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Iranian coaches, players must learn to respect AFC rules

BY FARROKH HESABI
Iranian football clubs Esteghlal and Persepolis have been ordered to pay fines totaling \$45,000 over the violations of their staff and players during the 2021 AFC Champions League (ACL) group stage. Esteghlal head coach Farhad Majidi is ordered to pay \$10,000 for his refusal to participate at the pre-match press conference against Al Duhail. The Blues' captain, Vorya Ghafour, was also fined for his statements after the game against Al Shorta.

The AFC's Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (AFCDEC) has mentioned that Ghafour's statements have brought the game into disrepute. In addition, the Esteghlal club have been fined for the violations made by their head coach and player.

The AFCDEC also ordered Persepolis club to pay \$17,500 because of the statements published by the club on their social media channel and website ahead of Goa match. Persepolis also must play a match without spectators at the next match in an AFC Champions League hosted by the Iranian team in the home soil.

The Reds' winger, Mehdi Torabi, has been also fined for arriving late and causing a delay to the commencement of a pre-match press conference by 15 minutes.

The Iranian teams are also warned that if there are further similar breaches in the future will be met with more severe punishments.

The critical point about these violations made by Iranian clubs, players, and coaches is that they are the consequence of the Iranian football federation's Disciplinary Committee approach on domestic issues.

In fact, such breaches result from the fact that Iran's DC does not impose the necessary strictures and punishments on similar cases in the country's football competitions.

The coaches and players don't participate in the press conferences before and after the matches and it has become a common trend. The disciplinary committee has never put strict measures to deal with such violations.

This is disrespectful to media, fans, and even the organizing body that the head coaches ignore press conferences. Still, such a violation is repeated again and again without any consequences for the violators.

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Half a century of Iran's ecosystem protection

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI
TEHRAN – This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Department of Environment (DOE), coinciding with World Environment Day, which is celebrating half of a century of protecting the environment. The environment and biodiversity are the valuable heritage that humans have borrowed from previous generations and should pass on to future generations, but in the meantime, human extravagance has endangered this heritage so that many plant and animal species are in danger of extinction. Urban development, expansion of agricultural lands, large scale tree cutting, and destruction of forests under the pretext of road and dam construction, which led to subsequent drying of wetlands and rivers, extinction of plant and animal species, sand and dust storms, and the occurrence of various sea and land environ-

mental problems. There are no exact official statistics on the extinction of plant and animal species, but some believe that every 15 to 20 minutes, one species in the world vanishes. Due to the increasing trend of environmental destruction, the international community thought of a solution, to designate a day as World Environment Day to draw the world's attention to the importance of the issue. In 1972, the UN General Assembly designated June 5 as World Environment Day. The first celebration, under the slogan "Only One Earth" took place in 1974. In the following years, it has developed as a platform to raise awareness on the problems facing our environment such as air pollution, plastic pollution, illegal wildlife trade, sustainable consumption, sea-level increase, and food security, among others.

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Lapid enlists Gantz, moves closer to unseating Netanyahu

Israel's opposition leader moved closer to unseating Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday and forming a new government after agreeing terms with several parties including one led by Defence Minister Benny Gantz, a spokesman said. During a 12-year run in top office, Netanyahu has been an often polarizing figure at home and abroad. An end to his tenure may bring reprieve from domestic political turmoil, but major shifts in Israel's foreign policy appear less likely from the staunch U.S. ally. Yair Lapid, a centrist tasked with forming the next governing coalition after the conservative Netanyahu failed to do so in the wake of an inconclusive March 23 election, has until midnight (2100 GMT) on Wednesday to present a final slate. Lapid, a 57-year-old former TV host and author, has yet to clinch a deal with his main partner, nationalist Naftali Bennett, who would serve as premier first under a proposed rotation

between the two men. Lapid's Yesh Atid party and Gantz's centrist Blue and White said in a joint statement they had "agreed on the outlines of the government and core issues relating to the strengthening of democracy and Israeli society". Gantz would remain defence minister in the new cabinet, the parties said. **First Arab party in Government?** Netanyahu, 71, has sought to discredit Bennett and two other rightists negotiating with Lapid, saying they were endangering Israel's security - an allusion to efforts to curb Iran's nuclear programme and manage ever-fraught Palestinian ties. Keeping the door open to them, Israel's longest-serving leader, who was first elected prime minister a quarter-century ago, says he is still capable of forming the next government.

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Windmills of Sistan-Baluchestan nearer to UNESCO status

TEHRAN – Sistan-Baluchestan is further moving towards inscribing its ancient windmills on the UNESCO list as commencing an aerial mapping project as a preliminary stage. "We are completing a dossier for a selection of Asbads (windmills) of the province for a [possible] UNESCO registration... and during the recent months, this process has been accelerated," deputy provincial tourism chief Mansoureh Molla'elahi said on Tuesday. Aerial mapping of these valuable works has

been commenced for seven sites of Asbad, which are expected to be collectively registered on the prestigious list with those located in the provinces of Razavi Khorasan and South Khorasan. Made of natural clay, straw, and wood, an Asbad is typically comprised of eight chambers, with each chamber housing six blades. As the area's strong, steady wind enters the chambers it turns the blades, which then turn grindstones. The structures reach up to about 65 feet in height. The Asbad used to be a smart technique to

grind grains. It also bears testimony to the human being's adaption with nature by transforming environmental obstacles into opportunities. "Asbad is a smart technique to grind grains, a technique which goes back to ancient times when the people living in the eastern parts of Iran, in an attempt to adapt themselves with nature and transform environmental obstacles into opportunities, managed to invent it," according to UNESCO website.

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Artists remembering Imam Khomeini in "Mourning for the Sun"

TEHRAN – An exhibition of paintings by a group of Iranian artists opened on Tuesday at the Abolfazl Aali Gallery of the Art Bureau to commemorate the death anniversary of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic. The exhibition, which will be running until June 20, showcases works by Gholmali Taheri, Abdolhamid Qadirian, Iraj Eskandari, Kamyar Sadeqi, Mostafa Gudarzi, Hassan Razmjou, Morteza Afshari, Ali Sheikh, Ali Eslami-Mogaddam, Alireza Khaleqdadi, Ahmad Khalilifard, Kazem Chalipa and Mohammad-Ali Taraqqijah.

Developments in Belarus will define European-Russian ties: professor

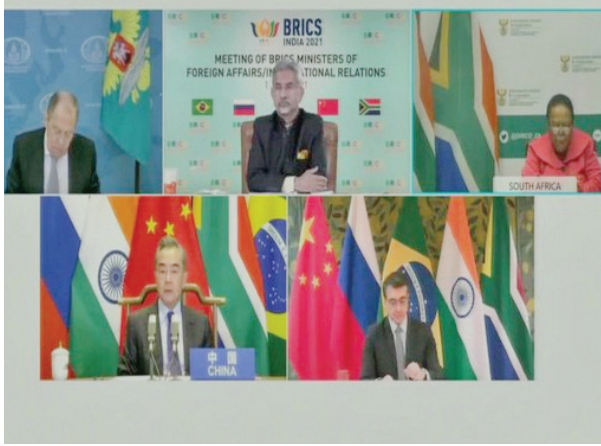
BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
TEHRAN - A Canadian expert on the history and contemporary politics of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine says what happens in Belarus will determine European-Russian relations. "It (Belarus) is located between the two power blocks of the EU and the Russian Federation," David R. Marples tells the Tehran Times. "What happens to Belarus will likely define European-Russian relations for some time to come," he notes. However, "Russia has shown little interest in cooperating with the EU, the UK, and the USA on the crisis in Belarus," according to the Canadian historian. Following is the text of the interview: **What is your comment on European sanctions on Belarus? Putin has slammed Western double standards as they remained silent in the case of Edward Snowden.** That's not strictly accurate, though. I think the 2013 incident and the interception of Evo Morales' plane was also unacceptable. However, the 1944 Chicago Convention specifies rules for the safety of commercial aircraft but not state or military planes. Ryanair's flight was an enforced landing of a commercial airliner with over 100 passengers with the use of a fighter jet and a military helicopter. The plane was within minutes of Vilnius Airport, where - if there had really been a bomb board - it could have landed more quickly than diverting to Minsk.

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BRICS backs full implementation of JCPOA

→ 1 The current U.S. administration under Joe Biden has expressed willingness to rejoin the multilateral nuclear deal which former president Donald Trump quit in May 2018 and introduced harshest sanctions against Iran in violation of international law.



“The Ministers reiterated the need to resolve the Iran nuclear issue through peaceful and diplomatic means in accordance with international law, including the negotiations within the framework of the JCPOA, and the importance of the full implementation of the JCPOA and the UNSCR 2231,” the BRICS statement said.

BRICS also praised extension of a monitoring deal between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) intended to give negotiators in Vienna more time to settle the remaining differences.

“They welcomed the extension of the ‘technical understandings’ between Iran and the IAEA that allowed for the continuation of necessary verification and monitoring activities,” the statement added.

The Iranian parliament approved a legislation last year that obliges the government to take certain nuclear measures such as limiting the monitoring of the Iranian nuclear activities by the IAEA if the Western parties failed to honor their obligations under the JCPOA.

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

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna has said the talks are “very complicated” and reached to the main issues of dispute.

Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabieei said on Tuesday that the sitting government is determined to fulfill its mission and hand over the country to the future administration without illegal sanctions.

Iranian logistic vessel sinks

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A naval training logistic vessel, named Khark, caught fire near the port of Jask and sank on Wednesday.

With the help of the ship damage control team, all the personnel, who were fighting the fire, were transferred to the shore.



20 hours of efforts by civilian and military vessels to quench the fire were unsuccessful, and finally the vessel sank in the waters near the port of Jask in the Gulf of Oman.

No deaths were reported. All the staff were safely rescued. However, according to local officials, 33 students and staff were injured. Reportedly, 10 of the injured were treated on spot and 23 were transferred to hospitals in Bandar Abbas.

A local official at the office of the governor of Hormuzgan province said that Khark was hosting 400 students and personnel, calling it one of “the most advanced vessels in the military.”

The logistic vessel had been serving in the Iranian Army since 1984.

The vessel was on a training mission.

Economy in view of presidential candidates

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — On May 28, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution gave a speech stating that economy is the main issue of the country. The Tehran Times explored the candidates’ remarks about the economy.

Mohsen Rezaei, the self-claimed economist of the bunch, has given a lot of importance to economy, yet his estimates do not seem accurate. He is planning to give Iranians a cash subsidy of 450,000 tomans (almost \$107 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to 40 million Iranians per month. He says he has worked on this plan for four years. The presidential contender has also stated that he is planning to give each province economic provisions to govern its affairs.

“If I am talking today about the subsidy of 450,000 tomans, this estimate is quite accurate. It has scientific basis and is applicable. We operate in a way that is non-inflationary and does not cause costs for the government,” he said.

Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh, a reformist-backed candidate, says he has outstanding economic plans. He says he will pay a special attention to the lower 5 deciles, giving them more cash subsidy than others.

Abdlonasser Hemmati, the former chief of the Central Bank of Iran, has also said that he will pay special attention to the lower 3 deciles, stating that he will pay every family in the lower 3 deciles at least 1 million tomans (almost \$238) in cash subsidy.

Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi, another presidential candidate, has emphasized the role of pseudo currencies, saying that pseudo currency should be used in the economy but not in cash. He stated that gold, foreign exchange, and cryptocurrency are all pseudo currencies that Iran is now consuming, but they should not be cashed.

He also criticized the massive infusion of cash into the economy, claiming that it has caused inflation to reach up to 50%.

Alireza Zakani, another presidential candidate, has focused on economy by putting emphasis on strengthening the production sector. He says as long as Iran is under sanctions, they (the U.S.) will “break Iran’s neck”.

“If we push the economy towards tackling sanctions, they will not be able to do anything against it,” he said.

Government says is impartial in presidential elections

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The presidential chief of staff on Wednesday said the government is “quite impartial” toward the presidential elections.

“If some want to attribute a candidate to the government and say that the government backs one candidate is not true,” Mahmoud Vaezi told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

Vaezi said the government neither has a candidate nor does it back a candidate. The government also does not oppose any candidate, he added.

Central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati, who is being replaced by his deputy Akbar Komeijani, is competing for the presidential post. He was among the seven candidates who were confirmed by the Guardian Council.

Vaezi said Hemmati himself decided to contest the elections and refuted rumors that he is being backed by the government.

The presidential chief of staff said the government is tasked to hold the election and “it does not want to elect somebody

as a replacement and tell people vote for this person.”

What is important for the government is an enthusiastic election, Vaezi pointed out.

The future of the Islamic Republic is important for the government, he said, adding whoever is elected president the government is ready to share its eight years of experiences with him.

It is the duty of the government to “sincerely” exchange experiences with the future government and brief the next ministers about the plans that have been Ironed out for the country’s future.

Speaking at the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, President Hassan Rouhani asked the electorate to vote not only for the most qualified candidate but for a candidate who has most efficient “plan and strategy” for running the government.

The presidential elections will be held on June 18. The first round of presidential debates will be held on Saturday.

Leader’s support for Guardian Council ‘heartens us’: Jannati

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** - Guardian Council secretary Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati on Wednesday thanked Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for backing the Guardian Council, saying the Leader’s support has heartened the members of the vetting body.

“It is necessary to announce my thanks and praise and those of the members of the Guardian Council to the recent speech by the Leader. He has always backed the position and performance of the Guardian Council in different times and this has heartened us,” Jannati told a meeting of the council.

The Guardian Council confirmed seven candidates to run for the presidential post. The names of the confirmed candidates were announced by the Interior Ministry on May 25.

Hemmati asks politicians to go “on leave”

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In an interview on Wednesday, presidential contender Abdolnasser Hemmati said that Iran needs an economist president right now, asking politicians to go on a “4-year leave”.

“At present, Iran’s economic condition and living conditions are not in a situation to sacrifice the people. We must change the situation,” he said.

Hemmati said the main reason for his presidential candidacy, considering his expertise and past work, is that he thinks he can bring the country to the right track.

“We have had a structural flaw in economic governance over the past few decades that has led to unfavorable trends in macroeconomic variables. One of these trends is investment. Until investment in the country is not developed, other macro variables, including production and economic growth, will be in trouble,” he opined.

Hemmati, who holds a PhD in economics from the University of Tehran, pointed out that another issue is productivity.

“The other issue is productivity. In the long-term plan envisaged for the country, a significant part of eight percent economic growth was supposed to be from productivity, but unfortunately, not only did it not grow, but it was negative, and this caused economic growth to be hampered,” he stated.

The presidential candidate said that the economic

growth is an important issue and should be looked at from different angles.

“The most important issue of production is that the government should not pressure the private sector,” he said.

Hemmati said it is the duty of the government to invest in infrastructure and let the private sector to do the investment and encourage it.

He said, “It is necessary for the private sector to have confidence in the economic and social conditions of the country. We should not have uncertainty in the economy.”

Hemmati stated that he believes that Iran must focus on economic growth and control inflation at the same time. Because if there is inflation, he said, there will be no growth because inflation intensifies an abuse of the market.

“The most important issue to control inflation is liquidity and part of the liquidity goes back to the relationship between the government and the central bank,” he explained.

Hemmati believes that banks have to connect people, who have financial problems and cannot purchase goods, to producers who cannot sell their goods.

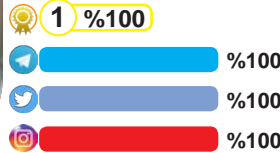
“The only way is to give credit cards and these cards are only for purchasing and you cannot cash them. The infrastructure is provided and now one bank is doing it on a trial basis,” the presidential candidate said.

The presidential elections will be held on June 18.

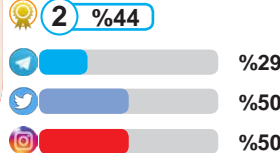
Comparative analysis of the presidential candidates in Instagram, Telegram and Twitter Total of 518,516,272 data analyzed



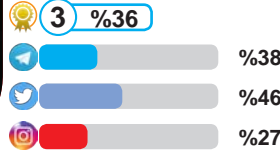
Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi



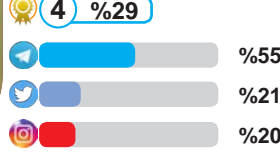
Saeed Jalili



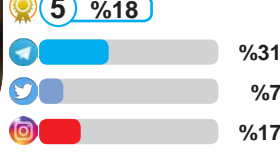
Mohsen Rezaei



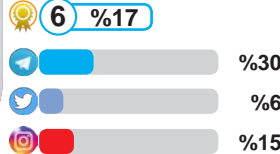
Abdolnasser Hemmati



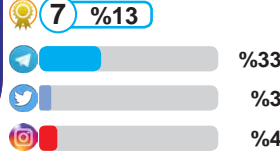
Alireza Zakani



Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh



Amir Hossein Qazizadeh



Dataak score

Total retweets and likes

Total likes and comments

Total views

Source: Dataak

Candidates’ views on domestic production



Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi

Raeisi has repeatedly stated that he will redirect investment towards domestic production. As a huge believer of the “we can” slogan, Raeisi helped revive over 2,000 factories that were nearly bankrupted in his time as Judiciary chief. He said on Wednesday afternoon that he will continue this path and tackle everything that is standing on its way.



Saeed Jalili

Jalili, very much like Raeisi, believes in the “we can” slogan. He said on Tuesday night that Iran must have the upper hand in the negotiations by producing everything at home and make itself needless of foreigners.



Mohsen Rezaei

The self-proclaimed economist candidate has said that he will redirect investment towards domestic production, but failing to present an accurate plan. He has not said a word about how those resources might be spent, or what is his strategy to monitor the investments, or what will be the guarantee mechanisms that those investments are directed towards the production sector.



Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh

Mehr Alizadeh said on Tuesday that on the first day of his presidency, he will repeal the laws that put brakes on production, and he will declare one or two general orders that will open the way for production. By doing so, he believes that the production will improve in a period of one or two months.



Alireza Zakani

He has frequently talked about productive capital, saying that his likely administration will first gain productive capital, and then it will redirect those capitals towards domestic production. He has not specified as to how he will attract the productive capital. He has briefly pointed to the 15 neighboring countries, saying that he will increase the number of economic consultants in those countries.



Abdolnasser Hemmati

“We need to create a good environment for new businesses. These businesses are in the two sectors of production of goods and services, and in the field of services, startups, businesses that operate in cyberspace have been successful,” Hemmati said on Wednesday morning. Hemmati’s plan is mostly based on domestic production and macroeconomics. He has promised to boost small businesses and factories.



Amir Hossein Qazizadeh

As of now, he has not presented a plan about domestic production. He is more focused on countering economic fraud. It is expected that he is on the belief that once his administration has overcome economic fraud, he will put more emphasis on domestic production.

SPORTS

Iranian coaches, players must learn to respect AFC rules

→1 On the other hand, issuing harsh and disrespectful statements on the Iranian clubs' social media channels and websites, in which they even accuse other teams, referees, the federation, and even the sports ministry of different issues, has become commonplace in Iranian football.

It is time for the football federation's disciplinary committee to review its methods of dealing with the violators and follow and emulate the rules of the AFCDEC in similar issues.

Skocic not satisfied with pitch for Hong Kong match

SPORTS TEHRAN – Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic criticized the pitch of the Al Muharraq Stadium ahead of Hong Kong match.

Iran will resume the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification with a match against Hong Kong in Group C on Thursday.



Iran coach is not satisfied with the pitch and says that he has never seen the pitch like this before in his whole career.

"There is no excuse but the pitch is very bad. I've never seen the pitch like this before. I invite you to see that. I was not allowed to check the pitch after our arrival and this is an interesting story," Skocic said.

"We are a strong team and are here to win our matches but I'm not satisfied with the pitch. We are not allowed to host our matches in Iran and Asian Football Confederation has awarded the right to Bahrain but we are disappointed with the turf," he added.

Iran defeated Hong Kong 2-0 in September 2019 however the Croat says they have no information about the East Asian team.

"Hong Kong have not played since last year and it makes our job difficult. Our players must just concentrate on this match. We respect Hong Kong but want to beat them" Skocic concluded.

Iran discover fate at 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup

SPORTS TEHRAN – Iran discovered their fate at the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup.

The Iranian team have been drawn in Group F along with defending champions Argentina, the U.S., and Serbia.

The 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup will be held in Lithuania from Sept. 12 to Oct. 3.

Iran will face Serbia in their group opener in Vilnius on Sept. 14. The Persians are also scheduled to meet the U.S. and Argentina on Sept. 17 and 20, respectively.

The top two teams of each group and the four best third-placed teams advance to the round of 16.

Groups:

Group A: Lithuania, Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Costa Rica
Group B: Uzbekistan, Guatemala, Russia, Egypt
Group C: Thailand, Portugal, Morocco, Solomon Islands
Group D: Panama, Czech Republic, Vietnam, Brazil
Group E: Angola, Japan, Paraguay, Spain
Group F: Argentina, the U.S., Serbia, Iran

Tamini voted Iran's chess federation president

SPORTS TEHRAN – Hassan Tamini Lichani was elected as new president of Iran's chess federation on Wednesday.

In the presidential elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic, Tamini was elected for a four-year term till 2025 by receiving 26 votes out of 41 votes.

Afshin Davari came second in the elections with 15 votes.

"First, I want to thank the members for trusting in me. I'm here to help Iran's chess to return to its golden days," Tamini said.

"My priority is to pave the way for the Iranian players to shine at the world stage," he added.

Jordanian Makhadmeh to officiate Iran, Hong Kong match

SPORTS TEHRAN – Jordanian referee Adham Mo-hammad Tumah Makhadmeh has been chosen to officiate the match between Iran and Hong Kong.

The match will be held in Arad's Al Muharraq Stadium in Group C of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

Adham Makhadmeh will be assisted by his countrymen Ahmad Moannes Al Roalle and Mohammad Mustafa Al Kalaf.

Iran are third in the standings on six points, five adrift of leaders Iraq. Bahrain sit second on nine points.

Iran's Super Cup slated for June 20

SPORTS TEHRAN – Iran's Super Cup between Persepolis and Tractor football teams will be held on June 30.

Persepolis, as champions of Iran Professional League, will lock horn with Tractor as Hazfi Cup winners.

The Super Cup is an Iranian association football trophy awarded to the winner of a match between the Persian Gulf Pro League's season champion and the winner of the Hazfi Cup. It is similar to numerous other Super Cup tournaments held in other countries.

The tournament was only held once in 2005 when Hazfi Cup champion Saba Battery defeated league champion Foolad 4-0.

Persepolis are the most successful team in Super Cup with three titles.

Bibi wraps up political life with hapless campaign of hype against Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN – In an effort to cover up Israel's intelligence failures in Iran, the new Mossad chief vowed to quash Iran's nuclear program regardless of the international community's engagement with Iran, a position already been taken by the former spymaster of Israel but failed to make any progress in putting a halt to Iran's nuclear activities.

New Mossad chief David Barnea said Israel is isolated on the issue of the nuclear talks between Iran and major world powers that are underway in the Austrian capital of Vienna but nevertheless it will continue to confront Iran's nuclear work. Speaking at a ceremony marking his entry into office as head of the intelligence agency, Barnea said, "The agreement with world powers that is taking shape only reinforces the sense of isolation in which we find ourselves on this issue."

He added, "I say it clearly — no, we do not intend to act according to the majority opinion since this majority will not bear the consequences for the erroneous assessment of this threat."

The new Mossad director threatened that Iran's nuclear program will continue to feel Mossad's might, accusing Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons.

The remarks came a day after Barnea's boss issued threats against Iran at a handoff event during which outgoing Mossad Director Yossi Cohen handed over control of Israel's intelligence agency to Barnea. The lame-duck Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel must "do everything,



but everything" to confront Iran's nuclear program. Netanyahu once again repeated his outworn claim that Iran is pursuing an unpeaceful nuclear program, describing this program as the "greatest threat" against Israel. He even went so far as to say that he would eliminate this threat if he was to choose between friction with the U.S. and eliminating the threat, a claim that drew a backlash from Netanyahu's rival Benny Gantz, who tries to snuggle up to the Biden administration.

Earlier on Monday, Cohen alleged that Israel deeply infiltrated Iran. "We pene-

trated into the heart of hearts of the enemy Iran," the former spymaster boasted.

The remarks by the Israeli officials came at a time when Israel is facing a historic failure in terms of putting a halt to Iran's nuclear program, which continues to make significant progress despite Israel's continued campaign of sabotage against Iran.

The Israelis can boast about their alleged success against Iran and say whatever they want, but no amount of bragging would change the reality on the ground, which attests to the progress Iran has made in

the nuclear sphere.

Regardless of the Israeli hype, Israel, in theory, has two options to completely stop Iran's peaceful nuclear program: covert intelligence sabotage and overt military strike.

Israel has never sought to use the second option despite the vociferous fuss Netanyahu has made about attacking Iran over the past years because it knows full well that such an attack would inflict an irreversible cost on Israel. The Israelis know better than anyone else that Iran is not Iraq or Syria, which turned a blind eye on Israeli aggression when their nuclear facilities were pounded by Israel.

As regards the second option, Israel actively sought sabotage against the Iranian nuclear program. And despite some minor damages they caused to some Iranian nuclear facilities they utterly failed to bring the whole program to a halt. On the contrary, after every act of sabotage, Iran stepped up its nuclear activities, indicating that Israeli sabotage would only ratchet up these activities.

So, the intelligence option did not yield the outcome the Israelis were seeking. Instead, it only prompted Iranian authorities to beef up the security of nuclear plants. At the end of the day, with every act of sabotage, a window of infiltration is closed.

Israel also suffered a resounding defeat at the diplomatic level, with Iran and the West resuming nuclear talks in Vienna after four years of Israeli-backed American pressure on Iran.

Senior Iranian diplomat elaborates on Salehi's letter to IAEA chief

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Kazem Gharibabadi, has given more details about the letter that Iran's nuclear chief sent to IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi.

The letter, sent via Gharibabadi, contained details about Iran's decision to announce the expiration of a technical understanding between Iran and the IAEA.

The letter was announced after the Agency released a quarterly report on Iran in which it accused Iran of failing to explain traces of uranium found at several allegedly undeclared sites. The letter also came after Grossi announced on May 24 that he had agreed with Iran to extend by one month a February deal between Iran and the IAEA allowing the UN nuclear watchdog to continue necessary monitoring activities.

However, Gharibabadi said on Twitter that Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), in his letter, told Grossi that the monitoring deal has expired.

"Dr. Salehi's letter to @rafaelmgrossi: Whereas the Technical Understanding was expired on May 24, Iran decided not to extend it, meanwhile we decided to continue recording for one month aimed at providing another opportunity to conclude bilateral tech negotiations with the Agency," Gharibabadi said on Twitter, adding, "On safeguards, Iran has so far done its utmost efforts to cooperate with the Agency substantively and provide the necessary clarifications and responses. We welcome the Agency's readiness for engaging in a proactive and focused effort to resolve the issues without any delay."

According to Fars News, the Iranian diplomat also said, "And as before, we would continue to cooperate constructively with the Agency. We highly expect such a mutual determination would result in reaching a visible practical outcome as quickly as possible."

Gharibabadi provided more details about the letter in an interview with Iran's TV. "We delivered this letter to the Director General of the Agency yesterday, which addresses two issues. One [aspect of the letter] is about a joint agreement we had with the Agency to record data from some of the Agency's surveillance cameras for three months without providing the data to the Agency, and if we reach an agreement on nuclear issues and the outcome as well as the lifting of sanctions after three months, then we will provide information to the Agency," he said.

According to Gharibabadi, safeguards issues constitute another aspect of the letter. "The letter explicitly states that Iran has all kinds of interactions and cooperation with the IAEA and that we are still ready to work with the IAEA to resolve a number of safeguards issues, but the IAEA must work with a neutral and non-political approach to conclude these issues as soon as possible," he noted.

Underlining that the AEOI-IAEA deal expired on



May 24, the Iranian diplomat said, "There were contacts and requests from the Agency and the countries that are negotiating with us in the framework of the JCPOA talks to extend this understanding for another period. This issue was examined internally and the conclusion was that this understanding could not be legally extended, but the Islamic Republic of Iran decided to continue recording data for another month in its own good faith and as an independent decision and not a legal decision."

He added, "What happens next month and what we do with this data is an independent sovereign decision that takes into account a number of factors, including the Agency's approach and technical approaches, especially in negotiations with us on safeguards as well as political negotiations in the field of the JCPOA."

Gharibabadi also commented on the IAEA quarterly report on Iran. "The Director-General of the Agency released two quarterly reports yesterday for next week's meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, one on verifying the implementation of the JCPOA in Iran and the other on a number of remaining safeguards disputed between Iran and the IAEA," he continued.

"The entire JCPOA report is influenced by the decision we made to the Agency on February 15, 2021, stating that from 23 February we will cease all voluntary and transparent activities under the JCPOA. Our decision followed the implementation of the strategic law of the Islamic Consultative Assembly on the lifting of all sanctions and the protection of the rights of the nation. After that, all voluntary actions, including the implementation of the Additional Protocol in Iran, came to a halt," the Iranian diplomat said, adding, "This report lists verification restrictions in more than a dozen cases, and this report indicates that Iran's decision and the law of the Islamic Consultative Assembly have been well implemented in this regard. Another point reflected in the JCPOA report is that this report acknowledges that Iran's nuclear activities, especially in the two areas of new machines and enrichment, i.e. both the level of enrichment and enrichment up to 5%, up to 20% and up to 60% as well as the stockpile or the amount of uranium we enrich, continue as before."

JCPOA Joint Commission convenes as fifth round of nuclear talks end without agreement

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Parties to a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers announced on Wednesday that they would hold another meeting to discuss the latest developments regarding the Vienna nuclear talks.

The meeting was set to be held at end of the fifth round of nuclear talks which are aimed to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The European Union said in a statement on Wednesday that the Joint Commission will hold a meeting late on Wednesday night. "The Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) will resume this Wednesday 2 June, in Vienna. The Joint Commission will be chaired, on behalf

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

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi who is leading the Iranian negotiating team in the Vienna talks confirmed on his Telegram channel the JCPOA Joint Commission will convene on Wednesday night.

In remarks to Iran's TV, he also said that the meeting will conclude the fifth round

of talks. "Today we are in a situation where we have to make a new conclusion on the negotiations that have taken place so far," he said ahead of the meeting.

He added, "All delegations concluded that visits should be made to the capitals for further consultation and further decision-making on disputes. Today we will have a final meeting of the Joint Commission, after which the delegations will return to their capitals."

The top Iranian nuclear negotiator said during the Wednesday meeting a return date will likely be set for delegations to return to Vienna.

"All delegations are determined and there is complete seriousness. Disagreements have reached a point where everyone believes that it is not impossible to resolve, but details are



important anyway, and our firm positions are important to be respected. God willing, the meeting will conclude when we will start," Araqchi said, noting, "I do not know if it will be too far and we will probably return to Vienna after a consultation period in Tehran, God willing, as in the past."

TEDPIX climbs 8,000 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 8,190 points to 1.148 million on Wednesday.



Over 5,852 billion securities worth 48.341 trillion rials (about \$1.015 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market's index rose 6,860 points, and the second market's index went up 13,591 points.

TEDPIX lost 45,000 points, or four percent, in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday)

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

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

3,500 kilometers of roads in rural areas to be asphalted by next March

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**- The head of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMT) announced that 3,500 kilometers of roads in the country's rural regions will be asphalted under the framework of "Abrar Plan" by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).



Dariyush Amani said that according to the mentioned plan, projects with a physical progress of more than 70 percent in the country, especially in the provinces with a higher average rural population, will be a priority in terms of asphaltting the rural roads.

The deputy transport and urban development minister further announced the high cost of building the rural roads, and the arrears of the contractors as some major problems in the implementation of Abrar Plan and stated that according to statistics, the cost of rural roads constructing has increased by about 102 percent this year compared to the last year.

Villages are often mentioned as some keys to the development of countries, and the allocation of a proper amount of budget to rural development always brings fruitful economic results.

In Iran, where villages account for generating 20-23 percent of the value added in the country, development of rural areas has been always a top agenda of the governments' activities.

The sustainable economic, social, and cultural development of the villages is one of the major priorities of the current government, and many projects implemented and underway in this regard have led to outstanding development in the rural regions.

It is while the sanctions have created many limitations and difficulties for the Iranian economy in recent years.

One of the sectors with noticeable achievements in this field is gas supplying, while the number of villages supplied with natural gas has doubled during the past seven years since the current government started its activity.

The current government has paid 290 trillion rials (about \$6.904 billion) for supplying gas to the rural areas.

It should be noted that supplying gas to the villages has been a big help for the development of infrastructures, the establishment of complementary industries, and job creation in these areas.

The supply of drinking water to the villages has been also expedited by the current government. Under the framework of a program titled A-B-Iran, the Energy Ministry has inaugurated many projects to supply drinking water to the rural areas.

A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the previous Iranian year, during which the energy minister made 31 trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion).

This program has supplied drinking water to 1.7 million people in rural areas. In terms of power supplying, Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian announced that electricity will be supplied to the villages with less than 10 families in the current Iranian calendar year.

The minister said that power supply to these villages and also supplying electricity to the nomadic areas through mobile solar panels are among the major priorities of the ministry's A-B-Iran program.

A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020), during which the minister made several trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion).

The government has also initiated a plan for constructing and renovating roads in the rural areas, through which 3,000 kilometers of roads have been built, and 4,000 kilometers have been renovated in the villages with over 20 families in the past two years.

All such programs and projects are hoped to bring sustainable development to the country's villages and lead to boosting production, which is now seriously pursued in the country.

Iran will return to oil market as soon as sanctions are lifted: Zanganeh

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iranian Oil

Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said Iran is ready to return to the oil market as soon as the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is revived and the U.S. sanctions are lifted, Shana reported.

Zanganeh made the remarks after attending the 17th meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and their non-oil allies known as OPEC+, which was held via videoconferencing on Tuesday.

Commenting on the issues discussed in the meeting, the official said: "It was a short meeting, mostly influenced by the imminent return of the Islamic republic to the oil market."

Pointing to the remarks by OPEC Secretary-General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo that Iran's return should be orderly and transparent, Zanganeh said: "We are transparent, and will certainly take all necessary measures to be orderly, like our other activities."

According to the minister, the OPEC+ meeting concluded with a decision not to increase production despite a prospect of



a better economic situation in the coming months.

"Iran, Venezuela, and Libya are still ex-

empted from the production restrictions," Zanganeh confirmed.

At their 15th meeting, OPEC+ had agreed

E-commerce contribution to Iran's GDP rises nearly 2.5 times

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** - The share of e-commerce in Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) has increased by 2.4 times, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand announced.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony of two e-commerce projects on Tuesday, Dejjasand underlined the significance of e-commerce in the country's economy and said: "In recent years, the realization of tax income targets has grown well, a third of which is due to the use of new technologies."

"Blockchains will account for 10 percent of the world's gross domestic product in the next four years," he said, adding: "As electricity consumption has increased we limited the mining of cryptocurrencies, while in the long run, we cannot stand in the way of technology development."

According to the official, using new technologies has helped the country withstand the U.S. economic sanctions to a great extent.

Pointing to the use of new technologies in the capital market, Dejjasand said: "Regarding the capital market, we

have the capacity to become the top country in the region in terms of smartening indicators."

The minister further mentioned the great contribution of the e-commerce and new technologies in the battle against the coronavirus pandemic, saying: "Knowledge-based companies and startups have helped us a great deal to manage this disease so that other countries request to use our experiences."

Back in February, the head of the E-Commerce Development Centre of Iran had announced that the value of Iran's e-commerce transactions during the first six months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21, 2020) increased by four times compared to the same period in the preceding year.

The number of new licenses issued for online businesses also tripled in the mentioned six months compared to the same period in the preceding year, Ali Rahbari said.

According to Rahbari, this statistic shows that many have changed their shopping methods and chosen on-



line shopping, and also traditional and offline businesses have tried to have online sales, while online businesses have tried to strengthen the capacity of their various departments.

Iranian delegation visiting Russia to attend SPIEF 2021

→ 1 "This conference is the biggest economic and political event in Russia in recent years, which attracts the attention of many politicians, businessmen and heads of large international companies and major media every year," Seyedi said about the forum.

Myasnikovich had earlier announced that several figures including the Vice President of Venezuela, and deputy prime ministers of Azerbaijan, Qatar, Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia and Turkmenistan as well

as the foreign ministers of Bahrain, Hungary, Mongolia, Nigeria and Slovakia are scheduled to attend this year's SPIEF.

World Bank Group President David Malpass will also address the forum online, Myasnikovich said.

The Iranian delegation is also scheduled to meet with the CEO of RusHydro and will visit several Russian companies.

As previously reported, the value of Iran's exports to Russia has increased 105 percent

in 2020, Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali has announced.

The ambassador put the worth of Iran's export to Russian at \$390 million in 2019, and at \$800 million in 2020, and reiterated that the Russian market has a good capacity for the Iranian products.

He stressed the existence of various fields for economic relations between Iran and Russia and said, "Russia's economy is a large economy and this country has about

\$260 billion in imports, so we, as Russia's neighbor, can provide some of the goods it needs and have our share of the market of this country."

"Our relations with Russia are mostly in political, security and defense fields, and on the other hand, due to the mutual economic potential that exists, economic relations between the two countries should undoubtedly be developed and expanded", the ambassador further stressed.

Water storage in Iranian dams exceeds 28b cubic meters

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iranian Energy Ministry data indicates that currently 28.81 billion cubic meters of water is stored behind the dams across Iran, indicating that 57 percent of the capacity of the country's dams is full.

Based on the mentioned data, in the previous year's same period 39.68 billion cubic meters of water was stored behind the country's dams.

The total capacity of Iran's dam reservoirs currently stands at 50.5 billion cubic meters.

As reported by IRNA, from the beginning of the current water year (late September 2020) up to May 22, the total volume of water inflow to the reservoirs of the country's dams stood at 25.29 billion cubic meters, 47 percent less than the figure for the last year's same period.

Last year the water inflow to the country's dam reserves stood at 47.58 billion cubic meters in the same period.

According to the Energy Ministry data, compared to



the figures for the previous water year, the volume of water outflow from the country's dams has also decreased by 35 percent to stand at 23.63 billion cubic meters.

This is while the water consumption in the capital Tehran reached 3.543 billion cubic meters on May 31, according

to the ministry data.

The sudden increase in temperature in Iran and the decline of rainfalls across the country have caused severe drought in the current year so that the energy ministry is implementing new programs for managing water and electricity consumption.

In late May, Iran's Deputy Energy Minister for electricity affairs Homayoun Haeri s announced that power consumption in the country had risen 7,000-8,000 megawatts (MW) since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Out of a total of 183 currently operational dams across Iran, 52 are related to the Caspian Sea catchment area, 12 are based in the Urumieh basin, 68 dams are located in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman watersheds, 34 dams are in the Central Plateau, 11 dams are in Sarakhs catchment basin, and another six dams are located across the eastern boundary basin (Hamoun).

Iran to import 140MW of electricity from Turkmenistan

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**- Iranian Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said the country will import 140 megawatts (MW) of electricity from Turkmenistan in a bid to meet domestic power need.

Emphasizing the ministry's efforts for meeting the country's electricity requirement, he said that 140 MW of electricity will be imported from Turkmenistan at the first stage, that will meet the power need of some part of Khorasan region (northeastern Iran).

Although every year nearly 3,000 MW is added to the country's power generation capacity, the reduction in the rainfalls and the decline in the water storage behind the dams has reduced the electricity generation offsetting the added capacity, according to the managing director of Tehran Electricity Distribution Company said Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir).

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity

supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new strategies in recent years to manage the consumption and lessen the electricity losses in the national grid.

In late July 2020, Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said that his ministry was considering new incentive packages for low-consuming households and industrial electricity subscribers.

He also said that two programs were prepared for high-consuming subscribers so that by implementing these plans, these subscribers would also join the low-consumer group.

The official described the first program as a training course to teach consumption management methods with the help of knowledge-based companies and startups, and said: "Start-up companies will be formed in this field and will help us optimize the consumption of high-consuming subscribers by providing simple solutions."

The second plan was to install solar panels on the roofs of high-consuming subscribers' houses so that such subscribers would meet their electricity needs by



installing these PV stations.

In mid-April, the energy minister said the country is capable of boosting its electricity exchange with the neighboring countries to 10,000 megawatts (10 gigawatts).

Speaking in the monthly meeting of the members of the Iranian Energy Club which was held through video conference, Ardakanian put the country's current capacity for electricity exchange with the neighbors at 3,500 MW.

Referring to the positive measures taken by the Energy Ministry for expanding the possibility of energy exchange with neighboring countries, the minister said:

"Now, we have the possibility to exchange electricity with all countries that share land borders with us."

The Energy Ministry, however, is also pursuing a plan for exporting electricity to the southern Arab neighbors through sea.

"The Iran-Azerbaijan-Russia route is a more feasible route, and with the consent of all three countries, an Iranian contractor has been selected to study this project; the relevant contract was prepared and signed, and the primary studies are hoped to begin soon," Ardakanian explained.

According to the official, in addition to Iraq and Russia, negotiations are also underway with Afghanistan and some new projects have been defined in order to expand the two country's energy cooperation.

Ardakanian also mentioned the synchronization of the country's power grid with Iraq back in November 2019, and the plans for synchronizing of the electricity network with Russia through Armenia-Georgia or Azerbaijan, saying: "Whichever of these routes that is agreed on sooner will become operational."

Developments in Belarus will define European-Russian ties: professor

→ 1 Why is Russia supporting Belarus?

Good question. Russia has tried to push Belarus into closer integration since the early years of the Putin presidency. Putin's perception of the so-called Near Abroad is that the former Soviet countries, and especially the three Slavic states are part of the Russian space, with a common history and culture. In 2014, after the Euromaidan uprising in Ukraine, Russia annexed Crimea, which led to a war in the Donbas that has left a frozen conflict in the eastern parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

But the original concept of a Russian World that included the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine failed to materialize. President Putin has therefore acted much more cautiously with Belarus, using propaganda and media and gradual pressure to coax that country into measures such as the acceptance of a Russian airbase in Belarus (it has still not happened to date). There are significant policy differences between the Lukashenka government and Moscow. Even today, Lukashenka resists Russian plans to build a political base in Belarus through the formation of pro-Russian political parties and tries to control the paths to political change.

Why do Western states prefer to turn a blind eye when it comes to other cases in countries allied with



them. For instance, after the shocking murder of Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi embassy in Turkey, none of the Western states sanctioned Saudi Arabia.

I agree. It doesn't make sense. There is an interesting phenomenon. The Western states also reacted very slowly to the period of repressions, mass arrests, detention and

torture in Belarus in the weeks after the 2020 presidential elections. They reacted strongly only with the hijacking of a commercial aircraft, which in Western minds the crossing of a line. But it is admittedly difficult in the case of the EU to get 27 states to reach an agreement on sanctions policies.

Do you consider Alexander Lukashenko successful in adopting

a policy balances in ties with Russia and Europe?

Not now. That was precisely the case in the past. In fact, it was the keystone of the Lukashenka presidency and it provided great frustration for the Russian leadership. But now it is too late. There is really no way back to the past. The population is waiting for him to leave and he remains in office thanks to the loyalty of his security forces and support from Russia. While the latter is relatively firm right now, in the long term, Russia will seek an alternative leader who is supportive of Russia but also more predictable and reliable.

Why is Belarus important for European geopolitically?

It is located between the two power blocks of the EU and the Russian Federation. Like Ukraine, it is part of Europe but also part of the former Soviet bloc that Russia seeks to lead in a political bloc. Thus, it is in a very sensitive geopolitical space. It is not so important economically, but what happens to Belarus will likely define European-Russian relations for some time to come. The big question is whether Belarus could change its government and revert to its original constitution without strong opposition from Russia. At present, Russia has shown little interest in cooperating with the EU, the UK, and the USA on the crisis in Belarus.

Lebanon's financial meltdown

By Yanis Iqbal

The Lebanese pound has depreciated about 90% in the past 18 months, driving annual food inflation to 400%, erasing salaries and savings, and pushing more than half the nation into poverty. All this comes at a time when the country is battling the devastation wrought by COVID-19, as well as the ravages from the 2020 Beirut blast.

Financialization

The economic crisis in Lebanon is closely linked to the paradigm of financialization adopted by the ruling elite. This paradigm has converted the country into a "bankers' republic". The country that was once known as "the Switzerland of the Middle East" based its economy on the financial sector without regard for the productive sectors.

The beginnings of the current morass can be traced to the 1997 "peg," which artificially fixed the Lebanese pound to the dollar at an overvalued rate, thus laying the ground for the rise of rentier capitalism. On the one hand, it became more profitable to import than to produce locally. On the other hand, investing capital in unproductive economic sectors - namely financial products and real estate - became increasingly attractive as the risk of inflation receded.

A definite set of problems emerges when a currency is pegged at a high rate. Since the government sets the rate too high, domestic consumers will buy many imports, creating chronic trade deficits. When imports exceed exports, a country's currency demand in terms of international trade is lower. The lower demand for currency makes it less valuable in the international markets.

In response to these devaluation pressures, the government will have to appreciate its own currency. For this, the central bank needs to buy its currency in foreign exchange markets, paying with foreign currency. Since no central bank has an infinite amount of foreign currency reserves, it cannot buy its currency indefinitely. The government's reserves will eventually be exhausted, and the peg will collapse.

Lebanon's central bank had to ensure a continual inflow of foreign currency, namely U.S. dollars, to maintain the peg. This was done through a national Ponzi scheme - a scam in which existing investors are paid off with funds collected from new investors while the organizers cream off a share for themselves. With the help of oil money from (Persian) Gulf Arabs and remittances from the large Lebanese diaspora

(estimated at more than 12 million persons living on all continents), the bourgeoisie built the bases of domestic finance.

To further attract money from abroad, Lebanese banks promised high-interest rates on deposits. Meanwhile, people who put money into the banks received more than 5% interest on deposits. It was a great deal for investors in the region, who piled money into Lebanese banks. The money could have been used for productive investments but stayed in the financial chamber.

Lebanon's commercial banks used the dollar flows from abroad to speculate on sovereign-debt instruments denominated in Lebanese pounds at interest rates significantly higher than the international market rates granted by the Lebanese central bank. In other words, the banks, flush with deposits, started lending the money to the government via the central bank. The banks had promised to pay a high interest rate on the deposits, but the central bank promised to pay an even higher interest rate to the banks. It ensured the system could keep going for a little while. The banks turned around and lent the government a lot of money, pocketing the difference between the two interest rates.

The high-interest rates on government bonds and bank deposits strongly limited investments of capital in the productive economy. Most of the money the state collected through the bonds was, in the end, used to repay the interest rather than to fund social welfare programs or public infrastructure. While proving to be catastrophic for the working class, this profit scheme enriched bankers.

The share of public debt held by banks reached nearly two-thirds in the 1990s, and it is estimated today to be nearly 43%. Indeed, interest rates went up to as high as 40% on untaxed treasury bills, helping the banking sector's assets grow by 25% between 1993 and 2000 and increase nearly eightfold between 1993 and 2013. In addition, between 1993 and 2018, banks' net profits increased from \$63 million to a whopping \$2 billion, representing a 3,000% increase.

It is important to note that the process of financialization was fundamentally aided by the political plutocracy. In fact, politicians in Lebanon are closely stitched with the financial magnates. Individuals closely linked to political elites control 43% of assets in Lebanon's commercial banking sector. 18 out of 20 banks have major shareholders linked to the political elite.

Moreover, 4 out of the top 10 banks in the country



have more than 70% of their shares attributed to crony capital. Only eight families control 29% of the banking sector's total assets, owning together more than \$7.3 billion in equity. For example, one of the controlling shareholders (over 5% of shares) of Bank Audi is a company wholly owned by Fahad Al-Hariri, brother of the Prime Minister, Saad Al-Hariri.

Collapse

The collapse of the Ponzi pyramid constructed by the financial oligarchy began in October 2019 with the slowdown of flows of hard currencies in the context of the global crisis of capitalism, and instability in the Middle East (West Asia), particularly in Syria. The expropriation of capital organized by the wealthiest 1% of the population, who dominated the financial sector, exacerbated the lack of cash.

The banks, having lent three-quarters of deposits to the government, had become functionally bankrupt and increasingly illiquid. Unable to contain the crisis of their own making, they passed the burden on small depositors by setting illegal and discretionary capital controls that prevented them from withdrawing their pensions and wages.

In hindsight, the crisis of Lebanon's economic architecture was predictable. The state was borrowing from or via the central bank at exorbitant interest rates; the central bank was borrowing from the local banks, who were lending the money of their depositors, who in turn were lured in by high-interest rates. High-interest rates of up to 15% kept this unsustainable cycle going for years. But running out of cash was inevitable. When this happened, the entire structure of accumulation broke down.

Saudis slam crown prince, call for his ouster, after major Yemeni military operation

Saudi Arabia's embattled Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the architect of the war on Yemen, has come under fire at home after more than 70 Saudi forces were killed in a successful Yemeni army operation in the southwestern port city of Jizan.

The massive aerial and ground operation by the Yemeni military forces, backed by allied fighters from popular committees, has come as a major setback to the Riyadh-led

coalition in its war on Yemen.

Yemen's al-Masirah television, quoting military sources, reported on Monday about the operation that targeted Saudi positions on three strategic mountainous areas of Jabal al-Dud, al-Ramih and Jahfan.

Apart from 70 fatalities suffered by Saudi-led mercenaries, at least 32 Saudi armored vehicles were also damaged in the operation, the report said.

Yemeni forces managed to seize control of at least 40 sites in the mountainous region, after which the Saudi air force sent warplanes that inflicted damage on their own military equipment.

According to Press TV, the massive military operation, which again reaffirmed the Yemeni military's supremacy in the devastating Saudi-imposed war, has come as a huge embarrassment for the kingdom's leadership.

Social media has been abuzz with many Saudi nationals slamming the crown prince and his protracted war on Yemen, while reiterating their demand for his ouster, as reported by the Saudi Wikileaks website.

The hashtag #Yakfi_Abath_Bajnudna (humiliation of our soldiers is enough) has been trending on Twitter since Saturday, showing complete exasperation of the country's citizens with the regime.

Erdogan attacked Macron again: We know with whom he works in Libya and Syria

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan launched a new attack on his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, noting that Turkey knows with whom the latter cooperates in Syria and Libya.

In an interview on Tuesday evening with the Turkish "TRT" channel, Erdogan mentioned Macron's statements in which he considered that NATO was suffering from "brain death", and the Turkish president said in this context: "If the leader of a NATO member state says that the alliance is in a state Brain dead, NATO should be held accountable for that."

"We know with whom Macron works in Libya and Syria," Erdogan added, without giving further details.

Erdogan and Macron have previously exchanged several reciprocal attacks against the background of a set of differences, including France's cooperation with Kurdish militants in Syria, which Ankara considers terrorists, Turkey's deployment of forces and fighters loyal to it from Syria in Libya, and the Turkish-Greek-Cypriot conflict in the Mediterranean.

Palestine summons European envoys over 'no' votes to UN's motion

Palestine has summoned four European ambassadors over their countries' "no" votes to a resolution at the United Nations to probe Israeli abuses, including during the recent aggression on Gaza.

The ambassadors of Austria, Britain, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic were handed strong-worded letters of protest on Tuesday and requested clarifications by their foreign ministries regarding the votes against pro-Palestine motions at the UN Security Council and the World Health Organization (WHO), Wafa news agency reported.

Palestinian Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Amal Jadou slammed the "no" votes by the four European states as a "green light" to Israel to persist in its aggression and systematic violations of the Palestinian people's rights.

Such votes reinforce the culture of impunity, giving Israel more chance to consolidate its occupation and perpetuate further crimes of apartheid and persecution which constitute crimes against humanity based on international law, she said.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry is also expected to summon the German ambassador over its opposition to the same motions.

On Thursday, the UN Human Rights Council agreed to launch an international inquiry into violations committed during the 11-day Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and "systematic" abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories.

By a vote of 24 states in favor, nine against, and 14 abstentions, the 47-member forum adopted a resolution brought by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Palestinian delegation to the UN.

Austria, Bulgaria, Cameroon, the Czech Republic, Germany, Malawi, Marshall Islands, the United Kingdom and Uruguay voted against the resolution.

The council "decides to urgently establish an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry, to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council, to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem [al-Quds], and in Israel," read the document.

U.S. senator says Israel to request \$1bn in additional aid

Being already the largest recipient of assistance from Washington, with an annual \$3.8bn in U.S. military aid, does not stop Israel from asking for more. Now a U.S. senator has unveiled that the Tel Aviv regime is preparing a request for an additional \$1 billion to the Pentagon to replenish its missile system following the latest war on the besieged Gaza Strip.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham called on Congress to immediately authorize Tel Aviv's request for extra funding.

Graham made the remarks in an interview with Fox News from Jerusalem al-Quds on Tuesday, after meeting with both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz during a trip to Israel this week.

"There will be a \$1 billion request coming to the Pentagon this week from the (Israeli) defense minister to replenish the Iron Dome and a few other things, to upgrade the system," Graham said, pledging to lead efforts to secure the request in Congress after the Pentagon officially receives it in the coming days.

"Every time somebody tries to destroy Israel, our response is going to be more aid," while holding a sign that read "more for Israel."

Claiming the Iron Dome had saved thousands of lives during last month's Palestinian rocket attacks, Graham said he expected the administration of President Joe Biden and Congress to approve Israel's request for more funding.

Resistance News

U.S. campaign launched to block Israeli shipping worldwide

INTERNATIONAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— "Block the Boat," a coalition of American NGOs, unionists and activists, has launched a one-week campaign as of Wednesday, June 2, calling on dockworkers unions around the world to refuse to handle loads of Israeli ships arriving at their ports.

In a statement, Block the Boat said that its pro-Palestine week is aimed at sending a clear message that Israel should pay a heavy price for its continued settler colonization and occupation policies and its persistent violent practices and atrocities against the Palestinian people.

The organizers of this campaign will be working on preventing Israeli-owned vessels and shipping companies from offloading or loading cargos at ports in the United States and other countries around the world.

Lapid enlists Gantz, moves closer to unseating Netanyahu



→ 1 Netanyahu, 71, has sought to discredit Bennett and two other rightists negotiating with Lapid, saying they were endangering Israel's security - an allusion to efforts to curb Iran's nuclear programme and manage ever-fraught Palestinian ties.

Keeping the door open to them, Israel's longest-serving leader, who was first elected prime minister a quarter-century ago, says he is still capable of forming the next government.

Deals have also been reached with the left-wing Meretz and centre-left Labour parties as well as with former de-

fence minister Avigdor Lieberman's nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party, a Lapid spokesman said.

The United Arab List was also negotiating to join the coalition. If it does, it would be the first time in Israel's history that an independent Arab party becomes a member of the government.

A source involved in the Lapid-led talks said the proposed new government would try to retain consensus by avoiding hot-button ideological issues such as whether to annex or cede occupied West Bank territory that Palestinians want for a state.

Designing cities based on cultural intangibles is essential, deputy tourism minister says

HERITAGE DESK TEHRAN — The design of contemporary cities should incorporate intangible cultural aspects of the nation, deputy tourism minister Mohammad-Hasan Talebian has said.

He made the remarks during an international webinar on contemporary architecture and intangible cultural heritage, which was held in Tehran Intangible Cultural Heritage Center on Monday.

For the dynamism and vitality of contemporary cities, the intangible cultural heritage capacities must be emphasized more than ever, he explained.

In this regard, traditional and indigenous knowledge as a source of spiritual and material capital and its positive contribution to sustainable development seems crucial, he added.

For his part, Mostafa Purali, a senior official with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said that throughout the last two centuries, human attitudes toward themselves, their environment, and their living space have changed, creating a new kind of architectural space.

Despite the strengths of this type of architectural space, it must be admitted that contemporary architecture has its limitations, including the lack of an appropriate basis for intangible cultural elements to emerge and develop, he added.

Architecture and the city can share a memorable quality if they make use of intangible cultural heritage, which is being preserved through customs, performances, rituals, handicrafts, and language, he explained.

The intangible cultural heritage of a nation consists of its practices, symbols, skills, means, traditional knowledge, handicrafts, and cultural spaces passed down from one generation to the next.

Among Iran's intangible cultural heritage are performing arts, traditional and hand-made crafts, skills related to these crafts, social traditions, customs, celebrations, rituals, science and customs related to nature and world, verbal traditions, and other manifestations such as languages.

Windmills of Sistan-Baluchestan nearer to UNESCO status

→ 1 “The earliest known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and windmills in Seistan [Sistan], Iran, in 915 CE,” the Encyclopedia Britannica says.

Avid visitors and researchers can examine the subtle yet simple mechanism in person as several windmills have been restored and brought back to life to testify how ancient Iranians harnessed the wind to make a living.

The Islamic Republic designated the Asbad as a national heritage site in 2002.

Taq Kasra, Persian masterpiece of architecture in Iraq, to be restored

HERITAGE DESK TEHRAN — Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities Hassan Nazim has said urgent restoration work is due to commence on Taq Kasra.

Located near Baghdad, the ancient Persian masterpiece of architecture was partly collapsed last year, prompting criticism from many Iranian supporters of cultural heritage.

“Studies and preparatory work related to the restoration project have been completed and now we are in the operational stage of rescuing this historical monument,” IRNA quoted Nazim as saying on Tuesday.

Scaffolding has been up around the monument and [restoration] work will begin soon under the supervision of the ALIPH Foundation (International Alliance for the protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas), the official said.

In early January, some Iraqi social media users posted pictures of Taq Kasra, writing the vault of the monument is partly collapsed, prompting social media activists and cultural heritage lovers to criticize the Iraqi



government over what they named as a “neglect” of the monument.

For years, there have been talks between Iranian and Iraqi officials to

jointly restore the magnificent structure, but nothing happened. Even Iranian archaeologists have repeatedly asked the Iranian authorities to consult on

the restoration of the monument in cooperation between the two countries. Because they believe Taq Kasra is in dire need of urgent repairs as every time a part of it collapses.

In 2019, Tehran Municipality hold talks with Baghdad's urban planners and authorities to restore several aging monuments in Iraq including Taq Kasra.

Ivan Madaen or the Archway of Ctesiphon are other names given to the remains of a circa 3rd–6th-century Sasanian-era Persian monument, which is located near the modern town of Salman Pak, a city located approximately 15 miles (24 km) south of Baghdad.

The arch was part of the imperial palace complex, however, the exact time of its construction is not known with certainty. Some historians believe the founder is Shapur I who ruled Persia from 242 to 272 CE and some others believe that construction possibly began during the reign of Anushirwan the Just (Khosrow I) after a campaign against the Byzantines in 540 CE.

Wooden, stone handicrafts exhibit to be held near Tehran

HERITAGE DESK TEHRAN — An exhibition of wooden and handmade stone products is scheduled to be opened in Robat Karim, Tehran province on Saturday.

The exhibit will showcase artworks by 10 prominent local artisans in the fields of marquetry, woodturning, wood carving, traditional musical instruments, and precious and semi-precious stones, Robat Karim's tourism chief has said.

The exhibit, which aims at providing the opportunity of direct sale for the artisans as well as promoting and developing the traditional arts in the region, will be running until June 11, at the historical caravanserai of Haj Kamal, Hamid Karimi said on Tuesday.

Online visitors can also explore the works that will be on show on the occasion of World Handicrafts Day, which takes place on June 10, the official added.

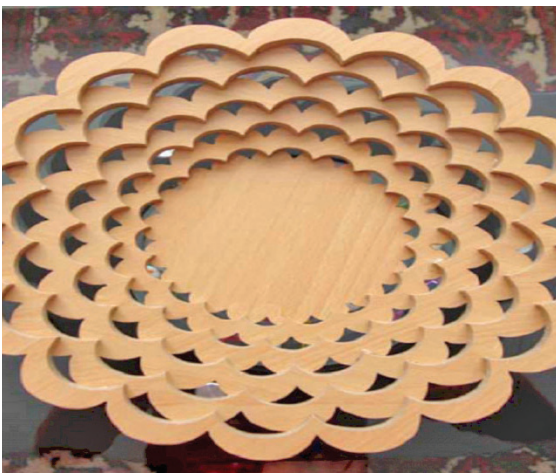
With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts

Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts”. Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a “world city of filigree”. And Qassemabad village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab, a kind of homemade outer garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.



Second Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 1400/103-30/03

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender :
Broadcasting the TV networks of Press Tv , Al-Alam TV-Syria & Ifilm Arabic in DVB-S2 format on Eutelsat 7WA for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
From **Monday 07 June 2021 (1400/03/17)** until **Thursday 10 June 2021 (1400/03/20)** by **10:00 a.m** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

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

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

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit required for participating in tender is USD 78/156 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 17/976/000/000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the Qualification Evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m. on Saturday 10 of July 2021 (1400/04/19)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:
The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes on Saturday 10 of **July 2021 (1400/04/19)** at **10:00 a.m** in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

Time and place of opening Envelopes:
The envelopes A of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened on **Sunday 11 July 2021 at 03:00 p.m (1400/04/20)** in the office of Financial Vice President .In case of complete content in the envelopes A the envelopes of B and C of eligible participants will be opened at the same time and place.
The participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.
Fore more information please see : www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and <http://iets.mporg.ir/> Tel: 00982122167053
Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Second Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 1400/103-29/03

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender :
Broadcasting the TV network of Sahar Urdu in DVB-S2/MPEG4 format with Constant Bit Rate of 2.5Mbps ,3846 V on Paksat 1R for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
From **Monday 07 June 2021 (1400/03/17)** until **Thursday 10 June 2021 (1400/03/20)** by **10:00 a.m** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

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Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit required for participating in tender is USD 20/625 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 4/744/000/000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the Qualification Evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m. on Saturday 10 of July 2021 (1400/04/19)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

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Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. June 1

New cases	11,620
New deaths	161
Total cases	2,935,443
Total deaths	80,488
New hospitalized patients	1,527
Patients in critical condition	4,005
Total recovered patients	2,494,108
Diagnostic tests conducted	20,183,510
Doses of vaccine injected	4,442,996

Half a century of Iran’s ecosystem protection

→ 1 The theme for World Environment Day 2021 is “Ecosystem Restoration”, hosted by Pakistan this year, and will see the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

In Iran, in commemoration of the World Environment Day, a week has been set with this name since June 6-12, which this year is coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Department of Environment (DOE).

Founded in 1971, the Iranian Department of Environment is a governmental organization, that is responsible for matters related to safeguarding the environment.



Currently, about 18.5 million hectares of the country’s lands are under the management of the DOE, according to Kioumars Kalantari deputy chief of the DOE for natural resources and biodiversity.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and natural national monuments. In 1997, the DOE held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas. By the year 2003, the supervised areas reached 11,791,788.225 hectares.

According to the latest studies, about 1,300 species of vertebrates, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic fish, about 30,000 species of invertebrates, and 8,000 species of plants have been identified in the country.

Unfortunately, over the past two decades, human activities have led to alarming degradation of ecosystems, deletion of genes, species, and biological capabilities; Human threats to biodiversity have accelerated the most over the past 50 years over the entire history of human life.

COVID-19 has given a fillip to biodiversity

The COVID-19 outbreak caused many problems for the world, but in return gave the planet’s environment and biodiversity a chance to breathe. The high mortality rate may be worrisome, but it provided us with the opportunity to think more about how we should treat biodiversity in a better way.

The sudden prevalence of COVID-19, followed by lock-downs and restrictions around the world, reduction in human activity, the evacuation of highways, reduction in travel, air, and land transport, and a significant drop in greenhouse gas emissions, has benefited the nature in early months.

While, after a year, the reports claimed the increase of wood logging and illegal hunting of wildlife, which showed that human is not kind to himself anymore, as conservation is in fact the protection of ourselves and the resources without which we cannot survive.

According to experts, “the most important and largest public asset of any country is the environment”, unfortunately, due to the wrong approach and underestimation of its vital importance, its capacity is declining every day, and it cannot be exchanged or bought, although some officials, especially economists, suggest ways to price these environmental resources, they are invaluable.

Protecting environment must be brought into sharp focus

COVID-19 is nature sending us a message. In fact, it reads like an SOS signal for the human enterprise, bringing into sharp focus the need to live within the planet’s ‘safe operating space’. The environmental, health and economic consequences of failing to do so are disastrous. Now more than ever before, technological advances allow us to listen to such messages and better understand the natural world.

We can estimate the value of ‘natural capital’ – the planet’s stock of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, like plants, soils, and minerals – alongside values of produced and human capital – for example, roads and skills – which together form a measure of a country’s true wealth.

Data from the United Nations Environment Program shows that, per person, our global stock of natural capital has declined nearly 40 percent since the early 1990s, while produced capital has doubled and human capital has increased by 13 percent.

For sustainable economic growth, helping to steer our leaders towards making better decisions that deliver us, and future generations, the healthier, greener, happier lives that more and more of us say we want. From now on, protecting and enhancing our environment must be at the heart of how we achieve economic prosperity.

Some €450m allocated to tackle SDSs in 3 years

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – A total budget of €450 million has been earmarked to contain sand and dust storms (SDSs) nationwide over the past three years, deputy head of the Department of Environment (DOE) for the human environment has stated.

Eliminating SDSs hotspots has always been a concern of the government and the DOE, Masoud Tajrishi said.

Accordingly, in 2017, a special working group called “national headquarters for SDSs control” was formed, which has been able to manage this issue to a very good extent, he further highlighted.

Tajrishi went on to state that the headquarters first identified internal and external dust hotspots, based on which it was determined that about 35 million hectares are generating dust in the country, two million hectares of which are in critical condition.

Studies have shown that 40 percent of the critical dust sources are dried wetlands. To manage this section, we are going to have a meeting with the Ministry of Energy, he added.

About 350 million hectares of surrounding countries affect Iran, which is mainly raised from Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Turkmenistan, he noted, adding, so that the Ministry of Foreign affairs started negotiations with the international community to tackle the problem.

In order to manage external SDSs sources, we have many bilateral and trilateral agreements with countries such as Iraq and Syria, last week, we have reached good agreements with the United Nations in this regard, he explained.

Over the past three years, some €450 million have been spent to mitigate SDS hotspots in the country, Tajrishi said.

During this period, about 110,000 hectares



undergone seedling plantation, more than 750,000 hectares of protection, trapping and grazing operations in pastures with dust-raising potential, soil stabilization in 150,000 hectares, including mulching, construction of live and non-living windbreaks, equipping 100 stations for forecasting and warning, about 360 thousand cubic meters of dredging operations, improving routes for water to reach wetlands and about 100 kilometers of water transmission channels to humidify areas with dust potential in 27 dusty provinces were among the actions have been taken, he explained.

Since the past few years, southern and western provinces of the country are frequently hit by sand and dust storms, as well as drought and even destructive floods, which are caused by both internal and external hotspots. Major external SDSs sources are Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

In fact, Iran has been repeatedly exposed

to SDSs due to its presence in the arid and semi-arid part of the world, so that in 2006-2007, the dust storms originating in Iraq and Syria affected Iran, haunting a wide area of the country so that it reached the central areas and southern slopes of Alborz and also included Tehran.

Consumption, changing the pattern of cultivation, and climate change have increased the negative effects of this phenomenon.

According to the World Metrological Organization, sand and dust storms usually occur when strong winds lift large amounts of sand and dust from bare, dry soils into the atmosphere. Over the last decade, scientists have come to realize the impacts on climate, human health, the environment, and many socio-economic sectors.

How to mitigate the effects of SDSs

According to EcoMENA, sand and dust storms cause significant negative impacts on society, economy, and environment at local,

regional, and global scales. There are three key factors responsible for the generation of sand and dust storms – strong wind, lack of vegetation, and absence of rainfall. The environmental and health hazards of such storms cannot be reduced permanently, however, their impact can be reduced by taking appropriate measures.

As the dust cloud rises, it reduces horizontal visibility which can impact human life in many ways. The fine suspended particles also contain contaminants, bacteria, pollens, which cause negative health impacts such as allergies and respiratory diseases. Dust also carries airborne pollutants such as toxins, heavy metals, salt, sulfur, pesticides, etc. which cause significant health impacts when people inhale the contaminated dust. Dust can corrode buildings and other built infrastructure as it contains a high level of salts.

The effects of sand and dust storms can be reduced by using a number of health and safety measures and environmental control strategies. Large-scale sand and dust storms are generally natural phenomena and it may not be always practicable to prevent it from happening. However, control measures can be taken to reduce their impacts. Localized small-scale dust emission due to human-induced activities can be reduced by using temporary mechanical methods such as concrete barrier, mulching, tree buffer, etc.

Taking appropriate control of dust-raising factors such as increasing the vegetation cover where possible can help in the stabilization of the soil, sand dunes, and form windbreaks. Additionally, the use of native plants and trees as the buffer can reduce wind velocity, and sand drifts at the same increase the soil moisture. Designing buildings appropriately and conduct air infiltration testing during building commissioning can also help the adverse effects of sand and dust storm.

Persian shallot: endemic plant tied to numerous health benefits

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Persian shallot (*Allium hirtifolium*) is native plant species of Iran and grows as a wild plant across the Zagros Mountains. The ancient plant is for long used for the treatment of rheumatic and inflammatory disorders.

Called “Mooseer” in Persian, the plant belongs to the Alliaceae family and is one of the important edible alliums in Iran.

In traditional medicine Persian shallot is recommended for the treatment of rheumatic and inflammatory disorders, gout, arthritis, diarrhea, stomach pain, psoriasis, and hemorrhoid.

Moreover, in modern medicine, Persian shallot has been reported to have a range of health benefits which include anticarcinogenic, hypoglycemic, hypolipidemic, antioxidant, antibiotic properties, kidney, and liver-protective effects. Here we review the medicinal properties of Persian shallot:

Persian shallot is a wild, perennial, herbaceous, and aromatic plant. It consists of a naked and erect scape with 80 to 120 cm height. The green leaves are linear and lanceolate with 20 to 30 cm in length and its flower’s color is red or violet. Bulbs of common shallot are pear-shaped, reddish-brown skinned, and clustered at the base of the plant and its clusters may contain as many as 15 bulbs.

Persian shallot production in Iran falls into three broad product segments; bulbs for fresh market, dehydrated Persian shallot for food processing, and green salad Persian shallots for fresh consumption.

Compared with common onions, shallots are a more concentrated source of protein, fiber, and micronutrients, including calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, copper, folate, B vitamins, and vitamins A and C.

They are packed with powerful antioxidants and organosulfur compounds – all of which are responsible for many of their health benefits.

Hypoglycemic and antioxidant

The Persian shallot extract is a stronger hypoglycemic agent compared to garlic extract and it could be a useful supplemental remedy in diabetes.

Persian shallot preserves and protects the pancreas by its strong antioxidative capacity. So, it may be useful for

preventing or delaying the development of diabetes and its complications. Also, Persian shallot had probably the ability to accelerate the hepatic glucose metabolism.

Probably some of these hypoglycemic and antioxidant properties of Persian shallot are related to its content of phenolic and sulfur compounds.

Kidney protective

Also, a significant elevation in serum creatinine, uric acid, and urea levels is indicative of impaired renal function in diabetic animals. It was shown Persian shallot extract improved renal function, which was evident from the lowered serum uric acid, and creatinine levels with Persian shallot extract.

The presence of polyphenols and flavonoids in Persian shallot extract might be responsible for the antioxidant nephroprotective activities and the reduction of serum uric acid and creatinine levels.

Hepatoprotective

A study revealed that using hydroalcoholic extract of Persian shallot could protect liver cells against oxidant effects of alloxan.

Furthermore, having antioxidant properties, these compounds are able to neutralize free radicals existing in the environment and prevent their destructive effects.

Antibiotic

Antimicrobial effects of three types of Persian shallot extract-fresh, dried and autoclaved extracts- were used and the results showed that fungal species were more sensitive to shallot extract than bacteria.

Therefore, this ancient plant is a potential source for the treatment of bacterial and fungal infections. Hence as an alternative, cheap and affordable eco-friendly plant extracts may possibly be used for the treatment.

The findings indicate that Persian shallot extract exerts antioxidant and antibacterial effects on vacuum-packaged rainbow trout during storage and increases its shelf life.

Anticancer

Persian shallot contains some useful biological secondary metabolites, which include allicin, S-allyl-cysteine, diallyldisulphide, and diallyltrisulphide. Allicin has been reported in the treatment of cancer.

The ability of Persian shallot to preferentially suppress



the growth of neoplastic over non-neoplastic cells provides interesting possibilities for the development of new anticancer strategies in humans.

Other health benefits

Shallots are high in quercetin, a plant flavonoid that may help reduce and manage eye and nose symptoms related to seasonal allergies.

Quercetin may act as a natural antihistamine by preventing the release of histamine and lessening the severity of inflammatory and respiratory reactions like allergic asthma, bronchitis, and seasonal allergies.

Research indicates that the organosulfur compounds and antioxidants in shallots may benefit heart health and blood circulation in several ways, potentially lowering your risk of heart disease.

Shallots contain high amounts of thiosulfinates, a type of organosulfur compound that may prevent the formation of dangerous blood clots.

Some studies indicate that compounds in shallots may help prevent excess fat accumulation and lower total body fat percentage.

The use of Persian shallot is an additive to food or a drug without any side effects.

It could probably be stated that the extract of Persian shallot may provide a new therapeutic avenue against different diseases and their related complications.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

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 غذا و دارو با محصولات تراریخته فاقد برچسب برخورد می کند

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا 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.

مفید افزود: هشت آزمایشگاه علاوه بر آزمایشگاه مرجع در کشور می توانند تراریختگی را تعیین کنند.

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا و دارو گفت: درج تراریختگی در برچسب جلوی ترکیبات، صرفاً احترام به مشتری و فراهم کردن قدرت انتخاب برای مصرف کننده است و هیچ ارتباطی با ایمنی و سلامت آن فرآورده ندارد.

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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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Zip Code: 1599814713





GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When you get ill do not get nervous about it and try as much as possible to be hopeful.

Imam Ali (AS)

Garden in Persian literature

Part 1
Bagh (garden) appears both as an object of description and as the prime source of nature imagery in Persian literature. As a poetic image, bagh stands for order and beauty, and the link between man and nature. In modern poetry it can be a locus for social criticism. It is also a source of book titles and musical modes. Under the influence of mystical thought, bagh becomes a symbol of Paradise. Finally, bagh as conventionalized in literature summarizes the Persian attitude toward nature. Actual gardens are frequently mentioned in literature, and the building of a new garden is often the occasion for a poem celebrating the event. Descriptions of gardens, however, are so conventionalized that they are non-distinctive, the only specific detail being the date of the event expressed in a chronogram. Gardens are the setting for parties and revelry, seasonal celebrations such as Noruz and Mehrgan, festivities connected with the end of Ramadan, or any other public or private occasion. They are also thought of as places of private retreat, and as examples of royal pomp and magnificence. Although gardens are always described in conventional terms, many of the specific flowers and trees common to them on the Iranian plateau and the Indian subcontinent are found in the poetry about gardens. Certain other physical features, such as the surrounding wall, are hardly ever mentioned. The pattern for this sort of description was set by the Ghaznavid poets Farrokhi and Manuchehri, and continued to the twentieth century. In spring, the garden was at its most beautiful, and the spring flowers and indeed the garden as a whole quickly became images for all that is beautiful, especially the poet's beloved.

From here, it was only a short step to personifying the garden, and making possible rich clusters of images, such as Farrokhi's of spring drinking wine from the cup (the blooming red rose) held by the garden (the leaves of the chinar, plane tree, are likened to human hands), or Manuchehri's mythic narrative of two lovers, the cloud and the garden. Persian poets never hesitated to mix images of paganism with images of Islam. The profusion of colorful flowers and the glittering surface of the watercourses were often likened to jewels, and this image was extended by the Ghaznavid poets to make the garden into an idol temple, an idea reinforced, no doubt, by Sultan Mahmud's expeditions to India in search of treasure. Farrokhi, celebrating spring, says "The garden became an idol temple and the rose bush, the idol; the rose-worshipping shaman [i.e., the nightingale] was drinking wine". More complex however, are the images of the garden as Paradise. It is likely that the form of Persian gardens was influenced by descriptions of the archetypal garden of Paradise in the Holy Quran, which stress its green color, shade, fruits, fountains of running water, and cool pavilions where the inhabitants may drink a wine that does not intoxicate. A qasida by Moezzi praising a royal garden and probably dedicated to the Saljuq Malek Shah, contains many of the features of the garden of Paradise: the king like the sun and his throne raised to the seventh heaven, the presence of Rezwan, fruit trees, streams of water, and huris. The idea of an earthly Paradise captured the imagination of Persian poets, and the image was so powerful that it appears as late as the nineteenth century in a qasida of the Qajar poet Fath-Ali Khan Shaba, and the great nineteenth-century garden in Shiraz was called Baghe Eram, after the earthly rival of Paradise. From the image of the garden as an earthly Paradise, mystical poets and prose writers extended it to symbolize Paradise itself. Again the Quranic passages provided the model, and features of the actual garden such as the watercourses and cypress trees corresponded to the divine archetype. The cypress tree, for example, is likened to the Tuba, and then, in a line from Hafez, associated with his beloved: "You think about the Tuba tree and I about my beloved's stature; everyone thinks according to his aspiration". The beloved was frequently described as one of the huris who were promised to the faithful for their enjoyment. In this regard, the 13th-century mystic Ruzbehan Baqli "draws our attention to the alleged prophetic tradition that one should find spiritual recreation by looking at three things: water, greenery, and a lovely face". For Jalal ad-Din Rumi, the garden becomes a symbol of divine beauty which both displays and conceals the eternal beauty of the archetypal gardener, God. The mystical lover and his divine beloved are like a rose and its thorn. When the lover becomes one with the beloved, the rose becomes one with the thorn and all duality is resolved. Source: Encyclopedia Iranica To be continued

Hungarian WWII drama “Natural Light” shines as best at Fajr film festival

➔ Denis Cote from Canada was selected as best director for his 2021 comedy-drama "Social Hygiene". The award for best screenplay was given to Turkish drama "Brother's Keeper" co-written by Gulistan Acet and director Ferit Karahan. The story of the film begins in a Kurdish boarding school in the mountains of Eastern Anatolia, attended by Yusuf and his best friend Memo as pupils. Yusuf is faced with the struggle to challenge the school's strict regulations to help Memo after he mysteriously falls ill. The plot of the movie complicates after the school is buried under heavy snowfall with no way out and an increasing desperation to address Memo's deteriorating health. The award for best actress went to Laura Birn for her portrayal of Finland's most acclaimed painter, Helene Schjerfbeck, in Finnish filmmaker Antti J. Jokinen's 2020 romance historical drama, "Helene". Hamid Farrokhnejad was named best actor for his role in the Iranian drama "Major" written and directed by Ehsan Abdipur. "The White Wall" by Andrea Brusa and Marco Scotuzzi from Italy won the award for best short in Salvation Cinema. "Asteroid" by Mehdi Hosseiniyand from Iran received the award for best film in the Eastern Vista competition, which is dedicated to Asian cinema. The film tells the story of Ebrahim, a 12-year-old boy who lives in a remote desert village with his mother and five younger



Ferenc Szabó acts in a scene from "Natural Light" by Hungarian director-writer Dénes Nagy. sisters and brothers. His mother still believes that her husband and elder son who left in search of work will one day return to the village, as Ebrahim is the only breadwinner in the family. Iranian director Alireza Samadi won the award for best director for "Staging", which revolves around a group of people who stage fake car accidents in a bid to extract money from insurance companies. The award for best screenplay in this category went to "200 Meters" by Palestinian director-writer Ameen Nayfeh. Upon learning his son has had an accident, a desperate Palestinian construction worker at wit's end attempts to smuggle himself past the separation wall between Israel and the West Bank to see him. Director of cinematography Mark Lee Ping-Bing received the award for best artistic achievement for his collaboration on Chinese director Cao Jinling's drama "Anima". "Bethlehem 2001" by Ibrahim Handal was picked as best short of the Eastern Vista competition. The film is about a young Palestinian who recalls childhood memories of the military invasion and siege of Bethlehem by Israeli forces.

FIAPF welcomes Fajr filmfest as new accredited event

Film Festival as its new accredited film event in competitive feature film festivals. "FIAPF welcomes the major Iranian festival, Fajr International Film Festival, as a new FIAPF-accredited competitive non-specialized film festival," the association tweeted on last Friday. Iran is the sixteenth international festival accredited by the FIAPF in this category, which contains festivals such as Berlinale, Cannes and Venice. In a letter sent to the Fajr festival on Tuesday, the Iranian House of Cinema, which is the official guild of Iranian cineastes, congratulated the organizers. The house said the endorsement opened a new chapter in the history of the festival, and added that this recognition can help improve the economic condition of cinema and the films participating in this event. Critic Shadmehr Rastin, who is also the writer of the acclaimed movie "So Simple", called the FIAPF

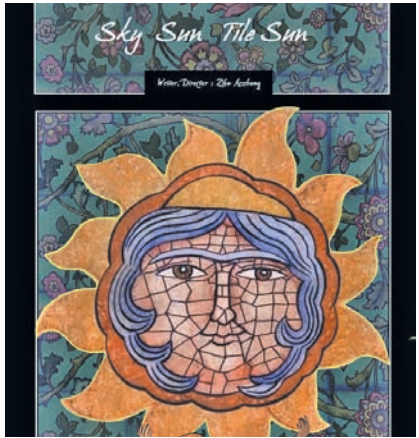
accreditation of the Fajr Festival marks the beginning of traversing a difficult route. "From now on, no longer can we change the date and structure of the festival," he told the Persian service of MNA. "We must undertake a series of dos and don'ts and apply some universal standards, and meeting these standards can foster audience trust," he added. Based on this accreditation, Rastin also noted, "We cannot cut or change scenes from the entries to festival anymore without permission from their writers and directors." The FIAPF (Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films), created in 1933, is an organization composed of 36 member associations from 30 of the leading audiovisual production countries. Its secretariat is located in Brussels, Belgium. The FIAPF is also in charge of regulating international film festivals, including some of the world's most important ones.

Iranian movies line up for Fine Arts Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN – Four Iranian movies will be screened in various sections of the 8th Fine Arts Film Festival, which will be held online in the U.S. city of Venice, California from June 8 to 14. Established by the Venice Institute of Contemporary Art, the festival is dedicated to showing the finest movies in the world about art. "The Badger" directed by Kazem Mollai will be competing in the feature narrative category. The acclaimed drama is about Sudeh, a 40-year-old woman who faces a strange incident right before her second marriage. Sudeh and her son Matiar live in an old apartment. One day, she hires a pest control

company to solve the termite problems in the apartment. While the pest control company is working, Matiar is recording the procedures, as this is his hobby. The next day, Matiar gets kidnapped after school, and the kidnapper asks Sudeh to pay 10 Bitcoins for her son. Tremendous pressure is put on Sudeh, but the truth hidden beneath will surprise everyone. Earlier in May, the 19th Riverside International Film Festival in the Inland Empire region of Southern California honored "The Badger" in three categories, including the best audience and best actor. The short experimental film "Cocoon" by Yavar Darehzami will also compete in the festival. It tells the story of a short man who makes artificial limbs for himself and

grows tall. Coming out of his house, we see that everyone is short. The short narrative "Sheep Will Devour Us" has also selected to be screened at the festival. Directed by Mostafa Rostampur and Atefeh Rezaian, it is about Tahereh, a woman who is the victim of premature marriage. Now she wants to prevent her sister from repeating those bitter memories. The festival will also screen the short animation "Sky Sun, Tile Sun by Ziba Arzhang. Due to the intensity of the explosion and bombardment, the role played by the sun on the tiled wall ceases, and it becomes dark everywhere. People then build a new sun together.



A poster for "Sky Sun, Tile Sun" by Ziba Arzhang.

Books on puppetry published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — Four books by renowned international experts on puppetry have recently been published in Persian by Namayesh Publications. The books are from a collection translated under the auspices of the 18th edition of the Tehran-Mubarak Puppet Theater Festival, which was held in Tehran in March. "Puppetry: How to Do It" by Mervyn Millar is one of the books. It focuses on puppet theater performances and how performers can bring puppets to life in the theater. Translated by Selma Mohseni Ardahali, the book provides a simple and practical guide for enthusiasts to develop the elements of puppetry through individual and group exercises. "Puppetry: A Reader in Theatre Practice" by Penny Francis was another book of the collection translated by Pupak Azimpur. In this sophisticated and compelling introduction to puppet theater, Francis offers engaging contemporary perspectives



This combination photo shows books by several international experts on puppetry published in Persian Namayesh Publications.

on this universal art form. She provides an account of puppetry's different facets, from its demands and techniques, through its uses and abuses, to its history and philosophy. The book gathers together material from an international selection of sources, bringing puppet theatre to life for the student, practitioner and amateur alike. Written by Henryk Jurkowski and translated to Persian by Zohreh Behrozinia, "Aspects of Puppet Theater" is based on the author's original 1988 text and includes the author's essays analyzing puppetry as a performing art. The book is the third in a series of essays by Jurkowski, containing articles discussing the craft of puppetry, as well as the art of performing Puppet theatre. The collection also includes "Children and Adolescent Theater". It is a compilation of writings of German experts on Children's theater compiled and translated by Keiqobad Yazdani.



A logo of Sadi Foundation.

Iran's Sadi Foundation preparing texts for learning Persian in India

CULTURE TEHRAN – The Sadi Foundation, Iran's organization that promotes the Persian language abroad, is preparing textbooks for learning the Persian language for schoolchildren in India. Indian plans to add the Persian language to its school curriculum, which also includes 10 other classic languages. The textbooks will be prepared in

collaboration with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Ministry of Education, and the University of Tehran. Officials from the organization came together for a meeting at the Sadi Foundation on Wednesday to review the process of preparing textbooks. Speaking at the meeting, Sadi Foundation director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel said, "I hope that with the cooperation of Iran and India, an effective step will be taken to teach

Persian in India and strengthen relations between the two countries." "Persian is still spoken in parts of India, and Taj Mahal, India's most beautiful tourist attraction, was built by Shah Jahan, whose mother spoke in Persian," he added. "It's our duty to support the Indian government to implement its plan to add the Persian language to the country's school curriculum," he noted.