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Who is the new Judiciary chief?

TEHRAN — On Thursday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei appointed Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei as the new Judiciary chief. Ezhe'i has been working in the Judiciary for 37 years. He has held numerous key positions in the Judiciary.

The Tehran Times decided to introduce the new Judiciary chief to its readers.

Ejei, born in 1956 in a village near Isfahan, began serving in the Judiciary in 1985 as the representative of the Judiciary in the Ministry of Intelligence.

Mohseni Ejei was the Special Prosecutor of the Clergy of Tehran from 1995 to 1997 and the Special Prosecutor General of the Clergy since 1998. He also served, from 1998 to 2002, as the head of the Special Judicial Complex for Investigating the Crimes of Government Employees.

Mostly known for his time as the minister of intelligence in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's first administration, he quit the administration following a spat between him and the former president in 2009.

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Industrial, mining projects worth over \$850m inaugurated

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday inaugurated six major industrial and mining projects worth 35.77 trillion rials (over \$851 million) in four provinces through video conferencing, IRNA reported.

The mentioned projects were inaugurated in Zanjan, Yazd, Hormozgan and East Azarbaijan provinces in the 78th series of inauguration ceremonies since the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

A steel ingot production unit, a tile and ceramic production plant, a tobacco processing unit, and a sponge iron pelletizing unit, were among the inaugurated projects.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior industry officials including Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Alireza Razm Hosseini and some officials from the mentioned provinces.

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“Sun Children” director Majid Majidi receives IAA’s first Plaque of Glory

TEHRAN — Oscar-nominated director Majid Majidi was honored on Thursday with the first edition of the IAA Plaque of Glory by the Iranian Academy of Arts (IAA).

He received the honor during a special ceremony at the IAA following a screening of his latest acclaimed movie “Sun Children” about child labor.

The academy has established the award

to honor an artist for his/her lifetime achievements every year.

“This film was produced to generate motivation for the construction of schools for child workers across the country, however, screening the film was thwarted by the pandemic, and I hope organizing meetings like this could help achieve the aim,” said Majidi after receiving the award.

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Ex-FM Mottaki says Saudi Arabia tricked U.S. into Yemen war

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, former Iranian foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki says Saudi Arabia deceived the United States into the war against Yemen in 2015.

The former foreign minister, who served as the chief of the unity council of the principlists in the run-up to the June 18 presidential election, also says President-elect Ebrahim Raisi will prioritize relations with neighbors during his incoming administration.

Mottaki who was trying to encourage principlists to gather around Judiciary Chief Raisi for the presidential election argues that the president-elect has a “clear understanding” of Iran’s foreign policy.

Following is the text of the interview:

What is the attitude of President Raisi’s administration towards Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action? How will the administration negotiate if the negotiations are not over until July, and how do you predict the administration’s response if the U.S. does not lift all sanctions.

The JCPOA is a “sad story” that has plagued the country for almost 18 years, the core of its issue is Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities and if in 2003 the administration of the time knew that these plans and scenarios made in connection with Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities would be a 17-18 year- long-term process, it might not make such decisions. A naive conception regarding the nuclear issue has made misunderstanding in a way that we cooperate, we show goodwill, and then the West accepts. We did it. We did all this in the talks, in the negotiations, in the interviews, in accepting the voluntary suspension of enrichment, in accepting the Additional Protocol voluntarily, and then Mr. ElBaradei, then Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), came to Iran for the last time and raised 12 basic questions and doubts and he said there is nothing else beyond these. We answered all those 12. But the Iran nuclear dossier was not closed. This shows that Westerners have a plan beyond our naive initial view of the nuclear issue. They wanted us to fulfill our obligations to the NPT in full, but not to have NPT privileges. This was in fact their intention. When we look at the issue in this way, what are our national interests?

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Rural development budget increases by 2.5 folds

TEHRAN — The budget for rural development projects has increased by 2.5 times in the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 2021-March 2022) compared to that of the previous year, deputy head of the Housing Foundation of Islamic Revolution, has announced.

A total of 80 trillion rials (nearly \$1.9 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) were allocated this year for the implementation of rural development projects across the country, IRNA quoted Mohammad-Reza Shamloo as saying on Friday.

The credit will be spent on preparing, reviewing, and implementing the rural plans, improving the rural infrastructure, and the development of the villages, he explained.

He went on to note that so far, the development plan of more than 3,700 villages in the country has been prepared and reviewed.

Currently, 26 percent of the country’s population lives in villages, around 39,000 villages have more

than 20 households and 23,000 villages have less than 20 households.

Thus, more than 97 percent of the country’s rural population lives in villages with over 20,000 households.

Rural-urban migration reverse

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

Many efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend of migration from rural areas to cities.

Rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and ecotourism are alternatives or complementary economic activities that could further stimulate rural development while decreasing rural community dependency on one main economic sector (agriculture, forestry, energy, or mining).

U.S. forces leave Afghanistan’s Bagram airbase after 20 years

After nearly 20 years, the United States military has left Afghanistan’s Bagram airbase, the epicenter of its war to remove the Taliban and hunt down the al-Qaeda perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks, two U.S. officials have said.

The airbase was handed over to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces in its entirety, they said on Friday on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release the information to the media, The Associated Press reported.

One of the officials also said the U.S. top commander in Afghanistan, General Austin S. Miller, “still retains all the capabilities and authorities to protect the forces”.

At its peak, Bagram airbase saw more than 100,000 U.S. troops pass through its sprawling compound 50km (30 miles) north of capital, Kabul.

An Afghan official said the base would be officially handed over to the government at a ceremony

on Saturday, Reuters news agency reported.

The withdrawal from the airbase is the clearest indication that the last of the 2,500-3,500 U.S. troops have left Afghanistan or are nearing a departure, months ahead of President Joe Biden’s promise that they would be gone by September 11.

It was clear soon after the mid-April announcement that the U.S. was ending its “forever war,” that the departure of U.S. soldiers and their estimated 7,000 NATO allies would be nearer to July 4, when the country celebrates its Independence Day.

Announcements from several countries analyzed by The Associated Press show that a majority of European troops left with little ceremony — a stark contrast to the dramatic and public show of force and unity when NATO allies lined up to back the U.S. invasion in 2001.

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S. Arabia key pillar of U.S. presence in the region: researcher

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN - An assistant professor at the Defense Studies Department of King’s College London says that Washington uses Riyadh as a means to maintain its presence in the region.

“Saudi Arabia remains a key pillar of U.S. presence in the region,” Andreas Krieg tells the Tehran Times.

“Leading from behind means that Washington uses military support to its partners in the

(Persian) Gulf as a means to maintain a presence there,” the strategic risk consultant says.

The war on Yemen has turned into a dark chapter in the history of Saudi Arabia. However, Western powers, including the U.S., are keeping to arm tyrannical states in the Persian Gulf region.

Following is the text of the interview:

While Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt have ended the blockade on Qatar under the Al Ula

declaration, don't you think that disputes surface again?

The root causes of the (Persian) Gulf crisis have not been addressed — particularly not between Qatar and the UAE. So, while the symptoms of the crisis are currently suppressed at least in the (Persian) Gulf, we see the symptoms of this ideational conflict already surfacing in other parts of the Middle East (West Asia).

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Restoration of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque continues

TEHRAN — A team of cultural heritage experts and experienced restorers supervises the restoration of parts of the creamy dome of the 17th-century Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, a masterpiece of Iranian architecture in Isfahan, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said. The restoration project has been in progress since last year as the previous low-quality rehabilitation work produced many criticisms from experts and authorities.

However, in recent weeks, cultural heritage aficionados have sharply criticized officials for carrying out restorations without the assistance of experts.

“Supervisory and advisory committees have been formed jointly by the province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department and Imam Square in order to continue the restoration of the dome of the mosque,” Nasser Taheri announced on Thursday.

The supervisory committee is composed of architects and restorers who are tasked with overseeing the restoration project, while scholars and specialists on the advisory committee will be consulted in the areas needed to complete the project in due time, the official explained.

The restoration project continues with the use of traditional materials and methods as well as rearranging and restoring old tiles removed during the initial phase of the project, he noted.

Last October late provincial tourism chief Feireydoon Allahyari announced that as the dome is not in a good condition and there are some new cracks on it, it is decided to be restored once again using the expertise of top traditional restorers and academic achievements in order to salvage the monument without any damage to its glory.

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It is in China’s long-term interest to confront U.S. sanctions: GWU professor

BY M. A. SAKI

TEHRAN — A professor from the George Washington University says that it is in China’s long-term interest to blunt U.S. sanctions, which have become a weapon in its foreign policy.

Noting that “America’s sanction policy has become a potent weapon in its foreign policy arsenal,” Hossein Askari tells the Tehran Times that “China, and indeed other American adversaries such as Russia, should try to blunt this almost unique policy.”

Askari is of the opinion that if China fully embraces Iran, the U.S. will think more seriously about imposing secondary sanctions on Chinese companies, entities and Chinese officials as this would truly harm the U.S. consumer and corporations.

“(However,) the sooner China does this, it is better for China. An alliance with Iran affords China its best access to the Middle East (West Asia) and beyond,” according to the expert in international business.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you see the fate of the Vienna talks in light of Iran-U.S. escalation in Iraq and Syria and strictness by both countries in the negotiations?

I don’t think that the escalation of hostilities in Iraq and Syria will have much of an impact on the outcome of the talks. Both sides realize that their suspicions and hostilities go much deeper than a few drone attacks or ensuing retaliations. It all depends how badly each side wants to make a deal. For Iran it is all about economic respite; an economic boost, no matter how temporary.

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Regarding our previous Tender under Ref. No. 1400-1004, hereby we extend mentioned Tender till 14-July-2021
Meanwhile the tender's winner should guarantee 1% of proposed amount as performance guarantee in one of the trustees introduced by Iralco.

TENDER INVITATION NO. 1400-1004

IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO) would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 180.000 MT, Metallurgical Grade Calcined Alumina (AL2O3) on tender basis.
Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 30-June -2021
Based on our required instruction to following address:
PO Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran Postal code: 3818998116
Attention: Mr. Omidi - Mr. Nabini Tel: +98 86 32162014 +98 86 32162181
NO.49, Mollasadra Ave., Vanak Square, Tehran- Iran, Postal code: 1991614581
Name of office: Managing Director Office, Iranian Aluminum Company. Fax: +98 21 88049028 Tel: +98 21 88049024
For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: www.iralco.ir
Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



Raisi launches website for people to suggest capable managers

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In an unprecedented move, President-elect Ebrahim Raisi's office launched a website called "Companions of Raisi," asking people to submit names and numbers of people whom they assume have the caliber to be future managers and ministers of his future administration.

"All elites, intellectuals, groups, parties, organizations and individuals are invited to nominate a person they know at the level of 'the government of people'," according to the statement released by the Raisi office.

Raisi has called his new administration "the government of people".

"Competence", "anti-corruption", "revolutionary spirit" and "popularity" are among the characteristics that the president-elect has emphasized.

"Because I deeply believe that wherever there is room for public participation in decision-making, the success rate goes up, and as I promised, a system for public participation in introducing members of the government is in place," Raisi said, explaining about the website.

Who is the new Judiciary chief?

➔ **1** Mohseni Ejei, who studied theology at Haqqani School and Qom Seminary, was elected as the attorney general in September 2009 and on August 20, 2014, Ayatollah Amoli Larijani, then head of the Judiciary, appointed him as the first deputy Judiciary chief. In June 2016, he also took over the chairmanship of the Broadcasting Supervisory Council. With the election of Ebrahim Raisi as the head of the Judiciary in December 20018, he became the first deputy head of the Judiciary.



On Thursday, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution appointed Mohsen Ejei as the new head of the Judiciary. In his decree, the Leader thanked Raisi for all his efforts in the past two years, asking Ejei to continue the Development Document of the Judiciary, expanding new technologies and guaranteeing free and accessible judicial service to all, appointing hard-working and motivated youth to work in the Judiciary and tutoring gifted managers for high and middle-ranking positions, confronting few judges violating law as well as appreciating judges who do a good job, and finally, being in touch with the people at the heart of the society.

Raisi was voted president-elect on June 18. He wrote a letter on Wednesday night asking the Leader for permission to quit the Judiciary to focus on forming his new government.

Outgoing President Hassan Rouhani, Armed Forces Commander Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Iran's al-Hikma (Wisdom) National Movement leader Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakim, and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf were among the officials who congratulated Mohseni Ejei in his new post, cherishing the opportunity given his close friendship with President-elect Raisi to counter corruption.

Ambassador: Gen. Soleimani assassination was clear example of 'state terrorism'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran says the U.S. assassination of senior Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani clearly exemplifies "state terrorism," cautioning the UN against any understatement of the atrocity.

Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh, Iran's permanent ambassador to the UN office in Geneva, made the remarks on Thursday while addressing the 47th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

He was addressing a report last year by Agnes Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, about the assassination, that sufficed to describe it as "arbitrary killing."

According to Press TV, the Iranian diplomat called the designation a mere understatement of the terrorist crime that failed to depict the enormity of the "unjust, illegal, and barbaric murder."

Callamard's description, he said, should not lead to any underestimation of the gravity of "this act of state terrorism".

General Soleimani, the former commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), was martyred together with his companions in a U.S. drone strike near Baghdad's airport in January 2020. The attack took place while General Soleimani was paying an official visit to the Iraqi capital.

The strike was directly ordered by former U.S. president Donald Trump.

Among other martyrs in the strike were senior Iraqi counter-terrorism commander, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

Both commanders had earned huge admiration both inside their respective countries and throughout the region.

General Soleimani's reputation has registered him as the region's most decisive and popular anti-terror military official, who led the region's successful battle against the terrorist group of Daesh.

Baghaei Hamaneh described General Soleimani as a "true defender of the human rights as well as an opponent of occupation and Daesh's terrorism."

"This measure (targeting him) was an international crime that came to threaten the international peace and security too," he added.

The culpability of the U.S. administration, including those who were involved in the assassination, is clear to see, the diplomat said.

"The Iranian people, who know [General] Soleimani as the model of a soldier, and the entire people of the region, who see their liberation from the scourge of Daesh is owed to his sacrifice, will never stop demanding justice for this tremendous crime," he stated.

The world's human rights organizations are expected to pay heed to the sheer scope of the crime and its lasting repercussions for the rule of law as well as human rights and dignity, Baghaei Hamaneh said.

The bodies have to realize the full extent of this "clear example of lawlessness and insult against the basic right to life," he concluded.

Ex-FM Mottaki says Saudi Arabia tricked U.S. into Yemen war

“Mr. Raisi has almost a clear understanding of Iran’s foreign policy”

➔ **1** If first we had understood the problem correctly, we would have designed it in such a way that we would proceed in parallel. That is, we should both focus on protecting our national interests, using our privileges as a committed member of the NPT, and continuing our talks.

Towards the end of the eighth government (the Khatami government), we just realized what the Westerners were planning and what they were aiming for. And their package, proposed around July and August 2005, was a package in exchange for a two-year suspension in exchange for implementing the Additional Protocol and in exchange for implementing all the leniencies we have shown regarding the nuclear issues. In this proposed package, the negotiators talked about drugs, customs and agricultural cooperation, but Iran's right to enrichment was not considered in the talks and so contrary to what they propagate, unlocking enrichment seals took place in the last months of the eighth administration, not the ninth administration (the Ahmadinejad administration). And the Westerners said that if you unlock the seal, we will take Iran's case to the Security Council and they did. But it happened in the ninth administration. In the ninth administration, we either have to approve what was done in the eighth administration or we have to obey the will of the West. The work of the eighth administration was approved by us. We cooperated and accompanied around two years, and they did not fulfill their obligations, so the seals must have been unlocked and we halt our commitments. But the other side of the coin was that we were referred to the Security Council. At this point we were at a crossroads in the ninth administration, whether to surrender and continue our cooperation without enrichment or to continue the decision of the eighth administration. We continued the decision of the eighth administration and then the cases went away. The JCPOA-related negotiations were ongoing with special privileges and permits that the eleventh and twelfth governments received from the system, in fact, they continued their negotiations.

I do not want to assess whether the JCPOA met our demands or not. Anyway, this deal was approved in the parliament with any quality and now the JCPOA is there and both sides, the Iranian side and I+4 are facing their commitments to fulfil. Here again, we did not go through the right diplomatic process. That is, the nine-article letter of the Supreme Leader "a step for step" was included. But we with enthusiasm and haste, took one step after another, even our ambassador in London was interviewing why you don't you deliver the 300 kilos of enriched uranium and do not take it out of the country. While for each of our steps they also have to take one step and they did not take any steps let alone what the Americans did. Unfortunately, in the face of the Americans' actions, which were not only a violation of the JCPOA due to Trump's withdrawal, we did not provide ourselves a possibility or opportunity to exercise the right that if the Americans did, we would have the right to use the trigger mechanism and take them to the Security Council.

While the Americans gave themselves the right of the trigger mechanism to take us to the Security Council if we violated it. It was a difficult situation. They left the JCPOA and we could not do anything except the public atmosphere which was negative towards the United States and of course for other reasons the atmosphere was negative towards the United States at the world level and Mr. Trump's defeat in the November 2020 elections was for this reason that Trump did not succeed in his foreign policy, not in the nuclear issue with Iran, but in the Venezuela issue, in the North Korean issue, regarding "the Deal of the Century" for Palestine, and these issues brought him down. In the final months of the current administration, they said that new JCPOA talks would begin in Vienna, given Mr. Biden's presidency and the signals he had given during the electoral campaign; they thought they would get the results they wanted, but the result was clear. That is, the system made it clear that we should lift the sanctions in the Vienna talks. We can verify this lifting and then we will return to our obligations.

That is, the system made it clear that in the Vienna talks lifting the sanctions must be a priority and we can verify this lift and then we will return to our obligations.

This was expressed in the words of the Supreme Leader. Because some people wanted

“In essence, Mr. Raisi’s administration in foreign policy will be pursuing in fact an approach based on interaction.”



to say that we were able to bring America back to the JCPOA and they considered this a victory. While the United States was in the JCPOA for less than three years; it was a matter of commitment to the JCPOA. Therefore, the Leader defined the matter very carefully and it turned out that negotiators in these two or three months of negotiations in Vienna, did not succeed in fulfilling this demand.

Now our word is clear and the new administration's stance is that of the system and that is all sanctions must be lifted. We verify and then return to our commitments and these principles are not undermined. But if the Americans do not act, the new administration will usually make a decision based on its own interests and the facts on the ground.

Definitely, this pursuit will not be an attrition one and neglecting the interests of the Islamic Republic. We think that if the West, I mean China and Russia plus the West, come to the conclusion that, given the new administration in Iran, they should settle this issue. The Iranian side is ready. I mean, my perception of Mr. Raisi's position is that the new administration has this view and this approach. In essence, Mr.

“Mr. Raisi intends to seek a serious and comprehensive cooperation with the neighbors.”

Raisi's administration in foreign policy will be pursuing in fact an approach based on interaction, an interaction that, as stated in Mashhad, guarantees the dignity of the Iranian people and includes national interests and moreover, the nature of this interaction of the Islamic Republic is an anti-domination interaction. Therefore, this administration authoritatively but diplomatically will defend the interests of Iran with all its might, and it may be an opportunity for the 5+1 to use this opportunity to reach a logical solution that guarantees the interests of Iran on the one hand and the result of their efforts on the other.

How do you see Mr. Raisi’s regional foreign policy? What will be his position on neighboring countries?

Mr. Raisi has almost a clear understanding of Iran's performance in the field of foreign policy. In recent years, I believe that the missing links in these foreign relations have been well observed by him. In the rational approach of the Islamic Republic, one of our solutions to solve regional problems is cooperation and regional approaches. We believe that the problems of the countries of the region can be resolved among themselves in a peaceful framework and on the basis of mutual understanding. This means that we do not welcome extra-regional powers to solve regional problems. Another point that Mr. Raisi intends to seek a serious and comprehensive cooperation with neighbors. We have not seen the slightest serious planning in the current administration to work with our neighbors until the approval of the JCPOA and shortly thereafter. Therefore, our view is that the neighbors are one of the serious priorities of Mr. Raisi's administration for cooperation.

We have a population of more than 450 million people in our neighborhood. And if we take into account our immediate neighbors, there will be more than 600 million people. Therefore, one of the priorities is the neighboring countries, which we must plan carefully. And while we can find markets for all of our country's products that have export capacity in neighboring countries, apart from distant countries, this requires a plan. In the field of security issues in the region, we have had successful and unsuccessful experiences in the past. On the one hand, we are in ECO, on the other hand, we have interests regarding the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, and the cover almost all of our neighbors except two or three countries.

Therefore, we can become more active within the framework of ECO regional systems. We had plans for the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in the past, but now it can be raised

more seriously to have the fields of mutual political, economic and security cooperation with the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. These are our neighbors and we will remain neighbors forever. Therefore, we must increase the power of crisis management. Our region is a region of turmoil and crisis. And sometimes countries fall into a quagmire of crisis. Now, for example, Saudi Arabia has been in this swamp for many years. In a constructive interaction, we can help the countries of the region to get out of this crisis. In the issue of Afghanistan and the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh and other issues that we have in the region, we can have solutions based on the interests, authority and dignity of our people in cooperation with the countries of the region.

You mentioned Saudi Arabia. What is your prediction of Mr. Raisi’s policy towards non-aligned countries, which have sometimes caused problems for us? For example, plans such as the Hormuz peace initiative have been proposed by Iran but not welcomed. How can we interact with countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain?

Sometimes we come to a common ground in the necessary area of interaction with others; sometimes, as you mentioned, in the necessary area, you may not agree with proposals and plans. So, someone who is in crisis should think about interacting with others to get out of that situation.

Saudi Arabia thought and deceived the American officials that it would finish the work of Yemen in a very short time. The same way that Saddam deceived Western and Arab officials by claiming that he will arrive in Tehran in a week. Saudi Arabia has not been in this crisis for 15 days, not for a month, not for a quarter, not for a year or two, but for years now. Everyone in the world understands that Saudi Arabia is not the winner of this war. It is now necessary for Saudi Arabia to reach this conclusion that the Yemeni crisis has no military solution, because the Yemenis are fighting with guerrilla tactics. Neither Saudi's ground forces will be able to confront the Yemeni ground forces, except for the areas it occupied, nor the aerial bombardments will lead any country to victory, from the Vietnam War to the Iran-Iraq war and other wars.

I made trips to countries in the region during the bombing of Lebanon during the 33-Day War by the Zionist regime. When I met with the President of Egypt, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, he said that the Israelis were here last week. And I told them you would definitely not win this war. Because you are fighting with classic tactics while Hezbollah is fighting you as guerrilla fighters. And you do not know where and with whom you are at war. And so it was. The first 15 days they were sure of victory, but the second 15 days the battle slowly turned in Hezbollah's favor, and eventually Hezbollah won.

Therefore, we will help Saudi Arabia to know that it will not be victorious in this war, and if it ever thought that it would cause serious damage to Yemen through starvation, misery, destruction and inhumane acts to force them to surrender empty-handed, they failed.

Today, the situation has changed. Today, the Yemenis can target any target anywhere in Saudi Arabia, except the two Muslim holy areas of Mecca and Medina. It is enough for a rational person in Saudi Arabia to convey this understanding to the Saudi authorities that as long as you continue, there is no news of victory and it is just the spread of damage. I call this a negative understanding. Not positive. And Saudi Arabia is almost coming to that conclusion. It coming to the conclusion that it is fruitless to cut ties with Iran. Some time ago, messages were raised by Saudi Arabia, and of course, I think that in this government and in the next government, this offer will be welcomed by Saudi Arabia, based on the

principles and foundations that we have always had and defended.

In your opinion, who will form Mr. Raisi’s foreign policy team? What will be Mr. Raisi’s actions to accelerate the trial of the assassins of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, given that Mr. Raisi was the Judiciary chief?

I have no information about your first question. Regarding the second question, I think that the prosecution of this crime will go through its stages in the Iranian courts. And the competent courts will issue a verdict against the killer and the perpetrators of this crime.

Internationally, we must pursue this crime. Encouraging our Iraqi friends who are with us as the victims of this crime by the United States will lead us to take joint action, and I believe that if the verdict is issued for the perpetrators of this crime, we should take further action in the field of international police to indict these people.

It requires intensive international political and judicial work to pursue this case, which, given the position of Mr. Raisi in the Judiciary and now as president, I think this issue will be seriously on the agenda of the next administration.

How do you assess the U.S. insistence on a longer and stronger nuclear agreement? And how do you see the outlook for U.S.-Iranian relations?

The case of Iran and the United States is a thick one. There are almost tens of years of history of interference, coup and violation of the rights of the Iranian nation before the revolution and tens of years of conspiracy to intervene and doing crime against the Iranian nation directly or indirectly.

Therefore, I do not think that the relationship between Iran and the United States can be raised in the short term, but the issues between Iran and the United States should be directed towards taking a position and a logical solution based on the rights and interests of the Iranian people.

That is, we have an issue in the region called the disruptive U.S. presence in the region. And this disruption has caused a lot of damage to us. The last of which is related to the martyrdom of Gen. Soleimani. The cases are very wide. We have a logical position and that is the United States must end its intrusive and disruptive presence in the region.

Every country must act within a framework. The United States cannot deploy its forces wherever it wants. Even its invasion of Iraq did not have a UN permit, unlike in Afghanistan. So, the United States must be notified regarding this fact that today America is not in a strong position and is not the America of ten years ago, or the America of thirty years ago. This U.S. must redefine itself. This United States is not allowed to enter or invade or have presence anywhere it wants. The next part is the issues that affect our region or (other) regions of the world. That is U.S. involvement in Latin America, in the Middle East (West Asia). U.S. policy means coercion for different parts of the world. It is natural that our positions are our rights and we react to these American approaches.

The third issue is content issues and issues in international organizations. Issues such as human rights, the global economy, disarmament. The first thing that needs to be removed from these concepts is, in fact, the double standards, discriminatory and political approach.

With regard to disarmament, the United States, the Soviet Union, and all the countries of the world were committed to reducing their chemical weapons with the formation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Americans need to answer to the world's public opinion as why they did not do this.

Regarding the nuclear issue, there is an acceptable logic in the world, and that is that nuclear energy for all, nuclear weapons for no one. Why do Americans want the second part to be discriminatory; that is, the United States and several other countries have nuclear weapons and others do not? And in the field of peaceful nuclear energy, some should not have.

The time of the logic is over in the world. The fact that the Supreme Leader points out that the United States has entered a period of decline means that American logic has entered a period of decline. The fact that the United States cannot exercise its leadership in the world shows that the United States has no ability to exert its will in the world.

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“Now our word is clear and the new administration’s stance is that of the system and that is all sanctions must be lifted.”

Three endgame scenarios loom large over Vienna talks

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — After six rounds of intensive talks to possibly revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, negotiations in Vienna have reached a key point that could lead to three possible scenarios ranging from a full revival of the original deal to a complete halt to talks, the Tehran Times can reveal.

When the sixth round of talks, aimed at resuscitating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), ended more than a week ago, it was evident from the Iranian and U.S. war of words that the next round would be the most consequential round, though it will unlikely be the last one.

First, U.S. envoy to the Vienna talks Rob Malley made it clear that Washington will not lift all the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration against Iran. He even threatened to walk out of talks if Iran continued to insist on getting the U.S. to lift all the sanctions. "What they've asked for - in principle, they've said they want all of the sanctions that President Trump's administration reimposed 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," Malley told NPR.

"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.

U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken reiterated Malley's threat by implying that the ball is in Iran's court.

"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.

Iran hit back at the U.S. and its European allies by saying that they are the ones who should make difficult decisions, not Iran. Because Iran had already made tough decisions regarding the JCPOA.

"So far, six rounds of talks have been held with the P4+1, and we are almost close to the final stages. There is a series of issues that have been sufficiently negotiated and it is time for the countries to decide," Iran's top nuclear negotiator Seyed Abbas Araqchi said.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has already made tough decisions. When the United States withdrew from the JCPOA and Iran decided to stay in the JCPOA. It was Iran's big and difficult decision that led to the preservation of the JCPOA so far. Now it is the turn of the opposing parties, and according to the negotiations we had, they must decide and reach a conclusion on

the revival of the JCPOA in order to reach an agreement," Araqchi told Iranian state media after briefing lawmakers sitting on the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on the Vienna talks last week.

The briefing took place ahead of a supposed resumption of talks last week. But the talks were delayed due in part to internal deliberations in the concerned countries. As regards Iran, intensive discussions have taken place to draft a strategy on how to proceed with the talks given the American intransigence during the sixth round during which little progress was made.

To this end, a new committee has been formed with members from various institutions such as Iran's Supreme National Security Council, the Majlis, the government, and representatives of the new Iranian president-elect's transition team. The main duty of this committee is to determine whether the outcome of the Vienna talks goes in line with the stated policies of Ayatollah Khamenei.

The committee is also tasked with overseeing the Vienna talks and approve or disapprove of them. As the Vienna negotiations

reach a determining point, three scenarios have been envisaged for the end result of the committee's JCPOA deliberations. First, the committee would approve the outcome of the Vienna talks and corroborate a revival of the JCPOA. Second, it would disapprove the outcome of the talks and recommend an increase in nuclear activities. Third, the committee would reject the outcome and lay out a new agenda for talks with the West with the purpose of solving outstanding issues in a new format and spirit.

It's not clear yet which scenario is likely to take place. But it seems that the seventh round, expected to resume on Sunday, would determine which scenario is possible. Iranian news website Asr-Iran reported that Vienna talks would resume on Sunday. And this time, the website said, officials from the Iranian oil, banking, and insurance sectors will join the negotiating team to discuss how to release Iranian frozen assets and oil sales as well as banking ties.

Whether the Vienna talks would reach a conclusion in the next round remains an open question. But if the U.S. continues to wriggle out of its stated goal to return to the JCPOA by lifting sanctions, talks will face a bumpy road since Iran has made it clear that it will not let the U.S. to renege on its commitments again. Iran has demanded that the U.S. provide assurances that it will not leave the nuclear pact again, something that the U.S. has rejected. In addition, Iran has demanded that the U.S. prolong the draw-down period for foreign firms operating in Iran and increase it from six months to four years in case there was another withdrawal from the JCPOA, a source familiar with the matter told the Tehran Times.

Furthermore, Iran has called for the establishment of an Iranian-led committee whose task would be to provide a regular reporting on the continuation of the lifting of the U.S. sanctions, something similar to what the UN nuclear watchdog does in terms of verifying the implementation of JCPOA-related commitments by Iran, according to the source.

Iran needs 'young and revolutionary' managers: MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN**— A member of the Iranian Parliament's Clergy Faction has underlined Iran's need for having young and devoted managers to get rid of the current economic challenges facing the country.

In remarks to Fars News, Javad Nikbeen drew a comparison between the economic woes and the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, saying that Iran needs young and revolutionary managers to overcome these woes as it did during the eight-year war.

"We need young and revolutionary managers to get out of the current situation in the country, and just as we won the imposed war with the youth, we will succeed in the economic war with the youth today," Nikbeen said, adding that the 13th government's managers should be young, expert, and devoted to the Revolution.

The remarks come as Iran President-elect Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi remains focused on the transition period for which he recently resigned from the Judiciary in a bid to put his energy and time into forming the next government. Raisi's government would be the 13th government of Iran.

Iran's presidential race was held on June 18 with four candidates on the ballot and led to the victory of Raisi. Shortly before the start of the voting, Zakani and Ghazizadeh-Hashemi withdrew from the race in favor of Raisi while Mehr-Alizadeh announced his withdrawal in tacit support for Hemmati, who represented the reformist and moderate political groups at the ballot box. Following the victory of Raisi, his rivals rushed to congratulate him on his success without casting any doubt on the election's integrity, a move that was appreciated by Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a recent public appearance.

Nikbeen said elder managers, whom he described as "tired generals and lobbyists," are of no use to the country, and therefore, Iran is in need of young experts and motivated people.

"Given the current situation, we need revolutionary action to improve the situation, and revolutionary action requires a revolutionary manager," the cleric asserted.



He added, "The next managers of the government, far from different colors and factions, must be revolutionary managers at the level of the revolution, because only in this situation can we hope to improve the situation."

Ayatollah Raisi has vowed to hire highly skilled, expert managers. He even asked the people to introduce the managers whom they think are talented and fit for managerial positions. To this end, the president-elect has established a website asking people to introduce such kind of managers.

Drawing a comparison between the "economic war" and the Iran-Iraq war, Nikbeen said Iran won that war with young people aged between 22 and 32 and that "we can win the economic war with Hezbollah-styled youth aged between 32 and 42."

Iranian officials often refer to the economic sanctions imposed by the former U.S. administration of Donald Trump as "economic war." The U.S. imposed sweeping economic sanctions on Iran following former U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal - officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - in May 2018. Trump piled up sanctions on Iran in a bid to force Iran into making more concessions to the U.S. within the framework of a new nuclear deal. Trump, however, failed to get his deal, bequeathing his successor a litany of unresolved issues with Iran.

The Biden administration has said it wants to open a new chapter with Iran and change tack, though it is yet to make any move to break with the Trump legacy on Iran.

Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA have been negotiating since April to get the U.S. and Iran back to full compliance with the nuclear deal with now ultimate success. So far, six rounds of talks have been held with the seventh round expected to go ahead in the coming days.

Diplomats from Iran and the U.S. as well as Europe are preparing for a potentially decisive round of talks in Vienna that is expected to result in a consensus to revive the JCPOA. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi, who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, said last week that the Vienna talks have almost reached their end and that the time has come for the negotiating parties to make decisions.

Speaking after a briefing session with lawmakers, Araqchi said, "So far, six rounds of talks have been held with the P4+1, and we are almost close to the final stages. There is a series of issues that have been sufficiently negotiated and it is time for the countries to decide."

The top Iranian nuclear negotiator added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has already made tough decisions. When the United States withdrew from the JCPOA and Iran decided to stay in the JCPOA. It was Iran's big and difficult decision that led to the preservation of the JCPOA so far. Now it is the turn of the opposing parties, and according to the negotiations we had, they must decide and reach a conclusion on the revival of the JCPOA in order to reach an agreement."

Iran has urged the U.S. to lift sanctions and provide guarantees that it will not renege again on its commitments under a revived JCPOA. However, the U.S. has refrained from giving such guarantees, arguing that no U.S. administration can give this kind of guarantee without submitting the final agreement to Congress for ratification as a treaty, something that is near to impossible given the fierce partisanship prevailing Capitol Hill.

SPORTS

Iran learn fate at 2022 World Cup qualification Round 3

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team learned their fate at the 2022 World Cup qualifiers on Thursday.

Iran have been drawn along with Korea Republic, the UAE, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon in Group A.

Group B consists of Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Oman, China and Vietnam.

The respective group winners and runners-up will seal their places for the global showpiece, while the third-placed teams will advance to the Asian playoff to determine the side that will advance to the intercontinental playoff.

Based on the special FIFA Ranking released for Asian teams on June 18, top seeds Japan and the Iran were placed in Pot 1 of the draw, with Pot 2 comprising Australia and Korea Republic while Pot 3 had Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Pot 4 contained Iraq and China PR, followed by Oman and Syria in Pot 5 and debutants Vietnam and Lebanon in Pot 6.

The AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar is scheduled to be played on the following 10 match days: September 2 and 7, October 7 and 12, and November 11 and 16, 2021, as well as January 27 and February 1, 2022, before reaching its climax on March 24 and 29, 2022.



Iran's 2022 World Cup qualifiers fixtures revealed

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran will start the 2022 World Cup qualification Round 3 with a match against Syria on Sept. 2.

The 'Persian Leopards' discovered their path to the 2022 Qatar World Cup, with the groups for the third round of Asian qualification announced on Thursday.

Group B consists of Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Oman, China and Vietnam.

The top two sides from each group will advance directly to the 2022 World Cup, while the third place teams will enter the playoff rounds.

Iran's fixtures:

Sept. 2, 2021: Iran v Syria
Sept. 7, 2021: Iraq v Iran
Oct. 7, 2021: UAE v Iran
Oct. 12, 2021: Iran v South Korea
Nov. 11, 2021: Lebanon v Iran
Nov. 16, 2021: Syria v Iran
Jan. 27, 2022: Iran v Iraq
Feb. 1, 2022: Iran v UAE
March 24, 2022: South Korea v Iran
March 29, 2022: Iran v Lebanon

Iran's 400 meters athlete Pirjahan qualifies for Olympics

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian 400 meters Mahdi Pirjahan secured a spot at the 2020 Olympic Games.

He secured his spot through ranking.

Pirjahan became the fourth Iranian athlete to win a quota place in Tokyo.

Discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi, Hassan Taftian and Farzaneh Fasihi (men's women's 100 meters) have already qualified for the Games.

The men's 400 meters event at the Olympics is scheduled to take place from August 1 to 5 at the Japan National Stadium. Approximately 50 athletes are expected to compete in the event.

Sepahan earn hard-fought win over Machine Sazi: IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Sepahan football team earned a hard-fought 1-0 win over almost-relegated Machine Sazi in Matchday 25 of Iran Professional League (IPL) on Thursday.

Danial Esmaeilifar scored the only goal of the match in the 67th minute.

Machine Sazi defender Mehdi Rostami was sent off in the 70th minute after receiving a straight red card.

Sepahan are second team in the league, two points behind IPL leaders Persepolis.

In Arak, Aluminum and Esteghlal played out a goalless draw. Mes came from behind to defeat Foolad 2-1 in Rafsanjan.

Paykan edged past struggling Nassaji 1-0 in Ghaemshahr and Sanat Naft defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 2-1.

Iran looking for a better place at U19 Basketball World Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran will begin the FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup with the aim of finishing in a better place than 2013 that they came 11th in the competition.

Iran have participated in the U19 Basketball World Cup five times so far but they have not been satisfying enough in the competitions.

Regarding that the world's powerhouse teams will take part in the prestigious event, the Iranian team are well aware that they will have a difficult task ahead but they will do their best to finish in a better place than 2013.

The FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup will begin on July 3 and run until July 11 in Latvia.

The Persians will start the campaign with a match against strong Serbia on Saturday at the Daugavpils Olympic Center in Group B.

Iran will also meet Latvia and Puerto Rico on Sunday and Tuesday, respectively.

The tournament will bring 16 teams together.

Iran voices support for regional initiative on South Caucasus

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan has expressed Iran's support for a regional initiative aiming to foster co-operation among stakeholders in the South Caucasus.

Seyed Abbas Mousavi said the countries involved in this initiative can cooperate for the good of the region.

"Iran supports initiative to establish a 3+3 format regional mechanism to bolster peace, stability & development in our region," the Iranian ambassador said on Twitter, adding, "Three South Caucasian states (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia) + three regional neighbors (Iran, Turkey, Russia) can cooperate for the good of the region."

The Azerbaijan-led initiative was discussed in January this year during a regional tour of Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif which included visits to all the countries that are supposed to be part of the initiative. In a meeting with Azerbaijani President Il-

ham Aliyev, Zarif welcomed the initiative.

During the meeting, Zarif welcomed the proposal of the president of Azerbaijan entitled the Initiative for Six-Party Cooperation in the Region and announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to assist and cooperate in all fields that will contribute to peace, stability and tranquility in the region.

The next stop was Moscow where the top Iranian diplomat met with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov at the Russian Foreign Ministry and as usual, the two foreign ministers held a press conference. Upon his arrival in Moscow, Zarif said that he would discuss proposals for six-party cooperation in the region, the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and the situation in Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen.

In continuation of his tour, Zarif paid visits to Armenia, Georgia, and Turkey, where he discussed issues related to the South Caucasus region after a 44-day war between Baku and Yerevan over a Nagorno-Karabakh.

In May, Zarif once again paid visits to Azerbaijan and Armenia. The visits began amid reports of border tensions between two rivals grappling with the consequences of a deadly 44-day war that resulted in Azerbaijan retaking large swathes of Armenian-controlled territories in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The war ended after Russian President Vladimir Putin brokered a ceasefire deal between the two warring sides in November.

During his visit to Azerbaijan and Armenia, Zarif raised the issue of borders. In Baku, the top Iranian diplomat discussed with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev issues such as border tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan and communication corridors.

"Now you can play a historic role in bringing peace to the region," Zarif told Aliyev, according to a statement issued by the Azerbaijani presidency.

In Yerevan, Zarif received the Armenian account of border tensions. Acting Minister



of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ara Aivazian thanked Zarif for paying a visit to Armenia during "disturbing days" in the region.

Aivazian noted, "It has been two weeks since the Azerbaijani armed forces invaded the border areas of the Republic of Armenia, trying to provoke a new escalation, which is fraught with new regional threats."

He also said that Azerbaijan strives to create "new geopolitical realities" amid global silence towards Baku.

70 infrastructure, development projects underway in Kish Free Zone

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — As announced by the managing director of Kish Free Zone Organization, 70 infrastructure and development projects are underway in this free trade zone.

Saying that most of these projects are carried out in the infrastructure sector to improve the condition for the investors in the island, Jafar Ahangaran put the worth of investment making for these projects at 33 trillion rials (about \$785.7 million).

The implementation operation of most of the projects has been already completed, the official said, adding implementation of the projects create direct jobs for 8,500 persons, which will reach 6,890 persons when the projects are completed.

He further stated that in recent years, the organization has put various development programs in the field of airport, port and urban development on its agenda to provide the ground for improving the quality of services to residents, tourists and investors.



Kish Island, with an area of 792 square kilometers and a population of 42,000, is located 18 kilometers from the mainland in the Persian Gulf.

Over the past two decades, free and special economic zones have played a significant role in Iran's economy, and the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing a program for the development of the existing zones and establishing new ones.

According to Morteza Bank, the former secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council, over 40 percent of Iran's exports are done through the country's free trade zones and special economic zones and \$169 billion worth of commodities have been exported from these areas in the past seven years.

Development of the mentioned zones became more significant since the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on the Iranian economy in November 2018, as the Islamic Republic started reducing dependence on oil incomes while elevating its domestic production and non-oil exports.

Although the sanctions have disrupted Iran's economic activities, they could not impede the development of Iranian free trade and special economic zones; in fact, the development of these zones has been even accelerated.

The measures taken by the government for the development of the mentioned zones have been paying off significantly so that despite the negative impacts of the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic, the trade balance of the mentioned zones has stayed positive in recent years.

In late April, the Secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council Hamidreza Mo'meni announced that the trade balance of the country's free and special economic zones has been positive in the past two years despite the negative balance of the country's foreign trade.

Today, the free zones are in a good condition and positive development measures have been taken which have led to significant growth in these zones, he said.

According to the official, the country's free and economic zones should become more productive in order to be able to fund their own development projects in the future.

In early May, Mo'meni announced the approval for the establishment of 13 new special economic zones and seven free trade zones across the country.

"After discussion on all proposed areas and based on the experiences of the existing zones, the establishment of seven free zones and 13 special economic zones was approved," the official said.

The mentioned free zones will be established in Kordestan, Ilam, Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr, Kermanshah, Ardebil, and Golestan, while the special zones are going to be based in Fars, Yazd, Zanjan, Lorestan, West Azarbaijan, Qazvin and etc.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province, and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

Industrial, mining projects worth over \$850m inaugurated

➔ Speaking at the opening ceremony, Rouhani underlined the country's significant industrial achievements in the previous Iranian calendar year despite the coronavirus pandemic and said: "Last year, we had more than seven percent industrial growth while many countries recorded negative economic growth; the world's economic growth was -3 percent, while Iran registered a positive economic growth of 3.6 percent."



Last week, Rouhani had inaugurated 52 development projects worth 620 trillion rials (over \$14.7 billion) in Iran's free trade and special economic zones.

OPEC pays tribute to Iran's veteran oil minister

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in its 181st meeting in Vienna on Thursday paid tribute to Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh for his long-lasting contribution to the organization and the oil market.

As Shana reported, the 181st meeting of the OPEC conference was chaired by Angola's Minister of Mineral Resources and Petroleum Diamantino Pedro Azevedo, via videoconference.

This was the last OPEC meeting in which Zanganeh would attend as Iran's Oil Minister.

"I would like to begin by congratulating our esteemed colleague, His Excellency Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, who will be taking a bow from his post as Minister of Petroleum for the Islamic Republic of Iran," Azevedo said in his opening speech.

"You have provided noble leadership, wise counsel, and technical knowledge to the OPEC Conference for many years, and have been instrumental in our organization's many achievements," he continued.

The official went on to say that OPEC



Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (L) and OPEC secretary-general Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo

has benefited immensely from the Iranian minister's leadership and vital contribu-

tions to the declaration of cooperation from the very beginning in 2016, and notably in

Over 70% of necessary petchem catalysts to be indigenized by Mar. 2022

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian engineers are going to indigenize the knowledge for the production of 72 percent of the catalysts needed in the country's petrochemical industry by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2022), the Head of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Behzad Mohammadi has said.

According to Mohammadi, the country needs \$275 million worth of catalysts annually, \$200 million of which is domestically supplied.

As IRNA reported, Mohammadi had previously said that more than 95 types of catalysts are currently used by the country's petrochemical plants, 20 of which have been already indigenized and 16 more will be produced domestically by the end of the current year.

The domestic production of the mentioned catalysts is going to save the country \$150-\$180 million annually.

The Iranian petrochemical plants are currently using 40

different groups of catalysts, one-third of which had been indigenized in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

NPC, in collaboration with domestic research institutes and knowledge-based companies, is currently working seriously on indigenizing the knowledge for the production of the rest of the catalysts needed in the country's petrochemical industry.

Back in March 2020, the Managing Director of the country's Petrochemical Research and Technology Company (PRTC) Ali Pajouhan had said NPC was planning to indigenize nine major catalysts used in the petrochemical industry within the next two years.

The official said that NPC had signed 20 contracts with knowledge-based companies for mass production of catalysts and 70 research projects were also underway in this regard.

In early January 2020, NPC held a seminar on the indigenization of petrochemical industry catalysts in Kish

Island.

According to the seminar's Executive Secretary Mohammad-Amin Ebrahimi, the mentioned seminar was aimed to create a common language and synergy between catalyst producers and consumers and also to provide a platform to discuss and evaluate the performance of the native catalysts.

Petrochemical is Iran's most important industry after oil and gas. The National Petrochemical Company hopes to lift output capacity to 120 million tons per annum by 2022.

The petrochemical industry has played a key role in domestic economic growth as it creates value-added and reduces the sale of oil and gas on which the economy has been dependent for decades.

With abundant hydrocarbon reserves and new private sector investments, Iran is working hard to maintain its global status in this key sector and broaden its scope.

1st meeting of Iran-Serbia energy, mining working group held online

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The first meeting of an Iran-Serbia energy and mining working group, which has been established under the framework of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, was held through video conference on June 30.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from the two sides including Serbia's deputy mining and energy minister, Iranian deputy industry minister, and the deputy head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA), the portal of the Energy Ministry known as Paven reported.

The attendees of the meeting stressed the need to strengthen relations between the two

countries in the fields of energy and mining. It was also decided that the two sides will continue talks in three areas of mining, electricity, and renewable energy, along with oil and gas sector to expand cooperation between the two countries.

Back in March, Iran's Ambassador to Belgrade Rashid Hassanpour and Serbia's Minister of Mining and Energy Zorana Mihajlovic held talks on ways to develop cooperation in the fields of energy and mineral sector.

The two officials highlighted good relations between Tehran and Belgrade and called for enhanced cooperation.

The Serbian minister underlined that formation of an energy and mining work-



ing group under the framework of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee as an important step toward the development of mutual cooperation.

Referring to Iran's great capacities in the energy and mineral sectors, she said that Serbia

is willing to develop effective and sustainable cooperation with Iran in those fields.

The Serbian minister expressed hope that sanctions would be lifted to prepare the grounds for cooperation.

The Iranian ambassador, for his part, said Tehran attaches great importance to its ties with Belgrade.

Pointing to the mutual agreement on the formation of the energy and mining working group, the ambassador hoped that this mechanism would help develop economic cooperation.

"The two countries have tried to support the development of cooperation in the sanctions [era.]", Hassanpour said.

NISOC to ink 2 deals with knowledge-based firms in near future

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is going to sign two deals worth 500 billion rials (about \$11.9 million) with domestic knowledge-based companies in the near future for meeting some of its technological needs, an official with the company announced.

Sadeq Fathollahi, who is NISOC's technical director, said these deals include domestic production of materials for preventing drilling fluid wastage and the design, manufacturing, and providing services for inflatable pipe plugs.

According to the official, following the government's new strategies for supporting the country's knowledge-based companies, NISOC has been pursuing the supply of its

technological needs through domestic startups and knowledge-based firms.

"These needs mostly include goods, parts, materials, equipment, services, and software in the fields of drilling, exploitation engineering, processing, geology, and chemicals," Fathollahi explained.

NISOC Managing Director Ahmad Mohammadi previously said that his company has successfully indigenized the knowledge for the production of over 1,000 oil equipment items.

NISOC has been seriously pursuing a program for supporting domestic producers in the oil industry, Mohammadi said in February 2020.

Quarterly exports from Kermanshah province increases 22%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Kermanshah province, in the west of Iran, increased 22 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), as compared to the first quarter of the previous year, according to a provincial official.

Saying that the main part of commodities was exported to Iraq, Keyvan Kashefi, the head of the province's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, said Kermanshah's export to Iraq increased during the three-month period, while Iran's total export to this neighboring country fell in the mentioned time span.

He mentioned ceramic tiles, iron products, petrochemical products, fruits and vegeta-

bles, tomato paste, cartons and disposable tableware as the major products exported from the province during the first quarter.

The value of Iran's non-oil exports reached \$10.7 billion in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year, up 69 percent compared to the last year's same period, IRNA reported quoting the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

According to Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, Iran exported 30 million tons of non-oil commodities in the mentioned three months, registering a 38-percent rise compared to the figure for the last year's Q1.

Meanwhile, some 8.4 million tons of goods valued at \$10.2 billion were also imported into the country in the said period to register

a 34-percent rise in terms of value compared to the last year's same quarter.

In total, the Islamic Republic traded 38.4 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$20.9 billion with its trade partners in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year, up 25 percent and 50 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively, Mir-Ashrafi said.

According to the official, the country's trade balance was \$476 million positive in the mentioned time span.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$3.1 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$2.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$1.3 billion, Turkey with \$595 million, and Afghanistan with \$570 million.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources

of imports during these two months were the UAE with \$3.2 billion, China with \$2.2 billion, Turkey with \$1 billion, Germany with \$414 million, and Switzerland with \$384 million worth of imports.

The official also noted that over 2.742 million tons of goods were transited through Iran in the said period, registering a 121-percent rise compared to the same period in the previous year.

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

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

TSE's main index gains 43,000 points in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 43,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.256 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Social Security Investment

Company, Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, Esfahan Oil Refining Company, and Kourosh Food Industry Company were the most widely followed indices.

Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has launched three single window systems for facilitating the processes and procedures related to the stock market activities.

The unveiling ceremony of the mentioned systems, held on Tuesday, was attended by Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand and the SEO Head Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi.

According to Dehnavi, these systems are going to offer various services to the companies and people active in the market.

It is in China's long-term interest to confront U.S. sanctions: GWU professor

Professor Hossein Askari says Iran could be a potential game-changer if it adopts and pursues sound policies

→ 1 Iran has boxed itself into the corner through years of mismanagement, uncontrolled corruption and unwillingness to begin a program of reforms that could set the stage for a real economic resurgence and prosperity. And as time goes by, the adoption of reforms and its success becomes ever more difficult. So given the dire state of the economy, my guess is that Iran truly wants a deal, no matter how short term and temporary. Biden, on the other hand, wants a deal for his own very different reasons. The JCPOA was Obama's, and in part Biden's as his vice-president, signature foreign policy achievement. Biden wants to revive it and in the hope that it may lead to wider range of cooperation, especially when it comes to Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria. But he cannot be seen as giving Iran too much as this would erode his support in the U.S. Congress when it comes to getting his domestic agenda passed into law.

How do you assess Raisi's election? Do you predict any fundamental change in Iran's approach towards the region and the Western powers?

I don't see much that will change. President Rouhani followed Supreme Leader's guidance as will President Raisi. Moreover, President Raisi has been a close disciple of the Supreme Leader, has a similar ideology and is on the same page. Differences with Western powers all lead to the United States. Will Raisi be different than Rouhani? Maybe on the edges but not at the core. Raisi may use harsher language in his dealings with the U.S. and European allies but no big change unless there is a sea change in U.S. policies towards the Middle East (West Asia) region.

As for relations with countries in the region, things are more complicated. There are ethnic and sectarian differences and a long history of disputes and hostilities. Iran cannot abandon its allies in the region and then be faced with no allies and a more demanding U.S. At the same time, rapprochement with Arab countries will be dictated by their relations with the U.S. Frankly, Iran's foreign policies, whether you like them or not, are more stable than those of the U.S. Just think how Trump upended everything. Trump or a Trump look-alike



"If Iran adopts rational, consistent and well-conceived policies even for 10 to 15 years, it could be well on the road to sustained prosperity."

could do the same again.

How can Iran capitalize on its ties with neighbors to counter U.S. sanctions?

Absolutely no viable option. All the countries of the Persian Gulf, except Iraq, will do nothing without U.S. blessing. I would also add Jordan to the list of Persian Gulf countries to follow the U.S. line. If the U.S. wants to continue squeezing Iran, they will all tow the U.S. line. What about others? Syria, Yemen and Lebanon are in dire economic straits themselves. They can do little to boost Iran's economy. Pakistan and Afghanistan present a number of issues as well. Pakistan is warming up to the U.S., is still very dependent on Saudi Arabia and not in a strong economic position itself. Afghanistan is in terrible economic shape and is likely to enter a

period of heightened internal strife, if not a real civil war. This leaves Iraq. Iran must tread carefully when it comes to Iraq. Iran must not overplay its hand. It must not be perceived as meddling in Iraq's internal affairs. If Iran can do that, then I believe strong economic and political benefits could accrue to Iran. In oil policy. In trade with the rest of the world. In leverage dealing with the U.S. and Europeans. Iran needs a seasoned economist and Arab hand to coordinate Iran's relations with Iraq. This must go far beyond the security and military alliances currently in place.

How do you see the 25-year Iran-China partnership? Can it prove a game-changer?

Iran had little choice but to sign up with China. China is equal to the U.S. It can give Iran most Iran needs—investment,

free trade and access to the international payments system—if China is willing to fully embrace Iran. If China does this, I believe that the U.S. will think long and hard about imposing secondary sanctions on Chinese companies, entities and Chinese officials as this would truly harm the U.S. consumer and corporations. I think it would be in China's long-term political and economic interest do so as well. America's sanction policy has become a potent weapon in its foreign policy arsenal. It is a weapon that has given it an edge beyond its military power. China, and indeed other American adversaries such as Russia, should try to blunt this almost unique policy. The sooner China does this, it is better for China. Moreover, an alliance with Iran affords China its best access to the Middle East (West Asia) and beyond.

However, please note that Iran is not in a strong bargaining position. It has to take much of what China offers, that is making concessions and signing onto to One Belt One Road initiative. But it is only for 25 years. And if Iran adopts rational, consistent and well-conceived policies even for 10 to 15 years, it could be well on the road to sustained prosperity. But will Iran do what it needs?

So, yes, it could be a potential game-changer if Iran adopts and pursues sound policies. This has been, and always will be, the key.

What will be Raisi's main economic challenges?

I don't envy President Raisi. He has monumental economic challenges. He has to find the ways and means to come up with much higher and sustained economic growth. He needs this to provide good jobs to provide food, shelter, healthcare and good educational opportunities. All this is for the very short run. But for the medium and longer run, he needs economic prosperity and better opportunities to deter Iran's talented university graduates from emigrating.

Most of these will not come to fruition if the focus is only on getting a quick injection of funds from Iran's frozen assets and higher oil revenues to give brief economic relief to the majority of Iranians. Yes, Iran needs sanctions relief but it must be accompanied with sound economic policies that are maintained from one Iranian presidency to the next.

U.S. forces leave Afghanistan's Bagram airbase after 20 years

→ 1 The U.S. has refused to say when the last of its soldiers would leave Afghanistan, citing security concerns, but also the protection of Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport that is still being negotiated. Turkish and U.S. soldiers currently protect the airport.

The U.S. will also have about 6,500 troops in Afghanistan to protect its sprawling embassy in the capital. Their presence it is understood will be covered in a bilateral agreement with the Afghan government.

Israel launches fresh, fierce violation of Gaza ceasefire

Israeli warplanes strike a site reportedly belonging to the Palestinian resistance movement of Hamas in the Gaza Strip in a heavy-handed response to alleged mere incendiary device-laden balloons flown towards the occupied territories from the enclave.

"The strike was carried out in response to the arson balloon attacks," the Israeli military said on its Twitter page of the Thursday attack.

It specified its target as an alleged site used by Hamas to "develop and build weapons."

"Most of the fires (resulting from the purported balloons) were small and not dangerous," The Times of Israel reported, citing the regime's Fire and Rescue Services. "Firefighters gained control of blazes before they cause damage," the daily added.

The Israeli military added that it "will respond with determination against" any such incident.

In May, the regime launched its fourth full-scale war against the already Tel Aviv-blockaded impoverished territory.

According to Press TV, the war killed more than 250 Palestinians, but the regime was forced to put out a desperate call for a ceasefire after Gaza's resistance groups targeted the occupied territories with more than 4,000 rockets.

The Israeli daily claimed that the Thursday offensive marked "a shift" in the regime's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's policy. It said the attack had shown that the regime's new officials had even ramped up their violence against the coastal territory compared to the previous ruling coalition of premier Benjamin Netanyahu, "which did not always respond to arson balloon attacks with airstrikes."

Hamas has, however, strongly warned the regime on many occasions against testing its firepower. It has reminded it how the resistance's rockets reached surprising distances during its latest successful defensive operation against the war.

The defensive campaign, known as the Operation Sword of al-Quds, saw Hamas' projectiles fly as far as the holy occupied city of al-Quds and Tel Aviv itself as well as even northern-lying cities such as Haifa and Nazareth.

Bahrain's main opposition group renews call for release of jailed political opponents

Bahrain's main opposition group has renewed its call for the immediate release of political inmates being kept behind bars at detention centers across the Persian Gulf kingdom, stressing that the right to free expression and freedom of peaceful assembly form the backbone of public demands.

The al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, in a statement issued on Thursday, blamed the ruling Al Khalifah regime's extremism, repressive measures and use of violence against the pro-democracy campaign in the country for the worsening political crisis.

"Despite the ban on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Bahrain, thousands of citizens have taken to streets in recent years to express their political demands, underline their direct role in running the country's affairs and oppose authoritarian rule," the movement noted.

Al-Wefaq added, "The rift between the Manama regime and the Bahraini nation is fairly deep. The regime does not have any connection with people other than through security institutions, which employ excessive force, violence, threats and arbitrary measures."

"Not only does the regime refuse dialogue or reconciliation with the nation, but also takes its revenge on the advocates of dialogue and demonizes them by all means in order to forcibly silence them," the statement also read.

Resistance News

More than 60 injuries in IOF quelling of night protests in Beita

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Dozens of citizens were d e s k injured on Thursday evening, as the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) attacked the participants in the night protests in Beita town, south of Nablus.

The IOF soldiers stormed the western region of Mount Sobeih and fired live bullets and tear gas canisters at the protesting citizens.

The Red Crescent reported that its crews treated 61 injuries, 55 of them suffered breathing problems while six were injured by rubber-coated metal bullets.

The local "torches unit" organized a massive rally, with the participation of hundreds of Palestinians and carried out a tour in the vicinity of the mountain while carrying torches.

Dozens of buses, cars and hundreds of citizens from different provinces of the West Bank arrived at Mount Sobeih to participate in the march.

IOF set up barriers at the entrance to the village, searched the vehicles and prevented the entry of citizens from outside Beita.

S. Arabia key pillar of U.S. presence in the region: researcher

→ 1 The Al Ula summit has brought about a good working relationship at least between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, but also here there are some fundamental ideological differences that have not been bridged. Saudi Arabia has been pragmatic in recent months but it does not mean that should opportunities arise; they might strike again. The relationship between all parties to the crisis is now characterized by mistrust and suspicion.

What are the main differences between Qatar and the Saudi-Emirati axis?

The main ideological differences are between Doha and Abu Dhabi, mainly about the regional order after the Arab Spring. While Qatar has actively supported the revolutions and engaged with civil society and Islamist groups, the UAE has fought the revolutions and civil society in the region. The UAE has securitized independent civil society and fears its mobilization while Qatar actively supports civil society in the region, not least through Al Jazeera.

How do you evaluate the U.S. influence on policies of Persian Gulf Arab states?

The United States has gradually withdrawn from the region since the late 2000s but still plays an important protector role in the background. However, since the Arab Spring, the United States is leading from behind, leaving much of the burden of security in the region to local actors in the (Persian) Gulf. The new tone struck by the Biden administration towards Iran also means that the most hawkish actors in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, have switched



from escalation to de-escalation. There is a greater willingness now even by the anti-Iran hawks in the (Persian) Gulf to attempt a multilateral framework that involves Iran, if Iran under the new Raisi administration proves to be a constructive player. There is a window of opportunity under Biden for both the Arab (Persian) Gulf states and Iran to come together.

How do you see the repercussions of the war on Yemen on the economies and policies of the Persian Gulf states, especially Saudi

Arabia and the Emirates?

The War in Yemen constitutes a major burden on Saudi Arabia—both economically and militarily. While the UAE has been able to subvert the coalition to advance its own interests in the south of the country, Saudi Arabia is stuck on its own trying to win an unwinnable war. There has been a genuine change of direction in Saudi Arabia in recent months with a serious attempt to find a peaceful way out of the war. However, the Houthis appear to not grant Saudi Arabia a way out of the conflict on Saudi terms. Meanwhile, the UAE is continuing to leverage its surrogate, the STC, to deepen influence and control of key choke points along Yemen's coast.

Why do Western countries keep arming tyrannical states like Saudi Arabia despite their long notorious record in violation of human rights?

Saudi Arabia remains a key pillar of U.S. presence in the region. Leading from behind means that Washington uses military support to its partners in the (Persian) Gulf as a means to maintain a presence there. However, it becomes increasingly clear that the old vassal states in the (Persian) Gulf might not necessarily follow U.S. interests in the region. This is particularly true for the UAE who uses U.S. arms and support to advance their own interests, often at the expense of U.S. strategic security interests. Looking at the UAE's policies in Yemen and Libya, Abu Dhabi is working more closely with Russia than with Western partners.



Isolating Russia 'wrong and dangerous' for Europe: German FM

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has warned that severing economic ties with Russia will be "wrong and dangerous" for Europe, amid disputes over the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project that is designed to take Russia's gas via the Baltic Sea to Germany.

"Fundamentally, I'm of the opinion that it would put us in Europe in a difficult position if economic relations with Russia were no longer possible," Maas said after a meeting with his Polish counterpart Zbigniew Rau in the Polish capital of Warsaw on Thursday.

"It is not only wrong but also danger-

ous for our security interests in Europe," Maas added.

In a German-language tweet later in the day, Maas also thanked Rau for the bilateral meeting during which the two discussed the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline at length, saying, "We need this unity for Europe."

Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the completion of the first line of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline to Germany despite Western attempts to prevent the project.

Nord Stream 2, which would take gas from the Russian Arctic to Germany under the Baltic Sea, is set to double Russian natural

gas shipments to Europe's largest economy

The project has been beset by sanctions from the U.S. and EU states.

Poland has said the pipeline is a political as well as an economic project designed to increase Russian influence in Europe. Other Central European countries are also concerned about loss of revenue from gas transit fees.

Russia restarted construction of the politically-delicate pipeline to Germany in December after the construction work on the \$11.6 billion pipeline, which will bypass Poland and Ukraine, was put on a halt for a year over Washington's threat of sanctions.

Historical properties in central Iran made national heritage

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** —A total of 13 historical sites and aging structures across the central province of Markazi have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list.



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

Remnants of Hajiabad Caravanserai, Haj Mohaseb Public Bathhouse, Samsamieh School, Aqabaha Mansion, and Arak Railway Station were among the properties added to the prestigious list.

Markazi province is considered the industrial capital of the country. It is rich in natural, historical, cultural, and religious

attractions.

Hand-woven carpets and kilims, made in its cities including Farahan, Sarugh, Lilivan, Senejan, and Vafs are known internationally.

Illegal diggers arrested in northern Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** —Iranian police have recently arrested five illegal excavators and antique smugglers in Rudbar county, the northern province of Gilan, CHTN reported on Friday.

The accused people were traced and finally arrested in the historical region of Rostamabad, said Mohammad Alipur, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage.



Some excavation tools and equipment have been seized from the culprits who were surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the official added.

Gilan is well-known for its rich Iron Age cemeteries such as Marlik that have been excavated over the past century. It was once within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

Restoration of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque continues

→ 1 While pictures were taken on a snowy day in Isfahan in 2019 showed all parts of the dome but one covered in snow, the media and experts blamed the flawed restoration work, which used modern waterproof materials that had damaged the dome's integrity.

Restoration and preservation experts criticized local authorities for not caring enough for the architectural masterpiece which was built 400 years ago during the Safavid Empire.

Authorities at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts admitted that there should have been a fault with the restoration. Experts said the repair workers could have used hydrated construction materials that contained polymer substances. Others said cracks on the dome that have been caused by previous restoration work could be to blame.

The story, however, turned to larger fear, casting doubt over the fate of the majestic mosque and warnings over the danger of the whole collapse.

A budget of 30 billion rials (over \$700,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) will be needed for the new round of the restoration project, Allahyari added.

The official announced in June 2019 that



some two-eighths of delicately floral tiles, which for centuries adorned the creamy dome of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, had been restored and are ready to be reinstalled.

"This phase of the restoration project

entails two-eighths of the dome's surface (the dome has been divided into eight portions), and its associated glazed tiles have been fully restored and are ready to be reinstalled."

In comparison to many mosques scattered across the country, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque appears to be relatively unusual, having neither a minaret nor a courtyard probably because the mosque was never intended for public use, but rather served as a worship place for women.

Built between 1603 and 1619 during the reign of Shah Abbas I, the mosque was dedicated to the ruler's father-in-law, Sheikh Lotfollah, a revered Lebanese scholar of Islam who was invited to Isfahan to oversee the king's mosque (now the Imam Mosque).

The exterior panels boast collections of arabesques and floral designs that have become a signature motif of the masterpiece. The portal itself contains some stalactite-type stone carving used to decorate doorways and window recesses with rich concentrations of blue and yellow motifs.

Inside the sanctuary, there are thousands of mosaics that adorn the walls and its extraordinarily gorgeous ceiling that features a series of shrinking, yellow motifs, itself a masterpiece of design. Photography is allowed but using a flash is not.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning "Image of the World"), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning of the time.

Hamedan reopens tourist sites, museums as virus curbs ease

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Museums and other cultural heritage sites in the west-central province of Hamedan have been allowed to reopen doors to the public as restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic have been loosened, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Virus-related health protocols are strictly enforced for visitors, CHTN quoted Majid Jahangirian as saying on Thursday.

Earlier last week, the officials announced that Ali Sadr water cave, which is one of the top tourist destinations of the province, opened its doors to visitors.

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

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamadan has had many names: it was possibly the Bit Daiukki of the Assyrians, Hangmatana, or Agbatana,

to the Medes, and Ecbatana to the Greeks. One of the Median capitals, under Cyrus II (the Great; died 529 BC) and later Achaemenian rulers, it was the site of a royal summer palace.

About 1220, Hamedan was captured by the sweeping army of Mongol invaders. In 1386 it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, and the inhabitants massacred. It was partly restored in the 17th century and subsequently changed hands often between Iranian ruling houses and the Ottomans.

Sitting on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy. Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.





راہ آہن اسلامی ایران
Islamic Republic of Iran Railways

First Notice of Invitation for Qualitative Evaluation

International tender no. 11-97-05 for purchasing 3100 pcs locomotive wheels (2000 pcs GM wheels; 250 pcs GE wheels; 250 pcs Alstom wheels and 600 pcs Siemens wheels)

Iranian Islamic Republic Railways (RAI) intends to entrust purchasing of the above-captioned 3100 pcs locomotive wheels to the qualified and competent companies through holding an international tender within framework of tender-holding law approved in 05.02.2005 by Iranian parliament and by observing the law of maximum utilization of the Iranian's local production and service capacities including protection of Iranian goods also approved in 05.05.2019 by Iranian parliament. For this purpose, all qualified and competent companies having the related records in this field, are hereby invited to obtain the qualitative evaluation documents.

- General particulars:** purchase of 3100 pcs locomotive wheels comprising of 2000 pcs GM wheels, 250 pcs GE wheels, 250 pcs Alstom wheels and 600 pcs Siemens wheels.
- Time period of Contract:** The Contract shall be fulfilled within 9 months.
- Delivery place of the Goods:** The wheels shall be delivered to CFR Bandar Abbas.
- Bid Bond:** The Bid Bond shall be valid for 3 months from its issuance date and also should be extendable.
- Deadline for purchase of qualitative evaluation documents:** Utmost by 14:00 P.M on Tuesday 2021.07.27 corresponding to 1400.05.05
- Deadline & place for submission of completed qualitative evaluation documents:** The applicants can complete and submit the qualitative evaluation documents to the RAI Procurement & Logistics General Dept. (Foreign Purchasing Dept.) located at 2nd Floor, RAI Central Building, Argentina Sq., Africa Blvd., Tehran-Iran utmost by 14:00 P.M on Saturday 2021.08.28 corresponding to 1400.06.06.
- Price of qualitative evaluation documents and method of its receipt:**
The applicants can receive the qualitative evaluation documents by remitting RLS 1,000,000 to the bank account no. IR710100004001064004005747 and with remittance code of 262064074280500885134499908000 in favor of Iranian Islamic Republic Railways opened with Central Bank of Iran (payable in all branches of Bank Melli Iran) via the above address through submitting an introduction letter or receive the qualitative evaluation documents free-of-charge through National Database Portal of Iranian Tenders Information ([HTTP://IETS.MPORTG.IR](http://IETS.MPORTG.IR)).

**Iranian Islamic Republic Railways
Procurement & Logistics General Department**



IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No:1400/108-18/01

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender:
Purchasing Radio AM Transmitter Spare Parts with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents :
From **Monday 05 Jul 2021 (1400/04/14)** until **Sunday 11 Jul 2021 (1400/04/20)** by **02:00 P.m.** with Presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

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

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

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender :
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 8800 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 2.200.000.000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee. All guarantees contained in Article 4 of the Government Transaction Guarantee Regulations approved by Cabinet in 15/07/2015 and in accordance with the subject of the tender are acceptable.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than **09:00 a.m. on Wednesday 11 of Aug 2021 (1400/05/20)** and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:
The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes on **Wednesday 11 of Aug 2021 (1400/05/20)** at **10:00 a.m** in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

Time and place of Opening Envelopes :
The envelopes A and B of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened on **Sunday 15 Aug 2021 at 03:00 p.m. (1400/05/24)** in the office of Financial Vice President.
The participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.
For more information, please see:
Tel: 00982122167463 Purchasing (Kala) Dept., IRIB

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

COVID-19 UPDATES

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

New cases	13,836
New deaths	127
Total cases	3,232,696
Total deaths	84,516
New hospitalized patients	1,561
Patients in critical condition	3,196
Total recovered patients	2,902,140
Diagnostic tests conducted	23,806,452
Doses of vaccine injected	6,201,573

Environmental protection in Iran

(Part 2)

Recognizing the need to deal with these problems through a coordinated national plan and to make wiser use of the country's natural resources and environment, while protecting its cultural heritage, the government has begun some of the programs initiated before the Revolution. The programs had included measures requiring master plans for all urban developments and a "national spatial strategy plan" for the country that were begun in the early to mid-1970s. Similar to the latter and as a result of the resolutions adopted at the Rio Conference of June 1992, sustainable development is putatively slated to be initiated in collaboration with the relevant UN and international agencies.



Pollution. In the major cities of Persia air pollution has become an accepted part of everyday life, and the media have repeatedly stated that Tehran is among the most polluted cities in the world. Emission inventories demonstrate that 70 percent of Tehran's air pollution is from motor vehicles. Structural measures to improve traffic, the use of natural gas in homes, industries, and vehicles (especially taxis, and the expansion of public transport to include a subway and additional buses) were among the measures proposed, begun, or implemented in the mid- to late-1970s (Plan and Budget Organization, pp. 314-15). The increased pollution of the 1980s created political pressure for remedial action, and by the early 1990s some of these measures had been undertaken; however, the project for the conversion of taxis to gasoline has yet to be broadly implemented. But the capital's population had doubled in the previous dozen years to about 9 million, and abating the truly hazardous pollution had become increasingly difficult. More than a million pre-revolutionary vehicles were still on the road; simply requiring proper servicing of these vehicles would probably reduce pollution by more than the sum of all other efforts. Although industrial air pollution is so far only a problem near particular plants, it threatens to become critical on a national level if existing regulations are not enforced and standards of monitoring and site selection are not firmly imposed.

In an arid land such as Persia water is obviously a precious natural resource, yet, in practice, it is treated as a product "to be managed according to user's needs" (Plan and Budget Organization, p. 319). Inefficient and often excessive irrigation subjects much farmland to salinization; the resultant saline runoff harms downstream areas as well. The indiscriminate sinking of wells in the past decade has dangerously lowered the water table in regions such as Khorasan. Tehran, its population rising implacably toward 12 and 13 million, requires more than double the 500 million cubic m per year of treated water it received on average through the 1980s. Plans are underway to bring some of the needed water from the central Caspian region. But urbanization of parts of the central Caspian region—a reasonably plentiful supply of water notwithstanding—is threatening that region with water shortage too. Furthermore, raw sewage there is dumped into wells, although the water table is often only about a meter below ground level. This state of affairs threatens to cause irreversible pollution of groundwater.

Appropriate pollution-control laws and regulations are in force, but their application is haphazard and invariably directed at point sources, particularly industrial plants. For example, in 1991 a fine of \$3.5 million was imposed on a sugar factory whose effluents had badly contaminated the Zarrinarud. But little effort is made to exert comprehensive control over urban or agricultural units.

Soils and agriculture. Persia's cultivable land is estimated to be 16.6 million hectares (Plan and Budget Organization, 1976), 10 percent of the area of the country, or slightly less than the area presently under cultivation. This is 0.25 hectares per person compared to 0.48 in Turkey and 0.74 in the United States (World Resources Institute). Per capita cultivable land in Persia is thus very low and is diminishing proportionately to the rapidly expanding population. In a television broadcast in November 1991, it was stated by the agricultural-planning task force of the second five year plan that the country's agricultural capacity could presently supply the needs of a population of 45 million and, with the application of the best agricultural techniques, could support no more than 67 million.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

Half a million Iranians donate blood in 3 months

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Over the first three months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (started March 21), some 510,000 people donated blood across the country, Bashir Haji-Beigi, the Blood Transfusion Organization spokesman, said on Friday.

Blood donation over the aforementioned period has increased by 15 percent compared to the same period last year, he added.

"During this period, the provinces of Qazvin, Khuzestan, and Khorasan Razavi had the highest growth rate of blood donation in the country."

He went on to say that the index of regular blood donation in the country was estimated at 57 percent and the highest rate was related to the provinces of Semnan, Yazd, and Bushehr.

Over 2.1m Iranians donate blood per year

Blood donation in Iran has long been done voluntarily as over 2.1 million Iranians donate blood annually, Haji-Beigi said on June 14.

There are currently 178 blood donation centers in the country, with Fars, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Tehran, and Mazandaran provinces having the largest number of blood donation centers, he stated.

Highest blood donation in Eastern Mediterranean

While blood donation in 70 countries still depends on replacement or paid donors, Iran is the first country in the region that has enjoyed voluntary blood donation by 100 percent since 2007.

More than 85 percent of all donated blood worldwide is used to produce blood products, while the rate is 65 percent in Eastern



Mediterranean countries. Iran ranks among the highest-income countries in terms of converting more than 97 percent of the blood donated by people to plasma-derived medicinal products (PDMP).

Only 55 of 171 countries produce PDMP through the fractionation of plasma collected in the reporting country. A total of 90 countries reported that all PDMP are imported,

16 countries reported that no PDMP was used during the reporting period, and 10 countries did not respond to the question, according to WHO.

Iran currently has the highest blood donation rate in the Eastern Mediterranean region so that out of 9.9 million blood donation units in this region, more than two million belongs to Iran.

Over 2.1 million Iranians donate blood annually. While blood donation in 70 countries still depends on replacement or paid donors, Iran is the first country in the region that has enjoyed voluntary blood donation by 100 percent since 2007.

Iran, Serbia seeking to develop relations in geoscience



SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran and Serbia discussed bilateral cooperation in the field of geology and mining during a meeting held virtually on Wednesday.

Alireza Shahidi, head of the Geological Survey and Mineral Exploration of Iran (GSI), expressed hope to develop scientific cooperation in the future among both countries.

He went on to say that the GSI was established in 1959, and during these years, produced basic geological information and exploration throughout the country.

The production of the small, medium, and large geological maps, monitoring of geological hazards, and implementation of national and international projects preparing West Asia's (Middle East) maps, and holding 39 national and international specialized gatherings are among the activities of this organization.

"Due to climate change in the world, especially in Iran,

we are facing problems such as water scarcity, drought, floods, landslides, subsidence, sand and dust storms, he stated, adding, we hope with regional and international scientific cooperation can overcome these environmental problems."

Issues of joint cooperation with Serbia include geology, geological hazards, mineral exploration, extraction, and processing of minerals (phosphate, potash, lithium, iodine).

Dragan Todorovic, Serbian ambassador to Tehran, also expressed readiness to strengthen the bilateral cooperation, hoping that the two sides' intentions in the field of mining and energy will lead to beneficial results in the near future.

Earlier in June, Shahidi and Flemming Larsen, the director of the Geological Survey of Denmark (GEUS), emphasized the need to enhance cooperation on geoscience, high-tech, and satellite technologies.

Arctic's 'last refuge' for polar bears more vulnerable to climate crisis, study says

A "last refuge" for polar bears and walrus in the Arctic Ocean may be more vulnerable to the climate crisis than once thought, a new study says.

The research finds that global heating played a role in an episode of record melting in the Arctic's "last ice area" — a critical refuge for Arctic wildlife — in 2020.

The Arctic is one of the most rapidly warming regions on Earth, with some parts of the polar region heating up at a rate that is four times faster than the global average.

Sea ice in the region has already declined dramatically as a result of this rapid warming. The last 14 years have seen the 14 lowest Arctic sea ice levels since satellite records began.

Despite the rapid downturn, there remains a region north of Canada and Greenland where the sea ice is thicker and older and, therefore, expected to persist for longer as temperatures continue to climb. It is dubbed the "last ice area".

Also known as "Tuvaqjuituq" — which

means "the ice never melts" in the Inuit language Inuktitut, the region is expected to act as a critical last refuge for mammals such as polar bears and walrus as sea ice disappears across much of the Arctic Ocean.

However, last summer scientists observed an episode of extreme melting in this region, with sea ice levels falling to a record low of 50 per cent on 14 August.

The new research, published in the Communications Earth & Environment journal, finds that global heating is partially to blame for the record sea ice low.

"Current thinking is that this area may be the last refuge for ice-dependent species. So if, as our study shows, it may be more vulnerable to climate change than people have been assuming, that's important," said Dr Axel Schweiger, study lead author and a polar scientist at the University of Washington.

To study what caused the record ice low, the researchers used a combination of satellite images and mathematical mod-



elling. They focused their research on the Wandel Sea, the easternmost sector of the last ice area.

The findings show that the record ice loss in 2020 was mostly driven by unusual weather, including strong winds — which can cause ice to break apart and blow away.

However, around a fifth of the ice loss was driven by long-term ice thinning caused by the climate crisis, according to the results.

The findings reinforce the need to take urgent action on rapidly climbing CO2 levels,

said Dr Schweiger.

"[We need to] reduce greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible so ice-dependent animals won't have to rely on this area as a last refuge," he told The Independent.

The results fit with what is known about how the climate crisis is driving unprecedented change in the Arctic, adds Prof Jonathan Bamber, a leading polar scientist from the University of Bristol who was not involved in the study.

"Parts of the Arctic experienced record temperatures and wildfires in 2020. These extreme events have been predicted by climate models for some time as the Arctic warms at a rate more than twice the global average," he told The Independent.

"It's not too much of a surprise that older sea ice in the Arctic's 'last ice area' is responding to these extreme conditions, but it is definitely further cause for concern, especially for species that depend on this ice as a habitat."

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran breaks U.S. monopoly on aviation navigation charts

Iranian researchers have succeeded to produce aviation navigation charts, known as Inflight AIP (Aeronautical Information Publication), which was monopolized by the United States, IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

Prepared by Iran's Army, the Inflight AIP was unveiled in Tehran with Air Force Commander Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh and Vice President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari in attendance.

Digital aeronautical charts, including instrument flight rules (IFR) and visual flight rules (VFR), is a high-quality knowledge-based product which was solely produced by Jeppesen Company and was not available for Iranian airlines due to U.S. sanctions.

ایران انحصار آمریکا در نقشه‌های هوانوردی را شکست

ایران با تولید نقشه‌های هوانوردی (INFLIGHT AIP) که پیش از این در انحصار آمریکا بوده به موفقیت چشمگیری در زمینه صنعت هوانوردی دست یافت.

به گزارش ایرنا، روز یکشنبه با حضور امیر سرتیپ خلبان عزیز نصیرزاده فرمانده نیروی هوایی ارتش و سوزنا ستاری معاون علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری از نقشه‌های هوانوردی تولید داخل رونمایی شد.

چارت‌های هوایی دیجیتال شامل نقشه‌های پروازی IFR و VFR یک محصول دانش بنیان با فناوری بسیار بالا است که پیش از این انحصار آن در اختیار آمریکا و شرکت جیپسن (Jeppesen) قرار داشت که به دلیل اعمال تحریم‌های ظالمانه شرکت‌های هواپیمایی ایرانی از دسترسی به این نقشه‌ها محروم شده بودند.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Often your utterances and expressions
of your face leak out the secrets of your
hidden thoughts.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



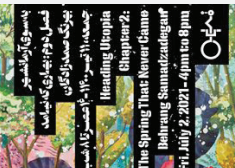
Sculpture/painting

■ Iranshahr Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures and paintings by Salman Khoshru. The exhibit will run until July 19 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.



Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Parsua Mahtash is currently underway at Aran Gallery. Entitled "Relocation: A Trilogy", the exhibition will run until July 16 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



■ Mohsen Gallery is showcasing paintings by Behran Smaadzadegan in an exhibition entitled "Heading Utopia, Chapter 2: The Spring That Never Came". The exhibit runs until July 21 at the gallery located at 42 East Mina Blvd., Naji St., off Zafar St.



■ An exhibition of painting by Ojan Zargarbashi is currently underway at Dastan Basement Gallery. The exhibit will be running until July 16 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



Ceramic

■ Fahimeh Heidari is showcasing her latest ceramic works in an exhibition at Vista Gallery. Entitled "Harmony and Contrast", the exhibition will run until July 12 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



Calligraphy

■ An exhibition of calligraphy by Ahmad Mohammadpur is currently underway at CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Dance of Words" runs until July 13 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.



Sculpture/installation

■ Sets of installation and sculptures by Mohammad Alizadeh are on view in an exhibition at O Gallery. The exhibition named "Whisper" will run until July 13 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.



Multimedia

■ Javid Gallery is hosting an exhibition of artworks in various media by a large number of veteran artists, including Faramarz Pilaram, Behzad Shashegaran, Ali Golestaneh, Shirin Ettehadieh, Keikhosro Khorush and Davud Emdadian. The exhibition runs until July 9 at the gallery that can be found at 17 Zartosht St., Vali-e Asr Ave.



■ On view at Shokuh Gallery is a selection of artworks in various media by a large group of artists, including Ahmad Vakili, Behnam Valadvand, Somayyeh Vallian, Bita Mohabbati, Arash Lahiji and Zahra Alizadeh.

The exhibit named "Cow" will continue until June 21 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.



■ Farimah Haqirani, Nilufar Qanbari, Leila Salmani, Hassan Salehi, Sima Derkhsan and Saba Karami are displaying their latest artworks in various media in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery. The exhibition will continue until July 7 at the gallery, which is located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

“Sun Children” director Majid Majidi receives IAA’s first Plaque of Glory

→1 “We watched a great and amazing movie and were impressed by it,” said IAA director Bahman Namvar-Motlaq who selected Majidi as the director of IAA’s Cinema Department in May.

“He has expressed one of the main problems of the city in the best way, and it is an artist’s main job to show maladies in the best way,” he added

“As an experienced critic, I’m sure that his works will be discussed in the future and many books will be authored about him, not only by Iranian scholars, but also by the Indian, Chinese and Westerners,” he noted.

“Sun Children” was Iran’s submission to the foreign-language film category at the 93rd Academy Awards. However, it failed to receive a nomination to the shortlist.

The movie had its Iranian premiere during the 38th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February 2020, garnering the Crystal Simorghs for best film, script and set design.

Numerous international events,



Director Majid Majidi (R) receives the IAA Plaque of Glory from Iranian Academy of Arts director Bahman Namvar-Motlaq in Tehran on July 1, 2021.

including the 77th Venice Film Festival, have also screened the movie. The festival honored the film’s star Ruhollah Zamani with the Marcello Mastroianni Award.

Earlier in December 2020, when Majidi attended the Hainan International Film Festival in the Chinese city of Sanya, he said that he will be doing his next project on the coronavirus pandemic in China.

Speaking to the China Global Television Network (CGTN), he said that he will be traveling to Yunnan Province in southwest China after the festival to scout for potential locations for his upcoming movie. This follows a trip to the eastern city of Hangzhou for the same purpose.

Majidi noted the film centers on a little girl during the coronavirus crisis, without giving more details. He added that the cast will be all Chinese.

He made “Beyond the Clouds” in India in 2017. The film, which is set in the slums of Mumbai, represented India at several international film festivals.

Iran’s “This Side, Other Side” honored at Neum Animated Film Festival

and the director wishes that the world of adults, like the world of children, would be full of peace and friendship.

The movie produced by Iran’s Documentary and Experimental Film Center has been screened at numerous international festivals and won several awards.

Serbia’s International Festival of Children and Youth Animated Film awarded its Grand Prix to the movie. The festival took place in the city of Sremski Karlovci in November 2020.

It also won the UNICEF Award at the 15th Biennial of Animation Bratislava, an international festival of animated films for children that took place in the Slovakian capital in October 2020.

The Grand Prix award of the Neum Animated Film Festival went to “Foreign Exchange” by Corrie Francis Parks from the USA.

Corrie Francis Parks animates sand and other unusual materials, her film raises the question: How

much is a handful of sand worth in the vast landscape of the global economy?

“Natural Selection” by Bosnian director Aleta Rajic won the award for the best 2D animation.

“Flower and the Girl” by British director Robin Heap was selected as best clay puppet animation, while the award for visual art was given to Russian director Roman Burmakov’s “Krasnoludki”.

Cris Van Beuren won the award for best music composer for his collaboration in Mexican director Marcos Almada Rivero’s animated film “The March of the Missing”.

“Croach” by Agustín Tourino and Matias Deon from Argentina was picked as best student film.

The Dusan Vukotic Award, which has been given since 2017 in honor of the Oscar winner, went to the Serbian director Masha Avramovic for the film “Stuck Together”. This award is given to young authors in the region as an incentive for further work.



“This Side, Other Side” by Iranian director Lida Fazli.

A R T TEHRAN – Iranian director Lida Fazli’s acclaimed short movie “This Side, Other Side” won the award for best movie in the category of 2D and 3D animation at the Neum Animated Film Festival in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the organizers announced on Thursday.

This film shows that no border can prevent the formation of friendships and affection between children,

Iranian pianist Puyam Azadeh to hold workshops at German festival

A R T TEHRAN – Iranian pianist Puyam Azadeh, who is a professor of the instrument at the University of Tehran, will be holding workshops at the 71st edition of the Bayreuth Festival of Young Artists in Germany.

The workshops are part of the Intercultural Piano Education Project that the organizers have initiated to offer young piano teachers from all over the world a unique platform for international exchange.

The workshops will focus on comparing and contrasting piano education and piano literature of various cultures and countries.

Participants will also become familiar with different methodologies of teaching piano during these workshops.

The workshops will take place from August 13 to 16 and will be conducted digitally on the video platform Zoom.

Admission to the workshop is free and it will be held in English. The outcomes of the workshop will be recorded both in vision and sound. Upon completion of the project, they will be presented as part of the Young Artists Festival Bayreuth.

Azadeh, 42, began playing piano in his childhood and has been playing ever since. He studied classical European and classical Persian music (BA), as well as piano (MA) at the Tehran Academy of Arts, and participated in master classes with Professor Paul Gulda at the Bayreuth Festival of Young Artists in Germany.

Since 2007, he has been a full Ph.D.

scholarship holder of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). He worked as Assistant Professor at Martin-Luther-University Musical Institute in Germany where he also received his doctoral degree with great honor “Magna Cum Laude” in January 2015.

Founded in 1950 under the patronage of German composer Jean Sibelius, the Bayreuth Festival of Young Artists is organized and performances done by young talent from all over the world, and is seen and loved by an international audience.

The close collaboration of young artists and cultural managers is an important part of the festival experience, since mutual trust and empathy are cornerstones of cultural exchange.



This file photo shows Iranian pianist Puyam Azadeh giving a recital.

Locarno film festival picks “Mask”, “Here My Village” from Iran

The short film “Mask” directed by Nava Rezvani will be screened on Pardi di Domain, a platform for short and medium-length films.

This film is about a girl who does something against her will for her boyfriend’s sake. The beauty of women in today’s Iranian society is summarized in the beauty of their faces. Women give more importance to their faces and focus more on it. Many men value women for their beautiful appearance, and it leads women to do cosmetic surgeries, and they finally wind up in a situation they get more and more distant from their real selves day by day.

Directed by Abbas Aram, “Here My Village” will be showcased in the Locarno Kids Screenings section, which offers films for children and teenagers. It places a special emphasis on works screening as national premieres, together with restored titles that help rediscover film history.

This film tells the story of Farhad, a 12-year-old boy

who lives with his mother and his 6-year-old sister in a village. He lost his father 5 years ago due to a fatal disease. Farhad is crazy about photos and magazines. One day, he goes to the city with his family and becomes fascinated by a second-hand camera in the shop window. He works hard to buy the camera, but he doesn’t succeed, so he sells one of their sheep in order to buy it. When his mother makes him return the camera and is refunded the money, Farhad grabs the camera and runs away.

Thousands of film fans and industry professionals meet here every summer to share their thirst for new discoveries and a passion for cinema in all its diversity, the organizers have said.

The audience is the soul of the festival, as exemplified in the famous evenings on the Piazza Grande, whose magical setting can accommodate up to 8,000 filmgoers every night.



“Here My Village” by Abbas Aram.

CULTURE TEHRAN – “Mask” and “Here My Village” from Iranian filmmakers will be competing in various sections of the 74th Locarno Film Festival, which will take place in Switzerland from August 4 to 14.

Art, architecture during Qajar period

Part 2

Three large mosques, the Masjed-e Shah of Qazvin built in 1806, of Zanjan built in 1827-29, and of Semnan built in 1828 have a common feature in a prominent entrance.

Because a Persian mosque is surrounded by adjacent buildings and has no exterior in the European sense, the entrance is a towering structure with a vaulted arch lined with moqarnas (stalactites) vaulting and set within a massive rectangular frame.

The entrance in turn is linked to the north ayvan of the mosque by a vestibule leading to the open court. The Masjed-e Shah of Qazvin has a single story of arches lining its court,

while that of the Masjed-e Shah in Semnan has two stories, the upper set well back from the lower to form an open, terraced walk.

The proportions of the four ayvans are also variable; the Qazvin and Zanjan mosques have four ayvans of similar height, but in the Semnan mosque the north and south ayvans are much taller and more imposing than those on the west and east.

They are all constructed on similar principles—lofty recesses with moqarnas decoration in their vaults—and in all cases the south ayvan is the most significant and most lavishly decorated as it leads into the maqsura, or sanctuary.

The traditional construction of the maqsura is seen most clearly at Qazvin, where it is a square chamber set with a squinch at each corner to effect transition to the dome; the mihrab, emphasized by its polychrome tilework decoration, is centered in the south wall.

Later, Qajar mosques continue the open-court, four ayvan plan but are more varied in the treatment of it, as can be seen in two mosques from the period of Nasser ad-Din Shah; the Masjed-e Nassir al-Molk built in Shiraz 1876-88 and the Masjed-e Sepahsalar built in Tehran 1881-90.

The Shiraz mosque is unusual in that

emphasis is shifted from the sanctuary area. Its open court, reached from an elaborate entrance situated on the northwest corner, is lined with a single row of arches opening on the west to a columned winter prayer hall.

There are no ayvans, and the north side is more elaborate than the south or kiblah side. This north side has two stories of open arches framing a spacious central niche that opens into a high chamber flanked by a series of vestibules opening out of one another; at the back of this chamber is a mihrab.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued