

Everyone who cares about Iran will attend presidential polls Page 2

Iran's Mohammadiam beats Shabani to claim gold in Poland Open Page 3

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Postponement of talks looms large as U.S. insists on destroying Iranian nuclear 'knowledge'

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Zarif defends Iran's voting privileges at UNGA

TEHRAN – After the UN Secretary-General's threat that Iran will lose its voting rights at the United Nations General Assembly due to the arrears in the payment of its membership fees, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote a letter to the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres informing him that the U.S. sanctions have blocked the payment of Iran's membership fees.

"I am writing to convey our strong dismay over the announcement that the Islamic Republic of Iran will lose its voting privileges in the United Nations General Assembly due to the arrears in the payment of its financial contribution to the United Nations," Zarif said in the letter. "This decision is fundamentally flawed, entirely unacceptable, and completely unjustified,"

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Iran, Nakhchivan confer on expanding transport, trade co-op

TEHRAN - Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Es-lami held talks with the Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic Vasif Talibov on Tuesday to explore avenues for expansion of economic and transport ties.

officials from both sides, the attendees expressed satisfaction with the upward trend of cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

Addressing the event, Talibov said the Islamic Republic of Iran and Azerbaijan have always had close friendship and cooperation, and now conditions are ripe for further expansion of this cooperation.

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Fakhra vaccine begins second human trial

TEHRAN – The second phase of the Fakhra vaccine's human trial started on Wednesday by being administered to 500 volunteers.

Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically-developed COVID-19 vaccine, named after nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, who was assassinated in November last year near Tehran, was unveiled and started the clinical trial on March 16.

Through the first phase, some 135 people have received the vaccine, project manager Ahmad Karimi said

on Wednesday. Through the second phase, 500 people will be selected to perform the human trial, he added.

After obtaining the necessary permits from the Ministry of Health, we will inject 30,000 doses of the vaccine through the third phase of the human trial, he said.

Vaccination to end by late November President Hassan Rouhani said in May that if the volume of COVID-19 vaccine required by the country is provided,

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Production will fail to keep pace without tapping new technologies

BY M.A. SAKI

The seven presidential contenders in Iran have been insisting on production since the campaigns began on May 25. However, production in industrial fields without using new technologies will end in failure.

Generally speaking, producers are obsessed with instant profit and a great effort is needed to change this mindset.

Many citizens, based on their incomes, are willing to pay more money to buy high quality goods. Once sanctions against Iran are lifted, tendency toward buying foreign-produced goods, such as home appliances which have higher qualities, will increase. In that situation local producers will lose the race to the benefit foreign manufacturers.

It is heartening that the candidates say producers should be supported to lower their cost and be granted tax relaxation. However, producers will surely lose the battle if they don't update their technology. Producing low quality goods will lead to the waste of raw materials as they get out of service sooner than it is expected.

Research and development (R&D) must find its place among producers in Iran. If local producers have lost the market to the benefit of foreigners, it is mostly because goods manufactured by certain foreign companies are of higher quality and sometime cheaper.

Local producers should allocate a considerable portion of their income to R&D. If Korean goods succeeded to sideline producers of home appliance in Iran it was just because they are constantly promoting the beauty and quality of their products.

Consumers in Iran have fallen prey to certain companies, especially those involved in heavy industries. For example, two large car producers in Iran -- SAIPA and Iran Khodro -- which together produce more than one million vehicles in the country are not answerable to consumers for the low quality of their cars. Not only they have monopolized the domestic market, they also constantly increase their products. However, R&D and quality are given little attention. If R&D had been given priority all through these long years, their products would have now found customers around the world.

The presidential candidates claim that Iran can export manufactured goods to neighbors and other countries. However, as long as local producers don't continuously promote the quality of their goods by tapping new technologies, they will fail to find a proper place in the highly competitive international markets.

Zionists are a one trick pony called VIOLENCE...

BY MARTIN LOVE

One must slide reluctantly into masochism to stay informed. Cruelty, chaos, criminality and insanity reign. And smack in the center of it all is America and its sidekick or dominatrix, Apartheid Israel.

It seems clear Netanyahu and other Zionist "leaders" in Likud and in smaller parties farther to the right are ramping up the ethnic cleansing and mass arrests of Palestinians like rarely before in what may be an

effort to spark a regional war. Netanyahu does not care whom he hurts or kills; he just wants to stay in the political miasma that is Israel now with all its abusive criminality and arrogant assaults on international law and human rights. This can only get worse since the Zionists know nothing and aim for nothing but what they have always been about for over 70 years: violence against Palestinians

and non-Zionists amidst land grabs and ethnic cleansing.

That possible war may be just the thing that scuttles a new coalition government in Israel and allows Netanyahu to remain as PM for a few days longer, and avoid prosecution and jail on corruption charges. Yes, Hamas launched the tiny rockets in May in response to invasions of al-Aqsa and the ethnic cleansing in East Jerusalem, but Hamas is likely spent for now and just trying to clean up the mess the Israelis made on Gaza and bury the dead. This must be a calculation by the Zionists who are proceeding with the same moves that caused Hamas to respond to the Israeli violence at al-Aqsa and in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem.

Hapless and foolish Joe Biden anyway has promised the Zionists a complete restocking of the "Iron Dome" defense array which proved to be like

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Nasrallah: We will eventually hold prayers at al-Aqsa Mosque

Hezbollah's secretary-general says Muslims will eventually prevail over the Israeli regime and its allies' efforts to interfere with their observing their religious rituals at al-Aqsa Mosque in the holy occupied city of al-Quds.

"I am still hopeful that we will [eventually] pray together at the sacred al-Aqsa Mosque," Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised address on Tuesday.

He pointed to the anniversary of Naksa (Setback), which marks the Israeli regime's occupation of a whole host of regional territories -- including the Palestinian territory of the West Bank, where al-Quds is located, Lebanon's Shebaa Farms, and Syria's Golan Heights -- in a Western-backed war in 1967.

The Hezbollah chief noted how the Palestinians across the occupied territories had been struggling "with patience and sacrifice" to pre-

serve the status quo in al-Quds and the al-Aqsa Mosque's compound throughout decades that have passed since the war.

Now, the international Muslim Ummah (Nation) has to pursue this matter shoulder to shoulder with them, Nasrallah said.

Gratitude towards Ansarullah

The Hezbollah leader, meanwhile, voiced gratitude towards Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, leader of Yemen's popular Houthi Ansarullah movement, for the latter's expression of support for resistance efforts aimed at preserving al-Quds and the Islamic sanctities there.

Nasrallah also congratulated the Yemeni people for their successful resistance and struggle against a United States-backed Saudi Arabia-led coalition that has been attacking the impoverished country since 2015.

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Iran may open borders to travelers in July

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran is weighing plans to open its borders to certain international travelers by issuing tourist visas as of mid-July.

"The issuance of tourist visas will resume in the second half of [the month of] Tir (June 22- July 22) based on initial agreements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Interior Ministry," Vali Teymouri, the deputy tourism minister, announced on Wednesday.

"An initial agreement has been reached with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Interior Ministry, to reopen borders of the country to foreign tourists."

"The issuance of tourist visas will resume after the final preparation and approval of travel regulations and protocols," the official added.

Teymouri said earlier this month that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts have already had started extensive consultations with other government ministries

for the reopening of borders to vaccinated travelers. "One of the issues that we are pursuing strongly through various committees is the arrival of international citizens who have been vaccinated so that won't pose a threat or concern to the Iranian society," the official said.

"We have put forward the proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and to the President (Hassan Rouhani) as well."

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Visit Qaleh Kant in southeast Iran

Qaleh Kant is a centuries-old adobe-plastered fortress, which is named after a nearby village in Sistan-Baluchestan province, southeast Iran.

Visiting the monument consists of a journey where you will not only discover part of the local history, rituals, and traditions of the region but will also come into direct contact with scenes of magnificent landscapes and hospitable people.

Reviving JCPOA can cool tensions in West Asia, says American foreign policy expert

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - Barbara Slavin, an American foreign policy expert, is of the opinion that a revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) can ease tensions in West Asia.

"A resumption of the deal should encourage Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to cool tensions with Iran," Slavin tells the Tehran Times.

"We have already seen talks take place in Iraq and hopefully we will see a resumption of full diplomatic relations," she adds. On May 10, Iraqi officials revealed that there are ongoing talks between regional arch-rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran to resolve issues between them.

"De-escalation of tensions between the two Muslim countries in the Persian Gulf region is in the interest of both nations and the region," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a televised weekly news conference recently.

Apparently, the two countries welcome resolving the issues that have soured relations between Tehran and Riyadh.

Following is the text of the interview: **Some observers believe a deal would be struck at the next round of the nuclear talks that are going to be resumed in Vienna next week, but other European diplomats say "the most difficult decisions lie ahead." What is your prediction?**

I am not privy to the details of the talks, but it does seem that the Iranian side has slowed them down so that there will be no results before the presidential elections.

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MPs representing religious minorities call for massive turnout in elections

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Legislators representing the religious minorities in the Iranian parliament issued a statement on Wednesday calling on the people to participate massively in the June 18 presidential and council elections.

The statement was read out by MP Mohsen Dehnavi, a member of the Majlis presiding board.

They said the Iranian nation have been viewing the elections “as a symbol of national will” over the last 43 years and consider participation in the elections as a religious, national and revolutionary duty and this time will participate in the elections enthusiastically and intelligently and will show the dignity and power of Iran to the world.

They also said that through high turnout in the elections the Iranian nation will prove that national unity is among the “greatest values”.

Zionists are a one trick pony called VIOLENCE...

→ 1 Swiss cheese. One can only imagine how badly the Zionists would fare if there were ever a regional war and Israel also had to deal with real missiles from Iran or from Hizballah in Lebanon in addition to

Syrian anti-aircraft rockets, one of which recently went astray and landed within a few miles of Dimona. If such a widespread battle ever materialized one can also imagine other Arab countries might well join the fray on the back of potential popular uprisings in places like Saudi

Arabia or Jordan or the UAE, but this latter may just be wishful thinking. Jordan anyway would be well advised to eject the Israelis in Amman now, and so would Sisi in Egypt, but then this is just yet more wishful thinking. And the so-called Abraham Accords could well be dismissed, too. One can only dream of a better world.

But the real achievement, despite the carnage, is the apparent and long sought unification of Palestinians against Apartheid and occupation, and just as importantly, what appears to be a worldwide awakening against the evils of the Zionists, who have been exposed and which no hasbara can

eliminate. Americans also are waking up and there have been scattered suggestions that U.S. voters ought to reject those in government who have long caved to AIPAC and other Jewish lobbies for money and political endorsements.

As for Iran, which is anxiously awaiting the revival in some form, preferably original form, of the JCPOA, which Biden has promised to resurrect, there have been inside Iran some fiery explosions of late on industry or infrastructure, which one easily wonders may have been the work of Israeli sabotage trying to incite Iran. The new head of Mossad, one David Barnea, has already threatened new assassinations

of Iranians and attacks on infrastructure, and the Netanyahu regime has been warning that it will do anything it can to scuttle the JCPOA. A unilateral attack on Iran's nuclear facilities? But that would likely be the end of the Zionist regime and one can also imagine many of Israel's absolute worst elements, the settlers in the West Bank who seem to be directing the IDF's moves in East Jerusalem and elsewhere in the West Bank, to return to New York or wherever they have come from. Again, a bit more of wishful thinking. But the world despises Zionism.

The worldwide shift in perspective on Israel emboldens Israel's enemies to persevere against the occupations, but so emboldened, the Zionists

have no answer but further repression and violence, which shifts the perspective even farther against Israel. This is to say Zionism (unless it is redefined in practice as some benign movement) is doomed, and

so may be Israeli Apartheid.

In addition, there are now modest hopes for better relations between various Arab countries and between Arab countries and Iran. Some sort of unity or at least a rapprochement between largely Muslim countries, Shi'a or Sunni, may be in the first innings. This includes between Iran and even Saudi Arabia while the current crackdown on Palestinians,

including Palestinian citizens of Israel, is the largest in decades and it is doing no service to Israel. This has only strengthened Palestinian resolve. When will Muslims finally realize their real enemies are not other Muslims, but rather Western countries like the U.S. which for over a century have imposed war, division, imperialism and colonialism on various largely Muslim lands?

As for America, it has been claimed that the general political disarray between Trump supporters in the GOP and the Democrats may be pushing the U.S. into an environment where if voter suppression efforts continue, the U.S. may no longer be able to call itself an honest democracy. The GOP is racist to its core under any lingering fealty to Trump and

Trumpism, just as the Zionists are racist.

Everyone who cares about Iran will attend presidential polls, parliament speaker says

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Wednesday called for participation in the June 18 presidential elections, saying turnout in the elections will show “love for the country and concern over the fate of the future generation and children of Iran”.

Highlighting the role of the Iranian nation in changing the future, Qalibaf said, “We believe that people can change any circumstances, no matter how hard it is. The will of the nation can create a social miracle. The will of God, as well, will be in line with that of the nation. Belief in people alongside belief in God is the way out of the problems”.

The parliament speaker also said it is wrong to dishearten Iranian people from participating in the presidential election.

“Disheartening people [from attending the election] is not wise. The work-background of candidates is more important than their claims and slogans. It matters even more than their plans”, Qalibaf told an open session of the parliament.

The speaker also said, “The deep belief of Imam Khomeini in peoples' ability to change the social circumstances and their authority to implement their right to self-determination, founded the glorious evolution of the Iranian people and caused the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Imam Khomeini established the administration with the support of the nation and up until the last days of his exuberant life, the power of nation



abled him to overcome all the problems and conspiracies of the foes.”

The top parliamentarian went on to say that it does not make sense to distance people from the Revolution and leadership through a gesture of democracy.

“It is hypocritical to stand up against religious norms in the name of the people,” he stated.

Qalibaf said for more four decades Iran has not seen anyone more sincere than Imam Khomeini and the Leader in respect for democracy. “Even if the atmosphere becomes dark at some point,

we will use their behavior as a beacon,” he stated.

Qalibaf reiterated that today Iran has two important tasks in this direction and feels two heavy responsibilities on its shoulders. “Be kind to people, and reduce their suffering and stand by them,” he suggested.

He described “wisdom” as a requirement for a person who wants to take on such a huge responsibility. “Follow ‘piety’ in candidates' speech and behavior,” he advised the electorate.

“In the Majlis, we also cooperate with the people and with the people's elected candidate on the same criteria of wisdom, competence and piety,” the MP emphasized.

Qalibaf said it is a great sin to discourage people from attending the polling stations, saying that the Islamic Republic should not agree with the enemies on the issue of elections.

“Certainly, those who participate in the elections also have appropriate criticisms and complaints, but despite these criticisms, they consider the elections as the most important window of ‘managerial breathing’ for the country,” he stated.

“Inviting each other to participate in the elections is a struggle to elevate dear Iran,” he concluded.

Zakani says his foreign policy will be based on mutual respect, détente with neighbors

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Presidential candidate Alireza Zakani told a press conference on Wednesday that if he wins the elections, he will follow a foreign policy based on mutual respect and détente with neighbors.

Zakani also said he would pursue an active involvement of neighbors for establishment of a comprehensive security in the region.

The presidential candidate also said his government would focus on serious interaction with Muslim countries, noting the Islamic Republic of Iran would be ready to share 42 years of experience with the Islamic world.

He also said his government's approach toward the Western world and “new emerging powers” will be different.

“We are seeking long-term interactions with Russia and China,” he told a press conference in which foreign correspondents also attended.

The presidential hopeful said he will “redefine” interaction with the West with a focus on “mutual respect and national interests”.

He added, “Our approach with other countries is neither tolerating domination nor seeking domination. At the same time, we seek independence in all areas.”

By following such a policy, his likely government will seek to focus its attention on the Islamic world and neighbors and new emerging powers such as China and Russia, he explained.

“Along with this (our) relations with the Europe we think of a mutual interaction and mutual respect with the centrality of joint interests.”

Of course, he added, relations with South American and African countries will be seriously important is he is elected president.

Zakani also said seven million Iranians who live abroad will be a “unique opportunity” for his government.

According to Tasnim, the presidential candidate also said his government would have no concerns to negotiate

with the West to revive the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal.

“In the JCPOA we acted to our commitments and now it is the turn of Europe and others to fulfill their commitments, therefore, what we are seeking is active diplomacy in line with national interests,” explained Zakani, who is the chief of the Parliament Research Center.

He added the parliamentary ratification is “a major framework for us” in pursuing such a policy.

According to the nuclear law passed by the Iranian parliament late last year Iran will continue to reduce its commitment to the JCPOA if sanctions against Iran are not lifted within a timespan.

The presidential contender added “we don't reject negotiations” if it can help improve the economic situation at home.

Zakani also said the United States can return to the JCPOA only if it removes “cruel sanctions” against Iran and the Islamic Republic's interests are guaranteed under the agreement. However, he added, it seems the Americans have no interests to fully lift sanctions and want to keep the “skeleton of sanctions” and are raising new issues which are Iran's “red lines”.

The presidential candidate was indirectly referring to U.S. efforts to open negotiations with Iran about its defensive missile program and extend the limits on Iran's nuclear activities.

On his government's approach toward the United States, he said Washington should review its policy toward Iran by lifting “cruel sanctions” and showing “mutual respect” in order to create a condition for “new interaction”.

If Iran remains under U.S. “sanctions and threats” there will be no change in Iran's policy toward Washington, he remarked.

He added, “We believe that American officials have denied a serious interaction of the American people with the noble people of Iran.”

'Armenian community ready to participate enthusiastically in June 18 elections'

POLITICAL TEHRAN – Armenian women are insisting on the need for a high turnout in the presidential elections on June 18 and announce that the Armenian community is ready to participate enthusiastically in the elections, the spokeswoman for the women's faction in the Iranian parliament announced on Wednesday.

Sara Falahi made the remarks after the parliamentary faction had a meeting with

Armenian women active in social affairs.

During the meeting the most important issues and demands including those related to the Armenian community were raised, the spokeswoman said.

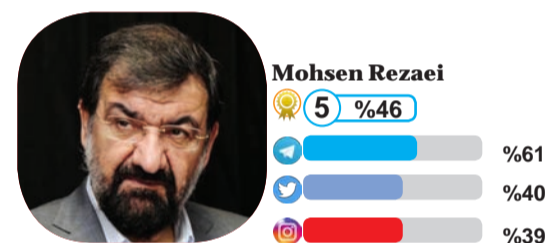
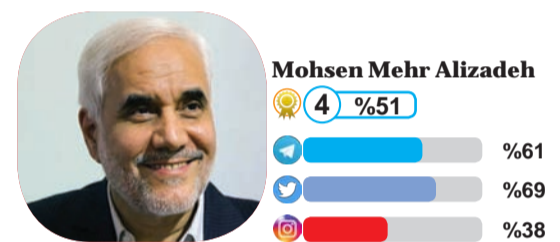
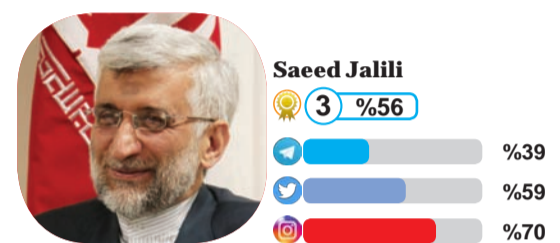
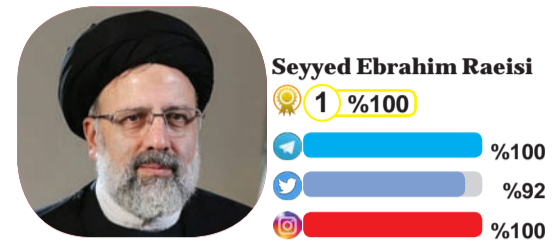
“The Armenian woman expressed their love for Iran and insisted on their Iranian nationality and announced that like Armenian martyrs they are ready to make any sacrifices for their country,” Falahi explained.

She also said youth unemployment, closure of some jobs due to Coronavirus pandemic and social harms such as divorce, which the Armenian community has not also remained safe from them, were discussed.

The spokeswoman also said the women's parliamentary faction and Armenian women's activists agreed for more interaction in areas of legislation and supervision to help resolve some problems.

Comparative analysis of the presidential candidates in Instagram, Telegram and Twitter

Total of 1,159,477,291 data analyzed



- Dataak score
- Total retweets and likes
- Total likes and comments
- Total views

Source: Dataak

Candidates' views on unemployment



Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi

Raeisi has given the issue of unemployment great importance, even saying that there are unemployed people in his family. Raeisi said that he will not allow employers to fire workers if he wins presidency. He stated that his administration will create sustainable jobs. He mentioned unemployment as one of the people's challenges along with inflation and housing problems. He believes that 40% of the production capacities are unused and should be activated.



Saeed Jalili

Jalili considers unemployment as a very important challenge for the country. He believes that unemployment affects the health of the society and its citizens. He says through reducing unemployment a burden can be taken off of the shoulders of the Ministry of Health. In the second presidential debate on Tuesday, he cited two examples in which he helped resolve the issue of unemployment in a rural and a border area, turning locals into exporters and traders of goods.



Mohsen Rezaei

Mohsen Rezaei has time and again mentioned the issues of inflation, poverty and unemployment as his most important concerns and the primary reason for contesting the presidential elections. He even claimed that in his administration, not even a single Iranian will remain jobless. He has repeatedly said that he has plans to overcome unemployment, not really specifying what his plans are.



Mohsen Mehr Alizadeh

Mehr Alizadeh says that he is troubled when he sees unemployed people. His plan of social economy is to strengthen small businesses and fair distribution of wealth among lower classes of society. He says that through removing production obstacles, unemployment can be tackled.



Alireza Zakani

Zakani believes that by giving authority to provinces, the governors can use the capacities of their provinces to employ the locals. Basically, Zakani's economic plan is to give authority to provinces to run their economic affairs. Zakani thinks that the unemployment rate is higher than what is announced, saying that the unemployed people registered in various websites to get a job, got fed up and quit following.



Abdolnasser Hemmati

Hemmati believes that a chain of events leads to unemployment. He once said that the sanctions crippled the economic growth, and the decline in the economic growth leads to the unemployment. The presidential hopeful says he seeks to reduce unemployment through removing sanctions. He is looking to establish economic relations with all countries, trying to tackle the issue of unemployment through foreign trade.



Amir Hossein Qazizadeh

Qazizadeh says that the highest unemployment rate is in the border areas, saying that the “Government of Greetings” – the name he has selected for his possible administration -- will solve the issue of unemployment and turn local border people into traders. He says that the root causes of unemployment are inflation, poverty, inequality and injustice. Qazizadeh says that in the first three years of his presidency, he will try to create a situation in which 4 to 5 million people find a minimum-wage job.

Postponement of talks looms large as U.S. insists on destroying Iranian nuclear 'knowledge'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In its Interim National Security Strategic Guidance issued in early March this year, the Biden administration equivocally warned of the prospect of Iran getting "game-changing capabilities and technologies."

As the negotiating parties make efforts to solve core issues in the Vienna nuclear talks, the U.S. doubles down on its efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring these kinds of technologies or destroy the knowledge behind the technologies in case Iran achieved them.

This explains why the Vienna talks, aimed at reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have so far failed to yield tangible results, though they were widely expected by many observers to be concluded in late May or early June.

The Biden administration is now injecting a note of caution despite the sanguine expectations expressed by the negotiating parties over the course of the past five rounds of nuclear talks, which began in early April.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday said that the U.S. still does not know whether Iran is ready to resume compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal. "It remains unclear whether Iran is willing and prepared to do what it needs to do come back into compliance. So, we're still testing that proposition," he told lawmakers.

The remarks elicited a response from Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who said Iran also wasn't sure if the U.S. is ready to abandon the failed policy of "maximum pressure" adopted by the Trump administration and his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo against Iran.

"It remains unclear whether @POTUS and @SecBlinken are ready to bury the failed 'maximum pressure' policy of Trump



and @mikepompeo, and cease using Economic Terrorism as bargaining 'leverage.' Iran is in compliance with the JCPOA. Just read paragraph 36. Time to change course," Zarif said on Twitter.

Blinken's remarks were the latest indication that the Vienna talks have reached a make-or-break point where all parties should make tough decisions. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi, who leads the Iranian negotiating delegation in Vienna, confirmed this assessment on Wednesday after briefing lawmakers on the outcome of the fifth round of talks, which ended last week on Thursday.

Speaking after a meeting at the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, Araqchi said, "Negotiations have reached a point where some key issues still need to be decided.

We will start a new round of talks next week and we hope to make progress on various issues, but it is too early to judge whether this will be the last round of talks."

But what are these "key issues" that, if not solved, the whole negotiation process would be derailed? The Iranian and American as well as the other negotiating parties have remained tight-lipped about these issues that if announced, would reveal the extent to which the U.S. attempts to prevent independent, sovereign nations from making scientific advances.

According to press reports, these issues have much to do with the technological advances Iran has achieved after reducing its compliance with the deal. During the Vienna talks, the U.S. has demanded that Iran "destroy" the advanced centrifuges it started to spin at the Fordow and Natanz facilities one year after the U.S. withdrawal

from the JCPOA. These centrifuges, known as the IR9, are 50 times more powerful at producing uranium than the ones covered by the JCPOA, according to Reuters.

Iran flatly rejected the U.S. demand just as Washington refused an Iranian demand that the U.S. lift all the sanctions imposed, re-imposed, or relabeled by the Trump administration. In a bid to create a middle ground, Russia, with support from China, proposed that Iran seals and keeps the advanced centrifuges inside Iran under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), according to a report by Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, a newspaper close to Qatar.

It remains unclear whether the U.S. would accept this proposal, but the downbeat remarks of Western diplomats and analysts about the next round of talks leave little room for optimism about a conclusion of the nuclear negotiations in the coming days.

Citing diplomats and analysts, Reuters said the remaining issues, including Western concern over Iran's expanding nuclear know-how, may need weeks or possibly months of further negotiations.

Whether Iran and the U.S. would reach an agreement on thorny issues such as the advanced centrifuges and Iran's production of metal uranium in the next round remains an open question. The U.S. seems to be more worried about the scientific progress Iran has made in terms of producing sophisticated equipment and materials than the accumulation of these materials that can be easily destroyed or shipped out of the country. The U.S. problem is not if Iran would destroy its equipment, rather it is Iran's ability to re-manufacture this equipment. At the end of the day, he who can produce it for the first time can reproduce it at any other time.

Zarif says had 'fruitful' talks with UN envoys on Yemen, Afghanistan

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has described his meetings with two UN envoys on Yemen and Afghanistan as fruitful and expressed Iran's readiness to facilitate peace efforts in the two war-torn countries.

Zarif met on Tuesday with UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan Jean Arnault and Martin Griffiths, the UN special envoy for Yemen. He discussed with the two UN officials the latest developments in Afghanistan and Yemen.

"Fruitful talks with UNSG SRs on Afghanistan, Mr. Arnault, and on Yemen, Mr. Griffiths. Key theme: Peace processes must be owned by all Afghans and Yemenis—without external imposition. Important common denominator: Iran seeks regional peace and stability. Ready to facilitate," the Iranian foreign minister said on Twitter.

Griffiths held talks with Zarif on various aspects of the Yemen crisis and the ways to achieve peace and stability in the country according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

In the Tuesday meeting, the Iranian foreign minister elaborated on Iran's viewpoint on ending the Yemen crisis, the developments following the beginning of the crisis in the country, and underlined the need for removing the blockade against the country and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people.

Foreign Minister Zarif expounded on Iran's principled policy that war is not a solution to the Yemen crisis, and said the current disastrous situation in Yemen - which has put the Yemeni people on the verge of a humanitarian disaster after six years - can only be wound up through political talks and peaceful ways.

The UN envoy, in turn, briefed the Iranian chief diplomat on the results of his negotiations with relevant bodies on the Yemen crisis.

Griffiths, who will soon be appointed as UN undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs, also met with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand.

In the meeting, Baharvand congratulated Griffiths on his new post, and stressed the importance of the United Nations' humanitarian aid in conflict zones, especially in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq regardless of political considerations and pressure.



FM Zarif talking to UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Afghanistan Jean Arnault (R).

Despite cruel sanctions, he said, Iran has always stood ready to help the UN expedite the trend of sending humanitarian aid to the needy in war-hit areas.

"Unfortunately, the United States' unilateral sanctions have not only impeded trade in humanitarian goods such as buying food and drugs, but also overshadowed the UN's dispatching of humanitarian aid to the needy in conflict-stricken and crisis-hit zones," the senior Iranian diplomat explained.

"As soon as Griffiths assumes his new responsibility, he should put this issue on the agenda," he added.

Baharvand proposed that an international contract be drawn up under which humanitarian assistance and trade cannot be targeted by sanctions and political considerations or be used for military purposes.

The Iranian official also expressed deep concern over a rise in terrorist attacks in Afghanistan against specific ethnic groups and religions, especially girls' schools.

He said such acts not only amount to war crimes, but are also regarded as a gross violation of human rights.

The diplomat called on international organizations to pay attention to this issue.

Griffiths, in turn, underlined that he would soon begin work in his new capacity, elaborating on the priorities of the United Nations' humanitarian programs.

The two sides also exchanged views on regional issues, including the developments pertaining to Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the UN's role from a humanitarian perspective.

Foreign Minister Zarif also held separate talks with Arnault on the latest developments in Afghanistan. In the meeting, Zarif elaborated on Iran's viewpoint regarding Afghanistan, especially peace and security in the country and the peace process led by Afghans.

He also expressed Tehran's support for intra-Afghan talks and the need to protect the achievements of the Afghan people in recent years, especially in terms of the basic rights of the people.

Jean Arnault, in turn, highlighted the key role of neighbors and the fact that he has started his regional tour from Iran after being appointed to this position.

He also noted that the issue of Afghanistan can be resolved through collective measures, and his efforts are focused on finding a way for realizing this collective cooperation.

The meeting took place in continuation of Iran's diplomatic efforts to achieve peace and security in neighboring Afghanistan.

Iran's special envoy for Afghanistan Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian held a phone conversation with Afghanistan's National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib regarding the recent developments in Afghanistan.

During the conversation, the Iranian official touched upon a trip to Iran by the UN's special envoy for Afghanistan, and underscored the need to adopt a common stance by different Afghan factions with regards to the peace process in the country.

Mohib, in turn, appreciated the stances adopted by Iran on the peace trend in his country, and said Kabul would not accept solutions that are based on non-peaceful means.

He also emphasized the need to stand up to the fresh wave of violence in Afghanistan.

Earlier, he held phone talks with Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), on the country's developments and the visit to Tehran of the UN Secretary General's personal envoy on Afghanistan.

In the Tuesday phone call, Abdullah called for continued support for the country's peace process.

Taherian, in turn, underlined Iran's support for the Afghan peace process and efforts made within this framework.

He also stressed the necessity for further interaction among various fronts of the country in order to accelerate the achievement of peace.

Zarif defends Iran's voting privileges at UNGA

→1 as Iran's inability to fulfill its financial obligation toward the United Nations is directly caused by unlawful unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States to punish those who comply with a Security Council Resolution."

Zarif added, "As you, and the whole world, are well aware, the people of Iran have been under the most unprecedented economic warfare - and indeed economic terrorism - following the Trump's administration's U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA (shamelessly continued to this day by its successor as so-called 'bargaining leverage') in material breach of preemptory norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and UNSC resolution 2231."

He noted, "It is astonishingly absurd that Iranian people, who have been forcibly blocked from transferring their own money and resources to buy food and medicine - let alone pay UN contribution arrears - by a permanent member of the United Nations' Security Council, are now being punished

for not being allowed to pay budget arrears by the secretariat of the same organization, which has unjustifiably chosen for the past 3 years to remain indifferent in the face of attempted mass starvation - a crime against humanity - by the United States. The U.S.' unlawful acts and war and economic terrorism have impaired Iran's capacity to transfer our financial contribution to the United Nations and some other international organizations as a direct consequence both of extreme restrictions on Iran's banking relations with outside world, and of freezing of the Iranian nation's multi-billion dollars if cash deposits - and not assets or reserves - in South Korea, Japanese, Iraqi, and other banks."

Zarif noted, "It is deplorable that a United Nations founding member is deprived of its voting right due to conditions totally beyond its control, perpetrated by unlawful unilateral acts of another State. It only emboldens the bullying mentality that did the utmost over the

past 4 years to torpedo multilateralism and replace it with extremely selfish and impulsive unilateralism. The United Nations and its general membership must remain true to the purposes and principles of the Charter and refrain from any decision that betrays the spirit of sovereign equality of member States, and weaken multilateralism."

Earlier this year, Zarif had said Iran has allocated funds for the payment of its dues to the UN but the United States prevented Iran from paying the money.

Commenting on the suspension of Iran's voting rights at the UN over unpaid membership fees, Zarif told states news IRNA that the dues were the only reason behind the suspension of Iran's voting rights.

"We should have paid \$16 million to settle our debts to the UN and secure our right to vote. The government allocated the fund and urged that the country's frozen assets in South Korea be used [to pay the debts], but the U.S. blocked the payment to the UN

account," the chief Iranian diplomat said.

Iran had proposed paying its membership fees with its seven billion dollars frozen at two South Korean banks due to U.S. sanctions.

"Iran's latest proposal in this regard was to pay this debt by having the UN use Iran's seized assets in South Korea with the permission of the central bank, which is being discussed with the UN secretariat and the necessary arrangements are being made," Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, had said.

Khatibzadeh also called on the UN to guarantee the transfer of Iran's unpaid fees through non-American banks.

"Given that the United States has encroached upon Iran's international assets before, the Islamic Republic of Iran insists that the UN not use an American intermediary bank to receive our country's membership fee, or that this organization guarantee the financial transfer channel," he noted.

SPORTS

Iran's Mohammadian beats Shabani to claim gold in Poland Open

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iranian wrestlers claimed three medals at the Poland Open Ranking Series event in Warsaw.



Mohammad Hossein Mohammadian defeated his countryman Ali Shabani in the final match of the 97kg.

Iran's Alireza Karimi also beat American wrestler Kollin Raymond Moore to win a bronze medal.

Iran is treating the Poland Open as a selection tournament for the three freestyle and one Greco-Roman weight classes.

At 97kg, Mohammadian captured the spot in the Olympics. "Thank God I was able to win," Mohammadian said. "This is not the biggest day for me but I am happy."

Mohammadian's gold may not have been enough for a seed in the weight class at the Olympics, but it ended a long wait of Iran finalizing the wrestler at the weight. He won the quota in dominating fashion at the Asian Olympic Qualifiers in April.

But Shabani's wins over him earlier this year and Karimi's record at 92kg made them contenders as well. Instead of hosting a trial back home, the Iranian Federation decided to send the wrestler to Warsaw for a face-off. The winner would be selected for the Olympic team.

"I have been wrestling with Shabani since cadet-level and I know his style," he said. "Before becoming here I had strategized a lot and thankfully it paid off."

Two Iranian teams in Asian Club League Handball Championship

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Mes Kerman and Shahid Kazeroon will represent Iran at the 2020 Asian Club League Handball Championship.

The competition will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from June 12 to 21.

Kazeroon are in Group A along with Al Arabi of Qatar, Kuwait's Al Salmiya, Saudi Arabian Mudhar Club and Al Najma of Bahrain. Group B includes of Mes Kerman, Saudi Arabia's Al Wehda, Uzbekistan's AGMK Club, Al Qaten Club from Yemen, Qatar's Al Duhail and Al Kuwait of Kuwait.

The 2020 Asian Club League Handball Championship will be 23rd edition of the championship scheduled to be held from 12 to 21 June 2021 at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation.

It will be the third time in history that the championship will be organized by the Saudi Arabian Handball Federation. It also acts as the qualification tournament for the 2021 IHF Super Globe, with top team from the championship directly qualifying for the event to be held in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Hazfi Cup semifinals draw to be held on Sunday

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Eight Iranian team will learn their fate at the semifinals round of the 2020/21 Hazfi Cup.

The draw ceremony will be held on Sunday. Sepahan, Malavan, Kheybar, Sepahan, Gol Gohar, Persepolis, Esteghlal, Aluminum and Foolad have qualified for the Round of Eight.

The Iran's Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975 and Esteghlal are the most successful club with seven titles, followed by Persepolis who have won six titles.

Tractor are the defending champions of the competition.

Barancheshmeh elected as Zurkhaneh sports federation president

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Mehrli Barancheshmeh was elected as new president of Iran's Zurkhaneh and Koshti Pahlevani federation on Wednesday.

In the presidential elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic, Barancheshmeh was elected for a four-year term till 2025 by receiving 22 votes out of 41 votes.

Mojtaba Johari came second in the elections with 19 votes.

The sport is also known as Varzesh-e bastani (Ancient sport) and its particular form of wrestling is called Koshti Pahlevani, Traditional Iranian Wrestling.

The sport dates back to ancient Persia, the Achaemenid era. The original purpose of this sport was to train men as warriors for the coming battles. So, the whole Zurkhaneh system of training parallels with the battlefields. It combines martial arts, calisthenics, gymnastics, strength training, and music.

Friendly: Iran's women's team fall short against Belarus

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran's women's football team lost to Belarus 6-0 in a friendly match Tuesday night.

In the match held at the Spartak stadium in Mogilev, Belarus, Anna Pilipenko scored a hat-trick for Belarus, Karina Olkhovik netted a brace and Anastasia Pobegailo scored one goal.

Iran will meet Uzbekistan on Friday. Iran are 70th in FIFA ranking while Belarus and Uzbekistan sit on 54th and 43rd place, respectively.

The warm-up games are as part of preparation for the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualification in September.

Indigenizing SP phase 14 special parts manufacturing saves Iran \$170m

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Indigenizing the technology for the manufacturing of some special parts and equipment in the implementation of the development project of the phase 14 of Iran's South Pars gas field has saved the country \$170 million, head of the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) announced on Tuesday.

Making the remark when visiting the complementary stages of launching the first train of phase 14 gas refinery, Mohsen Salehinia said that for the implementation of this huge national project, special and advanced goods such as rotating equipment and packages have been supplied for the first time by the domestic companies.

He stated that the value of this group of goods required for phase 14 of South Pars, which were manufactured by the domestic suppliers for the first time, is more than \$170 million in the onshore sector and added that this group has not been so far manufactured domestically for the other phases of South Pars.



Last month, the head of Pars Oil and Gas company (POGC), which is in charge of developing South Pars gas field, had said that the first train of the phase 14 refinery is going to be completed and handed over to the commissioning contractor by early July.

Referring to the round-the-clock efforts by the refinery's contractors in different work fronts, Mohammad Meshkinfam said: "As scheduled, the first train of South Pars Refinery Phase 14 will be handed over to the commissioning group in early July this year, and then the commissioning activities will continue to prepare the different units of this train for operation."

He stated that weekly meetings are being held by the POGC's headquarters for the mentioned phase to follow up on the project's progress and address the problems of the contractors.

"Fortunately, with the follow-ups done, the ancillary units of Phase 14 of South Pars are now ready for commissioning, and in the process section, the reception facilities will be ready to receive gas by late May."

Referring to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the commissioning of the mentioned refinery, Meshkinfam said: "According to the previous announcements, this train was scheduled to be handed over to the commissioning contractor by late June, however, due to the new wave of the pandemic in Europe and the closure of equipment manufacturing companies the handover was postponed to mid-July."

He added that with the measures taken by the POGC's HSE department, daily health control tests are being conducted to monitor the health of employees.

Meshkinfam had earlier announced that all the operations of the first phase of the South Pars gas field development project will be completed in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year 1400 (started on March 21).

POGC is in charge of developing South Pars gas field which is divided into 24 standard phases in the first development stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

Phase 14 development is aimed at producing 56.6 million cubic meters per day of rich gas, 75,000 barrels/day of gas condensate and 400 tons/day of sulfur, and 1 million tons/year of liquefied petroleum gas and one million tons/year of ethane to be fed to petrochemical plants.

Back in October 2020, the operator of the South Pars Phase 14 development project said the project's onshore refinery is scheduled to be fully operational by the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (September 2021).

The huge South Pars field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

TEDPIX loses 8,200 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 8,823 points to 1.151 million on Wednesday.

Over 8.442 billion securities worth 62.22 trillion rials (about \$1.481 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.



The first market's index dropped 7,079 points, and the second market's index fell 15,712 points.

TEDPIX gained 39,000 points, or 3.5 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.148 million points on Wednesday, June 2, (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Khodro Company, Saipa Company, Zar Macaron Industrial Company, Barkat Pharmaceutical Group, and Opal Kani Pars Company were the most widely followed indices.

'NIOC prepared to boost oil output to pre-sanction levels within a month'

ECONOMY TEHRAN — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has taken all the necessary measures and is ready for boosting oil output to the pre-sanctions level within a month, a senior official with the company announced.

"Precise weekly, monthly and quarterly planning has been made to restore oil production to pre-sanctions level, and if sanctions are lifted, most of the country's oil production will be restored within a month," Farrokh Alikhani, NIOC's deputy director for production affairs, said.

After the re-imposition of sanctions against the country, NIOC prepared a plan for production control, in parallel, programs for production restoration were also put on the agenda, and plans were made to revive production at one week, one month, and quarterly intervals, Alikhani explained.

"Although we have estimated the time required for a full recovery to be three months, based on the plans and arrangements made, we anticipate reviving most of the targeted capacity within one month," he added.



According to the official, the NIOC approach has always been to be fully prepared so that whenever maximum oil production is needed the company would be able to

restore production in the shortest possible time.

"For this purpose, all fields have been thoroughly studied, and naturally the younger and greener fields return to their potential production more quickly," the official stated.

Alikhani, in response to a question about the estimated costs of restoring oil production capacity to pre-sanctions levels at this point said: "In any case, recovery of wells and restoring production will come at a cost."

He further noted that NIOC plans are not limited to restoring previous production capacity, and in the second step, plans will be made to increase production.

"The average daily production of Iranian oil before the re-imposition of sanctions was 3.38 million barrels per day, and the National Iranian Oil Company has planned to return to the pre-sanctions production in the first step if the sanctions are lifted, and in the next step to increase production capacity to more than four million barrels per day," Alikhani explained.

Iran, Nakhchivan confer on expanding transport, trade co-op

→ 1 "Nakhchivan has made all the necessary investments in the railway and road sectors, and therefore a window has been opened for the countries in the region to use this opportunity for increasing their communication and trade exchanges," the official noted.

Eslami for his part noted that cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan is in the interest of all countries in the region, adding: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate with Nakhchivan and the Republic of Azerbaijan in various fields."

During the meeting, the officials also discussed cooperation in the fields of energy, rail transport and the completion of the Nakhchivan-Mashhad railway, and connecting Nakhchivan with other regions of Azerbaijan through the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two sides decided to establish specialized working groups to follow up on the above-mentioned issues.

The Iranian minister, along with Shahin Mustafayev, also visited Jolfa terminal on border with Azerbaijan and several other industrial areas in the mentioned country.

During this visit, while emphasizing the need to promote Jolfa terminal, Eslami stressed the two countries' efforts and interest for expansion of trade and logistics cooperation especially in north-south corridor.

According to Eslami, considering the developments in the region and the trilateral agreement among Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the activation of the Tabriz-Nakhchivan railway through Azerbaijan and Russia is on the Iranian Transport Ministry's agenda, which will expand the trade capacities of Iran and Azerbaijan as well as the countries in the region.

The official further stated that Iran and Azerbaijan have numerous opportunities and great potential for playing an effective role in the Black Sea and Persian Gulf corridors, saying: "Both Iran and Azerbaijan are eager for realizing these capacities."

He expressed hope that Shahin Mustafayev's recent visit to Tehran and Eslami's visit to Baku could be a turning point in identifying potential areas for cooperation, the challenges in the way of trade and joint investment opportunities of



Heading a delegation, Iranian Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami arrived in Azerbaijan on Tuesday for meeting with local officials and discussing expansion of ties especially in transportation.

Installed capacity of dispersed generation power plants touches 1,900MW

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said currently nearly 1,900 megawatts (MW) capacity of dispersed generation power plants are installed across the country's power network.

According to Rajabi Mashhadi the mentioned capacity is expected to reach 2,000 MW by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (June 21), IRNA reported.

The official noted that currently over 1,833 MW of dispersed generation power plants, which have been constructed over the past few years, inject their generated



electricity into the national grid. Rajabi Mashhadi stated that these power plants sell their electricity based on the

guaranteed purchase rate for new power plants and the rate set by the Electricity Market Regulatory Board for older plants, noting that the regulatory rate is about four times higher than the wholesale market price ceiling.

The installed capacity of the mentioned power plants stood at 1,664 MW at the peak consumption period in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), which has now increased to 1,833 MW, he stated.

Also, the electricity generated by these power plants has increased by almost 10 percent since the beginning of the current

year compared to the same period last year, the official added.

Tehran Province Electricity Distribution Company with 369 MW and Sistan-Baluchestan Regional Electricity Company with 10 MW, have the highest and lowest share of distributed generation power plants, respectively, according to Rajabi Mashhadi.

Dispersed generation power plants are small, highly efficient plants that would be built along the existing grid, close to the end-user customer. It is similar in concept to the move from large central computers to desktop computers on a network.

NPC inks co-op MOU with German QMS institute

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) and the German Institute for Quality Management Services (QMS), which is the representative of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in business excellence.

The MOU was signed by NPC's director of planning and development and the CEO of the German Institute, on the sidelines of the International Conference of Business Excellence in Tehran on Wednesday.

As Shana reported, the MOU is aimed to provide NPC with training and evaluations in the field of business excellence and also allows the company access to the European Foundation for Quality Management database to use in the Iranian petro-



chemical industry.

The International Conference on Business Excellence in Petrochemical Industry was held at the place of the Iranian Oil Ministry with the presence of heads of Iranian petrochemical holdings and companies and several guests from the EFQM board of directors.

The 2020 edition of the EFQM Organizational Excellence Model was presented at this conference by the designers of this template.

The European Foundation for Quality Management is a not-for-profit membership foundation in Brussels, established in 1989 to increase the competitiveness of the European economy. The initial impetus for forming EFQM was a response to the work of W. Edwards Deming and the development of the concepts of Total Quality Management.

Agricultural products account for 23% of Iran's export to Iraq

ECONOMY TEHRAN — During a meeting between Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi and his Iraq counterpart in Mashhad on Tuesday night, the Iranian minister said that agricultural products account for 23% of Iran's export to Iraq.

"We have very good trade relations with Iraq and a large amount of our goods are exported to this country", Khavazi stated.

"We are happy that relations with Iraq are expanding day by day and we are ready to sign a long-term contract with our neighbor in the agricultural sector", the official added.

"To cooperate in different sectors, we must have a timetable that fits the agricultural calendars of the two countries", Khavazi said, adding, "There is a good ground for importing goods that we import from other countries that we can supply from Iraq to help our trade balance."

In mid-January, Iranian Energy Min-

ister Reza Ardakanian, who is the head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee, said that the two countries' annual trade is going to be increased to \$20 billion.

Ardakanian made the remarks in the opening ceremony of the two countries' fourth Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran, which he co-chaired with the Iraqi Trade Minister Alla Ahmed Al-Jubouri.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to support the export of Iranian engineering and technical services to Iraq by establishing a joint investment fund," he said, adding that new agreements are going to be signed between the two countries in the fields of water and energy.

He also underlined the development of transportation lines between the two countries as an important factor in the development of trade relations between the two countries and added: "We are ready to implement the previous agreements in the fields of electricity, gas, and water, and

to formulate new agreements in this field in order to develop cooperation between the two countries."

The official further called for signing agreements for cooperation in other fields including double taxation, investment, preferential tariffs, and customs.

Ardakanian also mentioned the positive political relations between the two countries as a base for boosting economic relations.

He expressed hope that with the efforts of the two countries' governments and businessmen, the development of trade and economic relations between the two sides will become smoother and the talks in the Joint Economic Committee meeting will lead to the signing of documents to develop bilateral cooperation.

Further in the meeting, Al-Jubouri said the presence of a high-ranking Iraqi delegation at the two countries' Joint Economic Committee meeting is an indi-



Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi and his Iraq counterpart in Mashhad on Tuesday night, the Iranian minister said that agricultural products account for 23% of Iran's export to Iraq.

cation of Iraq's determination for boosting cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to identify and eliminate existing obstacles in the way of the two sides' trade development and to take the necessary measures.

"Given the important relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, both countries can help each other by sharing their experiences and technical knowledge to have good cooperation on important economic issues," he stressed.

There is a growing movement for social democracy in the U.S.: Jeffrey Green

By M.A Saki

TEHRAN – A professor at the University of Pennsylvania says that some American politicians are tending towards social democracy.

"There is a growing movement for social democracy in the U.S. Bernie Sanders for instance referenced Denmark (a social democracy) as the state the U.S. should be aspiring to," Jeffrey Green tells the Tehran Times.

"At the same time, though, even support for social democracy is not as strong as it could be: sometimes socialism and social democracy are conflated and, in general, Americans suffer from being too uninterested in / uninformed about the practices of other countries," adds Green, author of *The Shadow of Unfairness: A Plebeian Theory of Liberal Democracy*.

Following is the text of the interview: **Republicans and Democrats accuse each other of threatening American democracy. Some political commentators say that the political system in the U.S. is heading towards autocracy combined with plutocracy. Where is the U.S. heading when we talk about democracy?**

While there are many problems currently threatening the U.S. and its democracy, one of the most serious, from a strictly democratic perspective, is a slew of recent laws (at the state level) that make it harder for citizens to vote. Bills pending in 28 states would limit judicial independence to enforce voting rights. And numerous laws in many states over the last decade have threatened voting rights by restricting early and absentee voting, requiring ID cards from voters, reducing the number of polling stations, and taking voters' names off of voting rolls. These laws are coming from the Republicans. The hope is that these new regulations (the ongoing attempted ones and the ones that already have occurred) will not be enough to undermine citizens' sense of living in a country where all citizens have a right to vote and votes are counted fairly. But the risks on this front have grown substantially over the last decade.

Which kind of democracy is more effective for the U.S.? We have experience of liberal democracy and also social democracy. Why is socialism considered a pejorative term while



we have successful cases of social democracy?

Socialism has long been opposed by large segments of the American population because of its historic association with totalitarianism, its violation of entrenched individualistic and capitalistic values, and the lack of clarity of what it would entail in practice. But social democracy is not the same thing as socialism. The social democracies of Northern Europe (e.g., the Scandinavian countries, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, etc.) are hardly anti-capitalistic, but they manage to provide much more robust welfare for the least advantaged members of society (in the form of health insurance, free education, vacation, options for parents of young children to work less if they choose, less income inequality, unemployment insurance, etc.) than is the case in the U.S. There is a growing movement for social democracy in the U.S. Bernie Sanders, for instance referenced Denmark (a social democracy) as the state the U.S. should be aspiring to. At the same time, though, even support for social democracy is not as strong as it could be: sometimes socialism and social democracy are conflated and, in general, Americans suffer from being too uninterested in / uninformed about the practices of other countries. Beyond this, of course, there are libertarian and

unabashedly capitalistic perspectives that are strong in U.S. political culture. But there is support for social democracy among the left...and also, among a smaller group, for socialism.

What is your comment on Trump's performance? Do you think that he improved democracy in America or undermined it?

I think Trump more undermined than improved American democracy. His suggestion that elections were rigged against him even though they almost certainly were not—and relatedly, his refusal to accept the results of the election when he lost in 2020—did damage to the integrity of the American democratic system, incited unnecessary unrest, and fed into forces of irrationality.

How can democracy help a country like America to have a fairer and reasonable foreign policy? As a country that claims a long history of democracy, its foreign policy is full of futile wars.

With regard to the relationship between democracy and a more fair and reasonable foreign policy, I'd make two comments: (i) America should not be seen as the standard-bearer for democracy. Well-known and well-respected rankings of the countries of the world by how democratic they are now frequently placed the United States outside of the top 20. So, if the U.S. is not

engaging in a more fair and reasonable foreign policy, this ought not be interpreted as a cause to be suspicious of democracy as such; and (ii) although there is debate about it, the so-called "democratic peace theory," which says that democracies are much less likely to engage in armed conflict with each other, has hardly been disproven. With regard to the specific issue of how the U.S. might change its foreign policy, that is a big question. I don't have a clear answer. I'd say that the "futile wars" you reference, specifically the second Iraq War, have been disastrous from an economic, military, strategic, and geopolitical perspective. Simply avoiding such wars in the future would be an improvement. At the same time, I do not think the U.S. is to blame for all of the world's problems and, even if many of America's recent armed conflicts have been poorly conceived or executed, the enemies against which America has fought in recent years have, with few exceptions, hardly occupied a position of moral superiority.

Given Trump's opposition to globalization, do you think globalization can help democracy spread globally? Then, can we claim or impose just one model for democracy, or we can have various democracies?

I think Trump was insufficiently powerful to arrest forces of globalization. And beyond the broader question of globalization, I think that the idea of democracy has not been refuted either. I don't think we are close to having a single democracy (or model of democracy) for the whole world, but it is more imaginable that various forms of democracies will continue to be adopted by more and more countries throughout the world since it is hard to see where else legitimacy can come from besides democracy (at least in contexts that no longer recognize Nature, Tradition, History, or God as workable sources of political authority). Would this scenario involve different nation-states, each with its own democracy (but a democracy that is of the same form), or would it involve each nation-state having not just its own democracy but its own definition of what democracy means (as in, e.g., the difference between the so-called Chinese model of democracy and Western-style liberal democracies practiced in the West and elsewhere)? This is a big question, but it seems the latter scenario is what we are likely to witness in the near term.

Reviving JCPOA can cool tensions in West Asia, says American foreign policy expert

→ 1 Given Israel's fierce opposition to the JCPOA, what will be Israel's possible reaction to a revival of the deal? A new war or other kinds of crises?

Israel has already made its position clear and so has that the Biden administration.

Israel will continue to take some independent action against Iranian infrastructure and will closely monitor Iranian nuclear steps. But I don't think the incoming Israeli government will want to antagonize Biden and so it will keep its concerns private.

What will be the impact of any agreement in Vienna on ties between Iran and Arab countries, especially states like Saudi Arabia?

A resumption of the deal should encourage Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to cool tensions with Iran. We have already seen talks take place in Iraq and hopefully, we will see a resumption of full diplomatic relations.



Do you think Washington is capable of controlling Israel not to act unilaterally in West Asia?

Israel has considerable autonomy in its actions but does value the relationship with the U.S., so its freedom of movement is not unlimited. Especially after the latest war in Gaza, Israel understands that U.S. Democrats are no longer united in support for Israel and will be critical of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians and toward Iran if they are seen as too aggressive.

How can Americans justify their stance against Iran's nuclear deal under Trump's presidency and reimposition of sanctions when Iran was fully committed to the deal? Isn't such approach based on hegemony?

Many Americans opposed Trump's decision which I believe was based more on his wanting to please domestic donors (Christian Evangelicals, right-wing Jewish supporters) than on any objective analysis of the JCPOA. Unfortunately, domestic politics often intrudes on foreign policy - and not just in the U.S.

Black Lives Matter protests had UK government running scared

By Richard Sudan

The Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill is on its way to becoming law, making its passage through the UK parliament before passing through the House of Lords, in the latest move by the government to clamp down on a number of issues, including what they claim is 'unlawful disruption'.

However, the move which aims to give the police more power to carry out their duties, has actually produced more of the very thing which critics claim is the whole reason the bill came into being in the first place, which is of course, the very legitimate and critical right to protest.

In 2020, mass demonstrations took place around the country, from both Black Lives Matter supporters, galvanized by the mass global movements for justice following the murder of George Floyd in the U.S., and also environmental activists, raising alarm over the growing climate emergency.

The protests for racial justice were wide-reaching and, in some instances, like in Bristol, also saw the toppling of statues like that of the slave trader Edward Colston. People from all walks of life in Britain, especially young people who took to the streets were demanding racial justice, not only concerned about anti-Black racism in the United States, but also about deep and evident systemic racism here in the UK.

Environmental protesters and demonstrations also swept across the country,

with some in London causing disruption to public transport, in order to get their message across and to get their voices heard. And getting the message to the forefront of public debate is precisely the point of protests.

While the government has focused on the toppling of statues, and of the inconvenience to those using London trains to get to work, to justify more power, the reality, is that should the police bill become law, it will likely be exploited to shut down very legitimate and lawful protests, with critics alarmed that the authorities will have the legal means to shut down and stifle any real criticism of the government at all.

The problems of racial inequality, injustice and of corruption and incompetence within the UK government, in many people's eyes, far outweigh and are of far greater concern, than protestors stepping beyond the bounds of so-called legality.

The right to protest in the UK is something sacred, and is often talked about as being an essential cornerstone of British democracy. And yes, sometimes protests can get heated.

But remember too, that there are often serious questions about the conduct of the police, who many would argue themselves operate outside of the law, while at times being accused of breaking the law, while operating with complete impunity. There has to be a balance, and listening to the concerns of legal experts and those with a keen eye

on the importance of civil liberties, it isn't hard to see why there are serious concerns about the UK police having more powers.

Many argue that the UK police need to correctly manage the existing powers which they already have, and not be given more powers which as well as giving the police the power to keep people off the streets indefinitely, will also arguably impact and devastate the lives of Britain's traveler communities. Traveler communities have a way of life which is thousands of years old, and there are serious worries that the new police bill will be used in order to legally control their freedom of movement and to do the opposite of facilitating their way of life. Such communities are a part of British multicultural society, and should have the same rights as anyone else, and should not be treated as a nuisance to be pushed to the margins, as the authorities see fit.

The truth is that the government was terrified by the collectivized message and power of protest movements last year, and in particular of the effectiveness of the Black Lives Matter, and the ability of such demonstrations to galvanize and inspire people to challenge power and the status quo.

Also, worth remembering is that a Metropolitan Police officer was charged with the murder of Sarah Everard. Some argue that there are serious problems within the police themselves institutionally which need rooting out, before they are given any more

authority to adjudicate over the right of the public to mobilize, even if at times protests might become disruptive and hard for them to manage.

When apartheid in South Africa was brought to an end, it was because mass global protests took place demanding it, and without such protests, much needed change would have been jeopardized.

Huge protests also just took place in London, demanding an end to apartheid in Palestine with some even arguing that they were the biggest show of solidarity in the streets for the Palestinians which have ever taken place in Britain. This is something to be celebrated.

More protests calling to 'Kill the Bill' regarding the proposed police powers have also been taking place and they will continue. It's abundantly clear that the British people do not want this bill to become law and value their right to protest and to speak truth to power as sacred. Rather than ploughing ahead with its current plans, for once, this current government should listen to the demands of what seems to be the vast majority of people. Clamping down on people's right to protest and assemble is a fundamental right of any free society and is the essence of free speech. The government seeking the power to shut this down whenever they see fit is draconian and is the opposite of what people expect from a decent democracy.

(Source: Press TV)

Nasrallah: We will eventually hold prayers at al-Aqsa Mosque

→ 1 "Now, we are witnessing the defeat of the aggressive Saudi-American coalition," he said, adding, "Ever since the first day [of the war], we had faith in the Yemeni people's strength for steadfastness and victory."

Lebanon's economy

Meanwhile, the Hezbollah official slammed those businessmen hoarding foodstuffs and medicines amid Lebanon's dire economic conditions. He urged the authorities to confront them in order to be able to resolve part of the country's economic woes.

The fuel crisis in the country, which had had the Lebanese queue up at gas stations could be resolved "within days" through the purchase of fuel products from Iran, Nasrallah noted.

Such transaction, however, required "a courageous political decision," he noted, apparently referring to the prospect of Washington's frowning on Beirut.

"Whatever humiliation that the Lebanese suffer from at gas stations can swiftly end by taking the decision to put the U.S. [dollar] aside and use the Lebanese lira to import oil from Iran," Nasrallah stated. He said the movement would act on its own initiative to negotiate with the Islamic Republic over the imports once it despairs of Beirut's sense of responsibility in the area.

The Hezbollah chief, meanwhile, dispelled rumors about his health condition, saying he was currently not suffering from any complications.

Syria's air defenses intercept Israeli missiles over Damascus

The Syrian military says the country's air defenses have intercepted a number of Israeli missiles in the skies over the capital Damascus.

The official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) announced late on Tuesday that the air defenses of the Syrian Arab Army had confronted an Israeli aggression from the Lebanese airspace against some targets in the central and southern regions and shot down some of the missiles.

"At exactly 11:36 p.m. this evening, the Israeli enemy carried out an air attack from over the Lebanese territories, targeting some targets in the central and southern regions," SANA quoted an unnamed military source as saying.

"Our air defense media confronted the aggression's missiles and shot down some of them, and the losses were limited to material."

The aggression would be the first in about a month after pre-dawn raids struck the western Syrian port city of Latakia on May 5.

SANA said the Israeli airstrike had hit a plastics factory in Latakia, leaving one civilian dead and six others, including a child and his mother, injured.

Israel frequently targets military positions inside Syria, especially those of the resistance movement Hezbollah, which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists since 2011.

World should not tolerate Israel's reckless terrorism: North Korea

North Korea has denounced the latest Israeli military aggression on the besieged Gaza strip, stating that Tel Aviv is massacring children and the international community should not tolerate Israel's reckless sponsorship of terrorism.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the whole Gaza Strip has turned into a huge human slaughterhouse and a place of massacring children," the North Korean Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "Israel's horrific crime of killing the ... children is a severe challenge to the future of humankind and a crime against the humanity," it added.

The international community should not tolerate "Israel's reckless state-sponsored terrorism and act of obliterating other nations."

At least 260 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in 11 days of the conflict that began on May 10. Israel's airstrikes also brought widespread devastation to the already impoverished territory.

U.S. Senate passes bill aimed at countering China's tech sector

The U.S. Senate has passed legislation that provides more than \$250bn to help maintain a competitive edge over China in areas including artificial intelligence, quantum computing and semiconductors.

The Senate on Tuesday voted 68-32 to pass the bill, underscoring broad bipartisan support in Congress to take action to counter Beijing.

The U.S. Innovation and Competition Act stitches together various China-related measures into the biggest piece of industrial policy legislation in decades.

The bill provides \$52bn to bolster the semiconductor industry amid rising concerns that the U.S. is too reliant on countries such as Taiwan at the same time that China is striving to build up its chip capacity. Part of the bill, known as the Endless Frontier Act, provides roughly \$120bn for investment in technologies such as AI and quantum computing that China has prioritized as part of its policy for high-end technology.

Resistance News

Palestinian activist and groups call for intensifying presence at Aqsa

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN—Palestinian activists and groups in the 1948 occupied territory (Israel) have called on their fellow citizens to necessarily intensify their presence and stay at the Aqsa Mosque on Thursday, June 10.

In a joint statement, the Movements of Kifah and Abnaa el-Balad stressed the need to block any attempt by extremist Jewish settlers to organize marches or do provocative acts in the holy city.

Social media activists also called for marching in masse to the Mosque on Thursday and stay on retreat at the Aqsa Mosque.

The activists warned of settlers' intents to stage their flag march in the holy city or defile the Aqsa Mosque soon, despite the Israeli announced postponement of the march.

Iran may open borders to travelers in July

➔ Earlier in March, the Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association Ebrahim Pourfaraj asked the government to issue tourist visas for the international applicants who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. "The Ministry of Health and the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control can at least agree that the international tourists who have received the [second dose of] coronavirus vaccine would be allowed to enter Iran," Pourfaraj said.



He also lamented that the continuation of such a trend would result in losing international tourist markets more than before. "Or at least they should make it clear so that we can respond appropriately to foreign companies and tourists to not to miss the international tourist markets more than before," he said.

According to available data compiled by the tourism ministry, the number of foreign visitors to Iran plunged 94% in the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2021) as the coronavirus pandemic takes a heavy toll on the tourism industry.

"Some 450,000 foreign travelers arrived in Iran for mainly medical or trade purposes during the first nine months of the year... tightened measures to tackle the new coronavirus has reduced international travel to the country by 94 percent," Teymouri said.

The coronavirus epidemic has ruined more than 1.5 million jobs in Iran's travel sector, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said in December. "Over 1.5 million jobs have been lost in the tourism sector of Iran due to the COVID-19 disease.... Many of the tourism-insiders are now unemployed or they are staying at home."

Tourism [industry of Iran] was growing before the corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, near the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent, the minister explained.

The ancient land embraces hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Iran, Italy resume joint project on cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts

HERITAGE TEHRAN – Iran and Italy have resumed a joint project on cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, which was initially launched in 2019 and subsequently interrupted due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project restarted its operational phase with a roundtable on cultural heritage promotion and responsible tourism development, held on Tuesday at the residence of the Italian Ambassador in Tehran, Giuseppe Perrone.

The program is conceived and carried out by the Italian Embassy in Iran and the Italian Trade Agency Office in Tehran in cooperation with the Italian Cooperatives Alliance and the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ambassador Perrone, in his introductory remarks, stressed the great potential for cooperation on tourism development between Italy and Iran, which can be fully tapped into as the pandemic gets contained in both countries. "Our aim is to further develop the existing strong synergies between tourism and economic development and provide momentum for the use of cutting-edge technologies in the preservation and promotion of our two countries' cultural heritage", he indicated.



The roundtable was attended by members of the implementing parties of both countries.

The presentations were held partially in a virtual format and partially in presence in the garden of the Italian Residence. Main topics included responsible tourism and its most promising areas of development, such as historical, cultural, and health tourism, use of social media and new ICT technologies for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, training of human resources, and development of new tourism marketing strategies.

The next steps envisaged within the project include an Iranian mission to Italy for a visit to some of the leading Italian tourist sites and a briefing on Italian best practices. This step will be followed by the implementation of a pilot project in Iran on the so-called "Golden Triangle of Khuzestan", which encompasses in its territory the Iranian UNESCO sites of Susa, Shushtar, and Changa Zanol.

According to Perrone his embassy is highly responsible for depicting the richness of "so deep and so complete cultural ties", which have long been developed between the two nations. "I think because our cultural ties are so deep and so complete in every area, we do have a responsibility to showcase this richness and to tell people the story of this important connection that has always existed between Italy and Iran in different areas, so we look forward to our future projects which are going to be quite amazing as well."

In November 2019, on the sidelines of the ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of the joint cultural heritage, the Italian envoy said: "Italian tourists are fond of Iran because it has a natural diversity that is appealing to them. Italians are also fond of Iran's unique antiquities."

Iranian, Russian museums ink MOU to boost partnership

TOURISM TEHRAN – Tehran's Niavaran Museum has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Moscow's Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts to intensify their cooperation.

The MOU was inked by the director of Niavaran Museum Amir-Reza Sharifnia and the director of Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts Marina Loshak in Moscow on Tuesday, CHTN reported.

Under the agreement, the two museums will stage joint exhibitions and exchange artifacts that will be displayed in both countries.

The museums will also extend their collaboration in the areas of education and research, the report added.

The MOU was signed on the sidelines of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan's visit to Russia.

Mounesan on Monday signed an action plan to implement a bilateral visa-free agreement for tourist groups.



The signing of the agreement, which emphasizes a waiver of visas for tourist groups, was due to the good relations between the two countries as well as the interest of Iranians in visiting Russia and the existing capacity in the country for cultural tourists and history buffs, he noted during the signing ceremony.

He also expressed hope that the signing of the joint action plan, as well as the process of increasing vaccination and overcoming the corona crisis, would result in a growth of tourism between Iran and Russia.

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, to put the agreement into effect.

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.

Temple of Anahita in western Iran undergoes restoration

HERITAGE TEHRAN – A restoration project has been commenced on the ancient temple of Anahita, which is located in the city of Kangavar, western Iran.

"After 20 years of silence in the Anahita Temple, a restoration project has begun on the southwestern side of this historical sanctuary," Morteza Geravand, the director of the ancient site, announced on Tuesday.

In this part of the temple, there are four rows of 12-meter-long walls, the restoration of which is on the agenda, the official said.

"The restoration work has started on the south side of the temple from the first-row stairs with a length of 12 meters and we have placed some of the stones and capitals in place inside these stairs," the official explained.

The Anahita Temple is the name of one of two archaeological sites in Iran popularly thought to have been attributed to the ancient deity Anahita. The larger and more widely known of the two is located at Kangavar in Kermanshah province. The other is located at Bishapur of the southern Fars province.

Anahita, also known as Anaitis, and Anahit, was an ancient Iranian goddess of royalty, water, and fertility; she is particularly associated with the last.

Possibly of Mesopotamian origin, her cult was made prominent by Artaxerxes II, and statues and temples were set up in her honor throughout the Persian empire.

A common cult of the various peoples of the empire at that time, it persisted in Asia Minor long afterward. In the Avesta she is called Arvi Sura Anahita ("Damp, Strong, Untainted"); this seems to be an amalgam of two originally separate deities, according to Britannica.

In Greece, Anahiti was identified with Athena and Artemis. She is mentioned in the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, the Avesta, note, and three Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions from the reign of Artaxerxes II Mnemon (r.404-358 BCE). There were sanctuaries for Anahita in Bactra, in Ecbatana, in Artaxata, in Zela, and Hierocaesarea, according to Livius.org; a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch historian Jona Lendering.

The goddess is also represented in Darabgird and Taq-e



Bostan. Modern scholars have suggested that Anahita was also venerated at Kangavar, Qadamgah, and Bishapur, where sanctuaries have been found that can plausibly be identified as water temples. However, not every aquatic deity automatically equates with Anahita, so there is room for doubt.

Centuries-old public bathhouse restored

TOURISM TEHRAN – Historical public bathhouse of Molla Baqer in Shazand, the central province of Markazi, has been restored, a local tourism official has said.

A budget of 100 million rials (about \$2,400 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the project, Mohammad Atabaki announced on Wednesday.

The project involved replacing skylights on the roof, insulating the rooftop, painting the entrance door, and repairing the damaged parts, the official added.

The bathhouse, which has an octagonal plan and dates back to the Zand era (1750–1794), was inscribed on the national heritage



list in 2008, he explained.

Bathhouses or 'hammams' in Iran were not only places for bathing and cleaning up. They had a social concept for people who

gathered at these places weekly.

It was a place where people talked with each other about their daily life and shared humor and news. There are still bathhouses in Iranian cities but they do not have their social function anymore since most people have bathrooms in their homes due to the modern lifestyle.

Some cities had separate bathhouses for men and women. They were usually built next to each other. However, there were some bathhouses, which were used by men and women at different times of the day.

There were also male and female public bathhouses; at daybreak, a longhorn (boooq-e javaz) was blown to announce that the bath

was ready. Men came to the baths from daybreak till the afternoon. Women could use the bathhouses from then to sunset. In some cases, five days were allocated to men and two days to women.

Persian literature is full of proverbs, narrations, and folk stories about bathhouses, which indicate the importance of the place in the past time.

Markazi province is considered the industrial capital of the country. It is rich in natural, historical, cultural, and religious attractions. Hand-woven carpets and kilims, made in its cities including Farahan, Sarugh, Livilan, Senejan, and Vafs are known internationally.

Cultural elements in Kashan added to national heritage list

TOURISM TEHRAN – Two time-honored cultural elements, passed down from generation to generation in the city of Kashan, have been registered in the national intangible cultural heritage list, Kashan's deputy tourism chief has announced.

The skill of transplanting and propagating blackberry trees in Barzok and the ritual of food offerings known as Nazri in Nashalj were added to the prestigious list, IRNA quoted Mehran Sarmadian as saying on Wednesday.

There have been blackberry trees planted in the region for over a century, and they are a major source of income for the locals, the official explained.

Nazri food is given to mourners in Nashalj every year during the first ten days of the mourning month of Muharram, he explained.

It is an ancient Persian tradition that the people cook food and give it to others, including the poor, friends,



and family, in their religious ceremonies. This charity food or free food is called Nazri.

Kashan is a historical city near Isfahan in the central part of Iran. Its history dates back to over ten thousand years ago, and it is home to some of the most beautiful buildings featuring Islamic architecture.

Many travelers opt to pass Kashan on their journeys between Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd, because this delightful oasis city on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir, is one of Iran's most alluring destinations.

Kashan not only boasts a cluster of architectural wonders, an atmospheric-covered bazaar, and a UNESCO-recognized garden, but it also offers some of central Iran's best traditional hotels.

The annual Golab-giri (rosewater distillation) ceremony of Kashan attracts huge crowds to the city every year. Some of the most ancient traces of civilization have been discovered near Kashan, at the Sialk archaeological site.

Restoration to add more magic to Persian garden in Lorestan

TOURISM TEHRAN – The historical garden of Falahat in Khorrarnabad, the capital of western Lorestan province, has undergone some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The project that aims at reviving the garden as a tourist attraction, involves an irrigation system, water lines, and flooring, Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Wednesday.

A budget of 500 million rials (about \$12,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, the official added.

Dating back to the early Pahlavi era (1925-1979), the garden has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

For millennia, Iranian gardens have

combined the magic of nature with the aesthetic qualities of art and architecture to create a symbolic representation of paradise on Earth.

A selection of nine Iranian gardens, which bear important architectural, traditional, and cultural elements, have been collectively inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list under the title of "The Persian Garden."

The genuine concept of the Persian Garden that is deeply rooted in time interweaves natural elements with man-made components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.

The UNESCO website asserts that the flawless design of the Persian Garden, along

with its ability to respond to extreme climatic conditions, is the result of an inspired and intelligent application of different fields of knowledge, i.e. technology, water management and engineering, architecture, botany, and agriculture.

Lorestan, which is a region of raw beauty, was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. The Luristan Bronzes noted for their eclectic array of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Iranian artistic motifs, date from this turbulent period. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.



Iranian universities advance in QS Rankings

SOCIETY TEHRAN – All six Iranian universities have improved their positions among the world's top 1300 in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2022.

QS is the world's leading provider of services, analytics, and insight to the global higher education sector, whose mission is to enable motivated people anywhere in the world to fulfill their potential through educational achievement, international mobility, and career development.

The QS World University Rankings portfolio, inaugurated in 2004, has grown to become the world's most popular source of comparative data about university performance.

Some 1,000 of the world's top universities are ranked using six different indicators to compile QS World University Rankings 2021. Universities are evaluated according to the following six metrics: academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty/student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, and international student ratio.

As per the data published on QS World University Rankings official website, Sharif University of Technology, ranked 381, Amirkabir University of Technology, ranked 465, the University of Tehran, ranked between 521 to 530, Iran University of Science and Technology, ranked between 541 to 550, Shi-



raz University, ranked between 751 to 800, and Shahid Beheshti University with 1001 to 1200 rank, are the top 6 Iranian universities among world-class universities.

Some 24 Islamic countries participated in this ranking. Among them, Malaysia with 22 universities (the highest number of universities), Turkey with 21, and Indonesia with 16 universities had the highest number of

attendees, respectively.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) tops the list for a record tenth consecutive year in QS ranking. MIT is one of five American institutions in this year's top 10.

Performance in 2021
Most recently, 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 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.

Environmental stamps exhibition underway in Tehran

SOCIETY TEHRAN – The Department of Environment opened a stamp exhibition titled 'half a century of Iran's ecosystem protection' in Tehran on Monday to mark the occasion of World Environment Day.

Organized in cooperation with the National Post Company, the exhibition is a collection of 60 years of stamps that have been printed in the field of the environment since the 1960s, which have carried environmental messages to the whole world.

These stamps are related to the subject of climate (seas, wetlands, and waterfalls), meteorology, forests, wildlife species (deer, cheetah, tiger) and domestic animals (cats, horses, etc.), bird species (ducks, storks, geese, etc.) and a variety of ornamental flowers and butterflies.

The exhibition continues until June 13.

In 1972, the UN General Assembly designated June 5 as World Environment Day. The first celebration, under the slogan "Only One Earth" took place in 1974. In the following years, it has developed as a platform to raise awareness on the problems facing our environment such as air pollution, plastic pollution, illegal wildlife trade, sustainable consump-



tion, sea-level increase, and food security, among others.

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

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

Iran home to over 31,000 animal species

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

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

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

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

World's intelligent hunters in Iran

There are more than 20 species of foxes who eat almost anything, including small mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, worms and fruit. The common fox is considered by some as pest species, being an opportunistic hunter of game birds, ground-nesting birds and small mammals, often killing animals' surplus to its needs.

Foxes in Iran are often seen in farmlands in search of rodents. They are also likely to feed on melons, scavenge in refuse dumps, or track hares and other small mammals, especially when there is snow on the ground. Foxes in Iran are trapped, shot, and hunted almost everywhere they occur, and yet they still manage to thrive.

The intelligent hunters who avoid humans, having a limited range in Iran, are endangered due to human encroachment on their habitats and the lack of safety, said Jalil Imani, a biodiversity and ecosystems management expert.

Four fox species inhabiting in Iran, including Blanford's, Corsac, Rüppell's and common foxes, Imani said, lamenting, according to the Red List of the International

Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), all four aforesaid species of foxes in the world are defined as least concern, however in Iran, their condition is different.

"Blanford's fox is assigned endangered by the Department of Environment, any hunting or trade of which is considered illegal," he noted, adding, while Corsac fox has been listed as extinct before sighting some in northeastern part of the country, which switched to critically endangered.

Rüppell's fox is also placed in the IUCN's least concern category, while being vulnerable in Iran which requires protection, he said.

"Fortunately, common fox is in better condition and is not listed as endangered yet," he added.

So far, no measures have been taken to estimate fox population in the country, he said, adding, so there are no accurate statistics on the number of foxes in the country.

"The results of genetic tests showed that genetic variation of the foxes is desirable. There are two major genetic groups in the country that are in some ways compatible

with the global groups."

Imani went on to say that the Rüppell's fox found mainly in Yazd, Kerman, somewhat Sistan-Baluchestan and Isfahan provinces, have proper genetic diversity, so there is still hope for the preservation of the sub species.

Blanford's and Corsac foxes while offering insufficient information for a proper assessment, can be conserved to some extent, he said, noting, for precise determination scientific analysis and researches must be conducted in this regard.

One of the most important threats to fox species are habitat fragmentation, as well as the use of pesticides eradicating their prey, road construction, rabies and stray dogs, although the conflict with humans is the leading cause for their heading toward extinction.

"Foxes feed on small animals like rats, but farmers turning pastures into agricultural land over the past few years are using pesticides to protect their product, which kill foxes' prey, and in some case the foxes themselves by the poisonous baits.

"On the other hand, road accidents took

lives of many of the smart species, for example, there is a road in northern island of Qeshm, in which one to two foxes are killed per day due to road crashes.

"Unfortunately, another threat posed to the foxes is hunting for the fur trade, or some people keep their pelt for prosperity beliefs and superstitions.

"Foxes are primarily nocturnal hunters who prefer to search for food at a time when there is little chance of being spotted by humans, therefore, they are no threat to humans and there is no need to persecute the precious species," Imani regretted.

Corsac fox's habitat no longer safe

An official with the Golestan DOE, Mahmood Shakiba, said in October 2018 that living conditions for rare corsac fox in the country is so improper that spotting a few nests of the species is a pleasure.

In the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), some 14 Corsac nests have been found in Turkmen Sahara in Golestan province, of which only four nests have been active and last year the nests have no longer been active, he added.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. June 8

New cases	10598
New deaths	157
Total cases	2,990,714
Total deaths	81,519
New hospitalized patients	1,557,216
Patients in critical condition	3,584
Total recovered patients	2,590,682
Diagnostic tests conducted	21,065,451
Doses of vaccine injected	4,987,963

WHO appoints new representative to Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN – The World Health Organization (WHO) appointed Seyed Jaffar Hussain as a new representative to Iran, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Hussain replaced Christoph Hamelmann who served in the country from April 15, 2018 to March 31, 2021.



The new representative of the WHO met Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday to present his credentials at the beginning of his mission in Iran, IRIB reported.

Prior to his appointment as the country's representative, he was the head of the World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office from June 1, 2018 to March 31, 2021.

Hussain was educated in the University of Peshawar, Pakistan and the University of Leeds UK. He holds a Master and Doctorate in Public Health. Since 1997, Hussain worked for various United Nations organizations including UNHCR, UNICEF and the WHO country office in Pakistan.

He has vast experience in health promotion policy development, multisectoral injury prevention policies and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Fakhra vaccine begins second human trial

→ 1 the vaccination of people with underlying diseases will be completed by late July, and the whole population will be vaccinated by late November.

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



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

Homegrown vaccines

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

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

The second Iranian-made vaccine developed by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute (Razi Cov Pars) to be administered among the population in early August; which started the clinical trial on February 27, entered the second phase of the human trial on Friday.

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

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

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ج

DOE not convinced to transfer water from Caspian Sea

Studies carried out so far has not yet convinced the Department of Environment (DOE) to transfer water from the Caspian Sea to central Iran, Parvin Farshchi, deputy director of the DOE for marine affairs has said.

Over the past few years Iran has faced recurrent drought spells and low precipitation and the value of water has become more tangible, Khabaronline quoted Farshchi as saying on Saturday. She further explained that water transfer from the Caspian Sea to central Iran has been a matter of interest for some years now and in the [Iranian calendar year of] 1389 (March 2010-March 2011) various research and studies on the issue were conducted.

سازمان محیط زیست؛ برای انتقال آب خزر مجاب نشده ایم

پروین فرشچی معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: مطالعاتی که ما را به انتقال آب خزر به فلات مرکزی مجاب کند، هنوز تکمیل نشده است.

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرآنلاین پروین فرشچی در خصوص وضعیت آبی کشور گفت: طی این سالها با خشکسالی و کمبود بارش روبهرو بودیم، بنابراین ارزش گذاری آب ملموس تر مطرح شده است. معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست درباره مسائل مطرح شده در خصوص انتقال آب خزر به فلات مرکزی گفت: این موضوع از سالها پیش مطرح بوده و در سال ۱۳۸۹ نیز مطالعات گوناگونی در این حوزه صورت گرفته است.

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Generosity is to help a deserving person without his request, and if you help him after his request, then it is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prophet Joseph (AS) in Persian art

Part 1

The popularity of the Prophet Joseph (AS) as a subject in the visual arts is by and large a reflection of the popularity of the story of Joseph in Islamic literatures.

Several Persian poets composed versified versions of the story, the earliest being the one, now lost, by the 10th-century poet Abul-Moayyad Balkhi.

The most famous among them, however, is Yusof o Zolaykha by Nur ad-Din Abd ur-Rahman Jami, which forms the fifth versified narrative of his Haft Owrang.

The general prominence accorded the arts of the book decoration in the post-Mongolian period are also evident in the figurative depictions that occur overwhelmingly as miniatures illustrating works that feature, or are wholly about, Joseph (AS).

Book illustrations that represent Joseph (AS) or depict an episode in one of the many tales about him have been among the more popular subjects in the history of Islamic painting in general.

Figurative depiction of prophets or biblical personalities, and thus iconographic prototypes, date back to the earliest period in Persian painting, but it was above all the far-reaching influence of Islamic mysticism in Persian literature that raised the popularity of Joseph (AS) as a subject in manuscript illustrations.

The story of Joseph (AS) has been used as a motif in Sufi discourse at least since the 11th century, when Abul-Hassan Ali Hujwiri (d. ca. 1071-72) made exemplary references to it to illustrate certain Sufi concepts.

Joseph (AS), his beauty, his father Jacob (AS), the conspiracy of his brothers, his sale as a slave, the ordeal of Zolaykha's love, his reunion with Jacob (AS), as well as other episodes far exceeding the basic narrative in Chapter 12 of the Holy Quran have been repeatedly used as literary tropes in both lyric and narrative poetry in order to explicate the trials involved in establishing a direct, individual experience of the Divine.

Illustrations of these or related episodes in the cycle in turn established an iconographic standard that, with the aid of such generic features as Joseph's flaming aureole, make textual reference for identification of the scene unnecessary, as is the case with a lacquer painting on a bookbinding for Jami's Tohfah al-Ahrrar, executed in 1570 in Qazvin.

The most appealing subject from the Joseph story has been the episode involving Potiphar's wife, called Zolaykha in Islamic lore.

The popularity of the stories about Zolaykha's love for Joseph as a subject for lyrical and narrative poetry dates back to the Ghaznavid period, but they attain prominence as subjects for painting after Abd ur-Rahman Jami's (d. 1492) mystical epic, the romance of Yusof o Zolaykha.

Shortly thereafter, the impact of Jami's romance in the visual arts became manifest in one of the most celebrated paintings in the history of Persian book illustration.

It was executed by the master painter Kamal ad-Din Behzad (d. 1535-36), who chose to illustrate the scene of Zolaykha's attempt at seducing Joseph (AS) for a passage in Sadi's Bustan.

He not only used the descriptions as provided in Jami's version of the story, but also reproduced a few verses from Jami's poem in the painting itself.

Although Joseph's face has partially worn away, his sense of alarm is apparent as he reaches for the latch of the locked door with one arm while Zolaykha, pulling at his garb, is trying to prevent his escape by grabbing his other arm.

There are some 108 illustrated manuscripts of Jami's Yusof o Zolaykha from the 16th century in museums and libraries around the world.

Among these, which do not include such images as frontispieces or those inserted later, the most frequently illustrated episode is that of Egyptian women being overwhelmed at the sight of Joseph's dazzling beauty, followed by Joseph (AS) being sold at a slave market, and being rescued from the well.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Over 600 artworks to promote hope at Tehran Intl. Design Exhibition 2021

A R T TEHRAN — The 3rd edition of the International Design Exhibition will be opening on Friday at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center, showcasing over 600 artworks on the themes of hope and evolution.

"Since we are in the last year of the century [in the Iranian calendar], we decide to put our spotlight on the themes of 'hope' and 'evolution' this year," the director of the exhibition, Ashkan Qazanchai, said in a press conference on Tuesday.

The main section of the exhibition is dedicated to displaying posters and motion graphics, he added and noted that the 3rd edition of the exhibition is a hybrid event with virtual and live showcases.

Works by 272 artists from 32 countries have been selected to put on view at the exhibition.

"The exhibition will be organized in a

special condition during the pandemic and we hope that it can help bring happiness to society hit by the virus," Niavaran Cultural Center director Ebadreza Eslami said during the press conference.

Qazanchai, Kianush Gharibpur, Mehrdokht Darabi, Javad Atashbari, Mehran Mirhosseini, and Farshid Parsikia ate the members of the jury for poster category.

The artworks in the motion graphics section will be judged by a jury composed of Milad Shahjani, Reza Allahyari, and said Haqzare.

Agnieszka Weglarska from Poland, Aiwei Wen from China, Andreas Syah Pahlevi from Indonesia, Brad Tzou from Taiwan, Elvin Shirinov Azadkhani from Azerbaijan, Ivan Kashlakov from Bulgaria, Kathiana Cardona from Venezuela, Cristina Mariana Garcia Acevedo from Mexico and Mehmet Diyaddin from Turkey are among the artists whose



A poster for the 3rd edition of the International Design Exhibition.

works will be showcased at the exhibition.

Works by the Iranian artists, including Ali Zurmand, Azam Amini, Behdad Sharifi, Behnam Ranjbar Khadivi, Ensieh Rezdooost,

Fahimeh Fadavi, Fatemeh Ensanimehr, Ghazal Hosseini, and Hadi Golchin, have also been selected to be showcased at the exhibition, which will run until June 25.



Graphic design features the flags of Iran and China.

A R T TEHRAN — The Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) announced on Wednesday that it has signed a memorandum of understanding with China Film Bureau to expand relations in the film industry.

The MOU was inked by COI director Hossein Entezami and China Film Bureau director Wang Xiaohui, the director of COI Office of Festivals and International Cooperation, Ruhollah Hosseini, said in a press release.

He called signing the MOU a significant action that can open the Chinese film market with thousands of movie theaters to Iranian film products.

Iran, China sign MOU on cinema

Based on the MOU, both sides agreed to provide the necessary opportunity for each other to screen and offer their film products.

According to the agreement, Iran and China will also exchange experts on film projects.

Hosseini said that China can use the skills of Iranian directors and screenwriters to raise the quality of their films and Iranian producers can use China's technical and technological advantages to advance their products.

He also added that the MOU will cause an increase in the number of joint film projects, which have started by Iranian and Chinese filmmakers over the past few years.

The MOU has been signed for three years and it can be extended for more years.

Chinese film organizations have always been eager to cooperate with Iranian filmmakers on joint projects.

In its 2019 edition, the Shanghai International Film Festival, China's major film event, organized the session "Focus on Iran: Dialogue between Iranian and Chinese Filmmakers" to discuss collaboration between Iranian and Chinese cineastes.

Speaking at the meeting, the general manager of the China Film Co-Production Corporation, Miao Xiaotian, said that China is willing to collaborate on joint film projects with Iran.

"China has signed co-production agreements with 22

countries. Similar agreements between Iran and China are in the works, and will be signed by the end of this year," he added.

The CEO of China's Dirty Monkey Films Group, Wang Yibing, noted that Chinese and Iranian filmmakers share a passion for realistic films.

"Each country's complicated social structure and large population provide fertile soil for creativity," he added.

The manager of the International Relations Department of Iran's Fajr International Film Festival, Kamyar Mohsenin, also attended the meeting.

"Governments can work to promote cooperation between countries, but the implementation should be done by filmmakers. Filmmakers need to have more dialogue. Maybe a movie on children's topics can be a starting point of our collaboration," Mohsenin said.

Iranian filmmakers have been frequent visitors to the Shanghai film festival.

Iranian director Abolfazl Jalili's latest drama "The Contrary Route" is among 13 movies that will be contending for a Golden Goblet in the main competition of the festival this year.

Six other Iranian films, including "Sun Children", "The Wasteland", "No Choice" and "Maya", will be competing in the other categories of the festival.

"Letters to Ruhollah" unveiled in Lebanon

CULTURE TEHRAN — A book titled "Letters to Roohollah", which carrying letters from Arab peoples from around the world to the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, has been unveiled during a ceremony in Beirut, Lebanon.

A number of Lebanese and Iranian cultural figures attended the ceremony held at the Iranian Culture Center, Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations

Organization announced on Wednesday.

The book contains a selection of 65 passionate letters written to Imam Khomeini in the literary competition "Heart Notes to Ruhollah" organized by the Institute for the Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works to commemorate his death anniversary.

The letters were picked for the book by a jury from the Arabic Literature

Department at Beirut University.

In one of the letters, an Iraqi woman named Zeinab Abd al-Reza wrote, "My leader Ruhollah, I hope you forgive me, when I was young, Saddam's regime asked us to draw a caricature of your happy face for an exhibition, and I am ashamed of this."

"When I was informed about this competition, I wrote this heart note in the hope that his soul will forgive me."



Lebanese and Iranian cultural figures attend a ceremony at the Iranian Culture Center in Beirut to unveil a book titled "Letters to Roohollah".



Bardia Yadegari and Farideh Azadi act in a scene from "District Terminal" co-directed by Bardia Yadegari and Ehsan Mirhosseini.

A R T TEHRAN — "District Terminal", a co-production between Iran and Germany, has won a special mention from a jury of the

"District Terminal" receives GWFF jury special mention

GWFF (Gesellschaft zur Wahrnehmung von Film- und Fernsehrechten), a society dedicated to safeguarding film and television rights.

The jury composed of critic Carmen Gray, curator Azu Nwagbogu and film expert Wieland Speck selected was assigned the task to honor a film with the GWFF Best First Feature Award, which is given a directorial feature debut at the Berlin Film Festival every year.

"The Scary of Sixty-First" by Dasha Nekrasova from the U.S. won the award this year.

"District Terminal", co-directed by Bardia Yadegari and Ehsan Mirhosseini, is about Peyman, a poet and a junkie who lives with his mother in a Tehran neighborhood during the pandemic.

In the jury statement published by the Berlinale, they called the film "A world of blurry presence and future, framed by drug addiction and physical decay."

"A situation populated by ancestors, threatened by an avalanche of ruinous waste," the jury added.

Since 2006, when it introduced the GWFF Best First Feature Award, the Berlinale has been even more committed to supporting the next generation of filmmakers.

The award is endowed with 50,000 Euros, donated by the GWFF. The prize money is to be split between the producer and the director of the winning film.

Additionally, the director will be awarded with a high-quality viewfinder as both a useful instrument and memorable trophy.

In total, 13 directorial feature film debuts from the sections Encounters, Panorama, Forum, Generation and Perspektive Deutsches Kino were nominated for the GWFF Best First Feature Award.

The award will be presented during the official award ceremony at the Freiluftkino Museumsinsel on June 13.

Konstantin Simonov's "Stalingrad Fight on" published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Konstantin Mikhailovich Simonov's book "Stalingrad Fight on" has been published by Sib-e-Sorkh Publications in Tehran.

The book translated by Hassan Rezaei-Sadr consists of two parts. The first part is about the Battle of Stalingrad during World War II. The second part includes two short stories and a war report by the writer.

The first chapter of the book includes three news reports about the war, which were published in local newspapers.

The significance of "Stalingrad Fight on" is that it is entirely based on true events. All the characters, soldiers and civilians who are mentioned in the book are actual people

who shared their memories with the author.

Each of the book's stories narrates a descriptive tale of the horrific conditions at the forefront of the Stalingrad war, citing the heroism of soldiers as well as civilians in resisting the invading army.

Simonov's observations and memories shape the two short stories and the war report in the second part of the book.

In an introduction to the book, translator Rezaei-Sadr emphasized the need for translation such books to Persian and said, "The new generation of readers are not very familiar with the genre of war literature."

"In my opinion, the narrative style presented in this book, written by one of

the most famous authors of socialism and war literature, is very excellent," he added.

Simonov was a Soviet author and a war poet. He was a playwright and a wartime correspondent, most famous for his poem "Wait for Me".

He is among the most prominent authors of literature on socialism and war, with many of his works translated into several languages.

During World War II, Simonov was recruited as an official newspaper correspondent after studying war journalism at the Lenin Military-Political Academy.

He was promoted to senior battalion commissar in 1942, a lieutenant colonel in 1943, and consequently rose to the colonel rank after the war.



Front cover of a Persian translation of Konstantin Mikhailovich Simonov's book "Stalingrad Fight on".