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Unity is the secret behind the Resistance's victories: Amir-Abdollahian

TEHRAN - Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, has reflected on the secret behind the recent victory of the Palestinian resistance against Israel.

Amir-Abdollahian said the 2006 victory of the Lebanese resistance movement against Israel raised faith in the resistance and sent a message that Israel understands only the language of power.

"The flight of the Zionist entity from southern Lebanon raised faith in the resistance among the Lebanese, and that through

resistance and steadfastness victory could be achieved. This victory sent an important message that the Zionist enemy only understands the language of force and resistance," he told the Lebanese Al-Ahed News.

The Iranian diplomat added, "This victory and other victories achieved by the resistance, especially the victory of July 2006, were achieved in light of the unity of the Lebanese people and the golden equation in Lebanon - the army, the people, and the resistance."

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Tehran, Moscow confer on joint investment in agricultural sector

TEHRAN - Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi met with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Patrushev in Moscow on Thursday to discuss potential areas for expanding cooperation in agricultural sectors, IRNA reported.

In the meeting, which was attended by Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali as well as some deputies from the two countries' agriculture ministries, the two sides expressed readiness for joint

investment in various agricultural fields.

Speaking in the event, Khavazi called on the Russian government for facilitating the negotiations between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) for reaching a free trade agreement.

The official also expressed Iranian private sector's willingness for establishing joint ventures with Russian counterparts.

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Antoin Sevruguin's photos of Iran on view at Alexander Solzhenitsyn House

TEHRAN - Photos of social life during the 19th century by the Armenian-Georgian photographer Antoin Sevruguin are on display in an exhibition that opened Wednesday at the Alexander Solzhenitsyn House of Russia Abroad in Moscow.

The exhibition has been organized in collaboration with the Iranian Culture

Center in Moscow, the center announced.

Sevruguin was born into a mixed Armenian-Georgian family in the Russian Embassy in Tehran.

In the late nineteenth century, Sevruguin managed and operated one of the most successful commercial photography studios in Tehran. *Continued on page 8*

Daunting task ahead of Iran in 2022 World Cup qualifiers

BY FARROKH HESABI

TEHRAN - Iran national football team face a daunting task in the second round of qualifying for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar due to the lost points in the previous matches and the withdrawal of North Korea as well.

The 'Persian Leopards' have started their training camp under head coach Dragan Skocic in the southern island, Kish, in the Persian Gulf. They need four wins out of their four upcoming matches to chase the automatic qualifying for the next round.

The withdrawal of Korea DPR from the preliminary round made FIFA decide to ensure the fairness of the competition for the remaining teams.

It worsened the already difficult situation for the Iranian national team in Group C as FIFA announced that the results of the matches between the second-placed teams and the fifth-placed teams in groups A to G would not be counted to have a balanced final comparison between all group runners-up.

Based on this, Iran's emphatic 14-0 win against Cambodia in the first leg of the competitions will be nullified. If Iran stand the second team in the group, then their 14 goals scored against Cambodia will be ineffective in counting the points and goal difference of the second teams of all groups.

It's the second blow to the national team's journey to Qatar 2022 prestigious tournament as Iran had already lost the hosting right of their matches against Hong Kong, Iraq, and Bahrain. The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) decided to centralize all the preliminary group round Asian qualifiers matches after a covid-hit year and awarded hosting rights of Group C matches to Bahrain.

Back-to-back defeats to Bahrain and Iraq have put Iran's progress in jeopardy. Skocic's side are currently third in the group with six points and a game in hand - five points behind Iraq, who top the group, and three behind second-placed Bahrain, who enjoy an unfair advantage of hosting.

Croatian coach Dragan Skocic has the unenviable task of turning around Persian Leopards' fortunes in Bahrain as his side must win "pretty much all" of their remaining matches to have any chance of catching the top of the table.

Eight group winners and four best runners-up are to advance from this phase of 39 teams after Korea DPR withdrew from the competition.

Razi Cov Pars enters second clinical trial phase

TEHRAN - The second Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine, named Razi Cov Pars, started the second phase of the human trial on Friday by being administrated to 500 people.

Developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, the vaccine is protein-based, which employs recombinant versions of the spike protein and tutors the immune system against the virus by producing antibodies, started the first clinical trial on February 27.

The vaccine is developed in 3 doses, the first two doses are injectable and the third dose is intranasal. The second dose of the vaccine will be injected into the volunteers 21 days later and the third dose will be inhaled 51 days later.

The first phase of the vaccine was performed on 133 people in 4 groups with doses of 5, 10, 20 and one control group with the aim of measuring immunogenicity and selecting the effective

dose, Saeed Kalantari, the main researcher of the vaccine's clinical trial said.

"Fortunately, any serious side effects have been reported after the injection," he stated, adding, mild complications were seen only in some vaccine recipients ranged from headache, mild fever, and injection site pain which is normal and common in every vaccine.

In the second phase, people with controlled diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure were included in the study and we also saw an increase in the age group from 55 to 70 years, he explained.

He went on to say that the third phase of the study will begin in early or mid-August, with at least 20,000 people. The mass production will start with a capacity of 1.5 million doses per month, which will be launched at the same time as the third phase.

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Assad wins the presidential election with 95% of vote

Syrian President Bashar Assad won a fourth term in office with 95.1% of the votes in the presidential election held in liberated parts of Syria.

Syrian government says the election on Wednesday shows Syria is functioning normally despite the decade-old conflict, which has killed hundreds of thousands of people and driven 11 million people - about half the population - from their homes.

Head of parliament Hammouda Sabbagh announced the results at a news conference on Thursday, saying voter turnout was around 78%, with more than 14 million Syrians taking part.

Iran and Russia, as well as Belarus, sent delegations to monitor the election, while the foreign ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Britain and the United States said in a statement criticizing Assad ahead of the

election that the vote would not be free or fair.

Addressing his critics, Assad had said Syrians made their feelings clear by coming out in large numbers. "The value of your opinions is zero," he said.

"Thank you to all Syrians for their high sense of nationalism and their notable participation. ... For the future of Syria's children and its youth, let's start from tomorrow our campaign of work to build hope and build Syria," Assad wrote on his campaign's Facebook page.

Assad's biggest challenge, now that he has regained control of around 70% of the country, will be an economy in decline.

Rallies with thousands of people waving Syrian flags and holding pictures of Assad while singing and dancing took place all day Thursday in celebration of the election.

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Imagine what Gaza could become if the siege were lifted...

BY MARTIN LOVE

Words are not sufficient to describe the horrors of what "Israel" (and the U.S. as an enabler) have done in the last two months around al-Aqsa, Sheikh Jarrah and across Palestine, and then Gaza for almost two weeks.

The price paid for the shift in worldwide perceptions about what the "Israel" actually is (a rabid Apartheid state!) has been horrendous for Gaza and across Palestine. Gazans celebrated a possible pyrrhic victory of sorts

because not only were the Zionists forced to call a ceasefire but there have been profound changes in public perceptions even in the U.S. about how insidious and out of control Zionism has become and long been.

But it has not solved the problem because as soon as a ceasefire went into effect Netanyahu had managed to stay in power with the cancellation of a possible new government, avoided the resumption of his trial on corruption charges and worse has continued doing the very things

that prompted a rain of bottle rockets over "Israel" with a resumption of military and police raids on al-Aqsa, hundreds of arrests including murders and further efforts to ethnically cleanse Sheikh Jarrah of Palestinians with other Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem lined up for the same treatment eventually. And Biden and Blinken did almost nothing about the carnage: they let it continue for a while until the demanded ceasefire went into effect.

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Satellites in the row in Iran to be sent into space

TEHRAN - Iran is designing a number of satellites, some of which are in the row to be launched into space, IRNA reported on Friday.

Pars Plus satellite with an imaging resolution of five meters, Pars 2 with a five-meter resolution multispectral imaging system, and Rasam satellite with four meters resolution multispectral imaging system are among the satellites that are being designed.

The telecommunication Nahid 1 satellite, Zol-janah, Nahid 2, Simorgh, Remote Sensing Tollood, Pars 1, and Zafar 2 are being designed and produced

to put satellites at LEO (Low Earth Orbit).

Iran's strategic purpose for developing the space industry is to expedite space activities including the aerospace industry, tapping the country's scientific capacities, commercialization of space and space service.

When rockets launch satellites, they put them into orbit in space. There, gravity keeps the satellite on its required orbit - in the same way that gravity keeps the Moon in orbit around Earth.

LEO is generally defined as an orbit below an altitude of approximately 2,000 kilometers

(1,200 mi). Given the rapid orbital decay of objects below approximately 200 kilometers (120 mi), the commonly accepted definition for LEO is between 160 kilometers (99 mi) (with a period of about 88 minutes) and 2,000 kilometers (1,200 mi) (with a period of about 127 minutes) above the Earth's surface. Because it's so close to Earth, satellites must travel very fast so gravity won't pull them back into the atmosphere. Satellites in LEO speed along at 17,000 miles per hour (27,359 kilometers per hour)! They can circle Earth in about 90 minutes.

TENDER INVITATION No: 00-1 MS

IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO), would like to invite eligible suppliers for Procuring 1 unit Komatsu loader model WA470-5 on the basis of tender document (instruction and contract template). Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 23th June 2021, to below mentioned address.

Address: PO Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran; Postal code: 3818998116

Name of office: Secretariat of the Transaction Committee, Iranian Aluminum Company.

Tel: +98 86 32162014 +98 86 32162181

Attention: Mr. Omidi - Mr. Nabuini;

Mrs. Mohammadi (Spare part & Machinery department) Tel: +98 8632162402

For more information, please visit our website <http://www.iralco.ir/> then click tender.

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



World heading towards hybrid warfare: Pakistani expert

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - A Pakistani researcher in Arms Control & Disarmament Centre (ACDC) believes that the world is heading towards hybrid warfare, which will push West Asian countries to design their cyber-security policies.

"I believe that the world is experiencing the rise of hybrid warfare where the classical warfare model is complemented by non-kinetic tactics," Aamna Rafiq tells the Tehran Times.

"In the contemporary strategic landscape, states and non-state actors prefer synergized and tailored use of their military, economic, political, civilian, and informational power to target the specific vulnerabilities of their adversaries."

Today, cyber wars are no longer hypothetical. Every event that was imagined in stories about cyberwar has now actually occurred.

Cyberwar has left the pages of overblown science fiction open and the tabletops of Pentagon war games have become a reality.

More than ever before, it's becoming clear that the threat of hacking goes beyond nuisance vandalism, criminal profiteering, and even espionage to include the sort of physical-world disruption that was once possible to accomplish only with military attacks and terrorist sabotage.

"Cyberwarfare, espionage, disinformation, psychological warfare, religious warfare, separatist movements, regime change, resource warfare, lawfare, trade wars, terrorism, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions are few examples of these non-kinetic tactics," Rafiq argues.

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Violence will never end as long as Israeli atrocities are condoned: Iranian diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A high-ranking Iranian diplomat says West Asia will never see an end to the current vicious cycle of violence as long as the Israeli regime is allowed to carry on with its atrocities with impunity. Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh, Iran's permanent ambassador to the UN office in Geneva, made the remarks on Thursday during a special United Nations Human Rights Council session. The gathering had been formed to address "the grave human rights situation" in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.



The regional turmoil would bubble up, while the "criminals" keep avoiding accountability because of this impunity and the occupation of Palestine sustains as a result of "compromise or silence," Hamaneh said, according to Press TV. Instead, the diplomat suggested, administering justice and pressing the Israeli regime to answer for its crimes against the Palestinians should turn into an urgent demand of the international community. Professor Mahmood Monshipouri, who teaches Middle Eastern Politics at San Francisco State University and UC-Berkeley, says, "The Biden administration will squander a great opportunity should it choose to condone or abet the Israeli confiscation of Palestinian territories." Monshipouri warns, "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." "Israel's backers should be accountable too" Hamaneh said the Israeli regime's supporters, who try to justify its savagery under the pretext that it should be able to "defend itself", must also be held to account for emboldening Tel Aviv and obstructing justice. He reiterated the Islamic Republic's position that "the only sustainable" way out of the crisis is holding a referendum among all Palestine's residents including those Palestinians who have been displaced because of occupation and aggression.

Such a vote would enable Palestinians to exercise "their right to self-determination," he pointed out. The session followed after the forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, violence against Palestinian worshippers and protesters across the occupied West Bank, including the holy city of al-Quds, that killed scores of Palestinians. The regime then ramped up its attacks against the Tel Aviv-blockaded Gaza Strip that had risen up in protest against the escalation, killing more than 250 others there too. More than 60 children were among those killed as a result of the Israeli bombardment of the coastal city. UN says Israel's Gaza strikes may constitute 'war crimes' United Nations human rights chief Michelle Bachelet has said Israel's recent attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip may constitute "war crimes" if they are shown to be disproportionate. Bachelet's comments on Thursday came as she opened a special session of the UN Human Rights Council, called at the request of Pakistan — on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation — and Palestine. According to al Jazeera, the UN official said she had seen no evidence that civilian buildings in Gaza hit by Israeli fighter jets were being used for military purposes. "If found disproportionate, such attacks might constitute war crimes," Bachelet told the 47-member Geneva forum. She also urged Hamas, which runs Gaza, to refrain from firing rockets indiscriminately on Israeli territory.

Leader: Elections is competition to serve people

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Thursday supported the legal procedure followed by the Guardian Council in screening the presidential hopefuls, noting "the scene of elections is a place for competition to serve the people." Speaking with members of the Parliament via a videoconference, the Leader stated that the people would participate in the elections in large numbers because competent and highly capable managers have entered the election race to resolve the people's economic problems. He also advised the candidates to avoid imitating the presidential debates in the U.S. and Europe and be committed to Islamic ethics. Thanking all those who registered to run for president, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said, "The honorable Guardian Council did what it deemed necessary according to its responsibility."

Of course, the Leader said, not confirming a candidate "does not mean that a person is incompetent." He also thanked those candidates who respected the decisions of the honorable Guardian Council despite the fact that their competence was not confirmed. "I have to thank those whose qualification was not approved and was not ascertained by the council and who reacted nobly. Some of them even encouraged people to participate in the election," Ayatollah Khamenei remarked. 'Elections take one day, effects last for several years' Inviting the people to participate in the elections in large numbers, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Dear people of Iran, the elections will take one day, but its effects will last for several years. You should participate in the elections. You should know that elections belong to you. You should ask God to guide you to that which is correct and true and to the most qualified candidate." The Leader of the Islamic Revolution added those who encourage the people to ignore the ballot boxes are not concerned about the destiny of the people. On the enemies' policy against the elections in Iran, he stated, "Obviously, the enemies are opposed to our elections. Since the first day and for many years now, they have been opposed to them. Up until today, they have always focused on discouraging the people from participating in the elections by saying that the elections may be rigged and that there may be cheating. They propagandize against the people's participation in elections. Later, when the people do participate and there is an enthusiastic turnout in the elections, they say that the elections have obviously been 'engineered' and that it was clear beforehand who would be the winner. This scenario has always existed. After a person is announced as the winner of the elections — either the one whom they guessed or someone else — they say, 'what



difference does it make? The president has no authority.' This has been the enemy's policy in their propaganda over the course of all these years, and they are pursuing the same policy today." The Leader said he did not believe that people were concerned about the names of candidates. "Rather, the people are looking for an individual who has high managerial capabilities and firm will and performance to solve the country's issues. And it doesn't matter to people what title that person holds or which party he hails from. Of course, that may be important to the political factions, but not to the general populace," Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out. The Leader thanked all the individuals who nominated to run. "Many of these people undoubtedly entered the scene because they felt a responsibility [before the people]." The Leader said virtual space and foreign policy were not the immediate concerns of the people. "Presently, the main and the urgent issue of the country is the economy, and the candidates should present their plans to solve the economic issues and convince them that they can resolve those problems." Leader asks presidential rivals to observe Islamic ethics At the end of his statements, Ayatollah Khamenei offered words of advice to presidential candidates, asking them to observe Islamic ethics and to avoid doing something that would cause Iran's elections to resemble American elections. He stated, "My first advice to presidential candidates is that you should not turn the elections into a battle for power. You should not look at typical American elections and the elections in some European countries as they have been a source of disgrace for them. The field of elections is a place for competition to serve the people."

Zakani: Americans will beg Iran if I am elected president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Speaking in an online show on presidential elections on Friday morning, Alireza Zakani elaborated on his plans, particularly those regarding the nuclear negotiations already underway in Vienna, Austria. Stating that Iran is facing issues such as nuclear industry, regional influence, missile program, and human rights, Zakani said that the Western countries are seeking to discredit Iran. "Westerners have a material understanding, and among these issues, the nuclear ability has the capacity to be traded. The profit of this transaction can be minimal or maximum."

He said Iran is not sanctionable but "this is the strategic tool of the United States" to sanction Iran and "it will never give up." Zakani says the Islamic Republic has taken action on the JCPOA and now it is the Europeans' turn. "The United States can also return to the deal by lifting all sanctions, after Iran's verification. The current administration is seeking a verbal commitment," the presidential candidate noted. He says the American pressure on the Iranian people was aimed to explode the society. However, he said, "If I become president, the Americans will beg and be forced to lift

all sanctions." Zakani emphasized that all U.S. policies in dealing with Iran have failed. "The Strategic Action law passed by the parliament must be implemented and the result is the desperation of the United States and Europe. I see the atmosphere of diplomacy as an opportunity, and with the right logic they should be isolated," the parliamentarian stated. On the JCPOA, the candidate said that the negotiations were not the administration's decision. He added, "The Supreme National Security Council decides on the issue of negotiations."

Raeisi says situation can change by participation in election

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The cleric presidential candidate Ebrahim Raeisi visited the graves of martyrs of Sacred Defense on Friday morning during which he listened to people and their problems. Raeisi said if people participate in the elections, God willing, the situation will change and improve. He added that today people are upset and worried about problems, and some are frustrated, and some feel that nothing

can be done. However, he said problems can be resolved and his government can take important decisions if he is elected president. "We know and want and can do something in this direction. This path is seemingly difficult and we have been told a lot that the path is not easy, but we think that with the presence of these good and cheerful young people, the peak will be conquered and the problems will be decreased."

7 candidates in 7 days

CANDIDATE PROFILE



Alireza Zakani

Age	56	Place Of Birth	Tehran
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Education

PhD in nuclear medicine

Career

- Member of parliament (three terms)
- Head of the Parliament's Research Center

Social Media Accounts

arzakani	arzakani
arzakani4	zakani.ir

Supporters

Conservative factions

Political position on JCPOA

Zakani headed the special committee to oversee the JCPOA in the parliament. He says he has meticulously read the 2015 nuclear agreement and knows extensively about it. He wrote a letter to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif asking him to summon IAEA chief Yukiya Amano to the Iranian parliament to explain about the nuclear deal. He strongly opposes the deal, saying it could have been much better. Zakani thinks Iran has given too many concessions to the West, including the U.S., thus the Islamic Republic has not benefitted from the deal. He recently stated that the JCPOA was not a decision made solely by Zarif. The deal was the decision of the Islamic Republic's politicians in general.

Political position on interaction with neighbors and the West

Zakani believes if it had not been for Gen. Qassem Soleimani, Baghdad and Damascus would have fallen to terrorists.

Candidates' views on economic reform



Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi

Raeisi says liquidity should be directed towards the production sector. He believes that Iran is suffering from economic mismanagement. The cleric presidential candidate says that a cooperative economic team will lead to a stable economy. Raeisi believes that inflation can be lowered to single rate, but it entails serious work.



Saeed Jalili

Jalili has written extensive and detailed plans to revive the Iranian economy. He has stated that Iran could also export chicken and hen, along with oil and petrochemicals. Jalili has not elaborated on his plans. However, he says he will give details of his economic plans day by day. Jalili argues if the government stops organizing conferences for "shows" and does its job, the economy can be fixed.



Mohsen Rezaei

He has said that he will give 40 million Iranians 4,500,000 million rials (nearly \$107, at the official rate of 42,000 rials) cash subsidy. Rezaei says that he will quickly determine a rate for foreign the currencies. Rezaei also believes in a single-rate foreign currency.



Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh

Mehr Alizadeh has stated that he is seeking to establish "social economy" in the country. He says that his government would stop inflation rate in three to four months. He believes that multi-rate foreign currency is the virus to the national economy. He recently said that competitive economy is on his agenda as he believes the government should not have control over more than 25% of the economy. He says he has been working on controlling inflation growth rate for 2 years.



Alireza Zakani

Zakani says he will counter economic corruption. He also believes in single foreign currency rate. He says that he will take the money from "special ones" and distribute it among the people with less incomes. Zakani says he has plans to make banks to create jobs, as he believes the plan will solve the unemployment issue. He also says he plans to invest in petrochemicals as an alternative for crude oil.



Abdolnasser Hemmati

Hemmati has not laid out any detailed plans yet. Hemmati, who holds PhD in economy, has said that he will fix the stock market, control inflation rate and fix the economy. He has not presented a solution yet.



Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi

Qazizade Hashemi has entered the presidential race with huge promises. He has said he will fix the stock market in three days, as it only needs a presidential order in his view. He has also promised the youth to give them an allowance of 5 billion rials (nearly \$120,000 at the official rate of 42,000 Rials). He has called his government, "Government of Greetings," stating that no Iranian will remain homeless in the Government of Greetings.

SPORTS

Brighton's Jahanbakhsh to decide on his future

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Brighton & Hove Albion winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh says that he will make the best decision for his future.



He signed from AZ Alkmaar in 2018 for a then club-record fee of £17m but has since endured a frustrating time in the Premier League on the south coast.

Now, Jahanbakhsh says he will make the best decision on his future after returning to England.

He is training with Iran national football team for the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers in Kish Island at the moment.

"As you know, I have two more years on my contract with Brighton and I've always been very cautious with the matter. I will return to Brighton after the holidays and maybe something will happen," Jahanbakhsh said.

"I don't exactly know what happens next season but I will make a decision which can be beneficial for me," he added.

The 28-year-old player has been linked with Eredivisie teams.

Iran fall short against Japan in 2021 VNL

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran national volleyball team had a disappointing start to the 2021 Volleyball Nations league (VNL), suffering a 3-0 loss to Japan on Friday.

The Iranian team, who missed captain Saied Marouf ahead of the match due to illness, were defeated against Japan in straight sets (25-19, 25-22, 26-24) in Rimini, Italy.

Vladimir Alekno's men left Iran without any warm-up matches and lack of coordination was one of the reasons they fell short against the Japanese team.

Ishikawa Yuki led the way for Japan in scoring with 18 points and Amir Ghafour scored 15 points for Iran.

Iran will meet Russia on Saturday in their second match in the 2021 VNL.

A total of 32 of the world's top national teams have joined the VNL 2021 bubble in Rimini, Italy to showcase electrifying volleyball action for millions of fans worldwide.

The 16-team tournament began with a round-robin phase where each side will play 15 games.

The third edition of the competition is being held from May 28 to June 27 in Rimini, Italy.

Iran out of FIBA 3x3 Olympic Qualifying

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran basketball team failed to book their place at the knock-out round of FIBA 3x3 Olympic Qualifying Tournament.

On Friday, the Iranian women team lost to powerhouses Ukraine 17-7 in Pool B and then suffered another 22-2 defeat against Australia.

Iran had previously lost to Japan (22-4) and Thailand (22-21) A total of 20 teams are vying for just three spots in the competition in Graz, Austria.

The 3x3 basketball will make its Olympic debut in Tokyo. The last opportunity to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 will take place at the FIBA 3x3 Universality Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Debrecen in Hungary from June 4 to 6.

That will finally determine the full extent of the 16 teams - eight men's, eight women's - that will make Olympic history from July 24 to 28, and offer one berth for each gender.

Iranians win two silvers at IBSA Judo Grand Prix

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Mohammadezra Kheirollahzadeh and Vahid Nouri claimed two silver medals at the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) Judo Grand Prix in Azerbaijan capital Baku on Wednesday.

World champion Kheirollahzadeh lost to Uzbekistan's Shirin Sharipov in the men's over 100kg.

Nouri also lost to Ukraine's Rio 2016 silver medalist and world champion Oleksandr Nazarenko in the men's up to 91kg final.

The competition has brought around 200 judokas from around the world together.

Iran remain unchanged in FIFA ranking

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team remained unchanged in the in the latest FIFA Men's World Ranking.

The 'Persian Leopards' are 31st in the world and second in Asia behind Japan.

With only one match played since the last edition was published — a Ukraine-Bahrain friendly that ended all square (1-1) — the Top 50 remains unchanged, with Belgium leading the way from France and Brazil.

Bahrain's one-place gain (98, +1) is the only movement among the 210 national teams that make up the ranking. Ukraine remain 24th but, having dropped points, nearest pursuers Serbia have closed the gap on them.

However, while things are presently calm in the standings, that is all expected to change in the coming weeks, when a host of international competitions take place around the globe.

Among them are FIFA World Cup qualifiers in Asia, as well as qualifiers for the FIFA Arab Cup 2021™ involving teams from Africa and Asia in mid-June. FIFA.com wrote.

The next FIFA Men's World Ranking will be published on 12 August 2021.

Crabs in a bucket

The falling Netanyahu takes down a cantankerous political class

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — After waging a deadly war on the Gaza Strip in hope of securing another stint as a prime minister in Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu is now grappling with a wave of discontent both at home and abroad.

Netanyahu did everything in his power to cling to power. He authorized an 11-day air raid campaign against Gaza in the midst of internal deliberations on the formation of an Israeli government. He pinned too much hope on the upshot of the war on Gaza, believing that the war will rally all major political parties behind him and make them more receptive to another premiership of his.

This didn't happen, even as Netanyahu's rival, Yair Lapid, failed to put together a government by the 28-day mandate set by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. Lapid is now talking to another rival of Netanyahu, Naftali Bennett, to form a government and spare Israel another inconclusive election in two years.

Israeli media said that a deal between Lapid and Bennet was ready to be signed and the deal gave the latter "everything he asked for." However, Bennet doesn't seem to be willing to ink the deal, even though he met with Lapid for the first time since Bennett announced he was pulling out of negotiations with other members of the anti-Netanyahu bloc following an outbreak of ethno-religious violence and the start of the Gaza war on May 10.

"There is a sense that Bennett doesn't want to sign, that he's waiting to see what happens with the other side. They set a deadline to form a government by Monday, and if they can't — they will take immediate action to dissolve the Knesset," a high-ranking Likud official told Israel Hayom on Friday amid



speculations that Bennet would be the next prime minister of Israel.

Over the past two years, Israeli politicians set an example of how crab mentality works by throwing a monkey wrench into each other's efforts to form a government. They neither succeeded in forming government nor let others do it.

Netanyahu's blunders and provocative measures against the Palestinians even made the situation worse. They pitted other politicians against him while exposing Israel to a rarely seen international backlash in the wake of the Gaza war. Besides, Netanyahu even destroyed the much-vaunted co-existence between Arabs and Jews inside Israel.

"The prime minister empowered and emboldened Itamar Ben-Gvir and his racist, thuggish followers, who were key in triggering the inter-communal violence,"

wrote Jonathan Rynhold, a professor in the Department of Political Studies at Bar-Ilan University, in an article for The Times of Israel. According to Rynhold, Netanyahu bears responsibility for the Jewish-Arab meltdown in Israel because he failed to distinguish between his own personal interests and the interests of Israel.

Since his indictment on charges of bribery and corruption, Netanyahu acts as if his tenancy in the prime minister's residence on Balfour Street is so critical to the future of Israel that it can justify almost anything, including an unashamed and illegal attempt to appoint a 'loyal' minister of justice, the Israeli professor said.

Aside from internal mayhem, Netanyahu is facing a rare international consensus against Israel. The latest rebuke came from the UN Human Rights Council, which decided to launch an open-ended probe of

Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

On Thursday, a draft resolution calling for an investigation of Israeli crimes against Gaza was passed by 24 to 9 votes, with 14 abstentions.

The resolution, submitted by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, decided to establish an "ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry, to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council, to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021, and all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity."

On Thursday, Michelle Bachelet, the UN rights chief, said Israeli forces may have committed war crimes during the 11-day war. Bachelet also called on Israel to allow an independent probe of military actions in the latest spasm of deadly violence, according to The Associated Press.

"Air strikes in such densely populated areas resulted in a high level of civilian fatalities and injuries, as well as the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure," Bachelet said.

"Such attacks may constitute war crimes," she added.

As usual, Netanyahu accused the UN Human Rights Council of being obsessed with Israel. "Today's shameful decision is yet another example of the UN Human Rights Council's blatant anti-Israel obsession," he said on Twitter.

Iran warns U.S., UK against appeasing Israel on JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran has responded to comments by the American and British top diplomats on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal during their visits to Israel, warning them against appeasing Israel.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, said in a tweet that the foreign ministers of the U.S. and the UK are trying to appease the sworn enemy of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"To appease the sworn enemy of JCPOA, UK/US FMs spin goals of Vienna Talks. Disappointing! The brutal Israeli regime you try to placate has done its utmost to torpedo the deal. Instead of eroding your credibility, focus on reviving the original deal—the ONLY solution on the table," Khatibzadeh said on Twitter.

The spokesman was responding to remarks by UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken who both had called for a "stronger" deal with Iran during separate visits to Israel.

During his visit to Israel, which came after the recent flare-up between the Gaza Strip and Israel, Blinken said the U.S. is seeking a "longer and stronger" deal with Iran.

In an interview with Israel's Channel 12, Blinken said, "if Iran returns to compliance with the deal, we would do the same.

We would also seek to make it, as we say, longer and stronger. And we'd also work hard to engage the other issues where Iran is a very dangerous and problematic actor for us and for Israel — destabilizing activities in the region, proliferation of weapons, support for terrorist groups, et cetera. All of those things."

Raab also echoed the same thing during his visit to



Israel. After a meeting with his Israeli counterpart Gabi Ashkenazi, Raab said the UK is committed to achieving a "stronger" deal with Iran.

"Reiterated the United Kingdom commitment to a two-state solution, the importance of a stronger nuclear deal with Iran & our commitment to Israel's security in my meeting with @Gabi_Ashkenazi today. Vital we make progress towards a more positive future for Israelis and Palestinians," Raab said on Twitter.

The remarks came as the fifth round of nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA were resumed on Tuesday. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi visited the Austrian capital for nuclear talks that are aimed to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

"Today, the fifth round of our negotiations with the Joint Commission of the JCPOA, which consists of Iran and the

P4+1 countries, began, and we had the first meeting of the Joint Commission. Work will continue by working groups in both nuclear area and sanctions lifting, and a third working group on how to implement the agreements will also continue," Araghchi told state media Tuesday after a meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, which marked the beginning of the fifth round of the nuclear talks.

He added, "All parties are still serious and have taken these talks seriously, many delegations are hoping that this round can be the last round of talks and we will reach a conclusion. You can have such hope, but you have to be a little bit cautious. The issues that remain to be finalized and decided are still important issues, although their number has decreased and we have made great strides in writing the text in previous periods. We can move forward further, but the few issues that remain are still key issues that need to be decided."

Araghchi echoed the same assessment in an interview with Press TV. He told the English-language broadcaster that he still cannot ascertain that a conclusion was possibly within reach despite progress made on some key differences over reviving the landmark deal.

"In the last round, we were able to make some meaningful progress in our negotiations but still there are some key issues to be resolved," Araghchi said.

"I cannot say that we are able to conclude our job in this round of negotiations but this is possible; it depends on how much we are able to make progress on key issues and how much the other parties are prepared to make their own difficult decisions," the Iranian deputy foreign minister underlined. "I am not confident that it would be possible to conclude the negotiations but there is a possibility."

Unity is the secret behind the Resistance's victories: Amir-Abdollahian

→1 This equation is an example of the unity that brought good results for Lebanon. These achievements are possible in any country that has such unity."

Amir-Abdollahian added, "The anniversary of the victory of the Islamic resistance and the expulsion of the Zionist enemy from southern Lebanon coincided this year with the great victory of the resistance in the 12-day war in Palestine. Today, we see the result of the unity of all the factions, groups, and Palestinian people in this great victory. At the same time, we see [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and the entity's officials, who dispatched mediators on the first day in order to end the operations, remaining silent because of this great defeat and the humiliation they suffered."

"This victory was achieved in light of martyrdom, steadfastness, resistance, and unity among the Palestinians, and this is a great lesson for all in the resistance in Lebanon

and Palestine. They achieved these victories through unity and solidarity," the veteran diplomat pointed out.

Amir-Abdollahian congratulated the secretary-general of Hezbollah on the victory of the resistance in Palestine.

"I congratulate my dear brother His Eminence Hujjat al-Islam Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. This dear brother is the loudest voice for the oppressed in the world. As a diplomat, I say that some believe that the voice of Sayyed is heard only in Lebanon or the West Asia region. But according to the admission of His Eminence's enemies, the voice of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah is heard by the world and is the voice of defending the oppressed. The resistance played a role in achieving security, and it achieved and is achieving security for the Lebanese people," the Iranian diplomats said.

He continued, "It also played a very important role in achieving security for the re-

gion. When we talk about eliminating Daesh in Syria, we must remember what Hillary Clinton said in her memoir. She said, 'we had reached the final point to achieve victory in Syria.' She pointed out the most important factors that led to their defeat and mentioned that Hezbollah contributed to changing the situation and harming the American project only by sending 1,000 fighters to Syria."

"Because of the interconnectedness between Lebanon and Syria and the impact that a destabilized Syria has on Lebanon, Hezbollah entered the scene on those days and gave martyrs to preserve the security of the region and Lebanon," Amir-Abdollahian noted.

Abdollahian concluded by saying that "the voice of the resistance today is the voice of unity, not the voice of division, and it is the voice of victory and the voice of development and security in Lebanon and the region. This voice comes out of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah,



who is the son of Lebanon, and everyone is proud of this great leader. We remember all the martyrs of the resistance and the martyrs who were killed defending the holy sites. We are proud of the Lebanese people from all sects, and we believe that Lebanon is for all Lebanese. The Islamic Republic is ready to provide any assistance for the development of Lebanon, and we regard the security of Lebanon as our security, and the development of Lebanon is our development."

Doha urges Tehran, Washington to return to JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani has expressed support for a revival of the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

In an interview with Al Arabiya, the Qatari foreign minister said his country urges both Iran and the U.S. to return to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Our relationship with the U.S. government is moving in the direction of a strategic partnership. We urge Washington and Tehran to return to the JCPOA and assist in holding the negotiations," he said, according to ISNA.

He added, "The member states of the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) must play a role in the regional security equation with Iran, and this will not be achieved except through regional talks."

In early May, the Qatari foreign minister said that in separate contacts with the U.S. and Iranian governments, Doha is urging both sides to take an effective approach to advancing negotiations to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

"We have strong and strategic relations with Washington and good relations with Iran, and we do not want tensions to increase, which will have a negative impact on Qatar and the region," Al-Thani said.

He said that there were ongoing contacts with the United States and Iran, and Qatar encourages them to participate in the negotiations effectively.

Qatar also called for a dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia, calling such a dialogue a constructive step toward regional stability.

"We welcome any dialogue or efforts and a positive spirit related to relations between Iran and the [Persian] Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, and we support such efforts and believe that dialogue is a constructive step toward the stability of the region," the chief Qatari diplomat said in an interview with Al Jazeera in early May.

Iran-Poland Joint Chamber of Commerce to be launched by late July

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Iran-Poland Joint Trade Committee Rahim Banamolaei has said the two countries' joint chamber of commerce is going to be officially launched by the fifth Iranian calendar month of Mordad (begins on July 23).

"The relevant documents will be signed in two or three weeks, and after the European holidays, we will open the Iran-Poland Joint Chamber of Commerce," Banamolaei told ILNA on Friday.

The official noted that the Polish side is interested in increasing trade relations with Iran, saying: "They are even ready to have a specialized exhibition in Iran at the end of the current year. We are waiting for the outcome of the Vienna talks and the Presidential elections to be determined."



"One of the things we have to prioritize is to establish a direct transport line to Warsaw," Banamolaei said, referring to the importance of transport between the two countries.

"We hope that the Transport Ministry in the new cabinet will reach an agreement in this regard so that we can plan for the expansion of economic and trade ties, because now the trade exchange between the two countries is not significant," he said.

The official further pointed to Poland's interest for co-operating with Iran in producing Halal products, saying: "Poland is interested in getting help from Iran in the halal trade so that they can export goods such as meat and poultry under a halal brand to European markets."

Poland, being located in the center of Europe, is a suitable point for Iranian traders to enter European markets.

More than five hundred years of historical relations between the two countries and good memories of Poles from Iran considering the country's support for Poland's independence, as well as sheltering of more than 120,000 Poles during World War II in Iran, have provided a good cultural and political context for the development of relations with this country.

NIOC begins development studies on newly discovered reservoir

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has started primary development studies on the country's newly discovered Namavaran oil reservoir, an official with the company announced.

"Research activities have started in Namavaran oil field so that we can propose a roadmap for the development of this field," Reza Dehqan told IRNA on Thursday.

The 53-billion oil Namavaran reservoir was discovered back in 2019.

According to Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, Namavaran is the second biggest oil reserve discovery in the history of Iran's oil industry.

The reservoir covers 2400 square kilometers of land and is placed nearly 3.1 kilometers beneath the ground surface and the thickness of the oil layers is estimated to be about 80 meters, the official explained.



The area which this oil reservoir covers includes several already discovered oil fields such as Darkhovin, Jofair, Sepehr, Mansouri, Sousangerd and Ab-Teimour, with a total in-place reserve of nearly 31 billion barrels, so the new discovery, in fact, adds nearly 22 billion barrels to the country's in-place oil reserves, he elaborated.

Considering a recovery factor of 10 percent, Namavaran reservoir will currently add 2.2 billion barrels of oil to the country's recoverable reserves.

"The field's exploration began with the most advanced exploration techniques in the Iranian calendar year of 1395 (started in March 2016) with drilling three assessment wells, which resulted in discovering the huge oil reservoir," Zanganeh said in November 2019.

Speaking in a ceremony for unveiling the details of the reservoir, Zanganeh stressed the important role of new technologies in increasing the recovery factor of the country's oil fields, saying "even one percent increase in the recovery factor of such a huge reservoir with 53 billion of reserve means 530 million barrels of more oil, which considering the current oil prices would be nearly \$32 billion more revenue for the country, so we need to take all necessary measures to improve our knowledge and technologies for increasing the recovery factor in all oil fields across the country."

He finally noted that development of the Namavaran reservoir will be carried out as part of the development projects of Sepehr, Jofair, Ab-Teymour and Mansuri fields.

Steel ingot export rises 135% in a month on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's export of steel ingots increased 135 percent during the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As reported by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, 566,000 tons of steel ingots were exported during the mentioned month.

Earlier this month, Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry issued a three-month waiver for some approved steel production units to be able to export steel products especially long sections.

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

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



Producers Association (ISPA) showed.

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

As ISPA data indicated, the exports of steel products, intermediate steel, and sponge iron all declined last year, and despite significant output growth and the demand decline in the domestic construction sector, the exports of the

mentioned products did not increase due to the pandemic.

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

The mentioned companies produced over 2.04 million tons of steel ingots in the last month of the previous year (February 19-March 20), 17 percent more than the figure for the same month in the preceding year.

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

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

Tehran, Moscow confer on joint investment in agricultural sector

→ 1 Khavazi further pointed to the views of the leaders of the two countries on development of cooperation in various fields and emphasized that new steps should be taken for expansion of trade ties between the two countries, starting with the agricultural sector as a priority.

Patrushev for his part noted that Russia is one of the largest producers of grains in the world, saying: "More than 80 percent of Russia's total exports are related to agricultural products and grains."

Referring to the common needs of the two countries for agricultural products including grains, protein

products, vegetables, fruits and nuts, he emphasized: "In order to accelerate the process of cooperation, it is necessary to introduce licensed Iranian companies to the Russian Ministry of Agriculture to start the procedures for joint activities in agricultural sub-sectors."

Iran needs to import some wheat and grain annually, and Russia needs Iranian horticultural products, dairy products, protein, fruit and vegetables, he said.

Patrushev finally expressed satisfaction with the significant increase in cooperation between Iran and Russia in various fields, adding: "We hope that the agricultural sector and its various sub-sectors will



Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi (3rd R) and the Russian Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev (3rd L) meet in Moscow on Thursday.

experience significant growth like other areas of cooperation."

Housing price fall 1.8% in Tehran City

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN**— Average housing price declined 1.8 percent in Tehran City during the past Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht (ended on April 20), compared to its previous month, according to a report by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

The CBI report put the average price for one square meter of a residential unit at 288 million rials (about \$6,850) in the capital city in the mentioned month, IRNA reported on Thursday.

As reported, the number of real estate deals increased 88.1 percent in the past month from its preceding month and 65.2 percent from the same month of the past year.

Housing price in Tehran city had dropped 3.1 percent in the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 20), from its previous month, according to CBI. The average price for



one square meter of a residential unit was reported to be 293.2 million rials (about \$6,980) in the said month.

The housing market in Tehran was the second-highest returning market in Iran among the country's four major markets in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) with 85 percent annual growth.

The information obtained from Kilid

website (which is a major platform for housing trades) indicated that the housing price index in Tehran grew by 85 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) compared to its preceding year.

The highest monthly price increase of 12.5 percent occurred in the Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22-August 21, 2020), while the biggest monthly price decrease occurred in Azar (November 21-December 20, 2020) with a decline of 8.1 percent.

Last month, the head of Iran's Property Advisers Union said housing prices in the country should decrease at least 25 percent in order for people to be able to afford to purchase.

Mostafa Gholi Khosravi noted that the closure of real estate agencies due to the coronavirus pandemic has caused some problems in this market, calling for the

re-opening of the agencies in compliance with health protocols.

The official also stressed the need for establishing a market regulation headquarters for housing sector to monitor the activities of dealers and real estate agencies in order to balance the prices.

Housing prices in Iran have been constantly rising over the past year due to various internal and external factors.

Coronavirus has been reported to be a major factor affecting the housing prices in Iran as the pandemic has stoked concerns about losing one's savings and more people entered the housing market.

"People are turning to the housing market in order to protect their savings in the face of rising inflation. No one sees housing as a short-term consumer commodity. Even real consumers view purchasing a home as a long-term investment," Mehdi Soltan-Mohammadi, a housing expert, said.

Annual home appliance exports stand at \$200m

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran exported \$200 million worth of home appliances during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to an official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

Keyvan Gordan, director-general of electrical, metal, and home appliances office of the Industry Ministry said the ministry has targeted \$600 million of exports for the mentioned sector in the current year.

Speaking in a gathering of the country's home appliance parts manufacturers in Tehran on Wednesday, Gordan said Iran halted the imports of home appliances in June 2018 to support domestic production and last year we achieved self-sufficiency in this sector.

"This year we intend to increase production and have a strong presence in export destinations," he stressed.

Pointing to the \$6 billion turnover of the home appliance industry, the official said: "This industry has provided 300,000 direct jobs as well as one million indirect jobs in the country and 500 manufacturing companies are currently active in this sector."

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy



on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years.

Last week, Iran's Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki said that the country's home appliance industry experienced 78-percent growth in the past Iranian calendar year.

The growth was achieved despite the restrictions on the manufacturing sector, the official said, adding, "While foreign brands left Iran, manufacturers were able to achieve this leap by relying on domestic capacities."

Back in April, Niaraki had said that considering the Iranian home appliance industry's infrastructure and capacities, the country will be able to become a net exporter of such products in the near future because most of the raw materials needed by the mentioned sector are produced domestically.

Stating that the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry will definitely support domestic manufacturers and national brands, the official added: "Today we have the necessary manpower, knowledge, and infrastructure in the field, so there is no reason to look for foreign sources to meet the country's demands."

Earlier this month, the Secretary of the Association of Industries of Household Appliances of Iran Abbas Hashemi had pointed to the advantages of home appliance industry in Iran, saying: "Production of home appliances in the country is an advantage considering cheap energy and workforce and the country's geographical situation", he noted.

"This industry should be more supported," he stressed.



Exports from Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad province up 90%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, exports from Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad province, in the southwest of Iran, rose 90 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Behnam Ahmadi, the director-general of the province's customs department, announced that the growth was both in the value

and weight of the exported commodities.

The value of Iran's non-oil exports reached \$6.3 billion in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year, up 48 percent compared to the last year's same period, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Iran exported 16.9 million tons of non-oil commodities including gasoline, polyethylene, methanol, iron and steel ingots and

steel products to foreign destinations in the mentioned two months, Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi announced.

The value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Mir-Ashrafi, Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, while that of import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

Imagine what Gaza could become if the siege were lifted...

➔ **1** For now, despite alleged promises by the U.S. to help rebuild the bombed infrastructure damaged in Gaza, Secretary of State Tony Blinken is headed to Israel and other countries for what? In the West Bank he is going to consult Mahmoud Abbas for one thing (who if not an outright quisling hardly gives Palestinians effective leadership and is the wrong person to talk to about anything). Blinken ought to be trying to go to Gaza, too.

As for Hamas in Gaza now, they literally cannot respond to the same Israeli moves that caused this most recent war on Gaza because they are probably running low on those home-made rockets even if the organization has managed to garner some modest praise and support across the world. Moreover, the Zionist defense establishment and Netanyahu has proclaimed that it will hit Gaza even harder if Hamas does anything now. Also, in Israel, the government has done nothing to reign in the right-wing mobs of "settlers" who now are openly calling for the razing of the lovely al-Aqsa shrine, Islam's third holiest site. If al-Aqsa ever did fall, one would probably be looking at complete war in West Asia. All those "settlers", including many Americans, would flee, cowards that they are looking for freebies in the West Bank with U.S. support.

If there has been any kind of "victory"



for Palestinians, it resides solely for now in the awakening of public perceptions about Zionist Apartheid everywhere which may, in time, have an impact. The BDS campaign is bound to expand mightily and the ICC is definitely going to charge "Israel" and its craven leaders with numerous war and others crimes. But the court in The Hague has been way too slow mounting its prosecutions.

But there is another aspect of this crazed

situation.

The two million Palestinians in Gaza have long ached for relief from the siege (and their martyrs abound, including almost 70 children slaughtered by IDF bombs this month). Real relief, however, is not likely to arrive anytime soon even if there are repairs to the damage done, but if it ever arrived, consider or imagine what Gaza might become if the siege were lifted.

This is something that the Zionists fear and despise and actually, prospectively, are extremely jealous of ever seeing. Gaza, if it could revive its port and repair its airport and other assets, could become a prosperous relative heaven for Gazans and for curious tourists from all over the world wanting to understand better Palestine and its people and history while enjoying Arab hospitality which the Gazans could deliver like few others. It's not hard to imagine even Americans wanting a taste of the Middle East (West Asia) and especially a look at a (then former) victim of Zionist aggression (that stood tall despite the Israelis). If travelers had to choose between visiting a discredited Apartheid regime and an inexpensive beachfront Gaza, even if only for purely educational purposes, Gaza would be the place to go.

But the Zionists above all want to crush the Palestinians if not eliminate them altogether and give them no quarter for what could be a magnificent revival given their own creativity and industrious ways that have existed for generations.

The sole hope for now that has any chance for success is a burgeoning condemnation worldwide of Apartheid and its aggressions. One day, perhaps, even candidates aspiring to become a part of the U.S. Congress will be judged in part on their postures towards Zionism.

World heading towards hybrid warfare: Pakistani expert

➔ **1** **How do you evaluate the recent cyberwars in West Asia? What does distinguish the region in this regard?**

The Middle East (West Asia) is a classic case of cyber realism where every cyberattack is a calculated strategic move with far-reaching geopolitical and security implications. In the Middle East (West Asia), cyberspace is just another domain where states have brought their pre-existing conflicts, territorial disputes, power struggles, blame casting, strategic interests and security dilemmas. What makes cyber warfare in the Middle East (West Asia) more dangerous and distinct from the rest of the world is the sophistication and exclusivity of cyberattacks. The complexity, exclusivity, and long endurance of a sophisticated cyber-attack require specialized hackers, advanced technology, and intelligence about the specific strategic target.

What can Iran and other regional countries learn from previous cyber-attacks to contain future threats?

They can design their cybersecurity policies, draft new cyber strategies and doctrines, restructure existing institutional framework, establish new specialized institutions and cyber commands, conduct cyber exercises with friendly countries, improve cyber hygiene, build bilateral or regional alliances and focus on creating cyber awareness. However, there is a need to acknowledge the fact that strengthening cyber defense is not enough. According to offense-defense theory, a war can only be avoided if the defense gets an advantage over the offense.



Unfortunately, the speed and unique nature of cyberspace favor offense most of the time, if not always.

Why have Western powers focused on Iran's peaceful nuclear program while Israel has a big arsenal of nuclear arms?

This is the most significant yet complicated aspect of the nuclear politics of the Middle East (West Asia). The potential factor could be Israel's role in protecting their geostrategic interest in the Middle East (West Asia).

Do you think that the world is heading towards soft wars (like cyber-attacks, disinformation, etc.) by quitting the classic warfare model? So, which tools and techniques are useful in new forms of wars?

I believe that the world is experiencing the rise of hybrid warfare where the classical warfare model is complemented by non-kinetic tactics. In the contemporary strategic landscape, states and non-state actors prefer synergized and tailored use of their military, economic, political, civilian, and informational power to target the specific vulnerabilities of their adversaries. Cyberwarfare, espionage, disinformation, psychological warfare, religious warfare, separatist movements, regime change, resource warfare, lawfare, trade wars, terrorism, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions are few examples of these non-kinetic tactics.

Is there any program or initiative to establish a regional system of cooperation and cyber defense between countries like Iran, China, and Pakistan?

Currently, there is no regional cyber defense program or initiative among China, Iran, and Pakistan. However, China is enhancing its bilateral cooperation in the cyber domain with Pakistan and Iran under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the recently signed China-Iran Strategic Cooperation Pact, respectively.

Kuwait parliament passes legislations on boycott of Israel, banning normalization of ties

Kuwait's National Assembly has strongly condemned the latest Israeli military's acts of aggression against Palestinians across the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds besides its bloody military onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip, and unanimously approved legislations that outlaw any deals or normalization of ties with the Tel Aviv regime.

During a special parliamentary session held on Thursday to discuss the latest Israeli attacks in Palestinian territories, Kuwaiti legislators expressed their country's strong position towards the Palestinian cause, as well as its unswerving support and solidarity with the Palestinian nation until they establish an independent sovereign state with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital.

"Today, the Kuwaiti parliament held a special session to emphasize the popular and official position of Kuwait on its main issue, which is the issue of Palestine," Parliament

Speaker Marzouq Ali al-Ghanim read out a statement issued at the end of the meeting.

The statement also expressed the assembly's strong condemnation of the latest Israeli offensive on the impoverished Gaza Strip, and vicious attacks against Palestinians in Jerusalem al-Quds, the occupied West Bank and other Palestinian territories occupied since 1948.

The parliament finally saluted Palestinian resistance factions, and underscored that the position of the Kuwaiti government and parliament towards Palestine is unwavering.

Earlier in the day, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser al-Mohammad Al Sabah stated that his country's position on supporting Palestinians until they redress their full and legal rights is firm.

"The heinous crimes committed by occupying Israeli forces can be considered war crimes," he said.

"The occupiers, through violence, oppression and aggression, during brutal operations against our Palestinian brethren in al-Quds and Gaza, killed people, destroyed buildings, set fire to farms and trees, and ignored the cries of children and helpless women," Al Sabah pointed out.

At least 253 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in 11 days of conflict from May 10.

Israel's airstrikes also brought widespread devastation to the already impoverished territory.

A ceasefire came into force in the densely populated coastal enclave in the early hours of May 21 after Egypt brokered an agreement between Israel and Palestinian resistance factions to halt the conflict.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Pales-

tinian territory said in a report that more than 90,000 people in Gaza had been displaced due to Israeli bombardment.

"Hostilities have also resulted in additional displacement of Palestinians, bringing the cumulative number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to about 91,000, including 66,000 seeking protection in 58 UNRWA schools across Gaza and over 25,000 staying with host families," the organization said.

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber Al Sabah has reiterated the kingdom's unswerving support for the Palestinian nation and their struggle for the liberation of their land occupied by the Israeli regime.

Anti-Israel sentiments run high in Kuwait. A poll conducted in 2019 by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, an American think tank, showed that 85 percent of Kuwaitis oppose normalizing ties with Israel.

Saudi Arabia claims mysterious air base on Yemeni island amid uproar

Saudi Arabia has acknowledged that it has constructed a military base on an island in the Bab al-Mandab strait to fight the Sana'a-based government.

In a Thursday statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency, an official said all equipment currently present on Yemen's volcanic Mayyun Island is under the control of the Saudi-led war "coalition".

The unnamed official said the equipment was transferred to the island in order to enable the former Yemeni government and coalition forces to counter Ansarullah fighters, secure maritime navigation and support the West Coast forces.

Mayyun Island, which was occupied by Saudi-led forces and mercenaries in 2015, is located in the Red Sea on one of the world's crucial maritime trade routes for energy shipments and commercial cargo.

On Tuesday, the Associated Press reported that "a mysterious air base" is being built on the island, publishing satellite images of the center with a 1.85km runway alongside three hangars.

While the AP said no country had laid claim to the air base, it cited officials from the former Yemeni government

as saying that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was behind the military build-up on the island.

However, the Saudi official contradicted the claim that the UAE was behind the construction, saying the "reports in the media with regard to the presence of UAE forces on the Islands of Socotra and Mayyun are baseless and unfounded."

The source added that the current UAE role is focused within "coalition" forces on providing air support in Ma'rib, which Yemen's armed forces are trying to liberate from the control of Saudi-led mercenaries.

Back in 2019, the UAE announced that it would withdraw its forces from Yemen, in what Yemenis have described as a false declaration over fears of Yemeni retaliation.

Military officials from Yemen's former government told the AP that Emirati ships dispatched weapons, military equipment and troops to the island in recent weeks for the construction of the air base.

UAE officials have not yet commented on the AP report.

Yemen warns to target UAE with 'lava of fire'

In response to the developments, Yemen's Foreign Minister Hisham Sharaf Abdullah warned that the UAE's

measures on the Socotra and Mayyun islands are in violation of international law.

Sharaf Abdullah said Yemen will not keep silent over such illegal measures by the Emiratis on Yemeni soil, Lebanon's al-Mayadeen news network reported.

"If you do not leave our lands and islands, the lava of fire will soon reach you," he warned the UAE.

"We advise the rulers of Abu Dhabi to maintain their lands and government within the borders of the UAE. We remind the rulers of Abu Dhabi that Yemen will be able to return them to their sanity," the Yemeni minister added.

Saudi Arabia and its allies, the UAE in particular, have been waging a deadly war on Yemen since March 2015 to return Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi to power.

The war – which the Saudis claimed would last only a few weeks but is still ongoing – has killed more than 230,000 people in what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The Saudi war has also destroyed much of Yemen's infrastructure, and according to the UN, it has caused outbreaks of disease, and brought the poor Arab country to the brink of famine.

Germany recognizes colonial-era massacres in Namibia as genocide

Germany has recognized for the first time that it committed genocide in Namibia during its colonial rule more than a century ago and promised financial support worth more than one billion euros (\$1.2bn) to fund infrastructure projects in the African nation.

German settlers killed thousands of Herero and Nama people between 1904 and 1908, after the tribes rebelled against Berlin's rule in the colony, then called German South West Africa.

Survivors were driven into the desert, where many ended up in concentration camps to be used as slave labor and many died from cold, malnutrition and exhaustion.

"We will now officially refer to these events as what they are from today's perspective: genocide," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in a statement on Friday.

"In light of the historical and moral responsibility of Germany, we will ask forgiveness from Namibia and the victims' descendants for the atrocities committed," he said.

The news was welcomed by Namibia. "The acceptance on the part of Germany that a genocide was committed is the first step in the right direction," the country's President Hage Geingob's spokesman Alfredo Hengari told AFP news agency.

"It is the basis for the second step, which is an apology, to be followed by reparations," he said. The German government has previously acknowledged "moral responsibility" for the killings but Berlin has avoided an official apology to ward off compensation claims.

As a gesture "to recognize the immense suffering inflicted on victims", Germany will also support the "reconstruction and the development" of Namibia via a financial programme of 1.1 billion euros (\$1.34bn), Maas said.

Migrant children held under dangerous conditions in Texas

More than 4,300 unaccompanied children who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border are being held at a makeshift detention center in the U.S. state of Texas under dangerous and distressing conditions.

According to reports, the desperate children, aged 13 to 17, coming from Mexico have been languishing there for weeks without being allowed to speak to a caseworker who can assist them.

The detention center for unaccompanied migrant children was put up by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on the Army base in El Paso city nine weeks ago.

Representatives, child advocates, federal and contract workers inside the facility have claimed that the site is being poorly managed and children are suffering.

Those visiting the site have spoken of enormous size of the tents, ineffective oversight of a large number of subcontractors and vendors, and the slow pace of case management for the children.

"When I went into the boys' tent, there are literally hundreds of boys in these very low-to-the-ground bunk beds," a representative from Texas, Veronica Escobar, was quoted saying by El Paso Times.

According to the newspaper report, the children spend most of their days in the warehouse-sized tents, girls and boys in separate quarters.

"It's like the Walking Dead," a former youth care worker is quoted saying in the report. "White tents as far as you can see. The security department, the medical tent, the cafeteria."

The children sleep on "metal beds with two layers of? you know that green stuff you use to put on your fence for privacy? It's like that tied around the bars. They don't have a mattress. It's mesh wrapped around the poles. The (children) literally have no space."

Among the 11 dormitory tents, the former youth care worker said, are six known among coworkers as "COVID City," for children who have tested positive for the virus. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services calls the area "Healing Hill".

Assad wins the presidential election with 95% of vote

➔ **1** The vote was boycotted by the U.S.-backed forces who administer an autonomous oil-rich region in the northeast and in northwestern Idlib region, the last existing rebel enclave, where the opposition groups denounced the election.

Assad was running against two candidates, former deputy Cabinet minister Abdallah Saloum Abdallah and Mahmoud Ahmed Marei, head of a small. Marei got 3.3% of the vote, while Saloum received 1.5%, Sabbagh said.

Resistance News

UN rights council to investigate crimes during Gaza conflict

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** —The UN Human Rights Council has agreed to launch an open-ended international investigation into violations during the 12-day conflict between Israel and Palestinian groups in Gaza, and into "systematic" abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories.

By a vote of 24 states in favor, nine against, with 14 abstentions, the 47-member forum adopted a resolution after an all-day special session on Thursday brought by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Palestinian delegation to the United Nations.

The resolution calls for the creation of a permanent Commission of Inquiry – the most potent tool at the council's disposal – to monitor and report on rights violations in Israel, Gaza, and the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. It would be the first such COI with an "ongoing" mandate.

According to the text, the commission is also to investigate "all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict" including discrimination and repression.

The investigation should focus on establishing facts and gather evidence for legal proceedings, and should aim to identify perpetrators to ensure they are held accountable, it said.

Israel said it would not cooperate with the probe.

"Today's shameful decision is yet another example of the UN Human Rights Council's blatant anti-Israel obsession," Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. "This travesty makes a mockery of international law and encourages terrorists worldwide."

A spokesman for the Palestinian group Hamas which governs Gaza welcomed the investigation, calling its own actions "legitimate resistance", and urging "immediate steps to punish" Israel.

The Palestinian Authority welcomed the resolution, saying it amounted to "international recognition of Israel's systemic oppression and discrimination against the Palestinian people".

"This reality of apartheid and impunity can no longer be ignored," it added. The United States said that it deeply regretted the decision.

Historical texture of Khusf capable of becoming UNESCO site: official

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iran's deputy minister of cultural heritage and tourism has said that the historical texture of Khusf, which was once situated on the ancient Silk Road, is capable of becoming a UNESCO World Heritage site.



“The historical texture of Khusf is a noteworthy property, and it is capable of being registered as a World Heritage site,” Mohammad-Hassan Talebian said on Thursday.

The official made the remarks during a visit to Khusf that is an oasis town on the east side of the country in South Khorasan province, during which he inaugurated an eco-lodge center embedded within a fully-restored historical house.

“We should assist such historical houses to be revived in this historical texture, as these restorations would help develop both the local economy and the realms of culture and tourism,” the official said.

South Khorasan is an explorer's delight – lots to discover yet barely another visitor to be found, even at the most important sights (despite a decent infrastructure of recently paved roads).

The region intersperses arid mountains and semi-deserts and is famed for saffron and barberries. But there's also a wealth of old mud villages that seem to have been left almost complete as though to tempt archaeologists.

Over the past couple of years, hundreds of historical sites and monuments across Iran have been temporarily ceded to the private sector through auctions reportedly to gain higher productivity and better maintenance.

Currently, there are over 40 countries alongside the historic land and maritime routes, which are collectively named the Silk Road, (or Silk Roads). This vast network carried more than just merchandise and precious commodities however: the constant movement and mixing of populations also brought about the transmission of knowledge, ideas, cultures, and beliefs, which had a profound impact on the history and civilizations of the Eurasian peoples.

Experts say that travelers along the Silk Road were attracted not only by trade but also by the intellectual and cultural exchange that was taking place in cities along the Silk Road, many of which developed into hubs of culture and learning. Science, arts, and literature, as well as crafts and technologies, were thus shared and disseminated into societies along the lengths of these routes, and in this way, languages, religions, and cultures developed and influenced each other.

For thousands of years, the ancient Silk Road passed through many different empires, kingdoms, reigns, and societies. According to UNESCO, the Silk Road enriched the countries it passed through, transporting cultures, religions, languages, and of course material goods into societies across Europe, Asia, and Africa, and uniting them all with a common thread of cultural heritage and plural identities.

Field of miniature golf under construction near Ardebil

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A sports ground, dedicated to miniature golf, is currently under construction near Ardebil, the capital of Ardebil province, in northwest Iran.

“A minigolf course is being constructed near Ardebil, along the Ardebil-Nir road,” Ardebil province's tourism chief has announced.

Some 30 billion rials (\$714,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) have been invested in the project by the private sector, Nader Fallahi said on Friday.

Covering an area of 120 square meters, the project which is a part of a bigger tourist complex is expected to generate six job opportunities, the official added.

The project also aims at attracting more tourists to the region, he explained.

Miniature golf is a variation on golf where the emphasis is solely on the putting part of the game. The object of the game is to score the fewest points possible. This game consists of holes with shorter lengths than its parent game.

In April 2020, tourism authorities of the province announced that they have developed extensive plans to draw more tourists during the winter season to the province and make it the winter tourism hub of the country.



In December 2019, Fallahi announced that seventeen tourism projects, worth 1,500 billion rials (some \$35 million) would be inaugurated in the province in near future. Ha said that the objective to launch tourism projects in the province is to provide tourists from all over the world and domestic tourists as well with the opportunity to use these facilities and select Ardebil as their prime destination.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardebil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

London show turns spotlight on 5,000 years of Iranian art, design and culture

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The Victoria and Albert Museum in London is hosting an exhibition of Iranian art, design, and culture, which according to organizers delves into 5,000 years of the history of the nation.

The show, titled “Epic Iran”, kicks off today featuring ten various sections, some of which being presented below. Organizers say the sections are expected to transport visitors to “a city, complete with gatehouse, gardens, palace, and library”.

The first section introduces the “Land of Iran” with striking imagery of the country's dramatic and varied landscapes – all of which have shaped the country's social, economic, and political history.

Some sections feature objects decorated with recurring animal and nature motifs, and figurines and items from everyday life including earrings and belt fragments, which were made from 3200 BC to the Achaemenid era (c.550 – 330 BC).

The fourth section, “Last of the Ancient Empires,” covers a period of dynastic change with Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian Empire in 331 BC. This section



Horoscope of Iskandar Sultan on show at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London

showcases Parthian and Sasanian sculpture, stone reliefs, gold and silverware, coins, as well as Zoroastrian iconography.

The fifth section, “The Book of Kings”, is a prelude to the sections devoted to Islamic Iran. It shows how Iran's long history before the coming of Islam was understood in later centuries – primarily through the Shahnameh, or Book of Kings, which is the world's greatest epic poem, completed by the poet Ferdowsi around 1010 CE.

Several exquisite Qur'ans and manuscript illuminations feature, alongside a prayer rug, battle and parade armor, a celestial globe, and the magnificent Horoscope of Iskandar Sultan, have been put on show at the section.

Bridging the 1940s to the present day, the final section “Modern and Contemporary Iran” will cover a period of dynamic social and political change in Iran, encompassing increased international travel as well as political dissent, the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, and the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

Minister inspects restoration work on historical mansion in Rasht

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan on Thursday visited Rasht Municipality Mansion to scrutinize restoration works underway on the historical monument in northern Iran.

The restoration project is being carried out by Gilan province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department in close collaboration with the northern city's municipality, CHTN reported on Friday.

The first phase of the project involves moisture removal from the floor as well as strengthening the rooftop, the report added.

The historical structure is planned to turn into a museum of anthropology after being fully restored.

Constructed in 1926 by the prominent Armenian-German architect, Artem Sardarov, who lived in Rasht at the

time, the monument is considered the icon of the city of Rasht. The architecture of this building was inspired by the architecture of the city of San Petersburg in Russia and three years after its completion, a clock tower was built over the mansion, which still stands tall.

With 24 meters height, the clock tower was used for monitoring the city for possible fires or any other incidents. The mansion and its clock tower were severely damaged by the 1990 Manjil–Rudbar earthquake, however, they were fully restored and repaired by the Iranian-Armenian architect Robert Vahanian.

The historical monument was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1977.

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and



hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Rouhani inaugurates 33 tourism, cultural heritage projects in Lorestan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated 33 projects of tourism, cultural heritage, and handicrafts across Lorestan province via a video conference on Thursday.

A total value of 13.2 trillion rials (about \$314 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been channeled into the projects, the provincial tourism chief announced in the inauguration ceremony.

The projects are expected to generate 500 job opportunities for the local people of the western province, Amin Qasemi said.

The projects include an agritourism



site with an investment value of 10 trillion rials (about \$238 million) as well as a tourist complex worth three trillion rials (\$71.4 million), the official added.

A total of 31 restoration projects including repairing and reviving some aging structures inside the historical textures of the cities of Khorramabad and Brujerd were also among the inaugurated projects, according to Qasemi.

Lorestan is a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring. Falak-ol-Aflak fortress in the provincial capital of Khorramabad is one of the top destinations in the province,

which is one of the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran, and mainly acts as a gateway to the neighboring Khuzestan province which hosts UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period.

South Khorasan unique in realm of cultural heritage, deputy tourism minister says

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — South Khorasan enjoys a unique cultural heritage, yet it has remained little known and unexplored, deputy tourism minister Mohammad-Hassan Talebian has said.

“Since it is situated far away from the center of the country, the province may not be very well known, but anyone who visits it will remember it fondly,” Talebian said on Thursday during a meeting with journalists in the eastern Iranian province.

A budget of 52 billion rials (\$1.2 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been spent on restoring and reviving the province's historical monuments and aging buildings during the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March



20), the official noted.

Across the province, 948 historical properties are

Experts discuss 100 years of cultural heritage protection in Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A host of academia, archaeologists, Iranologists, and restorers on Thursday discussed efforts being made to protect Iranian cultural heritage over the past 100 years.

The discussion was made during a virtual meeting organized in close collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural

Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and the Iranian National Committee for ICOM (the International Council of Museums), and cultural heritage NGOs, Mehr reported.

Follow-up sessions have been scheduled to be held throughout the current year 1400, which will usher in the 15th century of the Iranian Solar Hijri calendar.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a

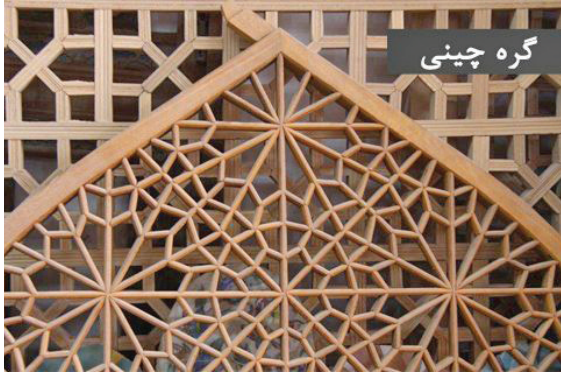


Gereh Chini: art of laying finely cut wood fragments on surface

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The traditional art of “Gereh Chini”, literally meaning arranging the knots, is the knowhow of laying finely cut pieces of wood on a surface based on a specific design.

Geometric knots that are beautifully and rhythmically repeated are considered an essential part of Gereh. The beginning of Gereh Chini has not been dated exactly, but the Seljuk era (1037–1194) is known to be the first time this craft was used and Isfahan is its birthplace. Safavid era (1501–1736) is known to be the time Gereh flourished, according to Visit Iran, the official travel guide to the country.

For Gereh Chini, pieces of wood are used in their raw color and no paint is added. According to masters of



this art, the plane tree is the best wood to make Gereh. However, wood from other trees such as walnut, beech, almond, silverberry, zerkova, pear, and jujube are also used to make structures such as doors of shrines, pulpits, doors, and windows, frames, tableaux, dividers, covers for tables and many other decorative objects.

In the art of Gereh Chini, the Gereh or knot is, in fact, intersections of pieces of woods that have been attached by locking in each other and create delicate designs. The finer the wood pieces, the more valuable the product.

Using tongue and groove joints make Gereh Chini pieces endure in different climate of Iran. That is the reason we can find Gereh Chini artworks in many historical buildings.

National Innovation Award for Children during COVID-19 announces winners

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The national award on innovative solutions for challenges faced by children and adolescents during COVID-19 announced three winners on Thursday.

Titled “National Innovation Award for Children during COVID-19”, the joint initiative by the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and UNICEF Iran Office, was designed to promote the culture of innovations for children in Iran.

The closing ceremony of the award was attended by Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari, and UNICEF Representative in Iran Mandeep O’Brien.

Some 80 innovative designs were submitted by knowledge-based and creative companies, and the top three winners were honored at the event. And seven solutions were recognized as worthy of appreciation.

The program aimed at developing solutions in education, nutrition, hygiene, physical and mental health, protection, economy and environment, culture, and entertainment, and sports in light of the challenges accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The solutions may include accessible



and inclusive e-learning platforms, digital health systems, protecting children against cyberbullying, skill-building solutions for adolescents, innovative nudges, frugal and

social innovations among other solutions using basic and emerging technologies.

The best solutions will benefit from technical and financial support from the Vice

Presidency for Science and Technology as well as from technical support from UNICEF Iran so that they can be applied and effectively support children in Iran.

Iran 4th in West Asia for innovation

Iran has ranked 60th in the world and 4th in West Asia in the 2021 Global Innovation Index which analyzes dozens of criteria using seven equally weighted metrics, including research and development spending, manufacturing capability, and concentration of high-tech public companies.

The 2021 rankings reflect a world where the fight against COVID-19 has brought innovation to the fore - from government efforts to contain the pandemic, to the digital infrastructure that's allowed economies to work through it, and the race to develop vaccines that can end it.

Iran also ranked 43rd among the 100 most vibrant clusters of science and technology (S&T) worldwide for the third consecutive year, according to the Global Innovation Index 2020 report.

The total ranking of Iran was 67 in the GII 2020 report, which was 61 in 2019.

Iran welcomes scientific cooperation related to Caspian Sea

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – Iranian academic and scientific institutions have always supported scientific initiatives in relation to the Caspian Sea, Kazem Jalali, Ambassador of Iran to Russia said.

The “Caspian 2021: Ways of Sustainable Development” conference was held on Thursday at Astrakhan State University.

The specialized topics of the conference included cooperation in the fields of science and education, youth, the future, education in the digital age, marine technology, resource utilization, medical education, agricultural biotechnology, and aquaculture development priorities in order to achieve sustainable development and cooperation.

Increasing scientific and research cooperation between institutes of the Caspian littoral states will be an important opportunity to promote knowledge and technology among the states, Jalali stated.

As a strategic region, the Caspian Sea has become a focal point for constructive competition and cooperation between the Caspian states and nations to ensure peace, stability, friendship, good neighborliness, and progress, he explained.

So far, five-sided documents between the Caspian littoral states in various fields have been signed, such as, marine environmental protection, meteorology, disaster prevention, science, and technology, which in comparison with other



similar water areas in the world, is unique in terms of the number of documents and cooperation topics, he noted.

Significant measures have been done, in the field of information exchange related to the Caspian Sea, the establishment of the Caspian Sea database, the exchange of professors and students between the member universities, he also said.

One of the most important documents currently being considered by the five littoral states is the drafting of an

agreement on marine scientific research in the Caspian Sea. This document will be the first scientific agreement in the Caspian Sea, he also said.

Challenges facing Caspian Sea

The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed inland body of water on Earth by area. It is bounded by Kazakhstan to the northeast, Russia to the northwest, Azerbaijan to the west, Iran to the south, and Turkmenistan to the southeast. The sea has a surface area of 371,000 square kilometers and a volume of 78,200 cubic kilometers.

The Caspian Sea water level has reached its lowest level since 1995, mainly because of a recent drop in the water level of the Volga River, which supplies most of the sea's water, by about 22 percent.

In 2019, the average water level stood at -27.18 meters, showing 13 centimeters decrease compared to the year before.

According to the national center for Caspian Sea studies and research affiliated with the Water Research Institute, seawater temperature is one of the main criteria in heat exchange and an indicator in assessing the potential for evaporation from the water level, which is one of the main components of the Caspian water balance.

The increasing trend of the Caspian Sea surface temperature, especially in recent years, has been one of the factors affecting the reduction of water level.

Tobacco imposes annual loss of \$33b: deputy health minister

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Estimates show that tobacco costs the country 1.4 quadrillion rials (nearly \$33.3 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) annually, Alireza Raeisi, the deputy health minister, has announced.

Reisi made the remarks on Wednesday in a press conference held virtually on the occasion of the World No-Tobacco Day 2021.

The World Health Organization created World No Tobacco Day in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable death and disease it causes. The day is further intended to draw attention to the widespread prevalence of tobacco use and to negative health effects, which currently lead to more than 8 million deaths each year worldwide, including 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.

Referring to the 40 percent increase in hookah consumption over the last eight years in the country, he stated that tobacco brings the country a loss of 1.4 quadrillion rials (nearly \$33.3 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) annually, taking health

costs into consideration.

Stating that tobacco consumption is high among Iranian women, he said that “one of the reasons for the increase in the tendency of women, especially young people, to desire to use hookah is the presence of aromatic tobacco, which is very dangerous and harmful.”

Coronavirus has killed more than three million people in a year and a half, but smoking kills eight million people a year, and the tobacco mafia is still active, causing extensive damage to society, he lamented.

Aromatic tobacco is very dangerous and contains 7,000 chemicals, of which 70 are carcinogenic and 400 are toxic, he further noted.

In 2014, there were 7 tobacco production units, which increased to 23 units in 2020, showing that the number of these production units has quadrupled, he added.

Tobacco use

The nicotine contained in tobacco is highly addictive and tobacco use is a major risk factor for cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, over 20 different types or subtypes of cancer, and many other debili-



tating health conditions. Every year, more than 8 million people die from tobacco use. Most tobacco-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, which are often targets of intensive tobacco industry interference and marketing.

Tobacco can also be deadly for non-smokers. Second-hand smoke exposure has also been implicated in adverse health outcomes, causing 1.2 million deaths annually. Nearly half of all children breathe air polluted by tobacco smoke and 65 000 children die each year due to illnesses related to second-hand smoke. Smoking while pregnant can lead to several life-long health conditions for babies.

Heated tobacco products (HTPs) contain tobacco and expose users to toxic emissions, many of which cause cancer and are harmful to health. Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENNDS), commonly known as e-cigarettes, do not contain tobacco and may or may not contain nicotine, but are harmful to health and undoubtedly unsafe. However, it is too early to provide a clear answer on the long-term impact of HTPs and/or e-cigarette use.

Smokers face a 40 – 50 percent higher risk of developing severe disease and death from COVID-19.

A recent technical manual on tobacco tax policy and administration by the WHO shows countries are to cut down on over US\$1.4 trillion in health expenditures and lost productivity due to tobacco use worldwide.

Improved tobacco taxation policies can also be a key component of building back better after COVID-19, where countries need additional resources to respond and to finance health system recovery.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. May 27

New cases	10,253
New deaths	184
Total cases	2,886,111
Total deaths	79,568
New hospitalized patients	1,532
Total recovered patients	2,410,252
Diagnostic tests conducted	19,550,558
Doses of vaccine injected	3,637,373

Razi Cov Pars enters second clinical trial phase

➔ 1 COVIRAN to complete third phase of human trial by late June

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first coronavirus vaccine made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, will complete the third phase of the human trial by late June.

The vaccine was unveiled on December 29, 2020, started to be mass-produced on March 29.

Some 800,000 to 1 million doses of the vaccine have been produced, however, the public use depends on the successful completion of the third stage of human testing and the issuance of a license by the Ministry of Health, Seyed Reza Mazhari, executive director of the third phase of clinical studies said.

By June, this number will reach 12 million doses per month, and in August, and by September we will produce 20 to 25 million doses of vaccine, he stated.

Mass vaccination

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

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

Iran is also producing vaccines jointly with three countries of Cuba, Russia, and Australia, which may also be released by September.

Domestic vaccines

Meanwhile, a vaccine developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute (Razi Cov Pars) is expected to become the second Iranian-made vaccine to be administered among the population in early August; which started the clinical trial on February 27.

Iran has also successfully completed the first phase of the human trial for Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine, named after nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh (he was assassinated in November 2020 near Tehran), that was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

“Osvd-19”, the fourth domestic vaccine produced by Osvah Pharmaceutical Company is also undergoing human trials, which will also be available in early September.

On May 24, the first coronavirus vaccine made by the private sector in Iran succeeded in receiving the code of ethics and entered the phase of clinical studies.

A glimpse at Iran's north-central national parks

(Part 2)

North-central Semnan province is home to two extraordinary arrays of wildlife and natural landscapes, from Touran to Kavir National Parks, areas with the largest population of endangered Asiatic cheetah. Here, we take a glimpse at these wild, wonderful places.



Kavir National Park

Kavir National Park with an area of 4,000 square kilometers is a protected ecological zone stretched over the provinces of Semnan, Tehran, Qom, and Isfahan.

Lying on the western edge of Iran's major desert (Dasht-e Kavir), the region reveals the natural beauty of the mysterious desert and displays a great share of wildlife species. Its astonishing biological characteristic has made it be known as Little Africa or Iran's Serengeti.

Kavir National Park is home to native goats (Capra aegagrus), sheep (Ovis Orientalis), striped hyenas, Indian wolves, gazelles, the rare Asiatic cheetahs, and the Persian leopards.

Receiving around 150 millimeters of rain a year, the region's vegetation is adapted to drought and salty soils; also plants grow leaves with thorns too retain water and combat grazing by animals.

The Kavir National Park is Iran's only region that contains no human, mineral and grazing habitat so it is well protected from human involvement.

In fact, the park is a natural exhibition for showcasing the rare desert wildlife, including Asiatic cheetah, Persian leopard, Gray wolf, Striped hyena, Sand cat, Red fox, Rüppell's fox, Chinkara, Ovis, Jackal, Caracal and various Halophyte plants.

In total, 34 species of mammal, 155 bird and 34 reptiles have been identified in this region.

In the past, a large population of Persian onager lived in the area, the last of which was observed in 1984, and today their generations have certainly vanished.

Black-tailed gazelle, if not extinct, is on the verge of extinction, but the population of Indian gazelle in this region is probably the largest in all of Iran.

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Relief foundation plans to provide 200,000 jobs for the deprived

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation plans to create 200,000 jobs in order to facilitate income generation for the deprived, as soon as the required budget is provided, Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki, deputy director of the Foundation has said.

He went on to say that some 70,000 job opportunities will open up through entrepreneurs who started their own businesses using the Foundation's loans.

Currently, there are about 400,000 entrepreneurs in the country, he said, adding, only if each of them employ 10 job seekers, the country's unemployment problem will be solved.

۲۰۰ هزار فرصت شغلی برای مددجویان کمیته امداد امام ایجاد می شود

معاون اشتغال و خودکفایی کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره) گفت: در صورت تأمین به موقع منابع مالی می توان با توجه به برنامه ریزی های انجام شده ۲۰۰ هزار فرصت شغلی تا پایان سال ایجاد کرد.

حجت الله عبدالملکی روز جمعه در گفت وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: از این تعداد فرصت شغلی ۷۰ هزار مورد از طریق راهبری شغلی کارآفرینان ایجاد خواهد شد. وی با اشاره به اینکه هم اکنون ۴۰۰ هزار کارآفرین حرفه ای در کشور فعالیت دارند، تصریح کرد: به لحاظ راهبری اگر هر یک از ۴۰۰ هزار نفر کارآفرینان حرفه ای موجود در کشور بتوانند برای ۱۰ نفر بیکار اشتغال ایجاد کنند، می توان گفت که در مجموع چهار میلیون فرصت شغلی ایجاد می شود که به صورت کامل مسئله بیکاری حل خواهد شد.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Like your body, your mind also gets tired so
refresh it by wise sayings.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



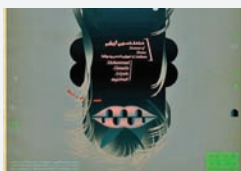
■ A collection of paintings by Mohsen Jamali-Nik is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery 2. O Gallery 2 is also playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Alireza Masumi.

The exhibitions will run until June 14 at the gallery located at 18 Shahn St., Sanai St.



■ Art Center Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Hamid Hadinejad.

The exhibition runs until June 15 at the gallery, which can be found at 145 North Salimi St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Mohammad-Hossein Arian is underway at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Demons of Shams & Molana" will run until June 8 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.



■ Paintings by Maryam Zahabi, Shahnaz Sohbatlu, Zohreh Safari, Elham Shifa, Saeideh Alizadeh, Azra Enteqali and several other artists are currently on view in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery.

The exhibition will run until June 2 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



■ Baharak Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Elham Sabbagh.

The exhibit named "Face from Below" will continue until June 2 at the gallery that can be found at No. 312, Alley 1, Saberi St. in the Deh Vanak Neighborhood.

Multimedia



■ A group of artists, including Elham Hashemi, Armin Navai, Amin Kanani, Narges Afshar, Maryam Farahi and Mahnaz Qanei, are showcasing the latest artworks in various media in an exhibition at Golhay Davudi Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Almond Blossoms" is a tribute to the Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh. It will be running until June 2 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.



■ Artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Sara Ahsant, Fatemeh Khademi, Maral Rajabi, Jaleh Malek, Setareh Shiri and Asal Pakinat, are on view in an exhibition at Zarna Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until February 26 at 10 Esko Alley near Daneshgah St. and Enqelab Ave.



■ Works in various media by Leila Khamushi, Roshanak Azari, Jalal Qadakhchain, Mojgan Khalili, Samira Soleimani, Nadia Mahmudian and several other artists are currently on view in an exhibition at Ehsan Gallery. The exhibit will run until June 2 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

■ Ali Fakhari is currently displaying his latest sculptures, videos and sets of installation in an exhibition at Vista Gallery. Entitled "Miles of Rope", the exhibition will run until June 4 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Antoin Sevruguin's photos of Iran on view at Alexander Solzhenitsyn House

➔ He was born in Iran, but his mother returned with her family to her hometown of Tbilisi, Georgia, after his father, Vassil, a Russian diplomat in Iran, died in a horse-riding accident.

Sevruguin trained to become a painter. Accompanied by his two brothers, he returned to Iran in the early 1870s and established a photography studio first in Tabriz and then in Tehran. Sevruguin's ties to Tbilisi, however, continued through the years. Many of the early portraits of dervishes and women have been simultaneously attributed to Antoin Sevruguin and Dimitri Yermakov, the Georgian photographer who is often referred to as Sevruguin's mentor.

As early as 1885 many of Sevruguin's photographs were being published in travelogues, journals and books. By that time he had fully established a studio on Tehran's Ala al-Dawla Street and cemented ties to the court of the Qajar ruler Nasser ad-Din Shah (reigned 1848–96). He received the Medal of the Lion and Sun from the shah.

His works are preserved at several prestigious museums and collections across



A photo from the Armenian-Georgian photographer Antoin Sevruguin's collection of Iran.

the world, including the National Museum of Asian Art in Washington.

The Alexander Solzhenitsyn House of Russia Abroad, a Moscow state-financed cultural institution, opened in 2018 to bring together and research the cultural legacy of the Russian expatriate community, as well as to establish and strengthen bonds with Russians living abroad.

In a visit to the museum, Iranian Ambassador Kazem Jalali praised the museum's plan to accumulate works by Russian expatriate artists, and said that he will do his best to help the museum in that mission.

He also held a meeting with the director of the museum, Viktor Moskvina, who expressed his thanks to the University of Tehran and the Iranian Culture Center in Moscow for their contributions to the exhibition.

The Alexander Solzhenitsyn House of Russia Abroad is a unique center that consists of a museum, archive, library, science and research center, information and publishing center, and cultural and education center.

Works by Iranian artist Ashkan Sanei showcased at Drawing Room Madrid

A R T TEHRAN — The Drawing Room Madrid Fair, a Spanish art exhibition underway at the Palacio Santa Bárbara, is showcasing a collection by Iranian mixed media artist Ashkan Sanei.

Sanei's works have been selected by Tehran's O Gallery for the online exhibition, which will run until May 30.

The gallery hung a collection of the artist's works in an exhibition entitled "Touching at a Distance" in 2020. His artworks were also showcased in the exhibit "The Wind Bloweth Where it Listeth" at O Gallery in 2018.

His works were previously shown during the Artissima art fair in 2020 in Turin, Italy. He also attended the Art Residency project of the Qingyun International Art Center in Beijing, China, in 2017.

Sanei's aesthetics is based on destruction and repetition. When it comes to working, however, he swings between creation and destruction as a pendulum, the organizers of the art fair said in a statement about Sanei's artworks.

He believes that drawing, as an untainted medium, maintains the minimum distance to the artist's mind and provides him with the opportunity to experience at the

moment. His choice of medium is paper and the traces he leaves behind represent memory and reminiscence rather than a specific object.

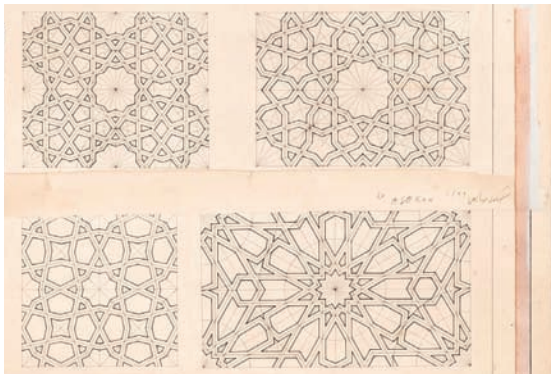
Poetry and geometry inspire him and bring him closer to the visual traditions and literary culture of Iran. In his artworks, he essentially rewrites what has already been said and done hundreds of times in his own contemporary language.

Nineteen galleries from 11 countries are participating in the International Online Drawing Room Madrid Fair, which opened on May 15.

The galleries show for the occasion an individual exhibition of one of their artists.

Granada Gallery, Otto Galeria, AC Contemporary and (+ Gallerylabs, all from Buenos Aires, are attending the exhibition with works by Jon Burgerman, Mane Zorraquin, Ana Elisa Fernández and Liliana Livneh.

From Berlin, Feldebusch Wiesner Rudolph, Anaid Art Gallery and Lage Egal are showcasing works by Nicola Staeglich, Alexandru Radvan and Peter Freitag. The exhibition is also displaying works by Ze de Rocha, Luis Silveirinha, Ernesto Casero, Valentin van



A mixed media and paper-cut on paper from Iranian artist Ashkan Sanei's 2021 series "A Long Exhausted Summer" on display at the Drawing Room Madrid Fair.

der Meulen, Marco La Rocca, Francesco Casolari, Miwako Nagaoka, Susanna Inglada, Conceição Abreu, Catarina Patricio and Feliks Culpa.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt's "Between Worlds" coming to Tehran theater

A R T TEHRAN — Franco-Belgian writer Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt's 1999 play "Between Worlds" ("Hotel des Deux Mondes") will be staged at the Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran.

The Parvaz theater troupe led by actor-director Erfan Maqsudi will perform the play at the Sanubar Hall of the complex on Wednesday and Thursday.

"How on earth did I get here? When will I be able to leave? Where will I go?" Every guest who gets to the Two Worlds Hotel asks

the same questions. But nobody knows the answers," Schmitt's official website wrote about the story of the play.

"In this strange place, anything is possible, even miracles - the lame walk again and liars tell the truth. The enigmatic Doctor S. looks after the guests during their stay, but his silence only increases their fears," it added.

"Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt's new play after 'The Visitor' is a metaphysical suspense drama between dream and reality, life and death, comedy and tragedy. Schmitt's play is another desperate quest as well as a variation on the

notion of Meaning. In the end, Mystery remains the sole reason for hope," the website explained.

"Between Worlds" will be staged based on a Persian translation of the play by Shahla Haeri.

Several plays by Schmitt, including "Partners in Crime", "Enigma Variations", "Oscar and the Lady in Pink" and "The Night of Fire" have been performed by various groups in Iran.

Maqsudi, Shahdi Ruzbehani, Samaneg Bajelan, Arman Mahrokh, Farshad Gudarzi, Bahar Zarrin, Dadmehr Badparva and Arian Talai are the members of the cast.

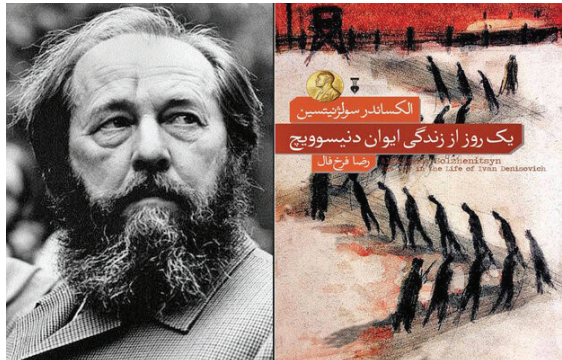
New Persian translation of "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" released

CULTURE TEHRAN — A new Persian translation of Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novel "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" has recently been published in Tehran.

Reza Farrokhlal is the translator of the book published by Nashre No. Persian translations of the novel by Fahimeh Tuzandehani and Hushang Hafezipur have previously been published by two other Iranian publishers.

First published in the Soviet journal Novy Mir in 1962, "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" stands as a classic of contemporary literature. The story of labor-camp inmate Ivan Denisovich Shukhov, it graphically describes his struggle to maintain his dignity in the face of communist oppression.

An unforgettable portrait of the entire world of Stalin's forced work camps, "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" is one of the most extraordinary literary documents to have emerged from the Soviet Union and



This Combination photo shows Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and the front cover of the Persian translation of his novel "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich".

confirms Solzhenitsyn's stature as "a literary genius whose talent matches that of Dostoevsky, Turgenev and Tolstoy".

At least five English translations have been made. Of those, Ralph Parker's translation was the first to be published, followed by Ronald Hingley and Max Hayward's, Bela Von Block's and Gillon Aitken's.

The fifth translation, by H.T. Willetts, came in 1991. It is the only one that is based on the canonical Russian text and the only one authorized by Solzhenitsyn.

The English spelling of some character names differs slightly among the translations.

A one-hour dramatization for television, made for NBC in 1963, starred Jason Robards Jr. in the title role and was broadcast on November 8, 1963.

A 1970 film adaptation based on the novella starred British actor Tom Courtenay in the title role. Finland banned the film from public view, fearing that it could hurt external relations with its eastern neighbor.

Umberto Eco's "Story of the Betrothed" published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — Italian writer Umberto Eco's "The Story of the Betrothed" has recently been published in Persian in Tehran.

Portegal is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Gholamreza Emami.

Lombardy, 1628, during a time of oppressive Spanish occupation of Northern Italy, and of the Thirty Years' War, the young lovers Lorenzo and Lucia, both from peasant families, are planning their wedding.

However, the villainous Don Rodrigo has

designs on Lucia, and the lovers are forced to flee their village. Their dangerous journey in exile takes them through one of the most dramatic epochs in Italian history, filled with war, famine and plague – will they ever be able to find happiness together?

Eco was an Italian writer of fiction, essays, academic texts and children's books. A professor of semiotics at the University of Bologna, Eco's brilliant fiction is known for its playful use of language and symbols, its astonishing array of allusions

and references, and clever use of puzzles and narrative inventions.

His perceptive essays on modern culture are filled with a delightful sense of humor and irony, and his ideas on semiotics, interpretation and aesthetics have established his reputation as one of academia's foremost thinkers.

The story first published with illustrations by Alessandro Manzoni and Marco Lorenzetti in 2010 was translated into English by Stephen Sartarelli.



A Front cover of the Persian translation of Italian writer Umberto Eco's "The Story of the Betrothed".