



**Araqchi briefs**  
**President-elect Raisi**  
**on JCPOA talks** *Page 3*



**Nikkhah Bahrami**  
**named Iran's flagbearer**  
**for Tokyo 2020** *Page 3*



**TSE re-elected**  
**as FEAS board**  
**member** *Page 4*



**"Iran" documentary**  
**maker Mojtabehi**  
**dies at 80** *Page 8*

# U.S. muzzles Iranian media in violation of freedom of speech

See page 3

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## Water, electricity projects worth nearly \$215m inaugurated in 8 provinces

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian on Wednesday inaugurated 24 major water and electricity industry projects valued at 9.028 trillion rials (about \$214.9 million) through video conference in eight provinces.

Put into operation in the 12th week of the ministry's A-B-Iran program in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), the said projects were inaugurated in Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad,

Khuzestan, Bushehr, Ardebil, Kerman, East Azarbaijan, Fars, and Mazandaran provinces.

As reported by the Energy Ministry portal Paven, nine of the mentioned projects including three solar power plants and six projects for the development of electricity transmission network worth 1.59 trillion rials (about \$37.8 million) were put into operation in Khuzestan province.

*Continued on page 4*

## Iran sets up center to export bio-products to east Africa

TEHRAN – A specialized office for the export of Iranian biotechnology products has been established in Kampala, the capital of the east African country of Uganda.

With the establishment of the office, Iranian biotechnology products will enter the East African market; which was facilitated with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology. At present, this office specializes in agri-

cultural inputs, human and animal probiotic products, animal feed supplements, pharmaceutical products, diagnostic kits, and equipment, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

In order to implement the program, in the first stage, a sample farm with an area of 10 hectares has been chosen to test different types of fertilizers and seeds of 8 Iranian companies.

*Continued on page 7*

## Hyderabad children showcase impression of Shiraz at painting exhibit

TEHRAN – An exhibition opened in Shiraz on Tuesday displaying a collection of paintings by a group of schoolchildren in Hyderabad who have drawn their impressions of the southern Iranian city.

The Municipality of Shiraz is organizing the exhibition entitled "A Color from the East" with contributions from several other cultural

institutes at the Namazi Station of the Shiraz Subway.

The idea to have children create paintings comes from a webinar on tourism organized last year by the Iranian consulate in the Indian city of Hyderabad, Hashem Mazaherizadeh, an advisor to the Shiraz mayor, said during the opening ceremony of the exhibit.

*Continued on page 8*

## Can CGT increase homebuyers' purchasing power?

**BY MAHNAZ ABDI**  
During an open session of the parliament on May 26, the Iranian MPs approved the general outline of capital gains tax (CGT) plan.

As reported, the parliament's Economic Committee's report on the mentioned plan was discussed and approved in the session.

The recent shift of liquidity from production to the unproductive markets in Iran has caused high inflation and damage to some industries in the country.

As many experts believe, the imposition of capital gains tax is the only way to exit the liquidity from the unproductive markets and lead it to production.

Based on the approved plan, if a person buys gold, foreign currency, house, or car and then sells it, he/she must pay the related tax.

As defined by the Investopedia, capital gains tax is a levy assessed on the positive difference between the sale price of the asset and its original purchase price. Long-term capital gains tax is a levy on the profits from the sale of assets held for more than a year. Short-term capital gains tax applies to assets held for a year or less, and is taxed as ordinary income.

While CGT prevents the wealth to be owned just by a few people, it leads the liquidity toward production, and help re-distribution of wealth and income in the society.

It was in the middle of the Iranian calendar year 1391 (March 2012-March 2013) that economic officials apparently thought of passing a capital gains tax law.

Finally, this plan was sent to the cabinet by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in February 2019, after a seven-year delay, and reached the parliament after 10 months.

Capital gains tax is one of the tax bases that, although it can increase public resources, but mainly has a regulatory function and can play an effective role in regulating various markets such as housing, cars, gold and currency by weakening unproductive activities and reducing speculative incentives.

In this regard, the plan on capital gains tax was proposed with the aim of supporting production and investment, reducing fluctuations in asset markets such as car and housing, gold and foreign currency, as well as preventing a sudden rise in prices in these markets.

*Continued on page 4*

## Not bright future ahead of Iran's sports minister

**BY FARROKH HESABI**

TEHRAN – After Iran's presidential election, the country will see a new Sports and Youth Minister who will have to face many challenges in the country's sports.

Ebrahim Raeisi will take office in August, replacing President Hassan Rouhani.

Rouhani appointed two sports ministers during his eight-year administration, Mahmoud Goudarzi and Masoud Soltanifar, the current sports and youth minister.

It is not clear who will take charge of Iranian sports. Based on the past experiences and what has been heard from the Ministry of Sports in recent months, Soltanifar is not interested in continuing in this position any longer.

On the other hand, it is unlikely that his name will be in the new president's cabinet. So, new figures will probably enter the field, and a new commander will take the helm at

the Iranian sports.

One of the first challenges of the new minister will be to privatize two major clubs of Iran, Persepolis, and Esteghlal. The Ministry of Sports and Youth owns both clubs, and it has been a problematic issue during all the previous years for the ministry.

Soltanifar had promised that the country's most popular football teams would be ceded to the private sector by auction by the end of his current administration. But this promise has not yet been - and is unlikely to be - fulfilled. Accumulated debts of the clubs and their ambiguous financial statements are seen as the main hurdle to privatization.

The appointment of a new minister could also lead to a change in the board of directors of Esteghlal and Persepolis, and it can affect both clubs' future.

*Continued on page 3*

## Breakdown - U.S. administration seizes dozens of websites in West Asia

**The operation**

The United States has launched a wide-scale cyber crackdown on the websites of major news networks, mainly based in West Asia. In what appears to have been a coordinated operation, the domain for the websites was seized at a similar time late Tuesday night. Viewers visiting the sites have been met with the same message from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

**Who has been targeted?**

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a total of 36 websites have been seized. Among the most prominent news networks that have been affected are Iran's English-language Press TV Channel and the country's Arabic-language al-Alam and al-Kawther channels. In Yemen, the popular al-Masirah news outlet, that has been documenting the U.S.-backed Saudi Arabian war on the country, along with other regional

developments, has also been seized.

The U.S. government took over the domain name of the news website, Palestine Today, which is affiliated with the resistance in the besieged Gaza Strip. The website of LuaLua TV, an independent Bahraini news channel that broadcasts from Britain was also captured. Moreover, Washington took control of around a dozen sites connected to news channels based in Iraq. One of these channels, al-Furat is linked to the Iraqi cleric, politician and leader of the al-Hikmah party in parliament, Ammar al-Hakim. Some of the other channels are associated with Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, the country's most influential anti-terrorism security force. The same branch of the Iraqi armed forces that spearheaded the victory against Daesh terrorists from 2014 to 2017.

*Continued on page 5*

## Ali Sadr Cave reopens to visitors as coronavirus curbs eased

TEHRAN – Iran's Ali Sadr water cave opened its doors to visitors on Tuesday after seven months of closure due to coronavirus.

Sightseers are required to observe strict health protocols associated with the virus, the manager of the site, Mehdi Majidi, announced.

An average of 600,000 people visit the ancient cave per annum, however, the figure dropped to about 80,000 tourists in the previous Iranian year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – March 21, 2021),

IRNA quoted as saying.

Ali Sadr Cave revenue dropped to 30 billion rials (\$714,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) last year from 220 billion rials (\$5.2 million) the year before, the official added.

He expressed hope that the reopening of the complex would boost tourism in the province as well as compensate for the economic losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Last September, the official announced that

the outbreak of the coronavirus cut the number of visitors by 86 percent in the first six months of the Iranian year 1399 (March 20, 2020-September 22, 2020). He also emphasized that the economy of the region depends on the activity of this tourist complex.

Back in April, the official said two-thirds of the employees of the tourist site have lost their jobs temporarily over the impacts of the coronavirus outbreak.

*Continued on page 6*



## First telesurgery in Iran performed

TEHRAN – The first remote surgery (also known as telesurgery) in Iran was conducted at Imam Khomeini hospital in Tehran.

The operation was carried out on a dog using the domestically-made Sina robotic system from a distance of seven kilometers.

Telesurgery is the ability for a doctor to perform surgery on a patient even though they are not physically in the same location.

## Iran election showed most parties back Islamic Republic: Turkish academic

TEHRAN – Despite some calls to boycott the presidential election in Iran, reformists, centrists, and conservatives proved that they support the establishment, says Mustafa Caner, a Turkish academic. "Even though some political actors called for a boycott, prominent figures of reformists, centrists, and conservatives announced to the world that they are all with the establishment," Caner, the research assistant in the Middle East Institute at Sakarya University, tells the Tehran Times.

"Although the participation rate declined due to various reasons, many people voted for the president-elect Mr. Raeisi and showed their support for the system," Caner notes.

Following is the text of the interview:  
**What are the messages of Iran's election for the world and the region?**

First of all, I'd like to congratulate Sayyed Ebrahim Raeisi on his electoral victory, and I hope the new era brings the best for Iran and the region. I think there are a couple of messages to take for the world and regional powers.

First, Iran is one of the fewest countries in the region that holds elections. Although the participation rate declined due to various reasons, many people voted for the president-elect Mr. Raeisi and showed their support for the system.

Even though some political actors called for a boycott, prominent figures of reformists, centrists, and conservatives announced to the world that they are all with the establishment. Therefore, the world powers should interpret this outcome carefully.

*Continued on page 5*



## President-elect Raisi visits Rouhani

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — President-elect Ebrahim Raisi on Wednesday attended the presidential building in central Tehran to meet outgoing president Hassan Rouhani.

“Today, the president-elect came to visit Hojatoleslam President Hassan Rouhani by attending the Pasture,” the presidential communications office said in a tweet.



In the tweet, Alireza Mo'azi, director of the communications office, said the transition period is being done in a “professional, civil and ethical” manner.

On Tuesday morning First Vice President Es'haq also visited the president-elect and congratulated him for winning the presidential election.

At the meeting Jahangiri wished success for the president-elect and his team.

In remarks on Wednesday, presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said Raisi is the president of the entire Iranian nation and all political groups and factions should back him.

Raisi won the June 18 presidential election with a landslide victory, defeating his three rivals with a wide margin.

From a total of 28,933,004 ballots, Raisi succeeded to win 17,926,345 votes. However, Mohsen Rezaei, Abdolnasser Hemmati, and Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi won 3,412,712 votes, 2,427,201 votes, and 999,718 votes, respectively.

## President-elect Raisi invited to UN climate change meeting

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, the president-elect of Iran, has been invited to attend the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

COP26 will be held from November 1 to 12 under the presidency of the UK.

Raisi, who won the June 18 elections by a landslide, will take the helm in mid-August.

The summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, according to its website.

More than 70 presidents, prime ministers and top officials will be attending the summit.

According to Tasnim, questions have arisen about whether Raisi will take part in the conference and whether Scotland will be his first foreign destination as the new president of Iran.

Iran participated at the COP15 held in Copenhagen in 2009 and the 2014 UN climate summit in New York at the level of president. However, the 2015 United Nations climate change conference in Paris was attended by Iran's vice president.

## Iran's ICT minister: No satellite launched and therefore no failure

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Information and Communications Technology Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi on Wednesday refuted reports by the U.S. media outlets claiming failure of two satellite launches by Iran, saying no satellite has been launched.



“The Pars 1 and Nahid satellites have all gone through their processes and are in the Space Organization. The news of the failure of the launch is not confirmed by us,” Azari Jahromi said after a cabinet meeting.

He added that the ministry has not delivered the satellites yet and is following their launch.

“The Pars 1 and Nahid satellites have all gone through their processes and are in the Space Organization. The news of the failure of the launch is not confirmed by us,” Azari Jahromi said after a cabinet meeting.

He added that the ministry has not delivered the satellites yet and is following their launch.

## Five anti-Revolution terrorists murdered in Kurdistan province

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — In a report on its website released on Wednesday the state news agency IRNA announced that days before the June 18 presidential elections five members of an anti-revolution terrorist group were killed in the western province of Kurdistan province.

They were killed by local Basiji forces aligned to the Shahid Shahrmarf base.

The skirmishes with the anti-revolution groups took place in the Baneh and Sarvabad region.

According to the base, a few days before the presidential election the terrorist team intended to infiltrate and do sabotage acts during the elections, however in two special operations five of them were killed and three others injured.

It said some arms and technical equipment were also confiscated in the operations.

The local military base said it is warning the thugs that it will not allow the slightest harm or crime against the locals and if it notices the slightest move, it will give them a crushing response, IRNA reported.

# Tehran says UN rights report is product of Western ‘political mandate’ to demonize Iran

‘Iran says it does not hesitate to correct a host of disinformation, false claims and unsubstantiated allegations’

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A new report by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council about the human rights situation in Iran is the product of a “political mandate” devised by certain Western countries to mount pressure on Tehran and demonize the Islamic Republic, Iran's permanent representative to the UN body said on Tuesday.

Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh made the remarks in an address to the council after UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet presented the anti-Iran report.

Baghaei Hamaneh said the report is full of inaccurate information and false narratives and the methodology used for compiling it is impeccably based on over-generalizing individual cases, magnifying negatives, minimizing positives and catastrophizing the whole situation.

“The report presented today is based on an entirely political mandate initiated by a group of like-minded, or rather similarly-biased, countries that have for long instrumentalized human rights as part and parcel of their adversarial agenda against Iran. The product of such prejudicial mandate is unavoidably biased toward reinforcing the prejudices,” Ambassador Baghaei Hamaneh stated, according to Press TV.

“The report is one of the four yearly reports -- all similar in content, theme and tone -- originating from a mentality that is far from good faith — compiled inevitably to satisfy the mandate devised by a few Western states to pressurize and demonize Iran.”

Bachelet claimed that the report “found a disturbing human rights landscape for Iranian women and men of every religious faith, ethnic origin, social class and other status.”

Baghaei Hamaneh stressed that Iran is fully committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and respects its international obligations, adding that unfair pressure



and baseless allegations could not dissuade Tehran from continuing its path.

All world countries should consider the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity regarding human rights issues and eliminate double standards and politicization, he said. “We also call upon all who truly care for human rights to recognize the imperative of rule of law and the centrality of judicial systems in preserving the rule of law and protecting human rights.”

He also said the participation of the Iranian

people in the June 18 elections to choose a new president and members to the city and village councils “showcased their determination to exercise their constitutional rights and secure the country's democratic processes.”

The Iranian diplomat further denounced the cruel unilateral coercive sanctions imposed against the nation by the administration of former U.S. president Donald Trump following its unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iranians, he noted, exercised maximum re-

**“We should never forget that the U.S. even tightened its unilateral sanctions during the pandemic leaving no doubt as to their true intention to immiserate a whole nation, in bold disrespect to the ICJ's ruling... which ordered the U.S. to remove any impediment to export foodstuffs, medicine and medical devices to Iran.”**

## Iran calls U.S. seizure of Iranian media domains ‘shameful’

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Reacting to the seizure of the domains of Iranian media websites, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Wednesday that the current U.S. administration is following exactly the path of the Donald Trump administration, which will only lead to a “double defeat for Washington”.

According to the Mehr news agency, Khatibzadeh called the U.S. move to block Iranian websites a systematic effort to undermine “free speech” at global level and silence independent voices by media.

Calling the continuation of these double standards by Washington “shameful”, Khatibzadeh said, “The current U.S. administration is following exactly the path of the previous U.S. administration, which will only lead to a double defeat for Washington.”

“While rejecting this illegal and bullying action, the Islamic Republic of Iran will pursue the issue through legal channels,” he stressed.

Earlier, the head of the Press Office of the Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations in New York called

Washington's move an attempt to muzzle free speech.

He added that the United States was trying to muzzle free speech. “While rejecting this illegal and bullying action, which is an attempt at limiting the freedom of expression, the issue will be pursued through legal channels.”

Late on Tuesday, the websites of a number of Iranian news media outlets, most notably the English-language Press TV and the Arabic-language Al Alam, as well as regional media outlets close to Iran, were blocked with a message showing that the websites were seized by the government of the United States.

“The domain pressstv.com has been seized by the United States Government in accordance with a seizure warrant...as part of a law enforcement action by the Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement and Federal Bureau of Investigation,” the message on Press TV website read.

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Bureau of Investigation,” the message read.

The websites of Iran's Arabic-language Al-Alam television news network, Yemen's al-Masirah TV channel and Bahrain's Lualua television network were also among the targeted outlets.

Tehran Times readers on the Twitter have reacted to the U.S. move. Asad Abukhalil, a professor at California State University, has said, “Trump did not do this, Biden did.”

Benjamin Norton, assistant editor at The Grey Zone, has said, “The U.S. government launches another attack on freedom of press and speech.”

Norton added, “The U.S. empire thinks it has the right to censor and steal any media outlet anywhere in the world. It's a true global dictatorship.”

Rania Khalek, an American journalist, has also censured the move, saying, “And then you wonder why countries on America's hit list see the internet as a weapon of empire.”

Another person has cited George Orwell who has said, “In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.”

## Iran urges UN to facilitate peace process among all Afghan groups

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran has called on the United Nations to help facilitate a peace process in Afghanistan aimed at ending decades of bloodshed in the conflict-hit country, saying a more stable Afghanistan will benefit all of its citizens, the broader region and the entire world.

Iran's UN Ambassador Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks on Tuesday during a Security Council meeting on Afghanistan amid renewed violence there as the Taliban militant group is making gains on the battlefield.

The senior diplomat said the international community should not allow the second option to happen in Afghanistan, adding that a safer, more stable and more prosperous Afghanistan, which is in peace with itself and its neighbors, will be in the interest of all Afghans, the region and the world.

On the contrary, he warned, an insecure

and unstable Afghanistan that would witness violent extremism, terrorism and organized crimes such as drug production and trafficking poses a threat to Afghans themselves as well as to regional and international peace and security, Press TV reported.

Building a secure Afghanistan requires the start of a comprehensive intra-Afghan peace process facilitated by the UN, the Iranian envoy said, emphasizing that the path to lasting peace passes through a real internal dialogue involving all Afghan political, ethnic and religious groups, including the Taliban, in an atmosphere of cooperation, understanding and reconciliation.

In a diverse society like that of Afghanistan, no group can resort to force to dominate others, therefore the formation of a legitimate government can only be achieved through a comprehensive political process and demo-



cratic ways, he insisted.

Takht-Ravanchi further expressed concern about the security situation in Afghanistan, referring to the growing number of deadly attacks by the Daesh terrorist group.

By hosting millions of Afghan refugees and connecting the landlocked country to

high seas via the port of Chabahar and to Europe via the Khaf-Herat railway, Iran has proven that it stands by the Afghan government and people to build a secure, stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan, he concluded.

**“Destructive policies of the U.S. have had lingering consequences in our region”**

Also on Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Iran is “closely following the alarming developments” in neighboring Afghanistan.

“Iran calls for immediate de-escalation, respect for rule of law, & inclusive dialogue,” he tweeted.

He added, “Destructive policies of the US have had lingering consequences in our region & now its utterly irresponsible conduct is taking a toll.”

## Rouhani says key issues in JCPOA have been resolved

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the main issues in the Vienna talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal have been settled, noting it is now possible to have the sanctions lifted right away.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said his administration has done a great job by overcoming the “economic war” launched by Donald Trump on Iran.

Highlighting his administration's success in bringing the U.S. to the negotiation table in Vienna and resolving major issues, Rouhani said if there is a will and if Iran's top negotiator in the Vienna talks, Abbas Araqchi, is given the necessary authority, the administration would be able to have the sanctions lifted “today”.

The president also noted that the next

administration will have a much easier job in running the country, saying his administration has handled the situation under an unprecedented economic war that even faced problems importing medicine and foodstuff.

Rouhani said Iran's non-oil exports in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year have increased by 69 percent compared to the corresponding period last year, and a positive balance of trade has been recorded in the 3-month period.

The outgoing president also noted that the next administration will be in a much better position in regard to the situation created by the coronavirus pandemic, saying efforts will continue to supply the COVID vaccine as the homegrown vaccines will be soon available in the market.

In comments on Sunday, Rouhani boasted of his administration's success in dealing

with the foreign sanctions in an unequal battle, urging that his successor should be informed of the economic conditions and the measures taken during his tenure to settle the problems.

Raisi, the incumbent Judiciary chief, won the June 18 presidential election by a landslide.

In his first press conference after winning the election, Raisi took a swipe at the U.S. for violating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and at the European states for failing to honor their commitments under the nuclear deal.

“Americans should have lifted all sanctions under the JCPOA, but failed to do so. I advise the Americans to return to their commitments, and Europe should not come under pressure from the U.S. and (should) fulfill its commitments,” he said.

Talks to revive the JCPOA begun in Vienna

on April 6. The talks are taking place within the JCPOA Joint Commission between Iran and the remaining members of the nuclear deal, namely the UK, France, Russia and China plus Germany. The negotiations are led by the European Union.

In line with his “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, Trump left the JCPOA in May 2018 and restored the economic sanctions that had been lifted under the deal and added new ones under different labels.

On year after the U.S. quit the multilateral agreement Iran announced that its “strategic patience” is over and took retaliatory measures under the Paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

*(Paragraph 36 provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.)*



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — In a coordinated campaign of seizure, the United States has blocked the domain of several Iranian official news websites as well as regional media outlets close to Iran. The move drew criticism from free speech defenders who called the U.S. move a muzzling of freedom of expression.

Late on Tuesday, the websites of a number of Iranian news media outlets, most notably the English-language Press TV and the Arabic-language Al Alam, as well as regional media outlets close to Iran, were blocked with a message showing that the websites were seized by the government of the United States. “The domain presstv.com has been seized by the United States Government in accordance with a seizure warrant... as part of a law enforcement action by the Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement and Federal Bureau of Investigation,” the message on Press TV website read.

The websites of Iran’s Arabic-language Al Kawthar television network, Yemen’s al-Masirah TV channel and Bahrain’s Lualua television network were also among the targeted outlets.

The U.S. State Department declined to comment on the matter and referred it to the Justice Department, which later issued a statement confirming the seizure of Iranian websites. The statement alleged that the targeted websites were used by the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union and Kata’ib Hizballah of Iraq.

“Today, pursuant to court orders, the United States seized 33 websites used by the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union (IRTVU) and three websites operated by Kata’ib Hizballah (KH), in violation of U.S. sanctions,” the statement said.

In an echo of the Trump administration’s allegations against Iran’s news organizations, the Justice Department accused IRTVU and others like it of being “disguised as news organizations or media outlets” and targeting “the United States with disinformation campaigns and malign influence operations.”

“Thirty-three of the websites seized today were operated by IRTVU. The 33 domains are owned by a United States company. IRTVU did not obtain a license from OFAC prior to utilizing the domain names. Three additional websites seized today were operated by KH,” the statement continued.

It added, “These website seizures were investigated by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement and the FBI. The National Security Division’s Counterintelligence and Export Control Section prosecuted the seizure. Assistant Attorney General John C. Demers for

# U.S. muzzles Iranian media in violation of freedom of speech

the Justice Department’s National Security Division; Special Agent in Charge J.C. (Chris) Hacker, of the FBI’s Atlanta Field Office; and Special Agent in Charge Ariel Joshua Leinwand, of the Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement’s Atlanta Office, made the announcement. The National Security Division’s Counterintelligence and Export Control Section is investigating this matter in coordination with the FBI’s Counterterrorism Division and Atlanta Field Office.”

This is not the first time that the U.S. targets Iranian news organizations or media outlets allegedly affiliated with Iran. Under Trump, the U.S. seized dozens of websites operated by Iranian entities or non-Iranian groups. Among these websites, was the Fars News.

Press TV has also been targeted many times by U.S. social media and internet services companies. Technology giant Google has targeted Press TV at least seven times, blocking the English-language news network’s access to its official YouTube account without any prior notice.

“We have reviewed your content and found severe or repeated violations of our Community Guidelines. Because of this, we have removed your channel from YouTube,” Google told the Iranian broadcaster in a message in late March after blocking its access to YouTube.

Over the past years, the U.S. tech giant has recurrently been opting for such measures against Iranian media outlets. It has taken on Press TV more than any other Iranian outlet given the expanse of its viewership and readership, according to Press TV.

Analysts believe the U.S. move against Iranian news organizations reflects a sense of American failure in suffocating

the Iranian narrative. Ben Norton, an American journalist and commentator, has called the U.S. seizure of Iranian websites “another attack on freedom of press and speech.”

In an interview with Press TV, Norton described the U.S. move as “desperation to control a narrative that Washington has lost control of.”

“It’s incredible to see that while the U.S. government is accusing other countries of supposedly violating press freedoms, it’s actually seizing the property of foreign media outlets and not just Iranian but also Yemeni. This is rather incredible because of course there’s so much propaganda and fake news and dehumanization in the Western media. The U.S. government claims for instance that the IRGC is a terrorist organization, which is an absurd designation. This is a major violation of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. And it’s especially ironic coming from a government that ... even carries out a cruise in the name of defending freedom of speech and democracy and civil liberties when it is actually violating them pretty egregiously,” Norton said.

He added that the claim that Press TV and other media outlets are supposedly disseminating disinformation is laughable on its face. “When the U.S. government says disinformation what it really means is information that Washington doesn’t like. And we’ve seen the U.S. government use this talking point to censor outlets not only abroad but also at home. It’s a desperation to control a narrative that Washington has lost control of,” Norton continued.

Iran condemned the U.S. move against Iranian news websites, calling it “illegal” and “bullying.”

An Iranian official at the United Na-

tions called the U.S.’s move to block Iranian websites illegal and said, “This issue will be pursued through legal channels.”

Rejecting the U.S. “illegal and bullying”, the Iranian diplomat told IRNA on Tuesday that the move was an attempt to restrict freedom of expression.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian president’s chief of staff, accused the U.S. of pursuing double standards in terms of dealing with freedom of expression.

“They always have a double standard, that is, they observe the issue that pertains to themselves and their friends, but what pertains to other countries and Islamic countries, they have a double discriminatory approach,” Vaezi told reporters on Wednesday.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry also reacted to the U.S. seizure of Iranian websites. Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh, in response to the seizure of Iranian media websites belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Radio and Television, called the move a “systematic attempt by the United States to undermine global freedom of expression and silence independent voices in the media.”

The spokesman called it shameful for Washington to continue these double standards, adding that the current U.S. administration is following in the footsteps of the previous U.S. administration, which will only lead to a double defeat for Washington.

At the end of his statement, Khatibzadeh emphasized that “the Islamic Republic of Iran, while rejecting this illegal and bullying action, will pursue the issue through legal channels.”

A leader of Yemen’s Ansarallah also reacted to the seizure, saying it showed that the message has been delivered.

Mohammad Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Yemeni Ansarallah political bureau, in response to the U.S. move to close several official Iraqi, Yemeni and Iranian websites, stressed that the move reflects the influence of these networks.

In a tweet on Tuesday, al-Houthi said the U.S. seizure of these websites shows that their message has been received and that these outlets have made an impact, and that free media frightens regimes claiming to defend freedom of expression.

He added that this move also shows the falsehood and superficiality of American democracy and proves that America acts on the principle of comprehensive confrontation and is the example of the verse of the Qur’an which says to comprehensively fight the polytheists as they fight comprehensively.

Yemen’s Al Masirah website was among the outlets targeted by the latest wave of U.S. seizures. Ansarallah reactivated the Al Masirah network a few hours after it became unavailable using another domain.

## Araqchi briefs President-elect Raisi on JCPOA talks

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Top Iranian nuclear negotiator has provided a thorough report on the Vienna nuclear talks to the new president of Iran in preparation for the transition of power.

Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi, who is leading the Iranian negotiating team in the Vienna talks, were instructed by outgoing President Hassan Rouhani to brief President-elect Ebrahim Raisi on the latest developments of the Vienna talks aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian president’s chief of staff, said the JCPOA is an important issue and that’s why Rouhani instructed his diplomats to brief the incoming government.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session on Wednesday, Vaezi said, “As regards the JCPOA, which is an important issue, the president ordered Araqchi, along with the foreign minister, to meet with Mr. Raisi as soon as he arrives in Tehran, and to announce the progress and restrictions. The meeting lasted an hour and a half and everything was announced.”

Vaezi also said that the Iranian president has instructed all cabinet members to consult with Raisi’s transition team if they are making decisions that affect the next government.

Araqchi has recently returned to Iran from Vienna after concluding the sixth round of the JCPOA talks. Diplomats from Iran and other parties to the Iran



nuclear pact held a meeting on Sunday noon to conclude the sixth round of talks that have been underway since April to revive the nuclear deal. Araqchi issued a statement about the holding of the meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission. He said at the end of the sixth round of the Vienna talks, a meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission chaired by Enrique Mora, the EU Deputy High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, was held.

The top Iranian nuclear negotiator also hailed the progress made during the last round of talks in remarks to Iranian state TV.

“Our progress in this round has been relatively good, because a large number of texts are ready now, and

the amount that is not ready has at least one very clear situation, and it shows a picture of the differences and what stage (the differences) are in, and this helps decision makers make the right decision. We have come a long way so far and we are nearing the end, but the rest of the way, as I said before, will not be an easy one,” he said, adding, “I hope and I think that if the other parties can make their own decisions, God willing, we will be able to reach an agreement that we want. Our positions have not changed since the beginning of the talks, and we want all U.S. sanctions to be lifted, as well as their verification and then Iran will return to its commitments under the JCPOA.”

Vaezi also confirmed that significant progress was made during the talks. He said the negotiating parties agreed to lift all insurance, oil, and shipping sanctions. According to Vaezi, about 1,040 Trump-era sanctions will be lifted under the agreement. He also said that the parties agreed to lift some sanctions on individuals and the Leader’s Office.

Vaezi underlined the need to brief Raisi on these developments. To that end, Rouhani has held a meeting with Raisi.

“Today, the president-elect came to visit Hojatoleslam President Hassan Rouhani by attending the Pasture,” the presidential communications office said in a tweet on Wednesday.

Alireza Mo’azi, director of the communications office, said the transition period is being done in a “professional, civil and ethical” manner.

## Iran thwarts ‘act of sabotage’ against nuclear building

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran has foiled a plot to do damage to a building belonging to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), Nour News reported.

The plot, reportedly an “act of sabotage”, was carried out early Wednesday in an attempt to target a building operated by the AEOI.

Nour News said the failed attempt did not lead to any human or material damages. It did not give more detail about the sabotage, saying that authorities are investigating the issue and pursuing those involved in it.

Reports said that the saboteurs attempted to attack the building with a quad-copter with a parcel bomb attached to it. However, Security forces downed it before it reached the building.

The last time Iranian nuclear facilities

suffered acts of sabotage was in last April when an underground fuel enrichment plant at Natanz was rocked by an explosion widely attributed to Israel.

Iran decided to enrich uranium to a purity of 60% in response to the April 11 explosion. The sabotage took place at a time when Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) were holding technical talks in Vienna on a possible revitalization of the agreement as the new Biden administration had expressed willingness to rejoin the multilateral accord. Israel was blamed for the sabotage attack. Multiple Israeli media outlets have quoted unnamed intelligence sources as saying Mossad spies carried out the sabotage operation at the Natanz complex.

Then Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashke-

nazi said on April 16 that Israel will do “whatever it takes” to ensure that Iran does not acquire what he called “nuclear weapons.”

Iran called the sabotage “nuclear terrorism” and an instance of “war crime.”

In May, Fereydoon Abbasi, head of the Energy Committee of the parliament recounted how many acts of sabotage were carried out at the Natanz nuclear plant.

He said that the April sabotage was not the only case of sabotage against Natanz. “This is not the first time something similar has happened in Natanz, but the method of sabotage is new. This is not the first time sabotage as well as use of explosives have been reported. For the past 15 years, the enemy has been constantly trying to do this,” he told Fars News.

Abbasi stated that it is estimated that the



April sabotage was the fifth big attack.

“This time they targeted the distribution network, the cables, and the spare batteries that supply power,” he explained.

Israel was also blamed for the last year’s assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, who was targeted on the outskirts of Tehran in November 2020.

## SPORTS

### Nikkhah Bahrami named Iran’s flagbearer for Tokyo 2020

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran basketball small forward d e s k S a m a d Nikkhah Bahrami will headline Iran’s delegation at the Opening Ceremony of 2020 Olympic Games.

Nikkhah Bahrami represented Iran at 2008 Olympic Games and will also play for the Iranian team in Tokyo.

He has won three gold medals at the FIBA Asia Championship and two silver medals at the Asian Games.

Iran will take part at the 2020 Olympic Games with 65 athletes.

The 2020 Summer Olympics opening ceremony is scheduled to take place on 23 July 2021 at Olympic Stadium, Tokyo.



### Behnam Yakhchali signs for MBC Syntainics

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** - Iranian shooting guard Behnam d e s k Yakhchali left Rostock Seawolves to join MBC Syntainics.

With an average of 16 points, the 25-year-old player was one of the five best shooters in the ProA in the 2020/21 season.

Rostock coach Dirk Bauermann, who had already worked with Yakhchali during his time as Iranian national coach, praised the player and said he is the best guard in Asia.

Yakhchali represented Iran in two World Cups (2014 in Spain and 2019 in China).

“As a young basketball player, I always dreamed of playing in one of the best leagues in Europe. One year ago, Dirk Bauermann and Rostock gave me the opportunity to prove myself in the ProA. We had a great year together and I would like to thank them for that. Recently, several Bundesliga clubs contacted me. After assessing my personal situation and talking to MBC head coach Igor Jovic, I decided to join the team. I am very excited and will join them after the 2021 FIBA Asian Cup,” Yakhchali said.

MBC coach Jovic is so happy to sign the Iranian player. “Despite his young age, Behnam is an internationally experienced shooting guard who can also help out as a point guard. He’s a good defender and has a good feel for the ball, he can create for himself as well as for his teammates. He is an award for MBC. Behnam is burning with ambition to prove himself at Bundesliga level,” Jovic said.

### Iran in Pot 2 of AFC Women’s Asian Cup Qualification

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran will know their rivals at d e s k the 2022 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification draw ceremony on Thursday.

The ceremony will be held in Kuala Lumpur with 28 Member Associations (MAS) in the running to qualify for Asia’s marquee women’s national team competition, which will feature an expanded 12 teams for the first time.

he AFC Women’s Asian Cup India 2022 Qualifiers will divide 28 MAS into four seeding pots based on the AFC Women’s Asian Cup Jordan 2018 ranking. Defending champions Japan, runners-up Australia and third-placed China PR as well as hosts India have already qualified for the Finals.

The teams will be divided into four groups of four and four groups of three, with the winner of each group clinching its place in the AFC Women’s Asian Cup India 2022, scheduled to take place from January 20 to February 6.

Thailand, Korea Republic, Philippines, Jordan, Vietnam and DPR Korea, will be placed in Pot 1, while Pot 2 will consist of Bahrain, Iran, Palestine, United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Pot 3 will include Iraq as well as non-ranked teams from Pot 4 (10 non-ranked teams) consisting of Afghanistan, Guam, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, and Turkmenistan.

### Iran basketball lose to Japan in friendly match

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team d e s k lost to Japan 85-57 in a friendly match held in Miyagi, Japan on Wednesday.

The two teams commemorated the victims of the city which were killed in a fatal earthquake 10 years ago prior to the game.

Behnam Yakhchali was Iran’s top scorer with 15 points.

Mehran Shahintab’s men will also play Japan on Friday and Sunday.

The matches are being held as part of preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Iran have been drawn in Group A of the Olympics along with the world’s No. 1 the U.S. and France.

### Not bright future ahead of Iran’s sports minister

→1 Iranian Judo’s four-year ban by the International Judo Federation (IJF) is another dispute that the new sports minister must confront and try to solve.

Financial problems could be the biggest challenge for Iran’s next sports minister. The rising costs of all sports federations and the budget constraints resulting from sanctions imposed against Iran paint a worrying picture for Iranian sports, at least in the short term.

Apart from this, public sports should also be given serious attention by the new minister. People want greater access to sports facilities and opportunities to play in less competitive environments with their family members.

Iran’s newly elected president, Mr. Raisi, is expected to appoint the next sports minister on the basis of seniority and experience with the hope that the country will reach new heights in sports.



## Bank loans to economic sectors up nearly 47%

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian banking system has paid 2.74 quadrillion rials (over \$65.2 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), registering a 46.6-percent rise from the same period in the previous year, IRNA reported.

According to the data provided by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), working capital loans paid to different economic sectors in the mentioned two months were above 2.018 quadrillion rials (about \$47.85 billion), accounting for 73.7 percent of the total provided facilities.



As reported, during the said period, the country's mining and industry sector received 693 trillion rials (about \$16.5 billion) in the form of working capital loans, accounting for 34.4 percent of the total such facilities.

According to CBI, the country's banking system offered 18.989 quadrillion rials (about \$452.1 billion) facilities to domestic economic sectors in the previous Iranian calendar year of 1399 (ended on March 20), 94.8-percent more than the figure for its preceding year.

Earlier this month, the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry announced that 99.161 trillion rials (about \$2.36 billion) was paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year.

The mentioned facilities, which were provided for renewing machinery, equipping production units, or completing semi-finished projects, were paid in the form of bank loans to 1,512 projects and production units.

CBI has defined supporting production as one of its major plans over the past two years.

Former CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has repeatedly stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country's banking system.

In early May 2019, Hemmati had outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

CBI's plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

## TEDPIX climbs 26,000 points on Wednesday

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN**— TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 26,101 points to 1.213 million on Wednesday.

Over 10.375 billion securities worth 67.805 trillion rials (about \$1.614 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market's index rose 24,090 points, and the second market's index rose 35,716 points.

Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), has announced that the organization's advisory council has proposed two new programs for supporting the stock market in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

The details of the mentioned programs dubbed "capital market policy package to support production and eliminate obstacles" and "the plan to improve the position and performance of the capital market" were presented in a meeting between Dehqan Dehnavi and the members of the SEO Advisory Council.

"The capital market has witnessed great changes in the past two years and has grown significantly in terms of size, the volume of activity, and presence of people. These rapid developments have changed some of the equations [in the market]," Dehnavi said following the mentioned meeting.

He emphasized that the structure and facilities of the stock market should be reviewed and modified based on the size and volume of today's market and the issues it faces.



"New capacities should be created not only in the structure of the stock exchange organization [SEO] but also in all sectors of the market in order to adequately respond to the existing needs," the official said.

According to the official, the first of the above-mentioned programs, namely "capital market policy package to support production and eliminate obstacles" has been prepared by the SEO Research Center to tackle the issues that the stock market is facing in supporting domestic production.

"It provides solutions to more than 40 to 50 capital market challenges and issues in this regard," he noted.

In the second program, the necessity and ways of improving the position and performance of the capital market are discussed and the raised issues and problems will be addressed through specialized working groups with the presence of experts, analysts, capital market activists and managers from different sectors.

# Water, electricity projects worth nearly \$215m inaugurated in 8 provinces

**→ 1** Four electricity transmission projects valued at 1.5 trillion rials (about \$35.9 million) were also inaugurated in Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad province, while four other electricity network development projects worth 850 billion rials (about \$22 million) went operational in Bushehr province.

In East Azarbaijan, Ardebil and Fars provinces, three electricity industry projects worth 2.83 trillion rials (about \$67.3 million) and in Mazandaran province, one water project valued at 230 billion rials (about \$5.47 million) were also put into operation.

Under the framework of the A-B-Iran program, the Energy Ministry has inaugurated many projects to supply drinking water to the country's rural areas.

The first phase of the A-B-Iran program (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) was initiated in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19, 2020), during which 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion) were put into operation



## Can CGT increase homebuyers' purchasing power?

**→ 1** Now, the question is if CGT can help increase the homebuyers' purchasing power.

While some opponents of the capital gains tax claim that this tax base benefits from inflation and is therefore inflationary, the truth is that this tax prevents inflation.

There are two claims in opposition to CGT.

First, it is said that this tax causes the seller to collect the CGT amount from the buyer, and as a result, it leads to an increase in prices in the housing market.

Secondly, some say that this tax, which is to be collected from the owners from the place of income and increase in the value of housing, is due to general inflation in the society and increase in the price of all goods, and the owner has no role in creating value added and raising housing prices to pay taxes on that income.

On the other hand, many experts emphasize the anti-inflationary nature of the capital gains tax and believe that people are the beneficiaries of this tax.

According to this group of experts, the losers from this tax base are speculators and unofficial traders who seek to earn astronomical profits by creating fictitious inflation and then creating false added value in non-productive assets, while regulatory taxes, especially capital gains tax, are an obstacle to such profits.

Some experts may believe that this tax base will cause stagnation and decline in transactions, but it is not true that it will affect prices; while the mentioned tax base reduces the turnover of the housing sector as well as reduces the incentive to buy and sell frequently and prevents the increase of prices and inflation of housing.



## Iran among IHO's 30 active members



through ports."

According to the official, most of the country's maritime trade is carried out through the southern ports and maritime transportation to the Persian

Gulf nations, as well as countries in the Indian Ocean and the Far East account for a big share of the country's trade exchanges.

Pasandeh noted that in recent years, maritime transportation between Iran and Europe has also been increasing and Iran has been able to have direct exchange of goods with European countries by accessing international waters.

"Undoubtedly, one of the necessities of safe maritime transportation is having access to up-to-date maps of known sea routes and waterways, which is provided by the collection of marine data, using hydrography," he said.

"With hydrography, navigation is done safely in oceans and sea waterways and it can also be used to survey and

determine navigable areas," he added.

According to Pasandeh, in addition to promoting maritime safety, the hydrographic industry engages in other marine activities, including the exploitation of marine resources such as aquatic and mineral resources, the management and protection of the marine environment, maritime demarcation, defense and maritime security, and accident prevention.

The International Hydrographic Organization is an intergovernmental organization representing hydrography. In January 2021 the IHO comprised 94 member states. A principal aim of the IHO is to ensure that the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are properly surveyed and charted.

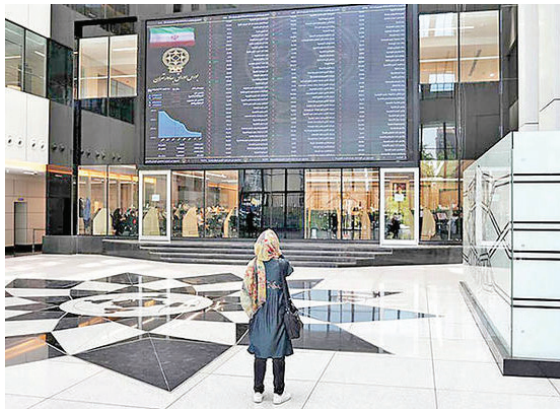
## TSE re-elected as FEAS board member

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) has been elected once again as a main member of the Board of Directors at the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges (FEAS), IRNA reported.

According to the TSE office of Public Relations and International Affairs, the decision was announced during the 32nd meeting of FEAS General Assembly which was held online on Tuesday due to the restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic.

As reported, at this meeting, financial statements for the fiscal year 2020 were approved and the yearlong performance of the FEAS secretariat and committees were reviewed. The roadmap for 2021 was also evaluated by board members.

At the end of the meeting, the attendees voted to select the members of FEAS Board of Directors for a two-year term, and the stock exchanges of Egypt, Ka-



zakhstan, Athens, Sydney, Amman, Muscat, Tehran, Armenia, and Iraq were selected as the main members and Egypt and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development were selected affiliates.

It should be noted that Iran Fara Bourse, stock exchanges of Cyprus, Tashkent, and Palestine along with Armenian Deposits were also selected as members of the Board of Directors of FEAS Audit Committee for two years.

TSE had been elected as the main member of the FEAS Board of Directors in the previous election which took place in 2018.

The Tehran Stock Exchange is Iran's largest stock exchange, which first opened in 1967.

TSE, which is one of the founders of the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges, has been one of the world's best performing stock exchanges in recent years.

## Over 62,000 tons of copper anode produced in 2 months

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran produced 62,325 tons of copper anode during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), which was one percent more than the figure for the same period of time in the past year.

Production of copper anode has risen eight percent in the second month of this year, as 33,286 tons of the product was produced in the second month.

The periodical reports and statistics indicate that Iran's metals sector is progressing both in terms of production and export despite the limitations imposed by the U.S. sanctions.

The country's copper industry is moving forward noticeably, as some outstanding projects are implemented.

Meanwhile, in early April, the managing director of National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICIC) announced the discovery of one billion tons of new

copper reserves in the country.

NICIC carried out 101,000 meters of deep drilling to identify new copper reserves across the country in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), which resulted in the discovery of one billion tons of new reserves, Ardeshir Sa'd-Mohammadi said in a press conference.

Sa'd-Mohammadi put the value of the discovered reserves at 350 trillion rials (about \$8.3 billion).

According to the official, NICIC had also discovered 523 million tons of copper reserves across the country during the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019- March 2020).

Considering the new discoveries, NICIC's total copper reserves across the country have currently surpassed eight billion tons.

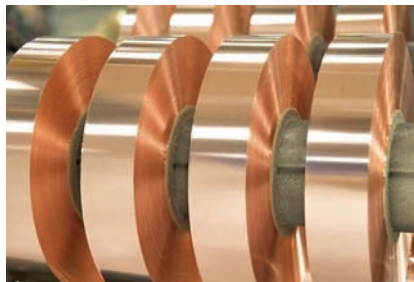
The official put the country's total copper reserves at 40 billion tons, say-

ing that Iran currently has the world's seventh-largest copper reserves, and hopefully the country will climb to sixth place in the current Iranian calendar year.

Sa'd-Mohammadi further mentioned the new record achieved in the country's copper cathode production and noted that over 280,000 tons of the mentioned product were produced in the country during the previous year which was 12 percent more than the preceding year.

Pointing to the NICIC's new projects for the current year, the official noted that three major copper-related projects will go operational in the current year which is going to add more than 400,000 tons to the country's copper concentrate output, boosting the company's annual incomes by \$800 million.

According to Sa'd-Mohammadi, NICIC has defined more than €2.4



billion plus 300 trillion rials (about \$7.1 billion) worth of projects to be implemented over the next four years, which will increase the company's total copper concentrate capacity to 2.3 million tons.

He further noted that the country's copper exports increased in the previous year despite the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions.



# Iran election showed most parties back Islamic Republic: Turkish academic

→ **1** Second, I think we are entering a new era. With the new president of Iran and the highest possible new nuclear deal, these two developments will shape the regional balances. Iran will move towards economic stability, and its regional activities will be more visible, especially after the pandemic.

**How do you see Iran-Turkey relations during Raeisi's presidency? Do you think that change of administration change impacts bilateral ties?**

Turkey-Iran relations are generally immune to presidency changes. I don't expect a significant change in relations. President Erdogan was among the first world leaders who congratulate Mr. Raeisi right after the election results were announced. Erdogan mentioned Turkey's willingness to develop relations with Iran in many areas. There has been a 30-billion-dollar annual trade volume target for years. Unfortunately, these two neighbors could not reach the goal due to sanctions, bureaucratic reasons, etc.

The Covid-19 pandemic has dealt a major blow to trade between countries too. Hopefully, we are about to eradicate the pandemic, and trade volume will increase in the near future. Other than trade, Turkey and Iran have been cooperating on several regional issues. They are the main actors along with Russia in the Astana process, which aims to bring a political solution to the Syrian crisis. Also, there are many issues regarding South Caucasus, especially after Azerbaijan liberated Karabakh last year. Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iran are pivotal actors in this regard, and trilateral cooperation is rather critical.

**Why do Western media prefer to portray Iranian leaders and political features as extremist or hardliner?**

I think the ones who have been portrayed



as extremists are mostly the ones who quest for an independent foreign policy. Of course, every case should be analyzed within its specific conditions. This is not the case for every leader, but mostly it is the case. Because some radical extremist figures like Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman can be portrayed as a "reformist" by Western media as long as he acts accordingly to their interests. This one example is enough for showing Western media's bias.

**Do you think Iran and Persian Gulf Arab states would restore their ties in near future?**

I think both sides have the political will to normalize relations, and they are very close to finalizing an agreement. It is imperative in terms of security, economy and development that neighbors have good relations.

External forces' involvement has been the leading cause of problems between Iran and the other Persian Gulf states. Therefore, the more they resist external powers' temptations, the more they enjoy good relations with neighbors. External actors also fuel threat perceptions and armament race. Regional actors should build trust mechanisms and stop seeing each other as a source of threat.

Of course, to some extent, it is normal for states to take precautions and do military spending to protect their borders. However, exaggerated threat perceptions do more harm than good. The normalization process is also critical because good diplomatic relations will provide the Muslim community with unproblematic Hajj travels. Normalization does not mean the competition between Iran and Persian Gulf Arab states will be over. The

competition will continue on many issues ranging from oil selling to regional influence. However, the competition in the context of normal relations could prevent hot conflicts and significant crises.

**What is your assessment of U.S. policies in West Asia, especially when it comes to Iran?**

Before 1979, Iran and the U.S. were very close. The U.S. could instrumentalize the Pahlavi monarchy in line with its interests in the Middle East (West Asia). However, Iran has adopted the "Neither East, Nor West" policy after the Islamic Revolution, and relations deteriorated immediately.

Since 1979, U.S. policy towards Iran has not changed. It is best described as a "containment" policy. Sanctions are the main pillar of that policy, but there are other elements too. The reason behind this approach is that Washington sees the Islamic Republic of Iran as a "problem." As long as the current system stays in Iran, the White House will not fundamentally change this view. Every U.S. government perceives Iran as a "problem." The question has always been the same: "How should the U.S. deal with this problem?"

The difference lies in the answer. Some of them use sanctions broadly and intensely, while others appeal to diplomatic options, and some do not hesitate to use ground operations and support anti-Iran groups such as MEK. Remember the suspicious accidents, fires, and explosions in Iran during Trump's presidency. U.S. Middle East (West Asia) policy, in general, is determined by Israel's interests, oil money, and "fighting terrorism." However, "fighting terrorism" is a much-contested concept, especially when the U.S. support for YPG/PYD terror groups is considered.

## Khashoggi killers received paramilitary training in U.S.

Four Saudis who were involved in the 2018 killing of the Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi received paramilitary training in the United States the previous year under a contract approved by the State Department, the New York Times reported on Tuesday.

The training was provided by Tier 1 Group, which is owned by the private equity firm Cerberus Capital Management, and was defensive in nature and devised to protect Saudi leaders, the Times reported. Cerberus did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

In response to the Times report, State Department spokesman Ned Price said under the law the department cannot comment "on any of the licensed defense export licensing activity alleged in media reporting."

Khashoggi, a U.S. resident who wrote columns for the Washington Post critical of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was killed and dismembered by a team of operatives linked to the prince, in the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

A U.S. intelligence report in February said the crown prince had approved an operation to capture or kill the journalist.

Cerberus senior executive Louis Bremer confirmed his company's role in the training of four members of the Khashoggi kill team last year in written answers to questions from members of Congress as part of his nomination for a senior Pentagon job in former President Donald Trump's administration, according to the Times.

## Russian defence minister warns about civil war in Afghanistan

In April, the NATO allies took the decision to start withdrawing their forces from Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, that has been in place since 2015.

Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said on Wednesday that there was a possibility of civil war erupting in Afghanistan following NATO's withdrawal.

"After the withdrawal of NATO forces, it is highly probable that a civil war may resume, with all its negative consequences: further deterioration in the life of the population, mass migration, and the spreading of extremism to neighboring states," Shoigu argued.

According to the defense minister, the alliance had failed to achieve "significant results in stabilization" in the country despite nearly 20 years of involvement. Shoigu added that urgent action was needed to change this situation.

"Developments in Afghanistan require the special attention of both neighboring countries and international organizations," he warned. The United States arrived in Afghanistan in 2001 following the 11 September terrorist attacks, kicking off what effectively became the longest military engagement in the country's history.

## World powers meet in Berlin to discuss Libya crisis

World powers met in Berlin on Wednesday to seek lasting peace in Libya by ensuring the conflict-racked North African country stays firmly on the path towards general elections on December 24.

Representatives of Libya's interim government will join U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken as well as the foreign ministers of France and Egypt at the United Nations-sponsored talks.

The efforts to end a decade-long spiral of violence in Libya would be the second round in Berlin, after the first attended by the presidents of Turkey, Russia and France in January 2020.

According to al Jazeera, ahead of Wednesday's talks, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas reminded participants of pledges made last year for an end to international meddling and for foreign fighters or troops to withdraw.

## Hamas: No more Israeli blackmail; prisoner-for-prisoner exchange sole option

Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has vowed to resist the Israeli policy of blackmailing Palestinians, saying the great Palestinian people and resistance will not keep silent in the face of Tel Aviv violations and crimes, including the regime's delay to lift the 14-year siege on the Gaza Strip.

"We are ready for all options and we will resist by any means and the enemy will not succeed in its policy of blackmailing," Hamas said in a statement on Tuesday, after its leader in the Gaza Strip, Yahya Sinwar, warned that Israel has no will to end the humanitarian crisis in the besieged enclave.

According to Palestine Today, Hamas underlined its preparedness to respond to Israel's failure to lift the siege on Gaza, but said the lifting of the siege is not linked with releasing Israeli prisoners.

The Zionist prisoners will be exchanged only with Palestinian prisoners, it said, adding, "We will not accept pressure on our nation and we will not allow different cases to get mixed up."

According to Press TV, the Palestinian movement also lauded Palestinians in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds for their daily struggle to defend their land against Israeli acts of aggression, vowing to support the al-Quds cause at any cost.

## Resistance News

## Settlers storm Sheikh Jarrah, threaten to displace families

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** **TEHRAN**—A horde of extremist Jewish settlers on Tuesday stormed the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah under police escort and threatened three families with expulsion from their homes.

The settler raids on homes were led by Betzael Smotrich, a Knesset member and leader of the religious Zionist party, and the director of the Ateret Cohanim settler society.

According to local sources, the settlers tried to break into three homes in the neighborhood belonging to the families of Diyab, al-Kurd and Qasem, brutalized the families and threatened to forcibly expel them from their homes within one month.

A brawl happened with the settlers and police forces as members of those Jerusalemite families were trying to fend them off and prevent them from entering their homes.

Dozens of Palestinian families in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah and Batn al-Hawa are threatened with mass displacement from their homes to make way for Jewish settlers.

## Russian analyst says U.S. has no productive role in Vienna talks

“American establishment is unpredictable and there is no trust”

By M. A. Saki

**TEHRAN** – Slamming U.S. negative role in the Vienna talks, a Russian political analyst is of the opinion that the U.S. is interested to keep diplomatic pressure against Iran.

"The U.S. is interested to keep pressure on Iran using different tools of preventive diplomacy," Leonid Savin tells the Tehran Times.

"Even with the engagement of Russia and China, there is a kind of umbrella of old thinking," Savin adds. "It is because the White House has a stereotypical idea about Iran."

Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you assess the Vienna nuclear deal talks? Are you optimistic about a removal of U.S. sanctions on Iran?**

There is a problem because negotiations are going on in an old way that is based on a Western-centric approach in general. Even with the engagement of Russia and China, there is a kind of umbrella of old thinking. The U.S. is interested to keep pressure on Iran, using different tools of preventive diplomacy. It is because the White House has a stereotypical idea about Iran. I think it is better that the U.S. be excluded from the process of talks, but it is mostly impossible.

**How do you see Russia's role in reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal?**

Russia is following the initial agreement and is the guar-



antor of the process of enrichment of uranium in general. But again, there is a negative impact of American involvement. At least Russia understands well what Iran wants to achieve and we are both under sanctions. So, Moscow is interested to support Iran to keep its sovereignty.

**What is your comment on the recent escalation between Russia and the U.S.? Is Biden going to confront Russia more directly?**

Because of the announcement of new sanctions against Russia by the U.S. just after the meeting of Putin and Biden it seems that the American establishment is unpredictable

and there is no trust. The U.S. is interested to stop any co-operation of Russia with EU countries as well as Moscow's ties with Beijing. On other hand, there are divisions inside U.S. politics on many issues. But anyway, the U.S. is obliged to do something.

**How do you describe Russia-U.S. relations? Partnership despite rivalry or enmity? Are we back to the Cold War again?**

I think we are in front of a new level of confrontation. It is different from than the Cold War era because the world is not bipolar but going to multipolarity.

For the U.S., it is more difficult to influence Russia and its own partners. But the U.S. still is interested to be a hegemon. So, they are going mad and harbor a deep resentment against Russia, China, Iran, and other actors who are interested to build polycentric world order.

**Do you think that Asian states have the potential to form a bloc to contain U.S. influence? It seems that China is eager to form this bloc economically in Asia.**

Of course. From an economic aspect, more than 30% of the world GDP is from Asia. G7 now is going to witness a decline. Demographically, Asia is also much more populated than the transatlantic West. And what is important is that most Asian countries are interested in more global political system without U.S. influence. So, I am optimistic about the role of Asian countries, including Russia.

## Breakdown - U.S. administration seizes dozens of websites in West Asia

→ **1** **What has been the reaction from Washington?**

The notice which appeared on all the websites whose domains had been shut down read: "This website has been seized. The domain has been seized by the United States Government in accordance with a seizure warrant issued pursuant to 18 U.S.C 981 982, and 50 U.S.C 1701 a 1705 as part of a law enforcement action by the Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement and Federal Bureau of Investigation."

The alleged legislation is very vague and wide to pinpoint exactly why the sites have been seized. One analyst has said that the US codes cited in the notices are "civil and criminal forfeiture and powers given to the U.S. President during a national emergency". In a statement, the U.S. Department of Justice, claims that the websites had been "targeting the United States with disinformation campaigns".

**What do these websites have in common?**

All the news channels whose sites have been seized have one thing in common. Their narrative is different from that of American media outlets and media outlets that are allied to the United States. For example, they offered the other side of the story to events unfolding in Yemen or Palestine.

**What now for the websites targeted?**

Iranian based websites such as Press TV, al-Alam, or al-Kawther are online like before under the domain ir.

For example, Presstv.ir or al-Alam.ir

contains all the stories and content, like before, as it has been publishing reports in sync with other domains. Yemen's al-masirah.net was quick to open a new working website at almasirah.com. Other channels are expected to follow suit in a similar fashion by changing their domain ID.

**The Timing ..**

The U.S. has a history of censoring Iranian media outlets, especially on social media platforms. Different social media giants such as Facebook, Google and YouTube have shut down Iranian media accounts on multiple occasions. The seizure of the website domains comes days after the Iranian nation turned out en masse, despite the coronavirus pandemic, to vote in the country's 13 Presidential elections. The large turnout came amid U.S. mainstream media using the MKO terrorist organization as their source to discredit the democratic elections. Many analysts have highlighted that there are no elections or very rarely held in West Asia and unheard of among Washington Persian Gulf allies whose people are ruled by tribes. It also comes as talks are ongoing in Vienna with a view to reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal following America's unilateral withdrawal from the international agreement.

**What has been the reaction to the seizures?**

The Iranian Presidential Office says "closing a number of our news websites is an unconstructive measure in light of the Vienna nuclear negotiations".

The owners of the popular Ansarullah movement have condemned the U.S. move saying "it signifies that these TV networks are

influential and their activities have frightened the hegemonic regimes that claim to be advocates of freedom of speech". A senior member of the movement, Mohamad Ali al-Houthi, added that the seizures showed the true face of those claiming to be democratic". Anger is mounting over the seizures. Mike Wallace, a member of the European Parliament, sarcastically asked that "no doubt the defenders of freedom and democracy in the EU + NGO's worldwide, will be out in force to condemn the U.S. for this blatant attack on journalism? Freedom of speech is under threat from U.S. imperialism, and all those who support it". Reactions from activists and campaigners to the development have also been flowing in. Television host, Lee Camp, says "this sets a horrifying precedent in which the U.S. shuts down the flow of information except for U.S.-approved propaganda. Meanwhile, the director at the center for counter-hegemonic studies, Tim Anderson, says this "shows that Washington is deeply disturbed by the credibility of the Iranian media". He also questions "why is the U.S. so desperate to sabotage independent media sites, especially those from Iran?". Investigate journalist, Alex Rubinstein, notes that "between shutting down Iran's media websites and a few weeks ago stealing off \$100m of its crude oil it is clear that the Biden regime will take what they want from Iran by force, these are not the actions of good-faith negotiators". Activist, Richard Medhurst, says "This is America's so-called freedom of speech and democracy. The United States is a criminal organization. They're scared of anti-imperialist and pro-Palestine outlets so they

shut them down. Cowards". The founder and chairman of the international solidarity committee with Yemen, Rune Agerhus, says "this American ban on the al-Masirah Net Website and other friendly websites reveals, once again, the falsehood of the slogans of freedom of expression and all the other headlines promoted by the United States of America, including its inability to confront the truth".

**Analysis**

It does appear that the former U.S. administration's so-called maximum pressure campaign which was designed to suffocate every aspect of Iranian society and bring the nation to its knees, continues under the current administration of President Joe Biden. Analysts say this is the American deep state at play and all falls under the pretext that Washington wants to portray the Islamic Republic as a destabilizing actor in the region to benefit the American military-industrial complex. These allegations against Tehran had been widely dismantled by the very same media outlets whose websites have now been seized. But the latest measure undertaken by the White House looks like it has backfired already. The outpour of anger towards the self-proclaimed flag bearer of democracy and free speech in the world doesn't exactly look well when only YOU are allowed to speak. Critics would say this is the very definition of totalitarianism. And it would be difficult to put up an argument against that. Democracies should allow all voices to be heard and offer the viewer the opportunity to choose which narrative they wish to believe.



## Ali Sadr Cave reopens to visitors as coronavirus curbs eased

➔ **1** Located some 70km north of Hamadan in west-central Iran, Ali Sadr is a gigantic water-filled cavern widely believed to date from the Jurassic era.

The cave embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes, and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.



Sightseeing there is connected with traversing in well-lit labyrinths of waterways via paddle boats, walking on subterranean islets, as well as observing rock carvings of hunting scenes, artifacts, paintings, and vessels that are associated with prehistorical troglodytes.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there's a scattering of historical curiosities.

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

## Work starts to restore and protect ancient bazaar

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — A project has been launched to restore and protect one of the ancient labyrinth marketplaces of Iran: the Bazaar of Gheisariyeh.

Located in the city of Lar in Fars province, the Bazaar of Gheisariyeh has a long history of trade but its shops and vaulted structure date back to the Safavid era (1501-1736).



“So far, a budget of 1,468 billion rials (some \$35,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project,” the provincial tourism chief said on Wednesday.

Bazaar is, originally, a public market district of a Persian town. The bazaar of the ancient Islamic world was vividly described in the folktales of “The Thousand and One Nights”. Located in a distinct quarter of a town, it was bustling and noisy by day in contrast to the quiet residential quarters. Access was forbidden after sundown.

Distinctive architecture characterized some bazaars—such as those built at Kashan and Isfahan in Iran in the 17th century. They were usually roofed for protection against the hot desert sun, either with a single roof, with individual vaulted cupolas or domes, or with awnings.

## Properties in Kordestan made national heritage

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A total of 17 historical sites and aging structures scattered across Kordestan province, have been inscribed on the national heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism declared the inscriptions on Wednesday in a letter to the governor-general of the western province, CHTN reported.

Palangan Jameh Mosque and historical sites of Banqola, Kohnneh Deh, Kani Khosro, and Navteng were added to the prestigious list.

Jasemnejad and Rashidi mansions, Kani Tanureh Castle, Kani Gachi ancient hill, and Mohammadi Olia Mosque were amongst other properties inscribed on the list.



The name Kordestan refers to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuq period), that name was given to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains.

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

# Safavid-era caravanserai to turn into tourism complex

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The first round of restoration work has recently been completed on a Shah Abbasi caravanserai in Eyvanekey, Garmsar county, to turn the inn into a tourism complex.

The Safavid-era (1501–1736) caravanserai is planned to turn into a tourism complex with accommodation centers and restaurants after being fully restored, Garmsar's tourism chief has said.

A budget of 60 billion rials (\$1.4 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, which is being carried out by the private sector, Mahvash Kamali announced on Wednesday.

Caravanserai has four iwans (porches) and a unique entrance, making it one of the most beautiful historical structures in the area, the official added.

There are 24 rooms and two Shahنشin (large rooms) on the east and west sides of the building, which is constructed from clay, mud, brick, and stone, she explained.

The famed Safavid king, Shah Abbas I (1571-



1629), is credited with building a network of caravanserais across Persia (Iran) during the much later Safavid dynasty.

Caravanserai is a compound word combining “caravan” with “sara or serai” . The former stands for a group of travelers and Sara mean the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Such roadside inns were originally built in various epochs along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world to shelter people, their goods, and animals. The former Silk Roads may be the most famous example dotted by caravanserais.

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550 -330 BC). For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai can be a wide experience as they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age.

## Impact of coronavirus on World Heritage will be felt for years, UNESCO says

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — The global coronavirus outbreak is the sort of disaster whose effects on World Heritage sites will last for years to come, according to a study conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

To understand the impact of COVID-19 on World Heritage one year after the start of the pandemic, UNESCO launched a far-reaching survey of site managers and national authorities. The UN body has published the results in the report ‘World Heritage in the face of COVID-19’.

At the height of the crisis, it was reported that 90% of countries with World Heritage properties had closed or partially closed them and respondents to this survey still reported an average figure of 71% closure of sites in February 2021.

Visitors to World Heritage sites dropped by 66% in 2020 according to respondents and at sites where staff redundancies were reported (13% of sites in the survey), an average of 40% of permanent staff and 53% of temporary staff were made

redundant at those sites, the UNESCO said.

Respondents overwhelmingly reported large impacts on local communities, especially from the loss of revenue due to huge reductions in visitors to World Heritage sites and grave concerns about the future. Some World Heritage properties also reported cases of illegal logging and mining, poaching, and vandalism due to the reduction of monitoring and a decrease in managed visitation.

Some respondents recommended a recovery process that includes measures to support the tourism sector and communities and to safeguard livelihoods in the transition towards more versatile and resilient World Heritage site management. The uncertainty surrounding the current crisis has suggested a policy of re-alignment of properties towards domestic tourism for many stakeholders in the short-term, providing, however, the equally important opportunity to “Build Back Better”.

Iran is filled with numerous tourist spots such as ba-



zaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The country is a heaven for those interested in cultural tourism, a subset of traveling that traces the nation's lifestyle in various geographical areas, their history, their arts, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life over time.

## Lake Gahar to enjoy better tourism infrastructure

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The tourism infrastructure of Lake Gahar, a freshwater lake located on the slopes of Oshtorankuh Mountain, western Lorestan province, is planned to be developed, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

A budget of four billion rials (\$95,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Wednesday.

The project involves improving tourism amenities, pathways, and recreational areas along the lake, as well as upgrading the water supply system, the official added.

Back in March, the province's tourism



officials announced that Iran is preparing a comprehensive dossier for Lake Gahar to be submitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in near future.

Encircled by snowcapped mountains, the exquisite alpine lake is a bustling tourist resort in western Iran that attracts many sightseers and environment buffs every year.

The property is nestled under the southern wall of the Oshtorankuh range in a protected nature reserve. It is made up of two smaller lakes that are situated within 100 meters of each other named the Upper Gahar and the Lower Gahar in Lorestan province.

## Iranian police arrest suspected smuggler, seize ancient coins

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Iranian police forces have arrested a person suspected of smuggling ancient artifacts and recovered seven ancient coins.

The lawbreaker was traced and finally arrested at his place in the city of Kashan after the authorities received reports from cultural heritage aficionados, Kashan tourism chief Mehran Sarmadian said, IRIB reported.

“Of the 18 coins discovered, 11 are counterfeit and seven-date from the historical and Islamic eras,” the official said.

About 220 CE the Sasanian dynasty of Iran introduced the concept of thin flan coins. The Muslim conquest of Persia, also known as the Arab conquest of Iran, led to the fall of the Sasanian Empire of Iran (Persia) in ca. 651 and the

eventual decline of the Zoroastrian religion. The rise of Muslims coincided with an unprecedented political, social, economic, and military weakness in Persia.

The conquering Muslims at first mimicked the coinage of their predecessors. In the western provinces, they issued gold and copper pieces imitated from contemporary Byzantine coins, modifying the cross on the reverse of the latter somewhat to suit Muslim sensibilities. In the eastern provinces, the Arab governors issued silver dirhams that were copies of late Sasanian coins (mostly of those of Khosrow II; with the addition of short Arabic inscriptions on the margin and often the name of the Arab governor in Pahlavi; even the crude representation of the fire altar was retained.

## Persian handicrafts: carpets of Fars

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Many Iranian cities and villages enjoy global reputations for carpet weaving in terms of intricate designs, lavish colors, and peerless craftsmanship.

The history of carpet weaving in the southern Fars province is very long and its exact date is quite ambiguous; however, evidence suggests that carpet weaving in Fars dates for millennia. Historians point to the presence of carpets in Cyrus' tomb during Alexander's invasion of Iran.

The eighth-century AH was the peak of Fars carpet weaving. The fame of Fars carpet in this period was so great that Ghazan Khan asked local artists to weave Fars carpets for his palace. In the ninth and tenth centuries AH, with the presence of more Qashqai, Khamseh tribes, and other tribes in this province, carpet weaving flourished in this region. This art continued until the present and became one of the main features of this region.

Moreover, the nomadic lifestyle has a direct impact on using of elements of nature. People in this area created beauties and these beauties emerged to the Fars carpets gradually.

Regarding the Persian carpet, along with the most famous examples of it, which are the Qashqai and Khamseh carpets, we can also mention the weavings of the surrounding villages in this province.

In addition to the numerous varieties of designs and styles that exist in these types of rugs and carpets, there are also commonalities, such as the existence of geometric designs or the use of cheerful colors that are inspired by the nature of this region. The most important common denominator among all types of Fars handicrafts is the loose texture of the knots and their lightweight, and of course, the dominance of geometric designs can be seen at first glance.

Due to the high volume of Fars carpets woven by nomadic women in this region, the loom carpet used for it is different. For example, unlike many areas, the loom carpet in this area is mostly on the ground and horizontal so that it can be easily moved during migration.

Fars carpets usually have a mental design and are woven in pairs or with a rug. The first carpet is called the “order” carpet, and the carpet or rug is woven with the ordered rug



with the help of its design or mentally and inspired by the order carpet design.

Traditional motifs or patterns are often woven mentally and have a geometric structure. The most important feature of this type of Fars carpets is symmetry weaving. Fars Carpets are woven symmetrically with traditional motifs from their horizontal or vertical halves.

For weaving Fars carpets and rugs, according to the UN cultural body, wool for the carpets is shorn by local men in spring or autumn. The men then construct the carpet loom – a horizontal frame placed on the ground – while the women convert the wool into yarn on spinning wheels. The colors used

are mainly natural: reds, blues, browns, and whites produced from dyestuffs including madder, indigo, lettuce leaf, walnut skin, cherry stem, and pomegranate skin.

The women are responsible for the design, color selection, and weaving, and bring scenes of their nomadic lives to the carpet. They weave without any cartoon (design) – no weaver can weave two carpets of the same design.

Colored yarn is tied to the wool web to create the carpet. To finish, the sides are sewn, extra wool is burned away to make the designs vivid, and the carpet is given a final cleaning.

All these skills are transferred orally and by example. Mothers train their daughters to use the materials, tools, and skills, while fathers train their sons in shearing wool and making looms.

The ancient region of Fars also spelled Pars, or Persis was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.



# 12 Asian, South American, European countries seeking Iranian COVID-19 vaccine

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** – Eleven countries from Asia and South America, and a European country have asked for importing Iranian-made coronavirus vaccine (COVIRAN BAREKAT), Hassan Jalili, the vaccine's production manager, said on Wednesday.

"However, it is the Health Ministry that sets the policy for exporting vaccines," he added, Tasnim reported.

Results of the second human trial phase showed that the vaccine creates immunity by 93.5 percent, he noted.

"We are preparing documents related to the vaccine to be sent to the World Health Organization once the third clinical phase is completed."

COVIRAN BAREKAT, the first corona-



virus vaccine made by researchers at the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam which was unveiled on December 29, 2020, started to be mass-produced on March 29.

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

Iran has also started human trials of Fakhra vaccine, the third domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine, named after martyred nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

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

## Iran sets up center to export bio-products to east Africa

→ 1 In the next stage, the products of 10 other companies with a focus on animal supplements and human probiotics have been selected to enter the market of this region after testing.

The establishment of specialized foreign offices in other countries is an action taken by the Biotechnology Development Council of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology with the aim of expanding the export of bio-based products in international markets. It is planned to establish specialized offices in other countries by the end of March 2022.

**800 knowledge-based firms active in biotechnology**

Nearly 800 knowledge-based companies in the country are currently operating in the field of biotechnology and supplying their products and services to the domestic market.

Among the companies, a number of them have made significant progress in the field of bioactive technology and have commercialized domestic products.

The Biotechnology Development Council of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology supports knowledge-based, creative companies and technologists active in this field

and has provided the ground for the commercialization of products that help promote community health.

Earlier in May, the Biotechnology Development Council launched 129 production projects with the aim of saving up to \$1.44 billion of foreign currency; the projects include the production of 27 biological medicine, 12 vaccine development, and 90 pharmaceutical raw materials through knowledge-based companies.

**Over 5,700 knowledge-based companies**

Currently, over 5,700 knowledge-based companies are active in Iran, manufacturing diverse products to meet the needs of the domestic market while saving large amounts of foreign currency, in addition to export the items.

The fields of aircraft maintenance, steel, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, oil, and gas are among the sectors that researchers in technology companies have engaged in, leading to import reduction.

**Iran ranks 12th in biotechnology**

Iran is ranked 12th in the world and first in West Asia

in terms of biotechnology, as 9.5 percent of the income of knowledge-based companies and more than 60 percent of their exports are related to biotechnology.

Foreign exchange savings of \$1 billion per year by producing 22 biopharmaceuticals, gaining the first rank in biotechnology products and vaccines in West Asia, and the presence among the top five biotechnology producers in Asia are among the country's achievements, Mostafa Ghanei, secretary of the biotechnology development office of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, said in October 2020.

So far, 27 biotechnology medicines, 12 vaccine projects, 90 pharmaceutical raw materials, and 55 projects in agriculture and food security have been implemented in order to gain a 3 percent market share and biotechnology assistance to the development of the economy, he explained.

Some 8 major companies are responsible for managing the country's 117 priority products in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical raw materials, vaccines, probiotics, equipment, and chemical drugs, he emphasized.

## Tehran to host intl. workshop on space technology for drought, flood

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** – The International Workshop on the Space Technology Applications for Drought, Flood, and Water Resource Management will be held in Tehran from August 9 to 11.

The event is organized by the Iranian Space Agency and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs through the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER).

The workshop will discuss the latest scientific and practical advances in the applications of space technologies to solve problems related to water scarcity and natural hazards.

It will explore how current space technologies help to identify and monitor the

effects of a changing climate – including the onset of drought, flash floods, and generally water resources conditions as a result of global climate change in particular on an international and regional scale.

The discussions at the Workshop will also be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main objectives of the Workshop are, therefore, to promote collaborative research, identification of challenges, and provide recommendations to enhance regional efforts towards disaster management and emergency response.

The workshop is being planned for disaster management professionals, technical experts, researchers, and educators from international, regional, national, and local

institutions, academic institutions, multi-lateral and bilateral development agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as from private industry.

The expected outcomes of the workshop include recommendations and findings on the use of space technology, facilitate the partnerships between countries in the region and international networks, define a road map to address issues and concerns identified during the workshop, and nurture the ideas of pilot projects and research to strengthen collaboration at a regional scale.

**More drought predicted over next 5 years**

According to the World Meteorological Organization's multiannual forecast, in the

next five years, Iran's average rainfall will decline by 75 percent, and the temperature rises by 50-75 percent compared to the long-term average.

Accordingly, the adoption of national policies to adapt to low rainfall and reduce the consequences of drought is inevitable, and the Seventh Development Plan should be prepared on the basis of drought and climate change, Vazifeh said in May.

A large part of the country has been hit by severe drought during the past 12 months. Forecasts indicate that we will not have significant rainfall in the remaining months of the current water year, so that, we face severe to very severe drought in most parts of the country, he stated.

## Renewable water resources decline by 30%

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** – Renewable water resources have decreased by 30 percent over the last four decades, while Iran's population has increased by about 2.5 times, Qasem Taqizadeh, deputy minister of energy, has stated.

The current water year (started on September 23, 2020) has received the lowest rain in the past 52 years, so climate change and Iran's arid region should become a common belief at all levels, he lamented, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Referring to the total capacity of Iran's dam reservoirs standing at 50.5 billion cubic meters, he said that as a result of flood management activities in previous years, the dam levels are 60 percent full, which is 28 percent less than last year (March 2020-March 2021), Taqizadeh noted.

The country's water resources must be managed on the basis of a document on adaptation to water scarcity, which has been prepared in cooperation with all water-related sectors, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Environment, the Ministry of Industry, and the Meteorological Organization.

Under the document, within the next 5 to 15 years, in each of the sectors of agriculture and industry, certain amounts of water should be saved, he explained.

"We have to resist cultivation of water-consuming crops in the agriculture sector so that we should not grow rice in areas where drinking water is scarce," he highlighted.

Stating that Tehraners consume 20 to 30 percent more water than the national average, he said that "the average water consumption per Tehrani citizen is 240 liters daily, which is 200 liters in the country."

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

**Groundwater resources declining**

A recent report by Nature Scientific Journal on Iran's water crisis indicates that from 2002 to 2015, over 74 billion cubic meters have been extracted from aquifers, which is unprecedented and its revival takes thousands of years along with urgent action.

Three Iranian scientists studied 30 basins in the country and realized that the rate of aquifer depletion over a 14-year period has been about 74 billion cubic meters, which is recently published in Nature Scientific Journal.

Also, over-harvesting in 77 percent of Iran has led to more land subsidence and soil salinity. Research and statistics show that the average overdraft from the country's aquifers was about 5.2 billion cubic meters per year.

Mohammad Darvish, head of the environment group in

the UNESCO Chair on Social Health that the situation of groundwater resources is worrisome.

The report notes that Iran's water consumption has increased due to a significant increase in legal and illegal wells, the expansion of agricultural land, and increasing livelihood dependence on water and soil resources in agriculture, livestock, and poultry, which are mainly caused by human factors, Darvish noted.

The statistic is unprecedented, as the total reservoirs of all dams in the country have a capacity of about 50 billion cubic meters; In other words, in the last 14 years, 22 billion cubic meters more than the capacity of all dams have been extracted from the country's underground sources, he explained.

**More drought**

In March, Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management, forecasted that the country will not receive much rain until the end of summer (September 23). A month later, he announced that an unprecedented drought had occurred in some parts of the country.

This is while in the following weeks, statistics showed that precipitation has declined by 60 percent in Iran over the first two months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-May 21) compared to the same period last year.

And, it dropped by 41 percent compared to the long-term average.

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## E-motorbikes come to curb air pollution in metropolises

The first phase of electric motorcycles development project will be implemented aiming at reducing air pollution in Tehran and other metropolises, IRNA news agency reported.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Tuesday that electric motorcycles will be promoted in big cities in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Through the first phase of the project, electric motorcycles will replace the regular ones used by the Ministry of Energy and state-run companies, he explained.

Ardakanian went on to say that, in addition to electric motorcycles being manufactured and marketed from now on, existing motorcycles will also change to use electricity sources.

## آغاز طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوا

مرحله نخست طرح برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با هدف کاهش آلودگی هوای تهران و دیگر کلانشهرها آغاز می شود.

به گزارش ایرنا، رضا اردکانیان وزیر نیرو روز سه شنبه گفت برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌ها با همکاری وزارت صنعت، معدن و تجارت انجام خواهد شد.

وی افزود: هدف این طرح در گام نخست، برقی کردن موتورسیکلت‌های مورد استفاده وزارت نیرو و شرکت‌های دولتی است.

اردکانیان اضافه کرد بر این اساس علاوه بر اینکه از این پس موتورسیکلت برقی تولید و وارد بازار می شود، موتورسیکلت‌های موجود نیز برای مالکان آنها برقی می شوند.

## COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. June 22

New cases	11,059
New deaths	112
Total cases	3,128,395
Total deaths	83,329
New hospitalized patients	1,299
Patients in critical condition	3,236
Total recovered patients	2,784,014
Diagnostic tests conducted	22,821,277
Doses of vaccine injected	5,429,004

## Forests and forestry in Iran

(Part 1)

Less than 2 percent of Persia is covered by forests, while another 8 to 9 percent may be regarded as depleted former forest areas. Thus, altogether 150-160,000 km<sup>2</sup> are, or have been, densely forested areas.

From a botanical and ecological perspective, Persia's forest vegetation is not uniform. On the contrary, in line with the country's ecological differentiation, Hans Bobek (1951) defines four different types of natural forests and forest-like brushwood: 1) humid forests, 2) semi-humid/semi-arid forests, 3) steppes and deserts with loose stands and brushwood, and 4) riparian forests/coastal forests. Other less differentiating surveys distinguish three different forest formations, covering an area of approximately 180,000 km<sup>2</sup>: "formations xeriques," "formations sub-xeriques," and "formations subhumides et humides" (Djazirei). Again, others such as Henri Pabot, favoring regional as well as overall ecological approaches to vegetation formations, speak simply of Caspian or Zagrosian forests or, even more broadly, of types of "steppe-forest areas." Viewed in terms of the economy and ecology, only the humid and semi-humid/semi-arid forests may be termed genuine forest areas.



(1) Humid forests are almost exclusively concentrated on the southern fringes of the Caspian Sea and the rain-fed northern slopes of the Alborz range. Characterized by what were once extremely dense stands of trees with thick and almost impenetrable undergrowth and a great variety of species, the humid forests of the Caspian littoral are subdivided into two distinct subtypes: the so-called Hyrcanian forest and, approximately 1000 m above sea-level, the humid montane forest.

The Hyrcanian forest, which once stretched from Talesh in the west through Gilan and Mazandaran into the western parts of Gorgan, covering the Caspian lowlands as well as the lower parts of the northern Alborz slopes, shares many formal similarities with genuine tropical forests: a several-storied growth structure, a great capacity for regeneration, dense undergrowth with liana vegetation, and a large variety of different plant species. Approximately fifty tree and sixty shrub species have been identified. This forest, partly a relic of the much more extensive warm temperate forests of the past, stretching from southern and central Europe to parts of northern Asia in late Tertiary times, contains a number of endemic species of flora and fauna that are now seriously endangered or have already become extinct. The Hyrcanian forest, which until the late 19th and early 20th century was in large stretches an unspoiled tropical-subtropical environment, has besides a great number of evergreens like *Buxus sempervirens* (Eng. box-tree); *Prunus laurocerasus* (Eng. cherry-laurel), *Ruscus hyrcanus* (Eng. box-holly), and *Ilex aquifolium* (Eng. holly, Per., raj), a number of endemic species such as *Quercus castaneaefolia*; *Parrotia persica* (Eng. Persian parrotia or ironwood), *Pterocarya fraxinifolia* (Eng. wingnut), *Albizia julibrissin* (Eng. silk-tree), and *Gleditsia caspica* (Eng. Caspian honey-locust) Many of these species are, however, greatly endangered because of over-cutting and/or selective exploitation.

With falling levels of rainfall and temperature, the Hyrcanian forests proper (which used to appear at their most typical in the Caspian lowlands) have been replaced from 800 to 1000 m above sea-level by the humid montane forests.

The humid montane forests, covering not only the high reaches of the northern slopes of the Alborz, but also parts of the Colchian forest regions in the west as well as certain areas of the Qarabagh and Qaradagh mountains in northwestern Persia, fall into two distinct sections. Following Pabot, they may be termed the medium forest belt (800 to 2000 m) and the upper forest belt, or "sub-alpine belt" (2000 to 2700 m).

(Source: *Encyclopædia Iranica*)



## Without water, everything withers



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The mind of a wise man is the safest custody of secrets; cheerfulness is the key to friendship; patience and forbearance will conceal many defects.

Imam Ali (AS)

## History of art in Iran during Safavid to Qajar Periods:

### Part 3

Elegance of line, whether figural or calligraphic, was more important than solidity of image or legibility of epigraph. Similarly, surface values whether the sheen of a silk carpet, the luster glaze of a pot, or the reflective surface of a polished steel vessel were more esteemed than a sense of heavy substance.

Inlaid gold was replaced by gilding, and figural images are rendered with attention to texture of clothing and flesh rather than volume. Within these canons idealized images coexist with those which appear more inclined toward naturalism, both perhaps views of the same inner reality of which Sadeqi speaks.

### Early Safavid period (1501-87)

According to literary accounts, the first Safavid ruler, Shah Esmail I (1501-24), was an active builder, but few monuments survive to testify to his architectural patronage. Portal inscriptions on two extant monuments, the Harun-e Welayat tomb and the Masjed-e Ali in Isfahan, do indicate that the public proclamation of official Shia doctrine was of central importance to the king.

This kind of strident statement is rarely encountered in the portable arts of the Safavid period, which usually express milder, more mystical attitudes.

Thus the articulation of Shia Islam and the shah's special relationship to it, which is found in the inscriptions on a brass inkwell, likely made for Esmail himself, is extremely uncommon.

During the first Safavid century portable luxury artifacts are predominantly private arts that convey personal taste rather than official conviction.

The evidence for Esmail's patronage of the precious manuscript is more extensive than for his activity as a builder. Like his contemporary Babor in India, the young monarch had a developed appreciation for fine painting and calligraphy, as well as for the classics of Iranian literature.

But while the Mughal emperor's esthetic inclined toward the cerebral architectonics of the late-Timurid master Behzad, Esmail's taste was for the more turbulent and emotional paintings and drawings done for the Aq Qoyunlu Turkmens of western Iran, where Esmail had come of age.

This continuity of taste can be demonstrated by a manuscript of fundamental importance. Begun under the Aq Qoyunlu in Tabriz in 1481, this Khamseh of Nezami was incomplete when Esmail took that city in 1501.

The nine illustrations finished before the shah acquired the manuscript are among the finest creations of Turkmen art: they show a natural setting far livelier and more colorful than in Behzad's work; this master's concern with psychological relationships and logical space and proportions is also largely absent.

Much of this wilder ambience is visible in the natural and architectural settings of the ten pictures added to the manuscript about 1505 by Shah Esmail's atelier, though faces have become rounder and figures somewhat stockier in this page attributed to Soltan Mohammad. The new shah had inherited the artists of the Turkmens.

Present research has not yet been able to define the later development of painting under Shah Esmail. In 1522 the shah's heir, eight-year-old Prince Tahmasp, was recalled to Tabriz from Herat where he had been nominal governor since 1516.

It is likely that the Herat master Behzad accompanied him, for this painter was appointed director of the royal library on 24 April 1522. The appointment must have been to Tahmasp's liking; educated in Herat, he would presumably have identified correct painting with Behzad's style. A small roundel by Behzad in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., depicts a youth and old man and indicates that the aging master was still a powerful and imaginative painter.

His immediate influence on the Tabriz court artists is demonstrated by a small copy of Arefi's Guy o Chowgan, completed in 1524-25 and presented by Tahmasp to his tutor, Qazi Jahan.

The scribe was the young prince himself, and the paintings were done by the leading masters at the court, surely including both Behzad and Soltan Mohammad, who with consummate skill had accommodated himself to the controlled, Behzadian art favored by Tahmasp.

In the same year Tahmasp became shah and despite his youth emerged as a patron of imagination and discernment. The next twenty years saw the production of a series of manuscripts that rank among the finest works of Iranian painting and calligraphy.

Shortly after his accession he ordered the creation of a royal Shahnameh, and the production of this great book of 759 pages and 258 paintings by the leading masters in the king's library was to continue for the next two decades.

Its pages necessarily reflect the development of painting during the early part of Tahmasp's reign. The earliest pictures are still very much in the Tabriz mode, and it has been ably argued that Soltan Mohammad was consciously trying to win the young shah over to less Behzadian art.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

# Hyderabad children showcase impression of Shiraz at painting exhibit “A Color from the East”

→1 Consequently, due to the great enthusiasm the webinar generated for Shiraz, the Indian filmmaker Maheshwar Rao, who is also a social activist, decided to introduce the attractions of the city to the children of his homeland.

“Rao held meetings on Shiraz at several schools in Hyderabad, calling on students to draw their perceptions of the city in their paintings. The outcome was ‘A Color from the East’,” Mazaherizadeh said.

The exhibition hanging 40 paintings selected from submissions from 200 schoolchildren will run until July 6.

Saeidreza Kamrani, the director of the Shiraz branch of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults,

also attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition.

“Undoubtedly, art has had an irreplaceable role in conveying a message, and now we see that children from India have produced amazing paintings of Shiraz so that we as visitors suppose that they have been citizens of Shiraz,” he said.

Mazaherizadeh also said that children have a special place in Shiraz Municipality's policy for international cooperation.

He announced a plan by the Shiraz Municipality to organize an international children's painting event with cities around the world that have signed twin city agreements with Shiraz, which houses numerous cultural heritage sites, including



Documentarian Hamid Mojtahedi in an undated photo.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Iranian filmmaker Hamid Mojtahedi, the man behind the “Iran” documentaries that recorded a large number of historical and religious sites in his homeland for 20 years, died on Tuesday at the age of 80, his son Amir-Hossein said.

He was suffering from liver cancer and was admitted to



A poster for the exhibition “A Color from the East” depicts an Indian girl holding her paintings of the Nasir-al-Molk Mosque in Shiraz.

Persepolis and Pasargadae.

The first edition of this joint children's art project will be organized with Florence,

the capital of Italy's Tuscany region, which is home to many masterpieces of Renaissance art and architecture.

## “Iran” documentary maker Hamid Mojtahedi dies at 80

Tehran's Bahonar Hospital last week due to liver failure, he added.

He had studied photography and cinematography at Regent College, London and moved to the United States to improve his education at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

As a pioneer of aerial photography in Iran, Mojtahedi used his skills in making the series “Iran”, which was commissioned by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) in 2001.

He had previously directed the documentary “Mummy” and collaborated with Syrian-American director Moustapha Akkad on the projects “The Message” and “Lion of the Desert”.

The first season of “Iran”, which is composed of 14 episodes, covers Persepolis and some cultural heritage sites in Tehran, Kashan and Isfahan. It was broadcast on IRIB's Channel 1 in 2005.

## Tehran theater to host “Fools”

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Tehran's Mehregan Theater will be playing host to theatergoers for a reading performance of American playwright Neil Simon's comic fable “Fools” on Saturday.

The reading performance will be directed by Raheleh Shamsabadi based on a Persian translation of the play by Shahram Zargar.

Ahmad Kheirabadi, Hamid Izadpanah, Maryam Alinia, Zahra Nazeri, Abolfazl Keivani, Hossein Qasempur, Amir-Hossein Sha'bani, Amir Arman, Ali Soheili and Miriam Zakeri are the members of the cast.

The story of the play is set in the small village of Kulyenchikov, Ukraine during

the late 19th century. It follows Leon Steponovich Tolchinsky, a schoolteacher who takes a new job educating Sophia, the daughter of Dr. Zubritsky and his wife, Lenya. Leon soon learns that there is a curse on the village that makes everyone stupid, but complications ensue when Leon falls in love with his pupil.

The play, premiered on Broadway at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre in 1981, allegedly was written as the result of an agreement Simon made with his wife during their divorce proceedings. She was promised the profits of his next play, so he attempted to write something that never would last on Broadway.

“Fools” was adapted as a stage musical in 1984 titled “The Curse of Kulyenchikov”, with book and music by Peter Melnick, lyrics by Pat Pattison and direction by Paul Warner.

It ran from April to May 1984 at the Old Library at Leverett House, at Harvard University.

With the permission of Simon, the play was adapted into another musical in 1990, this time with the title “Kulyenchikov”. It was produced in San Jose, California in November of that year.

“Fools” has also been staged by several other Iranian directors, including Nader Naderpur, Hooman Rahnemun, Majid



A poster for a reading performance of Neil Simon's comic play “Fools” at Tehran's Mehregan Theater.

Behnamifar, Mohsen Sotudeh, Majid Kashiforushan, Faezeh Rastegar and Satia Nuruzi, at Tehran theaters over the past five years.

## Ofoq cracks Mariella Mystery for Iranian children

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** – Iranian publisher Ofoq has published British writer and illustrator Kate Pankhurst's series “Mariella Mystery” in Persian.

Reyhaneh Jafari is the translator of the series, which was originally published from 2013 to 2016.

Mariella is smart as a whip, super sleuth-y, and able to solve most mysterious mysteries and perplexing problems in no time flat.

Mariella Mystery aged nine and a bit knows that all good detectives write down important information about their investigations.

In this top-secret journal, she tackles the case of who is trying to sabotage the Puddleford baking contest with important clues and observations, helpful drawings, and handy tips for new detectives.

Early readers will be hooked on this mystery chapter book from page one!

The series consists of the eight books “The Ghostly Guinea Pig”, “A Cupcake Conundrum”, “The Huge Hair Scare”, “The Mystery of the Curled Poodle”, “The Spaghetti Yeti”, “A Kitty Calamity”, “The Disappearance of Diana Dumpling”, and “The Mystic Mustache”.



A poster for the Persian translation of Kate Pankhurst's series “Mariella Mystery”.

Ofoq has recently released the last book, “The Mystic Mustache”, in Persian.

In “The Mystic Mustache”, Mariella and the Mystery



Cover of the Persian translation of John Skorupski's book “English-Language Philosophy 1750 to 1945”.

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** – “English-Language Philosophy 1750 to 1945” the sixth book from John

Skorupski's series “History of Western Philosophy” has been published in Persian.

The Tehran-based Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities – SAMT is the publisher of the book translated into Persian by Yaser Khoshnevis.

From the end of the Enlightenment to the middle of the twentieth-century philosophy took fascinating and controversial paths whose relevance to contemporary post-modernist thought is becoming ever clearer.

This volume traces the English-

language side of the period, while also taking into account those continental thinkers who deeply influenced twentieth-century, English-language philosophy.

The story begins with Reid, Coleridge and Bentham, who set the agenda for much that followed, and continues with a portrait of the nineteenth century's greatest British philosopher, John Stuart Mill.

It then surveys the cross-currents of thought at the end of the century, including American pragmatism, a movement never more influential than now.

Finally, it assesses two phases of what Skorupski calls “analytic modernism”, the revolution against the idealism of Moore and Russell, and the Viennese sequel whose project was to show that philosophy consists of pseudo-problems.

Skorupski is a British philosopher whose main interests are epistemology, ethics and moral philosophy, political philosophy, and the history of 19th and 20th-century philosophy.

He is best known for his work on John Stuart Mill and his study of normativity, “The Domain of Reasons”.

## “English-Language Philosophy” published in Persian