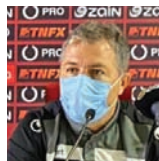
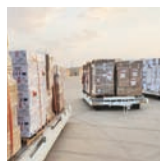




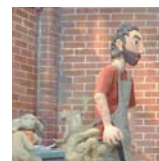
Qatar calls for dialogue between Iran and Arab neighbors *Page 3*



I know Bahrain like back of my hand: Dragan Skocic *Page 3*



Tehran, Seoul expected to resume trade within 3 months *Page 4*



Iran's "Statue" tops at VAFI & RAFI animation festival *Page 8*

Oman embarks on new Yemen diplomacy

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©AFP

Vladimir Alekno trusts youth players

BY MASOUD HOSSEIN
After two defeats against Japan and Russia, the Iranian volleyball team won four matches in a row with a very talented bunch of young players.

Saber Kazemi, Meysam Rahmani, Bardia Saadat, Arman Salehi, and Amirhossein Eshandiar have stolen the show in the 2021 Volleyball Nations League, helping Iran move up in the standing.

The Russian coach had already said the 2021 VNL is a chance for him to field the young players and he trusts the youngsters in Rimini, Italy as he said.

Iran are going to win their first ever medal in Olympics and VNL is a good preparatory tournament for Tokyo. Many teams like Italy and Russia are testing their new players in the event as well.

Iran's golden generation are coming to an end and the country needs to introduce the new players. The talented players have proved that there is a bright future ahead of Iran.

Alekno, who has already won a gold and a bronze medal in Olympics as a coach, can help the Persians to make history in Tokyo, however winning a medal in Olympics is very difficult job.

Iran have been drawn in volleyball giants Poland and Italy and hosts Japan in Pool A of the 2020 Olympic Games and it will be very tough task to secure a spot in quarterfinals but the players have shown that they have the potential to do the great works.

Iran are scheduled to meet the U.S., Serbia, Germany, Poland, Brazil, Argentina and France in the upcoming matches and Alekno will have many more chance to know his team.

The Iranian fans can be proud of their young players because they will help Iran to stay among the world powers in the next years.

The Iranian team have established themselves as one of international volleyball's leading powers almost a decade ago.

It doesn't matter where Iran sit at the end of 2021 VNL because Alekno considers the event as a chance for himself to find out what's the best lineup in Olympics.

Saeid Marouf, Mohammad Mousavi, Amir Ghafour and Milad Ebadipour will be replaced by the very talented players in the future and Alekno could be the catalyst to push the players onto bigger and better things.

Alekno is a role model for the coaches who want to use young players in their teams.

Iranian tourism minister visits Russia to finalize visa-free agreement

TEHRAN – Iranian tourism minister Ali-Asgar Mounesan entered Moscow on Sunday to finalize work on a bilateral visa-free agreement for tourist groups with Russia, CHTN reported.

In 2017, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked a visa-free agreement for tourist groups.

A joint technical committee has been developing an action plan for the previously agreed visa-free travel arrangements since then, in order to put the agreement into effect.

However, the outbreak of the coronavirus has put a halt to the agreement.

Based on the 2017 agreement four groups of 5 to 50 people heading to [easternmost parts of] Russia from Iran or vice versa are granted a visa-free stay of up to 15 days.

As part of the minister's visit to Russia, Tehran's Niavaran Museum and Moscow's

Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts plan to ink an MOU to intensify their cooperation, the report added.

Earlier this month, Mostafa Sarvari, who presides over the tourism marketing and advertising office of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, announced many Russian tourists are eager to travel to Iran, recounting his Russian counterparts. "Many [potential] Russian travelers are motivated to visit novel and lesser-known destinations such as Iran that could be a safe and attractive destination," he said.

"According to Russian tourism experts, the feedback from Russian tourists who have traveled to Iran has been very positive, and its reflection, especially on social media, has caused a great deal of enthusiasm and interest."

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U.S.-run Ain al-Asad Airbase in Iraq comes under drone strike

Unmanned aerial vehicles have reportedly struck a major airbase in Iraq's western province of Anbar, where American military forces and trainers are stationed.

Two combat drones hit targets inside Ain al-Asad about 160 km west of Baghdad on Sunday morning, said Sabereen News, a Telegram news channel associated with Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units better known by the Arabic name as Hashd al-Sha'abi.

The report said C-RAM and Patriot missile systems deployed at the base were not able to intercept the aircraft.

The Security Media Cell affiliated with the Iraqi prime minister's office, however, said the drones had been shot down.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet, which is the latest in a series of assaults that have targeted U.S. occupation forces over the past few months.

Back on May 24, a barrage of rockets landed inside the same airbase. An unmanned aerial surveillance system also attacked Ain al-Asad on May 8, and a hangar for military aircraft was damaged as a result.

The attacks come amid growing anti-U.S. sentiment, which has intensified since last year's assassination of Hashd al-Sha'abi deputy head Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and the region's legendary anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad.

Two days after the attack, Iraqi lawmakers approved a bill that requires the government to end the presence of all foreign military forces led by the U.S. in the country.

On January 8, 2020, Iran hit Ain al-Asad with a barrage of precision missiles that left more than 100 American forces with "traumatic brain injuries", according to the Pentagon.

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36 Iranian universities among world's top 1,000

TEHRAN – Thirty-six Iranian universities have been listed among more than 1,000 major universities worldwide, according to the Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking for 2021.

The ranking is prepared based on the indicators of scientific impact and collaboration.

The rankings are compiled by the CWTS (Dutch: Centrum voor Wetenschap en Technologische Studies, CWTS) at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

The CWTS Leiden Ranking offers a sophisticated set of bibliometric indicators that provide statistics at the level of universities on scientific impact, collaboration, open access publishing, and gender diversity. It stands for a multidimensional perspective on university performance.

The number of Iranian universities in the Leiden ranking has increased every year until 2020, but in 2021 it remains unchanged compared to the previous year, Mohammad Javad Dehghani, head of the Islamic World Science

Citation Center (ISC), said.

With the presence of 36 universities in this ranking system, Iran, as in previous years, ranks first among Islamic countries in terms of the number of top universities, he stated, adding, Turkey and Egypt are ranked second and third with 32 and 8 universities, respectively.

Overall, in the Leiden 2021 ranking, most of the country's universities have improved ranks compared to 2020, he highlighted.

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One-party systems can also present a model of development: Texas University professor

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – An American professor from the University of Texas believes that one-party states like China can also offer an alternative model for development.

"One-party states like China can offer an alternative model of development," Jon R. Taylor tells the Tehran Times.

Some political scholars suggest that the American style of liberal democracy is not the only way to reach development, as Samuel Huntington says that the existence of the order is more important than the type of the order (being democratic or authoritarian).

"As we've seen in China, the bargain struck during Deng Xiaoping's era enriched some areas and led to China's meteoric economic rise," Taylor notes. "But it also left a substantial portion of the nation outside the large cities of the east coast behind, hence moves by China to eradicate extreme poverty, new-type urbanization strategy, hukou registration reform, rural revitalization, and encourage a dual circulation economy," he argues.

Following is the text of the interview:
President Biden has said that this is "the white supremacy terrorism" that threatens the U.S., not al-Qaeda or ISIS. To what extent the American community understands the danger of racism and the widening split?

I'm not sure how much that the average American understands the threat, given that a portion of it believes that events such as the January 6th insurrection were either fake or not that big of a deal. White supremacist domestic terrorism is as much a threat today in the U.S. as it was in 1995

Continued on page 5

Funeral procession for defender of holy shrine

A funeral was held in Tehran on Sunday morning for Hassan Abdullahzadeh, a Defender of the Holy Shrine, who got martyred in an ambush by the Daesh terrorist group in Syria last week. He was laid to rest in the town of Shahid Mahallati in Tehran on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Jafar Sadeq (as).



© Mehr/Mohammad Khodabakhsh



Candidates face each other in first televised debate

➔ 1 The debate may not have a great influence on the number of people who will participate in the elections but they make shape the views of those who will vote, Imani stated.

Ebrahim Raeisi: Motivated producers are facing problems

Presidential contender Ebrahim Raeisi said today producers who have great motivation and new ideas to stimulate the economy are facing problems.

In order to create a favorable economic situation, the production sector should be strengthened, Raeisi suggested.

“We should create motivation for production and reduce motivation for non-producing sectors,” the cleric presidential candidate suggested.

Raeisi cited monopolization and an excess of regulations as the main impediments to the activities of the private sector.

He said the motivation for directing liquidity to foreign currency, gold and land property should lose its appeal. Raeisi also called trafficking of goods to the country as one of the hurdles which make the production sector suffer losses. He also said if he is elected president, he will reduce tax burden on the production sector.

Raeisi said he is serious in his view for a tight presidential competition and high voter turnout. He said based on opinion polls the people want officials show honesty.

“It is too bad that somebody as a presidential candidate tries to damage others in order to win votes,” Raeisi said in response to accusations by Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh and Hemmati.

In an open reference to the 2017 elections, he said if defamation and insults were influential in helping to resolve problems, many candidates traded accusations and made insults against others in the previous rounds of presidential debates.

“Haven’t you been tired of leveling allegations and making insults,” the presidential contender remarked. He added, “There is no problem if problems are resolved through insults and allegations against me.”

The candidate said he is talking to people honestly. He noted opponents of the Islamic Republic have been mobilized against him and unfortunately certain candidates (Hemmati and Mehr Alizadeh) have adopted such an approach toward him.

He also said since he has taken over as Judiciary chief, he has not ordered the closure of a website or a newspaper. “I have not also lodged a complaint against anybody who has criticized me.”

The presidential hopeful also defended his visits to manufacturing units that have faced problems and holding meetings with entrepreneurs. At the same time, he said, he is visiting prisons. He made these remarks in response to Hemmati that asked why Raeisi was visiting manufacturing units that were not related to his job.

The Judiciary chief said the causes of economic corruption should be uprooted which are being mostly produced by the executive body.

Injudicious measures create a foundation for corruption which the Judiciary should deal with, Raeisi lamented. He added people know well that “we don’t have red line” in cracking down on corruption and favoritism.

Today the government should counter loopholes that lead to “judicial files”.

He lambasted skyrocketing prices, saying housing prices have increased by about seven times, cars by eight times, etc.

For example, he said, the subsidized foreign currency has caused many problems for the judicial system, calling for market stability. He said the new government should take steps toward single-rate foreign currency.

He also said the country is lagging behind in cyberspace because there is a problem with the infrastructure system.

Jalili: There should be a will to fight poverty

Saeed Jalili: In the first televised debates, candidates asked about certain issues. On what is his plan in the next four years if he is elected as president, Jalili said, “One of the problems that we have had is that from an economic point of view people and poor people have not been given priority.”

Jalili said one of the main discussions by the late Imam Khomeini was to counter poverty.

In republicanism as a great legacy of Imam Khomeini due attention must be paid to the well-being of people, he noted.

“One should have plan for countering poverty but before making plans one should have belief and the will” to counter poverty, remarked said, the former secretary of the Supreme National Security Council.

He suggested that “certain major measures should be taken to reduce poverty.”

For example, he said, the citizens should be given an equal share in energy subsidy. Jalili said if he is elected president, he will materialize this goal.

Jalili said his second plan is to give food baskets to the poor classes of society. He added support for the poor should not just be restricted to the “first basic rights,” but it should also include travel and health service. Jalili said he has a “detailed plan for trip,” which is possible with the available facilities.

He added people are asking if the answer to economic problems is clear, then why nothing is done.

Jalili said the important point is that “you know the answers” to the problems but the point is that there should be a will for resolving these problems

and have a firm idea that they will be countered.

He also answered to Hemmati who sees some economic problems for refusal by the Expediency Council to approve the FATF (the Financial Action Task Force), saying, “When you look at the country’s problem in this way it leads to the current situation.”

Jalili said the government has accepted 39 articles out of 41 of the FATF, but the international body has not accepted them from Iran. He said certain countries have not implemented the FATF as much as Iran. “You (Hemmati) say that all the country’s problems are rooted in not accepting the FATF... this lack of correct understanding will not help you.”

He also accused Hemmati of being a part of the problem. Jalili also asked Hemmati about those who are hugely indebted to banks, but the central bank has done nothing tangible in this regard.

Jalili said during the eight years of the Rouhani administration, “Mr. Hemmati himself acknowledge that 11 persons were indebted 90 trillion toman (22 billion dollars) to banks. He said this has made the situation worse. Asking, “So what has been your duty?”

Jalili added there are two views, saying one view says let’s manage the country “by force” and then bring pretext for others. However, there are other views that says the country has capacities and “we not only can manage the country with a reliance on expert youth but also make the country to make a leap.”

The former chief nuclear negotiator said Hemmati clearly says the country cannot be managed in this way. “I say you cannot do it.”

Jalili cited an example, saying in 2015, the year the nuclear deal (JCPOA) was signed, he had warned that based on “this document sanctions will not be lifted.”

He said, “If in the next four years we do not just want to manage the country but create a situation to make it jump, we should have serious plan for the country’s economy. We should not invent pretexts.”

The former top security official said a jump in the production sector will lead to an increase in national currency. He said a jump in production will happen when there is an increase in export and this is possible when the country has extensive interaction with the world and “not just wait for a few countries.”

He asked Hemmati if you know how to run the country then why Iran’s export to 28 European countries is half of the country’s exports to Afghanistan.

The presidential candidate said different sectors should help produce income for the country and they should not just wait for the Oil Ministry, adding ministries of agriculture, industries, science and foreign affairs should help to increase the country’s foreign income.

He said even when Iran’s oil export is not subject to sanctions, the country can make money twice the oil export through the export of agriculture, mines, gas and electricity.

Jalili went on to say that a jump in petrochemicals, oil, gas and efficient use of energy can lead to a jump in job employment.

Zakani: Banks print money without the supervision of central bank

Alireza Zakani criticized heavy liquidity in the country, putting it at 3,500 billion toman (\$830 million). Zakani said banks are printing money outside the monitoring of the central bank.

Zakani said every day, about 1,000 billion toman (\$240 million) are added to the liquidity and this large amount of money has caused an increase in demand for foreign currency, gold, house, and cars.

This is while many production centers suffer from financial problems, he pointed out.

He rebuked Hemmati for the sharp devaluation of national currency, saying Hemmati says he is an economist “while in my view he should be given a Nobel prize in chemistry” because he has greatly depreciated national currency.

On remarks by Hemmati, who said the suggestions by certain candidates would lead to “distribution of poverty,” Zakani accused him of being an accomplice in “distribution of poverty.”

He also reacted to Hemmati, who criticized the Guardian Council for disqualifying certain candidates, saying, “If it was going to confirm other persons (candidates) you should not have been here.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said banks have created a situation in which 11 persons owe the banks 90 trillion toman. He said there are many who get loans from banks but don’t use that loan for the intended essential purposes.

He asked Hemmati who are these persons who are hugely indebted to banks and why there is such disorder in different banks. “Where do banking corruption originate?” he asked.

Zakani said, unfortunately, great debtors to banks are those who have no “active role” in the economic sector. Rather, he said, they use these huge amounts of bank loans to create turbulence in the economy.

The greatest service that Hemmati should have done was to regulate the monetary and banking system, but “unfortunately he has not done that.”

He also reacted strongly to a claim by Hemmati that he would finally withdraw candidacy in favor of Raisi, saying, “I request Mr. Hemmati to speak scientifically, precisely, and in an expert manner



and do not make accusations.”

Zakani also said due attention should be paid to the economy, management, culture, society, politics and foreign policy.

He said if he wins presidency, he will focus on a jump in the production sector and decentralizing the management system. Zakani said he will focus on electronic government, counter economic corruption and try to create a sustainable economic environment, promote justice, increase wealth, etc.

Zakani, who holds a Ph.D. in nuclear medicine, said he will try to remove barriers to production. He said the government is the greatest obstacle to production sector and called banks the greatest competitor to the production sector. He claimed if the North-South corridor is activated, it can bring the country 30 billion dollars income. Zakani, a sitting MP who currently heads the Parliament Research Center, said contrary to claims by Hemmati, he is not seeking to distribute poverty and instead will try to create a jump in the production sector and “distribute wealth”.

He also said he will focus on provinces to delegate responsibilities to local officials in different provinces, especially the least developed ones.

On a question that oil has made government economically incapable, he said in the past the governments relied on oil money and the Rouhani administration tried to run his administration through “the people’s pocket” and “feed on inflation.”

He also pointed to tax evasion, saying today there is 200,000 billion toman (\$47 billion) tax evasions and the same amount of tax waivers. In general, there is 720,000 billion toman (\$170 billion) in tax arrears.

He also accused Hemmati that he represents the government in the election trying to justify eight years of government performance.

Mehr Alizadeh: Management in my government will be rational, pragmatic

Pro-reform candidate Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh said if he is elected as president, he will follow a rational managerial system and that his approach is pragmatic and that one of his priorities is focused on the production sector.

“Management in my government will be rational, pragmatic and production-oriented,” he remarked.

He said his main plan is to build houses, create jobs and provide an environment for activities for realizing the talents of the youth.

He also expressed regret over a rise in poverty in the country, saying statistics show that about 50 percent of the population live under the poverty line.

Mehr Alizadeh also accused Raeisi that he cannot draw up plans to run the country because he is not proficient in economy.

He accused Raeisi of repeating the words of some experts, saying masses are suffering from economic problems and these problems are mostly rooted in different sectors, including lack of enough export. He added 70 percent of the production sector is dormant.

Mehr Alizadeh, who said he has is an engineer and has a Ph.D. in economic management, said making accusations have become a norm and certain “have no brake” in making accusations.

He went on to say that one of the major problems that the country has been grappling with since the 1979 Islamic Revolution is that there has never been a “proper model” for running the country. For example, one government followed a neo-liberal economy, another socialist policies, etc.

The presidential candidate suggested the model that European countries, especially Germany, have been following can resolve problems in the country.

He also said his government will seek to remove impediments in the production sector, facilitate production activities and introduce tax waivers for producers.

Mehr Alizadeh also said he will strengthen the Environment Protection Organization. He warned if attention is not paid to the environment, the country will face a water crisis in the future.

Mohsen Rezaei: I won’t say anything other than truth

Mohsen Rezaei said he has entered the presidential race to defend the Iranian nation.

Before the debates officially start, Rezaei said, “Those who have caused such a situation in the country are my competitors.”

He added, “I will adopt nothing other than telling the truth.”

The former IRGC chief went on to say that he had warned the electorate about the uselessness of President Hassan Rouhani’s “key”.

“Eight years ago, in this place I warned about that ‘useless key’. I showed you a 1,000 toman (about 20 cents) and warned if this trend continues our national currency will fall.”

He said the relations between government and the people has not been regulated based on “relations between government and economy, and relations between economy and the people.”

The presidential hopeful said the government “put its hands in the pocket of the people and the central bank with the help of Mr. Hemmati and his friend adopted such a policy.”

He also said the Rouhani government increased the value of the foreign currency to counter the budget deficit and encourage people to buy shares in the stock market and then when they met their goal of gaining money, they kept the people helpless (share prices fall sharply).

During the presidential debates, Rezaei said if he is elected president, he will ban Hemmati from leaving the country and lodge a complaint against him.

Rezaei has called his government “the government of action and reform.”

During the debate, Rezaei also several times pointed that his government will make use of the potential of all Iranians with different ethnicities and religions.

“In the government of action and reform... I will make use of all competent Iranians.”

He also said he will employ Iranians abroad in his government.

“In the government of action and reform.....I will make use of Iranians inside and outside the country, different ethnic groups, minorities, reformists, principlists, independents and any capable person who is able to do something.”

Rezaei also said he will make use of competent persons in the current and previous governments. The former IRGC chief said only those who have been involved in corruption will have no place in his administration.

Rezaei also vowed to pay salaries to housewives.

Qazizadeh Hashemi: National currency can gain its status if we can control inflation

Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi suggested his solution for raising the value of national currency, saying, “If we consider inflation as the mother of problems, then we can protect the value of national currency.”

“In our country the officials, instead of guarding the value of national currency they have become the guardian of foreign currency.”

He added, “I wish the chief of the central bank (Hemmati) consider himself as responsible for protecting the value of rial (national currency) instead of dollar.”

He said his government has introduced a project which includes 213 articles that more than 50 of them are about how to control inflation and make banking and budget structural reforms.

The presidential candidate said the major section of the budget deficit is compensated through inflation, describing inflation as a lasting tax imposed on the poor people which its money goes to the pocket of government and the rich, and this has been the norm over the past 50 or 60 years.

He added, “We seek to develop production, reinforcing production, redirecting liquidity, and controlling prices in the market.”

Qazizadeh also said it is regrettable that economic debates are being derailed by making accusations, creating a division in the society, trading insults and presenting no plans.

He said his government pays special attention to management and fighting corruption.

The sitting MP also said now the greatest favoritism is bank loans because the interest rate for loans is less than the inflation rate and this has created an impetus among debtors not to pay back loans.

He also said 65 percent of bank loans is given to the rich classes of society. Qazizadeh also said about 70 percent of bank loans are granted to

Tehran but 25 provinces jut get 20 percent.

The presidential candidate also said the way to running the country is “outdated”.

“Our rules about commerce, insurance, and banking should be restructured. However, now the problem is the government’s knee is on people’s neck.”

Qazizadeh said his team has crafted a plan that during four years the inflation rate will fall under five percent.

“We have also made plans to resolve the youth’s employment and marriage.”

He added, “We also want to establish the ministry of family.”

On how to fight unfettered importation of goods, he said, “Now we are facing the great and complicated mafia, which through favoritism, has been given the permission to receive foreign currency at a cheap price and threatens production sector through monopoly and imports.”

Nasser Hemmati: Promises by rival cannot be materialized

Nasser Hemmati who was boasting of his academic career as a professor of economics accused his rivals of not knowing even the A, B, C of economics and thereby they cannot manage the country.

He also said the economic promises given by his presidential rivals cannot be realized because the country does not have the necessary resources.

“I am economist. We don’t have necessary sources (money) and I don’t lie to win votes. Many of the promises given by the Mrs. cannot be materialized.”

He said as the central banker he is aware of details of the country’s economic situation.

He promised to make the “cake of economy greater and distribute it more fairly.”

“We need economic reform.”

Hemmati also rebuked Rezaei for delaying decision to approve the FATF in the Expediency Council for six months despite and order by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Rezaei is the secretary of the Expediency Council. Hemmati also made the claim that except Mehr Alizadeh the other candidates are seeking to garner votes for Raeisi.

He said if they don’t swear that they will stay in the race until the election date he will not give answer to them and just answers to remarks by Raeisi.

The former chief banker said it is unfair to blame the central bank for all the problems.

Hemmati also said he was dismissed as central banker due to differences with President Rouhani.

He also rejected that he represents Rouhani in the presidential campaigns, saying, “I am not the representative of Mr. Rouhani. I was dismissed from the central bank because of differences of opinion that I had with him.”

Hemmati added that Rouhani also suffers from lack of knowledge about economics.

“He also had your problems and did not have economic view and this was my problem.”

He repeated his previous statement that politicians leave the race for the post of president for economists and let them manage the country.

He defended his record as the governor of the central bank, saying he took over the post when the foreign currency market was highly volatile.

Hemmati said if it was not because of economic shrewdness the Iranian economy would become like Venezuela. “I prevented a Venezuelization of the economy.”

On why the value of dollar in the face of national currency have increased by about seven times, he said in the normal conditions Iran had an income of 50 to 60 billion dollars, but over the past three years the flow of income has been reduced to 9 billion dollars and in such a situation what the central could have done.

He said based on these nine billion dollars the value of dollars should have increased to 55000 toman per dollar but is now about 22,000 toman.

He accused his candidates for the current economic situation by refusing to approve the FATF.

He accused Jalili of knowing nothing about commerce and economy. He also made stinging attacks against Rezaei.

“Mr. Jalili I said in the Expediency Council that you don’t understand economic and commerce. Is it true or not? When you don’t know the basics of commercial issue why do you decide for the Iranian nation.

In an interview on Sunday, Hemmati suggested that the government, instead of interfering in the market, should take actions that the market finds its right path.

It is not possible to control the market through command pricing.

“Pricing should be delegated to the market. Entry into command pricing means entering into distribution of favoritism which is not controllable,” Hemmati pointed out.

The market itself should fix itself and the government should monitor that it would act correctly.

“This is my most important policy and plan for controlling the market.”

Writing on his Twitter account on Sunday, Hemmati said it was unfortunate that in the presidential debates no candidate asked about two important things: The effects of the toughest sanctions war in the history of the war against the Iranian economy by the Trump administration and the effects of Coronavirus that has taken the lives of tens of our countrymen.

(the dollar calculus is based on 4,200 toman)

Oman embarks on new Yemen diplomacy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In a rare public visit, a high-ranking Omani delegation from the Royal Office arrived in Sanaa Saturday to renew diplomatic efforts aimed at bringing peace to war-torn Yemen after international efforts in that regard failed to bridge the gap between the warring sides in Yemen.

Mohammad Abdul Salam, the spokesman for Yemen's Ansarallah movement, who accompanied the Omani delegation, said it will discuss ways to push forward the Yemen peace process.

In remarks to Al-Masirah TV, Abdul Salam said the delegation of the Royal Office arrived to discuss the situation in Yemen on the basis of the principle of good neighborliness and common interests.

He added, "We are working to advance the humanitarian situation arrangements process as well as the peace process."

"To complement the efforts we have made in the Sultanate of Oman, we are today in Sanaa to discuss all that is of interest at the national level and the region in general," Abdul Salam pointed out.

A day after the arrival of the Omani delegation in Sanaa, Omani Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq received a letter from the Saudi-backed president of Yemen Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in what appeared to be an intensification of Oman's diplomatic efforts to broker peace between Yemeni warring factions.

The message was received by Omani Foreign Minister Badr Hamad al-Busaidi



from Hadi's Foreign Minister Ahmad Awad Mubarak.

The meeting reviewed developments of situations in Yemen and the UN efforts to end the war in a way that preserves unity and safety of Yemen, the Oman state news said, adding that the two sides reiterated the importance of enhancing cooperation with all parties to achieve security and stability for Yemen by supporting efforts of the UN and U.S. envoys.

Oman's diplomatic efforts came after the

U.S. and UN envoys for Yemen failed to make headway on the Yemen peace process. Martin Griffiths, the UN special envoy for Yemen, said in late May that he was frustrated over the lack of progress in the Yemen peace talks.

"Nobody can be more frustrated than I am," Griffiths said. "We have spent a year and a half on things which are relatively simple to describe, the cease-fire, the opening of Sanaa Airport, the opening of Hodeida ports, the much-delayed start of the political negotiations."

Nearly a week later, the U.S. special envoy for Yemen also echoed similar frustration while blaming his failure on the Ansarallah movement. Tim Lenderking accused Ansarallah of refusing to engage meaningfully in the diplomatic efforts to "resolve a nearly seven-year conflict that has brought unimaginable suffering to the Yemeni people." Lenderking added that the movement bears the major responsibility for not engaging in bringing about a cease-fire.

While the U.S. and UN Yemen envoys expressed dismay at the lack of progress in their efforts, Oman quietly stepped in to calm the situation and it even made remarkable progress in this regard.

Abdul Salam, along with other Ansarallah figures, has been living outside Yemen since 2016 barred from returning to Yemen due to Saudi control over Yemen's airspace. But Abdul Salam and his Yemeni comrades accompanied the Omani delegation, effectively breaking a Saudi travel ban on Yemen.

The return of Abdulsalam, which would have required a Saudi green light, indicated tangible progress in the Yemen peace talks led by Oman. It's too early to speak of a final solution to the years-long Yemen war, but Oman's renewed diplomatic efforts have revived hopes of breaking the deadlock over the war as Muscat enjoys having good relations with both Riyadh and Sanaa. In addition, Oman has a direct interest in putting an end to a devastating war between two of its neighbors.

Qatar calls for dialogue between Iran and Arab neighbors

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani has expressed readiness to facilitate talks between Iran and some of Iran's Arab neighbors.

In an interview with CNBC on Friday, the Qatari foreign minister said there is a need for a regional security framework between Iran and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

"We believe it's important that we have the leadership of such a dialogue and not leave it for other countries," he said. "We appreciate and respect (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) to be part of this, to be (a) supporter for this, but the core of this dialogue should be handled by the GCC and Iran."

Al Thani also said that Qatar is ready to facilitate talks between Iran and the U.S. "(The) U.S. is a strategic ally for Qatar, and we want to maintain this strategic alliance," he said. On the other hand, Iran is "our next-door neighbor, and we want to see stability over there."

He said Qatar would be willing to facilitate discussions if asked.

"Right now, we are just conveying the message for both parties to ... be more positive and more constructive in engaging with each other, and to reach a deal as soon as possible," he said.

Al Thani has been calling for dialogue between Iran and the GCC for a while. In late May, he expressed support for a revival of the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers. He told Al Arabiya at that time that his country urges both Iran and the U.S. to return to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Our relationship with the U.S. government is moving in the direction of a strategic partnership. We urge Washington and Tehran to return to the JCPOA



and assist in holding the negotiations," he said, according to ISNA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iraq and Iran are one soul in two bodies: ambassador

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Iraj Masjedi has praised the strong relations between Tehran and Baghdad, saying they are so strong that cannot be broken.

Speaking at a memorial ceremony for the demise of Imam Khomeini, Masjedi said the resistance front is pressing ahead with its plans to strengthen itself.

"The resistance front is moving towards strengthening its capabilities in confrontation with the enemies," he said, expressing the Islamic Republic of Iran's pride in its defense of vulnerable Muslims in the world.

He also pointed to the depth of relations between the Iranian and Iraqi peoples, stressing that Iraq and Iran are one soul in two bodies and there is no separation between them.

"The Iranian and Iraqi peoples, in times of hardship and difficulties, have always been by each other's side and in defense of the causes of the Islamic world, and no force can separate the two peoples from each other," Masjedi noted, according to Al-Alam.

The Iranian ambassador referred to the role of the late Imam Khomeini in supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people and added, "The resistance of the Palestinian people today against the Zionist entity stems from and is inspired by the revolution of Imam Khomeini."

Masjedi stressed that "Imam Khomeini's revolution is an uprising for all the oppressed in the world," noting that "America failed to break this uprising and that Iran is proud of its defense of all vulnerable Muslims in the world."

He praised the role of the Popular Mobilization Forces and the two martyred commanders, Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis in combating terrorist groups.

He also praised the sacrifices and heroism of the Popular Mobilization Forces and



all Iraqi armed forces in the fight against terrorism.

He pointed out that America and its followers sought a lot to eliminate the uprising of the late Imam and the last of them was the former U.S. president, Donald Trump, who all went to the dustbin of history.

"The Joe Biden administration was forced to negotiate with Tehran because it realized the capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region," Masjedi noted.

For his part, the head of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Committee, Faleh al-Fayyad, said that Imam Khomeini's revolution gave a new meaning to humanity in the world.

Al-Fayyad added that Iraq was and still looks with respect and appreciation for the revolution of Imam Khomeini.

He explained that the Iraqis interacted a lot with Imam Khomeini's revolution and the line that the martyr Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr walked, stressing that Imam Khomeini's revolution had a great resonance in the Islamic and Western worlds. He stressed that all free people view the personality of Imam Khomeini as the teacher, pioneer and leader in reviving moral values.

A memorial ceremony has been held in various Iraqi cities in recent days in memory of the passing away of Imam Khomeini and similar ceremonies will be held in the coming days as well.

Zarif calls on U.S. to avoid using sanctions as 'leverage'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on the U.S. to return to its obligations and stop trying to use economic sanctions as a negotiating "leverage."

In a telephone conversation with UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, Zarif said he agreed with his British counterpart on the need to resume the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Agreed in phone call with FM @DominicRaab on need to resume full compliance with the JCPOA. Underlined that U.S. must return fully to its obligations & cease trying to use unlawful economic war against Iran as negotiating 'leverage.' Also discussed bilateral & consular issues," Zarif said on Twitter.

The phone call came after the fifth round of talks between Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA in Vienna. Following more than a week of intensive bilateral and multilateral talks at different levels, the JCPOA Joint Commission held a meeting at the Austrian capital's Grand Hotel last week.

In the Wednesday meeting, the heads of the negotiating teams of the JCPOA member states evaluated the latest status of negotiations.

All delegations expressed pleasure with the progress made so far, and once again underlined their determination and seriousness to pursue the negotiations in the coming days with the purpose of finding solutions to a number of issues that have yet to be settled, according to a statement issued



by the Iranian foreign ministry.

During the meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, the participants agreed to continue their contacts and talks at the level of experts. They also agreed that the heads of delegations go back to their capitals for a few days for consultations, and then resume the talks in the coming days.

A few hours before the meeting, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi, who led the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, told Iran state TV that the meeting would 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."

So far, the negotiating partners in Vienna have held five rounds of talks to discuss the possible U.S. return to the JCPOA. They made progress in terms of determining some of the measures needed to be taken by Iran and the U.S. to resume full compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal, but they are yet to arrive at a final agreement on how to achieve the goal of fully restore the JCPOA to the pre-Trump era. Iran has called on the U.S. to lift all the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration. The U.S., however, has shown little interest in lifting all the Trump-era sanctions.

SPORTS

I know Bahrain like back of my hand: Dragan Skocic

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic says that he knows Bahrain like back of his hand.

The 'Persian Leopards' will meet Bahrain in Group C of the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

The crucial match will be held at the Bahrain National Stadium in Riffa Monday night.



"All of us are well aware that how important the match is. Bahrain are a strong team and we respect them. They are an organized team but we will do our best to get the good result," Skocic said in the pre-match news conference.

"We have forgotten our previous match against Hong Kong. The match against Bahrain is not related to that match. Our players have recovered well and are ready for the Monday's match."

"It doesn't matter where we will play Bahrain. It would have been better if AFC had decided to hold the match in Tehran but we will face Bahrain to win the match."

"Once again, I emphasize that we respect Bahrain so much but Iran are well-prepared for the match against them. I know them like back of my hand," Skocic stated.

Iran 3x3 end UOQT run with three loses

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's women's 3x3 basketball team will be going home winless after three defeats against Chinese Taipei, Italy and the Netherlands in the FIBA Universality Olympic Qualifying Tournament (UOQT), where 3x3 basketball will make its Olympic debut.

Iran started the campaign on Saturday with back-to-back defeats against Chinese Taipei (16-10) and Italy (21-5).

The Iranian team also lost to Netherlands 20-10 on Sunday. The tournament is taking place in Debrecen, Hungary from June 4 to 6.

There is just one men's and women's 3x3 basketball ticket remaining for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

2021 VNL: Iran sweep Bulgaria

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran ended the 2021 Volleyball Nations League Week 2 with a win over Bulgaria on Saturday.

The Persians defeated the Bulgarian team in straight sets (25-20, 33-31, 25-22) in Rimini, Italy.

Bardia Saadat earned 17 points for Iran, while Parapunov Radoslav scored 11 points for Bulgaria.

It was Iran's fourth successive win in the competition.

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

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

Taremi wins fans' Goal of the 2021 UCL

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Taremi's stunning bicycle kick for Porto against Chelsea has been voted 2020/21 UEFA Champions League Goal of the Tournament.

Almost 1.3 million votes were cast as fans selected Mehdi Taremi's stunning bicycle kick for Porto against Chelsea in the quarter-finals as their 2020/21 UEFA Champions League Goal of the Tournament.

UEFA's Technical Observers selected their top ten goals of the season soon after the final, with that shortlist then going to a fan vote on Monday 31 May, UEFA.com wrote.

Taremi received more than 750,000 votes. Fans' Goal of the Tournament top three:

- 1. Mehdi Taremi, Chelsea 0-1 Porto**
13/04/2021: quarter-finals, second leg
- 2. Lionel Messi, Paris 1-1 Barcelona**
10/03/2021: round of 16, second leg
- 3. Olivier Giroud, Atlético 0-1 Chelsea**
23/02/2020: round of 16, first leg

Iran to send eight wrestlers to Poland Open

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran will take part at the Poland Open with eight freestyle wrestlers.

The final Ranking Series event of the year kicks off on Tuesday in Warsaw and will welcome over 365 athletes from 44 nations from June 8 to 13.

The Poland Open will have massive implications on the remaining '21 event calendar.

In addition to serving as the final point-scoring event for seeding (top four) at the '21 Tokyo Olympic Games, it'll also help determine the seeding for October's Oslo World Championships, and ultimately who earns a portion of the 600,000 CHF prize package for the 2021 Ranking Series top-three finishers.

Iran Team:
61kg: Reza Ahmadi Atri
74: Mostafa Mohabbali Hosseinkhani, Yones Emami
97kg: Alireza Mohammad Karimi, Ali Khalil Shabani, Mohammad Hossein Askari Mohammadian
125kg: Amin Hossein Taheri, Amir Hossein Abbas Zare

Over 145m Kwh of electricity generated from renewable sources in a month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iranian renewable power plants generated over 145 million kilowatt-hours (Kwh) of electricity in the second month of the current Iranian calendar year (April 21-May 21), IRIB reported.

Electricity generation from renewables in the said month led to economizing on the consumption of natural gas by 41 million cubic meters while saving 32 million liters of water and also prevented the emission of 94,000 tons of Green House Gases (GHG).

The capacity of Iran's renewable power plants currently exceeds 920 megawatts (MW) of which solar power plants with 452.75 MW have the biggest share.

Wind power plants with 317 MW of energy production stand in second place, followed by small hydropower plants with a generation of 105.65 MW.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for about seven percent of the country's total energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next four years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.



According to Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), the number of small-scale solar power plants across the country which are used by households or small industries is increasing noticeably as Iranian households and small industries are embracing the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

Iran is also planning on expanding its presence in the region's renewable energy market.

According to the Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, the country has great potentials in the field of renewable energies and can have a significant role in developing the region's market for such energies.

"Relying on the high potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, etc., the Energy Ministry has planned good measures in order to implement new policies for creating positive changes in the development of the country's renewable energy sector," Ardakanian has said.

Back in December 2020, SATBA Head Mohammad Satakin said the capacity of the country's renewable power plants was going to reach 1,000 MW (one gigawatt) by the end of the current government's incumbency (August 2021).

Gas industry to reduce air pollutants by 70% in 3 years

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – The air pollutants in Iran's gas industry will be reduced by 70 percent over the next three years, Gholamreza Bahman-Nia, head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) department, said.

Bahman-Nia announced the prevention of the release of about 180 million tons of air pollutants in the previous Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20) and said: "70 percent of pollutants in the country's gas industry will be reduced in the next three years."

Speaking to Shana on Sunday on the occasion of World Environment Day, the official said that NIGC has defined long-term programs for protecting the environment and to reach world standard levels in environment protection, especially in South Pars region.



Bahman-Nia also stressed the positive impact of natural gas supply development on reducing air pollution and said: "Natural gas, as the cleanest fossil fuel compared to other fossil energy sources, has less pollution per unit of energy production, hence the development of gas industry and replacing heavier fossil fuels with natural gas will help reduce air pollution in practice and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well."

The priorities of National Iranian Gas Company are to maintain the national resources and the environment, he stressed.

The official further mentioned the implementation of programs related to green management, defining and implementing projects related to the management of hazardous and non-hazardous wastes, completion and improvement of systems for collection, treatment and disposal of effluents and sewage, implementing new projects for reducing water and energy resources, periodic monitoring of air and wastewater pollution, and several project for collecting flare gases as some of the measures taken by the NIGC for reducing negative environmental impacts.

To establish, develop and continuously improve the HSE management system, all National Iranian Gas Company directors, supervisors and other staff members are accountable to extend their efforts with unanimity agreement and cooperation in realizing these objectives, he stated.

Post-sanction Iran able to boost oil output to 6m bpd: Lukoil

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Vice President of Russia's giant

Lukoil Company has said Iran is able to quickly boost its oil output to six million barrels per day (bpd) if the U.S. sanctions are lifted, Russian state-owned Tass reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 3, Leonid Fedun said: "If sanctions are lifted, Iran will be able to offer up to 1.5 million barrels of oil per day to the market in the near time."

Iran is a key factor for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and it is more important than the demand in the global oil market, the top manager said.

"Shortage may turn into surplus. That is why OPEC is so cautious in all its actions," Fedun noted.

In late May, Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh had said Iran could "easily" boost its oil production capacity to 6.5 million bpd.

"We can easily reach 6.5 million barrels



per day," Zanganeh said at a ceremony to award studies on the country's giant Azadegan oil field on May 31.

Zanganeh 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.

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

Earlier in May, officials from the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) had stated that the country's oil fields are going through overhaul operations and connections with oil buyers are being re-established, according to a report by Bloomberg.

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

Iran, EAEU soon to begin talks over establishing free trade zone

→ 1 The interim free trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran has already become an effective tool for advancing cooperation, Mikhail Myasnikovich noted.

"In 2020, the Iran-EAEU trade totaled \$2.9 billion, growing by 18.5 percent over 2019," he pointed out. "In Q1 2021, the EAEU export to Iran rose by 43.5 percent year-on-year, and import increased by 20 percent. The EAEU-Iran trade went up by over a third and totaled \$1.15 billion. This was possible thanks to our joint work," Mikhail Myasnikovich said.

The parties also spoke in detail about the most promising infrastructure projects of the EAEU member states and Iran, including the North-South international transport corridor, and about other joint initiatives.

The interim free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union member states and Iran was signed on 17 May 2018 and entered into force on 27 October 2019. The parties shall enter into negotiations on signing a full-fledged free trade agreement in line with Article 1.3 of the interim agreement.



Tehran, Seoul expected to resume trade within 3 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of the

Iran-South Korea Joint Chamber of Commerce has announced the trade between the two countries is expected to resume in the next three to five months, IRNA reported.

According to Hossein Tanhaei, the two sides have agreed to exchange machinery and technical equipment instead of money exchange for their trade.

In an interview with IRNA on Sunday, Tanhaei said South Korean officials and businessmen have been coming to Iran more frequently in recent months.

"With the easing of sanctions, small and medium-sized companies in this country (South Korea) are making great efforts to



resume trade with Iran, and on the other hand, large companies in South Korea have also announced their readiness to re-join the Iranian business scene," the official said. Emphasizing that trade with South

Korea is expected to begin in the next three to five months, he added: "As for Iran's blocked money in this country, it is stipulated that instead of paying in cash or exchanging manufactured goods, technical equipment and machinery will be exported to Iran."

He stated that Iran and South Korea had already experienced \$4 billion in annual trade, adding: "If the agreements between the two sides are implemented in the coming months, and given the interest of traders to join these economic exchanges, we can expect this figure to recover quickly."

"South Korean market is rich in terms of technical, electronic and petrochemical

items and a high volume of trade in this field can be put on the agenda," Tanhaei stated.

Back in April, South Korea had released \$30 million of the Islamic Republic's frozen oil money in the Asian country to be used for purchasing COVID-19 vaccine.

According to Tanhaei, South Korea had reached an agreement with the Islamic Republic on releasing \$1 billion of the mentioned frozen funds but so far only a small portion of this agreement has been realized.

Once one of Iran's major oil buyers, South Korea has reduced its trade with Iran and held back the release of several billions of dollars of Iranian oil money under the pressure from the White House.

Monthly sponge iron export rises 250% year on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— The export of Iran's sponge

iron increased 250 percent during the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20) as compared to the first month of the previous year, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry announced.

As reported, Iran exported 70,000 tons of the mentioned product in the first month of this year.

The ministry announced that like the first month of the past year there was no sponge iron import in the mentioned month of the present year.

Meanwhile, sponge iron production increased by 15 percent in the first month of the current year, as compared to the same month of the previous year.

Iran produced 3.026 million tons of the product in the first month of this year, while the figure was 2.626 million tons in the first month of the last year.

Direct reduced iron (DRI), also called sponge iron,



is produced from the direct reduction of iron ore (in the form of lumps, pellets, or fines) into iron by a reducing gas or elemental carbon produced from natural gas or coal. Many ores are suitable for direct reduction.

Exports from Bushehr province increases 59%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value

of exports from Bushehr province in the southwest of Iran increased by 59 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (Marc 21-May 21), as compared to the same period of time in the previous year, a provincial official announced.

Behrouz Qareh-Beygi, a director in the province's customs department, said that 4.285 million tons of commodities worth \$1.306 billion were exported from the province in the two-month period of this year, adding that the export also indicates a 15-percent rise in terms of weight.

The official further announced that 53,000 tons of goods valued at \$149.4 million were imported to the province in the first two months of the year, of which 37,000 tons were the basic goods.

He said the largest volume of basic goods cleared from Bushehr customs included lentils, tea, corn, oil, peanuts, sunflower seeds, rubber, agricultural and medical equipment.

Also, the customs revenue of Bushehr

province has increased by 23 percent compared to the same period of the previous year, the official stated.

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

Iran exported 16.9 million tons of non-oil commodities including gasoline, polyethylene, methanol, iron and steel ingots and steel products to foreign destinations in the mentioned two months, Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi announced.

Meanwhile, some 5.3 million tons of goods valued at \$6.5 billion were also imported into the country in the said period to register a 26.5-percent rise compared to the last year's same two months.

In total, the Islamic Republic traded 22.2 million tons of such goods worth \$12.8 billion with its trade partners in the period under review, up 6.6 percent and 38 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively,



Mir-Ashrafi said.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$2 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$953 million, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$849 million, Turkey with \$388 million, and Afghanistan with \$365 million.

According to the official, the mentioned five countries accounted for 68 percent and 73 percent of Iran's total non-oil exports in terms of weight and value, respectively.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports during these two months were the UAE with \$1.8 billion, China with \$1.5 billion, Turkey with \$642 million, Germany with \$285 million, and Switzerland with \$283 million worth of imports.

Mobile phones, corn, sunflower oil, meal, wheat, soybeans, rice, barley, sugar and crude soybean oil were the most imported items during this period.

These 10 items accounted for 69.5 percent of the weight and 33 percent of the total value of imports, according to Mir-Ashrafi.

The official also noted that over 1.842 million tons of goods were transited through Iran in the said period, registering a 142-percent rise compared to the same period in the previous year.

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

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

One-party systems can also present a model of development: Texas University professor

→ 1 when the Oklahoma City bombing occurred. And this is not just hyperbole on my part. The 2021 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community report notes that violent extremists with “an often overlapping mix of white supremacist, neo-Nazi, and exclusionary cultural-nationalist beliefs,” pose “an elevated threat to the United States.” A recent Defense Department analysis bluntly stated that the Department “is facing a threat from domestic extremists, particularly those who espouse white supremacy or white nationalist ideologies.”

Some political pundits believe that white racism and far-right attitudes have jeopardized U.S. democracy. Do you think that a democratic system can protect itself? Is there any mechanism to prevent dictatorship or restricting voting rights?

It’s played a part, but it’s not the only reason why U.S. democracy is experiencing an epistemic crisis. A host of reasons, from voter apathy and growing cynicism to slow responsiveness to pressing political and social issues to the impact of money and mass media in elections, have adversely impacted American democracy. That said, I think that it can and will defend itself. To do that requires renewal in civil engagement, a willingness to be civil and see past partisan political differences for the common good, and a focus on solving the chronic social and political problems facing the U.S. But talk is cheap and this will be harder than we think. Yes, there are mechanisms to prevent dictatorship and restricting voting rights — the courts, elections, the news media, and yes, protest. While the rule of law has weathered some hits of late, it’s still strong in the U.S. Adherence to the primacy of constitutional authority remains, albeit occasionally forgotten by some. Some may think it naïve, but I remain optimistic that we will rise to the occasion and beat back efforts to limit democracy and take an autocratic path.

Samuel P. Huntington says that the existence of order should not be



confused with the issue of the type of that order (both on the political level - democratic, authoritarian, and on an economic level - socialist, free-market, etc.). What I understand is that it is not necessary to have a multi-party system to be efficient. Do you agree one-party states like China are able to offer an alternative model of development that can last for a long time?

One-party states like China can offer an alternative model of development. The looming question is long-term sustainability. Can a bargain between an authoritarian government and its citizens based on economic liberalization but not necessarily political liberalization endure for decades? Maybe. As we’ve seen in China, the bargain struck during Deng Xiaoping’s era enriched some areas and led to China’s meteoric economic rise. But it also left a substantial portion of

the nation outside the large cities of the east coast behind, hence moves by China to eradicate extreme poverty, new-type urbanization strategy, hukou registration reform, rural revitalization, and encourage a dual circulation economy. It’s a cautionary tale for those countries looking at models for development because it could exacerbate underlying social and political problems. That said, American-style capitalism provides just as much of a cautionary tale as a model of development as China’s.

How can democracies around the world counter contradictions? For instance, when impulsive characters or dictators come out of ballot boxes, they may suppress minorities.

That’s an excellent question because conventional wisdom posits that voters are smart enough to see through populist demagogues at the ballot box and reject them. However, as we’ve seen in the U.S.

“American-style capitalism provides just as much of a cautionary tale as a model of development as China’s.”

U.S. legacy in Afghanistan: Possible reemergence of terrorist groups

Afghans don’t have festivals or celebrations in mind, but there are fears!

By Rakib Al Hasan

After twenty long years, the war in Afghanistan is finally coming to an end. U.S. President Joe Biden has announced that his troops will no longer be stationed in Afghanistan after September this year. When the war broke out in 2001, no one knew where it will end.

Twenty years later, as the war draws to a close, there is a mixed reaction. After spending so many lives, fresh blood and huge sums of money, many questions are now being raised in the international arena. Whose real victory at the end of the war? America, the Taliban or the grassroots of Afghanistan? There is no right answer to this question. At the end of this war, no one is relieved at all. There is no victory celebration or celebration of the festival. Rather, some Western observers are worried about troops returning to America. Terrorist groups in Afghanistan have no confidence in the fears of the Afghan people and the neighbors. Although America is seemingly pulling out its forces of Afghanistan, is real peace assured?

For even after the declaration of war, the number of suicide bombings and the number of car bombings in Kabul has increased several times more than before.

This withdrawal of American troops makes it clear that America is not concerned about the power gap and does not want to take any future responsibilities for Afghanistan. Over 10,000 troops of the United States and NATO’s member nations are stationed on Afghanistan’s soil. During the U.S. election campaign, Trump announced that he would withdraw troops around International Workers’ Day in May. When Joe Biden came, he held the same belief. However, he extended it a little longer, dragging it out until September. President Biden picked a special date as well. It is the 20th anniversary of the Twin Towers attack. Although the delay gives the warring parties in Afghanistan more time to compromise, the United States does not want to assume responsibility for the withdrawal of troops. There is no blueprint for how the country should function after the withdrawal of international troops.

The United States wants some regional powers to take over, but it is clear that they would not want to keep China in that role. Since China is moving towards global supremacy and becoming the nearest competitor of the United States day by day, taking on Chinese responsibilities in the region will contribute to an enhanced sense of Chinese power. Hence, for the time being, even if China is not considered, America would still like another power to emerge. However, the Taliban have not expressed the same interest. This is why to date no conference has succeeded.

While many Afghans and neighboring countries have warned about the unstudied U.S. policies in Afghanistan, the terrorist groups could exploit the weakness

of the government.

The return of the world’s most powerful military power empty-handed is also an expression of their festival. The fact that the USA has had to sacrifice so many soldiers, time and money in the past twenty years is a failure of the U.S.

In addition, the Taliban and other anti-U.S. groups seem successful in defending their homeland. There is also the possibility of regaining their lost power. After Vietnam, this time, the U.S. has to return from Afghanistan empty-handed. The Taliban are determined to return to the character of the old regime when the American troops leave. They are not willing to go for any kind of compromise. On the contrary, they want the entirety of the country to be ruled under a single authority. With such a situation, there are extreme fears regarding the country’s future and growing fear among its neighbors.

However, backing to the past means armed conflict, murder and a new round of civil war. The country then became a safe haven and pasture for all the world’s most powerful terrorists. Such a situation is understandable and dangerous for any region. The most feared and terrified are the country’s women’s society and media. Higher education institutions are also frequently attacked. The kind of society that the terrorist groups want to establish is in direct conflict with women’s education, rights and social dignity. As a result, the fear of gaining the power of terrorist groups like ISIS has become a source of concern for the people of Afghanistan and the surrounding areas.

The Afghan people are tired of over 20 years of war. But even when NATO leaves and follows its aggressive policy, there is no peace in the country. Nowhere in Biden’s big news is there a festival. There is not even the slightest hint of happiness among all. On the contrary, the sky is gradually being covered with black clouds of fear among the Afghan people. Journalists working in the field fear that as soon as terrorists’ hegemony comes back, many areas could be taken over by ISIS. What once happened in Iraq and Syria. It will ignite their fratricidal conflict with the Taliban, as well as a civil war in relatively safe areas, including Kabul. In addition to ISIS, there are at least two other armed groups in the country. One is the Hazara community and the other is the Uzbeks and Tajiks. Shia Hazaras have historically differed from the Pashtun Sunni Taliban. The Taliban are also unlikely to adapt to Uzbeks and Tajiks. Although Afghanistan is a country of 14 nations and 30 languages, if the Pashtun Taliban continue to dominate at gunpoint, peace will remain elusive in the region.

With Afghanistan being such a fertile ground for terrorist groups, there are enough headaches among the countries along the border to contend with. There is a good probability that a power struggle will arise



between terrorist groups and the government and the people against the nation in the near future.

If Afghanistan is in turmoil again, the wave of refugees in Pakistan could escalate further. Again, if gun peace is established again, it will encourage the local terrorists inside Afghanistan and outside to take arms. There are also concerns that Uzbeks and Tajiks have close ties to the Taliban in both countries. Even if China wants to take over the region, it could be a boomerang for them because Uyghur Muslims can join hands with the Taliban in this case.

Afghan groups have no idea of their future regime. Since terrorist groups do not want to compromise and want sole authority, many will be threatened by their demands. The extent to which women’s education and rights have expanded in Afghanistan over the past few years may also come to a halt. The common people of their country do not want to accept their own model of ‘religious rule’. As a result, Afghanistan’s history of intolerance of political dissidents has left no hope for the Afghan people. Even if the Taliban is prepared in this way, the Afghan government does not have a strong base to stand against it. So, in addition to the ordinary Afghan people, it is also making their government think more.

The withdrawal of NATO troops in September means that not much time remains. However, it is extremely important for compromises to be reached during that time. Unless some more local disputes, including the outline of an interim government, can be bridged, the end of the war will not bring the desired results. In addition, there is a strong possibility of using Afghanistan’s land in the future for a shadow war between the countries of region for military power. Currently, there is no single force in Afghanistan with authority to control all such parties. In that case, many see America’s legacy in Afghanistan as part of chaos-creating approach. An all-out ceasefire is possible in Afghanistan, which the Afghan people and no one outside the country believes. So, Afghanistan and its neighboring countries should be concerned about its future and the possible reemergence of terrorism among the groups. Therefore, Afghan people do not share in festivities or celebrate in any way. Everyone’s mind is filled with fears and anxiety about unanswered questions.

U.S.-run Ain al-Asad Airbase in Iraq comes under drone strike

→ 1 Iran described the missile attack on Ain al-Assad as a “first slap.”

According to Press TV, on April 8, Iraq and the U.S. said they had agreed on the eventual withdrawal of U.S. “combat” troops from Iraq, and that the two sides would hold talks to work out the timing.

The mission of U.S. forces is now allegedly focused on “training” Iraqi troops to fight Daesh, but American troops target popular anti-terror fighters from time to time.

Iraqi resistance groups have warned that they will treat the American troops as occupying forces and take up arms against them if they refuse to leave their country.

Yemen won war; Saudi, U.S. in no position to dictate terms to victors: FP

A leading American magazine says Yemen’s popular Ansaruallah movement won the U.S.-sponsored war waged by Saudi Arabia, stressing that the losers are now in no position to dictate terms to the victors.

In an article, the Foreign Policy analyzed the situation in Yemen, where the army and Popular Committees defeated the Saudi invaders and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down.

It said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman launched the offensive on the assumption that “it would bring an easy victory.”

“Instead, it became a public relations debacle, as Saudi Arabia not only publicly brutalized a desperate and impoverished population but also proved incapable of defeating a “ragtag” group of rebels despite billions of dollars of U.S. military hardware. The Saudis’ recent willingness to negotiate a ceasefire reflects their weakened position,” it added.

According to the Foreign Policy, the Saudis’ proposed truce and the terms offered by U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking impose “harsh terms” on Ansaruallah.

“The U.S. and Saudi claim that they are pursuing peace is less than honest, because the plans they’ve offered the Houthis could encourage them to keep fighting rather than accept a truce,” it said.

“To end a war, the victors usually dictate terms to the losers. Imposing maximalist demands on the victors is futile: They will simply continue fighting.”

Qatari FM rules out normalization with Israel after Kuwait

Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani says his Persian Gulf kingdom will not normalize diplomatic relations with Israel unless the regime ends its occupation of Palestinian lands, and the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved.

The main reason Qatar doesn’t have relations with Israel “is the occupation of the Palestinian territories,” Al Thani told CNBC television news network in an interview broadcast on Friday.

“The reason is still there, still valid, and there is no ... step or any hope toward peace yet. We didn’t see any light at the end of the tunnel,” the foreign minister added.

The top Qatari diplomat pointed out that normalization of ties with the Tel Aviv regime won’t solve the long-standing problems between Israel and the Palestinians.

His remarks come as Kuwait’s National Assembly last week strongly condemned the latest Israeli military’s acts of aggression against Palestinians across the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds besides its bloody military onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip, and unanimously approved legislation that outlaws any deals or normalization of ties with Tel Aviv.

Resistance News

Another Israel-Gaza flare-up to change Middle East shape: Hamas leader

The leader of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, Yahya al-Sinwar, warns that another flare-up between the Palestinian factions and the Israeli regime will change the face of the Middle East region.

Speaking before academics and public figures in Gaza on Saturday, Sinwar said Palestinian factions used only “half of their force” in the latest conflict with the Israeli regime in May, adding that the fighting was meant only “to test our strength.”

“We’ve proven to Israel that somebody’s protecting al-Aqsa Mosque, which is a strategic goal for the Palestinians,” he said.

According to Press TV, the Hamas leader noted that Israel sought to target more than 10,000 resistance fighters during the latest attacks on Gaza but it failed as “ninety fighters were killed at most.”

Tel Aviv launched the bombing campaign against the besieged Gaza Strip on May 10, following Palestinian retaliation against violent raids on worshippers at al-Aqsa Mosque and the regime’s plans to force a number of Palestinian families out of their homes at the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem al-Quds.

Apparently caught off guard by the unprecedented barrage of rockets from Gaza, Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire on May 21, which Palestinian resistance movements accepted with Egyptian mediation.

According to Gaza’s Health Ministry, nearly 260 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli offensive, including 66 children, while some 2,000 others were wounded.

In response, Palestinian resistance factions fired more than 4,000 rockets and missiles into the occupied territories, killing 12 people.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sinwar criticized some Arab countries for normalizing ties with Israel, saying they are responsible for the flare-up.

“The normalization of ties between some Arab countries and Israel and the intra-Palestinian division encouraged Israel to launch this aggression,” the Hamas leader added.

In September 2020, the United Arab Emirates was the first country to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel as part of an agreement brokered by former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Bahrain also signed the accord with Israel, followed by Morocco and Sudan.

“This withdrawal of American troops makes it clear that America is not concerned about the power gap and does not want to take any future responsibilities for Afghanistan.”

Iranian tourism minister visits Russia to finalize visa-free agreement

➔1 According to Ebrahim Pourfaraj, who heads the Iranian Tour Operators Association, rounds of negotiations have been held between Iranian tour operators, travel marketers, and their Russian counterparts. “We’ve been commenced talks with some Russian travel agents to put Iranian destinations on their itineraries.... And the Iranian Tour Operators Association has also entered negotiations with Russian unions for outbound tours to attract more travelers from Russia.”



Pourfaraj says the majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of the vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. “The fact is that Iran’s political and economic relations with Russia are considered as good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination.”

Maya Lomidze, executive director of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, had told Sputnik that the visa agreement may significantly surge the tourist flows between the two countries, just like it happened when a similar deal was signed between Russia and China. The flow of Iranian tourists to Russia increased by 50-70 percent following the operation of direct flights that connect Iran to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Sochi, she said. Iran is taking proactive measures in line with the long-term goal of 20 million tourists by 2025.

Handmade glasswork to go on show in Rey

HERITAGE TEHRAN — An exhibition of handmade glasswork will start in the city of Rey, Tehran province, on Thursday.

The event aims at promoting the city’s abilities in the field of glassware, Rey’s tourism chief Noruz Taqipour said on Saturday.



The works can be also visited online until June 15, the official added.

Glasswork objects constitute a majority of Tehran province’s exports of handicrafts.

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 Qasemabad were designated by 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.

Ihrami Bafi of Khuzestan

Ihrami is a kind of traditional fabric of Iran that is locally produced in province of Khuzestan. This fabric is made using cotton or wool yarn.

Textile machineries are used to make Ihrami fabrics which usually have simple geometric patterns. In the past, a kind of Ihram fabric was produced without any pattern and it was used as the clothing of Ihram during the Islamic pilgrimage of Hajj.

But today Ihrami fabrics are weaved in different sizes and in the forms of prayer rugs, doormats, bed covers, bags and similar products.

In the province of Yazd, a fabric named “Harami” and in Ilam, another kind named “Ihram” are weaved that, in terms of material, design, pattern, size and color are different from Ihrami of Khuzestan.

The motifs, colors and design of Ihrami fabrics are created from the memory of the weaver. There is no premade design involved and they are usually created based on a general form. Due to the technique of making of Ihrami, no cursive pattern can be applied to it, but they are geometric and symmetrical.

The most common motifs of Khuzestan Ihrami are diamonds, pines, double diamonds, simple strips, “Tikhorusi” strips, “Ajorkari” (brick), butterfly, “Kheshti” (Adobe), “Arusaki” (doll), and “Busehye Do Mahi” (two fishes kissing). The motifs of Ihrami are somehow representative of motifs of potteries from Susa civilization from hundreds of years ago.

Bright and shiny colors such as red, yellow, blue, green and white are common in Ihrami. Today most of these products are seventy in one hundred and ten centimeters or one hundred and fifty in one hundred centimeters.

The traditional textile machine is installed and fixed in the workshop, with the warp yarns arranged horizontally. Like many other textile machines, most parts are made from wood.

Some of the tools that are used in the process are: 1. “Dafeh” or comb that is used to pack the wefts 2. “Lit”, a rectangular piece made of plant stalks and the wrap yarns passing through it 3. “Balul” or bobbin, which is a short and thin pipe around which the weft is twisted 4. “Masureh Tabi” or bobbin winder, that consists of a big and a small wheel. When the bigger wheel is turned, the smaller wheel turns too and the yarn is twisted around the bobbin.

Cities of Shushtar, Dezful, Behbahan, Susangerd and Masjed Soleiman are some of the most important centers of Ihrami.

(Source: Visit Iran)

Historical cisterns in eastern Iran in need of restoration

HERITAGE TEHRAN —Historical d e s k Ab-Anbars (cisterns) scattered across the city of Sarayan in the eastern province of South Khorasan are in need of restoration and rehabilitation, the city’s tourism official has said.

Also known as the city of cisterns due to its numerous and still-working cisterns, Sarayan is a historically rich city, however, to preserve this reputation, its cisterns need to undergo restoration as soon as possible, CHTN quoted Mohammad Arab as saying on Sunday.

It is not feasible to restore all of these works because of funding limitations, but there may be ways to work together with the private sector and other organizations, the official added.

Most of the cisterns date back to the Safavid-era (1501-1736), 14 of which have been inscribed on the National Heritage list, with 11 of them still operating today, he explained.

In addition to being valuable historical



Rituals, food skills from Ardebil win cultural heritage status

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A total of 18 cultural elements passed down from generation to generation in Ardebil province have been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts on Saturday announced the inscriptions in a letter to the governor-general of the northwestern province, CHTN reported.

Ancient rituals of rainmaking with Chomchek Galin doll, Yashil Sofreh, Khidir Nabi, and Galin Chikhdi which have long been practiced across the province are among the items added to the list.

The arid climate of Iran has always been a concern for people throughout history, which has culminated in various rituals, such as rain dances to rain prayers, across the country.

In times of drought, children cover big wooden spoons with dolls’ dresses and call them Chomchek Galin, which is considered a rain doll. While singing songs and wishing for

rain, they go to the houses in their town or village to collect necessary items for cooking Ash - a traditional slow-cooked, thick soup made with chickpeas, beans, noodles, and fresh herbs. When Ash is ready, it is given to all the people, who gather together to pray for rain.

The skill of making halva - a kind of traditional sweet dessert as well as the talent of making Ash, which is popular in Ardebil province, were also added to the prestigious list.

Some more items including local games and the skill of jajim-bafi (a kind of hand-woven floor covering) were also inscribed on the list.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, whose altitude averages 3,000 meters above sea level, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition, it is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer,



attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

\$3.3m paid to support tourism businesses in Hamedan

TOURISM TEHRAN – The Iranian d e s k government has paid some 140 billion rials (some \$3.3 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) in loans to the tourism businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic in Hamedan province.

Throughout the west-central province, 170 units, engaged in the tourism industry, have received the loans, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

Tourism and handicrafts in Hamedan employ more than 50,000 people directly, and both sectors are heavily affected by the outbreak of coronavirus and require the government’s assistance, Ali Khaksar said on Wednesday.

Back in January, Hamedan province’s tourism chief Ali Malmir announced that the tourism industry of the province has taken some 2.48 trillion rials (\$59 million) hit from the coronavirus outbreak over the past couple of months.

Accommodation centers, hotels, restaurants, and halls have suffered major damages during the time as well, the official added.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world’s greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from



antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there’s a scattering of historical curiosities.

Hamedan never falls short of offering cultural heritage sites to its visitors. Scenic natural landscapes, traditional restaurants, public gardens, and colorful outdoor markets, and more importantly, its hospitable people make for an unexpected slice of the city.

Government’s care and support packages

In October 2020, the deputy tourism chief, Vali Teymouri, announced that a new support package was approved to pay loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Depending on the type and activity of the businesses, they could benefit from at least 160 million rials (\$3,800 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to nine billion rials (\$214,000) of bank loans with a 12-percent interest rate, he said.

The loans would be allocated to tourist guides, travel agencies, tourism transport companies, tourism educational institutions, eco-lodges and traditional accommodations, hotels, apartment hotels, motels, and guesthouses as well as traditional accommodation centers, tourism complexes, and recreational centers, the official explained.

Teymouri in September 2020 pointed to the 1.3 million tourism workers in the country, who are facing several issues due to the coronavirus crisis and said “This number, in addition to their households, includes a significant population that makes a living through tourism, who are needed to be considered in ministry’s decisions.”

Last August, Teymouri announced that the tourism ministry had approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million) to support corona-affected tourism businesses, covering as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector.

Tourism industry in critical situation

Tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan

in October 2020 warned that Iran’s cultural heritage and tourism would be in a critical situation if the crises caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus continue.

Last August, the tourism minister said that the tourism sector of the Islamic Republic had suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

He also noted that the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. “Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning.”

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the Iranian calendar year 1398(started March 21, 2019).

Handicrafts courses seek to empower inmates in Kordestan

TOURISM TEHRAN – A total of 396 prisoners d e s k have been trained across the Hamedan province by taking courses on different fields of handicraft, the deputy provincial tourism chief has announced.

In addition to efforts made to empower prisoners, the training courses have been designed to increase handicraft production throughout the province, Farhad Hamedadi said on Thursday.

Weaving kilim, woodcarving, marquetry, traditional costumes, Kalash-bafi (lightweight traditional footwear also called Giveh), leatherwork, and traditional embroidery were some of the fields covered in the courses, the official added.

In October 2020, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts signed a memorandum of understand-



ing with the Prisons, Security, and Corrective Measures Organization to create jobs and make income for prisoners.

The MOU also aimed at implementing special educational

Makhrageh Lake: The largest natural mirror in Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – One of the areas that attracts the attention of tourists is the Makhrageh lake of Shahr-e Babak city, Kerman province, which is considered as the largest natural mirror in Iran.

In the past, Makhrageh used to have three rivers of northern, western and eastern Qantas, and traces are still existing in the region, as well as an old castle. These ruins show that there has been great deal of urban development and history that we do not have accurate

information about.

The water of the wells in the Makhrageh area is salty due to proximity to saline lake. The source of fresh water is the area of the Habib Allah Khani River that flows only during rainfall and is dry in all seasons.

In every season of the year, sweet water flows out of this river with a thirty centimeter ditching. This part of the river, known as the Riz-Ab, is located in the ChahKali area, and its water is cool and gourmet in the hot summer.

The most important natural occurrence is the Makhrageh salt lake, which is unmatched in its type and sometimes referred to as the Chah Zangar Lake.

This lake is located on 3 km south-east of Makhrageh, with an area of more than 15 square km, and is fed by the rivers and streams, the mountains of Chah Pouzeh, Chah Ma,dan , Cheshmeh Anjir, Chah Gaz, Chah Khoshk, Pir Quchan, Haft-Kouh and the terrain hills of the region.



IRCS ready to vaccinate 3 million refugees, rare disease patients

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has announced readiness to vaccinate some three million refugees and people with special diseases against coronavirus if the required doses of the vaccine is provided.

“The necessary infrastructure and capacities are available to vaccinate refugees and patients of rare diseases, but we urgently need more vaccines,” Mansoureh Bagheri, deputy head of IRCS for International Affairs and Humanitarian Law, stated.

“Due to the sanctions, we are in a difficult situation and we are facing challenges in transferring funds, as well as providing medicine and medical equipment, especially during the epidemic.

In fact, economic sanctions are a major challenge to receiving international aid on time and are slowing down the process of receiving humanitarian aid, she emphasized, adding, we require the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to play a supportive role in providing vaccines.”

Pointing out that the IRCS’s volunteer population is at the forefront of tackling the pandemic, he stated that since the beginning of the new year (March 21), the Red Crescent Society, in coordination with relevant organizations, has screened passengers at air, sea and road borders.

So far, more than 350,000 passengers have been monitored with the participation of 471 operational forces at 28 borders nationwide, she added, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Some 1,952 IRCS’s volunteers have received the vaccine, and our goal is to inocu-



late more than 8,000 employees and 10,000 paramedics, she concluded.

On May 9, the Iranian Red Crescent Society asked the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide 2 million doses of coronavirus vaccine to be used for Afghan refugees.

UN appreciates Iran for vaccinating foreign nationals

On May 24, Indrika Ratwatte, Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said that Iran has generously considered refugees over the age of 75 for vaccination against coronavirus, appreciating Iran for over four decades of hosting refugees.

Living conditions of foreign nationals in Iran

At the end of 2018, Iran hosted close to one million refugees, making it the sixth-largest refugee host country in the world. The country was also the eighth largest refugee-hosting country in the world in 2019, hosting 951,142 Afghan refugees and 28,268 Iraqi refugees, according to the UNHCR.

One of the largest and most protracted urban refugee populations in the world is living in Iran; about 97 percent of refugees live in urban and semi-urban areas, while three percent are residing in 20 refugee resorts run by the UNHCR’s main government counterpart.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, un-

documented Afghans have access to free primary health services and similarly free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like nationals.

Despite the challenges, Iran has continued to generously give refugees access to education and health services. Iran is one of the handfuls of countries in the world that offer refugees the option to enroll in national health insurance for essential secondary and tertiary public health services in the same way as Iranian nationals.

The national insurance scheme allows for free COVID-19 treatment and hospitalization. It also subsidizes the cost of surgeries, dialysis, radiology, laboratory tests, outpatient care, and more.

70,000 rare disease patients vaccinated

Some 70,000 patients of rare diseases have received the COVID-19 vaccine so far, Mehdi Shadnough, head of the transplant management and treatment center of the Ministry of Health, said on May 23.

Rare diseases include peritoneal dialysis, hemophilia, thalassemia, Multiple sclerosis (MS), Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), Epidermolysis bullosa (EB), Cystic fibrosis (CF), Mucopolysaccharidosis type I (MPS I), autism, organ transplantation, and tissue therapy, patients with primary immunodeficiency disease (PID).

Patients with rare diseases often face a long journey from diagnosis to treatment. There are 540,000 patients in the country.

According to the statistics published in 2019, the number of rare diseases identified in Iran has reached 332 types of diseases.

Some \$2m earmarked to create 33 accessible cities

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – A total budget of 82 billion rials (nearly \$2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities in 33 cities, the secretary of the accessible cities coordination headquarters, has announced.

“In the process of a barrier-free city, we seek to ensure that all cities in the country are barrier-free and accessible. In the first phase, each province introduced one to two cities with less than 50,000 residents,” Ebrahim Kazemi explained.

Yazd was introduced as the first city to become accessible, he added, IRNA reported on Sunday.

The cities of Bostanabad, Shabestar, and Osko in East Azarbaijan province, Shahindej in West Azarbaijan province, Sarein in Ardabil province, Vahidieh in Tehran province, Farrokhsahr in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, Ferdows in South Khorasan province, and Gonabad, Fariman and Torqabeh in Khorasan Razavi province are among the cities, he noted.

According to the national document on improving accessibility in cities for persons with disabilities, fifty-five cities, five villages, and three metropolitan areas should be considered as pilots until the Iranian calendar year 1402 (March 2023-March 2024).

The national document includes a five-year action plan which analyzes the country’s weaknesses and strengths being accessible for the people physically challenged, with the participation of representatives of the country’s responsible bodies and NGOs.

The document describes strategies and plans to construct all buildings accessible to people with disabilities, and



the country’s headquarters for increasing the cities’ accessibilities will follow up the strategies and regulations.

Over 1.3m persons with disabilities live in Iran

Pirouz Hanachi, the mayor of Tehran, said in December 2019 that over 1.3 million people suffering from disabilities live in the country and the figure rises by 50,000 every year.

Majlis [the Iranian parliament] approved both general outlines and details of a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities in January 2018. Development of disability-friendly cities, free transportation, health insurance, free education, job creation, housing loans, and fewer working hours are some of the articles of the law.

Since the approval of the law, education for students with disabilities has been provided in Azad universities, subsidies for patients with spinal cord injury as well as disability care centers have been increased, in addition to residential units to families having members with disabilities.

Asghar Shirzadi, chairman of the board of the Iranian association of the disabled, said in December 2020 that it still seems that the related organizations are not very willing to implement the law.

Flocks of migratory bird land in Chaldoran wetlands

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – The beautiful wetlands of Chaldoran in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan are hosting more than 50 species of migratory birds.

In this season, Chaldoran wetlands welcome migratory birds due to having adequate food and security, Reza Khouri, head of the province’s department of environment said, IRIB reported on Saturday.

The wetlands of Chaldoran city are sufficiently filled with water due to their good ecosystem. During the migration season, countless species of birds wings their ways into these wetlands, including over 50 species of geese and ducks, he added.

There are six wetlands in the city, of which Zavieh Sofla, Pir Ahmad Kandi, and Navar wetlands are among the permanent wetlands.

Due to the location of Chaldoran wetlands in border and hunting-prohibited areas, the DOE forces constantly monitor the region and protect these species of natural heritage.

The presence of common cranes in Chaldoran’s wetlands has made them be listed among the most important wetlands of the country, Omid Yousefi, head of the wildlife surveillance of West Azarbaijan’s department of environment, stated.

These wetlands are the only wetlands in the country where this bird species breeds every year, he noted.

Chaldoran wetlands stretch to an area of over 1,000 hectares, and this year, with the participation of local communities and environmentalists, the volume of water in these wetlands increased significantly.

Iran’s bird species

Hosting over 600 species of birds, Iran is a climatically rich country, so it is said



that the number of bird species in Iran is higher than in the whole of Europe. A wide range of wetlands is the reason behind migratory birds choosing Iran for an annual wintering habitat, as a large number of birds fly a thousand miles each year to benefit from this rich climate.

Every year, from early September to late February, Iran hosts rare species of migratory birds heading from north to the southern countries due to reduced seasonal temperatures and food availability.

It is estimated that there are about 50 billion birds in the world out of 9,000 species, many of which are migratory. Accordingly, about five to seven million birds migrate to Iran in different seasons. There are about 530 species of birds in Iran, 320 of which are migratory species, some of which are native species.

Among the various groups of migratory birds wintering in Iran, the largest population belongs to the group of geese, swans, and ducks amounting to 781,499 and the smallest population of seven are the long-tailed ducks or oldsquaw.

The provinces of Mazandaran and Golestan are the first provinces with the highest number of migratory birds for having sufficient resources, as the movement of migratory birds is closely linked to the seasonal availability of resources.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. June 5

New cases	5612
New deaths	122
Total cases	2,966,363
Total deaths	81,063
New hospitalized patients	1,027
Patients in critical condition	3,769
Total recovered patients	2,552,401
Diagnostic tests conducted	20,688,723
Doses of vaccine injected	4,823,579

36 Iranian universities among world’s top 1,000

➔ He went on to note that Tehran University, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Amirkabir University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, Iran Science and Technology, Isfahan University of Technology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Shiraz, Tabriz, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti, Tabriz Medical Sciences, Islamic Azad Tehran Science and Research Branch, Khajeh Nasir Toosi University of Technology, Mashhad Medical Sciences, Shiraz Medical Sciences, Iran Medical Sciences, Shahid Bahonar, Babol Noshirvani University of Technology, Malek Ashtar University of Technology, Sahand University of Technology, were listed in the ranking.

In terms of scientific impact, almost all universities have performed better in terms of rankings compared to last year, and the University of Tehran, which is the first university in the country, has risen from 140 in 2020 to 134 in 2021, Dehghani emphasized.

In terms of collaboration, in general, there is no significant improvement in the ranking of the country’s universities. However, the best ranking of the country has increased from 201 to 198 by the University of Tehran.

In terms of open access publishing, the ranking of the country’s universities has not changed much, the best ranking in the country has been obtained by the University of Tehran, which has been upgraded from 201 in 2020 to 198 in 2021.

In gender diversity, universities of Tehran, Tarbiat Mo-dares, Tehran Medical Sciences, Mashhad Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti Medical Sciences, Iran Medical Sciences, Shiraz Medical Sciences, Tabriz University, and Gilan University have been upgraded compared to 2020.

Iranian universities performance in 2021

The 2021 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings has listed 27 Iranian universities among the 1,115 most effective institutions worldwide.

Six Iranian universities have been placed among the world’s top universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

Times Higher Education also has published its annual ranking of the world’s top universities for 2021, listing 47 Iranian universities, which shows an increase of 7 universities compared to the last year.

With 47 Iranian universities ranked among 1,527 top universities of 93 countries in the world in 2021 rankings, Iran achieved a great improvement in the academic field.

Some 21 Islamic countries were also listed in the ranking. However, Iran holds the highest share with 47 universities.

With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

According to statistics released by the International Web of Science Database, Iran’s citation rank has always been on the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

Endangered Animals in Iran

(Part 2)

Despite the fact that large stretches of the country are sparsely inhabited by humans, many of Iran’s larger animals are still facing the prospect of extinction. The country’s conservation efforts need to be improved before it’s too late for many of these endangered species.

Persian Leopard – This subspecies of the leopard only has about 1,000 individuals remaining in the wild and is now in danger of becoming extinct.

Asiatic Cheetah – This subspecies once stretched across India and the Middle East, but as a result of habitat loss, hunting, and a fall in prey numbers, it’s thought that less than a hundred now remain in the wild. It is highly endangered and could eventually become extinct.

Caspian Seal – Found exclusively along the shores of the Caspian Sea, this seal species has fallen from a high of 1.5 million to perhaps around 100,000 due to predation, industrialization, and overexploitation of the local ecosystem.

Persian Fallow Deer – Nearly hunted to extinction by the late 19th century, this deer has been slowly reintroduced to parts of its former habitat. However, there are still only about a thousand of them remaining.

Siberian Crane – This waterbird has a western population and an eastern population. The western population breeds in Siberia and migrates south for the winter near the Caspian Sea. However, there are very few western cranes remaining and they may already be extinct.

Egyptian Vulture – Sporting a white plumage, this species of scavenging vulture is threatened by hunting, pesticide use, intentional poison, power lines, and other human activity.

(Source: a-z-animals.com)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

‘Playing to learn’ scheme piloted in elementary schools

A plan dubbed “playing to learn” aiming at using educational games toward deeper learning was implemented for first time in elementary schools across the capital, with the Education Minister in attendance, Fars reported on Saturday.

Through the first phase of the scheme, 1,000 schools from 10 provinces nationwide will implement the playing to learn scheme, including Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Hamedan, Mazandaran, Kordestan, Kerman, West Azarbaijan, Qazvin, and Sistan-Baluchestan.

According to the report, schools regarding their proper environment and conditions volunteered and chose to hold game-based classes and assess the results, currently in each province 50 girls’ schools and 50 boys’ schools among state-run and private schools have piloted the scheme; 20 percent of which are private schools.




آغاز اجرای آزمایشی طرح «بازی و یادگیری» در مدارس ابتدایی تهران

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری فارس اجرای آزمایشی طرح «بازی و یادگیری» به منظور آموزش عمیق مفاهیم کتب درسی توسط بازی با حضور وزیر آموزش و پرورش در تعدادی از مدارس ابتدایی شهر تهران آغاز شد. قرار است این طرح در ۱۰۰۰ مدرسه ۱۰ استان کشور اجرا شود در فاز اول اجرای طرح، استان‌های خراسان رضوی، شهر تهران، فارس، همدان، مازندران، کردستان، کرمان، آذربایجان غربی، قزوین و سیستان و بلوچستان قرار دارند. ملاک‌های انتخاب مدارس اجرای پروژه بازی و یادگیری شامل اعلام آمادگی داوطلبانه مدارس با توجه به امکان سنجی محیط و شرایط مدرسه است که تعداد ۵۰ مدرسه دخترانه و ۵۰ مدرسه پسرانه انتخاب شدند و این مدارس از بین مدارس دولتی و مدارس غیردولتی انتخاب شده‌اند همچنین در این فاز اجرا، حداکثر ۲۰ درصد مدارس غیردولتی شامل اجرای پروژه می‌شوند.

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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
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Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be generous but not extravagant, be
frugal but not miserly.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Painting

■ Sharif Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Paria Farrokhi. The exhibit named “The Plain of Possibility” will be running until June 8 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Ghazal Marvi is currently underway at Homa Gallery. The exhibit entitled “We Know, Yet We Don’t Know” will continue until June 15 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ Paintings by a group of artists, including Reyhaneh Qazizadeh, Negar Kalantari, Hossein Fathipanah, Elahel Mirshamsi, Alireza Abachi, Nasrin Aini and Mohammad-Hossein Jafari-Naeimi, are currently on view in an exhibition at Ayrik Gallery. The exhibition named “Vanda” will run until June 9 at the gallery located at Ayrik Center on East Ferdows Blvd.



■ Marjan Firuzi is showcasing her latest collection of Paintings named “Blue Distances” in an exhibition at Golhay Davudi Gallery. The exhibit will be running until June 9 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.

Multimedia

■ A group of artists, including Mohammadreza Yazdi, Alireza Masumi, Mohammad Mardi, Morteza Mottaqi, Amir-Ali Garusian, Hura Gorji, Elham Fotuhi, Shaya Sharestani and Behruz Darash, are showcasing their latest artworks in various media in an exhibition at Risheha 29 Gallery.



The exhibit entitled “Boundless” will be running until June 25 at the gallery located at 31 Aqbozorgi St. in the Elahieh neighborhood. ■ Naseran Kashanian, Roya Karimi, Yahya Zahedipur, Alireza KHaqani, Zohdi Hesami, Ali Jahanshahi, Sara Baqerzadeh, Mahbod Baqernejad and Saeideh Azad are displaying their latest artworks in various media in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery. The exhibition will continue until June 8 at the gallery, which is located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.



■ On view at Shokuh Gallery is a selection of artworks in various media by a large group of artists, including Behnush Forutan, Hunia Abbasi, Hooman Bayat, Shirin Babazadeh, Jamal Rahmati, Kambiz Derambakhsh, Saeid Emkani and Mohammad Taraqqijah. The exhibit named “Cow” will continue until June 21 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.



■ Artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Hamid Ahadi, Fatemeh Ravak, Zohreh Mohammadimanesh, and Neshat Panahianfard, are on view in an exhibition at Zarna Gallery. The exhibit will continue until June 10 at 10 Esko Alley near Daneshgah St. and Enqelab Ave.

Video art

■ An exhibition of video art by Farid Aminoleslam is currently underway at Negar Gallery. The exhibition entitled “Stigmata” will be running until June 8 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, East Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

Iran’s “Statue” tops at VAFI & RAFI animation festival

A R T **TEHRAN** – Iranian short movie “The Statue” has won first prize at the 12th VAFI & RAFI International Children and Youth Animation Film Festival in Croatia.

The festival took place in the cities of Rijeka and Varazdin from May 27 to 29 and June 3 to 6.

Directed by Mohsen Salehifard, “The Statue” tells the story of a sculptor who engages with the clay of his sculpture and shapes it.

The animation, which won the award in the RAFI 15-18 category, was produced by the Najafabad branch of the Iranian Young Cinema Society.

“Geomancy” by Jost Sesko from Slovenia won a special mention in this section.

In the RAFI 0-6 category, “You Can Fly!” by Korean director Sung Bae Park received the

top prize, while “Tonka Will Do It Tomorrow” by Croatian director Morana Dolenc won a special mention.

The best film award in the RAFI 7-10 category went to “Marmalade” by Radostina Neykova from Bulgaria. “Nestling” by Russian director Marat Valerievich Narimanov received a special mention.

“It Will Never Be” by Croatian director Mateja Stefinscak was selected as best film in the RAFI 11-14 section. “Dandedog” by Portuguese director Elmano Diogo won a special mention.

Out of 218 correctly submitted animated films in the VAFI section, 80 of them were selected to compete in the official competition.

In the RAFI section, the organizers received 627 submissions and 73 competed in the official competition.



“The Statue” by Iranian director Mohsen Salehifard won first prize at the 12th VAFI & RAFI International Children and Youth Animation Film Festival in Croatia.

Iran to organize Intl. Storytelling Festival 2021 online

➔1 Iran plans to register the 30th of Azar on its national calendar as a day of stories and storytelling based on a proposal from the IIDCYA, which was approved by the General Culture Council of Iran.

The final decision on the proposal will be made at the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

The 30th of Azar on the Iranian calendar is the last day of autumn, the evening of which is celebrated by Iranians as the ancient tradition of Yalda Night. Storytelling by parents and grandparents is a key element of the celebration.

Yalda Night, which falls on December 20 this year,

is considered the longest night of the year when the ancient Iranians celebrated the birth of Mithra, the goddess of light. It is also known as Chelleh Night, which alludes to the first 40 days of winter, considered to be the harshest of the season.

People on this night are usually served with fresh fruits and a mixture of dry fruits, seeds and nuts in floral bowls.

Following a hot dinner, many people often recite poetry, narrate stories, chant, play musical instruments or just chat cozily until midnight or so.

“Pari” crowned best at Iranian Film Festival Zurich

A R T **TEHRAN** – “Pari” directed by Siamak Etemadi has won the Golden Cyrus Cylinder for best feature-length film at the 7th Iranian Film Festival Zurich, Switzerland.

The film follows Babak, an Iranian student in Greece, who doesn’t show up to welcome his visiting parents at the Athens airport. Pari and her older husband, both devout Muslims abroad for the first time, are ill-prepared to search for their son in an intimidating and alien environment. All their attempts to find a clue that might lead them to him prove to be in vain and they soon reach a dead end. However, Pari can’t give up looking for him, even when returning to Iran seems like her only choice. Following the steps of

her rebellious son in the darkest corners of the city, she will exhaust her inner strength to achieve more than a mother’s search for her missing son.

“A Stranger in Paris” by Mahdieh Valizadeh was chosen as runner-up while the winners were announced last Thursday.

The film is a true story of an Iranian musician who immigrates to France. To obtain French nationality in order to tour the world freely, Ahmad Yahyazadeh is advised to work as a taxi driver in Paris for a while to have a regular paycheck.

A jury composed of Barbara Miller, Annina Furrer, Gertrud Pinkus, Joël Jent and Veronique Gray judged the feature films.

The Golden Cyrus Cylinder for best short

film was given to “The Visit” by Azadeh Musavi.

In this film, after six months, Elahesh is finally allowed to visit her husband, who is a political prisoner. She and her little daughter Tara have one single day to prepare for this important meeting.

“White Clad” by Reza Fahimi won the runner-up prize in the short film competition.

The film is about a grandmother who gives Ahmad, a ten-year-old boy, a cake of cheese, so that he can give it to his father, who is a teacher. It is hoped that his father will intervene and stop them from hanging the grandmother’s son.

Karin Heberlein, Homayra Sellier, Firouz E. Pillet, and Moritz Schneider were the members of the jury in the short films category.



Melika Foroutan acts in a scene from “Pari” directed by Siamak Etemadi.

“Straw Dogs” arrives in Iranian bookstores

CULTURE **TEHRAN** – John Gray’s “Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals” has been published in Persian.

Davate Moaser is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Saman Moradkhani.

The 2002 bestseller is a work of philosophy, which sets out to challenge our most cherished assumptions about what it means to be human.

From Plato to Christianity, from the Enlightenment to Nietzsche, the Western tradition has been based on arrogant and erroneous beliefs about human beings and their place in the world.

Philosophies such as liberalism and Marxism think of humankind as a species whose destiny is to transcend natural limits and conquer the Earth. Gray argues that this humanist belief is an illusion.

In an introduction to the book, Moradkhani calls Gray’s book a radical philosophical survey, dedicated to breaking



Cover of the Persian translation of John Gray’s “Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals”.



A watercolor by an unknown artist depicts the tomb of Persian poet Sadi.

Part 2

In modern poetry, the garden continues to be a prominent image, but now it often appears in contexts of social criticism as well as of love. In 1932 Abul-Qssem Lahuti wrote a

poem entitled “Baghban” (“The Gardener”) in which he compares Stalin to a wise gardener who knows best what to prune in the garden and what to encourage.

More recently, Forugh Farrokhzad in “Delam Baraye Baghcheh Misuzad” (“My Heart Bleeds for the Garden”) used a withered and dying garden at the back of her house as a symbol of Iranian culture and society in her time.

She remembers the garden as flourishing when she was a child, and now that she is an adult she finds that people are filled with self-concern but nobody cares for the garden. In a different vein, in her poem “Fatheh Bagh” (“The Victory of the Garden”) is a joyful love poem set in a garden, using garden imagery to express her feelings.

The garden is not always an image of happiness and beauty, however. In classical poetry, autumn in the garden was a time of sadness and nostalgia, when cold winds take the place of warm breezes and black and white are the predominant colors (crows and snow).

The modern Mehdi Akhavan Saleh has used the garden as the central image in a poem consoling a friend on the death of his child: “Khadiy my friend, truly death’s hand is fickle. It always plucks the rose and never sees the thorns and twigs. Instead of the brush and thorns, it carries the rose from the garden: what a sinister gardener, what a fearful pruning”.

As conceptualized in literature, the garden comes to symbolize man’s relation to nature

in Persian culture. The garden’s life cycle parallels that of man: Each has its youth and spring and its autumn and decline.

However, the stylized, idealized idea of the garden presented in poetry represents a stark contrast with what lies outside the garden wall: the desert. Hot, dry, dangerous, and inhospitable, the desert is always a threat to life, and the wall serves to keep the desert out as it keeps the garden in.

Within the wall, nature is controlled and made to serve the purposes of man: The chaos and danger of nature outside are changed to order and security. In this small Paradise man, not nature, is dominant, and nature can be enjoyed on man’s terms.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
Concluded

Bookstores offer “The Midnight Library” to Persian readers

CULTURE **TEHRAN** – English writer Matt Haig’s novel “The Midnight Library” has recently been published by Saleh Publication in Tehran.

Translated into Persian by Amin Hosseiniun, the dazzling novel is about all the choices that go into a life well lived, from the internationally bestselling author of “Reasons to Stay Alive” and “How to Stop Time”.

Between life and death there is a library, and within that library, the shelves go on forever. Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived. To see

how things would be if you had made other choices... Would you have done anything different, if you had the chance to undo your regrets?

Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go

to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In “The Midnight Library”, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.