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# What to expect from Iran-Saudi talks

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## 20 years after 9/11, lawsuit against Saudis hits key moment



©File photo

## Iran insists 'tough decisions' needed to revive JCPOA as Vienna talks stumble

TEHRAN – Iran has once again underlined the need for the negotiating parties in Vienna, particularly the United States, to make difficult decisions regarding the revival of a 2015 nuclear deal.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reiterated a previous call by Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Seyed Abbas Araqchi, for tough decisions concerning the Vienna nuclear talks, which aim to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In a briefing statement on Tuesday, Khatibzadeh said, "The progress made in the Vienna talks is a fact acknowledged by all parties to the talks, although there are still important issues that largely need to be decided by the other parties, especially the United States. In fact, the finalization of the agreement to revive the JCPOA depends on the political will of the other parties to make tough decisions on their part."

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## First ID cards issued for children of Iranian mothers, foreign fathers abroad

TEHRAN – The first identification cards for children born to an Iranian mother and a foreign father living abroad were issued on Monday, IRINN reported.

Under a new nationality law, which was amended in 2019, Iranian citizenship is granted to children under 18 years with Iranian mothers.

The first group of children living in Iran obtained their Iranian nationality

and identity booklet (shenasnameh) in November 2020.

Alireza Mahmoudi, head of the Iranian Consulate General in Dubai, said that "Today is a big day for Iranian mothers abroad. This big step was taken with the help of the Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other related organizations."

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As the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks approaches, victims' relatives are pressing the courts to answer what they see as lingering questions about the Saudi government's role.

A lawsuit that accuses Saudi Arabia of being complicit took a major step forward this year with the questioning under oath of former Saudi officials, but those depositions remain under seal and the U.S. has withheld a trove of other documents as too sensitive for disclosure. The information vacuum has exasperated

families who have tried to make the case that the Saudi government facilitated the attacks. Past investigations have outlined ties between Saudi nationals and some of the airplane hijackers, but have not established the government was directly involved.

"The legal team and the FBI, investigative agencies, can know about the details of my dad's death and thousands of other family members' deaths, but the people who it's most relevant to can't know,"

*Continued on page 5*

## Remedies for power cuts

**BY M.A. SAKI**  
With the arrival of scorching summer, power outages have become frequent in Iran. Low precipitation, which its effects are seen in every part of the country, has exacerbated the situation.

Mostafa Rajabi, spokesman for the electricity industry, has said low precipitation has led to a reduction in generating hydroelectricity.

Gholam-Ali Rakhshani Mehr, an Energy Ministry official, has also said droughts have decreased the volume of water behind dams by about 50 percent, consequently leading to a 50 percent decrease in the generation of hydroelectricity.

Iran is now producing about 60,000 megawatts of electricity per day. However, due to the hot summer, the electricity consumption has increased to reach about 66,000 megawatts and that is the chief reason for power cuts.

Rakhshani Mehr has said only 24,000 megawatts of electricity is used for cooling.

The major consumers of subsidized electricity are affluent families and government buildings. Many lights in such buildings are unnecessarily on during daylight while small businesses and families living in small houses or apartments are suffering from power outages.

There are certain ways to compensate for the increase in electricity consumption. The best way is to develop solar and wind farms. This is the most viable way. This is essentially important as the world is turning to renewable sources of energy due to global warming and air pollution.

Focusing on gas-fired power plants may be necessary in short time but it isn't advisable to release more emissions which their long-term harms far outweigh short-term gains.

The government can act as the best example in using renewables. Now certain state bodies such as the oil and telecommunications ministries, car-producing factories such as Iran Khodro and SAIPA, and companies such as the Mobarakeh Steel Company, have the necessary financial resources to meet their own electricity needs through renewables.

Local auto companies which have raised the prices of their substandard cars almost in parallel with the value of dollar are rich enough to install solar panels to meet their energy consumption. The is somehow true in the case of steel or copper companies.

The other way is to encourage citizens to use electricity efficiently. Even in rich states, that a great portion of their electricity comes from nuclear plants, families are obliged to use electricity efficiently in summer.

## Basketball expert says Iran learn lessons from Spain losses

**BY FARROKH HESABI**  
TEHRAN - Iranian Basketball expert, Mostafa Hashemi, believes that Iran national team's matches against Spain have brought invaluable experience for the team.

Iran's national basketball team ended their training camp in Spain by suffering two defeats against the world's No. 2.

The national team lost two friendly games against them (88-61 in Valencia and 96-53 in Madrid).

Iran had lost to Japan twice and defeated them in one match last week in three friendly matches held in Japan.

Hashemi, one of the most decorated Iranian basketball coaches and the current coach of the Mahram club, shared his view with Tehran Times about Iran's performance prior to 2020 Olympic Games.

"I think we had two great matches against

Spain. I don't want to talk about the results because they were preparatory matches. The important issue is that Spain are one of the best basketball teams in the world. I believe Iran's national team have gained invaluable experiences from these two matches.

"Our players have been put in international match condition that was so similar to official matches. It was a great opportunity for the team to further strengthen their mentality in difficult conditions," Hashemi said.

"We also had three matches against Japan, and before that, we had played against Qatar and Saudi Arabia in FIBA Asian Cup qualifiers window, so we can say that the national team have had good preparatory matches so far," he added.

The matches were held as part of the preparation for the 2020 Olympic Games.

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## U.S. embassy, military base attacked in Iraq

According to AFP, U.S. anti-aircraft systems stationed at the American embassy in the Iraqi capital Baghdad have fired salvos of rockets in an attempt to bring down an armed drone. Videos of the rounds of rockets lightening up Baghdad's skies were quickly posted on social media. It's not clear from the footage if the drone landed in the embassy compound as no explosion is seen in the air. Some Iraqi media outlets suggest more than one drone had targeted the embassy, which is home to a military base. Since the start of the year, some 50 operations have targeted American interests in the country. Some analysts say the figure is higher.

Drone attacks pose a dilemma for the American occupation forces as they tend to evade air defenses. It's also not clear who was behind the operation as the Iraqi resistance had stated before it will not target U.S. diplomatic missions out of respect for the country's sovereignty. This is de-

spite the fact the resistance says the embassy is being used for extremely sinister purposes. The embassy attack came just hours after America's largest military base in Iraq had come under fresh rocket fire. According to an army spokesman for U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria, Colonel Wayne Marrotto, three rockets hit the Ain al-Assad Air Base in Iraq's Western Anbar province.

The spokesman said that the damage of the attack was still being assessed. No casualties have been reported. There has been no claim of responsibility but the attacks come days after American warplanes killed Iraqi security forces and a Syrian child in Iraq and Syria. The anti-American sentiment is running very high in Iraq following Washington's assassination of Iran's Lieutenant General, Qassem Soleimani, and Deputy Chief of the country's Popular Mobilization Units, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, in the vicinity of Baghdad International airport.

## Hakim Mosque: a hidden gem to visit in Isfahan

TEHRAN – The lesser-known Hakim Mosque is a visually stunning monument in Isfahan, which travelers can pay a visit to near the centuries-old bazaar of the central Iranian city.

The elegant mosque is not only a house of worship but also a public building serving a multiplicity of uses. It is a gathering place for prayers five times a day, an Islamic college, and an emergency shelter for travelers.

Built-in the mid-17th century during the reign

of Shah Abbas II, the mosque is named after its constructor who was a physician ("Hakim" in Persian).

The mosque has no monumental entry, but five different minor entries. Frequently, a mosque is also used as a shortcut for another destination beyond the place of worship.

Although the penetration of the mosque walls may take many forms, the primary destination is always the same. It is a courtyard that can be

called a monumental space. The mosque also contains amenities, such as washrooms and toilets, for public use.

Isfahan has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

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## Tehran, Delhi can play pivotal role to stabilize Afghanistan: Indian academic

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**  
TEHRAN – An Indian professor says that India and Iran can cooperate to have a regional role in establishing peace in Afghanistan.

"Asian emerging powers can have a regional role," Santosh Mehrotra tells the Tehran Times.

Mehrotra added, "This regional role might emerge if there was a strong role of Iran and India in a transition to peace and progressive development in Afghanistan. However, the Taliban's whole effort would be to prevent that, so that they can keep the support of Pakistan."

"Both Iran and India can be forces for good in Afghanistan, where peace and development will benefit all the people of Afghanistan," the visiting professor in the center for economic development at the University of Bath notes.

Following is the text of the interview:  
**How is the Indian economy considered at the global level? Many criticize India for developing at the cost of poor people.**

This is true, since 2013, not before that (and can still be reversed with better policies). Since 1973, the share of people below the poverty line had been falling for 30 years (from 54.9 to 27.5%), but the absolute number of poor remained almost the same (321 to 301 million), because of population growth.

However, from 2004 to 2012, on account of rapid economic growth, the absolute number of poor fell sharply. About 140 million emerged above the poverty line (which had been revised upwards), so that is an unprecedented achievement.

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## Top artworks on pandemic honored at Jihad Narration Art Festival

TEHRAN – Top artworks on COVID-19 were honored during the closing ceremony of the Jihad Narration Art Festival at the Sureh Hall of the Art Bureau on Monday evening.

The festival has been initiated by the bureau, a satellite institute of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO), to praise artists helping raise awareness about the virus.

IIDO director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi and a large number of cultural officials attended the ceremony.



## Military chief says security at border areas has improved

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Staff of Iran’s Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri on Tuesday highlighted that Iran has managed to improve security situation in border areas.

Bagheri made the remarks in a meeting of commanders and senior officials of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps including IRGC Ground Force Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour.

Emphasizing the growing security situation at borders, the military chief said, “Improvement of Iran’s security border in all parts and indicators show the effective and fruitful efforts of the IRGC ground forces and other forces in charge of border security mission.”

During the meeting, which was held at the IRGC Ground Force headquarters, General Pakpour and other IRGC commanders at border areas in separate reports explained about defense and military preparations in their turfs.

Some important issues were discussed including assessing and reviewing security movements and events. They also exchanged views on various security, defense and military issues in providing lasting security and deepening intelligence coverage in areas around the country.

General Bagheri appreciated the tireless efforts of IRGC ground forces to provide lasting security in border areas, especially in the northwest and southeast of the country, and noted that despite the enemy’s conspiracy to create insecurity in borders security in border areas is reassuring.

Praising the efforts of IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami for improving the capacity and readiness of the IRGC ground forces, Bagheri underlined the benefits of the implementation of people-centric security strategies to maintain security in the borders.

General Bagheri also underscored the strategy of helping the deprived families as well as utilizing the various construction capacities and civil services of the Armed Forces in providing assistance to the administration and helping reduce poverty which is evident in the mission plan of the IRGC.

## Iran: U.S. must know that bullying won’t serve its interests

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Tuesday that the United States must understand that bullying will worsen its situation in the region.

“The United States must realize that bullying not only does not achieve its regional goals, but also will aggravates its situation in West Asia,” Khatibzadeh said, speaking to reporters.

The remarks by Khatibzadeh came as the United States for the second time targeted the positions of Iraqi and Syrian forces who are fighting the main remnants of ISIS at the Iraq-Syria borders.

Khatibzadeh made the remarks in response to the White House claims about the moves by these groups in Iraq-Syria border.

White House claimed that the attacks were made by Iran-backed militias.

Khatibzadeh stressed that Iran has not and does not intend to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq.

## New Iranian ambassador submits credentials to Queen

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s new envoy to the UK submitted his credentials to Queen Elizabeth II on Tuesday.

Mohsen Baharvand had previously presented a copy of his credentials to officials at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

He was appointed new ambassador to the United Kingdom, succeeding Hamid Badinejad.

Before his new diplomatic post, Baharvand served as Iran’s deputy foreign minister for international and legal affairs.

## Raisi responds to Putin’s congratulatory message

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — In a letter presented to Vladimir Putin’s special assistant, Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi thanked the Russian president over his kind words.

The letter was presented by Iran’s Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali.



In the meeting, Jalali expressed hope that the era of new presidency in Iran would mark a period of growth and prosperity in bilateral cooperation.

Putin was the first foreign Leader to congratulate Raisi on his victory in the June 18 presidential election. In the message, Putin pointed to the good and fraternal relations between Iran and Russia and expressed hope that during the Raisi presidency both sides could see a growing expansion of cooperation.

## Iran seeking to cut executions of child offenders to zero

Iran is doing its best to bring down the number of executions of child offenders to zero, a senior Iranian official told AFP amid recurrent criticism from the UN and rights groups.

“We are going to the zero point,” said Majid Tafreshi of the High Council for Human Rights, insisting that that was the “will of the system” of the Islamic republic.

The United Nations and human rights groups frequently criticize Iran for executing child offenders, which violates the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that Tehran has ratified.

Tafreshi, the council’s deputy head of international affairs, speaking in English during an interview with AFP last week insisted the Islamic republic is working hard to reduce the numbers of executions of those who committed crimes while minors.

“This is what all the government [is doing]. This is applaudable.” “We’re trying to convince the victim family to pardon,” he said, noting that the council’s broad goal “is minimizing the number of executions ... as much as possible”.

For child offenders, these efforts result in pardons agreed by the families of victims in 96 percent of cases, according to Tafreshi.

# Biden fails to honor promises to stop U.S. support for Saudis: Yemen ambassador

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Yemen’s ambassador to Iran says U.S. President Joe Biden has failed to honor his pledges to stop Washington’s support for the Saudi-led military campaign against Yemen, stressing that he only used the issue of the bloody war as a trump card to boost his chances in last year’s presidential election.

“He said he wanted an end to the Yemeni war. He said he wanted to start political talks, but he lied to voters. He continues to support sanctions against the Yemeni people. He continues to support the siege on Yemen. He has not fulfilled any of his pre-election pledges about Yemen,” Ibrahim al-Deilami told Press TV in an exclusive interview broadcast on Tuesday.

He added, “We do not count on American promises, because it was during the reign of Democrats and [President Barack] Obama that the war against the Yemeni nation began. Biden’s pledges about Yemen have not been fulfilled, because he is the most dominant partner in the aggression.”

The Yemeni ambassador noted that the United States has been fueling the war in Yemen, and, in fact, the Saudi-led military aggression against his impoverished country all started in Washington, when Adel al-Jubeir was Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to the U.S. at the time.

“Saudi Arabia has been receiving logistical, intelligence, and other types of support from the United States since the first day of the invasion of Yemen. They supported a sea, land and air blockade on Yemen. Any UN Security Council resolution [against Yemen] has been backed by the United States, and Obama, in particular, backed them,” Deilami lamented.

In April 2015, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif submitted a letter to then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon outlining a four-point peace plan for Yemen. The letter came three weeks after Saudi Arabia started war on Yemen.

The plan called for an immediate cease-fire and end of all foreign military attacks, humanitarian assistance, a resumption of broad national dialogue and “establishment of an inclusive national unity government.”

The ambassador went on to say that Saudi Arabia wants Yemen to be divided and weakened, and has been purposely trying to interfere in the internal affairs of its southern neighbor over the past decades.

“Saudi Arabia seeks to dominate Yemen. We seek to preserve Yemen’s independence through our struggle. They seek to weaken and overthrow the Yemeni government. They want to decide the president of Yemen. They even want to appoint mayors and governors themselves. Clearly, this was the case in previous administrations backed by Saudi Arabia. But in their recent attacks, they witnessed the Yemeni people’s remarkable resilience,” the Yemeni ambassador to Tehran said.

Ambassador Deilami said Yemeni armed forces and fighters from the allied Popular Committees have beefed up their military might and deterrence power amid the on-going Saudi-led aggression, and are now able to produce various kinds of indigenous



unmanned aerial vehicles.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the ambassador said Saudi-led coalition forces and their mercenaries are using Yemen’s strategic central province of Ma’rib as a launching pad to mount offensives against other Yemeni regions.

“Even U.S. military advisers are active there to lead the aggression. Ma’rib has abundant resources and supplies electricity to other parts of Yemen. But the enemies have turned it into a conflict zone. The enemy uses the area to carry out attacks against Sana’a and other districts. Yemeni troops have to launch retaliatory attacks against enemy forces stationed there. We have so far liberated four districts in Ma’rib, and are to establish control over the rest. We want to liberate Ma’rib from the grip of Daesh and al-Qaeda,” the Yemeni ambassador said.

**“UN views the war on Yemen as fighting Yemenis”**

Deilami said the United Nations has thus far failed to handle the Yemen crisis properly, stating that the world body considers the conflict as a struggle between Yemenis themselves. “In reality, it is an onslaught by a foreign aggressor against Yemeni people,” he said.

“In our viewpoint, the UN-led negotiations are failure. Aggression must stop, and this requires the courage of the United Nations to openly criticize the onslaught. The United Nations must say it is an act of aggression by Saudi Arabia and the United States. Sanctions against Yemen must be lifted and all foreign forces, including Saudis, the Emirati and others, must withdraw in order for Yemeni parties to negotiate with each other.

“As long as we see the involvement of Saudis in Yemen, the UN-led negotiations are fruitless and the world body will not

**“We are talking about thousands of Yemenis, who need medical supplies and foodstuff. We are talking about people who are infected with coronavirus. Tens of thousands of injured people cannot travel abroad via Sana’a airport to receive treatment.”**

act logically,” he commented.

The ambassador also hailed relations between Yemen’s Salvation Government and Iran, stating that the Islamic Republic is the only country that stood by the Yemeni nation, criticized the Saudi-led aggression and called for the removal of brutal sanctions against the crisis-hit country.

“Iranian media outlets are supportive of the Yemeni nation. They talk about the need to lift sanctions against Yemeni people. While many countries have kept mum about the crisis unfolding in Yemen, Iran is diplomatically supporting Yemenis,” Deilami stated.

The Yemeni ambassador to Iran also decried the inhumane sanctions against his country, stating that the bans have prevented food and medicine from entering Yemen.

“We are talking about thousands of Yemenis, who need medical supplies and foodstuff. We are talking about people who are infected with coronavirus. Tens of thousands of injured people cannot travel abroad via Sana’a airport to receive treatment.

“This shows the ugly face of the United States and Saudis. Yemeni people call on the international community to bring food and medicine into Yemen. This has not happened yet. The Yemenis need the removal of such sanctions. The international community must ensure the reopening of airports and ports. Sanctions must be lifted,” he said.

“We are witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe. This needs to stop. This is the result of the aggression. Tens of billions of dollars have been lost. This, however, has not stopped Yemeni people from confronting the aggression. The freedom-loving people of the world must stand by Yemenis in the face of such injustices,” Deilami concluded.

Saudi Arabia, backed by the U.S. and regional allies, launched the devastating war

on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah resistance movement in a matter of weeks.

Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees have, however, gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

The Saudi war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions more. The war has also destroyed Yemen’s infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases across the Arab country.

Certain instances of the Saudi-led war on Yemen have been described as war crime. The bomb dropped on a school bus in August 2018, which killed 40 children, or bombing wedding ceremonies are concrete examples.

CNN reported that the weapon used in killing 40 children, who aged six to eleven, was a 227kg laser-guided bomb made by Lockheed Martin.

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

Mottaki likened the Saudi deception of the U.S. to Saddam’s trick against Arab and Western states that his army would capture Iran in a week when he ordered invasion of Iran on September 22, 1980.

“Saudi Arabia imagined 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,” Mottaki said.

The former chief diplomat said Saudi Arabia has been caught in the Yemen quagmire.

“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,” Mottaki stated.

Speaking in a radio interview on Monday, Ambassador Deilami highlighted the successive and heavy defeats that the Yemeni army and popular forces have inflicted on the Saudi aggressors.

“Saudi Arabia must realize Yemen’s power and accept it. That country has undoubtedly no choice but to move towards negotiations. Saudi Arabia and its allies have to withdraw from the Yemeni soil and compensate for the damages of seven years of war on Yemeni people, otherwise, we will press on with resistance to expel the aggressors from our country,” the envoy remarked.

## Government confirms sabotage act at Karaj

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — At his weekly press briefing on Tuesday, government spokesman Ali Rabiei confirmed that there was an act of sabotage at one of the building owned by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOD) in Karaj, however he refuted claims of significant equipment and human damage.

“Slight damage to the roof of one of the sheds, which is being repaired and replaced,” Rabiei stated.

He added the aerial photo published by some media outlets of the damage to the site is in fact an image that is being taken after the roof was removed for repair, and “the interpretations made in the media are not accurate.”

The spokesman went on to say that Iran has proven that after each sabotage act, its capabilities have been increasing.

Officials stated on June 23 that due to precautions, the parcel bomb was intercepted before it caused any damage to the building.

In April 2021, a sabotage attack took place in part of the power grid of the Ahmadi Roshan nuclear enrichment facility in Natanz. Israel was blamed as the chief culprit for the act.

It was after this sabotage act that Iran decided to increase the level of its nuclear enrichment to more than 60 percent.

**“No offer of serving in coming administration**

## Iran-Saudi dialogue enters new phase as officials from both sides welcome talks

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN**— In recent developments between Tehran and Riyadh, officials from both sides expressed hope that the talks would be beneficial.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Tuesday, government spokesman Ali Rabiei said that the negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia began with Iran’s firm belief in giving priority to neighbors.

“We believe that dialogue, especially between communities within the Muslim Ummah, is the only proper way to resolve differences between them,” he noted.

Rabiei added that in some cases disputes may have complexities that take time to resolve.

“The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a specific policy called neighborhood policy and regionalism.

**“Iran has always wanted to maintain peace and security in the region”**

In a similar note, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that Saudi officials should know that the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its principled positions, has always wanted the countries of the region to maintain peace and security in the Persian Gulf region.

“This approach, with the efforts and courage of Iran, has helped to end the domination of ISIS and other terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria and to prevent the infiltration of takfiri groups into the countries of the Persian Gulf,” he said, speaking to reporters on Tuesday.

Khatibzadeh said that the Islamic Republic has always welcomed dialogue to achieve positive results, and it looks forward to negotiations with Saudi Arabia.



**Former diplomat: No progress achieved in Tehran-Riyadh talks**

Speaking to Al Mayadeen news network, former Iranian diplomat Ali Amani said that he has not seen a tangible sign of progress in the talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

When Al Mayadeen host played a video of the Tuesday remarks of Rabiei welcoming talks between Tehran and Riyadh, Amani said that these remarks were made months ago as well.

“Saudi Arabia is looking for a hand to grab and save it from the quagmire in the region, especially in Yemen,” he said. The former diplomat noted that it is now seven years since the invasion and start of the Saudi war against Yemen.

Saudi officials have long said that they will soon resolve the issue of Yemen and defeat the Houthis and Ansar al-Islam, but this has not happened, he added.

“I think the situation in the region should change with the arrival of the new government in Iran and the victory of Bashar al-Assad in the presidential election in Syria,” he highlighted.



# What to expect from Iran-Saudi talks

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — After a few weeks of being on the sidelines, the Saudi-Iranian talks are back in the spotlight, with Iran outlining the broader goals that can be achieved through the talks.

Two Iranian spokesmen offered on Tuesday glimpses into the de-escalation dialogue currently underway between Tehran and Riyadh, after weeks of lack of updates on the talks. The briefings included the latest developments and the point where the talks currently stand as well as the extent to which they can be expected to succeed.

First, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh responded to remarks by Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, who cautiously welcomed talks with Iran but cast doubts on Iran's commitment to ensuring security in the region.

In remarks to the Italian newspaper La Repubblica, the top Saudi diplomat commented on the potential restoration of ties between Tehran and Riyadh, saying that Saudi Arabia welcomes talks with Iran but Tehran must prove its commitment to ensuring security and stability in the region with facts. Bin Farhan described as "positive" the stance of both Iran and Saudi Arabia on the talks and expressed hope that the dialogue would lead to a thaw in relations between the two regional heavyweights.

The remarks were the latest sign that the talks proceed in an atmosphere of lack of trust, especially on the Saudi side. The Saudis have agreed to engage in talks only after they came to know that the tide is turning in Iran's favor after Joe Biden took over from Donald Trump. Over the course of the Trump administration, they were treating requests for talks with Iran with a wait-and-see approach, effectively shelving all offers to patch up ties with Tehran. This approach was adopted due in part to a Saudi desire to see how Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" campaign would end with Iran.

With Joe Biden vowing to re-engage Iran, the Saudis started to test the waters to see whether they can embark on a dialogue with Iran in parallel with the talks between Iran and world powers in



Vienna over a 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Sensing a Saudi desire for talks, Iran quickly moved to offer the Saudis a pathway for talks. Thus the Iran-Saudi talks went ahead in Baghdad with security and intelligence officials from both sides leading them, another indication that the talks got going in an atmosphere of distrust. Had there been a mutual trust, the talks would have been led by diplomats and politicians.

During the Baghdad talks, the Yemen war was one of the first issues discussed by the negotiating parties, indicating that the negotiations started off with the most difficult issue. This is typical of Saudi Arabia. Perhaps, they wanted to gauge Iran's seriousness right from the start. Saudi Arabia has long complained about perceived non-compliance by the Iranian government with agreements between Tehran and Riyadh. This may explain why they preferred to negotiate with Iranian security officials outside the government whom they believe have the final say on state matters.

And when the Saudis met these officials in Baghdad, they first broached the Yemen war as a litmus test to see if Iran was serious about its expressions of

interest in opening a new chapter with the kingdom.

Needless to say, Iran has long underlined its seriousness for talks and even castigated the Saudis for their foot-dragging on seizing the opportunity of de-escalation. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif even expressed readiness to dispatch an ambassador to Saudi Arabia and pay a visit to the kingdom if needed. On many occasions, Zarif called on Saudi Arabia and other Arab states in the region to strengthen cooperation through an Iranian peace initiative called Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE).

These Iranian gestures of goodwill all fell on deaf ears in Riyadh due to the deep-running distrust by Saudi Arabia.

After weeks of negotiations, Iran and Saudi Arabia now seem to be moving steadily in a direction of de-escalation with Iranian setting realistic goals for the current trajectory. This is reflected in the cautious Saudi move to welcome the outcome of the negotiations and even express a desire to mend ties with Iran.

Responding to bin Farhan's remarks, Khatibzadeh said that "Saudi officials should know that the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its principled positions, has always wanted the countries of the region to maintain peace and security in

the Persian Gulf region. This approach, with the efforts and courage of Iran, has helped to end the domination of Daesh and other terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria and to prevent the infiltration of takfiri groups into the countries of the Persian Gulf."

The spokesman added, "We have always welcomed the dialogue to achieve positive results and our view of negotiations with Saudi Arabia is positive."

Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei echoed the same remarks, setting realistic goals for the talks. "Negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the government of Saudi Arabia began with our firm belief in giving priority to our neighbors and the need for peaceful coexistence for peace and security in the region. We continue to believe that dialogue, especially between communities within the Muslim ummah, is the only worthy way to resolve possible differences between them," Rabiei said.

He pointed to the complications of talks between Tehran and Riyadh, underlining that there are disagreements that need more time to be solved. But these disagreements, Rabiei noted, can be reduced.

Rabiei said Iran will continue the talks until the disagreements are reduced. "In the talks that have taken place between the two sides so far, the issues between the two countries have been discussed from a friendly and good-natured position, and some progress has been made. We understand that in some cases, disputes may have complexities that require appropriate time to be resolved," Rabiei pointed out.

He added, "We will continue this dialogue until the disagreements are minimized and we evaluate it positively and we are always ready to seriously continue this dialogue, relying on mutual goodwill, securing the interests and resolving the concerns of both parties. The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a specific policy called neighborhood policy and regionalism. The best way to ensure the security of the region and not to abuse the countries under the pretext of security is the presence of all countries in the region together."

## Iran insists 'tough decisions' needed to revive JCPOA as Vienna talks stumble

**→1** He added, "The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible and to lift the cruel sanctions against the Iranian people. However, we do not set any deadline for reaching an agreement that serves the interests of the Iranian people and negotiations will continue until a desirable agreement for Iran is reached. As has been said many times, we are not in a hurry to reach an agreement, but we will not allow the negotiations to become draining and protracted."

Since April, diplomats from the remaining parties to the JCPOA and the U.S. have held six rounds of talks in a bid to revive the deal. They made significant progress but failed to get Iran and the U.S. back to full compliance with the nuclear deal.

The sixth round was concluded more than two weeks ago. Deputy Foreign Minister Araqchi, who leads the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna, issued a statement about the conclusion of the sixth round.

Araqchi, while referring to the progress made in the round of negotiations, especially regarding the draft of negotiation texts, said that the remaining important issues require serious decisions in the capitals, especially in the negotiating countries. He called on the negotiating parties to make the necessary decisions with realism, seriousness and strong will to maintain and revive the JCPOA.

While stating that the sides are closer to an agreement than ever before, the deputy foreign minister expressed hope that an agreement could be reached in the next round of talks, although it could not be guaranteed.

The heads of the other delegations, while confirming the progress made, stressed the need for the participation of all parties with a constructive approach in creating the ground for reaching an agreement.

Araqchi has recently said that the U.S. needs to make difficult 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 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," Araghchi told Iranian media after briefing lawmakers sitting on the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on the Vienna talks last week.

The Vienna talks were expected to resume this week but were delayed after Iran and the U.S. accused each



other of not showing the flexibility needed to resume the talks. Iran demanded that the U.S. remove all the sanctions imposed, re-imposed, or relabeled by the Trump administration as these sanctions were primarily part of a broader design to make it hard, if not impossible, for the next U.S. administration to rejoin the JCPOA.

For its part, the Biden administration has demanded a commitment to engage in follow-on talks to bolster and expand on the existing JCPOA, but Iran has virtually ruled that out, saying they are only interested in renewing the 2015 accord, according to an NBC News report.

Meanwhile, the U.S. diplomats put the onus on Iran by saying that Iran needed to make tough decisions to revive the deal.

"There will come a point, yes, where it will be very hard to return back to the standards set by the JCPOA," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken 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.

Earlier, 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.

The U.S. and its European allies also implied that they will wait for the new Iranian government to take over before resuming the next round of the Vienna talks, something that drew a response from Iran.

Commenting on this issue, Khatibzadeh said Iran's position on nuclear talks does not change with governments and thus is steadfast. He made it clear that the next government of Iran, expected to put together by President-elect Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi by August, will abide by any agreement reached during the current government.

"Iran's position on the JCPOA and the lifting of sanctions is one of the principled positions of the establishment and will not change with the change of government. Therefore, if an agreement is reached, the government of his excellency Mr. Raisi will also be loyal to it, because contrary to the approach of some other parties, adherence to commitments and promises is always a principle for the Islamic Republic of Iran," Khatibzadeh asserted.

Iranian Government spokesman Ali Rabiei reiterated the same position. Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, Rabiei said, "Decisions on JCPOA revival negotiations are made at the highest levels, under the supervision and guidance of the Leader and in the Supreme National Security Council."

He said that under whose government the final negotiations will take place depends on meeting Iran's interests and the political will of the American side. "At the moment, there is no change in the negotiating team, and I can say that the negotiation process is over, especially on difficult and technical issues," Rabiei noted.

He added, "Unlike the U.S. government, the Islamic Republic of Iran sees the government as a unified and sustained legal entity that adheres to all international obligations accepted by previous governments. If an agreement is reached in the twelfth government (the Rouhani government), the thirteenth government (the Raisi government) will no doubt abide by all its obligations under this rule of law."

The government spokesman further said, "Experience has shown that the Islamic Republic of Iran has not violated its international agreements and commitments in the past, nor will it intend to do so in the future. We hope that the other parties, with the same frankness and transparency, will state the inseparability of their international obligations in spite of the change of governments and adhere to their legal obligations."

## S P O R T S

### Iran crowned Asian U19 Beach Volleyball champions

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Abolhassan Khakizadeh and Ali Ghorbanpasandi defeated Thailand's Netitorn Muneekul and Wachirawit Muadpha 2-0 (21-18, 21-15) in the final match of the 3rd Asian U19 Beach Volleyball Championships on Tuesday.



Bronze medal went to Kazakhstan after defeating Thailand B 2-0. Iran started the campaign with a 2-0 win over Kazakhstan B and also defeated Bahrain 2-0 on Day 2.

The Iranian team defeated Thailand C 2-0 in quarters and earned a 2-0 win over Thailand B in the semis.

The competition was held in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand from July 3 to 7.

### Iran a difficult team to play against: Paulo Bento

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — South Korea head coach Paulo Bento discussed his side's Group A opposition for the upcoming Asian Qualifiers.

In Group A of the final Asian qualification stage for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, South Korea will take on Iran, Iraq, the UAE, Syria and Lebanon.

"We'll just worry about playing good matches," Bento said. "It will start with strong cohesion at the foundation," Bento said.

South Korea have played at every World Cup since 1986, including as a co-host with Japan in 2002.

Bento said his team are in a tough group because there isn't much that separates the five countries.

Iran, one of the top-ranked Asian countries at No. 31, will likely present the toughest challenge for South Korea. The Taeguk Warriors have a 9-9-13 (wins-draws-losses) record against Iran, including four losses and two draws in their past six meetings, Yonhap news reported.

"In terms of cohesion, players' individual skills and athleticism, they're a great team," Bento said of Iran.

"Although they will be a difficult team to play against, that doesn't mean we can't overcome them. We're a very competitive team, too. I think we're prepared to take on any team, whether we're home or away," the Portuguese added.

### Spain too strong for Iran basketball team

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Spain basketball team defeated Iran 96-53 in their second friendly match at WiZink Center in Madrid Monday night.

Sergio Scariolo's team had defeated Iran 88-61 on Saturday in Valencia.

The matches were held as part of preparation for the 2020 Olympic Games.

Iran had lost to Japan twice and defeated them one time last week in three friendly matches held in Japan.

The Persians have been drawn with the U.S., France and Czech Republic in Group A of the Olympic Games.

Iran will compete at the Olympics for the third time in their history after earning their spot as the highest-ranked Asian team at the 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup.

The Iranians have previously participated at 1948 and 2008 Olympic Games.

### Javanmardi highlights anxiety and stress are not to be ignored

**S P O R T S d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Para shooter Sareh Javanmardi is determined to repeat his previous Paralympic medals in Tokyo but she says that anxiety and stress are not to be ignored.

She is also honest about what could hinder her performance. With the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics nearing, the pressure is rising and so is the anxiety and stress.

Rather than hide, the multi-Paralympic and world champion brings her Achilles' heel to light. Especially in shooting Para sport, where one mental lapse can cost an athlete everything, knowing how to handle such anxieties and stress is important for the Iranian.

"These factors (anxiety and stress) may have a negative impact on my performance," said the two-time gold medalist from Rio 2016.

"So, I am afraid of these internal elements rather than my competitors. I do believe that hard work ensures good results. And I am doing all the hard work and have trust in Almighty to secure the best result in Tokyo," she said in an interview with Paralympic.org.

### Basketball expert says Iran learn lessons from Spain losses

**→1** Hashemi, the former player of Iran's national basketball team, emphasized that the matches against Spain were the best friendly games for Iran: "I'm sure that these matches will help us for the Olympic Games. We have played with a high-level basketball team that own world-class players. These are the games that our basketball need more and more. We lost the games, but it's good for us. And I think it only helps us."

Mehran Shahintab's side are in Group A along with the U.S., France, and the Czech Republic. Iran will play the Czech Republic at the Saitama Super Arena. The Persians are scheduled to face the U.S. and France on July 28 and 31, respectively.



## Electricity consumption breaks new record amid heatwave

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 66,250 megawatts (66.25 gigawatts) on Monday to register a new record in the history of Iran's electricity industry as a new heatwave has blanketed the country over the past few days, IRNA reported.

According to the Iranian Energy Ministry's Spokesman for Electricity Industry Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, the mentioned figure was 8,000 MW more than the consumption in the previous year's peak period, and 10,000 MW more than the figure in the previous year's same date.

The country's power plants are currently able to generate only 54,000 MW of electricity which is nearly 12,000 MW less than the power demand, Rajabi Mashahadi said.



The official further noted that each degree of temperature rise would boost the country's electricity consumption by 1,500 MW and the temperature is expected to increase even more in the coming days.

He underlined the increasing use of air conditioning devices in the summer period as one of the major reasons for the increase in the country's electricity consumption, calling on people to manage their consumption and use the automatically regulated devices to decrease energy waste.

He also announced that the Energy Ministry is planning to import 650 MW more electricity in the coming days to offset the surge in demand.

Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian on Tuesday attended an emergency meeting of the country's electricity management headquarters along with other senior officials from the Energy Ministry to discuss the issue and explore ways for alleviating the situation.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

This year, however, new deteriorating factors like severe drought and the decline in the country's water resources as well as a new wave of illegal cryptocurrency mining across the country have also worsened the situation.

Iranians are currently left in the dark for several hours each day based on a pre-planned outage program implemented by the Energy Ministry.

Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) has previously announced that the company is implementing over 40 different programs for managing the situation and to prevent blackouts in the country, however, so far these programs do not seem to be working as expected.

## Govt., private sector discuss major economic issues

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The 105th meeting of the Dialogue Council of Government and Private Sector was held in Tehran on Monday in which some of the country's current economic issues were discussed, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

The meeting was chaired by Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand and attended by the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie and heads of the chamber's specialized committees.

The private sector's proposals for the realization of the motto of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), the country's electricity problems, promoting border markets, improving the business environment, and the challenges that foreign investors are facing in the country were among the issues discussed in the meeting.



Economy Minister Farhad Dejpasand (2nd R) and ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (2nd L) at the 105th meeting of the Dialogue Council of Government and Private Sector in Tehran on Monday.

Countering corruption and rent-seeking, moving towards a competitive and transparent business environment, expediting the resolution of legal problems that the traders are facing, supporting productive investment, holding commercial courts, covering uncertainties and production risks, facilitating the financing of productive sectors through the banking system and the capital market, reducing tax pressures on productive sectors, and removing foreign exchange and foreign trade bottlenecks in productive sectors were other issues raised in the meeting.

Speaking at the event, the ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie mentioned some of the above-mentioned issues and offered some solutions for resolving them.

Underlining the significance of border markets, Shafeie said: "These markets were established to improve the living standards of the people living in the border areas. At present, not only we have not achieved our initial goals in this regard, but the implementation of the plans for establishing border markets have created some problems for which solutions must be sought."

Elsewhere in this meeting, Dejpasand mentioned the private sector's proposal package for the realization of the current year's motto which is "Production: Support and removing obstacles" and said: "In this regard, the items that need to be approved by the government should be prepared in the form of a draft bylaw and submitted to the government, and what requires the approval of the parliament should be determined and made available to the MPs."

# Development projects worth nearly \$740m inaugurated in free trade, special economic zones

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Some 62 development projects worth 31.05 trillion rials (over \$739.2 million) were put into operation in Iran's free trade and special economic zones on Tuesday, in the 78th series of inauguration ceremonies since the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

As reported by the government portal, President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated the mentioned projects through video conferencing in various provinces including West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Hormozgan, Gilan, and Sistan-Baluchestan, IRNA reported.

Put into operation in Kish, Maku, Chabahar, Aras, and Anzali free trade, and special economic zones, the said projects are going to provide direct employment for about 2,388 people.

Speaking in the inauguration ceremony, Rouhani underlined the significant role of the country's free trade and eco-



omic zones in the country's economy. "Free trade and special economic zones play an important role in the economy and employment, and in this government, great work has been done in these areas,"

the president said.

He also mentioned the importance of Chabahar Port's free trade zone, saying: "Chabahar Free Zone is of special importance to us because Chabahar Port itself

## Quarterly exports from Gilan province rise 24%

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, the value of exports from Iran's northern Gilan province rose 24 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (Marc 21-June 21), as compared to the first quarter of the previous year.

Farhad Dalqgoush, the head of Gilan's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, said that 241,599 tons of products worth over \$146 million was exported from the province in the three-month period of this year, indicating also three percent growth in terms of weight.

The official named vegetable products, minerals and related products, chemical products, plastics and foodstuffs as the main exported commodities, and Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, and Belarus as the major export destinations of the products in the first quarter.

Expressing satisfaction with the favorable trend of non-oil exports and the determination of Gilan traders, he said: "Despite oppressive sanctions and intensifying economic pressures, trade with various countries is increasing and based on the province's \$750-million export target for this year, the non-oil export working group of Gilan will follow up and monitor related programs."

The head of Gilan's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department further announced that 423,140 tons of basic commodities valued at over \$275.7 million were imported to the province in the first quarter of the present year, showing 38 percent rise in terms of value, while one percent drop in terms of weight, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

He mentioned cereals (barley and livestock corn) and meat and oil, wood, boards and chemical products, paper, cardboard, wood pulp, machinery and its accessories and parts as the main imported items, and Russia, Kazakhstan,

China, Azerbaijan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Ukraine, Turkey, and Ecuador as the major sources of imports in the mentioned time span.

Also, during the first three months of this year, 27 tons of goods worth \$106,880 were exported through suitcase trade from Gilan customs, indicating 82 percent drop year on year, the official added.

Gilan province, with its Anzali Free Trade Zone and Astara Port Special Economic Zone, as well as its land border with Azerbaijan, was a platform for more than \$664 million in exports in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), with an increase of about 29 percent over its previous year.

As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), 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.

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.

## '90% of cigarettes consumed in Iran are produced domestically'

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Commodities and Foreign Currency has said 90 percent of the cigarettes consumed in the country are produced domestically, IRIB reported.

"Smuggled cigarettes account for only about 10 percent of the market, and with the activities of the headquarters in recent years, according to last year's statistics, 90 percent of the country's cigarettes are now produced domestically," Ali Moayedi Khorramabadi said in a press conference on Tuesday.



According to the official data, Iran has 39 tobacco and 23 cigarette production

companies.

The number of cigarette manufacturers in Iran increased from seven companies with an annual output of 29 billion cigarettes in the year ending March 2015 to 23 companies with an annual output of 55 billion in the year ending March 2020.

According to a report by the Persian economic daily Donya-e-Eqtasad, citing statistics by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, two leading international manufacturers of cigarettes, namely British American Tobacco and Japan Tobacco International accounted

for more than 60 percent of the total cigarette production in Iran in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019-20).

Iran has currently banned the imports of cigarettes into the country.

The decision to halt imports doesn't mean that no foreign cigarettes entered Iran; the Industries Ministry estimates that 10.03 billion cigarettes were smuggled into the country in the Iranian calendar year 1398, as 65 billion cigarettes were smoked in the country during the period, which registered a year-on-year decline of 39.2 percent.

## National housing plan's 2nd group of units to be handed over by late July

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's deputy transport and urban development minister announced that the second group of the national housing plan's units will be handed over to the applicants by the end of the current Iranian calendar month (July 22).

Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh said that 20,000 units will be handed over in the second stage, and emphasized on solving land problems in the implementation of the mentioned plan.

"We at the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development are looking to implement the national housing action plan on a larger scale", the official has previously emphasized.

As reported in early May, the ministry has provided Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution with land for the construction of 81,000 housing units under the framework of the mentioned plan.

According to Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami, the Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution is going to construct 100,000 housing



unit under the mentioned plan of which so far, the land for 81,000 units has been provided.

The official noted that so far 56,000 applicants have registered with the foundation to receive the mentioned housing units.

## TEDPIX gains 26,500 points on Tuesday

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 26,569 points to 1.281 million on Tuesday.

Over 7.356 billion securities worth 60.777 trillion rials (about \$1.447 billion) were traded at the TSE on Tuesday.

The first market's index rose 21,708 points, and the second market's index climbed 46,019 points.

TEDPIX rose 43,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

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 Dejpasand 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.

He noted that launching these single window systems would accelerate and facilitate many affairs and hopefully services would be provided more quickly and easily to the clients and companies.

Through the mentioned systems, the SEO, in collaboration with the Real Estate Registration Organization of Iran, the Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA), official newspapers, and the Iran Post, will provide all the necessary ser-



vices in the shortest possible time, he explained.



# The Russian bear in Lebanon

By Abir Bassam

It turned out that the Biden-Putin summit on May 16 has established a wider effect than anyone would expect. It exceeded by far political analysis, especially in Lebanon. The summit almost coincided with the Russian economic delegation's visit to Beirut on the 18th of the same month and the announcement of its study results to initiate investments projects in Lebanon.

The results revealed the Russian delegation's future plans in rebuilding the oil refineries in Zahran and Tripoli and rehabilitating the latter's port. Regardless of the projects, the Russian companies intend to deal with, if they are approved and encouraged by good signs changes can be relied upon. It means that Lebanon has taken an important leap in its economic policies by gradually moving towards the East.

Naturally, Lebanon's orientation towards the East "if it happens" will not be absolute and definitive, but rather principled and partial. This is an important matter by itself. It is marked as a qualitative leap that may minimize the private companies' monopolization of energy imports, which will be directly reflected, firstly, in electricity production in Lebanon, and secondly in facilitating the provision of petroleum products in Lebanon. Such projects became a necessity, in particular, after the collapse of the Lebanese lira against the American dollar.

Logically, changing the reality of the production of electricity will reveal immediate results. It will be reflected in the change in the rehabilitation of the economic infrastructure fields in Lebanon. It will also positively reflect in other vital areas, such as determining the prices of food commodities, which became outrageously high.

Accordingly, one of the most important reasons for the obscene rise in food prices is related to the high costs of transportation in the last month alone. It is almost above the purchasing power of the Lebanese. For example, the prices of vegetables and fruits, a non-imported commodity, which is not supervised by government support, remained within reasonable prices; however, once the diesel prices started rising, it directly affected the prices of the seasonal vegetables and fruits.

In addition, there are unseen accomplishments that will go with the entry of Russian companies, which is creating new job opportunities in Lebanon. Lately, it was reported that unemployment in Lebanon will reach 41.4% this year. It is a huge rate, which the



Lebanese media, in general, use to provoke people against the current resigned government. However, it neglects to shed the light on the importance of the Russian investment in creating new job opportunities, which will affect all social groups, whether they were transporters, building workers, porters, cleaners, or university graduates.

The companies coming to Lebanon are directly supported by the Russian state. However, they are private companies, a fact that has its advantages. They are familiarized with dealing with other Western international companies. Russian companies have previously coordinated with French and Italian companies in Lebanon, through contracts concluded for the extraction of gas in Lebanese fields and in other fields outside Lebanon. Russian-European coordination process is also recognized in rebuilding Beirut's harbor. A German company will rebuild the docks, while the French will rebuild the containers or depots, and the Russian companies will rebuild the wheat silos.

It seems that the process is closely related to the future of Lebanon and the future of the Chinese project, the New Silk Road, [One Road, and One Belt]. However, it is not clear yet whether the Russian companies will be investing in Tripoli's refinery and in regenerating and expanding its port or it will be invested by the Chinese companies. If this achievement is accomplished, then Tripoli will restore its navigating glorious history. Tripoli was one of the most important ports on the Mediterranean. Additionally,

there is a need for the Russian and the Chinese to expand on the warm shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Secondly, the project will boost Tripoli and its surroundings from the current low economic situation to a prosperous economic one, if the real intentions are there. The results in Tripoli will be read as soon as the projects set foot in the city. Of course, this will establish another Sino-Russian victory in the world of economy and trade, if not in politics as well.

The entry of the Russians and the Chinese into the Lebanese field of commerce has international implications. It will come within international and global agreements or understanding. Nevertheless, it is a sign that the Americans are actually losing their grip on Lebanon. This entry will stop the imposition of a limited number of European-oriented Lebanese monopolizing companies, which have dominated the major Lebanese trade of oil and its products. Dominance protected with the "illusion" of meaningless international resolution. It is true that the Americans are still maneuvering in several places; however, this is evident to the arbitrariness of decisions making in the U.S. today. It is the confusion resulting from ramifications of the "Sword of Jerusalem" operation in Palestine; it seems that they do not have a clear plan towards policies in the region, other than supporting "Israel".

If the above is put into action, and the Russian companies start working within a guarantee agreement with the Lebanese state.

This means a set of important issues on the international and regional levels. And it also means that the Americans would certainly prefer the Russians to any Chinese or Iranian economic direct cooperation in Lebanon.

Firstly, it is clear that in their meeting Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin reached a kind of consent to activate stability in the region. Two years ago, the Americans had a different plan. According to an established source, the Americans actually intended to strike internal stability in Lebanon and ignite another civil war round, before finalizing stability in Syria. This assertion tunes with David Hale's, an American envoy to Lebanon, declaration about the American anger over the \$10 billion spent in Lebanon to change the political reality and overthrow Hezbollah from the government. Consequently, the American project is behind us now. Russia and China need to invest in the stability of Lebanon, in order to secure their investments in the process of rebuilding Syria.

Secondly, the Lebanese state guarantee, which the Russians require, is directly related to the lack of confidence in the Lebanese banking policies, which have lost their powers as a guarantor for investments after the role they played since November 17, 2019 till today. It proved the inefficiency of the financial policies of the Lebanese banks, which was based on the principle of usury since the nineties of the last century. In addition, state guarantee will enable the Russian companies to surpass the Americans sanctions.

The state guarantee increases the value and importance of the Lebanese state as an entity in the region, and this can be understood from Macron's statements after the explosion of Beirut port last August, when he said that Lebanon's role in the region as we know it must change.

Thirdly, if we consider the history of international unions in the world, including the European Union, the (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council and others, they started as economic alliances before they end as political alliances. Therefore, at this historical stage and in order to work on the economic recovery of Lebanon, which needs more investments instead of falling under the burden of more debts. Lebanon needs to head East towards an economic unity with Syria. In cooperating with two superpowers, Lebanon and Syria can form an economic bloc on the Mediterranean shores, a bloc that can get Lebanon out of the vortex of Western absurdity and expand its alliances and horizons to be a real economic and cultural forum where the East and the West can meet.

## Tehran, Delhi can play pivotal role to stabilize Afghanistan: Indian academic

→ 1 However, that process has been reversed since 2013, on account of the slow growth, and the drop in the rate at which new non-farm jobs have been created since then. Unemployment had reached a 45 year high in 2018. The economy's contraction during Covid was much higher than for the rest of the world (-7.3% as opposed to -3.3%). As a result, poverty has grown, while joblessness has grown even further.

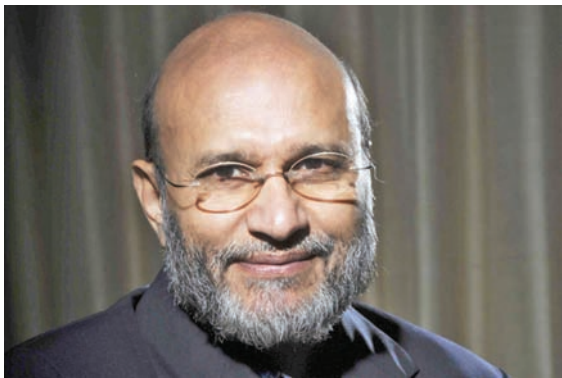
With changed policies, this retrogression can be reversed.

**How can India balance its economic rise amid the China-U.S. row in Asia?**

This balancing act for India would have been easier if China's rise as an economic and military power was accompanied by less, not more, aggressiveness in international affairs. But China's behavior has become more aggressive in many dimensions in Asia (and the world). India was left with little choice to joining with the Quad (U.S., Japan, Australia, India). China's entering Ladakh territory in 2020 totally disturbed the border equilibrium between India and China prevailing for decades.

**How do you describe India's economic ties with Iran?**

India and Iran have historically enjoyed very close and warm relations. This has been evident in the long-standing



economic relations, especially, India's long agreements to import Iran oil. U.S. sanctions against Iran have queered this pitch, unfortunately. Nevertheless, India still pressed ahead with the agreement on the Chabahar port development project. With the 2020 election result in the U.S., the likelihood of U.S. sanctions on Iran continuing may diminish. This will again enable a further deepening of the Indo-Iran ties, which have centuries-old and deep historical roots.

**Do you think that Asian emerging powers like**

**Iran, Turkey and India can form a coalition?**

Asian emerging powers can have a regional role. This regional role might emerge if there was a strong role of Iran and India in a transition to peace and progressive development in Afghanistan. However, the Taliban's whole effort would be to prevent that, so that they can keep the support of Pakistan.

Both Iran and India can be forces for good in Afghanistan, where peace and development will benefit all the people of Afghanistan.

**What are the effects of COVID 19 on the Indian economy? Do you predict a recovery in short run?**

We have seen the worst contraction of the Indian economy over the fiscal year 2020-21, and the second wave in 2021 has left the economy reeling again. At best recovery in FY 2021-22 will only be such as to return India's GDP to 2019-20 level, but because population grows at 1% per annum, per capita income will still be at 2017-18 level this year. As a result, poverty is increasing. At the same time, inequality is increasing.

India will be able to return to no more than 5% per annum growth from 2023 onwards, provided all the target population (940 million) are vaccinated with two doses before the end of 2022. That is possible for India to achieve since it is the world's largest manufacturer of vaccines.

## OPEC in chaos as Saudi-UAE spat goes public

Riyadh and Abu Dhabi are embroiled in a rare public dispute that has halted an agreement among OPEC plus members. A meeting between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries plus other key oil producers like Russia had hoped to reach a deal on crude output after the group failed to reach an agreement last week. However, a public spat between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has led to the meeting being called off. On Friday, the energy alliance had voted on a mainly Saudi-backed proposal to boost oil production by around 2 million barrels per day between August next month until December. But it also proposed; to then extend a cap (remaining cuts) on oil production until the end of 2022. Abu Dhabi went against the agreement arguing a cut

in output in 2022 would be 'unfair to the UAE' and that 'the UAE had sacrificed the most, making one-third of our production idle for two years and that the market is 'in dire need of higher production of crude oil. This follows a fall in production and prices last year because of the coronavirus pandemic's effect on the energy markets and the travel sector. Saudi Arabia hit back with the Kingdom's energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman, saying 'big efforts were made over the past 14 months that provided fantastic results and it would be a shame not to maintain those achievements, some compromise and some rationality is what will save us.

During the Trump era, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (both strong American allies) saw common ground on a number of issues to the

extent observers said each Kingdom tried to outperform the others to impress the former U.S. administration and at the same time procure the latest advanced weapons from Washington.

However, with Trump facing trouble domestically with an economy bartered by the Pandemic and fatalities from the virus resulting in the U.S. holding the largest death toll in the world under the former President's watch. The Trump White House focused its attention back home as an election was looming. Since then, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have deviated on a number of issues. In Southern Yemen, infighting broke out between different factions that each side supports and used to form a fight as one coalition. Abu Dhabi funded and trained separatist forces, while Riyadh supported

militants loyal to the former government of Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. For years, this alliance had fought the Yemeni army backed by Ansarullah forces. Then suddenly they began fighting each other on the streets of Aden. This coincided with the UAE withdrawing much of its military support for Saudi Arabia in its war on Yemen and refocusing its military attention elsewhere, such as Socotra Island. When Saudi Arabia recently reconciled with Qatar after years of imposing a blockade on Doha (alongside the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain) the UAE as opposed to the Saudi initiative. Analysts say that Abu Dhabi's normalization with Israel has given it a stronger platform from Washington to compete with Saudi Arabia economically and the rivalry between the two may expand.

## 20 years after 9/11, lawsuit against Saudis hits key moment

→ 1 said Brett Eagleson, whose father, Bruce, was among the World Trade Center victims. "It's adding salt to an open wound for all the 9/11 family members."

According to AP, lawyers for the victims plan to ask a judge to lift a protective order so their clients can access secret government documents as well as testimony from key subjects interviewed over the last year. Though the plaintiffs' lawyers are unable to discuss what they've learned from depositions, they insist the information they've gathered advances their premise of Saudi complicity.

## Taliban planing to present written peace proposal to the Afghan government

Speaking to Reuters, Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, says intra-Afghan peace talks in Doha, Qatar "[the process] will be accelerated and they are expected to enter an important stage'.

He says the latest round of negotiations have entered a critical juncture adding 'possibly it will take a month to reach that stage when both sides will share their written peace plan'.

Mujahid goes on to claim that although the Taliban have the 'upper hand on the battlefield, we are very serious about talks and dialogue'.

The Taliban are believed to be in control of more territory, but both the group and the government say this is not down to any fighting. Reports indicate that government troops have not opened fire and the Taliban have gained districts through intermediary dialogue.

Regional countries, including Iran, have voiced their strong support for an inclusive Afghan government that would include all ethnic groups and sects. This, as the United States and its NATO allies, withdraw from the country after invading it in 2001. Two decades of occupation have seen Afghans facing growing levels of violence, terrorism, poverty and unemployment among other problems.

## U.S. records at least 150 people killed in 450 shooting incidents during fourth July bloodbath

The data (from Friday to Sunday) documented by the research group, the Gun Violence Archive, is still being collected and the numbers are likely to rise but highlight the devastating nature of American gun violence. The shootings, which came amid warnings by the Department of Homeland Security about a rise in gun violence during the July fourth weekend, occurred nationwide. The DHS had cited dangers posed by white supremacists as lockdown restrictions ease and more gathering occur.

In Chicago, at least 83 people have been shot, among them, 14 have been killed. In New York, 21 different shooting incidents killed at least 26 people. In Dallas, five people have been shot dead and more than 20 others wounded. Th Gun Violence Archive also reported at least 18 mass shootings, these are classified as a shooting incident where at least four people are shot (not counting the shooter).

Other cities that saw heavy gun violence included Pennsylvania, Lancaster and all the way to Fort Worth in Texas. 2020 was the deadliest gun violence year in decades, with many attributing that to former President Donald Trump's racist rhetoric. However, the relentless pace of shootings so far in 2021 is expected to break last year's record, as America remains polarized as ever. According to the Gun Violence Archive, 8,100 people have been shot dead in the first five months of this year alone. That's an average of about 54 lives lost every day.

Records show that gun ownership has risen to record levels. The issue has been a fierce topic of debate in America for decades. Multiple attempts to tackle the 'epidemic' have failed at the congress. As things stand, it's going to get a lot worse before the country sees any improvement.

## Resistance News

### IOF kidnaps several Palestinians in W. Bank and J'lem

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN**— The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) at dawn Tuesday raided homes and kidnaped several Palestinian citizens during campaigns in different areas of the West Bank and Jerusalem.

According to local sources, the IOF stormed the house of Moataz al-Badawi in Sabah al-Khair suburb of Jenin City, ransacked it and interrogated members of his family.

The IOF also stormed Faqqua village in the northeast of Jenin, patrolled its streets and questioned some local residents.

In Qalqilya, the IOF kidnaped a young man identified as Karam Ayman after searching his home.

In Salfit, the IOF also stormed at dawn Marda village in northern Salfit and embarked on firing tear gas and stun grenades as they were patrolling its streets, with no known reason, causing panic among children and women.

In Bethlehem, the IOF kidnaped two young men called Eyas Farraheen and Yousef al-Afi from their homes in al-Dawha town, west of Bethlehem.

The IOF also broke into and ransacked a printing facility belonging to the father of Eyas Farraheen in al-Deheisha refugee camp in southern Bethlehem.

In east Jerusalem, police forces kidnaped three citizens from their homes in Hizma town. They were identified as Mohamed Salahuddin, Mohamed al-Khatib and Ra'fat Salahuddin.

Three Jerusalemite young men were also taken prisoners by police forces in the towns of Abu Dis and Anata.

Earlier on Monday evening, the IOF kidnaped a young man from his home in Yatta town near al-Khalil City and assaulted him. He was identified as Thaer al-Harini.

President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peter Maurer visited Yemen and toured some of the most affected areas to check out the humanitarian situation in the war-torn country. He has also held a press conference in Yemen's capital Sana'a.

Maurer said most Yemenis depend on humanitarian aid, and

the health care system is heavily affected by the ongoing war.

He also said millions of internally displaced are in need of urgent and permanent support.

According to Press TV, the humanitarian situation in Yemen is catastrophic due to the continued war and siege imposed by Saudi Arabia. The United Nations describes the situation in

the war-torn country as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

International aid organizations and watchdogs have repeatedly warned that the lives of millions of Yemenis including children are in danger due to the all-out Saudi blockade imposed on the country. However, the international community has so far failed to lift the siege from Yemen.



## Hakim Mosque: a hidden gem to visit in Isfahan

➔1 The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside. 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. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.



Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

## Exhibit features 50 years of metalwork by Iranian crafters

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – A group exhibit featuring 50 years of metalwork by a select of Iranian crafters has been launched at the headquarters of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism in Tehran.

The exhibition opened on Tuesday showcasing 136 works made using the techniques of embossing, engraving, filigree, etching, and inlaying, amongst others, IRNA reported.

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



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

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

## Minister cuts ribbon on palace museum complex in western Iran

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – Iranian tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan on Tuesday inaugurated a palace museum complex during his visit to Sanandaj, the capital of Kordestan province.

Several other provincial and local officials, travel insiders, and cultural heritage experts attended the opening ceremony of Khosro-Abad Palace Museum, which is named after a centuries-old mansion located within the historical complex, CHTN reported.



The palace complex has its roots in ancient Persia; however, it was more prosperous during the Qajar era (1789 to 1925).

Kordestan also spelled Kurdistan, is bounded by the Iranian region of Azarbaijan on the north, and it borders Iraq on the west. The name Kordestan means "Country of the Kurds," referring to the region's principal inhabitants. After the Turkish invasion of Iran in the 11th century CE (Seljuk period), the name Kordestan was applied to the region comprising the northwestern Zagros Mountains.

It was during the reign of the Safavid monarch, Shah Abbas the Great, that the Kurds rose to prominence, having been enlisted by Abbas I to help stem the attacks of the marauding Uzbeks from the east in the early 17th century.

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# Anguran mine to get off the ground as travel destination

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Efforts to turn the gigantic Anguran mine into a travel destination in Zanjan province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

"Based on a development plan, the lead and zink mine is being prepared to host visitors in a nearby accommodation center in near future," Amir Arjmand said on Tuesday.

A team of experts is presently working to equip the mine with needed tourism facilities, the official added.

"To promote the mine as a tourist attraction in the region, accurate and codified planning as well a package of beautiful nature and mining for the visitors will be needed," he explained.

"Planning as a scientific tool could help determine the best way to develop tourism in the region, which would ultimately lead to economic prosperity," he noted.

Last year, Iran started to promote mining tourism by launching the first project in the Anguran lead and zinc mine, located 130 kilometers west of the city of Zanjan.

The province of Zanjan is ranked sixth in the country by the number of mines, and it is very rich in high-grade mines of lead and zinc. The Anguran mine is one of the largest mines of its kind and one of the world's best zinc and lead deposits.



The mine has been in use for hundreds of years, but mining operations began underground in 1925. Since 2006, due to exploration and the discovery of high reserves within the mine, it has been operated as an open-pit mine. It is one of the few mines in the world with high metal content.

The Anguran mine is one of the active mines in the country, with 500 miners

working in different sections. There are also some residential units for tours and individual travelers inside the complex.

Methods of exploration and extraction, underground tunnels, travertine mines, machines used for mining, and observing the ways of extracting minerals and rocks, especially precious stones can be engaging for the tourists.

Mining tourism is a type of adven-

ture tourism that has gained many fans around the world. Because of the interest of tourists in this category, mining tourism has become one of the most interesting forms of tourism in the world for some time, and it has also been proposed as a way of developing old industrial areas.

The mines can be included in a tourism package in different regions where tourist arrivals can have a positive effect on the local economy. Because of these potentials, they can help create sustainable development, job creation, and poverty reduction in more remote areas of the country and prevent environmental, social, and economic damage in local communities.

In recent years, Iran has developed new programs for tourism development in different branches of the industry including agritourism, which is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.

## Iconic public bathhouse undergoes restoration in southeast Iran

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – Hammam-e Ganjali Khan, which was once an iconic public bathhouse in southern Kerman province, has undergone some rehabilitation works, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The project involves repairing tilework in both male and female halls and chambers of the historical bathhouse, Mojtaba Shafiei announced on Tuesday.

A budget of 700 million rials (about \$17,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, the official added.

The hammam has been repurposed into an anthropology-like museum in which wax dummies illustrate the workings of a traditional bathhouse. There is also a display case of antique washing utensils.

The Safavid-era (1501-1736) structure is a part of the historical Ganjali Khan complex, which is composed of a madrasa, a mosque, a caravanserai, a water reservoir, and a labyrinth bazaar, all centered on a large public square.

Covering an area of 11,000 square meters, the compound was built upon the order of Ganjali Khan who governed Kerman and some neighboring areas during the late 16th to early 17th centuries under Safavid Shah Abbas I (r. 1571-1629).

With an entrance at the northeastern corner

of the square, the mosque though is small in size enjoys elaborate tilework and arabesque designs. It boasts a gilt-pattern inner dome and honeycomb windows.

The bazaar is ornamented with exquisite plasterwork and wall paintings that are well-preserved although they are roughly 400 years old.

The caravanserai is based on the four-ivan typology, with guest rooms constructed around a courtyard. Shah Abbas I (1571-1629) is credited with building a network of caravanserais across Iran during the much later Safavid dynasty.

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

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

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



of the day.

There were also male and female public bathhouses; at daybreak, a longhorn (booq-e javaz) was blown to announce that the bath was ready. Men came to the baths from daybreak till the afternoon. Women could use the bathhouses from then to sunset. In some cases, five days were allocated to men and two days to women.

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

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartsari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

## New projects aimed to cement tourism in Hamedan province

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Six new tourism and hospitality projects have been devised to start across the west-central Hamedan province, a local tourism official has announced.

A budget of 300 billion rials (\$7.1 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the projects, which include a hotel, two eco-lodges, and three traditional restaurants, Alireza Qasemi said on Tuesday.

They are expected to generate 47 job opportunities for locals after being inaugurated, the official added.



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

remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamedan 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 in-

vaders. 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.

## Ten historical monuments in Zanjan restored in Q1

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – A total of ten historical monuments in Zanjan province underwent restoration during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

The Ilkhanid era (1256–1353) mausoleum of Chalabi Oghlou, parts of the historical bazaar of Zanjan, Zolfaqari Archaeological Museum, Sangi Caravanserai and parts of the UNESCO-tagged Soltaniyeh Dome were among the monuments restored, CHTN quoted Mohammadreza Mohammadpur as saying on Tuesday.

It is very important to revive and restore historical monuments as they can play an important role in the development and prosperity of a region if used properly, the official added.

Approximately, there are 20 historical buildings, which need urgent restoration in Zanjan, he explained.



To receive better maintenance, historical buildings could be [temporarily] ceded to the private sector so

that they will receive better maintenance and they will be profitable as well, he noted.

Over the past couple of years, hundreds of historical sites and monuments across Iran have been temporarily ceded to the private investors by auctions reportedly to gain higher productivity and better maintenance.

Conducted by the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places, the scheme is expected to assist a sustainable development for the local communities through fueling a tourism boom along the once flourishing route.

Zanjan is one of the cities founded by Sassanid King Ardashir I (180-242 CE). The province makes a base for wider explorations with the architectural wonder of Soltaniyeh, the subterranean delights of the Katala-Khor caves, colorful mountains, and the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleiman ruins are nearby.



## COVID-19 UPDATES

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

New cases	16,050
New deaths	146
Total cases	3,286,923
Total deaths	85,095
New hospitalized patients	1,733
Patients in critical condition	3,296
Total recovered patients	2,953,586
Diagnostic tests conducted	24,119,858
Doses of vaccine injected	6,476,320

## Environmental protection in Iran

(Part 5)

The area of these reserves in 1991 was slightly greater than before 1977, with seven national parks, twenty-three wildlife refuges, thirty-eight protected areas, and four national nature monuments (Department of the Environment, "Manateq-e taht-e hefazat-e mohit-e zist/Map and Tabulation," Tehran, 1367/1988), but the majority of them are neglected.

Often there is little control by wardens, and most of the reserves have minimal restrictions on the grazing of domestic sheep and goats (Bayat et al., 1984, p. 37; 1985, pp. 91-94; Majnunian).

Iran has some of the finest wetlands in Southwest Asia, all of which came under the jurisdiction of the Department of the environment. Eighteen were designated as wetlands of international importance and listed at the ratification of the Ramsar Convention in 1975. Although this treaty is still in force, a number of these wetlands have been subjected to ecological disturbance and one, the 10,000-hectare Kamjan marsh in Fars province, no longer exists (Darrashuri, pp. 31-32; International Union, pp. 181-201).

Error and neglect notwithstanding, Iran remains a leader in comparison to other countries in its region in the domain of nature reserves.

Wildlife. When the system of nature reserves was being established, the initial strategy was to make certain that viable remnants of each species remained in the reserves. Endangered and rare species were fully protected. By the early 1970s no existing species was deemed truly endangered (Firouz and Wambold p. 35). But for the reserve system and the dedication of the environmental wardens and guards, dozens (if not hundreds) of species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and plants would probably have become extinct.

Among the more dramatic successes were the protection of the Persian fallow deer (*Dama mesopotamica*, Plate V), the cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*, Plate VI), the Caucasian black grouse (*Tetrao mlukosiewiczzi*), and the great bustard (*Otisc tarda*; Firouz, 1974, pp. 33-37; 1976, pp. 37-39). By 1991 many species were once again threatened.

Departmental experts estimate that there are less than fifty cheetahs, a vulnerable species wherever it still occurs in the world, as against 350 in the 1970s (Khalili, p. 6). Other mammals threatened by habitat destruction and/or hunting are the Baluchestan black bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*), Blanford's fox (*Vulpes cana*), the Manul cat (*Felis manul*), and the honey badger (*Mellivora capensis*).

Many species of birds are becoming rare or threatened: the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), the previously abundant white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), and the three species of bustards, to name only a few of the more prominent ones. Habitat destruction in particular and also hunting, pollution, and pesticides are the main factors for such declines and for the great decrease of many other species of waterfowl and passerines. Evidently, various species of fish and reptiles are suffering similar decline.

(Source: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*)  
Concluded

## Long-term urban emissions data show a decrease in high-income countries

A new study shows how urbanisation has influenced anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> and air pollutant emissions across all world regions, by making use of the latest developments in the Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research developed by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The results show that by 2015 urban centres were the source of a third of global anthropogenic greenhouse gases, and the majority of air pollutant emissions.

The authors, from institutions in France and Italy, used the EDGAR database to provide a country-to-global view of the evolution of sector-specific air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions from urban centres and other geographical entities for different types of human settlement over the past five decades. Their results are published on July 6 in the IOP Publishing journal *Environmental Research Letters*.

Between 1975 and 2015, the global population increased by 80%; the global urban population almost doubled, while the global rural population increased by only 40%. The urban population increased for all continents. The fastest urban population growth occurred in developing and emerging regions. By 2015, almost half of the global population lived in urban centres, while the largest urban centres with more than 1 million inhabitants (representing only 5% of the global surface) had 22% of the world's population living in them.

From a sustainability perspective, the capacity to identify the nature, location, and source of emissions is particularly important, to be able to tailor emission reduction policies and evaluate population exposure properly.

## First ID cards issued for children of Iranian mothers, foreign fathers abroad

→ 1 The first birth certificates were issued to the children of an Iranian woman married to a foreign man in Dubai (Marian and Lillian).

In December 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the registration started for the issuance of birth certificates for children of Iranian mothers abroad.

According to the law, children of Iranian women and non-Iranian men who were born before or after the law can be Iranian citizens in case the Iranian mother requested if they have no security problem before the age of 18.

These children, after reaching the age of 18, can apply for Iranian citizenship if not requested by the mother, then will be granted Iranian citizenship in case of no security problem.

Birth certificates have so far been issued to over 1,400 children in the country, Seifollah Aboutorabi, the National Organization for Civil Registration spokesman, said in May.



Statelessness: a global issue

Although Iran is not a party to the UN Conventions on Statelessness, the Government of Iran is taking steps towards the prevention and reduction of statelessness in the country.

While the law does not give mothers and fathers equal rights to confer nationality to their children, it represents significant progress.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also has welcomed the law

as a step toward reducing statelessness around the world.

UNICEF also welcomed the implementation of the Iranian nationality law.

Around the world, stateless people can face a lifetime of exclusion and discrimination and are often denied access to education, health care, and job opportunities – making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Worldwide, statelessness affects millions of people, leaving them without the basic rights and official recognition that most of us take for granted. Some 3.9 million stateless people appear in the reporting of 78 countries, but UNHCR believes the true total to be significantly higher.

"No child chooses to be stateless," said Ivo Freijesen, UNHCR Representative in Iran last year. "Without identity and official documents, stateless people are often excluded from society. The Government of Iran is leading by example through its new law. It is a hugely positive move for these children and their families."

## Lake Urmia revival is gratifying: Japanese envoy

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN – Good measures have been taken to rehabilitate Lake Urmia and it is gratifying to see that the water body is being revived, Japanese Ambassador to Iran Ikawa Kazutoshi said.

"Good efforts have been made to revitalize Lake Urmia and I am very happy to see that the Lake is being revived and we hope to take more steps in this regard with the sympathy and cooperation of the related bodies."

The envoy made the remarks in a meeting with the Deputy Governor of East Azarbaijan province, Javad Rahmati, on Tuesday.

Lake Urmia has created many opportunities and resources for people living in surrounding areas, he added.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is also working with the Government of the Islamic Republic to rehabilitate Lake Urmia, he noted.

He further expressed interest to enhance cooperation on tourism.

UNDP Representative to Iran Claudio Providas also said that UNDP has implemented several programs with the cooperation of Japan to revive Lake Urmia, all of which are well underway.

"We are looking for the development of sustainable agriculture and natural disaster management in the water basin of Lake Urmia, and good cooperation has been done for the implementation of projects, which fortunately has been achieved," he added.

Pointing out that Iran is affected by climate change, Providas said that "Climate cannot be changed, but projects that affect agriculture and people's livelihoods can be implemented through awareness-raising programs."

In the next step, after the desired changes have taken place



in local communities, we are looking to digital marketing of agricultural products, he stated, adding, we are looking to brand those agricultural products that consume less water to help pace up the restoration process.

In the meeting, Rahmati also stated that our government has done great efforts to revitalize Lake Urmia as well as strengthening the locals.

Alternative livelihoods and changing the pattern of cultivation in the agricultural sector are among the programs that have been considered in order to revitalize the Lake, he highlighted.

Welcoming the expansion of tourism cooperation, he expressed hope that the fields of cooperation between East Azerbaijan and Japan will be created in various fields, especially economic.

Japan's eighth contribution to Lake Urmia revival

On February 17, the Government of Japan contributed \$3 million to help revive Lake Urmia through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The contribution will be implemented as a component of UNDP's ongoing Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project – a

joint project between Iran's Department of Environment and UNDP. This was Japan's eighth contribution to UNDP Iran.

In addition to almost \$7 million in financial support from the Japanese government, so far more than \$1 billion has been spent on the project in total.

Lake Urmia's surface increased by over 1500 km<sup>2</sup>

Lake Urmia, located in the northwest of Iran, was once the most extensive permanent hypersaline lake in the world. Unsustainable water management in response to increasing demand together with climatic extremes has given rise to the lake's depletion during the last two decades. The lake's restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program.

Lake's surface area has reached up to 2,917 square kilometers, indicating 1,582 square kilometers increase in comparison to 2013 when the Lake Urmia Restoration Program began.

The level of Lake Urmia has reached 1,271 meters, which indicates an increase of over 1.39 meters compared to the lowest volume recorded, Sarkhosh said.

The volume of water also raised by 3.81 billion cubic meters, which has increased more than 5 times compared to the Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) and before the Lake Urmia Restoration Program started, he highlighted.

Achieving sustainable rehabilitation requires countless efforts, such as preventing the lake's water flow from entering the agricultural land. Lake Urmia's condition stabilized with a positive trend due to heavy rainfall, but there is a fear that this trend will be reversed by drought in the coming years.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve Lake Urmia, however, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level.

## Land subsidence sinking Iran

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Out of 31 Iranian provinces, 29 are vastly subsiding and increasingly vulnerable, so that officials need to make urgent decisions in this regard.

Land subsidence, a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the Earth's surface due to subsurface movement of earth materials is mainly caused by aquifer-system compaction, drainage, and decomposition of organic soils, underground mining, oil and gas extraction, hydro compaction, natural compaction, sinkholes, and thawing permafrost.

Subsidence results in significant economic losses in the form of structural damage and high maintenance costs. This affects roads and transportation networks, hydraulic infrastructure, sewage systems, buildings, and foundations. The total damage worldwide is estimated at billions of dollars annually.

Gholam-Ali Jafarzadeh, head of the National Cartography Center, said that the rate of land subsidence in the country is increasing day by day, while the performance of the responsible bodies is not satisfactory.

Emphasizing the need to review the operation of wells, groundwater withdrawal, and water resources management, he lamented that some 29 provinces are cur-

rently at risk of subsidence.

If this trend is not stopped, there will be great environmental degradation, he further regretted.

Jafarzadeh went in to say that so far, 110 points and 44 regions in the country have been monitored by this organization in terms of subsidence, and all data have been sent to the relevant authorities, but no attention was paid to reduce this environmental crisis.

The way out of this crisis is to close the wells from now on, to stop the extraction of water from underground resources, and to implement the plans for the maintenance of land reserves, he suggested.

Criticizing the method of collecting surface water, he emphasized that under the pretext of collecting surface water, the ground has been asphalted, which has reduced the permeability of the ground.

Major causes

He named two factors of climate change and human intervention as the most important factors of land subsidence in the country and noted that It is expected that we take measures to reduce the pressure on the environment.

Over the past decades, groundwater exploitation has increased dramatically due to permanent droughts, leading to aquifer depletion.

Alireza Shahidi, head of Geological



Survey and Mineral Exploration said in May that 80 percent of the groundwater is withdrawn annually in Iran, which outpacing the global rate.

In the whole world, water resources withdrawal is between 3 to 20 percent, and when it reaches 40 to 60 percent which is considered problematic, and it will be a crisis when exceeding 60-80 percent, Shahidi noted.

Over the past decades, some of the aquifer levels dropped by 100 centimeters.

Inefficient irrigation methods in addition to digging illegal wells are the other main causes of groundwater extraction-induced subsidence, as out of 50,000 wells pumping underground water resources in the capital, 30,000 are illegal.

It should be noted that over the next 40

## ENGLISH IN USE

## LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Tehran to host autism conference

The 4th conference on autism disorder with a theme of empowering human resources and families will be held in Tehran on February 20. The event is organized by the Charity Foundation for Special Diseases in cooperation with the Special Education Organization, the Ministry of Health, the Welfare Organization and the Health Psychology Association.

Empowering human resources, discussing academic topics revolving around autism, and describing the parent's role in promoting and improving the autistic patient's condition will be among the subjects to be discussed in the conference.

## برگزاری همایش اوتیسم در تهران

چهارمین همایش «اوتیسم، توانمندسازی نیروی انسانی و خانواده» اول اسفند ماه در تهران برگزار می‌شود.

این همایش توسط بنیاد امور بیماری‌های خاص و با مشارکت سازمان آموزش و پرورش استثنایی، وزارت بهداشت، سازمان بهزیستی، و انجمن روان‌شناسی سلامت ایران برگزار می‌شود.

محورهای این همایش، وضعیت منابع انسانی و سرفصل‌های دانشگاهی حوزه اوتیسم در ایران و نقش والدین در ارتقاء و بهبود وضعیت افراد با اختلالات طیف اوتیسم است.



INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com

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» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603


» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Borna - 44197737

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P.O. Box: 14155-4843  
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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Those who give up religion to better their lot in life seldom succeed. The Wrath of Allah makes them go through more calamities and losses than the gains they gather for themselves.

Imam Ali (AS)

Art, architecture during Qajar period

**Part 6**  
**Painting**

The last important means of architectural decorations is painting, which was used mainly in domestic interiors.

On ceilings a mosaic of interlocking wooden shapes would be painted with still-life compositions, landscapes, groups of Victorian women, and traditional motifs such as a lion and snake in combat, all framed in rose foliage and ribbon strapwork.

Alternatively such designs would be painted on a ceiling of horizontal wooden beams. The parallels with motifs used in tilework and stucco are obvious. When used as wall decoration painting was employed to panels based on flower and bird compositions and also large figure scenes, which might be treated as paintings in their own right rather than as architectural accessories.

Qajar painting stressed different values from those current in earlier periods. The European influence that had been introduced into late Safavid painting continued and was indeed to be given fresh life in the mid-19th century.

Large-scale oil painting, which had flourished in the Zand period, was to become the major form of painting at the expense of manuscript illustration. Fath-Ali Shah, the first Qajar to patronize the arts, gathered around him an atelier of painters such as Mirza Baba, Mehr-Ali, and Abdollah Khan.

Mirza Baba (ca. 1785-1830), his earliest court painter, was commissioned to illustrate a copy of Fath-Ali Shah's poems as a gift to George III, but usually concentrated on large-scale oil paintings, including several magnificent portraits of Fath-Ali Shah.

These paintings were meticulously executed icons stressing the details of costume and accessory that proclaimed the ruler's status. Often the figure was posed against a landscape painted in soft colors with elements of perspective.

Other large-scale oil paintings were employed as mural decoration. The painter Mehr-Ali, in addition to painting superb portraits of Fath-Ali Shah, spent much of his time working on large murals; an enormous canvas of Fath-Ali Shah among his sons is attributed to him.

Apart from these royal subjects themes for oil paintings included lively portraits of court women and dancers, hunting scenes, women in European dress, and religious figures.

Oil painting received fresh impetus from the work of Nasser ad-Din Shah's court painter Abulhassan Ghaffari (d. 1866), who was sent to Italy in 1846 to study painting for three years.

His work shows how well he had absorbed a European training, as in his great canvas depicting Nasser ad-Din Shah, his sons, and courtiers, executed for the Nezamieh Palace (now in the Tehran Archaeological Museum), each character a subtle and realistic portrait.

He could also turn his talents to illustration, and he was responsible for supervising and designing a sumptuous manuscript of the Arabian Nights completed in 1855.

**Lacquerwork**

Closely related to painting was the art of lacquer that flourished during the Qajar period.

In effect, the skills required for miniature painting were concentrated on lacquer objects—mirror cases, pen boxes, book-covers, caskets, and spectacle cases.

They were made in papier maché coated with plaster and painted with the required design in water colors; the finished work was then sealed with a coat of transparent lacquer or varnish.

Lacquer painting in Fath-Ali Shah's reign reached a very high standard following directly in the tradition of the 18th-century painter Ashraf, whose work survives in exquisitely detailed compositions of roses, irises, and birds.

Fath-Ali Shah's artists extended the repertoire to include hunting and court scenes. The close relationship between painting and this applied art is demonstrated by the fact that Mirza Baba worked also in lacquer; the book covers of the manuscripts given to George III were painted by him.

As the 19th century progressed lacquer objects were produced using an increasing number of European-influenced motifs, especially young women in Victorian costume and even Christian scenes such as the Holy Family.

The most important contribution was made by members of the Najaf family of Isfahan, in particular Mohammad Esmail. Court painter to Nasser ad-Din Shah, he specialized in accomplished renderings of historical events as is shown by his masterful casket in the Bern Historical Museum depicting Mohammad Shah's siege of Herat; the casket is signed and dated 1865.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica  
To be continued

“Bor Shekan”, “Without Father’s Name” share Golden Pen Award for adult story

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** – “Bor Shekan” d e s k by Hamid Alidoosti Shahraki and “Without Father’s Name” by Seyyed Meisam Musavian have shared the award in the Adult Story section at the 19th edition of the Golden Pen Awards.

Winners in various categories were honored on Monday during a special ceremony at the Iran Pen Association, which organizes the Golden Pen Awards every year.

Published by Sureh-Mehr, “Bor Shekan” takes its title from an ancient tradition that existed in Iran’s Chahar-Mahal and Bakhtiari region during feudalism. Based on Bor Shekan, farmers agreed to reap the wheat and barley harvest on the same day in order to protect each other’s rights.

The Iranian Land Reform in the 1960s led to the fall of khans and Bor Shekan sinks into oblivion in the wake of industrial farming that comes following the reform.

The khans begin to restore the tradition, distorting it by some superstitions in order to return to power.

“Without Father’s Name” has been published by Jamkaran. The story is about a corrupt general who is an English agent in the Shah’s regime. He is sent on a mission to suppress separatist Kurds in the northwest



This combination photo shows the front covers of “Bor Shekan” and “Without Father’s Name”, which shared the award in the Adult Story section at the 19th edition of the Golden Pen Awards.

of Iran. Meanwhile, he falls in love with a Kurdish girl.

The award for children’s story was also shared by “Yolbars and the Underground City” by Abdorrahman Onaq and “Secret of the Small Grain” by Razieh Khademolhosseini.

“Yolbars and the Underground City” is an adaptation of “The Book of Dede Gorgud” is a heroic epic poem of the Oghuz, a Turkic tribal group whose members were the ancestors of the Azerbaijanis, Turks, Turkmens and the Gagauz.

“Secret of the Small Grain” tells the story of Gandomak, a small wheat grain that leaves its friends behind to realize a great dream. Gandomak meets a little ant that accompanies the wheat on the odyssey.

“Bracelets of Nimrod’s Daughter” by Saeideh Hashemi and “Freedom’s Cell” by Hadi Khorshahian shared the award in the Adult Poetry section, while “I’m the Fish of Your River” by Mahmud Purvabah won the Golden Pen Award in the Children’s Poetry category.

No winner was announced for the Golden Pen in the Review and Research category. However, Seyyed Mehdi Tabatabai’s “A Sieve in the Hand”, which delves into plagiarism in contemporary poetry, received an honorable mention in this section.

Asian Film Archive to hold retrospective of filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami

during the retrospective, which will be organized from July 10 to August 28 at Oldham Theatre, National Archives of Singapore Building, the organizers have announced.

In a statement for the exhibition, the Asian Film Archive wrote, “The most acclaimed and influential of Iran’s major filmmakers, Abbas Kiarostami has graced the world with his humanity and imagination throughout a nearly five-decade career.

“The Asian Film Archive is honored to be the first in Asia to present a comprehensive retrospective of the Iranian master with twenty-seven brand new restorations of his most illustrious features and rarely-screened shorts and documentaries.

“This film program is an invitation into a contemplative world between fiction and reality, marked by an unforced intimacy and a poetic voice of a deeply influential artist.

“Often applying a deft philosophical touch to simple issues and excavating deeper truths about life with bold experiments, Kiarostami’s cinema invokes introspection and greater possibilities for his audience, allowing each of us to

relate his films to our own worlds with new understandings.”

The 2010 drama “Certified Copy” that won Juliette Binoche the award for best actress at the Cannes Film Festival is among the films.

It is about an English author who visits Italy to promote his latest book and give a lecture on the relationship between originals and copies in the world of art. He meets a French art gallery owner and they decide to spend a couple of hours walking through the alleyways of a small village in the southern parts of Tuscany.

His final film “24 Frames” will also be reviewed in the program.

In this film, Kiarostami gave himself a challenge to create a dialogue between his work as a filmmaker and his work as a photographer, bridging the two art forms to which he had dedicated his life.

“The Wind Will Carry Us”, “Close-up”, “Like Someone in Love” and “Taste of Cherry” are also among the movies selected to be screened.

Iranian movies line up for Kazan International Muslim Film Festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Four d e s k Iranian movies will be competing in the 16th Kazan International Muslim Film Festival, which will be held in the Russian town of Kazan from September 5 to 10.

“Sami” co-directed by Habib Bavisajed and Meqdad Torfeh, “The Dolls Game” by Mehdi Mahaei, “Kal Fatemeh” by Mehdi Zamanpur and “Parizad” by Mehdi Imani Shahmiri will be screened in various categories of the festival.

The Arabic-language drama “Sami” will compete in the full-length feature films category, which also features nine other movies from Russia, Bulgaria, Turkey, France

and several other countries.

The story of the film is set in Khuzestan Province with a large population of people speaking in Arabic. The film shows a man’s love for his wife who died twenty years ago, however, the man cannot accept the fact yet.

“The Dolls Game” is about a clown who works in an amusement park in Iran, and is trying to collect his salary from his employer to pay for a lawyer. He wants to get his daughter back!

This film is an entry to the short film competition, while “Kal Fatemeh” will compete in the full-length documentary section.

The documentary is about Kal Fatemeh, an elderly woman who lives with her two sons

on a farm away from a village. Her family faces major challenges as a result of living on the farm.

The short documentary “Parizad” is about Aunt Keshvar, a lonely rural woman who weaves an unknown and nearly forgotten fabric named “Geleej”. She shares information about the role of Geleej in the daily life of the villagers and legends around his homeland.

A jury of well-known professionals, including filmmakers, cameramen and film critics from all over the world will judge the movies at the festival, which is organized with the motto “To the dialogue of cultures through the culture of dialogue.”



“Sami” directed by Iranian filmmakers Habib Bavisajed and Meqdad Torfeh will compete in the 16th Kazan International Muslim Film Festival in Russia.

New Persian edition of “The Watsons Go to Birmingham” released

Curtis’s story “The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963”.

The first edition of the book translated into Persian by Mohsen Khademi was released several months ago.

The Newbery Honor-winning American classic, “The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963”, is a historical-fiction novel first published in 1995. It was reprinted in 1997.

Enter the hilarious world of ten-year-old Kenny and his family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. There’s Momma, Dad, little sister Joetta, and brother Byron, who’s thirteen and an “official juvenile delinquent.”

When Momma and Dad decide it’s time for a visit to Grandma, Dad comes home with the amazing Ultra-Glide, and the Watsons set out on a trip like no other.

They’re heading South to Birmingham, Alabama, toward one of the darkest moments in America’s history.

In 2013, a television film based on the book produced by Walden Media premiered on the Hallmark Channel. The

movie adapted the story by condensing and trimming events and characters from Flint in the first half of the novel and adding new scenes showing Kenny and Byron helping local youths organize Civil Rights events in Birmingham.

The Tehran-based publisher Porteqal has previously published another Persian translation of the novel by Zaniar Ebrahimi.

Curtis was born in Flint, Michigan to Dr. Herman Elmer Curtis, a chiroprapist, and Leslie Jane Curtis, an educator.

The city of Flint plays an important role in many of Curtis’s books. One such example is “Bucking the Sarge”, which is about a fifteen-year-old boy named Luther T. Ferrel, who is in a running battle with his slum-lord mother. Curtis is an alumnus of the University of Michigan-Flint.

He is the father of two children, Steven, an ensign in the United States Navy, and Cydney, a college student and accomplished pianist.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Christopher Paul Curtis’s story “The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963”.

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** – Iranian publisher Cheshmeh d e s k has released a new edition of the Persian translation of American children’s writer Christopher Paul

Richard Passingham’s “Cognitive Neuroscience” offered at Iranian bookstores

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** – British d e s k neuroscientist Richard Passingham’s 2016 book “Cognitive Neuroscience: A Very Short Introduction” has been published in Persian.

Translated by Ali-Akbar Arjmand-Rad and Zahra Yaminifar, the book was published by Chatrang Publications.

Up to the 1960s, psychology was deeply under the influence of behaviorism, which focused on stimuli and responses, and regarded consideration of what may happen in the mind as unapproachable scientifically.

This began to change with the devising of methods to try to tap into what was going on in the “black box” of the mind, and the development of “cognitive psychology”.

With the study of patients who had suffered brain damage or injury to limited parts of the brain, outlines of brain components and processes began to take shape, and by the end of the 1970s, a new science, cognitive neuroscience, was born.

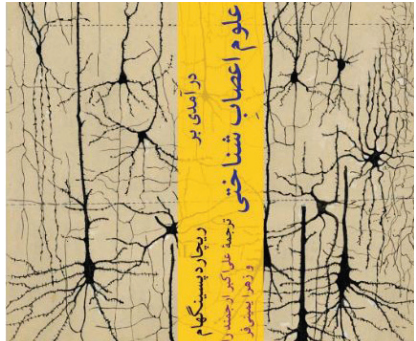
But it was with the development of ways of accessing activation of the working brain using imaging techniques such as PET and MRI that cognitive neuroscience came into its own as a science cutting across psychology and neuroscience, with strong connections to the philosophy of the mind.

Experiments involving subjects in scanners while doing various tasks, thinking, problem-solving and remembering are shedding light on the brain processes involved. The

research is exciting and new, and often makes media headlines. But, there is much misunderstanding about what brain imaging tells us, and the interpretation of studies on cognition.

In this “Very Short Introduction”, Passingham gives a provocative and exciting account of the nature and scope of this relatively new field, and the techniques available to us, focusing on the investigation of the human brain.

He explains what brain imaging shows, pointing out common misconceptions, and gives a brief overview of the different aspects of human cognition: perceiving, attending, remembering, reasoning, deciding and acting.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Richard Passingham’s book “Cognitive Neuroscience”.