.

Tens of hotels, apartment hotels under construction in Mazandaran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Some 27 hotels and 65 apartment hotels are being constructed across the northern province of Mazandaran, adding 71,000 beds to the province’s hospitality sector.

These accommodation centers are expected to boost tourism infrastructure in the region and make the lush green province a main tourism hub of the country, said Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan on the sidelines of his two-day visit to the province, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

In the course of the minister’s visit, 78 tourism-related projects worth over nine trillion rials (\$214 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) were planned to be inaugurated throughout Mazandaran province, the report added.

Last September, Mounesan announced that over 2,400 tourism-related projects,



including the construction of 500 hotels, are being implemented across the country

with a total estimated cost of 1,370 trillion rials (around \$32 billion).

Scenic Karaj-Chalus road considered to become national heritage

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Preliminary work of collecting data about Karaj-Chalus road, its associated structures, and nearby villages has been commenced by the tourism directorate of Alborz province to have the scenic road registered on Iran’s national heritage list.

Based on follow-up field visits and preliminary investigations, it was decided to develop a dossier for the national registration Karaj-Chalus road as a historical, cultural, and natural route that has considerable potential in the field of tourism, CHTN quoted the provincial tourism directorate as saying on Monday.

Natural landscapes, villages with historical texture, the architecture of different periods, local food, traditional clothing, and the original Karaji dialect are among the attractions of the Karaj-Chalus axis, a provincial official said.

In connection with political geography, the Karaj-Chalus

road was once the most important route and connection of the southern slopes of Alborz to the northern regions of the country.

As a piece of history, Chalus Road, also less well known as Road 59, was constructed during the Qajar era by the local people with very primitive hand tools.

The 160 km road crossing and crawling up the Alborz Mountains offers beautiful landscapes, waterfalls, and springs. Each season presents its own special beauty along the road.

The mesmerizing view changes as one travels on Chalus; from trees lining up on both sides of the pavement to getting engulfed and surrounded by the Alborz, and sometimes have dramatic views of the Karaj River, which runs along part of the road.

The road between Tehran and the Caspian Sea has become a destination in itself for many Tehranis who take it just to



escape the hustle and bustle of the city or for a relaxing day out with family and friends.

Historic Ladiz cave cleaned up by cultural heritage fans

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A cleaning project has been completed on the historical cave of Ladiz and a nearby river adjacent to the city of Mirjaveh in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

The project was carried out in collaboration with some cultural heritage aficionados and activists as well as some provincial tourism officials, Mirjaveh’s tourism chief has said.

Several tourists travel to the province every year to visit Ladiz cave, a popular natural wonder in the region, Abdollah Kord announced on Tuesday.

Exploring a cave may not be on the “to-do



list” of travelers in Iran. However, Karaftu, Ali-Sadr and Quri Qaleh, and Katala-Khor are amongst the most visited caves.

Friday mosque of Meybod being restored to former glory

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – An extensive restoration work has recently been commenced on the centuries-old Friday mosque of Meybod, which is named after the oasis city in central Iran.

Exterior walls, stuccowork, window glasses, wooden doors, and plaster coatings are amongst elements becoming restored, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

An archaeological survey conducted in the early 2000s revealed that the mud-

brick mosque dates back to the first and the second centuries AH, the report said.

Moreover, the survey showed the most was mostly thriving during the seventh and ninth centuries AH.

The terms “Jameh Mosque”, “Masjed-e Jameh” and “Friday Mosque” are used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are/ were performed: the phrase is used in other Muslim countries but only in Iran



does it designate this purpose.

According to UNESCO, Meybod is a remarkable example of the viability and transmission of human being’s collective thoughts from different generations to the present one. “What is significant in the city of Meybod is the regularity in city planning. The anatomy and spatial structure of the city show original plans which conform with the old Iranian city planning.”

Eco-lodges have enough potential to alter tourism in Bushehr: official

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – A total of 56 eco-lodge units, which have been inaugurated across Bushehr province over the past four years, has enough potential to alter tourism across the southwestern Bushehr province, the deputy provincial tourism chief said on Monday.

Construction of such lodging places is in line with the directorate’s policies to support job opportunities, sustainable income for local communities, and the development of rural tourism, Sakineh Salari added, IRNA reported.

A budget of 168 billion rials (\$4 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rial per dollar) has been allocated to the projects, he said.

The inaugurated eco-lodges have generated a total of 252 job opportunities directly and indirectly for the locals, she added.

She also expressed hope that boosting ecotourism in the region would lead to economic prosperity in rural areas, comprehensive development of villages, and reverse migration.

As a four-season country with pristine and beautiful nature in different parts of the country, Iran has a lot to offer nature lovers and eco-tourists.

Eco-lodge units in rural areas and the heart of nature, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, smoke, and pollution, could free people from the chaos and turmoil of modern life.

In recent years, several historical mansions and rural houses across the country have been repurposed into eco-lodge units to attract more domestic and foreign tourists.



The houses represent the indigenous culture, local customs, traditions, and stories, while the guests are served delicious food with local ingredients.

The growing tendency of tourists to experience indigenous and local cultures has made them want to get closer to natural and indigenous living conditions, experiencing the old-fashioned way of life, considering that staying in these eco-lodge units is much cheaper than other accommodation centers.

In January 2020, Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism Director Behrouz Omrani announced that Iran has been constructing hundreds of eco-lodge guesthouses over the past couple of years to meet the demands of rising eco-travelers and sightseers.

“At present, issuing guidelines for eco-tourism development is on the agenda. Historical villages are amongst

target destinations for eco-tourism development,” the official said.

Iran’s tourism body said in 2018 that 2,000 eco-lodges will be constructed nationwide until 2021. Experts say each eco-lodge unit generates jobs for seven to eight people on average so that the scheme could create 160,000 jobs.

Having a very diverse natural setting, Iran offers varied excursions to nature lovers. Sightseers may live with a nomad or rural family or enjoy an independent stay. The country is home to abundant historical mansions, caravanserais, bathhouses, madrasas, and other massive monuments, which can buttress its budding tourism and hospitality sectors if managed appropriately and refurbished properly.

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

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

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

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

Plan on early diagnosis, treatment of osteoporosis underway

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A pilot plan on the early detection and treatment of osteoporosis is being implemented in three cities, Baqer Larjani, director of Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Institute at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, said on Tuesday.

In recent years, public awareness of osteoporosis and fractures has been growing, but there is still insufficient information, he said, adding, the training of doctors and medical staff in this area should be given priority, IRNA reported.

"There is a gap between needs and services in this field, so we should have appropriate policies in the future," he stated, lamenting, a significant number of people with osteoporosis do not continue treatment, so that clinical guidelines for osteoporosis should be further promoted.

Regarding the international cooperation in this field, he said that "we are trying to increase our cooperation at the national and international levels."

80% of Iranian women above 75 suffering from osteoporosis

Afshin Ostovar, head of Osteoporosis Research Center at the Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Institute, said that 80 percent of women over the age of 75 across the country are suffering from osteoporosis.

Women are more exposed to osteoporosis than men, he said elaborating that averagely, all over the country, one in three women and one in five men aged over 50 get fractures due to osteoporotic each year,



According to International Osteoporosis Foundation, it is estimated that over 200 million people worldwide suffer from this disease. At least 40 percent of the women and 15-30 percent of men will sustain one or more fragility fractures in their remaining lifetime.

but now one in two women and one in four men over the age of 50.

In other words, half of the women aged 50 or above experience osteoporosis fractures, 20 to 50 percent of pelvic fractures lead to

death, he lamented.

Seventeen percent of Iranians over the age of 30 and 20 percent of women aged over 50 are suffering from osteoporosis, Ahmad Raeisosadat, secretary of the association of

physical medicine and rehabilitation, said in October 2019.

Osteoporosis prevalence

Although osteoporosis is mainly rooted in genetics, low physical activity or an unhealthy diet with a small amount of calcium, gradually reduces bone calcium and causes osteoporosis. It is referred to as the silent epidemic disease of the century because it does not create serious pain until a bone fracture occurs.

Osteoporosis is preventable and can be stopped with proper diet, exercise, and annual checkups.

Mina Kermani, a rheumatologist, announced in February 2019 that about seven million Iranian people were suffering from osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens bones, making them fragile and more likely to break. It develops slowly over several years and is often only diagnosed when a minor fall or sudden impact causes a bone fracture.

The most common injuries in people with osteoporosis are wrist fractures and hip fractures.

According to International Osteoporosis Foundation, currently, it is estimated that over 200 million people worldwide suffer from this disease. At least 40 percent of the women and 15-30 percent of men will sustain one or more fragility fractures in their remaining lifetime. Aging of populations worldwide will be responsible for a major increase in the incidence of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women.

Iraqi passengers must be retested for COVID-19: health minister

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Considering fake negative COVID-19 test certificates of Iraqi passengers, Health Minister Saeed Namaki emphasized the need for retesting all the passengers at land, sea, and air borders.

As some Iraqi passengers have violated travel checks by showing fake test certificates, and after retesting, they tested positive, so that all should be tested at the borders despite having a certificate, Namaki explained, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

"Therefore, all previous instructions on allowing the passengers with a negative test result to enter the country are rejected, and all entry points from land, sea, and air borders must retest the travelers."

Over 318,000 passengers tested at border points

Some 318,859 passengers have so far been screened for coronavirus by thermal tests at the country's official borders since March 10, Mehdi Valipour, head of Relief



and Rescue Organization affiliated to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), has stated.

During the aforesaid period, IRCS forces have conducted 16,368 PCR tests and 43,386 rapid tests, he said, IRNA reported.

He went on to lament that some 62 individuals, who tested positive, have so far been temporarily quarantined, under a plan to rapidly identify suspected cases of coronavirus and prevent the spread of new UK strain.

Some 471 members of the IRCS cooperate for carrying out the plan in 16 provinces across the country, Valipour concluded.

With the cooperation of ministries of health and transport, a plan is being implemented with the goal of rapidly identifying and testing incoming passengers and keeping them in quarantine facilities, if necessary.

Thirty border checkpoints have been selected, including 18 land borders, nine air borders, and three sea borders, all incoming passengers will be tested and referred to the quarantine facilities in case of necessity.

Around 8,000 individuals enter the country via borders on a daily basis.

Kidney Foundation performs 600 transplants in year

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Some 600 patients with renal failure, under the coverage of Kidney Foundation, have undergone transplantation over the last [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021).

A kidney transplant is the transfer of a healthy kidney from a compatible donor to the body of another person with a disabled kidney and is the most promising option for patients with end-stage renal disease, Azam Panahi, the head of the Foundation, has said.

At present, more than 100,000 patients with kidney failure are covered by this foundation, 600 of whom underwent transplantation, she added, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The population of patients with renal

failure in Iran is 320,000.

The first kidney transplant in West Asia was performed in Shiraz, Iran, in 1967.

Mehdi Shadnoosh, the director of the transplantation department at the Ministry of Health, said in February 2019 that there were around 8,600 people in Iran waiting to receive kidney transplants. Plus, 30 thousand patients receive dialysis every day.

It is estimated that, annually, the number of Iranians who receive dialysis grow by three to four thousand, and every round of dialysis costs around 4.5 million rials (around \$107) for the healthcare system, said Shadnoosh.

Kidney transplant and dialysis are free services in Iran, so there must be more focus on teaching people the proper

preventive methods such as controlling their high blood pressure and diabetes, he added.

According to World Health Organization, a 2015 study revealed that, in 2015, 1.2 million people died from kidney failure, an increase of 32 percent since 2005.

In 2010, an estimated 2.3–7.1 million people with end-stage kidney disease died without access to chronic dialysis. Additionally, each year, around 1.7 million people are thought to die from acute kidney injury. Overall, therefore, an estimated 5–10 million people die annually from kidney disease.

Currently, 50 percent of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) patients in Iran live with a functional transplanted kidney. The



annual number of kidney transplants in Iran has gone from less than 100 transplants in 1986 to 1800 transplants in 2006, and in recent years, the rate of kidney transplants has increased again, with approximately 2500–2700 kidney transplants performed per year.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Educational projects worth \$330m to be inaugurated

A total of 1,015 educational projects worth 14 trillion rials (nearly \$330 million) will be inaugurated across the country, Mehrollah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools, has announced.

The projects will be inaugurated by the next 10 days, on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, he stated, ISNA reported on Sunday.

According to Rakhshanimehr, the projects include 4,168 classrooms, 11 swimming pools, and 32 gyms.

About 14,000 classrooms have been built so far this year (started March 21, 2019), compared with some 10,000 last year, he concluded.

افتتاح ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان پروژه آموزشی

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشور گفت ۱۰۱۵ پروژه آموزشی با اعتباری به میزان ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان در سراسر کشور به بهره‌برداری می‌رسد.

به گزارش ایسنا، مهراله رخشانی مهر افزود این پروژه‌ها طی ۱۰ روز آینده و به مناسبت چهل‌ویکمین سالگرد پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی افتتاح خواهند شد.

به گفته او، این پروژه‌ها شامل ۴۱۶۸ کلاس درس، ۱۱ استخر، و ۳۲ سالن ورزشی هستند.

رخشانی مهر ادامه داد تاکنون در سال ۹۸ حدود ۱۴ هزار کلاس درس افتتاح شده است در حالیکه در سال ۹۷ حدود ۱۰ هزار کلاس افتتاح شده بود.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. May 24

New cases	11,873
New deaths	208
Total cases	2,855,396
Total deaths	79,056
New hospitalized patients	1,713
Total recovered patients	2,347,752
Diagnostic tests conducted	2,362,428
Doses of vaccine injected	3,146,062

Iranian bird fauna

(Part 5)

1974 White stork inquiry. In 1974, the Department conducted a nationwide census of breeding white storks *Ciconia ciconia* as part of an international census of storks in Europe and the Middle East. The census revealed an Iranian population of some 3,300 pairs, two-thirds of which were nesting in Azerbaijan province (Fotoohi and Scott).

Greater flamingo studies. Since its discovery in the mid-1960s the breeding colony of some 20,000 to 25,000 pairs of greater flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber* on islands in Lake Urmia, Azerbaijan, has been the subject of continuous study by ornithologists from the department. The entire lake and its islands, an area of 483,000 ha, were given reserve status in 1967 and the flamingo declared a fully protected bird. Banding studies have revealed that immediately after fledging young birds undertake a wide dispersal out of the Iranian region, with recoveries coming from as far afield as Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Pakistan, and India. The adults, however, winter mainly within Iran, in the Bakhtegan Protected Region in central Fars, and along the coasts of the Persian Gulf and Baluchistan (Scott, 1975).

The wetlands and their wildfowl. The wetlands of Iran constitute one of the main wintering areas for wildfowl belonging to the West Siberian-Caspian-Nile flyway population. The millions of ducks, geese, and coots in this flyway have long supported an annual harvest in the south Caspian region (Schuz, 1957; Savage, 1963; Firouz, 1968) and are increasingly attracting the attention of sport hunters.

In an attempt to conserve and manage this valuable natural resource the Department of the Environment has introduced realistic game laws and regulations, created a number of protected regions and wildlife refuges, and drawn up a detailed inventory of the nation's wetlands. Nationwide mid-winter wildfowl censuses have been conducted annually since 1966, and these have provided valuable information on population size and trends (see Table 7). A booklet entitled *The Wetlands and Waterfowl of Iran*, published by the Department of the Environment in 1971 (Firouz, 1971b), gives a general account of the situation in Iran, while a paper by Ferguson looks at the south Caspian region in some detail.

Iran has played a prominent role in international efforts to conserve wetlands and waterfowl. In 1971 it hosted the International Conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl, at which the final text of a convention—the so-called Ramsar Convention—on the conservation of wetlands especially as habitat for waterfowl was adopted (Carp, 1972). Iran has since ratified this convention and designated eighteen major wetlands for inclusion in the list of wetlands of international importance under the terms of the convention (Scott, 1976a; Carp, 1980).

Caucasian black grouse studies. A small population of the rare Caucasian black grouse *Lyrurus mlkosiewiczi* was discovered in the upper deciduous forest zone of the Kaleybur mountains in northern Azerbaijan in 1971. A special reserve, the Arasbaran Protected Region, was established to protect the dwindling habitat of this bird, and studies of the bird's ecology were initiated (Scott, 1976b).

Pheasant research and management. The common pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* occurs widely in forested regions in northern Iran. Four subspecies have been described: *colchicus* in northern Azerbaijan, *talischensis* and *persicus* in the southwest and southeast Caspian regions respectively, and *principalis* in northeastern Khorasan. Management of populations for sport hunting has centered on the south Caspian region, where special management areas have been set aside and stocks manipulated (Scott and Howell, 1976).

Crane project. An estimated 2,000 to 3,000 common cranes *Grus grus* spend the winter in Iran, principally in the wetlands of central Fars, and Sastan. In addition, some 10 to 15 of the very rare and endangered Siberian white crane *Grus leucogeranus* were rediscovered wintering in Mazandaran, in the southeast Caspian, in 1978 (Scott, 1980). A cooperative project has been initiated between the Iranian Department of the Environment, Soviet biologists, and the International Crane Foundation (Baraboo, Wisconsin) to establish a new population of Siberian white cranes using a cross-fostering technique as developed with whooping cranes *Grus americana* and sandhill cranes *Grus canadensis* in North America. Thus common cranes which breed in western Siberia and winter in southern Iran will be used as foster parents for Siberian white cranes.

Aside from the work of the Department of the Environment, the greatest contribution to our knowledge of Iranian birds in recent years has been the work of Lindon Cornwallis, who spent five years studying the birds of Fars province in the late 1960s and early 1970s. His work, plus all other recent unpublished material, is currently being written up for publication in a comprehensive work on the bird fauna of Iran by L. Cornwallis, and D. A. Scott.

(Source: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

That knowledge which remains only on your tongue is very superficial. The intrinsic value of knowledge is that you act upon it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iranian, Russian universities launch Iranistica Encyclopedia project

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A collaborative project has been launched by the University of Tehran and Saint Petersburg State University to compile a Russian encyclopedia of Iranian studies named Iranistica.



A poster for a memorandum of understanding, which will be signed by Iran and Russia on May 26, 2021 in Tehran to compile the Iranistica Encyclopedia

The project is being implemented based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which will be signed in Tehran on Wednesday by the Institute of Iran and Eurasia Studies (IRAS), Saint Petersburg State University and the University of Tehran, the IRAS Institute announced on Tuesday.

The MOU will be inked by IRAS director Mehdi Sanaei, Saint Petersburg State University rector Nikolai Kropachev and University of Tehran director Mahmud Nili Ahmadabadi.

Founded in 2004, the IRAS is active as an independent, non-profit, non-governmental think tank and publisher based in Tehran. The institute announced that the Iranistica Encyclopedia project will be compiled with contributions from experts on Iranian studies from both Iran and Russia.

The encyclopedia will become the primary source for Russian academia in the field of Iranian and Eurasian studies.

“Villa Dwellers” director Monir Qeidi makes drama on women in Khorramshahr resistance

ART **TEHRAN** — Monir Qeidi, the director of the acclaimed Iranian drama “Villa Dwellers”, has portrayed women’s role in the 34-day resistance in Khorramshahr against the Iraqi invaders during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war in her new film “Squad of Girls”.



A scene from “Squad of Girls”.

The film has been made based on a true story that took place during the invasion of Khorramshahr by Iraq.

Niki Karimi is among some of the notable actors and actresses featuring in the epic war drama.

Qeidi’s debut feature film “Villa Dwellers” on wives of Iranian fighters of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war in a camp near the frontline won her the award for best first-film by director at the 35th Fajr Film Festival in 2017.

Local people and volunteers from across the country joined together fighting the Iraqi forces. However, the southwestern Iranian city was captured by the invaders after 34 days of heroic resistance.

Khorramshahr in the southwestern Iranian province of Khuzestan was captured by Iraqis on October 26, 1980 during the early months of the war and was liberated on May 24, 1982.

“Ambushing a Rose” published in eight languages

→1 The collection was unveiled on Monday at the Sacred Defense Museum during a special ceremony organized to celebrate the liberation anniversary of Khorramshahr.

Written in Persian by Mohsen Momeni-Sharif, “Ambushing a Rose”, also known as “Waiting for the Red Rose”, has been translated into English, French, Italian, Russian, Arabic, Urdu, Azerbaijani and Turkish by the Army’s War Archives.

Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, the commander of the Army, Brigadier General Nasser Arasteh, the director of the Army’s War Archives, several military attachés and some cultural figures attended the ceremony.

“Talking about the big victories during the war brings the name of Sayyad Shirazi to our minds, and his name also brings back the sweet memories of the big victories,” Mousavi said in his brief speech made at the ceremony.

For his part, Arasteh said, “All chapters of Martyr Sayyad cannot be covered in a single book. Many books should be written to cover various aspects of his life.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, wrote a commendation for “Ambushing a Rose”,



Army commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi (2nd L) and War Archives director Brigadier General Nasser Arasteh (3rd R) unveil eight translations of the Martyr Ali Sayyad Shirazi’s biography “Ambushing a Rose” at the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran on May 24, 2021. (ISNA/Mohammad-Ali Asadi)

which was originally published by Sureh-Mehr, a major publishing house affiliated with the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology

Dissemination Organization.

“This is an exceptionally interesting example of a report on the war while it

is a sweet story of one of its characters,” the Leader wrote in the recommendation published in April 2019.

“I read the entire book thoroughly; it has been written beautifully and artistically. I am quite familiar with many of the incidents described,” he added.

“Of course, many other events of that era and many other words about this dear martyr remain untold. And this is natural, because the prominence of martyr Sayyad Shirazi cannot be showcased in a single book. He was truly an example of a brave and devoted army officer. God bless his soul,” he stated.

Sayyad Shirazi was assassinated on April 10, 1999, outside his house while on his way to work by the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) while serving as the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff, the second-highest military office in Iran. The MKO said the act was in revenge for Operation Mersad.

He had led a counter-offensive called Operation Mersad against the MKO militants, who, with the help of Saddam Hussein, launched an attack in the summer of 1988 to capture the western Iranian city of Kermanshah.

Khanian, Bahar join 2022 Astrid Lindgren Award nominees

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Children’s Book Council of Iran has selected the celebrated writer Jamshid Khanian and book reading promoter Abdolhakim Bahar as its nominees for the 2022 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

“Khanian has been selected for the substantial role he has played in the formation of modern fiction for young adults in Iran,” the council wrote in a press release published on Tuesday.

He received the nomination for “his regard for some humanitarian issues such as peace, respect for others, friendship and love, as well as his care for humanitarian crises such as all types of discrimination, wars, immigration, loneliness, death, identity, generation gap...”

Bahar was nominated for the award for his great motivation for reading promotion in Iran’s remote areas.

Khanian and Bahar were also nominated for the prestigious Swedish honor to promote children’s and youths’ literature in the world by the Children’s Book Council of Iran in 2021.

Khanian is the author of “A Half Day in the Interrogation Room” and “Compass”. He has also written several other stories, including “Money” and “Where Is My Joseph”, which have been translated into English, Russian and Polish.

The Institute for Research on History of Children’s Literature, the Iranian Association of Writers for Children and Youth and the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults are allowed to select Iran’s nominations for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

Previously on Monday, the Iranian Association of Writers for Children and Youth announced writer Fereidun Amuzadeh-Khalili and book reading promoter Shahla Eftekhari as its nominees for the award in 2022.

The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award amounts to SEK 5 million (about €570,000), making it the world’s largest award for children’s and young adults’ literature.

The award was established in 2002 by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs to commemorate writer Astrid

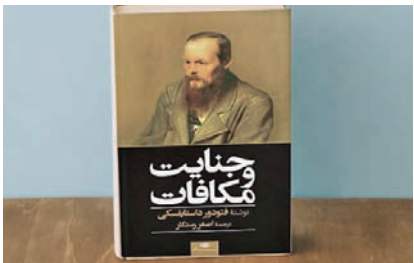
THE ASTRID LINDGREN
MEMORIAL AWARD



This combination photo is of a logo of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award and the Iranian nominees Jamshid Khanian (L) and Abdolhakim Bahar.

Lindgren and to promote children’s and youths’ literature from around the world.

Iranian reading contest picks “Crime and Punishment”



A copy of a Persian translation of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel “Crime and Punishment” by Asghar Rastegar.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Hasht d e s k Behesht Book Reading Contest has selected Russian author

Fyodor Dostoevsky’s 1866 novel “Crime and Punishment” for its new edition, which will be held on June 25.

The Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research is the organizer of the contest, which will be held online, and applicants have been called on to register through bookre.ir.

Over five Persian translations of “Crime and Punishment” by Mehri Ahi, Parviz Shahdi, Asghar Rastegar, Ahad Aliqolian, Hamidreza Atashbarab and Ahmad Banpur have so far been published in Iran.

The novel was first published in the literary journal The Russian Messenger in twelve

monthly installments during 1866.

It was later published in a single volume. It is the second of Dostoevsky’s full-length novels following his return from ten years of exile in Siberia.

“Crime and Punishment” is considered the first great novel of his “mature” period of writing. The novel is often cited as one of the supreme achievements in literature.

The novel focuses on the mental anguish and moral dilemmas of Rodion Raskolnikov, an impoverished ex-student in Saint Petersburg who formulates a plan to kill an unscrupulous pawnbroker for her money.

Before the killing, Raskolnikov believes that with the money he could liberate himself from poverty and go on to perform great deeds. However, once the deed is done he finds himself racked with confusion, paranoia and disgust for his actions. His justifications disintegrate completely as he struggles with guilt and horror and confronts the real-world consequences of his act.

French writer Victor Hugo’s celebrated novel “Les Misérables” was selected for the previous edition of the Hasht Behesht Book Reading Contest, which was in September 2020.

Iranian publisher offers “The Reason I Jump”

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Tehran-based publisher Cheshmeh has recently published a Persian translation of Japanese author Naoki Higashida’s biography “The Reason I Jump: One Boy’s Voice from the Silence of Autism”.

Higashida was only thirteen when he wrote “The Reason I Jump”, a revelatory account of autism from the inside by a nonverbal Japanese child, which became an international success.

Reyhaneh Zahiri is the translator of the book, whose English translation by K.A. Yoshida and David Mitchell was published by Random House in 2013.

It is one of a-kind memoir that demonstrates how an autistic mind thinks, feels, perceives and responds in ways that few of us can imagine.

Parents and family members who never thought they could get inside the head of their autistic loved one, at last, have a way to break through to the curious, subtle and complex life within.

Using an alphabet grid to painstakingly construct words,



Front cover of a Persian translation of Japanese author Naoki Higashida’s biography “The Reason I Jump: One Boy’s Voice from the Silence of Autism”.

sentences and thoughts that he is unable to speak out loud, Naoki answers even the most delicate questions that people want to know.

Questions such as: “Why do people with autism talk so loudly and weirdly?” “Why do you line up your toy cars and blocks?” “Why don’t you make eye contact when you’re talking?” and “What’s the reason you jump?”

Naoki’s answer: “When I’m jumping, it’s as if my feelings are going upward to the sky.”

With disarming honesty and a generous heart, Naoki shares his unique point of view on not only autism but life itself.

His insights — into the mystery of words, the wonders of laughter and the elusiveness of memory — are so startling, so strange, and so powerful that you will never look at the world the same way again.

Higashida was born in 1992 and diagnosed with autism when he was five. Reviews have been mixed, both celebrating the accomplishment of a mentally and emotionally challenged young author and expressing discomfort with the involvement of his communications facilitator (his mother) and English language translators, Yoshida and her husband Mitchell.

New game highlighting Gen. Soleimani’s role in battle for breaking ISIS siege of Amerli

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Center for Digital Products and Publications — MATNA is making a new computer game titled “Commander of the Resistance: Amerli Battle”.

The game, which is scheduled to be released in the summer, will highlight the key role Iran’s Quds Force chief, Qassem Soleimani, played in the battle for breaking the 89-day siege of the northern Iraqi town of Amerli by the ISIS terrorists, the director of the Basij Cyberspace Organization announced on Monday.

“One of our main strategies at the Islamic Revolution Production and Publication Center

is to enter the phase of creating native digital content,” Moslem Moein said in a press release.

A poster for “Commander of the Resistance: Amerli Battle” was also published on Monday. Amerli, an Iraqi town of Shia Turkmen located in the Tooz District of Saladin Governorate, was besieged by the ISIS terrorists from June 2014, cutting off access to food, electricity and water.

On August 31, the Quds Force, the overseas arm of the IRGC under the command of Soleimani, joined the Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and the Popular Mobilization Units — Hashd al-Shaabi, breaking the siege, which was described by some top analysts as Iraq’s

biggest victory against ISIS.

The MATNA has previously made “General in the Shadows”, a computer game depicting the commanding leadership of General Soleimani in the battle for breaking the siege of Amerli by the ISIS terrorists.

After his martyrdom, General Soleimani has become the subject of several computer games and films, as well as a number of theatrical and festival programs.

Previously in January the Raymon Media Company, an Iranian center for innovation and advancement of computer games, released “Shadow of Revenge”, a mobile game



A poster for “Commander of the Resistance: Amerli Battle”.

designed on the air and drone battles with the commanding leadership of the commander.

General Soleimani was assassinated during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.