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Iran's Astan-e Quds delivers 300 ventilators to India Page 7

## Iran voices strong support for Palestine



### Iran congratulates Syria on 'successful' presidential election

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and the Iranian Foreign Ministry have congratulated Syria on holding a successful presidential election which resulted in another seven-year term for President Bashar

"I sincerely congratulate Your Excellency on the successful holding of the elections and your re-election as President of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian people took an important step in determining the future and prosperity of Syria with their large turnout and decisive choice," Rouhani said in a message to al-Assad.

"I am confident that in the new phase of Syrian political life, we will see the development of cooperation between the two friendly and brotherly countries. I wish Your Excellency health and success and the people of Syria dignity and felicity," Rouhani added.

'Massive turnout an important step toward establishing peace in Syria'

In its statement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said massive turnout in the presidential elections marked an important step towards establishing peace in Syria and help reconstruct the country.

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### Vaccination against coronavirus to end by late November: Rouhani

vaccine required by the country is provided, the vaccination of people with underlying diseases will be completed by late July, and the whole population will be vaccinated by late November, President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday

Highlighting that vaccination in the country has a special order, he said that

mass vaccination started from the elderly aging 80 years or above, then people above 70 years old received the vaccine and on the next stage, people aging 65 and older will be the target group.

With vaccination of people above 60, virus mortality will reduce sharply, and the situation will be much better than it is today, he added

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 $TEHRAN-Iranian-flagged\,VLCC\,Horse,$ belonging to the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), which was detained by Indonesian authorities in late January. was released on Friday and will return to Iran after completing its mission.

Indonesian maritime authorities had detained Horse and a Chinese-operated VLCC claiming them to be conducting ship-to-ship transfer in a prohibited area.

Indonesia's coast guard spokesman had claimed the two tankers concealed their identity by not showing their national

flags, turning off automatic identification systems, and did not respond to a radio call.

According to the NITC, the vessel has been released following effective communication between the two sides' authorities for clearing the issue.

Following the seizure, Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had said that Iran is "waiting for more reports from the Indonesian government on the seizure of the Iranian oil tanker.'

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### Close ties with Israel can entail huge risks for Arab leaders: GSA

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

hief executive officer of Gulf State Analytics (GSA) says that cozy relation with Israel can result in big challenges for Arab leaders.

"Appearing too close to Israel can entail huge risks for Arab leaders from the standpoint of their standing among their own citizens and those of the wider region, even if joining the Abraham Accord scores them major points with Washington," Giorgio Cafiero tells the Tehran Times.

"Amid this latest round of violence in Israel/Palestine, it was obvious that all over the Arab world, the Palestinian struggle remains an issue which brings citizens out on the streets to protest," the DC-based consultant notes.

Following is the text of the interview: What are the repercussions of the recent escalation in Palestine for West Asia and Israel? Some observers say it was an embarrassment to Arab states who have normalized ties with Israel.

It will most likely require more time for analysts to fully realize the lasting repercussions of the latest confrontation between Israel and Gaza, which lasted for 11 days. Yet, it is probably safe to assume that the process of Arab states normalizing diplomatic relations with Israel will slow down. I am doubtful about any of the four Arab countries currently in the Abraham Accords (UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco) severing diplomatic relations with Israel because of the Israel-Gaza war of May 2021. But I think the Arab governments which have not vet joined the Abraham Accords will be more hesitant to do so now. Amid this latest round of violence in Israel/Palestine, it was obvious that all over the Arab world, the Palestinian struggle remains an issue that brings citizens out on the streets to protest. Appearing too close to Israel can entail huge risks for Arab leaders from the standpoint of their standing among their own citizens and those of the wider region, even if joining the Abraham Accord scores them major points with Washington.

Why is the United States always biased when it comes to Israel's security and interests? Do you see any change in U.S. attitudes towards Palestine under the Biden presidency?

Ever since the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, Washington has seen Israel as a very special and unique ally.

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### Rouhani inaugurates 526 tourism projects in 24 provinces

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday inaugurated 526 tourism projects worth 25.37 trillion rials (about \$604 billion at the official rate of 42000 rials) in 24 provinces via video conference.

The projects, which included hotels, apartment hotels, eco-lodge units, and rural guesthouses, are expected to generate jobs for 2697 people, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Rouhani said that a surge in the number of accommodation centers can be considered as having a boom in the tourism sector of the country. "As the number of our hotel and accommodation beds across the country has increased from 219.000 to 465,000, it means that we are expecting a surge in domestic and foreign tourism."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he reminded of tourism contribution to economic development

saying "The tourism industry is a very prosperous economy for the country and a renewable resource, and it is not exhaustible like the crude oil."

The projects were simultaneously inaugurated across the provinces of East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Isfahan, Alborz, Ilam, Tehran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Khuzestan, Zanjan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Fars, Qazvin, Yazd, Kordestan, Kerman, Kermanshah, Gilan, Lorestan, Hoemozgan, and Hamedan.

Some experts believe that the tourist flow from across the world to Iran will return to normal in 2022. "Although there are requests for traveling to Iran in the current year (2021), most travel agencies and tour operators believe that the flow will go back to normal in the next year,' according to Ebrahim Pourfaraj who presides over the Iranian Tour Operators Association.

### Hundreds of musicians sign letter pledging to boycott Israel over Palestinian lands occupation

Hundreds of international musicians have signed on to an open letter that calls upon other artists to boycott performances in Israel until the Tel Aviv regime puts an end to its occupation of Palestinian territories, which have been under Israeli military control since 1967.

Members of American rock band Rage Against the Machine, Julian Casablancas the lead singer and primary songwriter of rock band The Strokes, members of Cypress Hill, Patti Smith and Serj Tankian are some of the musicians who have pledged their support to the boycott call.

The campaign has been organized under the banner "Musicians for Palestine" and has obtained 600 signatures so far.

"As musicians, we cannot be silent. Today it is essential that we stand with Palestine. We are calling on our peers to publicly assert their solidarity with the Palestinian people

Complicity with Israeli war crimes is found in silence, and today silence is not an option, the letter reads.

 $\hbox{``Today, we speak together and demand justice,}\\$ dignity and the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people and all who are fighting colonial dispossession and violence across the planet," it continues.

The open letter urges fellow artists to refuse "to perform at Israel's complicit cultural institutions, and by standing firm in your support of the Palestinian people and their human right to sovereignty and freedom.

"We believe this is crucial to one day live in a world without segregation and apartheid," it points out.

Cultural and academic boycotts are tenets of the international anti-Israel movement of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS).

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### Iran to use \$125m of assets held in Iraq to buy Covid-19 vaccines

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, who is the chairman of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee, has said Iraq is going to transfer \$125 million of its energy dues to Iran to a European bank to be paid for 16 million COVAX Covid-19 vaccines.

"The necessary license has been issued to provide \$125 million of Iran's resources in Iraq for purchasing 16 million doses of the COVAX vaccine and transfer this amount to a European bank," Ardakanian said.

According to the Energy Ministry's portal Paven, the official noted that the paperwork is expected to be done by the end of the week and the vaccines will soon be provided to the Iranian Health Ministry.

Iraq owes Iran over \$6 billion for electricity and gas imports from the Islamic Republic, of which \$3 billion is claimed to be blocked and inaccessible in the Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI).

Back in March, the Deputy Head of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said that the Arab

 $country \ has \ started \ repaying \ its \ energy \ debts \ to$ Iran and part of the dues has been settled.

"This achievement is the result of diplomacy and pursuit of the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the energy minister and the head of the Judiciary," Hamid Hosseini told IRNA.

Ardakanian visited Iraq in late December 2020 to meet with senior officials from the country and discuss the country's energy debts

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BY REZA MOSHFEO

Israel's existence is based

on war crimes: special

ambassador to UN

TEHRAN - The International Commissioner for Human Rights in the Middle East (West Asia) says that Israel considers war crimes part of its strength and permanence.

"Israel's existence is based on murder, assassination and committing major crimes, and it does not need any reason to justify its acts against humanity because it considers war crimes a sign of strength and permanence," Ambassador Haitham Abu Said tells the Tehran Times.

"Israelis believe that war crimes give them a kind of advantage over the rest of the surrounding countries," he adds. The United Nations human rights council is studying whether Israel's recent attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip, that killed more than 250 Palestinians, constitute "war crimes" if they are shown to be disproportionate.

The UN officials said they had seen no evidence that civilian buildings in Gaza, hit by Israeli fighter jets, were being used for military purposes.

The 11-day offensive on the Gaza Strip, which began on May 10, killed at least 253 Palestinians, including 66 children, and wounded more than 1,900 people, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza.

Following is the text of the interview: Why does Israel commit war crimes once in a wȟile? Who gives Israel the green light to destroy Palestinian homes?

Israel's existence is based on murder, assassination and committing major crimes, and it does not need any reason to justify its acts against humanity because it considers war crimes a sign of strength and permanence.

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## Polo competition held in **Tehran**

TEHRAN – Polo match between Ghasre Firoozeh and Norouzabad women teams was held in Tehran on Friday.

The match took place at the Ghas-re Firoozeh Club and Ghasre Firrozeh emerged victorious 4-3.

Polo originates from ancient Persia. Its invention is dated variously from the 6th century BC to the 1st century AD. Iranians still refer to the game of polo by its original Persian name of "Chogan", which means mallet.

### Mehr Alizadeh: I will create 4 million jobs

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Presidential candidate Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh said on Saturday that if he wins the presidential post he will create about 4 million jobs through a 6 percent economic growth.

"My goal is to create 6% economic growth and, as a result, create 4 million jobs in other ways," he stated.

The presidential candidate also criticized the incumbent administration's decision to directly interfere with the stock market, saying the decision was poorly made.

'There shouldn't be outside interference in stock market, as it will leave a terrible effect on the market," Mehr Alizadeh opined.

He said that the people should not be harmed by the wrong decisions of the government, adding interference in the stock market in the last Iranian calendar year - March

2020-March 2021 - was wrong. The presidential election will be held on June 18. Four days into the campaigning, the candidates are busy ironing out their plans and presenting them to the electorate.

### Hemmati says high turnout is only solution to change the situation

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In a tweet posted on Saturday, Abdolnasser Hemmati, a presidential candidate for the June elections, asked the fans of the disqualified candidates whether refusing to vote can help improve the situation or not?

"I ask the supporters of the disqualified candidates and those who have lost hope for reform:

Is miffing with the ballot box effective or changing the scene and the result of the election by voting for the only candidate who has the ability and knowledge to improve the economic situation, and his surprise victory would effectively raise your voice of protest?" he tweeted.

Hemmati has recently begun his Twitter activities,

trying to attract the youth.

He recently called himself "the voice of the silent ma-

Hemmati is currently the head of the Central Bank

### A group of reformists set up campaign office to support Raeisi

**TEHRAN** — A group of reformists have set up a campaign office to support presidential candidate Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi.

The campaign office spokesman, Khezr Khalili, said despite the criticisms by some reformists about the vetting process of the candidates by the Guardian Council, they have decided to participate in the elections and maintain the framework of a reformist attitude as they do not see a boycott of the elections in line with the national interests.

'Based on modern, national and reassuring views, which are clearly mentioned in Ayatollah Raeisi's election statement, this group of reformist activists decided to expand into a broader campaign with the aim of converging and focusing on the country's transition program from existing problems and crises and form a political current to encourage the people to participate in great numbers in the elections and support Ayatollah Raeisi," he explained.

Khezr Khalili said that Ayatollah Raeisi has clearly stated that he is an independent candidate and presented modern and reformist programs to combat corruption, promote transparency, reduce tensions, make immediate efforts to lift sanctions, guarantee freedom of media and opinion, eliminate discrimination that realization of them will significantly improve the political and economic situation.

The implementation of such a policy will reduce the pressure and hardship "on the dear people of our country,"

The candidates started campaigns on May 25, right after the Guardian Council announced the names of the confirmed presidential hopefuls.

The candidates should end their campaigns by June 17, 23:59pm.

## Zakani: JCPOA only limited to nuclear issue and not regional or defensive capabilities

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Speaking at a press conference on Saturday, Alireza Zakani, a presidential candidate, responded to many questions, including his for-eign policy, possibility of sealing another JCPOA that would be "longer" and "stronger" as mentioned by the Europeans.

Zakani began his conference by thanking the organizers

Responding to a question about his differences with other four candidates backed by the principlist faction, he said that he respects all candidates and wishes success for them but his plans are superior than others, calling his plans "developmental

"My plans can be proved with facts and figures, along with opinion of experts," he said.

The presidential candidate stated that from the point of view of inclusiveness, his plans are more comprehensive than the other 6 candidates.

In response to a question about the Vienna negotiations to possibly revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions (JCPOA) and the fate of the negotiations under his possible administration, Zakani said that the existence of the negotiations is decided by the leading politicians, Supreme National Security Council and the approval of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution

"If anyone says I can do this and that, it is wrong, as the collective wisdom of the Leading politicians and the approval of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution would decide the existence of the negotiations," he explained.

The presidential candidate stated that the negotiations leading to the signing of the JCPOA had nothing to do with the incumbent administration, rather it started during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's watch.

"I was never opposed to negotiations, but I oppose un-professional decisions, as the fate of the people cannot be tampered with in 20 minutes," he noted.

He said that the United States' tool to block removal of sanctions was Congress, yet the Iranian parliament did not pay attention to the interest of the people and approved the JCPOA in 20 minutes.

He also said, "Iran is giving many concessions for free in the ongoing Vienna talks, and I oppose giving concessions for free.'

He defined negotiations as a deal, exemplifying the negotiations between Iran and the U.S. over the Jason Rezaeian

"We started that negotiation, and we got 1.7 billion dollars instead of 400 million," he said.

He said that Iran freed or delisted 28 people instead of four. 'We delisted Sepah and Sepah international banks. This is the true meaning of negotiations, a good deal," he stated.

The principlist candidate reiterated that he believes in the negotiations in principle but negotiating has its own unique logic.

'We can negotiate as we have done in the parliament when we invited Mr. (Yukiya) Amano to the special committee to oversee the JCPOA," he said.

"Amano had slips of tongue twice in the meeting, and his translator warned him. He said that I panicked in front of them. After the meeting ended, representatives told me that this was the first dignified negotiations in the parliament,"

### "Active and smart diplomacy"

Concluding his response to the question, he said that his diplomacy will be "active and smart," meaning that he will use the capacities of all regional powers and neighboring countries, along with paying attention to Eastern countries in addition to confronting Western countries in a logical manner.

He said that active and clear diplomacy will bring national dignity and global power.

### "Incomplete and broken deal"

Responding to a question about his administration's policy towards global powers such as Russia and China, and how he would continue the Vienna negotiations, he said that he thinks the JCPOA is an "incomplete and broken deal."

"This incomplete and broken deal was sealed. Today, we have done more than what they asked for in the JCPOA, now it is their turn. If the U.S wants to return to the JCPOA, it is more than welcome, but before rejoining the deal, it must lift all sanctions, issue the required guarantees. After Iran's verification, it can rejoin the deal," he stated.

 $Zakani\ added\ that\ the\ Europeans\ should\ do\ their\ commit$ ments as signatories to the JCPOA. He did not exclude Russia and China, saying as he is fully aware of the terms of the deal, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, and appreciate these relations to build a powerful Islamic Iran, the JCPOA appendixes, he can "cash" the JCPOA better than yet we defend our logical position."



other candidates

The presidential aspirant said that he gives priority to foreign policy, putting an emphasis on the Resistance Front and neighbors as first priorities. He stated that his second priority is the Muslim countries, along with countries such as China who have been helping the Islamic Republic in times of hardship. Zakani added that he will certainly deal with the Europe-

"We have exported security to some countries, yet failed to

export our culture and economy to them," he said. On the 25-year partnership between Iran and China, Zakani said that he has read the plan and praised it.

"It is a historic opportunity for Iran and China. We would certainly appreciate this historic opportunity, and we should thank those who organized the plan, in particular, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution who paved the way for this great deal," he remarked.

He stated that his administration will be looking into opportunities to sign similar partnerships with other countries

Responding to the Tehran Times about the JCPOA and his administration's position against "longer" and "stronger deal" request by the UK and U.S., he said, "The parties to the JCPOA have not guaranteed the continuation of the deal for us. They have set a snapback mechanism for us, which always makes us feel the threat. Our nuclear industry is worth more. We will negotiate properly with the help of our thinkers.

Zakani added the Europeans and the U.S. say that Iran had promised them different things from the original deal.

He added, "The incumbent administration was seeking a second and third JCPOA, as General Soleimani said; the second JCPOA was the regional (issues), and the third JCPOA was defensive (abilities).

### "Immense pressure"

"The U.S. and Europeans say now that Iran is under immense pressure, which they only hallucinate, it must accept JCPOA 2 and 3. They wanted to do what they did to Ghaddafi and turn Iran into Libya, which is burning in fire but they will fail," he said.

He reiterated that further negotiations need collective wisdom of the leading politicians and the approval of the Leader. He further stated that his negotiations will be active and smart, and the JCPOA will only be about nuclear issues and nothing more.

Regarding the mechanisms for guaranteeing the verification process, he said that paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Law on Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions passed by the parliament

Responding to the Tehran Times about how long is needed to verify the U.S. actions, Zakani said that there are two reports.

"About financial sanctions, three to six months is needed to verify their actions, and about industrial, production and export issues it at least needs six months to be verified," he explained.

### 'We are an emerging power"

In response to the Tehran Times about Tehran-Riyadh talks, the presidential candidate said that these kinds of talks are definitely beneficiary.

'When I say beneficiary, it does not mean that we should give in to their wrong policies. On the contrary, my administration is eager to talk with these countries, yet our negotiations will be to awaken them and lay the groundwork for mutual cooperation. We think about having the best relations with West Asian countries. We are an emerging power, and I don't think anything is more important than constructing Iran. We

7 candidates in 7 days

### CANDIDATE PROFILE



Mohsen Rezaei

### PhD in economics from **Tehran University**

- Chief of the Intelligence Division of the IRGC
- IRGC Chief (during Saddam Hussein's war against Iran in the 1980s and years after the war)
- Secretary of the Expediency Council
- Co-founder of Imam Hossein University





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### Supporters

Islamic Iran Endurance Front

### Political position on JCPOA

Rezaei's plan is more focused on economic development, thus his priority is to build strong economic relations with neighbors. On the issue of the JCPOA, Rezaei seems skeptical, believing the Biden administration will not rejoin the deal without forcing new terms and conditions on Iran. He thinks that banking and financial sanctions should be lifted in the first month. His controversial remarks got the Foreign Ministry to issue a statement saying that Rezaei's words were not Iran's official position.

### Political position on interaction with neighbors and the West

Since Rezaei considers himself as an economist, he believes in interaction with neighbors and boosting export to neighbors to improve economy. Rezaei's foreign policy is generally unclear, yet, it is estimated that he will follow a kind of foreign policy to advance economy.

### **Political views of candidates**



### Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi

Raeisi entered the election race as an independent candidate. In a mid-May statement announcing his presidential bid, Raeisi said he came in to form "a popular government for a strong Iran." In his view, Iran needs a "comprehensive and systematic upheaval" and this upheaval cannot be achieved through "minor changes" and "political compliments." Instead, he said, it can be achieved through synergy among Iranians from all walks of life. Raeisi declared that he ran for president to undertake

exactly the mission. Although Raeisi is running for the presidential post independently, a variety of conservative and reformist factions are throwing their weight behind him. On Saturday, a reformist group announced that it will launch a reformists-for-Raeisi campaign to support him in winning the June election.



Saeed Jalili

Jalili does not have the support of a particular political faction, yet a considerable percentage of conservatives back him and his plans. Citing Iran's fundamental issues, he said that unemployment, inflation, and sanctions are Iran's important issues that need to be tacked

**Challenging other nominees** to present their plans to the people, he said that the candidates should tell the people the result of their 4-year

"If we do not address the main issues well, some rhetoric can take even the main issues. I hope that in the upcoming elections, rhetoric will not overcome the needs of the people," he remarked. On sanctions, Jalili has stated that the burden of sanctions should be on the officials' shoulders, not the people.



**Mohsen Rezaei** 

Rezaei has been planning to enter the election race for four years, warning the people about the economic crisis. Rezaei declared that he is running independently and this time, he is running on a strong campaign.
"I'm not here to cover up the

truth. We will tell everything to the people honestly," he promised. Stating that he has come to shield people against difficulties, not to use the people as shields, Rezaei said that he has plans to bring

Stating that had the government solved economic issues, he wouldn't have registered as a candidate, the former IRGC chief said that Iran needs what he called an "economic and social uprising" by the people. "We will initiate a structural change in the administration of

the country," he said. Islamic Iran Endurance Front



of reform after it lost its appeal to a large number of people who lost faith in the reformists due to the track record of Hassan Rouhani in backing down on his promises. In a recent statement, Mehr-Alizadeh called on the people to create another "epic" similar to the Dovvom-e Khordad, a reference to the date on the Iranian calendar of the election of reformist President Mohammad Khatami on May 23, 1997. He also called on people to bring in a "third Khatami administration."



Alireza Zakani

Zakani entered the race with the support of some groups in the conservative faction. Having served as the head of the special committee to oversee the JCPOA, he says he knows the deal cover to cover, and knows how to "cash people's demands through the

Zakani believes his plans are more implementable than other candidates, as his experience in the parliament will certainly help his administration with help his administration with issues such as countering economic corruption, resolving unemployment, and controlling inflation. He has repeatedly stated that his plan is to build an "Islamic, powerful Iran," and turn this "emerging power" into a "global power."



**Abdolnasser Hemmati** 

Hemmati is widely known as

an economist and running for president requires a politician. That's why Hemmati started to issue political messages to voters. He has portrayed himself as a force for change, not some who would maintain the status quo. Writing on his Instagram page on Friday, he said he was not responsible for the current economic situation. Instead, Hemmati said he has been partially responsible for changing the status quo not bringing it about. Hemmati also appealed to reformists to back him in the June election, saying that he is the only candidate who can improve the economic



Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashem Qazizadeh Hashemi called

for a "deeper change" in terms of running the country, something that would amount to bringing about a revolution in management. In a recent television show he unequivocally called for such a drastic reform in management system. He pointed out that he bears the responsibility for putting forward "a new theory in order to build a new Iran." Qazizadeh Hashemi called for a revolution in the mechanisms and a practical and functional revolution as well as a change in the structures. Elaborating on his revolutionary idea, the candidates said the revolution in question "means an administration that fully merges with the

## Iran voices strong support for Palestine

TEHRAN – A number of senior Iranian military officials have expressed support of the Palestinian resistance groups amid the ongoing de-escalation mediation efforts by Egypt to beef up a recent ceasefire between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

The officials, mostly affiliated with the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), underlined that a new era has begun in Palestine in the wake of the 11-day war Israel waged on Gaza in May.

IRGC chief General Hossein Salami said the Palestinians emerged stronger from the war and they will get stronger by the day.

"A new Palestine has emerged, and the recent war imposed a strong Palestine on the calculations of the Zionist entity [Israel] from now on. The Palestinians will become stronger day by day, and the Israelis must realize that they cannot live in the midst of an enemy that has become so powerful," General Salami told Russian state broadcaster RT.

He also said that "the Israelis should know that the era of attacks without a response has passed and that the Palestinians have become strong.

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh highlighted Israel's failure in the war on Gaza.

"The Zionist entity has been defeated by the rockets and shells of the Palestinian people that they had made from the sewage pipes," Hajizadeh told Yemeni news channel Al-Masirah

He added that the Zionist entity must pack its bags and start looking for another area to live in, in America, Alaska or Europe, for example. Hajizadeh pointed out that the Zionist entity is fragile and the threats of the Mossad and the option of war against Iran are just nonsense, especially after their

inability to face the Palestinian resistance. The warning came after recent statements



by some Israeli officials, including Israeli Intelligence Minister Eli Cohen, who recently told Al-Arabiya that Tel Aviv would not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon.

Contrary to the remarks by Cohen, Iran is a signatory to the NPT and its nuclear program

is being monitored by the IAEA. Spokesman for the Iranian Armed Forces Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi also issued a warning to the Israeli regime in an interview with Al-Masirah. He said Israel is ratcheting up war rhetoric against Iran out of desperation.

The Zionist Mossad says its priority is Iran and the Zionist regime poses threats because it knows it is declining and weakening after successive defeats," he said, adding, "The threats of the enemy and Mossad against Iran are of no value in reality because the enemy is now in pain and it is time to accept its collapse.

The IRGC Quds Force Commander, General Esmail Qaani, also issued a stark warning to Israel, underlining that Israel should think of an imminent delivery of rule over the Occupied Lands to the Palestinians.

"I advise the Zionists to return to their houses that they have sold in Europe and America before these houses become more expensive," Qaani said, according to Fars

"Many of the infrastructural facilities were within the reach of Palestinian missiles and could be targeted... but, they [Resistance groups] refused to target them because it will not take long for Palestinians to use these facilities," the Quds force chief predicted.

According to Qaani, during the first three days of the Gaza war, the number of the missiles fired by the Resistance Front at the Occupied Territories was as much as the entire 22-day war which indicates the power of Resistance.

"We all witnessed how Gaza bravely defended all Palestinian lands, despite being acted in such a way that from the first day, the Zionist regime begged its friendly countries to call on the Palestinians to stop the war."

'The era when the Zionist regime wanted to kill the Palestinians with weapons, bullets and guns has gone. Today, more than 3,000 missiles fired at the occupied territories were produced by the Palestinians themselves," Qaani underlined.

From now on, the message of the Palestinian Resistance and the international resistance is that the Palestinians must make the necessary plans to govern the entire Palestinian land, including the land of 1948, the land of 1967 and the land of Gaza, and from now on Palestinians should prepare for ruling the entire Palestine, Qaani stated.

Nearly three weeks ago, Israel started an air raid campaign against the Gaza Strip that resulted in the death of hundreds of civilians. Facing mounting international pressure, Israel found itself obliged to put an end to its atrocities against the civilians in Gaza after 11 days of continued bombardment.

Michelle Bachelet, the UN rights chief, has said Israeli forces may have committed war crimes during the 11-day war. "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.

She adding, "Such attacks may constitute

With overwhelming support from its members, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution calling for an independent inquiry into Israel's crimes in Gaza, a move that was met with criticism from Israel.

During the war, Iran strongly supported the Palestinians and condemned Israeli crimes. After the war, Palestinian Resistance groups appreciated Iran for its support.

On Monday, five Palestinian resistance groups and movements sent letters and messages to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, thanking him for his firm stance on supporting the cause

### SPORTS

### 2021 VNL: Plucky Iran lose to powerhouses Russia

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Brave Iran volleyball team were defeated against Russia in Week 2

of 2021 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) on Saturday. Iran lost to strong Russia 3-1 (25-17, 25-20, 25-20, 25-17) in Rimini, Emilia-Romagna, Italy.



Mikhaylov Maxim was top scorer of the match with 22 points, while Saber Kazemi scored 18 points.

Vladimir Alekno fielded the Iranian young players including Saber Kazemi, Bardia Saadat, Aliasghar Mojarrad and Amirhossein Esfandiar to earn experience for the upcoming competition.

"We knew that we had to expect a tough game, because we were supposed to play against Russia, one of the best teams in the world. They were really good, they were better than us, especially in the physical aspects of the match,' Iran captain Milad Ebadipour said.

'I have to praise our young players, because they played really well. They pushed a lot and I think the Russians could feel it. Of course, we could have won this game, but we made some small mistakes during the match," he added. Iran had lost to Japan 3-0 on the first day of the tour-

The Persians are scheduled to meet Netherlands on

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.

### Iranian duo wins two bronzes at Asian Elite Boxing **Championships**

S P O R T S TEHRAN – Iranian boxers Shahin Mousadd e S k vi and Pouria Amiri won two bronze medals at the Asian Elite Boxing Championships.

Mousavi claimed a bronze medal at the 75kg weight class, while Amiri also took a bronze at the +91kg.

Danial Shahbakhsh at the 60kg and Meysam Gheshlaghi at the 81kg have earned their places at the final.

Iran has sent eight boxers to the 2021 ASBC Asian Elite Boxing Championships in Dubai, the UAE.

### Japan overtake Iran at FIVB rankings

TEHRAN – Iran lost the best Asian e s k team position to Japan in the updated FIVB men's world rankings.

Iran national volleyball team lost to Japan 3-0 on Friday in the opening match of the 2021 Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

Iran moved down to ninth place, while Japan moved up one spot to eighth place.

The changes are based on results from the ongoing VNL games. According to volleyball's world governing body FIVB, the new dynamic ranking system will respond in real time after each competition day.

Brazil, Poland, the U.S., Russia, France, Germany, Japan and Serbia all tasted victory on Friday, the first day of the men's competitions.

### Sayyadmanesh the best Zorya Luhansk player of season

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iranian forward Allahyar e s k Sayyadmanesh has been voted as best player Zorva Luhansk in the 2020/2021 season.

Sayyadmanesh defeated Vitaly Vernidub and Vladislav

Kochergin to win the accolade.

Sayyadmanesh scored five goals in 19 matches for Zorya

I the current season.

### Persepolis Kanaani linked with **Ülsan Hyundai**: report

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Persepolis football team d e s k defender Hossein Kanaanizadegan has been reportedly linked with a move to South Korean team Ulsan Hyundai.

The 27-year-old defender had been previously linked with Qatari club Al Ahli.

Kannani joined Persepolis in 2019 from Machine Sazi and won the Iran Professional League in his first

He was a member of Persepolis football team who qualified for the 2020 AFC Champions League final, where the Iranian team lost to Ulsan Hyundai from 2-1.

Now, the Iranian media reports suggest that he has received an offer from the South Korean team.

under sanctions for 15 years," the general said, adding, "The Palestinian Resistance

### Rouhani sends congratulatory messages to Ethiopia, Azerbaijan

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has sent congratulatory messages to Ethiopia and Azerbaijan to congratulate them on national occasions

In a message congratulating the National Day of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the president expressed hope that bilateral relations and the development of relations between the two countries would develop, according to the Iranian presidency website

"I hope that this year, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the implementation of the Friendship Agreement between Iran and Ethiopia, we will see the development of bilateral relations and the development of relations by taking advantage of the high capacities of the two countries," Rouhani told his Ethiopian counterpart Sahle-Work Zewde.

He added, "I wish Your Excellency health and success and the people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia prosperity and felicity.

In a separate message, Rouhani felicitated Azerbaijan on the independence anniversary. "I express my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the anniversary of the independence of your country to Your Excellency, the government and the friendly and brotherly nation of the Republic of Azerbaijan," Rouhani told Azeri President

"As two close neighbors relying on historical, cultural



and religious ties since the independence of that country, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan have shown high-level brotherly relations with good neighborliness. I am confident that in the future Iran and Azerbaijan will move towards strengthening the relations between the two nations as inspired by the rich cultural and common historical background. I wish Your Excellency health and success and the honorable people of the Republic of Azerbaijan prosperity and felicity," the Iranian president continued.

Rouhani's message to Azerbaijan came after a visit by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to the south Caucasus country during which he held talks

In the Tuesday meeting held during Zarif's visit to Azerbaijan, the two sides expressed content with the growing trend of the enhancement of bilateral ties in recent years, calling for promotion of mutual relations, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

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

After Azerbaijan, Zarif paid a visit to Armenia where he held talks with the country's political leaders. In Yeevan, Zarif told acting Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan that he "had a very detailed and meaningful conversation with the president of Azerbaijan," according to a statement issued by the office of the Armenian prime minister.

Zarif's visits to Azerbaijan and Armenia came against a background of heightened border tensions between Baku

## Iran congratulates Syria on 'successful' presidential election

the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a statement, congratulated the Syrian nation and government on the successful elections held in the country and the victory of Bashar al-Assad," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"The successful holding of elections and the massive turnout of Syrian people is an important step towards the establishment of peace, stability, calm, reconstruction, and prosperity of Syria," the Friday statement said.

The statement added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran respects the Syrian people's decision, and supports their right to decide their fate and the future of their country without any foreign interference.'

"Iran congratulates President Assad and

→1 "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the resilient people of Syria on his decisive heavy turnout for the Syrian presidential elecvictory in these elections," it further said.

> $Al\hbox{-} As sad won Syria \hbox{'s presidential election}$ by a landslide, securing 95.1 percent of the popular vote. The election turnout stood at 14,239,000, according to official data. Syria has received a number of congratulatory

messages from many countries and groups in the region and beyond. Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement has hailed higher voter turnout as support for Syria's leadership. "The Syrians have once again empha-

sized through the ballot boxes ... their full commitment to national unity and their opposition to discrimination, sectarianism and division," the movement said in

Hezbollah highlighted the unprecedented

tions as well as the popular demonstrations, that turned into a national ceremony, across the Syrian provinces, which had been liberated from the terrorist groups, according to Lebanese news channel Al-Manar.

The Hezbollah statement pointed out that the Syrians also reaffirmed their commitment to the political choice, which has been pursued by their government throughout modern history and based on fully adhering to the Palestinian cause, confronting occupation and aggression, and rejecting atonement as well as terrorism.

According to the statement, Hezbollah hopes Syria will restore, during the coming year, its normal and vanguard role in the Arab world and internationally, the Syrians



achieve prosperity and welfare, carry out reconstruction, enhance the return of the displaced, and liberate the territories occupied by the Israeli enemy and the terrorist groups.

China and Russia also congratulated Syria on holding the presidential election.

## Candidates elaborate on economic plans

**TEHRAN**— Just a few days after the presidential election campaigns have officially begun, candidates are laying out economic reform plans.

Following is a summary of the candidates' plans. Mohsen Rezaei:

Since Rezaei considers himself as an economic expert he thinks what he says is based on facts and figures. He claims that he will grant a cash subsidy of 450,000 tomans (almost \$107 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to 40 million Iranians per month. Rezaei promises to swiftly identify single rate for foreign currencies as he defends a single-rate foreign currency.

### **Amir Hossein Qazizade Hashemi:**

Qazizade Hashemi has started the presidential contest with lofty goals. He has stated that he will restore the stock market in three days since it only requires a presidential order in his opinion. He has also promised the young couples a 5 million toman allowance (almost \$120,000). The physician-turned politician has dubbed his administration the "government of greetings." Qazizade Hashemi, who represents the city of Mashhad in the parliament,

administration.

### Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh

Mehr Alizadeh has declared that he wishes to develop a "social economy" in Iran. He claims that his government will reduce the inflation rate in three to four months. He considers multi-rate foreign currency as a virus that infects the national economy. He recently stated that a competitive economy is on his agenda, since he believes that the government should not control more than 25% of the economy. He claims that he has been studying for two years on how to control the inflation rate.

### Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi

Raeisi believes that liquidity should be directed toward the manufacturing sector. He argues that Iran's economy is mismanaged. According to the cleric presidential contender, a coordinated economic team will lead to a stable economy. Raeisi believes that inflation can be reduced to a single rate but it entails significant efforts. Abdolnasser Hemmati

Hemmati has not yet elaborated on his plans. Hem-

has also said no Iranian will remain homeless under his mati, who has a PhD in economics and now serves as the central bank governor, has stated that he will restore the tock market, control inflation, and repair the economy.

Jalili has formulated a detailed plan to revitalize the Iranian economy. He has said that Iran might even export chicken in addition to oil and petrochemicals. The former secretary of the Supreme National Security Council has promised to release specifics of his economic plan on a daily basis. Jalili, who hold a PhD in politics, contends that the economy can be fixed if the government stops arranging conferences for "shows" and starts doing its job.

### Alireza Zakani

Zakani has stated that he will combat economic corruption. He also believes in a single foreign currency rate. He claims that he will take money from the "privileged ones" and distribute it to others with lower salaries. Zakani says he intends to force banks to generate jobs because he believes it will significantly reduce unemployment. He has also stated that he intends to invest in petrochemicals as an alternative to crude oil export.

### **Indonesia releases** Iranian oil tanker

→ 1 Speaking in a press conference on January 25, Khatibzadeh said the seizure of the Iranian tanker "was a technical issue and there have been such incidents in the shipping lines before.'

Khatibzadeh noted the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) and the ship owner company were looking to investigate the reasons for the seizure to resolve it.

 $\hbox{``The Iranian embassy and the Iranian Ministry of Transport'}\\$ and Urban Development are pursuing the issue," he added.

### Non-oil exports from Arvand Free Zone stands at \$61m in 1.5 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN—Non-oil products worth \$61 million were exported from Arvand Free Trade Zone (FTZ), in Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan, during the 1.5-month period since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), according to a provincial official.

Seyed Ali Mousavi, the deputy head of Arvand Free Zone Organization for investment and economic affairs, said the exported goods included construction materials, clinker, minerals, bitumen and various industrial oils, dates and dairy products, and were exported from the port of Shalamcheh and the ports of Khorramshahr and Abadan, which are located within the Arvand Free Zone

These goods have been exported to Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, China, Australia and Germany, and some Central Asian countries, he added.

The official had previously announced that this zone attracted \$52 million in the form of approved foreign investment projects during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

He said the status of investment making is proper in this zone

Over the past two decades, free and special economic zones have played a significant role in Iran's economy, and the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing a program for the development of the existing zones and establishing new ones.

According to Morteza Bank, the former secretary of Iranian Free Zones  $\H{ ext{High}}$  Council, over 40 percent of Iran's exports are done through the country's free trade zones and special economic zones and \$169 billion worth of commodities have been exported from these areas in the past seven years.

Development of the mentioned zones became more significant since the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as the Islamic Republic started reducing dependence on oil incomes while elevating its domestic production

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian free trade and special economic zones; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

On May 11, President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated 94 development projects worth 60 trillion rials (about \$1.42 billion) in the country's free trade and special economic zones through

Covering a variety of fields including tourism, oil and gas, industry, production, renewable energies, and power plants, fisheries, and agriculture, the mentioned projects were put into operation in Qeshm, Chabahar, Aras, Arvand, Salafchegan, and

This was the fourth series of inaugurations in the country's  $free\ trade\ and\ special\ economic\ zones\ since\ the\ previous\ Iranian$ calendar year (ended on March 20).



In the previous three rounds of inaugurations in the country's free and special economic zones, 163 projects with a total investment of 340 trillion rials (about \$8.095 billion) had been inaugurated.

The measures taken by the government for the development of the mentioned zones have been paying off significantly so that despite the negative impacts of the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic, the trade balance of the mentioned zones has stayed positive in recent years.

In late April, the Secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council Hamidreza Mo'meni announced that the trade balance of the country's free and special economic zones has been positive in the past two years despite the negative balance of the country's foreign trade.

Today, the free zones are in a good condition and positive development measures have been taken which have led to significant growth in these zones, the official said.

He further announced the establishment of a finance council in the Iranian Free Zones High Council, saying that soon advisory groups will be sent to all of the country's free zones and the zones can access sustainable financial resources for implementing new development programs.

According to the official, the country's free and economic zones should become more productive in order to be able to fund their own development projects in the future.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989-March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province, and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

## Production of special cement for oil field drilling operations indigenized

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – Managing Director of Kaveh Pars Mining Industries Development Company, which belongs to Iran's Mostazafan Foundation, announced that one of its subsidiaries has indigenized the knowledge for producing a special type of cement used for shotcrete in oil and gas field wells.

"The cement used in oil wells drilling operations is one of the necessities used in the oil industry, and the Mostazafan Foundation has succeeded in producing this strategic product," Mehr News Agency quoted Hashem Nezam-Abadi as saying.

This type of cement, which is currently being produced in one of the factories belonging to the Mostazafan Foundation, has a unique quality and meets the needs of the Iranian drilling industry, Nezam-

He said with the production of this product, the imports of the item will be stopped, adding: "At present, the company produces the mentioned cement with different grades (A, B, D, E, G) and



considering the level of production, the company can both meet the domestic market demand and also export to other

According to the official, the grade E cement produced by the mentioned company is used in deep drilled wells and for high-pressure operations and Iran is currently the only country in the region that has the knowledge to produce this grade of cement.

The Mostazafan Foundation of Islamic Revolution is the second-largest commercial enterprise in Iran behind the state-owned National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Kaveh Pars is a mining industry holding operating under the Mostazafan Foundation. The holding consists of 23 subsidiaries in six fields, including six cement companies, four steel companies, one aluminum company, two mining companies, and seven engineering, consulting, and trading services companies as well as three construction and transportation services companies.

## Iran to use \$125m of assets held in Iraq to buy Covid-19 vaccines

😝 🛘 Upon returning to Tehran, Ardakanian said that Iraq was going to open a euro bank account to pave the way for settling all the country's gas and electricity dues to Iran.

Based on an agreement which is going to be implemented in the coming days, Iraq is going to open a euro savings bank account in which the country's debts to National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and the Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) will be saved," Ardakanian said at the time

"Iraq's recent and past debts to our country will be transferred and saved in this account after being exchanged to euro," the minister said.

This way, transferring the money or using it for purchasing basic goods and medicine will be less problematic considering the U.S. sanctions, he emphasized.

Ardakanian had announced the formation of a committee for working on the issue and said: "As the Iranian head of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, I



will monitor the process on a daily basis until we achieve

## Japan ready to resume oil imports from Iran if sanctions lifted

TEHRAN – President of Petroleum Association of Japan has said his country's refiners could resume oil imports from Iran as early as three months after the U.S. sanctions on Iran are lifted, Platts reported.

In the event of confirmation of the lifting of sanctions, "we start our consideration and [the resumption of Iranian oil imports] could come as early as in three months," Tsutomu Sugimori told an online press conference Thursday.

Sugimori's comments came as negotiations between Iran and world powers on the 2015 nuclear deal are underway in Vienna and the two sides signal that an agreement is within reach.



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on May 20 a "main agreement" has been made to reinstate a nuclear deal as the U.S. has broadly committed to lifting its sanctions targeting Iran's oil, petrochemical and shipping sectors.

Idemitsu Kosan, and Cosmo Oil said on May 21 that they would consider the potential resumption of Iranian oil imports once there was confirmation of sanctions

Although it depends on the formal decision of lifting the U.S. sanctions as well as the details, we will closely coordinate with the Japanese government, financial institutions, and shipping companies," an Idemitsu Kosan official said.

Japan suspended its Iranian oil imports in May 2019 after briefly resuming imports in February for the first time in four months, as the U.S. did not extend its 180-day sanctions waiver to eight coun-

Japan's 2019 Iranian oil imports totaled 17.10 million barrels, down 63.2 percent from 46.51 million barrels in 2018, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry data.

The return of Iranian condensate, as well as many other crude grades, to the market, will likely set the stage for new competition for the Asian demand pie, prompting major producers to make competitive offers, which would significantly enhance Asian refiners' feedstock economics and overall product margins, according to refinery officials and trading sources in China, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and India.

### **TEDPIX** jumps 30,000 points on Saturday

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of d e s k Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), climbed 30,131 points to 1.139 million on Saturday (the first day of Iranian calendar week)

Over 6.952 billion securities worth 52.072 trillion rials (about \$1.239 billion) were traded at the TSE on Saturday. The first market's index gained 26,881 points, and the

second market's index rose 44.387 points. TEDPIX lost 45,000 points, or four percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.109 million points on Wednesday

(the last working day of the week). During the past week, the indices of Social Security



Investment Company, Iran Khodro Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, and Tehran Oil Refining Company were the most widely followed indices.

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

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

### Private sector to operate 90 mineral zones in Kermanshah

**ECONOMY TEHRAN**- As announced

by a provincial official, mining operation in 90 mineral zones of Kermanshah province, in the west of Iran, will be transferred to the private sector.

Holding tenders in this due has been

started since the beginning of this Iranian calendar month (May 22), Mohsen Darabi, the head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, stated. As previously reported, some 50

trillion rials (over \$1.1 billion) worth of mining projects were handed over to the private sector in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), Iran Minerals Production and Supply Company (IMPASCO), announced.

According to IMPASCO which is a subsidiary of Iranian Mines and Mining **Industries Development and Renovation** Organization (IMIDRO), last year, tenders were held for awarding 12 mining projects in which domestic investors as well as companies from China, Tajikistan, Iraq and Georgia participated.

As reported, contribution of the private sector in the country's mining sector is going to improve the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the current Iranian calendar year which has been called the year of surge in production by the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Ali Khamenei.



Utilizing the private sector's resources, the mining sector is going to generate more employment, production and value added for the country

Three weeks ago, IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour announced that IMIDRO is contributing to \$1.93 billion worth of projects that are going to be implemented by the private sector.

According to Gharibpour, IMIDRO and its subsidiaries are going to implement 31 projects, worth \$2.276 billion, in a variety of fields including steel, copper, gold, antimony, nepheline syenite, phosphate and also mining infrastructure in the

Due to the significant role of the mining sector in the country's non-oil exports, the Industry Ministry has provisioned operational targets in the mining sector's three major areas of exploration, extraction and processing in the current year.

According to Deputy Industry Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili, the mining sector accounted for 25 percent of the country's non-oil revenues in the past Iranian calendar year.

Meanwhile, as announced by the IMIDRO head, 253 idle small-scale mines were revived throughout the country in the previous Iranian calendar year.

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

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

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

Emphasizing that the above goals have been achieved as a result of productive cooperation among the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, provincial industry organizations, Iran Mines houses, and private sector companies, Jafari noted

that since the beginning of the program in March 2019 up to the end of the previous year, 303 mines have been revived.

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

reasons for the halt in their production. The program, which has been at the forefront of IMIDRO's missions over the past two years, is being pursued in several

provinces. Khodadad Gharibpour, IMIDRO's former head had mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of "Resistance Economy", saying that IMIDRO is strongly

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

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



## Close ties with Israel can entail huge risks for Arab leaders: GSA

→ 1 Officials serving the Biden administration come from a pro-Israel background and their views reflect what has been a decades-old bipartisan consensus in favor of the Jewish state. Yet younger and more progressive politicians in the Democratic Party are speaking about Israel in new ways which are far more critical of this country. This left-wing flank of the Democratic Party openly criticizes Israel and advocates for Palestinian rights, using language ("occupation", "apartheid", etc.) that a decade ago would have been difficult to imagine practically any U.S. lawmaker using when discussing Israel. This underscores how the conversation about Israel/Palestine is changing in Washington, even if Washington's current policies have not changed. The 64,000-dollar question now is how Biden will respond (if at all) to the pressure from younger and more progressive lawmakers such as those in the "Squad".

Why are American politicians, especially the Republicans, misinformed about West Asia?

This is largely connected to the fact that the American public at large is alarmingly misinformed/uninformed about the Middle East (West Asia) as well as other regions of the world where the U.S. has intervened militarily, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Among U.S. citizens, knowledge about the Middle East (West Asia) is scant. Studies have shown that most Americans are unable to identify the region on a map. Most Americans would not want to visit the Middle East (West Asia) and they do not demand that mainstream media in the U.S. provide more in-depth coverage of the region. It is no surprise that



U.S. politicians do not pay the price at the polls for being so badly misinformed about the Middle East (West Asia).

What are the main causes of recent rapprochements between states in West Asia, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar as well as Egypt and Turkey? Are they going to adapt their foreign policies based on Biden's demands?

In the region, we see many governments recalibrating their foreign policies in the post-Trump era. Although it would be an oversimplification to attribute all these recent rapprochements exclusively to the

"The left-wing flank of the Democratic Party openly criticizes Israel and advocates for Palestinian rights, using language ("occupation", "apartheid", etc.) that a decade ago would have been difficult to imagine practically any U.S. lawmaker using when discussing Israel."

 $change\ in\ leadership\ in\ Washington,\ there$ is no denying that the Biden presidency has been a major factor in play. Whereas Trump's presidency resulted in some regional states feeling emboldened to pursue more maximalist agendas, the election of Biden has resulted in these actors pushing ahead with more diplomatic foreign policies and showing real signs of being willing to possibly make concessions and accommodations to other actors, including those on opposite sides of major geopolitical fault lines. For some of these countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey, there have been fears about their bilateral relationships with the U.S. suffering amid the Biden era; thus, improving ties with other powers in the neighborhood has become a priority.

How do you assess Saudi Arabia's position on the Biden administration? Is it stronger than the past (Trump's

The Saudi leadership is adjusting to Biden's presidency. While Riyadh absolutely wanted Trump to win a second term in the November 2020 race, Saudi Arabia has come to terms with the fact that Trump's presidency ended after four years. Examples of changes in Riyadh's conduct include the release of certain political prisoners, the decision to offer the Houthis a ceasefire in March 2021, and the lifting of the three-and-a-half-year blockade of Qatar in January 2021. The decision to engage Iranian officials via Iraq also factors into this effort to adjust Saudi Arabia's foreign policy in ways that sit well with the Biden administration and the new regional circumstances created by Trump's presidency ending at the start of this year.

## Israel's existence is based on war crimes: special ambassador to UN

However, it is necessary to point to some facts that are behind its crimes in order to reveal the essence of its illegal actions because Israelis believe that war crimes give them a kind of advantage over the rest of the surrounding countries

They consider occupation as a right endorsed by Western powers who want to advance their policies in the region by

The Israeli regime today is concerned about its existence today, and therefore it increases its terrorist acts to block the path the resistance represented by some Arab resistance parties, on top of which is the Islamic Republic of Iran.

From here, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the Iranian role in supporting those rightful forces in

regaining their lands that were stolen by Israel since 1948. Can you update us about the efforts of the United Nations in dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli

First, we will address the emergency meeting of the International Commission for Human Rights requested by Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan (President of Human Rights Council), where we laid down basic points of demand in order to contain the Israeli attacks.

We insist that a meeting of the Security Council should be held in order to condemn the military actions carried out by Israel against the Palestinian people.

We have also scheduled for discussion with The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the League of Arab States, to be reflected at the Security Council meeting.

Also, we are invited, after a couple of days, to meet with the President of the International Human Rights Council, Ambassador Khan, to discuss seriously with member states and observers to find mechanisms to enforce the laws issued by the United Nations General Assembly.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said that there will be no peace "until the region says, unequivocally, they acknowledge the right of Israel to exist as an independent Jewish state." However, Israel refuses to recognize a Palestinian state. What is your

Regarding any proposal that can be adopted with the Israeli regime and the peace process, we need consensus between the Arab and Islamic countries, which provide major support to Palestine.

În this way, frankly, we face very big challenges.

The Israeli regime has not been responsive even in the minimal proposals that were presented to it in the past, and we do not know whether it will cooperate with the global community today, especially since the parties supporting it are still evading the solutions presented.

How do you evaluate the confrontation between the Palestinian resistance and Israeli forces, especially as the West has been trying to present the resistance as terrorism and been working to prevent the resistance to become strong militarily?

The Palestinian resistance showed a very high ingenuity in managing the military operation despite the superiority of the Israeli equipment, and it received great admiration even by the Western public who adopted positions that were not expected, and this is due to the wonderful scene that was created by the different Palestinian classes

We do not believe that most countries at the core of their consciences consider the Palestinian resistance as a terrorist group.

The resistance should continue its mission within a self-defense act to attract international support.



Israel attempts to portray Iran as a threat to the Arabs and the region. Given the wars waged by Israel and the crimes that it has committed against Arabs and Muslims, who is the real threat?

When any political player collides with concrete obstacles to its project, it begins to find the reasons and allies to abort the success of the hostile party, and this is the case of the Israeli regime

We will say it frankly that the lethargy and reluctance of some Arab countries to adopt their responsibilities towards Palestine as a central cause has pushed the Palestinians to search for a diverse source to achieve their goal in restoring their lands and rights, so Iran is a haven for them.

As for the threats to Arabs, we do not have the right to compare the Israeli regime that usurped all kinds of Arab rights with a country that has made every effort to suppor

## Hundreds of musicians sign letter pledging to boycott Israel over Palestinian lands occupation

 $\rightarrow$  1 The BDS movement, which is modeled after the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, was initiated in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian organizations that were pushing for "various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law."

Thousands of volunteers worldwide have since then joined the BDS movement, which calls for people and groups across the world to cut economic, cultural, and academic ties to Tel Aviv, to help promote the Palestinian

Israel occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip - the territories the Palestinians want for their future state - in 1967. Currently, about 700,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

Hundreds of employees from Amazon, Google and Apple have also called on the giant technology companies to support Palestinian rights and sever ties with Israel's military and intelligence agencies. Earlier this week, a group of more than a

thousand Canadian artists put out an open statement and asked the Ottawa government to impose military and economic sanctions on Israel and "to end its complicity in the oppression of Palestinians"

Rehab Nazzal, one of the organizers of

 $the \, statement \, and \, a \, long\text{-}time \, pro\text{-}Palestine$ activist, said Palestine has received unprecedented support in Canada in recent weeks.

"I haven't seen such support before," Nazzal said, adding that more were still joining the movement

"Signatures are coming from across Canada: curators; media and visual artists; filmmakers; workers in art organizations and artist-run centers; independent artists; musicians; researchers and art scholars; and other cultural workers," she noted.

Brussels regional parliament adopts a resolution against Israeli occupation

Separately, the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region has adopted a resolution that calls for the denunciation of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and recognizes an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, established on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital.

The resolution also calls for removal of the crippling Israeli-imposed siege of the Gaza Strip, and provision of support to Palestinians in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

It further urges the government to slap economic sanctions on the Israeli regime and to suspend all Belgian economic missions to the occupied territories.

Forty-four lawmakers voted in favor of the resolution and 25 against, while 15 representatives abstained.

### Yemenis deal heavy blows to Saudi Arabia in major multi-pronged operation

Yemeni army forces, supported by allied fighters from Popular Committees, have managed to inflict heavy losses on Saudi Arabia during a massive aerial and ground operation in the Arab kingdom's southwestern region.

In a late Friday report, Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported that the Yemeni forces managed to wrest control of dozens of sites from Saudi-led troops in the kingdom's southern region of Jizan, killing and injuring a large number of Saudi-led forces and mercenaries during the process.

It added that Yemeni forces managed to assert full control over at least 40 sites in the Saudi region after forcing the Saudi-led troops, including Sudanese mercenaries, to hastily retreat.

The large-scale operations also inflicted heavy material and equipment losses on Saudi-led forces, al-Masirah said. The report also said that a full account of the offensive,

along with photos and footage, will be published on Saturday

afternoon.

Meanwhile, Spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree announced early on Saturday that army troops and allied fighters from Popular Committees had hit sensitive targets in King Khalid airbase in the Saudi city of Khamis Mushait, some 884 kilometers south of the Saudi capital Rivadh.

 $\label{eq:Al-Massirah} \begin{picture}(100,0) \put(0,0){\line(1,0){100}} \put(0,0){\line(1,0){100}$ was carried out by two of the country's domestically-developed Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drones.

Saree stressed that the strike was "accurate," and said the attack came in response to the continuing aggression and brutal siege on his country.

Yemen's Air Force carried out a number of operations against sensitive and important sites in Saudi Arabia during the past few months, targeting Abha International Airport as well as

the airbase in Khamis Mushait.

Yemenis have stepped up their attacks on Saudi Arabia in recent months, saying the retaliatory strikes will continue as long as Riyadh carries on with its airstrikes and blockade. Saudi Arabia, backed by the U.S. and other regional allies, launched a devastating war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing Hadi's government back to power and crushing Ansarullah.

Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees have, however, gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the

The Saudi-led military aggression has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions of people. The Saudi war has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases across the country.

### Mali court appoints Assimi Goita as interim president

Mali's constitutional court has named the colonel who led a military coup this week as the country's new interim leader.

The ruling, issued late on Friday, said Assimi Goita would "lead the transition process to its conclusion" and carry the title of "president of the transition, head of state".

The court said it had made the decision due to the "vacancy in the presidency" following the resignation of caretaker President Bah Ndaw.

Goita, 38, was previously Ndaw's deputy, and had ordered the former leader's arrest on Monday following a cabinet reshuffle that stripped two soldiers of their ministerial posts.

Ñdaw resigned while in detention on Ŵednesday and was later

Friday's ruling raised the stakes as West African leaders prepared to meet on Sunday to decide how they would respond to the takeover, which regional and Western governments fear could could exacerbate instability in northern and central Mali and undermine a regional fight against armed groups linked to al-Qaeda and ISIL (ISIS).

Goita's power grab is his second in less than a year.

Last August, the young colonel led a coup that deposed Mali's elected President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita amid protests against perceived corruption and the government's failure to quell armed groups. But faced with the threat of regional sanctions, Goita and other coup leaders agreed to hand over power to a transitional government that would steer the country back to civilian rule.

The colonel was then appointed vice president of the interim government and his fellow soldiers were given key cabinet posts.

At the time, mediators from the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) insisted that Mali's transition, which is due to end with elections in February, remain civilian-led. The bloc stipulated in a joint declaration that the vice president of the transition "cannot under any circumstances replace the president".

### **U.S.** senators seek probe into COVID-19 origins, accuse China of 'cover-up'

The U.S. Senate has passed a resolution calling for a probe into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic and senators accused Beijing of "cover-up", amid claims by Washington that the virus originated in a lab in China.

The resolution, passed on Friday, calls for the World Health Assembly (WHA), which is the forum through which the World Health Organization (WHO) is governed by its 194 member states, to conduct a probe into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The legislation adds that the U.S. and "willing partner governments and experts" will launch an inquiry if an investigation is not approved by the WHA.

The resolution was spearheaded by Senators Roger Marshall (R-Kan.) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.).

'It's outrageous that a comprehensive investigation on the origins of COVID-19 has still not been carried out. With the World Health Assembly meeting this week we must get a full investigation into the outbreak," Marshall said in a statement. "If China continues on its path of cover-up, we must begin planning a full investigation,  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right)$ including with partners around the world.

"There must be a thorough and transparent investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic—obstruction is completely unacceptable. Our resolution makes clear that the U.S. believes that the previous WHO investigation was flawed, that there must be accountability, and all potential origins of this virus, including a lab leak, must be investigated fully," added Gillibrand.

The development comes two days after the Senate passed legislation requiring the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to declassify information about the origins of COVID-19, including on activities in the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, China, which U.S. authorities say is at the center of the lab-leak

U.S. President Joe Biden on Wednesday ordered U.S. intelligence agencies to find out whether the virus originated in the lab in China. Biden said that top U.S. health officials were investigating

whether the virus could have occurred naturally or came from a Chinese lab in Wuhan. Biden's order signals an escalation in mounting controversy over the origins of the virus.

The Chinese government said on Thursday that Biden is playing politics by calling for an investigation into the origins of the

Biden "does not care about facts and truth, nor is it interested in serious scientific origin tracing," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Thursday, The Associated Press reported. The spokesperson also urged the Biden administration to be

more transparent about how the virus spread in the United States.

### **Putin slams West's censure** of Belarus

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the West's reaction to the grounding of a passenger jet and the arrest of a dissident was "an outburst of emotion."

Putin made the remarks in a meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Sochi on Friday, during which he also reminded the Europeans of the forcing down of the plane carrying former Bolivian president Evo Morales on U.S. orders.

Based on U.S.-supplied inaccurate intelligence that Snowden, who had exposed America's massive electronic snooping efforts across the globe, was on board the Bolivia-bound aircraft, the plane was hijacked mid-air and searched after the forced landing.

The talks between Putin and Lukashenko in the Black Sea city of Sochi were planned prior to the plane incident - in which dissident blogger Roman Protasevich, wanted in Belarus on terrorism charges, was detained along with his Russian companion - but came after many European states-imposed flights bans on Belarusian aviation as the EU is mulling further sanctions.

During the meeting, Lukashenko told Putin he would share with him confidential documents about the Ryanair incident to explain what really happened.

Russia says Belarus has demonstrated a readiness for transparency in the row with Western governments. It has described the West's reaction to the plane incident as "shocking," with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov slamming Western effort to "demonize" the authorities in Minsk.

The U.S. and allied European countries have accused Belarus of piracy after Belarusian air traffic control on Sunday informed the Ryanair pilot of a hoax bomb threat and scrambled a MiG-29 fighter jet to escort the passenger plane down.

After searching the aircraft, local authorities arrested Protasevich and his girlfriend, who remain in custody on charges of inciting mass riots in Belarus following the reelection of Lukashenko late last year. He could be sentenced to a prison term of up to 15 years.

### Rouhani inaugurates 526 tourism projects in 24 provinces

→ 1 The average of international travels to and from Iran fell by 80 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20, 2021) from a year earlier. "During this period, 4,343,163 passengers entered the country, which included 3,030,464 Iranian passengers and 512,699 international travelers," said Arezou Ghaniun, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration.



Coronavirus-related travel restrictions are seen as the main barrier standing in the way of the recovery of international tourism, along with slow virus containment and low consumer confidence. The lack of coordinated response among countries to ensure harmonized protocols and coordinated restrictions, as well as the deteriorating economic environment, were also identified by experts as important obstacles for recovery.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, Iran aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

### Garden dedicated to tribal cultures inaugurated near Tehran

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** – A landscaped garden dedicated to tribal people and their associated cultures, traditions, and rituals has recently been inaugurated in Karaj, which is situated westward of the Iranian capital.



Science Minister Mansour Gholami, Secretary-General of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO Hojatollah Ayoubi, Karaj Mayor Asghar Kamalizadeh, and Academy of Persian Language and Literature Director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel were amongst attendees to the opening ceremony of the cultural garden.

The garden is situated within a theme park named "Little Iran" that is home to miniature replicas of many Iranian historical sites, monuments, and travel destinations.

Karaj is the capital of Alborz province, which is surrounded by Mazandaran, Tehran, Markazi, and Qazvin provinces. Its name is driven by the Alborz Mountains. A significant part of the mountains is located in the north part of the province. Historical resources and documents as well as archeological studies indicate that Alborz has a rich culture dating back to prehistoric times.

## Iranian handicrafts: Jajim of

**HERITAGE TEHRAN**—Jajim weaving is a significant handk icraft of Alasht village in Savadkuh, Mazandaran province. This craft has passed on from one generation to the next and has turned into a tradition that is learned by daughters from their mothers.

Jajim is used as a floor covering and in terms of thickness it is a midpoint of thick fabrics and Kelims or "Palas" (a kind of coarse fabric). Beginning from a long time ago, artist women of Alasht occupy themselves with weaving Jajims, and by doing so, they not only provide a share of the income of the family but also create a kind of social structure by connecting the producers of the raw materials with the weavers of this product.

Jajim weaving was received national recognition from the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization as the principal handicraft of Alasht village in the May – June of 2018, according to



In addition to its ancient history and high quality, the supply of all the raw materials from local resources was the reason that led to this recognition. These Jajims are weaved using yarns that have been produced from the sheep bred locally and are dyed using herbal pigments from plants that grow frequently in the northern region of Iran.

The patterns and motifs of this colorful hand weave of Alasht, which have gained an international reputation due to their exportation, are completely imaginative. Geometric and stripe patterns in different colors such as green, orange, yellow, brown, white, and blue are mostly found among them. The wrap and weft threads can be from wool, even though cotton wraps and wool weft are combined occasionally.

## Parthian underground city getting prepared for public visits

TOURISM TEHRAN—Samen underground city is getting prepared to reopen to the public in west-central Iran. The ancient troglodytic settlement dates back to the Parthian era (247 BC - 224 CE) based on archaeological evidence.

Currently, an entrance, which bears Parthian architectural motives and elements, is being constructed next to the underground city, which is located in Hamedan province, CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Ali-Malmir as saying on Saturday

Installation of lighting equipment, museum displays, and security devices are amongst other works being carried out in the underground town, the official noted.

He expressed hope that the restoration of the ancient site to be completed by the month of Shahrivar (starting August 23), the report said.

Samen subterranean settlement has 25 rock-carved rooms, interlinked tunnels, and corridors, the official noted.

The subterranean complex appears to have been first used for religious purposes, then as a cemetery, and finally as a shelter during emergencies

The underground complex, located 400 km west of Tehran, is believed to be built sometime between the fall of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC) and the early Parthian era (247 BC-224 CE).

Excavations at the site began in 2005



and are still going on. So far tens of well-preserved skeletons have been retrieved from its interconnected chambers.

Iran is a haven for ancient troglodytic architecture which is somewhat forgotten though they are filled with life and creativity. The northwest Kandovan village is one of the most famous examples of troglodytic architecture in the country; its ice-cream cone-shaped homes are resembling that of Turkey's Cappadocia.

In October 2018, the country hosted the 3rd International Troglodytic Architecture Conference in which tens of experts, researchers, and academia discussed troglodyte-associated architecture, culture, and technology.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamadan has had many names: it was possibly the Bit Daiukki of the Assyrians, Hangmatana, or Agbatana, to the Medes, and Ecbatana to the Greeks. One of the Median capitals, under Cyrus II (the Great; died 529 BC) and later Achaemenian rulers, it was the site of a royal summer palace.

About 1220 Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386 it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, and the inhabitants massacred. It was partly restored in the 17th century and subsequently changed hands often between Iranian ruling houses and the Ottomans.

Sitting on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy. Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few

### Agritourism development high on agenda for Iran ministry of tourism

**TOURISM TEHRAN** – The development of agritourism is high on the agenda for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts,

the deputy minister said on Thursday.
The implementation of agricultural tourism projects and sustainable management in the realm of agritourism has provided an opportunity for the presentation of tourism products, Vali Teymouri added.

Tourism and cultural heritage projects have unique economic, social and cultural functions and their added value could contribute to economic prosperity and social vitality, the official added.

Experts believe that in addition to the customer services jobs, agritourism pays special attention to the production sector, saying agricultural tourism is much more important and practical than other branches of tourism because it creates a new chain and diversity in the field of production

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might include outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting), entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands)

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ ranch recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc.

 $A gritour is \ a \ subset \ of \ a \ larger \ industry \ called \ rural$ tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets,



non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside

## Minister inspects recreational port construction in northern Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN - Cultural d e s k Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan on Friday paid a visit to the construction possess of a recreational port in Gilan

The minister Also promised to attract investors and to convince the government to assist in purchasing pleasure boats and  $% \left\{ \left( 1\right) \right\} =\left\{ \left( 1\right) \right$ cruise ships for the port, which is situated in the Chamkhaleh region of the lush green province, IRNA reported.

A budget of 500 billion rials (about \$12 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the construction project, said Hamidreza Abai, the director-general of ports focusing on seaports were also unveiled, the country to meet its ambitious target adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range



Abai said the cooperation of tourism investors will be essential for both an acceleration of the project and a subsequent maritime tourism boost.

During the visit, two research projects

"One of the research plans is a comprehensive document of ports and maritime using documents based on photos and evidence on Gilan ports in the Caspian Sea, while the other is about the historical document of the sunken boat discovered in Talesh," the official noted.

Over the past couple of years, the Islamic Republic has made various efforts to exploit maritime tourism potential by developing hospitality infrastructures, diversifying sea routes, and drawing private sector investors along its vast southern and northern coasts.

Prosperous maritime tourism could help

of attracting 20 million annual tourists

Bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the north, Gilan, in the far past, was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE.

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 is the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and

### Cultural complex, square in Isfahan added to national heritage list

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** – Abbasi Cultural Complex d e s k and nearby square in downtown Isfahan have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism announced the inscription in a letter to the gov-

ernor-general of the province, IRNA reported on Saturday. The cultural complex and square were built in front of the prominent Abbasi Hotel in 1971. The fully-restored hotel which is one of the most visited tourist attractions in the city was once the Safavid-era caravanserai of the Madraseh-ye

The cultural complex is used as a venue for cultural events and handicraft sales, while book sales are conducted in

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars,



museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing

it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast  $perfectly\ with\ the\ encircling\ hot,\ dry\ Iranian\ countryside.$ 

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning "Image of the World"), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.

Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

### Specialized coin museum to be established in Kordestan

TOURISM TEHRAN - Cultural k heritage authorities of Kordestan province are slated to establish a museum dedicated to historical coins

and currency Coins from different historical eras of Iran and other countries will be displayed in the museum in the city of Qorveh, the tourism chief of the western city announced on Saturday.

Covering an area of 250 square meters, the museum is expected to generate over six job opportunities following its inauguration, Mohammad Moradi added.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, coins and coinage, standardized units of metal used as a medium of exchange, were first introduced into Persia by the Achaemenid Darius I (521-486 BC).

Before modern times the Persian economy consisted of a conglomeration of regional economies, each with a mint and a currency system geared to local commerce, rather than an integrated national economy. For this reason, it is more sensible to study changes in the output (weight, fineness) of a single mint over time, rather than trying to arrive at

an estimation of a nonexistent national The name Kordestan refers to the re-

gion's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), the name Kurdistan was applied to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains.

It was during the reign of Abbas I the Great of Iran's Safavid dynasty (1501– 1736) that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.



## National day for rare diseases approved

SOCIETY TEHRAN – The eighth day of Esfand (the last Iranian calendar month) which falls on February 26 has been approved to be designated as the national day of rare diseases in the national calendar, ISNA news agency reported on Saturday.

Approved by the Public Culture Council, affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the proposal was approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, which will be announced by the presidency.

Rare Disease Day is internationally celebrated on the last day of February to raise awareness for rare diseases and improve access to treatment and medical representation for individuals with rare diseases and their families.

The Rare Diseases Foundation of Iran has been celebrating this day since 2009 by holding international conferences with the participation of officials, artists, athletes and supporters, and ambassadors of rare diseases.

The proposal to nominate the National Day of Rare Diseases was also supported by the Ministries of Interior, Health, Welfare, and Education.

Naming the National Rare Diseases Day and introducing more of these diseases to the community can play an effective role in identifying and achieving more accurate statistics of these patients.



National Document on Rare Diseases The National Document on Rare Diseases has been approved in December 2020, with the aim of preventing the birth of infants with rare diseases, medical and therapeutic

Patients with rare diseases launched and signed a petition calling for drawing up a national document on rare diseases on the occasion of Rare Disease Day, February 28, 2019.

The National Document on Rare Diseases,

which was recently prepared in collaboration with the Rare Diseases Foundation and the University of Tehran and was drafted by prominent domestic and foreign experts.

The main vision of this document is to prevent the birth of infants with rare diseases and to solve the medical and therapeutic problems of rare patients in the country.

Rare diseases prevalence

Between 6,000 and 8,000 types of rare diseases have been registered worldwide,

and in Iran, 344 types of rare diseases have

According to the statistics published in 2019, the number of rare diseases identified in Iran has reached 344 types of diseases and about 4,750 people are covered by the Rare Diseases Foundation of Iran.

Out of a thousand population, 2 people get a rare disease, while the prevalence can be curbed by changing people's culture, screening, identifying, preventing the births, and raising awareness.

According to WHO, rare diseases are often serious, chronic, and life-threatening. The European Union (EU) definition of a rare disease is one that affects fewer than 5 in 10,000 people. At present, more than 6000 rare diseases are known; around 80 percent of them are genetic disorders and half of them occur during childhood.

Grouped together, rare diseases affect 6–8 percent (or about 30 million people) out of the 508 million population of EU countries. This roughly equals the estimated prevalence of diabetes in the World Health Organization European Region, which in 2013 was 6.8 percent of 658.7 million adults in the 20 to 79-year age group.

Rare diseases are associated with a high psychological burden for the patient but they can also have a major impact on a patient's family. In addition to the health burden on patients, few of these diseases have effective drug treatment available.

## Domestic, foreign experts to exchange ocean sciences

**ENVIRONMENT**description of the UNESCO and maritime organizations will hold various programs on the occasion of World Oceans Day 2021.

The programs aim to promote ocean sciences among the people by increasing the maritime knowledge of teachers in coastal provinces at the beginning of the decade of ocean sciences (2020-2021), exchange of experiences on the ocean and marine data of scientists, new measurements to obtain up-to-date information on the country's coastal waters, as well as to draw the attention of individuals to the importance of oceans and their impact on lives and livelihoods.

From March 30 to June 2, education workshops will be held for teachers in the southern coastal provinces, including, Khuzestan, Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Sistan-Baluchestan.

The ocean covers over 70 percent of the planet equaling 361 million square kilometers. It is our life source, supporting humanity's sustenance and that of every other organism on earth.

The seas and oceans are known to be home to about 230,000 species of animals, although most of the depths of the oceans have not yet been discovered, and it is estimated that there are more than two million aquatic species.

The ocean produces at least 50 percent of the planet's oxygen, it is home to most of the earth's biodiversity and is the main source of protein for more than a billion people around the world. Not to mention, the ocean is key to our economy with an estimated 40 million people being em-

ployed by ocean-based industries by 2030.

Even though all its benefits, the ocean is now in need of support.

With 90 percent of big fish populations depleted, and 50 percent of coral reefs destroyed, we are taking more from the ocean than can be replenished.

"The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods" is the theme for World Oceans Day 2021, as well as a declaration of intentions that launches a decade of challenges to get the Sustainable Development Goal 14, "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources", by 2030.

Oceans in 'hot water'

Overfishing, pollution, and coastal development, among other pressures, have impacted the entire ocean, from shallow waters to the deep sea, and climate change will continue to cause a growing spectrum of effects across marine ecosystems.

Since the industrial revolution, human activities have increasingly destroyed and degraded forests, grasslands, wetlands, and other important ecosystems, threatening human well-being. Some 75 percent of the Earth's ice-free land surface has already been significantly altered, most of the oceans are polluted, and more than 85 percent of the area of wetlands has been lost.

The most important direct driver of biodiversity loss in terrestrial systems in the last several decades has been a land-use change, primarily the conversion of pristine native habitats into agricultural systems; while much of the oceans have been overfished. Globally, climate change has not been the most important driver of the loss of biodiversity to date,



yet in the coming decades it is projected to become as, or more, important than the other drivers.

The loss of biodiversity is not only an environmental issue but a development, economic, global, ethical, and moral one. It is also a self-preservation issue. Biodiversity plays a critical role in providing food, fiber, water, energy, medicines, and other genetic materials; and is key to the regulation of our climate, water quality, pollution, pollination services, flood control, and storm surges. In addition, nature underpins all dimensions of human health and contributes to non-material levels — inspiration and learning, physical and psychological experiences, and shaping our identities — that are central in quality of life and cultural integrity.

### Astan-e Quds delivers 300 ventilators to India

SOCIETY TEHRAN – Astan-e Quds des Kazavi (a charitable trust which manages the Imam Reza holy shrine) sent 300 ventilators to India on Friday to help counter the coronavirus pandemic.

The devices are made in Iran and comply with the highest international standards, ILNA reported.

Ali Chegini, Iran's ambassador to New Delhi, said that "despite being imposed the most severe sanctions, Iran has fortunately reached a good stage in the production of high-tech medical equipment, and today could donate 300 high-quality ventilators to India."

The donations have been dispatched to several hospitals, public and charitable treatment centers for coronavirus by the Iranian Embassy to India and the Indian Red Cross, he stated.

India is currently at the epicenter of the global coronavirus pandemic, as the nation has been hit by a devastating second wave,

with more than 345,000 deaths - the third highest in the world.

The wave overwhelmed the healthcare system, with people struggling to get hospital beds, oxygen, and medicines and crematoriums ran out of space.

On April 25, Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki, in a letter to his Indian counterpart, expressed readiness to provide technical assistance, expertise, and equipment to contain coronavirus as new cases surge in India.

The government and people of Iran are ready not to withhold any technical, expert, and equipment assistance in these difficult days and help Indian citizens to curb the epidemic, he wrote.

Iran's self-sufficiency

With the outbreak of coronavirus, Iran surged its production to meet the country's need for self-protective equipment along with medical and pharmaceutical items to fight against the virus, at a time when other

developed countries were struggling with a severe lack of personal protective tools.

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

Sepideh Golbaz, an official with the Food and Drug Administration said on April 20 that imports of coronavirus detection kits have dropped to zero as some 24 knowledge-based companies are producing kits to meet the domestic needs.

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

He also announced that two types of

diagnostic kits are now mass-produced by knowledge-based companies, first one is the RT-PCR tests, 8 million of which are being produced per month; while the other is serology-based tests that a total of 400,000 are being manufactured monthly and is expected to reach up to 2 million.

At present, 40 advanced ventilators are manufactured daily in the medical equipment sector, he explained.

Production of more than one million face masks per day, production of more than 1.5 liters of disinfectants per day, diagnostic kits, non-contact thermometers, protective clothing, ventilator are among the produces manufactured by these companies, he added.

Iranian-made innovative products in the field of diagnosis, screening, and fighting coronavirus were also unveiled to combat the disease, namely, ozone generator, nanotechnology face shields, disinfection gate, and molecular COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

### **ENGLISH IN USE**

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## FDA to penalize manufacturers producing unlabeled GM foods

Iran's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will penalize food manufacturers who have not labeled genetically modified (GM) food products, Vahid Mofid, the caretaker of the FDA department of food and beverages has announced.

All food products containing ingredients derived from GMOs must be labeled, including soybean and corn oil, rapeseed and cottonseed, he also noted.

He went on to say that eight laboratories in addition to the Energy & Power Industries Laboratories Company can test the products in terms of containing GM organism.

Labeling the products is merely done out of respect for the customer and providing the consumer with different choices and has nothing to do with the product's safety and health, he concluded.

## سازمان غـذا و دارو با محصـولات تراریخته فاقـد برچسـب برخـورد مـی کند

مدیر کل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غنا و دارو، وحید مفید در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اعلام کرد: تمام محصولات تراریخته در سطح عرضه کنترل می شوند و در صورتی که تراریخته باشند اما برچسب نداشته باشند، حتماً برخورد می کنیم. وی اضافه کرد: برخی محصولات در کشور مانند ذرت، سویا و کلزا از نوع تراریخته وجود دارد و فرآورده های غذایی در صورت استفاده از این محصولات تراریخته باید آن را روی برچسب خود اعلام کنند.

ر پستب صود، صحم فیـد افـزود: هشـت آزمایشـگاه عـلاوه بر آزمایشـگاه مرجـع در کشــور می تواننــد تراریختگی ا تعییــن کنند.

را تعییس دست. مدیـرکل فـرآورده هـای غذایـی و آشـامیدنی سـازمان غـذا و دارو گفـت: درج تراریختگـی در برچسـب جلـوی ترکیبـات، صرفـاً احتـرام بـه مشـتری و فراهــم کـردن قـدرت انتخـاب برای مصرفکننـده اسـت و هیـچ ارتباطـی بـا ایمنـی و سـلامت آن فـرآورده نـدارد.

### COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. May 28

New cases	7,107
New deaths	173
Total cases	2,893,218
Total deaths	79,741
New hospitalized patients	1,062
Patients in critical condition	4,296
Total recovered patients	2,425,033
Diagnostic tests conducted	19,687,077
Doses of vaccine injected	3,846,520

### Vaccination against coronavirus to end by late November: Rouhani

→ 1 To vaccinate people with underlying diseases, about 14-15 million doses of vaccine is required, while we now have 5 million doses, so another 10 million must be provided to complete the process by the end of July, then we will continue the process with foreign and domestic vaccines, he explained.

He expressed hope to start vaccination of the whole population by the end of the summer (September 23), noting that given the country's ability of vaccine administration, vaccinating 500,000 people in 24 hours, the entire population can receive the vaccine within three to four months.

He further warned of the fourth wave of the pandemic, calling one the people for more adherence to health guidelines and combat the virus.

 $\label{eq:mass_problem} Mass\ vaccination\ against\ COVID-19\ started\ on\ Iranian\ citizens\ with\ the\ Russian-made\ Sputnik\ V\ vaccine\ on\ February\ 9.$ 

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**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, and started

to be mass-produced on March 29. Meanwhile, a vaccine developed by the Razi Vaccine and Se-

rum 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, entered the second phase of the human trial on Friday. 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.

"Osvid-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.

## Five snake species endemic to Iran

(Part 1)

Many wildlife species in Iran are unknown to ordinary people. It becomes clear when a video of a spider-tailed horned viper goes viral on social media, and many people wonder whether this strange animal really lives in Iran.

However, the world of reptiles is full of the unspoken and many reptiles of the country are unique in their kind.

In the following article, we get you acquainted with some of the wonders of snake species in Iran. What you read below is a brief description of the life and biological characteristics of some of the most unique snakes in Iran.

Montivipera latifii

The Montivipera species group consists of the venomous snakes with 5 known species and sub-species; Montivipera albicornuta, M.latifii, M.raddei raddei, M.raddei kurdistanica, and M.kuhrangica, which their taxonomic situation is very controversial. These species live in alpine meadows from 1800 to more than 3200 meters from SL.

The populations of these species are really fragmented and are posed to the serious danger of extinction because of humane activities. Because of the high risk of extinction, M.latifii is sited in Endangered category of IUCN Red List. The first step to applying the conservation plans is to know the exact taxonomic situation and precise distribution areas.

Manthuiners latifii is found in Iron in the upper Levyelley.

Montivipera latifii is found in Iran in the upper Lar valley in the Alborz Mountains. Unfortunately, the mountain plains that are home to this species are being severely degraded by overgrazing. Currently, the largest protected area of this species in Lar National Park has an uncertain future due to threats such as habitat destruction due to overgrazing and excessive tourist presence.

"This snake is one of the few snakes in the world that has two completely different designs of zigzag and linear and another design that combines the two," Khosro Rajabizadeh, a biodiversity expert at the University of Ghent in Belgium said.

Interestingly, babies are born with different designs from

one mother, he added.

The total habitat of this species is not more than 150 km and in terms of width it may not be more than 20 to 30 km; because it is found only in the heights of the southern slopes of Alborz, he added.

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- Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
- Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh
- Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 88808895 info@tehrantimes.com
- Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000 Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
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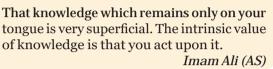




No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.o. Box: 14155-4843







## West-East Divan, Goethe and

Hafez poetry

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the most renowned poet of German literature, was already from his youth deeply interested in the

He planned to write a drama about the Prophet Muhammad (S), as witnessed by the poem Mahomets-Gesang. But it was not until later, during his period of romanticism, that the poet devoted his attention to the literature and history of Persia.

Goethe considered literature (language) and religion as the best aids to discovering other cultures. In addition to Persian literature, he also learned the Arabic language and script and studied the teachings of Zoroaster as well as those of Islam.

Goethe's productive preoccupation with Persia goes back to the years 1814 to 1827; and it was, above all, his acquaintance with Hafez which increasingly awakened his interest in Persian

Goethe's West-East Divan marks a literary encounter between German and Persian literature which began in 1814. In the spring of that year, Goethe received a German translation of Hafez's in two volumes from the publisher Cotta of Stuttgart.

The translator was the Austrian Orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856), whose translations and commentaries played a major role in acquainting Germans with the East.

Hammer's translation of the divan broadened and expanded the knowledge of the Orient which Goethe had acquired in his youth, so that he could now, at the age of 65, devote himself more intensively to the East, and predominantly to Persia.

Goethe's approach to Hafez began with enthusiasm, which, in its turn, led to interchange and dialogue, and, in the Divan, assumed a lyric-prosaic form. The need for communication, for narrative and for finding one's way into a different society is characteristic of the essence of the Divan.

 $The \ dialogue \ with \ Hafez, however, demanded \ a \ knowledge able$ analysis of the Oriental world. For this there was no lack of material; for, apart from the works of such travelers to the Orient as Marco Polo, Pietro della Valle, and Adam Olearius, and, above all, the translations of Sadi's Gulistan and Bustan, Goethe also read works by Orientalists, such as Hammer's Geschichte der Schönen Redekünste Persiens.

Goethe borrowed the term divan, "poetry collection", from Hammer; but he first referred to his work in a letter to his wife Christine dated 29 July 1814, and in his diary on 30 July 1814 as "poems addressed to Hafez", and occasionally also

In May 1815, Goethe described his collection, consisting of 100 poems with an index, as "a little whole". Before deciding on the title West-East Divan, he had given various names to the collection at various stages of its evolution; but in all the titles for this complex work, he retained the word Divan.

Between 1814 and 1815, the Divan was considerably expanded, due to Goethe's acquaintance with Marianne Jung (later Marianne von Willemer), who awakened fresh feelings of love in the aging poet, which he later expressed in the Buch Suleika.

Goethe's lyrical work was publicized by an announcement in Cotta's Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände on February 24, 1816, as also by preprints in the morning paper of March 22, 1816 and in the Taschenbuch für Damen auf das Jahr 1817. Between 1817 and 1819, the year when the divan appeared, several successive phases of development took place.

The last phase included the prose section, which in the first edition of 1819 bore the title Besseren Verständnis. Since certain passages seemed to be incomprehensible to his readers, Goethe

decided to supplement them with commentary.

Hammer's Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens reached him on May 3, 1818, and kept him busy studying the history of Persian and Oriental literature until late June; this was a primary source of his commentary.

In early June 1818, the first drafts on Persian culture were prepared; on September 17, the outline for the Besseren Verständnis was completed.

In the prose section, Goethe refers to imperfections in his work and to a plan for a Künftiger Divan; he also explains how he went about his Oriental studies.

His arguments about Eastern poetry, as well as about the Christian Orient, are fully represented. Goethe's preoccupations with travel descriptions by visitors to the East, as well as German translations of Oriental works, which formed the source of his own knowledge about the East, are also discussed in this part.

A characteristic mark of this less lyrical and more prosaic part of the divan is Goethe's passage from travelers to the Orient to Orientalists, which simultaneously marks an evolution from descriptions based on personal experience to scholarly accounts of the East.

Among the main activities of Orientalists was translating from Oriental languages; Goethe ends his Divan with a chapter reflecting on the problems of translation.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

## Iran's Mohammad Hayati among winners of Milky Way photo contest

🚺 TEHRAN – Iranian d e s k photographer Mohammad Hayati is among the 25 winners of the Milky Way Photographer of the Year competition, which is organized every year by the travel and adventure photography blog Capture the Atlas.

Hayati was selected for his "Night Lovers", a single photo taken near the Persian Gulf in Hormozgan Province.

This picture depicts the Milky Way rising on a fascinating spring night in the region. "The stunning cliffs of this area make

every viewer imagine and even talk to them," Hayati wrote in a statement for his photo.

"The light pollution from a faraway city was quite strong, so it was a challenging post-processing process," he added.

"I'm a nightscaper who tries to achieve an artistic look in my images, and in this image, I tried to convey and capture the magic of this location," he noted.

The spring of each year is considered the peak of the Milky Way season and by its competition, Capture the Atlas aims to inspire others and share the beauty of the

There no top winner or runner-up at this competition and 25 of the best and most inspiring images are selected from around the

Winning images have been captured in 12 countries, including the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Iran, Turkey, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland



"Night Lovers" by Iranian photographer Mohammad Hayati is among the winners of the Milky Way Photographer of the Year competition.

### Maestro Rahbari's latest music to feature Goethe's Hafez-inspired poetry

**TEHRAN** – Maestro Ali Rahbari plans to d e s k compose a piece for a poem from German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's West-East Divan

composed under inspiration from the Persian poet Hafez. The piece has been commissioned by Naxos Records, a Hong Kong-based German record label specializing in classical music, the Persian service of the ILNA reported

Naxos Records has so far released three volumes of Rahbari's album, "My Mother Persia".

The China NCPA Orchestra plans to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between Iran and China by performing two symphonic poems from the album in two concerts during July.

Goethe wrote the West-East Divan between 1814 and 1819 under the influence of Hafez's poetry.

The collection marks a literary encounter between German and Persian literature which began in 1814.

In the spring of that year, Goethe received a German translation of Hafez's divan in two volumes from the publisher Cotta of Stuttgart.

 $The \, translator \, was \, the \, \overset{\frown}{A}ustrian \, Orientalist \, Joseph \, von$ Hammer-Purgstall, whose translations and commentaries played a major role in acquainting Germans with the East.

Hammer's translation of the divan broadened and expanded the knowledge of the Orient which Goethe had acquired in his youth, so that he could now, at the age of 65, devote himself more intensively to the East, and predominantly to Persia.

"In fact, Hammer-Purgstall built a bridge between Goethe and Hafez," Iranian scholar Kurosh Kamali Sarvestani once said. The connection between Goethe and Hafez has always

been a source of inspiration for other art productions. Iranian filmmaker Farshad Fereshteh-Hekmat made the docufiction "Hafez and Goethe" in 2018 to shed light

on Goethe's great inspiration from Hafez.



Iranian composer Ali Rahbari.



"Cinema Cristal" by Marlies Pöschl and Farnaz Jurabchian.

**TEHRAN** – Visions of Iran – Iranian Film Festival Cologne has put the spotlight in its 2021 edition on short movies on women's stories by female filmmakers

Seven films selected by Iranian filmmaker Ghasideh Golmakani and the director of the festival, Amin Farzanefar, will be reviewed in a special section entitled "Women in Iran: Short Films", the organizers have announced.

"Taxi Is Here" directed by Sara Aqababaian is one of the films. It is about a mysterious woman in a taxi. The driver looks familiar, so she invites him over - she wants to share a secret with him. "Origami" is another movie in the lineup.

The film directed by Marjan Hashemi tells the story of Sudeh who has feelings for her classmate. The sports teacher finds out about this, becomes jealous and threatens to report

this forbidden love to the school principal. Director Maryam Naraqi's drama "Let

the Past Go by" will also be reviewed in this section.

by women filmmakers

Cologne Visions of Iran spotlights shorts

Unlike her father, Bahar hasn't yet overcome the tragedy of her younger brother's death. When his killer is released from jail, she tries to make him suffer emotionally. Her endeavors result in a change in her perspective.

The lineup also includes "Horn" by Ghasideh Golmakani. It follows a woman from Tehran who urgently needs to find a parking space for her car. Men on the street have their concentration disturbed.

"Spotted Yellow" will be screened. Directed by Baran Sarmad, the film is about Roya, a young girl with a yellow spot on her face, who suddenly feels clear signs

The section will also review director Mahbubeh Kalai's animated movie "Sink". A tiny man and a small woman emerge from the coffee grounds in the sink. A story of love and death - infinitely delicately designed.

"Cinema Cristal", a documentary co-directed by Marlies Pöschl and Farnaz Jurabchian, has also been selected to be screened. The movie revolves around film lovers and contemporary witnesses who share their memories and stories connected with the old cinemas on Tehran's Lalezar

The Visions of Iran is scheduled to take place online in Cologne, Germany from

### Docs from Iran to compete in Sebastopol festival

TEHRAN – Iranian short movies "A d e s k Horse Has More Blood Than a Human" and "Three Meters and a Few Centimeters" will be competing in the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival, which will take place in Sonoma County, Northern California, from June 10 to 13.

Directed by Abolfazl Taluni, the acclaimed movie "A Horse Has More Blood Than a Human" is about an older couple, who leave Tehran and return to their idyllic hometown on the Turkish border, but their dreams of quiet retirement are shattered by the realization that their town has become a smuggling gateway into Europe, and everyone they know

The film brought Iranian cinematographer Mehdi Azadi a Golden Frog of the 28th Energa Camerimage International Film Festival in Poland in November 2020.

"Three Meters and a Few Centimeters" directed by Mostafa Salehinejad revolves around a COVID-19 issue in



"A Horse Has More Blood Than a Human" directed by Abolfazl Taluni.

the southwestern Iranian city of Ahvaz. The coronavirus has not only caused many deaths, but also created a crisis in burial traditions. According to the obligations of Islam, when someone dies, their body must be washed by hand in order to move on to the hereafter cleansed. Because of the COVID-19's wild and deadly infection, few people are willing to touch the bodies of those killed by the virus, which creates a crisis in the city.

A lineup of 66 films from across the world will be screened at the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival.

This year's festival will also include a number of panel discussions for filmmakers and the general public about issues in documentary filmmaking, from technical topics like editing and musical composition to broader discussions of documentary's place in investigative reporting.

The organizers have said that despite their initial plans for an in-person fest in 2021, safety concerns have dictated that the event remain virtual until 2022.

## Swiss writer Barbara Schibli's "Lichen" appears in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN – A Persian translation of Swiss writer Barbara Schibli's debut novel "Lichen" ("Flechen") has recently been published

Ketabe Kucheh is the publisher of the book rendered into Persian by Manijeh Nasiri.

In this novel, Schibli portrays a woman looking for her place in the social fabric of her environment and sensitively depicts the movements of attraction and repulsion, appropriation and distancing between two sisters who cannot do without each other and therefore have to find a way to live together and next to each other.

The book tells the story of Anna who

moved to Zurich from Graubünden to study biology. Now she works in lichen research. Leta, Anna's identical twin sister, is dedicated to photography. When Anna drives to Treviso for the opening of Leta's photo installation "Observing the Self", she feels betrayed by her. Because Leta has retouched the only mark in Anna's photos that distinguishes the two.

Who am I if there are two of me? Anna, outwardly indistinguishable from her identical twin sister Leta, has always been asking herself the question of her own identity. After their childhood together in Bever in Graubünden, the sisters brought spatial distance between themselves, pursued very

different professions and did not maintain close contact with one another. Both, however, look at the world through a sharp lens - that of the microscope and that of the camera with an almost obsessive urge to observe, research and collect.

Anna collects lichens, examples of perfectly symbiotic communities in nature, Leta for her part collects photos - of Anna.

The special art of this book is not to judge, to leave the doors open, to look deeply close - as it should be for a lichen researcher - and to look for the distance by looking at a nearby surface until it opens,' critic Friederike Kretzen wrote in Laudation GEDOK-Förderpreis.



Publisher Ketabe Kucheh's poster for its Persian translation of Swiss writer Barbara Schibli's debut novel "Lichen".