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TEHRAN — The Permanent Representative of Iran to the International Organizations in Vienna has reminded the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Iran has only promised to fulfill its obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA).

Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks on Friday after the UN nuclear agency issued a statement asking Iran to “immediately respond” to extend the

monitoring agreement that expired on June 24.

The IAEA statement summarizes the report submitted by its director Rafael Grossi to the IAEA Board of Governors.

In February Iran suspended a voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which allows snap inspection of the Iranian nuclear sites.

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Construction of mega petrochemical complex begins in southwestern Iran

TEHRAN - Iran's Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) has started the construction of a mega petrochemical complex in the Mahshahr region, southwestern Iran, Shana reported on Saturday.

The ground breaking ceremony of the mentioned project was attended by senior petrochemical officials including the PGPIC Managing Director Jafar Ra-

biei, and the project's managing director Mehdi Gharouni.

Speaking at the ceremony, Rabiei noted that this complex is the biggest petrochemical complex in Mahshahr Petrochemical Special Economic Zone and when completed it will provide direct job opportunities for 5,000 people.

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Iran publishes book revealing motives behind U.S. invasion of Iraq

TEHRAN – The Iranian Culture Center in Baghdad has recently published a book that reveals the aims the U.S. had in the invasion of Iraq. “Islamic Resistance versus the U.S. Arrogance” has been written by Abd Ali Kazim al-Mamuri.

This book explains that the U.S. occupied Iraq to maintain the interests of Israel, to plunder the oil reserves in Iraq, and to eliminate the genuine Islamic culture of the country.

The writer also emphasizes the need for the Islamic resistance groups' activities in Iraq, and describes the challenge the groups pose for the presence of the U.S. in the country.

Copies of “Islamic Resistance versus the U.S. Arrogance” have been sent to Islamic seminaries, leaders and resistance groups in the country.

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Former player Mahmoudi reacts to VNL's results

BY FARROKH HESABI

Behnam Mahmoudi, the former Iranian volleyball player, believes that “under no circumstances” should Iran be ranked 12th in the Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

Iran volleyball team suffered 10 defeats at the 2021 Volleyball Nations League (VNL). It was a disappointing end for a team with so much promise, finishing 12th out of 16 teams.

Mahmoudi, who played more than eight years in the Iran national volleyball team, says that the performance of Vladimir Alekno's side was weaker than expected.

“It was not what we expected from our team. But, of course, the strategy of the Iran Volleyball Federation was not to get results in the tournament, and it was more important to create coordination and mutual understanding between the players,” Mahmoudi told Tehran Times.

“Some talented young players were added to the national team and performed well. However, our final place in the table is not a good at all, and if we do not consider the clear weaknesses of our team, we will have serious problems in the Olympic Games.

“Alekno didn't know the players well, and he aimed to test the potential ability of the players. But, given Mr. Alekno's honors and experiences, it was expected that the national team would have performed better and achieved better results in this tournament,” he added.

“If we recover mentally and forget about these weak games, I am sure that the players can again find their best form before the Olympics and get good results to make Iranian fans happy,” said Mahmoudi, who was the first Iranian volleyball player to ever play professionally outside of his country.

“Vladimir Alekno must be aware that Iranian people are loyal and passionate volleyball fans, and they love the national team. So, under no circumstances should Iran be ranked 12th in the VNL. Certainly, all teams will be stronger and more competitive in the Olympics, and we have a difficult job ahead.

“I believe that the technical and mental problems of the national team in the 2021 VNL must be examined by a technical committee consisting of volleyball experts, and the necessary solutions to solve these problems must be provided as soon as possible,” he concluded.

Iran have been drawn along with giants Poland and Italy and hosts Japan as well as Canada and Venezuela in Pool A of the 2020 Olympic Games.

Long-term solutions for electricity crisis

BY EBRAHIM FALLAHI

TEHRAN – Over the past few years, numerous articles and news pieces have been written on Iran's electricity issues that have become more intensified recently due to the severe drought and the significant increase in the temperature across the country and also illegal activities of cryptocurrency miners.

Every year with the arrival of the hot season, a huge gap appears between the electricity supply and demand in Iran, since electricity consumption skyrockets due to the increase in the use of air conditioning appliances while the power generation is reduced due to the decrease in the water storage behind the country's dams.

The problem

Although the electricity crisis is a common issue in almost all the countries in the region, Iran should have not been wrestling with such a problem considering its abundant resources

and being relatively more developed than the neighboring countries.

So, the question is what the country's electricity sector should have done in order to prevent such problems in the long run?

To answer this question, one should look for the roots of the problem. Several reasons can be counted for the current electricity problems in the country, one of which is the lack of diversity in the country's power sources. Currently, over 80 percent of Iran's power plants are thermal and mostly gas power plants, a small share is also accounted for by hydropower plants that are the ones that are affected the most by the climate changes.

Another issue that can be pointed out here is the lack of education with regard to consumption management, and also the lack of strict regulations for controlling the consumption patterns of the households, industries, and government entities.

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Derek Chauvin sentenced to 22.5 years for George Floyd murder

Derek Chauvin, the white former Minneapolis police officer convicted of killing George Floyd, a Black man, was sentenced to 22 1/2 years in prison Friday.

Chauvin, 45, was convicted in April of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for pressing his knee against Floyd's neck for up to 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old Floyd gasped that he could not breathe and went limp.

Bystander video of Floyd's arrest on suspicion of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill at a corner store prompted protests around the world and led to scattered violence in Minneapolis and beyond.

Judge's justification

Following emotional testimony Friday from Floyd's family and Chauvin's mother, along with brief condolences from Chauvin himself, Judge Peter Cahill said the sentence was not based on emotion, sympathy or public opinion.

“I'm not going to attempt to be profound or

clever because it's not the appropriate time,” Cahill said, explaining his reasoning would be laid out in a 22-page memorandum.

“I'm not basing my sentence on public opinion. I'm not basing it on the attempt to send any messages. The job of a trial court judge is to apply the law to specific facts and to deal with individual cases.”

Prosecutors had asked for a 30-year sentence for Chauvin, who was convicted of second-degree murder. Minnesota sentencing guidelines recommended Chauvin be sentenced to 12 1/2 years, given he has no criminal record.

Aggravating factors

The 22 1/2-year sentence is 10 years more than the state's guidelines and Cahill justified the longer sentence citing “aggravating factors”.

With good behavior, Chauvin could be paroled after serving two-thirds of his sentence, or about 15 years.

Literacy among Iranian youth 6% above global average

TEHRAN – The average literacy rate of the youth (15-24-year age group) in Iran is estimated at 97.4 percent, which is almost 6 percent higher than the global average, Shapour Mohammadzadeh, head of the Literacy Movement Organization, has stated.

The global youth literacy rate is estimated at 91 percent, he further stated, IRNA reported on Saturday.

In the age group of 15 years and above, the

average literacy rate is 86 percent in the world and in Iran, Mohammadzadeh noted.

Literacy rate at 96.6%

The rate of literacy among Iranians between 10-49 years has reached 96.6 percent, Mohammadzadeh stated in January.

Before the [1979] Islamic revolution, according to a census conducted in 1976, over 51 percent of the people were illiterate, he said, adding, over the past four decades,

in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), the average literacy rate in the age group of 10 to 49 years has reached 94.7 percent.

Toward illiteracy eradication

Some 50 percent of the activities of the Literacy Movement Organization are focused on literacy empowerment so that there is no return to illiteracy.

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“Cautious distance” between Iran and U.S. will continue under Raisi, expert says

BY M.A. SAKI

TEHRAN - A political science professor at the Open University in Britain predicts that Iran will maintain its policy of “cautious distance” from the United States during the future administration of Ebrahim Raisi.

“I suspect that we will see a continuation of the cautious distance that has been maintained by the Islamic Republic of Iran when it comes to the U.S.,” Edward Wastnidge tells the Tehran Times.

“The president-elect's comments on this issue have been clear so far, so I do not expect any significant change from the stance of previous administrations,” Wastnidge remarks.

In his first press conference on June 21, Iranian President-elect Raisi ruled out a meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden and urged the United States to return to its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA.

Raisi said he would not meet with Biden even if both sides agreed on terms to revive the JCPOA, under which Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear program in return for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

“Of course, some elements within Iranian politics have been more vocal about the chances of closer U.S.-Iran ties in the past, but even they have only ever based this on the U.S. meeting Iran's demands for respect and recognition of its national interests,” Wastnidge notes.

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Stepping into one of oldest Islamic ensembles in Iran

On the margins of a harsh sun-scorched desert stand ruins of arched structures, towers, domes, porticos, and mudbrick walls, which were once thriving as one of the oldest Islamic structures in central Iran.

Moreover, the ancient town of Fahraj in Yazd province is of great significance as being home to one of the oldest standing mosques in the country that is largely built of sun-dried, unfired clay tiles and mud bricks.

Leader pardons, commutes sentences of over 5000 prisoners

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Saturday approved a proposal to pardon or commute sentences of 5,156 prisoners on the occasion of the birthday of Imam Reza (AS) and Judicial Week.

The decision was made upon a request by Judiciary chief Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, who had asked the Leader to treat prisoners with specific conditions leniently.

Article 110 of the Constitution gives the Leader the right to pardon or commute sentences of inmates based on the recommendations of the head of the judicial body. However, the pardon does not apply to certain types of prisons, including those convicted of participating in armed drug smuggling, arms trafficking, kidnapping, acid attacks, rape, armed robbery, bribery, embezzlement, counterfeiting, money laundering, economic disruption, smuggling of alcoholic beverages and organized smuggling of basic goods.

Raisi vows to reform administrative system

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President-elect Ebrahim Raeisi said on Friday that doing reforms in the administrative system, creating jobs and controlling Coronavirus pandemic will be among his top priorities after taking office in less than two months.

“What has preoccupied my mind more than everything is the issue of employment. The issue of coronavirus that the people are grappling with has also preoccupied my mind,” Raeisi said in his first televised interview speaking from the holy city of Mashhad on Friday, according to Press TV.

He noted that his administration would also focus on increasing the availability of housing for the public as pledged during his presidential campaigns.

However, he said, people are aware that some measures would take time and emphasized that his administration would make utmost efforts to solve problems as soon as possible.

During his presidential campaigns Raisi said if the country’s economic capacities are activated it is possible to create one million jobs every year.

A member of the Raisi campaign office had also said a plan has been devised to build four million housing units within four years.

In his Friday interview, Raisi also called for national unity to overcome the problems the country is struggling with.

Raisi, the incumbent Judiciary chief, was elected the eighth president after he garnered about 62 percent of the votes in the June 18 election. He will succeed President Hassan Rouhani, who has served two four-year terms in office.

Many world leaders, senior foreign officials, prominent figures, and regional resistance leaders have so far offered congratulations on the Raisi victory.

The newest greetings came from South African and Austrian presidents.

The message of greeting by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was announced by the Iranian ambassador to Pretoria.

In his message of congratulation, Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen also pointed to seven centuries of friendly relations between Austria and Iran, saying, “I am willing to give assurances to Your Excellency that Austria will keep advancing political, economic, cultural and scientific relations (with Iran) in the future.” Raeisi will assume office on August 3 after being sworn in.

Intelligence minister meets President-elect Raisi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi and a number of his deputies met on Saturday with President-elect Ebrahim Raisi.

Congratulating Raisi for winning the June 18 presidential vote, Alavi wished success for him and his future government and also presented a report about the performance of the Intelligence Ministry.



The president-elect thanked the intelligence minister and other ministry officials for their greetings. He also said the Intelligence Ministry belongs to the Islamic Republic system rather than governments.

The president-elect also insisted on the role of the ministry in identifying loopholes generating corruption and combating it.

Raisi will officially start his job as president in mid-August. Labor and Welfare Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari also visited the office of Raisi to congratulate his presidential victory and brief him about the challenges and opportunities of the future government in this area.

Iranian embassy warns U.S. diplomat over meddlesome remarks

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — After interfering remarks by Dorothy Shea, the U.S. ambassador in Beirut, the Iranian embassy criticized the U.S. diplomat for his intrusive remarks, warning that the arrival of Iranian fuel tankers does not need approval from U.S. authorities.

“Arrival of Iranian tankers in Beirut does not need worthless remarks of the U.S. ambassador. The U.S. ambassador should not interfere in the fraternal relations between the two countries and the two nations of Iran and Lebanon,” the embassy tweeted in response to the U.S. ambassador.

Just hours after the televised address by Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, who announced on Friday that the Hezbollah movement had made necessary preparations to import fuel from Iran, Ambassador Shea claimed that importing fuel from Iran was “really not a solution”.

Is the Crisis Group involved in “strengthening” JCPOA?

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — After the Tehran Times wrote an article about the appointment of the new UK ambassador to Iran titled “The curious case of new UK ambassador to Iran,” the Crisis Group reacted to it.

Ali Vaez, Director of the Iran Project at the Crisis group, took a hasty position. The Tehran Times contacted him.

It all began when Vaez posted a screenshot of the aforementioned report from the Tehran Times website on Twitter, tweeting, “A crack investigative unit reporting that @CrisisGroup may be conspiring with the Queen of England to undermine the JCPOA. Big if true,” with a smiley face. He also tweeted in Farsi, saying, “According to a report by @TehranTimes79, the Crisis Group is collaborating with the Queen of England to prevent the revival of the JCPOA. :)))”. JCPOA has become worthy!!!”

The author of the article contacted Vaez, asking for explanations instead of such remarks. The author said that he is more than happy to retract, if Vaez has any explanations. Vaez agreed to hold an interview with the Tehran Times in regard to the article. Vaez stated that the Tehran Times has written “conspiracy theories” about the Crisis Group with a possible collaboration with the Queen of England to undermine negotiations about the JCPOA. The Tehran Times political journalist enlightened Vaez that in no part of the article there is a mention of a possible collaboration between the Crisis Group and the Queen of England. This is purely Mr. Vaez’s interpretation.

The Tehran Times emailed its questions to Vaez and he answered them.

Here is the question:

Question: Under Trump, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson explicitly called for the JCPOA to be replaced by a “Trump deal.” Following Biden’s inauguration, the German foreign minister, in an interview with Der Spiegel magazine, explicitly stated that the nuclear deal was not enough and should be expanded. France has taken a similar position. The Biden



administration has also raised the issue of “prolonging and strengthening” the JCPOA. In the Vienna talks, the United States is seeking a commitment from Iran to continue negotiations after the revival of the JCPOA. Meanwhile, Britain has sent a new ambassador to Iran who is following you and other members of the Crisis Group on Twitter, the same think tank whose former head, Robert Malley, is now leading the U.S. negotiating team in Vienna. Do you think the change of the British ambassador to Iran has anything to do with the “stronger and longer” deal? What is the position of the Crisis Group think tank in this regard? Does it support the goal of the U.S. stated goal of strengthening the JCPOA?

Here is how Ali Vaez answered the question:

Answer: “It’s correct to assert that the U.S. under the Biden administration, as well as the three European powers involved in the JCPOA negotiations (the UK, France and Germany, or E3) have all publicly indicated that they want to restore the 2015 nuclear deal as an immediate priority, on the basis of mutual compliance, and then build on the agreement to discuss with Iran issues beyond the nu-

clear-specific file. What is unclear is why Iran doesn’t see an interest in engaging in such talks. Iran was not satisfied with sanctions relief under the JCPOA when it was fully implemented in 2016. It is now demanding compensation for the effects of maximum pressure, seeks access to US dollar, and needs guarantees that the US will not renege on the agreement again. These could all be discussed in a follow-on negotiation that Iran needs but rejects. Also, the experience of the past few years have clearly demonstrated that a narrow transactional deal will not survive in the broader context of enmity between Iran and the West. So refusing to discuss and resolve disagreements is nothing but a refusal to learn from the mistakes of the past while expecting different results.

I have no insights to offer on whether the appointment of the new British ambassador has anything to do with the negotiations, or whether it is, as is norm in foreign ministries around the world, a matter of rotating diplomats as their postings come to an end. The UK Embassy in Tehran, or the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) would be best placed to address

your query. The fact that he follows us on Twitter does not mean we have an institutional relationship or necessarily agree on all policy positions. As the world’s most prominent conflict prevention organization, many diplomats and experts follow Crisis Group’s work and analysis. Reading too much into social media connections could be misleading.

As for Crisis Group - as an organization, we have been following the nuclear issue for nearly two decades. In that time, we have endeavored to engage with all of the key stakeholders to the extent possible as part of our mandate to prevent violent and deadly conflict. That resulted in numerous papers, briefings, articles and interviews that are publicly available and trace the negotiations that led in 2015 to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA); since then we have issued annual reports assessing its implementation and continued to track the issue closely.

It should be clear from this body of research and analysis that our position has been, and continues to be, that a fully-functioning agreement remains the best available framework for Iran and, the U.S. and P4+1 to address the nuclear issue. We have written, too, that areas of tension go beyond the question of non-proliferation. To that end, I would hope that, be it with respect to U.S.-Iran relations or regional dynamics, constructive engagement that delivers better-for-better understandings for all sides is the path of choice instead of animosity and tension that benefits none.”

Dodging question

Vaez’s answers are published without any change. However, has dodged our question about the role of the Crisis Group in the negotiations, weighing in on the necessity to make a comprehensive pact that goes beyond transactional deals.

However, there are serious doubts over the connections between Simon Shercliff, the new UK ambassador to Iran, and the members of the Crisis Group, regardless of what Mr. Vaez may believe.

Foreign Ministry: U.S. must return to JCPOA, not Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman on Friday responded to comments by the U.S. and French foreign ministers who had said they were waiting for Tehran to rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the common name for the 2015 nuclear pact.

“Iran has never left the JCPOA, so there is no point saying it should return to the deal,” said Saeed Khatibzadeh.

“Rather, it is the United States that should make up its mind and return to the JCPOA by lifting its illegal sanctions and effectively fulfilling its commitments,” said the spokesman.

He stated that the Americans and Europeans know better than anyone else that Iran decided to remain in the JCPOA and keep it alive at a time when the U.S. unilaterally quit the agreement and imposed illegal and cruel sanctions on Iran and Europeans failed to honor their commitments under the agreement.

“During the negotiations in Vienna, it was announced time and again that it is the U.S. that has disrupted the balance of the JCPOA and has practically impeded the

implementation of the JCPOA through its full non-compliance,” Khatibzadeh stated.

“Moreover, it was stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully prepared to stop its remedial measures (i.e., the scaling down of its obligations under the JCPOA) and resume the implementation of its commitments under the JCPOA provided the U.S. fully implements the agreement, and that the other parties are fully aware of Iran’s position,” he noted.

“It is clear that if the U.S. makes up its mind, becomes ready to fully deliver on its commitments and stop using sanctions as a bargaining chip, it will be possible to reach a deal,” the spokesman said.

At a briefing in Paris after meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le Drian, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, said, “We’ll see if we can bridge the differences, but they’re real, and we have to – we have to be able to bridge them,” calling on Iran to make “difficult” decisions to advance talks that could revive the deal.

Le Drian highlighted Blinken’s remarks, and said, “It’s

been six weeks since the negotiations started again. Some progress was achieved, and we will now be entering the most difficult times. It will require some strong and courageous decisions on behalf of the new Iranian authorities, but now is the time.”

The U.S. abandoned the nuclear agreement in May 2018 in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231. The decision to leave the agreement was within Donald Trump’s “maximum pressure” strategy to strangle the Iranian economy. However, Iran waited a year to see European parties to the deal to compensate Iran for the U.S. sanctions. Seeing no action Iran decided to gradually reduce its commitments to the JCPOA in accordance to paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which has “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.”

Each time that Iran has taken a step to reduce bans on its nuclear commitments it has been insisting that if sanctions are lifted it will reverse its decisions.

Iran: Recording nuclear data is a political decision not related to IAEA

”Iran is committed to meet its obligations under the safeguard agreement, no more, no less,” Gharibabadi emphasizes

➔ The suspension was based on a law passed late last year by the Iranian parliament in response to the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the 2015 nuclear agreement and a failure by European parties to the deal to fulfill their obligations.

However, the IAEA and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) reached a temporary bilateral technical understanding in February that the latter will continue to use cameras to record information about its nuclear facilities for three months, but retain the information.

Based on the agreement between the IAEA and AEOI if the U.S. sanctions are

completely lifted within three months, Tehran will provide the information to the UN nuclear agency, otherwise they will be deleted forever.

The monitoring agreement expired in May during the diplomatic effort to reactivate the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in Vienna, Austria. However, Iran and the IAEA agreed to extend the monitoring agreement to June 24, which enabled the Agency to continue the necessary verification and monitoring work in the country.

“Recording data is a political decision made by Iran to facilitate political negoti-



ations and help it succeed. It should not be considered as an IAEA-related obligation,” Gharibabadi said.

Rouhani lauds Leader for receiving Iranian vaccine

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday praised the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for insisting on being vaccinated against the coronavirus by a vaccine produced by Iranian scientists, saying this action has inspired Iranian scientists and demonstrated the Leader’s support for science and technology.

Speaking at the National Headquarters to Combat Coronavirus, Rouhani said Ayatollah Khamenei’s decision to be injected with a domestically-made coronavirus vaccine was a very spectacular initiative.

“Although the Leader could have used foreign vaccines before, he was more willing to be vaccinated with domestic vaccines. This is a very effective motivation for the activities of our scientists,” Rouhani added, noting

that this kind of spiritual support is not at all comparable to materialistic issues.

He also praised Ayatollah Khamenei for his constant support for science and technology, saying that the atmosphere of science, knowledge, technology, and invention has prevailed in Iran.

“Locally-made vaccines are a great honor for the Islamic Republic of Iran,” the president said

Citizens should be proud of the excellent work done by Iranian scientists and knowledge-based companies in developing COVID vaccines in the country, the president remarked.

Rouhani revealed the approval for the release of two BAREKAT and Pasteur vaccines, saying that more local vaccines will be provided in the coming weeks and months.

“Iran has a wide variety of coronavirus vaccines, and the country can meet domestic demand and even export COVID vaccines,” Rouhani said.

On Friday, Ayatollah Khamenei received the first dose of the COVIRAN BAREKAT coronavirus vaccine. The Leader had previously set two conditions for the use of the coronavirus vaccine: first, he would be vaccinated randomly; second, he would only be vaccinated with Iranian vaccines. For this reason, when the first phase of vaccination for Iranians aged 80 and above started, he did not receive foreign vaccines and waited for Iranian vaccination.

Despite the brutal sanctions imposed by the United States, Iranian scientists have successfully developed various vaccines against the coronavirus.

Vienna talks reach key point as U.S., European allies move beyond JCPOA

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – American and European officials have launched a concerted diplomatic campaign in a bid to extract more concessions from Iran in the nuclear talks while refusing to provide assurances that they will not renege on their promises again as they did in the 2015 deal.

While Iranian and Western as well as Chinese and Russian diplomats prepare to return to the Austrian capital for a potentially decisive round of talks over reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), American and European diplomats have intensified their diplomatic push to coordinate their negotiating position ahead of the seventh round of Vienna talks, which is expected to go ahead on Monday.

During recent rounds, Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA made significant progress, sorting out the measures needed to be taken by Iran and the U.S. to ensure full implementation of the tattered nuclear deal. In addition to the lifting of all Trump-era sanctions, Iran demanded that the U.S. provide assurances that it will not back down on its word again if the deal was to be revived.

The U.S. rejected both demands, putting the onus on Iran to make difficult decisions regarding the resumption of the JCPOA as if it was Iran who reneged on its commitments first. "What they've asked for - in principle, they've said they want all of the sanctions that President Trump's administration re-imposed or imposed since 2018 to be lifted. And that's a lot. And we've said we're prepared to remove those that we think we need to remove to be back in compliance with the JCPOA. But we're not going to lift all of the sanctions that the Trump administration imposed," U.S. envoy to the Vienna talks Rob Malley told NPR.

Malley appeared to go so far as to threaten to walk out of the Vienna talk if they ceased to make progress. "We wouldn't be going back to Vienna if we thought that it's not possible to reach a deal. I don't think that this window is going to be open forever. At some point, we'll have to conclude that this is not succeeding. But we're not there yet," he noted.

In an echo of Malley's warning, U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken also warned



that the U.S. could eventually decide not to rejoin the agreement if negotiations in Vienna continue without progress.

"There will come a point, yes, where it will be very hard to return back to the standards set by the JCPOA," the top U.S. diplomat said at a briefing in Paris after meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le Drian. He also called on Iran to make "difficult" decisions to advance talks that could revive the JCPOA.

Le Drian reiterated the same call. "It's been six weeks since the negotiations started again. Some progress was achieved, and we will now be entering the most difficult times. It will require some strong and courageous decisions on behalf of the new Iranian authorities, but now is the time," he said.

The difficult decision that the U.S. and its European allies want Iran to make is primarily related to the era after reviving the JCPOA, which seems to have fallen short of the West's expectations. During the past rounds of talks, the U.S. has sought to obtain a commitment from Iran that it will continue discussions with the West even after the resumption of the JCPOA, something that Iran utterly rejected.

Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi has made it crystal clear that he will not concede to the U.S. push to "strengthen and lengthen" the JCPOA. During his first press briefing after securing a landslide win, Raisi said Iran's

missile program and its regional sway are non-negotiable.

Facing decisive Iranian reluctance, the U.S. and its European allies seem to have resorted to diplomatic bullying ahead of the next round of talks. They threatened Iran with closing the current window of opportunity for talks, believing that Iran will retreat from its firm position due to its alleged need for sanctions relief.

Pundits close to the U.S. negotiating team are moving from reviving the JCPOA to advocating for a broader deal with Iran that would cover other thorny issues of interest to the U.S. and Europe, namely the Iranian missiles and the country's regional influence. A case in point is Ali Vaez of the International Crisis Group, an influential think tank that played a pivotal role in facilitating the talks that led to the signing of the JCPOA in 2015.

Vaez is Crisis Group's Iran Project Director and senior adviser to the president of the think tank. In the running up to the JCPOA, Vaez established close ties with senior diplomats and nuclear negotiators who hammered out the JCPOA. He could be seen on a number of occasions standing beside senior Iranian diplomats and their American counterparts in the JCPOA talks before its signing.

Vaez has been a fierce advocate of the JCPOA and has been calling on the U.S. to rejoin the deal ever since it was jettisoned by former U.S. President Donald Trump. With

Iran and the West locked in a war of words over the JCPOA ahead of an all-important diplomatic showdown, Vaez seems to be pivoting toward his former boss, Rob Malley.

Vaez believes that the JCPOA has failed to set a precedent for a "narrow transactional deal" between Iran and the U.S. given the severity of enmity between the two.

In remarks to the Tehran Times, Vaez also formulated the agenda of a possible follow-on negotiation between Tehran and Washington by positing that Iran should discuss its current concerns in a post-JCPOA negotiation.

"It's correct to assert that the U.S. under the Biden administration, as well as the three European powers involved in the JCPOA negotiations (the UK, France and Germany, or E3) have all publicly indicated that they want to restore the 2015 nuclear deal as an immediate priority, on the basis of mutual compliance, and then build on the agreement to discuss with Iran issues beyond the nuclear-specific file. What is unclear is why Iran doesn't see an interest in engaging in such talks," he told the Tehran Times. He added, "Iran was not satisfied with sanctions relief under the JCPOA when it was fully implemented in 2016. It is now demanding compensation for the effects of maximum pressure, seeks access to US dollar, and needs guarantees that the US will not renege on the agreement again. These could all be discussed in a follow-on negotiation that Iran needs but rejects. Also, the experience of the past few years has clearly demonstrated that a narrow transactional deal will not survive in the broader context of enmity between Iran and the West. So, refusing to discuss and resolve disagreements is nothing but a refusal to learn from the mistakes of the past while expecting different results."

But Vaez did not say why Iran should give up on its current concerns while the U.S. still refusing to even provide Iran with the slightest sanctions relief per a deal that was negotiated first by the very same diplomats who are now at the helm in Washington.

Ironically, Vaez, in effect, is calling for revising a deal that he and his former boss helped negotiate. This makes one wonder if there really exist people on the other side with whom one can make a deal, let alone non-transactional compacts.

Vienna talks highly likely to be completed in next round: Russian diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Russia's envoy to the Vienna nuclear talks has said the next round of talks will highly likely result in a completion of nuclear negotiations on how to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

Responding to a Twitter user's question on the likelihood of concluding the talks during the next round, Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted, "Chances to complete the Vienna Talks on JCPOA successfully during the seventh round seem to be high but you never know for sure in advance. The negotiators aim at fulfilling their tasks without delay. However, the quality of an outcome document comes first."

Negotiations over reviving the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have been underway since April. So far, six rounds of talks have been held with all sides hailing progress made during the talks.

The Russian diplomat also said that the main goal of the Vienna talks is to revive the JCPOA in its original format. "Our aim is to restore the original JCPOA - nothing more or less. This goal is fully achievable," he noted.

Earlier on Friday, he said the Vienna talks will resume next week as top diplomats are poised to return to the Austrian capital for the seventh round of talks. "My instinct tells me that the Vienna Talks on restoration of JCPOA will resume next week, i.e. no later than July 4 or - most probably - earlier. This is not for sure but highly likely. Let's see," Mikhail Ulyanov said on Twitter.



Nuclear negotiators from Iran and the remaining parties to the Iran nuclear deal have returned to their capitals after concluding the sixth round of talks last week. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi, who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, said the negotiators made progress during the sixth round particularly in terms of preparing the draft of the agreement. He said the remaining important issues required serious discussions in the capitals, especially in the negotiating countries.

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

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 pointed out that 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."

Iranian diplomat undertakes shuttle diplomacy on Afghanistan

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The Iranian foreign minister's special envoy for Afghanistan who had left Kabul for Islamabad on Thursday for talks with Pakistani officials on the latest security developments in Afghanistan, returned to the Afghan capital on Friday to resume his meetings with the country's political and defense officials.

In his meetings with Afghan officials, Mohammad-Ebrahim Taherian presented a report on his talks with Pakistani officials, and conferred with Afghan authorities and figures on the achievement of peaceful solutions to the ongoing crisis and prevent the outbreak of a civil war in the country, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Taherian had traveled to Kabul on Wednesday at the head of a delegation with the escalation of unrest in the country.

The Iranian diplomat had met with Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar and Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, before heading to Pakistan. During these meetings, the current developments in Afghanistan were discussed and the two sides stressed the need to continue consultations in this regard. It is worth mentioning

that Taherian paid a visit to Islamabad on Wednesday at the invitation of Mohammad Sadegh Khan, the special envoy of the Prime Minister of Pakistan for Afghanistan.

Iran has doubled down on its diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in neighboring Afghanistan as the conflict there has intensified between the Afghan government and the Taliban, which went on the offensive as the U.S.-led foreign troops began leaving the war-torn country after nearly two decades of war.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Iran was closely following developments in Afghanistan.

"Closely following alarming developments in Afghanistan. Iran calls for immediate de-escalation, respect for rule of law, & inclusive dialogue. Destructive policies of the U.S. have had lingering consequences in our region & now its utterly irresponsible conduct is taking a toll," Khatibzadeh said on Twitter.

Nearly a week ago, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held a trilateral meeting with his Turkish and Afghan counterparts during his stay in the Turkish resort city of Antalya.

The foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan called for active participation of the three countries in the Afghan peace process and fight against

terrorism in the region.

Zarif and his Turkish and Afghan counterparts, Mevlut Cavusoglu and Mohammad Haneef Atmar, issued the call during their trilateral meeting in Antalya.

During the meeting, agreements were made on transit ties with Afghanistan through Iran and on economic cooperation with Kabul.

The Iranian, Turkish and Afghan foreign ministers issued a joint final statement at the end of their meeting.

In Antalya, Zarif held several meetings with current and former Afghan officials in a bid to understand the situation in Afghanistan. In his meeting with Atmar, Zarif reiterated Tehran's preparedness to effectively contribute to the enhancement of solidarity in Afghanistan.

The top Iranian diplomat underlined the necessity of cooperation among all Afghan political groups to return security and stability to the country.

Zarif also said Iran is ready to hold a meeting of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission.

Atmar, in turn, conveyed to Zarif a message of gratitude from the Afghan government for the medical aid and consignments of oxygen capsules sent by Iran.

The top Afghan diplomat called on Iran to

keep sending in aid given the grave COVID-19 situation in Afghanistan.

He also elaborated on the latest security developments in Afghanistan and expressed his readiness for coordination with the Iranian side on the security situation in border areas and the holding of a joint border commission meeting as soon as possible.

In his meeting with Abdullah, Zarif expressed concern over the security situation of Afghanistan, and underlined the necessity of holding intra-Afghan talks.

Abdullah, in turn, praised Iran's constructive efforts, and elaborated on the current situation in Afghanistan.

Zarif also held talks with Salahuddin Rabbani, the former foreign minister of Afghanistan and one of the leaders of Jamiat-e Islami Party, on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. In the meeting, the Iranian foreign minister highlighted the necessity for cooperation among all Afghan movements in countering the country's unfavorable security situation.

Zarif also underlined Iran's continued support for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Rabbani, in turn, elaborated on the latest status of Afghanistan, and highlighted Iran's position in contributing to peace and security in the country.

SPORTS

Woman sprinter Fasihi to represent Iran at Tokyo 2020

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Sprinter Farzaneh Fasihi became the Iran's ninth woman to compete at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Iran's deputy Chef de Mission Peyman Fakhri says that Fasihi will compete in the Games via the Universality places qualification system, which allows one male and one female competitor from a country to participate in the Olympics.

"She has been awarded the Universality place and the number of Iranian participants in Tokyo 2020 has reached to 66," Fakhri said.

Fasihi will represent Iran in the women's 100 meters at 2020 Tokyo.

She is the Iranian record holder of the 60 meters indoor with 7.25 seconds.

"No words can describe how happy I am. I want everyone who deserves to participate at the Olympics can experience the feeling," Fasihi said.

"This is a big event for me. I hope it can help our women's sports and pave the way for the other Iranian girls to achieve what they want," she added.

Fasihi will be second Iranian woman to represent the country in the 100 meters event after Simin Safamehr who competed at the 1964 Olympic Games.

Iran's Keikha takes gold at Artistic Gymnastics World Cup

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Saeedreza Keikha of Iran claimed a gold medal in the men's Pommel Horse at the 13th Artistic Gymnastics World Cup on Friday.

He won the gold with 15.200 points, followed by Kazakhstan's Nariman Kurbanov (15.033) and Japanese Kohei Kameyama (14.600).

Another Iranian gymnast Mahdi Ahmad Kohani won a bronze medal in the men's Still Rings.

He finished in third place with 14.800 points.

Gold medal went to Greek Eleftherios Petrounias (15.500) and Brazilian Arthur Zanetti seized the silver medal with 14.933 points.

The competition is being held from June 23 to 26 in Doha, Qatar.

Iran's women's 10m air rifle win gold at ISSF World Cup

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Iran's women's 10m air rifle seized a gold medal at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup in Osijek, Croatia on Friday.

The Iranian team consisting Najmeh Khedmati, Armina Sadeghian and Fatemeh Karamzadeh defeated thrashed Russia 16-2 in the final.

Hungary also defeated Austria 16-10 in the bronze-medal match. This is Iran's second gold in the event.

Javad Foroughi had previously claimed a gold in the men's 10m air pistol on Thursday.

Iran's Javad Foroughi, Vahid Golkhandan and Sajad Pourhosseini won a bronze medal in the men's 10m air pistol team after beating Russia 16-14.

Italian team defeated Serbia 16-6 to win the gold medal.

For many athletes this is the last test of strength before the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The event has brought more than 600 athletes from 61 countries together.

Persepolis move provisionally top of IPL table

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Persepolis football team edged past Mes to move provisionally top of Iran Professional League (IPL) table.

The Reds beat Mes in Rafsanjan on Friday thanks to a goal from Mehdi Abdi in the 79th minute.

In Tehran, Esteghlal defeated Gol Gohar 2-0 to cement their place at the third place.

Mohammadhossein Moradmamand and Mehdi Mehdipour scored two goals for the Blues in the first half in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

In Tabriz, Nassaji defeated almost-relegated Machine Sazi 2-0. Struggling Zob Ahan earned a late draw against Aluminum in Isfahan. Sanat Naft also edged past struggling Saipa 1-0 in Abadan.

On Saturday, Shahr Khodro will host Tractor in Mashhad.

In the one of the most important matches of Week 24, Foolad will host second-placed Sepahan in Ahvaz on Sunday. Paykan will also entertain Naft Masjed Soleyman in Tehran.

Iran eye title at CAFA U15 Girls Championship

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Iran prepare to defend their title at the CAFA U-15 Girls Championship.

Uzbekistan won the first edition in 2017 but Iran claimed the title in the second edition in 2019.

Now, the Iranian girls prepare to win the title for the second time. Iran will travel to Dushanbe on Tuesday to participate in the round-robin competition.

The tournament will be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from June 30 to July 9.

Iran U19 women's team finished in second place last week in CAFA Championship and now the U15 team are going to shine in the competition.

The tournament will bring Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Iran together.

Iran claim bronze at 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team

SPORTS **TEHRAN** – Iran claimed a bronze medal at the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup in Osijek, Croatia on Saturday.

Golnoush Sebghattollahi and Javad Foroughi finished in third place at the event after beating India 2 team 17-7.

Russia defeated India 16-12 to win the gold medal.

For many athletes this is the last test of strength before the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The event has brought more than 600 athletes from 61 countries together.

100 Eurasian companies to participate in Iran’s 1st EAEU exclusive expo

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – More than 100 companies from the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are scheduled to participate in Iran’s first exclusive EAEU exhibition which is due to be held during July 9-12 in Tehran, the exhibition’s director told IRIB.

According to Alireza Jafari, 30 companies from Russia, 30 companies from Kyrgyzstan, more than 10 companies from Armenia, more than 10 companies from Kazakhstan, and some companies from Belarus will be participating at this exhibition along with Iranian companies.

The event will be held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, the official said.



The companies participating in this exhibition are active in the fields of banking and finance, technology transfer, construction of large factories, silos, ports, wharves, oil tanks, shipbuilding, steel, and cement, as well as large sellers of livestock inputs and oil and agricultural products, the official explained.

A meeting is scheduled to be held between the members of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and the Eurasian chambers of commerce on the first day of the exhibition, according to Jafari.

A memorandum of understanding will also be signed on the sidelines of the exhibition between the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and Iran’s Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), the official added.

He added that the current trade balance of the Eurasian Economic Union with the world is more than \$800 billion and the trade of the union with Iran stands at about \$2.5 billion.

“Such events will pave the way for Iranian businessmen and entrepreneurs to get acquainted with their counterparts in the EAEU and will play an important role in the growth and development of non-oil exports and trade with this economic union,” he said.

Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a free trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members.

The free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides.

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran’s exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for the Islamic Republic’s plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

IME’s value of monthly trade rises 8%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trade at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose eight percent during the past Iranian calendar month (May 22-June 21).

As reported by the IME’s Public Relations and International Affairs Department, more than 3.623 million tons of commodities worth over \$1.88 billion was traded at the exchange in the past month, indicating also 22 percent growth in terms of weight as compared to its preceding month.

The IME sold on its metal and mineral trading floor 1.816 million tons of commodities worth almost \$1.076 billion.

Commodities traded on this floor included 979,170 tons of various types of steel, 550, 280 tons of cement, 26,060 tons of copper, 690 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 129 tons of precious metals concentrate, 31,245 tons of aluminum, 165,000 tons of iron ore, 33,705 tons of zinc, 400 tons of metallurgical coke, 60,000 tons of sponge iron, 250 tons of lead and 13 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the exchange played host to trading of 1.74 million tons of commodities on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at more than \$795 million.



The IME’s customers purchased on this floor 492,393 tons of various grades of bitumen, 319,550 tons of polymeric products, 159,480 tons of chemicals, 19,834 tons of oil, 540,400 tons of vacuum bottom, 42,630 tons of sulfur, 450 tons of argon, 550 tons of insulation and 157,000 tons of lube cut.

There were also 6,316 tons of commodities traded on the IME’s side market.

The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) rose 108 percent compared to the preceding year.

During the past year, about 3.5 quadrillion rials (about \$83.5 billion) worth of commodities were traded at the mentioned market.

In the past year, several new records were achieved in terms of the volume and value of transactions in the mentioned market’s various floors including the industrial, petroleum, and petrochemical floors.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

‘Capital market capacities at the service of production growth’

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — The head of Iran’s Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) stated that the capacities of the country’s capital market are at the service of production growth.

Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi made the remarks in a ceremony for signing a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between SEO and the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade aimed at financing the production activities through the micro capitals of the people, with emphasis on strengthening the country’s production resources as a capital market priority.

The official said: “Efforts have been made to use all the capacities and facilities of the capital market to boost production, because we believe that the final benefit of this support will return to the capital market.”

New methods of financing should be introduced and new ideas such as crowdfunding should be considered alongside the previous methods, he added.

Elaborating on crowdfunding, the SEO head said that it is a platform and base for connecting micro-savers to small and medium-sized producers, which in fact can be a manifestation of people’s inclusive participation in the economy.

At the end, the official emphasized, “With the special support of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade from the production companies listed on the stock exchange, we will undoubtedly witness the further improvement of the country’s industrial development indicators.”



Materializing motto of year

Making these remarks by the head of Securities and Exchange Organization clearly indicates that this organization is determined to support domestic production in the present Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), which is named the year of “Production: support and the elimination of obstacles”.

In fact, the SEO considers itself a serious supporter of this motto, as the two keywords of “Production” and “Capital” together consist the base for the national development, and each step to facilitate production will be resulted in expediting the country’s movement toward development.

According to the organization’s head, the capital market, with its inherent potential in

the field of financial exchanges, organizing parallel markets, and creating balance in the economic system, pursues the mission of supporting production; and in spite of all domestic restrictions and international sanctions, prevents production stop through leading the liquidity toward productive enterprises.

“Without the safe “supports”, production is usually slow, so the capital market seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for those active in the production sector by constantly injecting liquidity and designing support institutions such as financing companies and planning to avoid wasting resources in unproductive sectors”, the official has stated.

Construction of mega petrochemical complex begins in southwestern Iran

→ 1 The said petrochemical complex, is comprised of one olefin unit with a production capacity of 1.26 tons of ethylene and 420,000 tons of propylene, as well as five polymer units including two units of high-density polyethylene (HDP), one unit of linear low-density polyethylene (LLDPE), one unit of polypropylene, one monoethylene glycol (MEG) unit and a butadiene unit, according to the project’s managing director.

The project will be implemented in two phases, the first phase of which includes the construction of the olefin unit with five relevant storage tanks and cooling towers, and the rest of the units will be built and commissioned in the second phase.

“Persian Gulf Holding, while making serious efforts to complete previous projects, feels a responsibility to begin new large-scale projects for developing the petrochemical industry,” Rabiei said in the inauguration ceremony.

The official noted that PGPIC is collaborating with Bandar

Imam and Arvand petrochemical companies as shareholders in this mega-project.

“The important characteristic of Mahshahr Petrochemical Project is that all its feed is produced by PGPIC and there is no concern about the feed in the future, so in this regard, Mahshahr Petrochemical is a significant project,” Rabiei said.

He further noted that another mega-complex is also going to be constructed in Assaluyeh, saying: “the construction of this project will hopefully begin in the near future and when completed it will be the biggest petrochemical complex in the region.”

Mahshahr Petrochemical Special Economic Zone in Iran’s southwestern Khuzestan Province is one of the major petrochemical zones of the country.

In July 2019, the managing director of Iran’s National Petrochemical Company (NPC) unveiled a plan for the



construction of a new petrochemical hub in Mahshahr Petrochemical Special Economic Zone in order to add up to six million tons of new capacity to the zone.

Long-term solutions for electricity crisis

→ 1 A third important issue to be pointed out is the need for the development of network infrastructure in order for the power grid to be able to handle the pressure imposed during the peak consumption period.

Long-term solutions

The Energy Ministry has been recently offering numerous solutions for tackling the country’s electricity issues during the summer time’s peak consumption period.

Earlier this year, Iran’s Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) had announced that the company was implementing over 40 different programs for managing the electricity situation and preventing blackouts in the country.

Construction of new power plants using foreign investment, encouraging the country’s large industries to contribute to the country’s power generation [at least for meeting their own needs], and finally importing electricity from the neighboring countries are some of the mentioned solutions.



Two of the above-mentioned programs seem to be more practical in the sense that they could be appropriate steps for increasing power generation capacity and meeting the demands of big industries [which account for a big share of the country’s electricity consumption] using their own facilities.

Considering Iran’s geographic position, the country has great potentials for the development of renewable energy sources like solar, wind, biomass, and geothermal. The renewables, however, only account for

seven percent of the country’s total nominal electricity generation capacity.

So, one of the most important strategies that the Energy Ministry should put on the agenda for solving the electricity issue is to focus more on constructing such power plants using domestic or foreign investments in order to diversify the country’s power sources and benefit from a huge potential that could definitely prevent such electricity issues in the long run.

Although electricity exchange with neighbors is a common trend among many of the world’s advanced countries, importing electricity should not be considered as a solution for addressing the electricity supply issue in the long run.

Instead of planning on importing electricity from the neighboring countries, the government should consider putting more emphasis on educational and encouraging programs for promoting positive consumption patterns among the people and different sectors of the country.

Last calendar year’s Q4 non-oil GDP growth stands at 3.3%: SCI

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s gross domestic product (GDP) excluding oil grew 3.3 percent in the fourth quarter of the previous Iranian calendar year (December 21, 2020-March 20, 2021) compared to the same period in the preceding year, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

Based on the SCI data, the figure including oil grew 6.8 percent, IRNA reported.

As reported, the country’s non-oil GDP reached 1.57 quadrillion rials (about \$37.5 billion) in the mentioned three months.

The data indicate that the country’s inflation rate was 36.4 percent in the mentioned time span.



According to SCI, the total liquidity of the country reached 34.76 trillion rials (about \$827.6 billion), indicating an in-

TEDPIX climbs 20,700 points on Saturday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 20,728 points on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week.

Over 8.315 billion securities worth 63.663 trillion rials (about \$1.515 billion) were traded at the TSE.

The first market’s index rose 16,504 points, and the second market’s index gained 37,350 points.

TEDPIX rose 66,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.213 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

TEDPIX returned to the uptrend after a long period of fluctuation and continuation of the downward trend

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, Esfahan Oil Refining Company, Kourosh Food Industry Company, and Zarmakarun Industrial Com-

pany were the most widely followed indices.

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

SEO’s main strategies to support production

The SEO head has also expounded upon this organization’s main strategies to support the motto of this year, which is supporting production and eliminating related obstacles, as follows:

Supporting knowledge-based companies along with strengthening the traditional market is one of the tasks that the slogan of the year implies, and any move that shortens the path of producers and consumers depends on the strong support of related organizations, which should have more overlap this year.

Removing obstacles in the path of development is one of the inherent tasks of organizations, and in this regard, the SEO will put the acceleration and simplification of the licensing process at the top of its policies.

Encouraging investors to have a wider presence in the capital market is possible only by removing unnecessary regulations and administrative barriers.

The capital market will emerge as one of the most serious supporters of this year’s motto with strong strategy, identification of obstacles, and offering solutions and operational action to eliminate them.

The SEO hopes to materialize this motto through adhering to the principles of strengthening professional supervision, continuing to improve public confidence, and trying to achieve the goal of “economic development” by relying on the strength of all capital market beneficiaries, including shareholders, investors, financial institutions, publishers, experts and media.

“Cautious distance” between Iran and U.S. will continue under Raisi, expert says

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

I think that there won't necessarily be a dramatic change in Iran's relations with the wider world and region. We might see a shift in tone and emphasis, but ultimately Iran's position internationally will likely be based on the same enduring principles of independence in foreign policy, non-interference in its internal affairs, prioritizing relations with its neighbors, and a desire to see a reduction in the U.S. presence in the region. We might see a greater emphasis on those core principles but there will be lots of continuities.

For example, we know that ongoing diplomatic initiatives, such as the current negotiations over the JCPOA and talks with Saudi Arabia on re-establishing diplomatic ties, are supported by the incoming administration, so we would expect these to continue and potentially come to fruition.

One thing that may also be different for external actors negotiating with Iran is the closer alignment of all the main centers of political power in Iran following the election result. This will enable a more consistent message to be articulated by the Islamic Republic when it comes to international negotiations and sensitive diplomacy.

How do you see Iran-U.S. relations during Raisi's presidency? Do you expect any changes in ties?

I suspect that we will see a continuation of the cautious distance that has been maintained by the Islamic Republic of Iran when it comes to the U.S. The president-elect's comments on this issue have been clear so far, so I do not expect any significant change from the stance of previous administrations. Of course, some elements within Iranian politics have been more vocal about the chances of closer U.S.-Iran ties in the past, but even they have only ever based this on the U.S. meeting Iran's demands for respect and recognition of its national interests.

Of course, the one thing that will shift



things a little will be a U.S. return JCPOA following its previous violation of the deal.

By necessity, this will mean a resumption of more direct interactions between Iran and the U.S., which are a key part of maintaining this diplomatic mechanism. This might mean some interaction, as before, at the level of Foreign Ministers, and some lower-level diplomatic engagement on technical aspects of the deal.

One thing that will certainly impact Iran-U.S. ties would be any attempt to add further, non-nuclear program-related conditions to the deal, as has been regularly suggested by the U.S. and some European states. This would not be helpful for diplomacy at this stage and would only further entrench both sides' positions. The focus should be on securing U.S. compliance and return to the JCPOA in its current form.

Why do Western media prefer to portray Iranian leaders and political figures as hardliners?

There is an inherent bias in many Western media reporting on Iran. This is especially true when it comes to the majority of mainstream media outlets in the West. Few commentators understand the complexities and the range of

views that characterize political debate within Iran and this often leads to crass stereotypes and sensationalist reporting. In terms of U.S. and British media, much of this rather blinkered view comes from the media just mirroring the same old cliched narratives that come from their own governments. So, we end up in a situation where a lot of the media are complicit in reinforcing that political agenda, which of course is an issue in many countries across the world. This is obviously rather ironic given the energy spent hectoring other countries about media freedoms when they are often dealing with a very pliant and uncritical media sphere themselves.

Using terms such as 'hardliner' is just lazy analysis in my opinion. It seeks to impose a polarizing logic onto an inherently more complex and varied political scene within Iran that does not necessarily map on to simple dichotomies.

Do you expect Iran and the EU can restore their economic exchanges in near future?

I do think that this is a distinct possibility if an agreement is reached in the current JCPOA negotiations. We saw the rush of European countries and businesses seeking

to ink various deals with Iran following the initial agreement of the JCPOA. However, as we now know, much of this enthusiasm was stymied by continued U.S. sanctions and then made virtually impossible once the so-called 'maximum pressure' strategy enacted by the Trump administration.

However, I think that there may potentially be less emphasis on courting closer business and economic ties with the EU as an explicitly desired aim under Raisi's administration. We will likely see a greater emphasis on cultivating economic ties with regional states and partners in Asia, as Iran seeks to take advantage of major economic and infrastructural developments such as China's Belt and Road Initiative.

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

The Middle East (West Asia) has preoccupied U.S. foreign policy for almost a century now. This preoccupation is arguably borne of a sense of American exceptionalism that has historically manifested itself in a self-regarding, unvirtuous circle of intervention in the region, sometimes predicated on so-called democracy promotion, but ultimately grounded in securing U.S. interests, and more recently, those of its allies. Thus, we have a situation where U.S. interests have been based on supporting authoritarian monarchies and a belligerent colonial state in the Occupied Territories. This was heightened further as the Trump admin took a more confrontational line on Iran with its violation of the JCPOA and vindictive use of sanctions.

With Iran, the U.S. has in recent years resorted to either carrying out or offering its support to a number of extra-judicial killings in the region – most notably its assassination of the head of Sepahbod Qassem Soleimani. We also witnessed the slaying of Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh who was the victim of an Israeli-sponsored killing. These are the acts of a hubristic imperialist power and a rogue nation acting with impunity in international politics.

Iran polls showed democracy in a region unfamiliar with freedom: commentator

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — A Lebanese political expert says the June 18 presidential election in Iran showed the existence of democracy in a region where the meaning of democracy is still unknown and people are rarely given the right to express their opinion.

“The participation of the Iranian people in their country's presidential elections whether inside or outside Iran was evidence of the existence of democracy in a region where the right to express an opinion in most countries close to Iran is rarely given, where most countries in the region that do not even know the meaning of democracy, human rights, or freedom of expression,” Marwa Osman tells the Tehran Times.

“Western and Saudi media even tried to obscure the political changes in the region, calling on the whole world not to recognize these elections,” Osman notes.

Some Western powers have slammed Iran's election, describing Ebrahim Raisi, the president-elect, as a hardliner who may put relations between Iran and the West at risk. “Iran represents a unique case of democracy and people's religious governance, and elections are one of the pillars of this democracy along with all the dimensions that collectively make up the democratic process in any country,” Osman underlines.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you assess the Iranian presidential election? What are its implications for the world?

Iran represents a unique case of democracy and people's religious governance, and elections are one of the pillars of this democracy along with all the dimensions that collectively make up the democratic process in any country.

It was obvious though that the results did upset the U.S. and its allies, who mobilized their media and efforts to try to thwart the elections and even reached the point of calling upon Iranian people not to participate in the process.

Western and Saudi media even tried to obscure the political changes in the region, calling on the whole world not to recognize these elections. The participation of the Iranian people in their country's presidential elections whether inside or outside Iran was evidence of the existence of democracy in a region where the right to express an opinion in most countries close to Iran is rarely given, where most countries in the region that do not even know the meaning of democracy, human rights, or freedom of expression. Here, they were again carrying out a campaign of distortion of the Islamic Republic and direct media campaigns against it trying to taint the presidential elections as not credible and rigged, yet they were only proven wrong.

What changes do you predict in Iran's policies after Raisi takes power?

We can begin to understand that Iran is overlooking a new phase internally, regionally and internationally by

simply listening to the first speech that President Ibrahim Raisi gave after he was named president-elect.

Raisi considered that the message sent by the Iranian people in these elections is a message of insistence on the values of the Islamic Revolution, stressing that he will dedicate his service to the people with the aim of solving their problems by relying on Iran's abundant capabilities and wealth and prioritize providing basic commodities to the Iranian people who have been suffering continuous illegal U.S. and European economic sanctions.

The major issue that will shift internally in Iran is that President Raisi's government has no choice but to focus on improving the conditions of the people by establishing an effective administrative system through revolutionary forces that fight corruption. It will be a tough road but Raisi knows that he has to rake it in order to salvage the Iranian resistance economy put forth as a dominant strategy by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei at a time when the Western pressure was at its peak.

Now as this pressure is expected to decline as a result of continuous failures that Western regimes faced in West Asia, it would be the perfect timing for President Raisi to leave his mark at the internal political and economic level that would for sure improve the quality of life for ordinary Iranians who have suffered deeply from external pressure and internal corruption.

Why are Western media trying to portray Raisi as a hardliner?

A simple answer would be because president Ibrahim Raisi represents everything that the U.S. imperial power has tried to annihilate in West Asia since late Ayatollah Sayyed Ruhollah Khomeini exploded the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 giving the Iranian nation its independence and sovereignty in a way that cut all the strings once attached between the Shah's regime and the American regime.

Americans tend to put labels, names and adjectives to leaders, movements and states who dare challenge their foreign policy, imperial demands and routine interventions which the U.S. blatantly views as their God-given right when dealing with any sovereign state. We even saw that arrogant behavior against historic friends of the U.S. during the Trump administration like the shade he threw against Canada, Germany and France when they were not seeing eye to eye with his unconventional methods of governing.

President Raisi has the blessing of Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei as well who considers him a dear friend and a competent leader who will govern as per the principles of the Iranian revolution.

So basically, we might be looking at a government that has the same perspective as that of the first government ever formed after the revolution, and that by itself would prompt the U.S. regime and its puppet Western and regional mainstream media to label President Raisi as a “hardliner” because he is ready to take on the endless pressure that the

U.S. utilizes to target any movement, state or leader they find to be resisting their continuous imperial hegemony.

How can America slam the Iranian election while it is silent towards its Arab allies?

Successive U.S. administrations have always operated as per American interests and benefits. They have one goal in mind and that is more power, greater influence and faster routes towards a unipolar, U.S.-dominated world. As far-fetched as this goal gets, the U.S. still believes that by allowing regimes, that were put in place during British imperialism and who tend to strive for U.S. acceptance, to continue ruling over the majority of their population without the latter's consent, approval, or even choice, it is simply protecting its interests in this region and giving more way for their domination to manifest in these specific countries. Let us first agree that these states that the U.S. dominates and practically rule are not even considered allied states, rather only proxy entities that abide by the dictates of the U.S. empire and implement its plans according to well-drafted policies and procedures that would ensure the submission of said states' political will, natural resources and diplomatic ties as per American guidelines that obviously only serves American interest.

How do you see the fate of the Vienna talks in light of the recent election in Iran?

Just like in 2013 the election of a reformist president was critical to seal the nuclear deal with the United States, now a conservative president seems necessary for concluding a new one and I think the Biden administration knows that very well. Early on, the Biden administration understood that it would be counterproductive to tie nuclear negotiations to Iran's presidential election. In fact, by ignoring the presidential election as a deadline and settling for a prolonged process that would extend into the summer, the administration made it easier for Leader Sayyed Ali Khamenei to support progress in Vienna which now makes way for better maneuvering for President Raisi. One thing is for sure though, Iran will simply not comply with any JCPOA demands whatsoever before the U.S. fully removes its sanctions and Iran actually feels the effect of the removal. I am not predicting anything; it is simply the speech of Sayyed Ali Khamenei which represents the strategic map for any government that is chosen to lead these talks into success. It's worth recalling that Imam Khamenei had approved the 2015 nuclear deal and supported Iran's compliance with it. However, once then-U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the deal, Sayyed Khamenei distanced himself from it and favored Iran's incremental backing away from compliance with its terms until Washington would return to the agreement. Saying that the United States could not be trusted, he flatly rejected the idea of a new deal as do most Iranians, which is why I believe the only route would be a return to the old deal but with full termination of all sanctions against the Iranian nation first.

Iraq's Hashd al-Sha'abi marks 7th establishment anniv. with military parade

Iraq's anti-terror resistance group Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, has held a military parade in the eastern Diyala province to mark the seventh anniversary of its formation.

The parade began on Saturday morning at the Abu Montazer al-Muhammadi base, northeast of provincial capital Baqubah, with PMU commanders, government officials and martyrs' families as well as religious, cultural

and social figures in attendance.

It is the first military parade by the resistance group involving infantry, combat and support units.

Speaking before the parade, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi said, “I salute the children of Iraq, the hero children of Hashd al-Sha'abi, on the anniversary of its establishment. The children of Hashd al-Sha'abi are the children of the government,

and they continue any efforts that serve our nation and homeland.”

“You and security forces defeated terrorism, and there are many things ahead of you. Hashd al-Sha'abi will be preserved with your vigilance, order and expertise. Alongside you, we will restore Iraq's historical role in the region. I salute you for your courage and the sacrifices of the martyrs and their families,” he added.

In a TV program on Friday, PMU chief

Falih al-Fayyadh stressed that the parade will strengthen the group's power and discipline.

Hashd al-Sha'abi is a military institution affiliated to the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi Armed Forces and operates under the Joint Operations Command, he said, noting that the Iraqi nation comprises the core of the pro-government group, which is supported by a fatwa (religious decree) issued by the Iraqi religious authority.

Taliban says has right to react if U.S. troops stay in Afghanistan

Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen has told Al Jazeera in an exclusive interview that the armed group has the “right to react” if the United States still keeps troops in Afghanistan after September 11, when the withdrawal is due to complete.

U.S. officials told The Associated Press news agency on Thursday that roughly 650 U.S. soldiers were expected to remain in Afghanistan to provide security for diplomats after Washington pulled its forces out to end its 20-year military presence in the country.

Reacting to the report, Shaheen told Al Jazeera's Osama Bin Javid in Doha that if the U.S. did so, it would be in breach of an agreement aimed at ending the US's longest war that was struck between Washington and the Taliban in the Qatari capital in February 2020.

“We have signed the Doha agreement and that was negotiated with the American side for 18 months. They have agreed and committed themselves that they will withdraw from Afghanistan all their military forces, advisers and contractors,” Shaheen said.

“I think it is a clear violation of that agreement,” he added.

“If they stay here, then I think it is a kind of continuation of the occupation. They have violated and we fully have the right to react,” Shaheen said.

Nasrallah: Seizure of resistance websites exposed falsehood of U.S. free speech claims

The secretary-general of Lebanon's Hezbollah has rejected as a “bunch of lies” accusations by some political parties that the resistance movement is obstructing efforts to form a new government and end the months-long deadlock gripping the country's political scene.

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah made the remarks in a televised speech on Friday, in which he discussed the latest political developments in Lebanon as well as the region.

“These parties seek to use any incident to tarnish others' reputation and to settle political scores,” said Nasrallah. “They put their own interests above those of the nation.”

He further said Lebanon's main parties should join hands to facilitate government formation and end the power vacuum in the Arab country.

Hezbollah, he said, had been seeking to pave the way for government formation since the day Prime Minister Saad Hariri was tasked with setting up a cabinet.

He also noted that the United States is seeking to link Lebanon's case to the negotiations over the 2015 nuclear deal.

“Certain sides are bent on pinning the blame for the failure to form a government on Iran and Hezbollah,” said Nasrallah. “The U.S. is after tying Lebanon's case to the negotiations with Iran, while Iran opposes that.”

Nasrallah said the accusations that Hezbollah is blocking the formation of a new government in Lebanon are a bunch of lies.”

Lebanon plunged into a political vacuum in August 2020, when the previous administration, led by former Prime Minister Hassan Diab, resigned following a devastating explosion at the port in Beirut that destroyed swathes of the capital and left more than 200 people dead.

U.S. troops to stay in northeastern Syria to back anti-Damascus SDF

The U.S. says it will continue deployment of troops in energy-rich northeastern Syria and prop up allied Kurdish militants from the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) against the Damascus government.

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Joey Hood said in a teleconference on Friday that Washington is committed to keeping “military presence” in northeast Syria “in partnership with the SDF, and to stabilize areas liberated” by that group.

Hood alleged that the U.S. supported all forms of assistance to the people of Syria, but stopped short of pointing to the crippling blockade placed on the Syrian government by Washington and its allies, under the so-called Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act.

He noted that “stability in Syria and the greater region can only be achieved through a political process that represents the will of all Syrians.”

On Thursday, the the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) announced in a statement that U.S.-led forces stationed in northeastern Syria will continue to patrol in the region along with SDF partners.

Local sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Syria's official news agency SANA that the U.S. military has dispatched truckloads of ammunition and logistical equipment to the northeastern province of Hasakah amid Washington's attempts to further loot oil reserves and natural resources in the Arab country.

Resistance News

Top Hamas delegation to visit Lebanon

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** — A high-level delegation from the Hamas Movement led by its political chief Ismail Haneyya is scheduled to visit the Lebanese capital, Beirut, on Sunday and meet with a number of leaders and officials.

According to the Movement's office in the country, the delegation will stay in Lebanon for several days and meet with president Michel Aoun, parliament speaker Nabih Berri and prime minister Hassan Diyab, as well as other noted Lebanese leaders and officials.

The delegation intends to discuss with the Lebanese leaders and officials several issues of mutual interests, including the latest developments in the Palestinian arena and the living and social conditions of the Palestinian refugees in the country.

Cultural elements in Kermanshah added to national list

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of ten cultural elements, which are practiced in Kermanshah province, have been registered in the national intangible cultural heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Saturday announced the inscriptions in an official document it submitted to the governor-general of the western province, CHTN reported.

The skill of making Gilakheh Ash, the talent of making Kuteh sweets, and local games of Qilobardan and Halakomalek were among the elements added to the prestigious list.



The ritual of Moludi Khani, a poem reciting ritual that is performed to celebrate the birthdays of the Prophet Muhammad (S), his household, and Imams, in Paveh Mosque was also inscribed on the list.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, of which Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan are both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Inscribed into the base of a towering cliff, Taq-e Bostan comprises extraordinary Sassanian bas-reliefs of ancient victorious kings divide opinions. Late afternoon is the best time to visit, as the cliff turns a brilliant orange in the setting sun, which then dies poetically on the far side of the duck pond.

Bisotun is a patchwork of immense yet impressive life-size carvings depicting king Darius I and several other figures. UNESCO has it that Bisotun bears outstanding testimony to the important interchange of human values on the development of monumental art and writing, reflecting ancient traditions in monumental bas-reliefs.

Kermanshah was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sassanid dynasty. Conquered by the Arabs in 640, it was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin). Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501–1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah's rule (1797–1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

Creative center for handicrafts to make debut in Damavand

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A creative center for handicrafts will make its debut in Damavand to help preserve ancient skills across the mountainous city, which is situated northeast of Tehran province.

The center is intended to attract creative ideas in three areas of production, packaging, and marketing. Damavand's tourism chief, Shahram Sharifi, said on Saturday.

The ideas and designs of the artists will be reviewed by experts and guided for implementation in this center, the official added. "At the center, marketing and advertising experts, cyberspace experts, and content producers will also be on hand to assist artists."

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.



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

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

The value of Iran's handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country's handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

Soleyman Prison: a conical peak with fascinating history

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Soleyman Prison ("Zendan-e Soleyman" in Persian) is situated in a dramatic 97m conical peak that dominates the valley landscape for miles around in northwest Iran.

Though there is no construction visible to modern sightseers, the cone was once enclosed by fortified walls and topped by a religious sanctuary that archaeologists suggest dated to 900 BC.

As an avid visitor, if you are reasonably fit, climbing to the crater's edge should take less than 15 minutes. The path is muddy but obvious, zigzagging up from the nearby Takab road about 4km south of the main Takht-e Soleyman ruins.

Meaning "Solomon's Prison", the site did not gain its great religious significance until the early Sassanid period when Takht-e Soleyman—then known as Shiz—was established as a Zoroastrian religious sanctuary (in all likelihood having replaced nearby Zendan-e Soleyman as an earlier center of cult activity) in the early to mid-5th century CE.

The UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleyman ("Solomon's Throne") is an ancient isolated sanctuary that bears testimony to various eras of the nation's history. It is situated in the southeastern highlands of West Azarbaijan province overlooking a lake with a backdrop of a snowcapped mountain range.

Takht-e Soleyman also embraces a fire temple, which was originally constructed of mud-brick (although foundations were generally of rough stone), but large sections of the complex, including the fire temple itself, were rebuilt of stone and fired bricks in subsequent centuries. The fire temple is flanked on either side (east and west) by two other cultic structures. To the west, on the other side of a long central hallway, a second fire temple may have served as a personal place of worship for the royal family. Situated to the east of the main fire temple was the temple of the goddess Anahita, who had particular



importance to the royal house and the warrior class—both of which were served by the local fire altar.

According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the surrounding landscape of the sanctuary was probably first inhabited sometime in the 1st millennium BC. Some construction on the mound itself dates from the early Achaemenian dynasty (559–330 BC), and there are traces of settlement activity from the Parthian period.

UNESCO says the site has strong symbolic and spiritual significance related to fire and water – the principal reason for its occupation from ancient times – and

stands as an exceptional testimony of the continuation of a cult related to fire and water over some 2,500 years. "Located here, in a harmonious composition inspired by its natural setting, are the remains of an exceptional ensemble of royal architecture of Persia's Sassanian dynasty (3rd to 7th centuries). Integrated with the palatial architecture is an outstanding example of a Zoroastrian sanctuary; this composition at Takht-e Soleyman can be considered an important prototype."

Moreover, the 10-ha property includes Tepe Majid, an archaeological mound culturally related to Zendan-e Soleyman; the

As an avid visitor, if you are reasonably fit, climbing to the crater's edge should take less than 15 minutes. The path is muddy but obvious, zigzagging up from the nearby Takab road about 4km south of the main Takht-e Soleiman ruins.

Iran targets 30 countries to boost inbound tourism

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has targeted a selection of 30 countries in a bid to lift inbound tourism of the country.

"Iran has recently shortlisted 30 countries as its target markets for tourism... They have been categorized and prioritized into four groups," Leila Azhdari, who presides over the tourism marketing and advertising office of the ministry, said on Saturday.

"China, Iraq, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Oman are the top priorities of our target market in terms of [inbound] tourism," she said.

"Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Russia, and Armenia constitute our second group of tourism targets," Azhdari said, adding that the elements of neighborhood and proximity are very important to us.

"For instance, India is not a neighbor of Iran but ranges of historical and cultural commonalities make it a top priority for us."

The ten countries of Germany, Italy, France, Qatar, Ku-



wait, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Kazakhstan, and the United Arab Emirates have been selected as the third priority on the list, the official stated.

"Finally, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Sweden, Aus-

Zanjan reopens museums, travel destinations as virus curbs ease

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Some of the museums and tourist attractions across the northwestern Zanjan province reopened their doors to the public on Saturday as restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic have been loosened.

Virus-related health protocols are strictly enforced for visitors, the provincial tourism chief, Amir Arjmand, announced on Saturday.

Zolfaqari Archaeological Museum, Katala-Khor cave, and the UNESCO-registered Dome of Soltaniyeh are amongst the sites which recently reopened, the official said.

Zolfaqari museum is famed for



showcasing some ancient salt men and their belongings. In 2006, the former

historical mansion of Zolfaqariha was converted into a museum to house the ancient mummies, along with more than 2,000 registered items and relics. The four salt men are the most unique items of the museum, which are preserved in special windows.

Meaning "Mountain of Sun", Katala-Khor, a limestone cave full of natural crystals, is said to date back to the Jurassic era, some 120 million years ago, so that it has embraced lots of natural and artificial changes during this lengthy period. The cave was reportedly discovered some seven decades ago by a group of Iranian cavers.

The UNESCO-listed Mausoleum of

mountain to the east of Takht-e Soleyman that served as a quarry for the site; and Belqeis Mountain 7.5 km to the northeast, on which are the remains of a Sassanian-era citadel. The archaeological heritage of the Takht-e Soleyman ensemble is further enriched by the Sassanian town (which has not yet been excavated) located in the 7,438-ha landscape buffer zones.

Under travelers' eyes

Here is a selection of comments that visitors to the mountainous site have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

"A volcanic mountain with history"

Evil spirits were once locked up in this mountain. This is the story. True or not, it doesn't matter. The mountain is impressive and near the historic site of Takht-e Soleyman. It is worth climbing the edge of the volcano and look inside, and smell ... the devilish smell of sulfur. (marekp59 from Gdansk; reviewed Jun. 2019)

"Difficult to climb"

This is a hugely impressive site with an amazing history. It stands out from the landscape amazingly. I managed to climb three-quarters of the way up but found it too steep and difficult to reach the top and so was hugely disappointed. My husband and our guide got to the top and told me about the wonderful, deep pit at the top. Most people would manage the ascent. (Sus1952 from Palmerston North, New Zealand; reviewed Apr. 2019)

"Wow an amazing place"

This is well worth the climb to get to the top. Looking down into the crater was a great experience. Also stunning views from the top. Be aware there are no bathrooms. (Youngone51 from New Plymouth, New Zealand; reviewed Oct. 2017)

"Doorway to Hell"

A small hill just off the road and a 10-min climb to look into this volcanic crater from the rim. It's very worthwhile! (Markus U from Modling, Austria; Reviewed August 2017)

tria, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Georgia, Belgium, Denmark, and Lebanon constitute our fourth priority."

The average of international travels to and from Iran fell by 80 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20, 2021) from a year earlier caused by various coronavirus restrictions.

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

UNWTO's Panel of Experts foresees a rebound in international tourism in the current year, mostly in the third quarter. However, some experts suggest the rebound could occur only in 2022.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Photogs invited to capture Sassanid sites in southern Iran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A selection of photographers have been invited to capture charming scenes from the "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region", which is a UNESCO World Heritage.

The ensemble comprises several Sassanian-era (224–651) sites, which are scattered across the ancient cities of Bishapour, Firouzabad, and Sarvestan in the modern Fars province of Iran.

"We are organizing specialized photography tours to re-introduce the Sassanid treasure in Fars," a local tourism official announced on Saturday, CHTN reported.

The ensemble reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

Under his leadership who reigned from 224 to 241, the Sassanians overthrew the Parthians and created an empire that was constantly changing in size as it reacted to Rome and Byzantium to the west and the Kushans and Hephthalites to the east, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

The dynasty evolved by Ardashir I and was destroyed by the Arabs during the period of 637 to 651.



The dynasty was named after Sasan, an ancestor of Ardashir I.

Iranian universities among world's top in biotechnology

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A total of 7 Iranian universities have been listed among the world's top in biotechnology subject, according to the Shanghai Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS).

Tabriz University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, University of Tehran, Isfahan University of Technology, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, and Tarbiat Modarres University were among the best biotechnology institutions.

ShanghaiRanking began to publish world university ranking by academic subjects in 2009. By introducing improved methodology, the Global Ranking of Academic Subjects was first published in 2017.

The 2021 GRAS contains rankings of universities in 54 subjects across Natural Sciences, Engineering, Life Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Social Sciences. More than 1,800 out of 4,000 universities across 93 countries and regions are finally listed in the rankings.

The GRAS rankings use a range of objective academic indicators and third-party data to measure the performance of world universities in respective subjects, including research output (Q1), research influence (CNCI), an international collaboration (IC), research quality (Top), and international academic awards (Award).

The index of international academic awards



is based on Academic Excellence Survey (AES) conducted by ShanghaiRanking since 2017. By February 2021, more than 1000 professors from top world universities have participated in the survey. Their responses have revealed 164 top journals in 48 subjects and 32 top awards in 27 subjects.

Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Technical University of Denmark top the list in the subdivision of biotechnology.

In the field of engineering, there are 22

subcategories, and Iranian universities have participated in most of the fields. In other subcategories, the Iranian universities are also included, but the University of Tehran ranked the highest among the country's universities.

Shining at world rankings 2021

Most recently, the Times Higher Education Young University Rankings 2021 listed 26 Iranian institutions among the world's best universities that are 50 years old or younger. Some 34 Iranian universities and insti-

tutions were listed among the top 1,000 in the world, according to Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2021.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Plan to support labor, street children in 12 provinces

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A five-point plan for labor and street children will be implemented in 12 provinces of the country, Mahmoud Alijo, an official with the Welfare Organization, has said.

Empowering the child's family, collecting labor children's biometric information, implementing a child-friendly plan, using the media system, and continuously monitoring the labor child's condition through a special system is among the five steps of this plan, Alijo said.

"Using technology and identifying labor children by the iris of the eye, provides us with a comprehensive database of these children and prevents re-counting of these children in the plan," he explained.

He went on to state that the child-friendly plan is a system according to which each child goes through a different path in order to be supported according to age group or nationality, YJC reported on Saturday.

The income of labor and street children is provided by people's help in the street so that it is necessary to organize people's contributions to go in a proper direction, he highlighted.

"We must promote the culture among the people not to ridicule these children but to treat them with respect because they are going to create the future," he stated, adding, improper treatment of children on the street causes psychological harm to the child, which can last for years.

He pointed out that there are 14,000 cases of labor and street children covered by the welfare organization, which need to be followed up and the child's condition should be monitored continuously.

To do this, a system has been designed, Alijo concluded.

70,000 street children

There are two concepts for labor children, some of whom are street children and others who are not homeless but have to work to provide a family livelihood.

Street children are homeless boys and girls, aged under 18 years, for whom "the street" has become home or their source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised.

According to the Society for Protecting the Rights of the Child (SPRC), there are 14,000 dumpsite pickers in Tehran, of which 4,700, or one-third of them, are children.

Habibollah Masoudi Farid, the deputy head of the Welfare Organization, announced in 2020 that there are an estimated 70,000 street children in the country. Of course, given that the conditions of children working in workshops are different, Masoudi Farid said that there are no exact statistics.

Under the law, the employment of children aged 15 or younger is prohibited in Iran and there are also restrictions on types of jobs that persons between 15 and 18 years can do. For example, no child is allowed to work on jobs that pose occupational health hazards.

Financially struggling children

Referring to the leading causes of child labor in the country, Seyed Hassan Mousavi Chalak, head of the Iranian Social Workers Association, said that the current causes of child labor in the country are similar to its global causes, which are economic and financial issues.

The inefficient social security system is another reason behind child labor. If the coverage of social security expands and becomes stronger, a significant part of this



phenomenon will decrease.

Some 83-87 percent of working children are those financially struggling families.

Currently, 5-6 million people (that are legally eligible for a living allowance) are under the coverage of the Welfare Organization and Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and are receiving subsidies, but the pension does not cover their living expenses.

Although the financial burden is indeed heavy for the government, we missed the capacity to expand social support, which might have been affected by various factors, such as U.S. sanctions, improper management, etc.

Now that the country's economy is not in good condition, the population in need of continued support is growing, and this is worrisome.

Working children are consequences of inefficient economic and social security systems.

Over 1,200 tons of narcotics seized in calendar year

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iranian anti-narcotics police discovered 1,200 tons of various drugs during the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2020-March 2021), which is two-folded compared to the recent years, Eskandar Momeni, the director of headquarters for the fight against narcotics, said.

Iran is the leading country in the fight against narcotics worldwide; despite its proximity to Afghanistan, which is the largest producer of narcotics, he explained, IRIB reported on Saturday.

The country has also carried on a battle against narcotics in spite of being highly affected by cruel sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic, he added.

"Last year, more than 1,200 tons of var-



ious drugs were confiscated, which shows a decrease in drug trafficking and transit to Europe," he highlighted.

According to the UN Office, the Islamic Republic's continuous efforts to combat narcotics trafficking came up with the seizure of

more than 90 percent of opium, 70 percent of morphine, and 20 percent of world heroin.

'common understanding, global action'

Iranian deputy anti-narcotics police chief Naqi Mahmoudi has stressed that the drug trafficking fight requires a common understanding and action by all members of the international community, and no country alone can address the challenges in this area.

Despite the conditions caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of harsh sanctions against the country, fortunately, with the efforts of anti-narcotics police in 2020, drug detection increased by 41 percent.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

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Iran starts smart screening program to contain coronavirus

The second phase of the social distancing plan in Iran started on Tuesday within the framework of a screening program to curb the spread of coronavirus.

"Under the program, we will conduct tests on the asymptomatic people who are transmitting the virus to the community without awareness," Health Minister Saad Namaki said explained, IRNA reported.

"With the help of knowledge-based companies, we are moving to centers that have no symptoms, and for this we need an extensive diagnosis," he added.

آغاز طرح فاصله گذاری هوشمند در ایران برای مقابله با کرونا

اجرای گام دوم طرح غربالگری و مقابله با کرونا در کشور روز سه شنبه آغاز شد.

به گزارش ایرنا، سعید نمکی، وزیر بهداشت، در تشریح این طرح گفت: در این مرحله سراغ افراد بدون علامت که منشأ عفونت هستند می‌رویم و برای این اقدام به آزمایش‌های گسترده نیاز داریم.

او افزود: با کمک شرکت‌های دانش بنیان، سراغ کانون‌هایی می‌رویم که علامت ندارند، اما ویروس را در سطح جامعه جابه‌جا می‌کنند.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. June 25

New cases	7,034
New deaths	123
Total cases	3,157,983
Total deaths	83,711
New hospitalized patients	965
Patients in critical condition	3,195
Total recovered patients	2,822,704
Diagnostic tests conducted	23,189,724
Doses of vaccine injected	5,613,140

Literacy among Iranian youth 6% above global average

→ 1 The literacy gap between men and women has declined from 26 percent before the 1979 Islamic Revolution to 2.8 percent, Mohammadzadeh stated in August 2020.



The difference in literacy rate between urban and rural areas has decreased from 34.9 percent in 1976 to about 12 percent in 2019, which demonstrates a significant rise in the literacy rate of rural areas.

According to the censuses conducted between 1976 and 2016, the literacy rate of urban areas has increased from 65.5 percent to 99.8 percent. At the same time, the literacy rate in rural areas has increased from 30.5 percent to 78.5 percent.

The allocation of about 80 percent of literacy activities to girls and women, especially in rural areas, has led to a faster increase in the female literacy index.

According to a census conducted in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), there are 2.6 million illiterates in the age group of 10 to 49 in the country, of whom 360,000 are foreign nationals.

The Organization plans to educate more than 30,000 illiterate foreign nationals residing in the country, Mohammadzadeh said in December 2020.

Forests and forestry in Iran

(Part 3)

Isolated stands of this Zagrosian forest type appear as outposts on different locations of the Persian plateau, indicating a historically wider expansion of these forests into Azerbaijan and stretching possibly as far as Khorasan. According to Pabot, all areas with an annual precipitation of more than 400 mm. may have once been covered by this specific forest type.

Less protected than the Caspian forests, which were hardly accessible until the late 19th century, the Zagrosian forests have always been within easy reach of farmers, nomads, traders, and armies crossing the Zagros mountains on their way between Mesopotamia and central Persia. Archaeological evidence shows that these forests have been exploited economically for millennia. Human interference, in combination with climatic and other ecological factors (soils, topography), must therefore be considered as decisive for the distinctly different character of this forest type.

(3) In line with Bobek's classification, the steppe and desert regions of Persia are the domain of very specific forest-types. Characterized by extremely patchy distribution and incoherent species composition (due to variations in the availability and the quality of water), Bobek's "loose stands and brushwood" seem to correspond to Djazirei's "formations xeriques" or Pabot's forest elements of the Baluchi flora zone in the context of his "xerophilous forest flora" as part of the Irano-Turanian flora zone. Although largely destroyed by human interference, the remnants of these formerly widespread "dry" forests can still be subdivided into two sub-types: a) Juniperus forests and b) pistachio-almond-maple forests.

Juniperus forests with J. polycarpus as the dominant species belong to the cold-resistant type and thus are mainly to be found in the northern parts of the country. Originally covering large stretches of the southern slopes of the Alborz as well as large tracts of the Khorasan mountain systems, Juniperus forests seem to thrive best at the same heights as the Caspian montane forests but under distinctly drier conditions. Aridity is also the reason for the comparatively thin strands of these forests as well as for their light, steppe-like, and mostly herbaceous undergrowth. Stretching into the neighboring regions of Armenia and Anatolia in the west and into Afghanistan in the east, Juniperus intermingle with other trees or woody shrubs such as pistachios, almonds, barberries, and cotoneaster species in drier environments; and with walnuts, willows, tamarisks and others in more damp habitats, especially in riverine areas or close to ground water reserves.

Pistachio-almond-maple forests are the more arid component of this third forest-type. Originally the continuation of the semi-humid/semi-arid forests of the Zagros towards the east and the interior, loose stands of pistachio-almond-maple have more or less disappeared from around big urban centers such as Tehran or Isfahan. Certain parts of Fars (e.g., around Lake Neiriz) or Kerman and their mountains are still covered by these very light forests, growing on steppe-like ground- covers over lithosols, or soils of chestnuts or sierozem type. Pistachios (P. atlantica) sometimes intermingled with almonds, maples or junipers are on the whole, however, characterized by their low and light stands, resembling very often scanty bush lands rather than forests.

(Source: Encyclopædia Iranica)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING



He who is deserted by friends and relatives will often find help and sympathy from strangers.

Imam Ali (AS)

History of art in Iran during Safavid to Qajar Periods:

Part 5

While these selected manuscripts represent the high points of Shah Tahmasp's favored art, they do not delineate it completely. Other books, less lavish but still fine, were produced for patrons at the royal court and in provincial centers of power, where a local aristocrat might commission manuscripts for his own library.

Commercial workshops also existed, both in the capital and in other cities, notably Shiraz, where a number of ateliers were actively producing the many dozens of handsome books known to have originated there.

Provincial centers of art, whether for book making or metal working or pottery, had existed in Iran from early Islamic times with recognizable regional identities. What distinguishes the Safavid period is that by the end of the 16th century the cultural hegemony of the royal court was such that provincial centers of patronage either tended to disappear or to become stylistically indistinguishable from the capital.

Manuscript making was not the only activity open to painters and calligraphers. The former drew and painted single pages that were not intended for inclusion in literary texts but were rather designed for precious albums (moraqqa); these were not haphazard assemblages of valued works but carefully composed, harmonious entities.

The increased attention to the single page and the moraqqqa is one of the most significant developments of later Safavid art. Although paintings bearing artists' names (sometimes signatures but far more often contemporary or later ascriptions by patrons, collectors, or librarians) are preserved from earlier times, it is in the late Timurid and Safavid periods that artists' names abound.

Artists and collectors seem to have been far more aware of individual differences of style; this heightened sense of artistic individuality is accompanied, around the mid-16th century, by a more developed sense of artistic history. Doost Mohammad's valuable 1544 account of the master at Tahmasp's court has already been noted; later painters, such as Sadeqi Beg, and historians, such as Qazi Ahmad, composed similar records (and from such documents it is possible to reconstruct the careers of major Safavid masters).

The life of the scribe Shah Mahmud Neyshaburi serves as a good example, illustrating the vicissitudes of a Safavid artist's career. He was the nephew and pupil of Mawlana Abdi, a calligrapher, and was famed as the peer of the earlier masters Soltan Ali and Mir Ali. While the great Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh of about 1524-44 may very well be the work of his hand, he did sign the British Museum Khamseh, which he wrote between 1539 and 1543.

At the peak of his power, he lost his patron when Shah Tahmasp turned away from painting and calligraphy and dismissed the members of his atelier, apparently without giving them any remuneration for their past services.

Without grants of land or patronage or pension, Shah Mahmud moved to Mashhad, where he supported himself for many years by writing architectural inscriptions, samples of calligraphy, and a few manuscripts for occasional patrons.

When the shah's nephew Ebrahim Mirza was appointed governor of Mashhad in 1556, he began the creation of a magnificent copy of Jami's Haft Owrang and hired the aging scribe to write a major portion of it. It was his last endeavor: Shah Mahmud died in 1564-65 and was buried in Mashhad beside Soltan Ali.

Tahmasp's devotion to the arts of the precious manuscript was almost single-minded; his patronage of other arts was much less intense.

In pottery there occurred nothing like the great production of 16th-century Ottoman Turkey, and while the few dated examples of early Safavid pottery indicate that figural style closely followed that of the court painters, the artistry of both potter and pottery painter was less fine.

There is a similar shortage of dated metalwork, but examples in the Topkapi Palace Museum indicate that heavily bejeweled vessels were the fashion at court. Metal objects depicted in painting of the period appear to be less fine and more restricted in type than in earlier times.

Fine designers, some of them surely painters, were employed in the production of precious textiles (many of which are also represented in contemporary painting), their silk material enlivened with brilliant colors and figural iconography based on literary texts and traditions.

The Ardebil carpets are by common consent the finest carpets ever produced in Iran and were presumably presented by Shah Tahmasp to the family shrine in Ardebil.

Other carpets, both in silk and wool, have richly figured scenes of hunts or delineate the forms of ideal gardens, a central metaphor of Iranian poetry. The finest examples preserve the classic Safavid symmetry of design the composition is divided into four identical quadrants, but individual elements, whether human, plant, or animal, are rendered with considerable naturalism.

Despite these important developments and his own key role in the history of Safavid painting, Shah Tahmasp's pursuit of esthetic gratification slackened.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Iran publishes book revealing motives behind U.S. invasion of Iraq

→1 The Iraq National Library and Archive, Council of Representatives of Iraq, political parties and cultural centers have also received copies of the book.

Islamic resistance has been the subject of numerous books published in Arabic with contributions from Iran in Iraq and Lebanon over the past few years.

One of the books is "Vanquisher of America" written about Lieutenant-General Qassem Soleimani by Mohsen Saleh, a Lebanese associate professor of modern and contemporary Arab history.

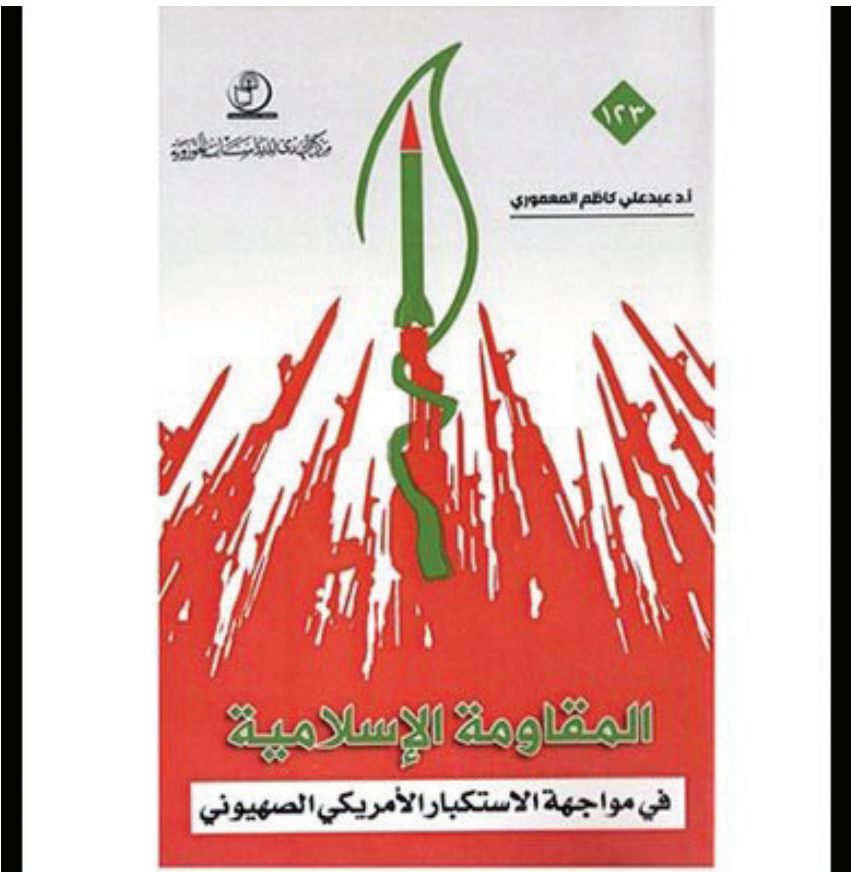
Tamkin Publications in Beirut published the book in collaboration with Iran to commemorate the commander's first martyrdom anniversary in January 2020.

Saleh, a former head of the Department of History and Civilization at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), is currently the general manager of the Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations in Beirut.

The book is composed of five chapters beginning with the messages from the Leader and Secretary-General of the Lebanese Hezbollah Resistance Movement, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, on the martyrdom of Soleimani followed by concepts such as the revolution.

The book also scrutinizes the Islamic Revolution's influence on the region and the geo-cultural and strategic changes in the area, and also carries articles by top U.S. senior officers about Commander Soleimani.

The writer also carried out several interviews with Hassan Nasrallah and the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon, Mohammad-Jalal Firuznia, about Commander Soleimani to publish in the book.



Front cover of Iraqi scholar Abd Ali Kazim al-Mamuri's book "Islamic Resistance versus the U.S. Arrogance".

Iranian movies win awards at Light to the World Intl. Youth Film Festival



Shahrbanu Mohammadi acts in a scene from "Before Darkness".

A R T TEHRAN – Iranian movies have won awards at the Light to the World International Youth Film Festival in Rybinsk, Russia.

"The Rotation" by Hazhir As'adi and "Stars in the Rain" by Sara Namju each received a diploma of the 1st degree laureate in the animation category.

"The Rotation" tells the story of a country where there is

a war between two tribes over claiming the sun in the sky. As a result of that war, the sun is annihilated and a volcano erupts. Those two tribes now are dead and a new sun is made, both done by the lava. Several centuries pass and the humans are still at war over claiming the sun in the sky.

"Stars in the Rain" is about a boy who draws paintings and joins passengers on a train in a city where it has been raining for years.

"Before Darkness" by director and writer Mosayyeb Hanai won the diploma of the 1st degree laureate in the foreign film category.

The film tells the story of an Afghan woman with a little baby and a group of human smugglers who attempt to cross the Iranian border towards Europe. Since she does not have enough money to pay the fare for herself and her child, she is forced to hide her baby in a bag.

In the middle of the trip, however, the baby makes a noise calling the smugglers' attention to her presence in the woman's

bag. They expel the woman from the car, but the woman's wailing and begging forces them to give her one hour to come up with the fare for her baby, before it gets dark. As the woman is unable to come up with the money, she makes a harsh decision: she abandons the baby on the street in a border town.

The film won the award for screenplay and also brought Shahbanu Mohammadi the award for best actress.

"Farrash" by Mohammad-Mahdi Fekrian won the diploma of the 3rd degree laureate in the video clip section. It also received the special diploma for originality.

"The Lower Floor" by Omidreza Kheirkhah was honored with a special diploma in the non-competitive program of the festival.

The Light to the World International Youth Film Festival, co-organized by the Rybinsk Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the National Fund for the Support of Copyright Holders, began its history in 2011.

Shorts from Iran line up for Fribourg Intl. Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN – Four short movies from Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the Fribourg International Film Festival, which will take place in Fribourg, Switzerland from July 16 to 25.

The films are "False Ceiling", "Nahid", "The Chick" and "All the Time".

"False Ceiling" directed by Mohsen Najafi Mehri is about a young couple who damaged the ceiling of the underground car parking garage in the apartment building. Should the two confess the truth or keep it from the neighbors? An Iranian Snow Therapy about the first steps into adult life.

Directed by Samad Alizadeh, "Nahid" features aspects of the patriarchal and traditionalist Iranian society when a woman

dies. Although she accepts the wrath of her family, Nahid protests against it.

In "The Chick", a cook at a rest stop in the middle of the desert is looking for a solution to rescue her friend who recently emigrated illegally from Afghanistan. An absurd and gripping film full of love, Bijan Aarabi is the director of the film.

In "All the Time" directed by Shadi Karamrudi, a shocking discovery turns Toranj's life upside down. Doubts begin to gnaw at her until the lines between seriousness and fun become blurred. EThe excitement lasts until the last second.

The Fribourg festival is focused on selected films from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Grand Prize is the main award of the event.

"The Ocean Behind the Window" by Babak Nabizadeh was screened in the School Program of the festival in March.

It is about Borhan, who sees the influx of tourists as a great way to earn some money. When things do not go exactly as planned, the ensuing events challenge his friendships, innocence and values.

Iranian filmmakers are frequent visitors to the Fribourg festival.

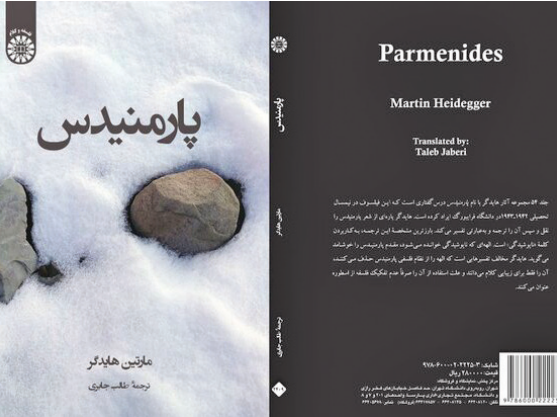
In 2006, "Slowly" by Maziar Miri won the Grand Prize Regard d'Or at the festival.

The film is about a railroad station employee named Mahmud who receives a telephone call informing him that his wife Pari has left him. All the evidence indicates that she has been disloyal to him, but Mahmud



"Nahid" by Samad Alizadeh. tries to discover the truth himself. In addition, "Asho" by Jafar Najafi was picked as the best short film in the 2020 edition.

Martin Heidegger's "Parmenides" comes to Iranian bookstores



Cover of the Persian translation of Martin Heidegger's book "Parmenides".

CULTURE TEHRAN – German philosopher Martin Heidegger's book "Parmenides" 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 rendered into Persian by Taleb Jaberri.

"Parmenides", a lecture course delivered by Heidegger at the University of Freiburg in 1942-1943, presents a highly original interpretation of ancient Greek philosophy.

A major contribution to Heidegger's provocative dialogue with the pre-Socratics, the book attacks some of the most firmly established conceptions of Greek thinking and of the Greek world.

The central theme is the question of truth and the primordial understanding of truth to be found in Parmenides "Didactic Poem".

Heidegger highlights the contrast between Greek and Roman thought and the reflection of that contrast in language. He analyzes the decline in the primordial understanding of truth—and, just as importantly, of untruth—that began in later Greek philosophy and that continues, by virtue of the

Latinization of the West, down to the present day.

Beyond an interpretation of Greek philosophy, "Parmenides" (volume 54 of Heidegger's Collected Works) offers a strident critique of the contemporary world, delivered during a time that Heidegger described as "out of joint".

The Indiana University Press published an English translation of the book by Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer in 1998. The original book was published in 1944.

Heidegger (1889-1976) was a German philosopher whose work is perhaps most readily associated with phenomenology and existentialism, although his thinking should be identified as part of such philosophical movements only with extreme care and qualification.

His ideas have exerted a seminal influence on the development of contemporary European philosophy. They have also had an impact far beyond philosophy, for example in architectural theory, literary criticism, theology, psychotherapy and cognitive science.

Sam Shepard's "Spy of the First Person" published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN – A Persian translation of American artist Sam Shepard's book "Spy of the First Person" has released in Iran.

Araz Barseqian is the translator of the book published by Esm in Tehran.

It is the final work from the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, actor and musician, drawn from his transformative last days.

In searing, beautiful prose, Shepard's extraordinary narrative leaps off the page with its immediacy and power.

It tells in a brilliant braid of voices the story of an unnamed narrator who traces, before our rapt eyes, his memories of work, adventure and travel as he undergoes medical

tests and treatments for a condition that is rendering him more and more dependent on the loved ones who are caring for him.

The narrator's memories and preoccupations often echo those of our current moment—for here are stories of immigration and community, inclusion and exclusion, suspicion and trust.

But at the book's core, is family—his relationships with those he loved, and with the natural world around him.

Vivid, haunting and deeply moving, "Spy of the First Person" takes us from the sculpted gardens of a renowned clinic in Arizona to the blue waters surrounding Alcatraz, from a New Mexico border town

to a condemned building on New York City's Avenue C. It is an unflinching expression of the vulnerabilities that make us human—and an unbound celebration of family and life.

Shepard was an American artist who worked as an award-winning playwright, writer and actor. His many written works are known for being frank and often absurd, as well as for having an authentic sense of the style and sensibility of the gritty modern American west.

He was an actor of the stage and motion pictures; a director of stage and film; author of several books of short stories, essays, and memoirs; and a musician.

of Sam Shepard's "Spy of the First Person".



Copies of the Persian translation of Sam Shepard's "Spy of the First Person".