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Woman shooter Rostamian named Iran's flagbearer in Tokyo *Page 3*



Over 600 world academics call for end to 'Israel's apartheid regime' *Page 5*



Mahmud Maddah, Living Bearer of Intangible Heritage, dies at 79 *Page 8*



©File photo

Iran-China deal mostly carries geostrategic importance: Pakistani expert

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI
Director of China Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad says that the Iran-China partnership has geostrategic implications for the region.

"The deal reflects China's intention to play an enhanced role across the region that has been a strategic preoccupation of the United States for decades," Talat Shabbir tells the Tehran Times.

"It is widely believed that the deal between Iran and China carries more geostrategic importance than having geo-economic implications."

Many predict the 25-year deal between Tehran and Beijing to enable both sides to advance their policies across the region through mutual cooperation.

"The China-Iran agreement will enable Iran to focus on economic revival as it deals with the impact of crippling U.S. sanctions," Shabbir argues. "The deal could deepen China's influence in the Middle East (West Asia) and undercut the U.S. efforts to keep Iran isolated."

Following is the text of the interview:
How do China's neighbors see Beijing's economic rise? How could China succeed to reach such a level of development?

China is the world's largest manufacturing economy and the world's largest trading nation. China is also investing overwhelmingly in overseas infrastructure and development projects across the world as part of its Belt and Road Initiative. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, a large majority of people particularly, in emerging markets, have a positive attitude toward China's economic stature.

Generally, People see China's economic rise as a positive sign for their country and believe China is having a positive influence on their country's economic affairs. According to the same survey, even China's neighbors and its peer competitors in the region look at China's economic rise as a good thing for regional economic stability and prosperity. Since the introduction and implementation of market reforms in 1979 and the integration of its economy with international markets,

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Foreign students in Iran to get coronavirus vaccine

TEHRAN – Foreign students who are studying at Iranian universities will be vaccinated against the virus along with Iranian students, Afshin Akhounzadeh, an official at the Organization of Student Affairs has said.

About 2,000 non-Iranian students have not returned to their country despite the outbreak of the pandemic to complete their course and graduate so that they are living in dormitories of the universities in accordance with health protocols, he further stated. Of course, the number of medical students who stayed in Iran is more than non-medical students, he added, IRNA reported on Friday.

Akhounzadeh went on to say that most non-Iranian students will also receive vaccines just like Iranian students.

With the online university education system, more than 15,000 foreign students returned to their country and communicate with their professors in Iran through virtual education.

"Some 57,675 foreign nationals from 133 countries are studying in Iranian universities, 30,600 of whom are studying in universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science, while 25,000 others are receiving education in Azad University, and about 2,000 in medical universities."

Fifty-seven percent of the international students are studying for a master's degree, 27 percent for a bachelor's degree and 15 percent are educating to receive a Ph.D., while the remaining one percent study at other levels.

Law, Persian literature, and computer engineering are the top three fields of study for foreign students in Iran, while civil engineering, business management, political science, English language and literature, Quran and hadith sciences, international relations, and electrical engineering, and other majors with the highest number of non-Iranian students.

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Envoy reminds U.S. that endangering public health is war crime

TEHRAN — Iran's permanent envoy to the United Nations has censured the U.S.'s illegal and inhumane sanctions on Iran as instance of "war crime", saying they are used as a means to endanger the Iranian nation's health for political purposes.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks on Thursday while addressing the UN General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on AIDS.

He made mention of Iran's progress in improving the health situation of HIV positive patients and those

who are subject to the unwelcome phenomenon.

The diplomat noted how Iranian scientists had managed to enable prevention of the disease's transfer from affected mothers to their children, and also contain the disease's adverse effects.

Despite the notable progress, Iran is still suffering from the sanctions that prevent it to gain access to medical products, technology, and cooperation with the international financial institutions, he said.

The U.S. returned sanctions and imposed

new ones on Iran in 2018 after it left the historic multi-party nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

It then began forcing third countries into abiding by the sanctions and stopping their trade with Iran. Washington's European allies, including the UK, France, and Germany, which are JCPOA parties, have been among those that have devotedly toed the sanction line.

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Officials commemorate abducted diplomat

TEHRAN— The commemoration ceremony for General Ahmad Motevasselian was held on the evening of Thursday, July 8, in the presence of his family and a group of officials in the hall of the Arts Center.

Ahmad Motevasselian was abducted on July 4, 1982, along with two other diplomats and a photographer by armed mercenaries under the command of the Zionist regime in the Barabara region of Lebanon.

Zarif to intra-Afghan dialogue: Peace more courageous than war

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday advised the Afghan government and the Taliban that "showing courage in peace is more important than showing courage in war."

Tehran hosted dialogue between representatives from Afghanistan and the Taliban on Wednesday and Thursday. Representatives from the Afghan parliament and prominent figures supporting the Republic system in the country also visited Tehran.

"Showing courage in peace is more

important than showing courage in war; because to achieve peace, one must sacrifice and forgive and ignore maximum demands and [instead] heed the demands of the other side, especially in these negotiations where ... both sides are brothers and in pursuit of peace and well-being of the Afghan nation," Zarif told the final session of the talks, according to Press TV.

Zarif also praised delegations for giving priority to peace and well-being of the Afghan people in the talks.

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Tehran hosting Iran's 1st exclusive EAEU exhibition

TEHRAN - Iran's first exclusive Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) exhibition, which is a platform to showcase the capabilities of the EAEU members and their Iranian counterparts opened at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Friday, IRIB reported.

As reported, 30 companies from Russia, 30 companies from Kyrgyzstan, more than 10 companies from Armenia, more than 10 companies from Kazakhstan, and

some companies from Belarus are participating in this four-day exhibition along with Iranian companies.

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

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Museum dedicated to Sardasht chemical attack victims to be established

TEHRAN – A cultural heritage museum, dedicated to the victims of the chemical attack by Saddam Hussein's regime on Iran's Sardasht in 1987, is planned to be constructed in the northwestern city in West Azarbaijan province, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

Entitled Peace Museum, the museum

seeks to both remember the victims of the attack and show how oppressed the people of this city were at the time, Jalil Jabbari said on Thursday.

Covering an area of 3,000 square meters, the museum will be established in five floors, the official added.

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Haiti police blame U.S., Colombian suspects in president's slaying

A 28-member hit squad made up of Americans and Colombians assassinated President Jovenel Moise, Haitian police said Thursday, adding that eight were still at large as the country lurched into political chaos.

One day after Moise was killed and his wife Martine wounded by gunmen in their Port-au-Prince home, the poorest country in the Americas has no president or working parliament and two men claiming to be in charge as prime minister.

Police paraded some of the suspects before the media on Thursday, along with Colombian passports and weapons they had seized. The head of the Haiti's National Police, Leon Charles, vowed to track the other eight down.

"It was a team of 28 assailants, 26 of whom were Colombian, who carried out the operation to assassinate the president," Charles said at the press conference in Port-au-Prince.

"We have arrested 15 Colombians and the two

Americans of Haitian origin. Three Colombians have been killed while eight others are on the loose."

Previously authorities had said four of the suspects had been killed. Charles did not explain the discrepancy. Colombia's defense minister Diego Molano also said at least six members of the hit squad appeared to be Colombian ex-soldiers, and that he had ordered the army and police to help with the investigation.

"The initial information indicates that they are Colombian citizens, retired members of the national army," Molano said in a video sent to news media. Hundreds of residents clamored outside a police station in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where suspects were being held, shouting "burn them" and setting fire to a vehicle they presumed was that of the assassins.

Police chief Charles described the killers as "mercenaries" and said that security forces had engaged in a fierce gun battle with the suspected assassins that lasted late into the night.

Academic says West has interest in continuation of status quo in Lebanon

BY ALI A. JENABZADEH

TEHRAN — A Lebanese political researcher says the Western powers prefer Lebanon to struggle crises without government.

"As for the issue of forming a government, the international efforts are nominal and not serious, while the West has an interest in the continuation of this existing status quo," Tariq Aboud tells the Tehran Times. However, Aboud notes, "The Western powers prefer Lebanon not to slip towards a comprehensive collapse that can create security threat which contradicts the interests of the West in Lebanon."

Observers believe everything that is happening in Lebanon is due to the inability of successive governments coupled with the incapability of the Lebanese establishment to provide basic infrastructure after decades.

Now the main question is why America's agents in Lebanon fiercely oppose any assistance, investment or cooperation with China, Russia or Iran.

"Moscow has tried to offer profitable investment projects for both Lebanese and Russian sides, but it has faced repulsion by the Lebanese deep state with an octopus network of political and financial interests," the professor at the Lebanese International University remarks.

Following is the text of the interview:
What parties prevent formation of a new government in Lebanon?

When we address the Lebanese government, we face external obstacles besides the internal complexities, which intersect at a pivotal moment in the history of Lebanon and the region.

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Leader calls Ahmed Jibril ‘tireless warrior’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi have expressed condolences in separate messages for the death Palestinian leader Ahmed Jibril.

In the message released on Thursday, Ayatollah Khamenei described Jibril as a “tireless warrior” who spent his entire life fighting for the usurped homeland and the oppressed country. “I offer condolences over the death of the strong fighter, Mr. Ahmed Jibril, to the Palestinian people and all the fighters and activists involved in the fierce struggle in Palestine, as well as all the resistance in West Asia and his sorrowful relatives,” he pointed out.

The Leader also prayed that Allah would grant the deceased soldier a generous reward and forgive him.

Raisi praises Jibril, calls him ‘courageous fighter’
In his message, Raisi praised Jibril as a brave fighter that his death “caused great pain and sorrow.”

“This tireless warrior stopped trying to liberate Muslims’ first pilgrimage (al Quds) until the last moment of his life and sacrificed his son in this way,” he said.

“I offer the deepest condolences to the family of the deceased, his comrades, the oppressed country of Palestine and all the supporters of holy Quds; I seek forgiveness and promotion from the Almighty God,” the president remarked. Raisi described Jibril as “a true loyalist to the Palestinian cause and one of the true supporters of the Resistance. He was unwavering in the storm of events.”

Jibril, the head and founder of the People’s Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLPGC), passed away in Damascus on Wednesday, his son Bader Jibril said.

Jibril was born in 1938 and established the PFLPGC in 1968 after leaving the People’s Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

He was known as the Abu Jihad and was one of the oldest and most famous military leaders in Palestine. He believed in the “armed struggle to liberate Palestine.”

He was mostly known for opposing any negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Jibril’s son Jihad was killed in an attack in Beirut in 2002, and the organization blamed Israel. Jihad was the head of the PFLPGC’s military department at the time.

Iran: Astana process puts forward solution to Syria issue

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Any humanitarian assistance to Syria must go through the government and respect the country’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity, a top Iranian diplomat has said.

Ali Asghar Khaji, who serves as the Iranian foreign minister’s senior advisor in special political affairs, made the remarks as Iran, Russia and Turkey held 16th round of talks on Syria within the Astana process on Thursday.

At the end of the talks in Astana, renamed Nur-Sultan, Khaji told the Russian news agency RIA Novosti that the main decision to resolve the Syrian issue must be made by the government and people of the country.

He pointed out that during the tripartite meeting on the final statement of the committee, Iran’s views were in unanimous with other members, including Turkey and Russia.

The Iranian diplomat said that everyone should remember that the participants are not “making a decision” on the Syrian issue, but putting forward their own opinions to help the Syrian government and people make the final decision.

The situation in Syria, the activities of the Syrian Constitutional Council in Geneva, international assistance, the exchange of prisoners, the release of hostages and other measures were on the agenda of the talks in Kazakhstan.

At the end of the talks, Iran, Russia, and Turkey announced in a joint statement that they will continue to cooperate until Daesh and other terrorist organizations are completely eliminated in Syria.

The Syrian government and armed opposition groups were present in the meeting. Senior representatives from the United Nations, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq also attended the talks, which are aimed to end the long-running crisis in Syria.

The Astana talks, started in 2017, were initiated by Russia, Turkey, and Iran to provide an international forum for the Syrian opposition and government to build a consensus.

The statement also condemned “continuing Israeli military attacks in Syria which violate international law, international humanitarian law, the sovereignty of Syria and neighboring countries, endanger the stability and security in the region and called for cessation of them.”

According to IRNA, in the joint statement the three guarantor countries called for full implementation of what agreed in the forum and to maintain stability in Idlib.

According to the statement, Iran, Russia, and Turkey “reaffirmed their determination to stand against separatist agendas in the east of the Euphrates aimed at undermining the unity of Syria as well as threatening the national security of neighboring countries. Expressed concern, in this regard, with the increasing hostilities against civilians.”

The also “reiterated their opposition to the illegal seizure and transfer of oil revenues that should belong to the Syrian Arab Republic.”

Envoy reminds U.S. that endangering public health is war crime

➔ “The United States’ oppressive and unilateral sanctions run counter to the principles and goals sought by the UN Charter as well as international law and the essential norms that govern the international relations,” Takht-Ravanchi said, according to Press TV.

The ambassador underscored that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have compounded the negative impact of the coercive measures, especially on women, children, adolescents, the elderly, and those with handicap.

Endangering the general public’s health and security for political purposes is not only illegal, but amounts to “war crime and crime against humanity”, that carries international accountability, he insisted.

Ambassador Takht-Ravanchi finally noted that moral responsibility entails strong opposition by Iran to the economic bans and demands their speedy removal.

Zarif to intra-Afghan dialogue: Peace more courageous than war

➔ **1** Iran’s chief diplomat called on the rival sides in the ongoing crisis in neighboring Afghanistan to end the war as soon as possible and pave the way for the development of their war-ravaged country.

The Afghan government team was led by Yunus Qanouni and the Taliban by Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai in the Tehran talks.

Stanikzai is the head of the Taliban’s political office in Doha.

Praising both delegations for prioritizing peace and well-being of the Afghan people in the talks, Foreign Minister Zarif said Iran is ready to facilitate a continuation of talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

“The Islamic Republic is always ready to facilitate the continuation of your talks in any way you wish,” Zarif stressed.

“Both sides agree war is not a solution, condemn war on hospitals, mosques, state offices”

At the end of the meeting, the two Afghan delegates issued a joint statement thanking Iran for its efforts to restore peace to Afghanistan.

Acknowledging the risks resulting from continued war and the damage it would inflict on the country, the two sides agreed that war was not a solution to the Afghan crisis and that all efforts needed to be directed towards reaching a political and peaceful solution.

Moreover, the warring parties described the Tehran meeting as a new opportunity to reinforce the political solution to the Afghan crisis.

The two sides strongly condemned attacks that target people’s homes, government offices, mosques and hospitals as well as the destruction of public institutions, and called for the perpetrators to be punished.

“Intra-Afghan talks is successful”

Rasoul Mousavi, the director general of the West Asia department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, on Thursday called the talks in Tehran between the Afghan government



and the Taliban “successful”.

“I believe that the Tehran intra-Afghan session was a successful meeting. The document for my claim is the declaration by the meeting in which the two sides strongly condemned attacks on schools, hospitals... and government buildings (clause 6) and considered the Tehran session as a new opportunity for political solution in Afghanistan (clause 5,” Mousavi tweeted.

Zarif: ‘Iran stands with our Afghan brethren’

Writing on his Twitter page late on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Zarif said Iran is happy to host talks between the representatives from the Afghan government and the Taliban, calling them Iran’s “brethren”.

“Honored to be host of cordial & substantive dialog between senior Afghan reps. As foreign forces leave Afghanistan, no impediment remains for Afghans of all political stripes to chart a peaceful & prosperous future for the next generation. Iran stands with our Afghan brethren,” Zarif tweeted.

“Iran a reliable friend to Afghanistan”

In tweet on Thursday, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special advisor to the Ira-

nian Parliament speaker on international affairs, also hailed Tehran for hosting the intra-Afghan talks, saying, “Iran proves it’s a reliable friend, brother, neighbor to Afghanistan.”

Iran has on several occasions reaffirmed its support for measures and talks aimed at establishing peace and ending the conflict in the war-battered Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan crisis has been a major concern for neighbors including Iran. Ali Rabiei, the Iranian government spokesman, said on June 29 that the Taliban is part of Afghanistan and a part of its future solution.

“What is important for us is the formation of an inclusive government with the presence of all Afghan groups and the achievement of a peaceful and lasting solution in this country,” he noted.

Rabie added that the Islamic Republic is closely monitoring developments in Afghanistan and is following the recent moves with concern.

“While calling on all parties to calm down, we do not consider the use of violence and non-peaceful behaviors useful in resolving disputes, and we will continue our consultations with Kabul to end unconstructive conflicts and replace dialogue

and engagement with the participation of all influential political groups,” the spokesman underlined.

Rabiei said the Islamic Republic continues to urge all countries not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

“Our mission is to communicate with the Afghan government and provide any necessary assistance,” Rabiei highlighted.

Tehran’s hosting of the Afghan talks comes as the U.S. military is completing the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan.

The U.S. Central Command has announced that the American withdrawal from the country, ordered in April by President Joe Biden, was now more than 90 percent complete.

Since the U.S. started the formal withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan in May, Taliban militants have intensified attacks across the country.

The official spokesman for the Taliban’s political office in Doha, Mohammad Naim, has claimed that their forces have captured about 85 percent of the Afghan territory.

In an interview with Sputnik, Naim also said the Taliban will pose no threat to Afghanistan’s neighbors.

“We give assurances to all neighbors that relative calm will be established in all our borders.”

Taliban fighters have seized control of a key district in western Afghanistan that includes an important border crossing with Iran, Afghan security officials said, as the armed group continues its rapid military advances around the country.

In the last week, the Taliban has overrun areas bordering five countries – Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China and Pakistan – as foreign forces end their 20-year intervention and the domestic security situation deteriorates.

Al Alam TV, Iran’s official Arabic language service, also reported that Afghan soldiers had entered Iranian territory via the border crossing to escape the Taliban.

India embraces Iran’s invitation for Raisi oath-taking ceremony

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — India has accepted Iran’s invitation to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President-elect Raisi.

The invitation was offered at a meeting between Raisi and Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday when the latter was on a brief stopover in Tehran en route to Russia.

The Indian foreign minister was the first foreign official to meet Raisi, even though he has not assumed the office yet.

At the meeting, Jaishankar conveyed a personal message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President-elect Raisi.

Some sources say Modi invited the Iranian president-elect to pay a visit to India once the both countries witnessed any improvement in controlling the COVID-19 situation.

“Thank President-elect Ebrahim Raisi for his gracious welcome. Handed over a personal message from PM Modi. Appreciate his warm sentiments for India. Deeply value his strong commitment to strengthen our bilateral ties and expand cooperation on regional and global issues,” Jaishankar tweeted.

India is among the countries that has so far been invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony.

“Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who is in Iran to deliver a written congratulatory message from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Iranian President-elect Ayatollah Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi met with



Democrats renege on JCPOA

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – In the latest act of renegeing on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, a senior Democrat senator has highlighted the difference between now and 2015, when the nuclear deal was reached, implying that the deal should be revisited.

Negotiations over reviving the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have hit a diplomatic impasse after the U.S. upped the ante by refusing to give even what was envisaged in the original deal: sanctions relief.

Ever since the end of the sixth round of the Vienna nuclear talks more than two weeks ago, the U.S. and its European allies, namely France, Germany and the UK - collectively known as the E3 - have been urging Iran to make "tough decisions" to revive the JCPOA, as if it was Iran that pulled out of the deal in the first place.

The U.S. envoy to the Vienna talks went so far as to threaten to walk out of the talks if Iran insisted on its rights under the nuclear deal. "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," Rob Malley told NPR in a recent interview.

He also made it clear that the Biden administration wouldn't lift all the sanctions imposed by its predecessor. "We're not going to lift all of the sanctions that the Trump administration imposed," Malley asserted.

The remarks came after the negotiating partners concluded the sixth round of talks in Vienna without any significant progress. In fact, the sixth round was a step backward because the negotiating partners failed to make any progress on the remaining issues while in the previous rounds, they have hailed the progress made and even voiced hope of a final agreement in few days.

But this hope evaporated after the sixth



round due to U.S. intransigence. The U.S., having rejected Iranian demands regarding sanctions relief, moved to blame Iran for the setback and joined forces with the E3 to ramp up diplomatic pressure on Iran in a bid to force it into giving more concessions.

To this end, the U.S. and French foreign ministers called on Iran to make "tough decisions" to revive the deal. U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken hinted at a U.S. withdrawal from talks with Iran if Tehran continued to increase its nuclear activities.

These threats even increased after Iran announced the production of a highly advanced nuclear fuel called uranium silicide fuel.

Iran responded by saying that if a party is to make tough decisions it is the United States and its European allies, not Iran. Because Iran had already made tough decisions after the U.S. unilateral decision to withdraw from the JCPOA in May 2018.

However, instead of returning to its commitments under the tattered nuclear

deal, the Biden administration opted for a confrontational policy going against the very promises it made before taking over from the Trump administration. During his election campaign, Biden vowed in no uncertain terms to revive a deal he helped make as vice president under Obama. But after moving into the White House, he backed down on his promise by refusing to return to strict compliance with the JCPOA.

To make things worse, the Biden administration even clung to some of the illegal measures the Trump administration took against Iran. For Example, a UN arms embargo against Iran expired in October 2020 in accordance with the terms of the JCPOA. The Trump administration took a series of measures to get the UN Security Council to extend the arms embargo and when it failed to do so, it resorted to the unilateral tool of issuing an executive order to ensure no arms deals are made with Iran.

Trump's gone but the executive order

issued by him are still in place, indicating a desire on the part of the Biden administration to keep the executive order in place. During the Vienna talks, the U.S. negotiating team indicated to the European intermediaries that the Biden administration has no intention of annulling the Trump-era executive order.

This was a major sign of the Biden administration's dishonesty and lack of credibility. Because the U.S. negotiating team in Vienna is more or less the very same team that negotiated the JCPOA back in 2015 and agreed to lift the arms embargo by October 2020.

U.S. officials, and some other Democrats in Congress and foreign policy circles, have mainly justified the U.S. renegeing by saying that circumstances have changed and that there is a need to revise the JCPOA.

"Today is different than 2015, when these agreements were negotiated," Senator Ben Cardin, a member of the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations, told AFP, adding, "Circumstances have changed and they require us to respond to where we are today."

He said the Vienna talks must address the "changed circumstances" since the accord was negotiated.

"There is a strong, almost universal desire by Congress... to go beyond the sunset dates that were included in the JCPOA," said Cardin, referring to dates in the deal beyond which certain restrictions on Iran's nuclear activity will no longer apply.

Cardin was in Vienna as part of a U.S. congressional delegation for a program that included a briefing from IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi.

Cardin's remarks may further muddy the waters as they send a message to Iran that the U.S. is not trustworthy partner to make a deal with. Furthermore, if Democrats renege on a deal of their own making, then how they can convince Iran to sign a new deal with them while they publicly call for jettisoning the original deal.

Syria eyes enhancement of economic ties with Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad has discussed ways to boost economic ties with Iran in a meeting with a visiting Iranian parliamentary delegation.

Miqdad received on Thursday an Iranian parliamentary delegation from the Syrian-Iranian Parliamentary Friendship Association in the Iranian Islamic Consultative Assembly headed by Abbas Golrou, vice president of the Association.

During the meeting, they discussed relations between the two countries, especially between the Syrian and Iranian parliaments. The two sides stressed the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in defending the interests of peoples in various international forums, as well as laying the necessary foundations for strengthening the capabilities and economic relations between the two countries in the face of economic terrorism represented by the unilateral coercive measures, the Syrian state news SANA reported.

Mekdad expressed the great appreciation that the Syrian leadership, government and people hold for the important role played by Iran in all political, military and economic fields to support his country in the war on terrorism.

He stressed in this regard that the one who defeated Daesh and other terrorist organizations is not those who claim to have formed an alliance for this purpose, but rather that the Syrian, Iranian and Russian forces and the resistance fighters from Iraq and Lebanon and their brothers from the honorable people of the region.

The people whose blood mixed with the soil of this land for the sake of defeating these terrorist organizations and liberating the lands in which these terrorists were wreaking terrorism and corruption with the support of some countries of that ominous alliance that was fighting everything in the region except for the terrorists, the foreign minister stated.

For his part, MP Golrou stressed Tehran's pride in the relations it has had with Syria throughout history, praising



Syria's historical support for Iran in many stages and the distinguished level of relations between the two countries. He stressed the need to build on these relations to advance them in the economic and cultural fields, as they are in the political and other fields. Golrou also expressed his belief in the inevitable victory of the peoples of the region over all projects of arrogance, domination and occupation.

The two sides reviewed the recent presidential elections in Syria and Iran, which were a deep embodiment of the democratic values in which the peoples of the two countries believe.

When discussing the ongoing negotiations on the Iranian nuclear issue, Mekdad praised in this regard the wisdom, strength and keenness of the Iranian leadership to defend the interests and rights of its people in the face of all attempts to pressure again, and Syria is standing by Iran in these negotiations.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on developments in the region, especially in the occupied Palestinian territories, where views were identical on the importance of supporting the steadfastness and resistance of the Palestinian people until their occupied land is liberated and their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital is established.

The Iranian delegation also met with Speaker of the People's Assembly Hamoudeh Sabbagh, who affirmed on Thursday the importance of boosting parliamentary relations through exchanging visits, viewpoints, and joint coordination at regional and international conferences, according to SANA.

In his meeting with Golrou and his accompanying team, Sabbagh said that forces of evil and global aggression, led by the U.S., besiege Syria and Iran together under false and misleading titles, claiming that they fight terrorism, while, in fact, they support and protect it.

For his part, Golrou said that the visit of the Iranian delegation to Syria aims to enhance parliamentary cooperation and various domains of bilateral relations, and overcome any obstacles that may hinder their development in addition to employing the available capabilities to push them forward.

He expressed his country's aspiration to fulfill advanced steps that make the friendship committees in both countries a role model.

In continuation of their visit, the Iranian delegation also met with Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous. The two sides stressed the importance of boosting parliamentary relations, increasing the joint visits to achieve the common interests of the two friendly countries and peoples.

The Syrian prime minister affirmed that the Syrian government seeks to push forwards and develop economic cooperation and trade exchange between the two countries and promote it up to the level of strategic relations that bind Syria and Iran.

He expressed appreciation for the support provided by Iran to the Syrian people, pointing out that the Syrian and Iranian peoples have foiled plots of the enemies in the region.

For his part, Golrou said that the aim of the Iranian parliamentary delegation's visit to Syria is to increase coordination and cooperation and to overcome obstacles that may face joint relations.

Production of advanced uranium fuel is for peaceful purposes: Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reacted to a statement by the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany about Iran's decision to produce silicide fuel using 20-percent enriched uranium, saying the fuel was produced for peaceful purposes.

Khatibzadeh noted that Iran's decision to produce silicide fuel plates using 20% enriched uranium is for peaceful purposes, and it will only be used in the Tehran research reactor, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday.

The spokesman said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been informed about Iran's decision in accordance with the procedures.

In a major announcement on Tuesday, Iranian Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency Kazem Gharibabadi said Iran will soon produce a highly sophisticated nuclear fuel called uranium silicide fuel.

The ambassador said in a statement that Iran has informed the IAEA of its intention to produce uranium silicide fuel pellet for the Tehran research reactor nine days ago and has immediately made arrangements in that regard.

Silicide fuel is an advanced type of nuclear fuel whose technology is only available to a handful of countries. According to Gharibabadi, Iran has started R&D activities using natural

uranium to produce sophisticated fuel over the past three months. "In the new process, one new fuel pellet is to be produced from 20% enriched uranium," the Iranian diplomat said, adding, "This measure, slated to significantly improve the quality and quantity of producing radiopharmaceuticals, will turn the Islamic Republic of Iran into a pioneering country in terms of nuclear technology."

The IAEA confirmed the Iranian move, providing technical details about the whole process. "Iran informed the Agency that UO₂ (uranium oxide) enriched up to 20% U-235 would be shipped to the R&D laboratory at the Fuel Fabrication Plant in Esfahan, where it would be converted to UF₄ (uranium tetrafluoride) and then to uranium metal enriched to 20% U-235, before using it to manufacture the fuel," it said in a statement, according to Reuters.

The move drew criticism from the U.S. and its European allies, who expressed concern about the new fuel production. The three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal - France, Germany and the UK, collectively known as E3 - said they had "grave concern" about Iran producing enriched uranium metal and even accused Iran of "threatening a successful outcome to the Vienna talks," which have been underway since April to revive the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"We the foreign ministers of the govern-

ments of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, note with grave concern the latest report by the IAEA confirming that Iran has taken steps in the production of enriched uranium metal. This is a serious violation of Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran has no credible civilian need for uranium metal R&D and production," the E3 foreign ministers said in a joint statement.

The E3 said the Iranian move "is all the more concerning at a time when no date has been set for the continuation of the negotiations in Vienna on a return to the JCPOA."

Khatibzadeh hit back at the E3 statement, saying that the advanced uranium fuel has peaceful uses. "Contrary to the claims of the E3, this product has peaceful, medicinal and humanitarian uses, and its production does not contradict Iran's non-proliferation and Safeguards obligations," Khatibzadeh pointed out.

He further emphasized that while these countries consider Iran's actions as a violation of its obligations under the JCPOA, they have never gone beyond words regarding their own obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and in line with the U.S. cruel pressure they have implemented Washington's extraterritorial and unlawful sanctions.

"We have repeatedly emphasized that Iran is ready to suspend its compensatory

measures and to fully resume the fulfillment of its obligations as soon as the oppressive sanctions are lifted. No one should expect Iran to unilaterally comply with its commitments while it is under intense pressure of unilateral sanctions," he noted.

Khatibzadeh stated that voluntary access to transparency measures beyond the Safeguards, including the provisional and voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, will be carried out by Iran in accordance with the provisions of the JCPOA if the Vienna talks are concluded.

He added that the concerns raised in this regard are of no use and the U.S. State Department spokesman's position on this issue is unacceptable.

"The U.S. is expressing concern about Iran's actions, while the current situation concerning the JCPOA is due to Washington's illegal and unilateral actions and approaches, as this country has continued to implement Donald Trump's failed maximum pressure policy on the Iranian people during the Biden administration as well," the spokesman continued.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman finally emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always expressed its readiness to resume the implementation of its obligations in the event of the lifting of U.S. sanctions, and during the Vienna talks it has clearly conveyed these points to the other parties.

S P O R T S

Woman shooter Rostamian named Iran's flagbearer in Tokyo

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Woman shooter Hanieh Rostamian was named as Iran's flagbearer at the 2020 Olympic Games opening ceremony.



She will carry the nation's flag at the 23 July ceremony to open the Tokyo Games.

Rostamian is a member of Iran's women's 10m air pistol at Tokyo.

Basketball player Samad Nikkhah Bahrami had been already named the male's flagbearer for the nation.

For the first time, the International Olympic Committee has decreed that a male and female carry the flag of each nation at the ceremony.

Iran volleyball player Fayazi announces retirement

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Outside spiker Purya Fayazi has announced his retirement from international duty with Iran.

The 28-year-old player made his Iran debut in 2011 and won the 2014 Asian Games with the team. Fayazi was also part of the team who won the gold medal at the 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship in Tehran.

"I was forced to quit my international duty since I had two knee surgeries. I need to rest for recovery and I want to focus fully on my goals in the club," Fayazi said.

"I have good memories of the national team and it was a very hard decision to make but the health comes first," he added.

Fayazi was also part of Iran team in the 2021 Volleyball Nations League in Italy and was fielded by Vladimir Alekno as a substitute.

Iran goalkeeper Abedzadeh signs for Ponferradina

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Ponferradina have completed the signing of Iranian international goalkeeper Amir Abedzadeh.

The 28-year-old goalkeeper has joined the Spanish Segunda Division side from Portuguese club Marítimo.

Abedzadeh started his professional career in Orange County SC in the United States in 2011 and after a year he joined Iranian giants Persepolis.

Abedzadeh joined Portuguese club Barreirense in 2016 and was transferred to Marítimo after a season.

Abedzadeh was an unused substitute in the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Iran discover fate at AFC U23 Asian Cup 2022 Qualifiers

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran learned their AFC U23 Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2022 Qualifiers group stage on Friday.

The Iranian team have been drawn in Group B along with Tajikistan (hosts), Nepal and Lebanon.

The 42 teams were drawn into 11 groups with 15 spots available at the AFC U23 Asian Cup 2022 with Uzbekistan having already confirmed their place as hosts, the first time the tournament will be staged in the Central Zone.

The draw divided the teams into two Regions – the West Region comprising 23 West, South and Central Participating Teams as well as the East Region, which consists of 19 East and ASEAN Participating Teams.

The West Region comprises six groups in total – five groups of four teams and one group of three teams – while the East Region features four groups of four teams and one group of three teams, with the 11 group winners and four best second-placed teams sealing their qualification to the Finals.

The Qualifiers are scheduled for October 23 to 31, 2021.

Group A: Syria, Qatar (H), Yemen, Sri Lanka

Group B: Iran, Tajikistan (H), Lebanon, Nepal

Group C: Iraq, Bahrain (H), Afghanistan, Maldives

Group D: Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Kuwait (H), Uzbekistan

Group E: United Arab Emirates (H), Oman, India, Kyrgyz Republic

Group F: Jordan (H), Palestine, Turkmenistan

Group G: Australia, China PR, Indonesia (H), Brunei Darussalam

Group H: Korea Republic, Singapore (H), Timor-Leste, Philippines

Group I: Vietnam, Myanmar, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei (H)

Group J: Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Mongolia (H)

Group K: DPR Korea, Japan, Cambodia

Iran defeat Mali at FIBA U19 Basketball classification

S P O R T S d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran will play with the winners of the Japan and Turkey at the 9–12th place semifinals of the FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup on Saturday.

The Iranian team defeated Mali 71-59 at the 9–16th place on Friday.

Parsa Fallah scored 21 points for Iran and Malian Oumar Ballo earned 17 points.

The tournament runs from July 3-11 in Riga and Daugavpils, in Latvia.

The Baltic country is hosting the event for a second time, following 2011. The United States go into the 2021 edition as the reigning champions from 2019 and the winners of seven of the previous 14 tournaments.

45 idle industrial units to be revived in Ardebil by next March

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — As announced by a provincial official, 45 idle industrial units are planned to be revived in Iran's northwestern Ardebil province by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Masoud Emami Yeganeh, the governor of Ardebil, said that these units returning to the production cycle will create jobs for 680 persons.

The official said that 28 idle units were revived in the province in the past year, which created jobs for 700 persons.

The governor of Ardebil considered it necessary to support production units, provide the necessary infrastructure and revive stagnant units and said using the full capacity of production units that have the necessary infrastructure by providing facilities and removing other production barriers is one of the priorities of the industrial sector this year.



Referring to the creation of employment in small production units, the official said: "Support for these units has been considered and good measures such as providing facilities and infrastructure for them have been taken in the province".

Creating sustainable employment in deprived areas is one of the main priorities of the provincial officials, and it is planned this year to provide the ground for economic prosperity in this province by implementing job creation plans, he added.

As announced by the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), 240 idle industrial units have been revived in the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

Emphasizing that one of the most important programs of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade is to activate the semi-active and stagnant units, Ali Rasoulzadeh said that reviving 1,600 idle and semi-active industrial units in the industrial parks and zones is targeted for this year.

With the revival of each idle industrial unit, 26 job opportunities will be created, which is expected that more than 100,000 jobs will be created in the country this year through the return of industrial units to the production cycle, the official stated.

Last year, 1,557 stagnant and semi-active units returned to the production cycle in the industrial parks with a financing of 35 trillion rials (over \$833 million), providing employment for 27,000 people, the ISIPO head further said.

With the aim of reactivating stagnant units or units that are operating below capacity, 900 consultants from the private sector and knowledge-based companies were selected in the form of industry clinics across the country to recognize the weaknesses of these units, Rasoulzadeh has previously stated.

"Despite the two major challenges of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, which imposed severe restrictions on the country, we tried to activate domestic capacities by turning to localizing the technology of manufacturing parts and equipment", he added.

Sanctions have caused problems for financial exchanges and the export of goods to other countries, he said, adding, "The negative effects of coronavirus pandemic on various parts of the country, including industry, are not hidden from anyone, and the economic growth of some countries has reached below zero during this period."

Iran is proud that despite these restrictions and pressure from these two important challenges, its industry has grown by more than seven percent, according to the statistics and reports from various sectors, the official further highlighted.

Also, as announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the official has said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."

Niaraki pointed to a 40-percent increase in the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the previous year, saying: "The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors."

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year.

According to the official, there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran's industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

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

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

The index closed at 1.282 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Civil Servants Pension Fund (CSPF), Social Security Investment Company, Isfahan Oil Refining Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

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

These systems are going to offer various services to the companies and people active in the market.

Tehran hosting Iran's 1st exclusive EAEU exhibition

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — On the first day of the event, the members of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and the Eurasian chambers of commerce held a meeting to exchange views on ways of boosting trade between the two sides.

According to the Managing Director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) Hassan Zamani, due to the special conditions created by the coronavirus pandemic in the country, the exhibition is not open for the public and only traders,

scholars, and businessmen whose field of work is related to the EAEU are allowed to visit the exhibition.

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

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

Iran is a very important market in the



region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members.

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

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

'Iran ready to contribute to Azerbaijan's economic projects'

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — A Trade Delegation from Iran's East Azarbaijan Province traveled to Baku on Tuesday for a three-day visit to the neighboring country, during which they expressed Iran's readiness for participating in Azerbaijan's economic projects.

As IRNA reported, the delegation was headed by East Azarbaijan Province's Deputy Governor for Economic Affairs Ali Jahangiri.

Upon returning to Tabriz on Thursday, Jahangiri told the press that positive talks have been held with Azeri officials for expanding economic and trade cooperation during the visit.

Iranian companies can cooperate with their Azeri counterparts in the fields of industrial and construction products and materials to provide such products in the recently liberated Karabakh region, he said.

According to the official, distance and lower transportation costs are important factors that make Iran and especially East Azarbaijan Province a great source of such materials for Azerbaijan.

"Even foreign companies that are already working



in industrial and construction projects in the Karabakh region can supply their required products and materials from Iran," he said.

Jahangiri noted that during his visit, the participation of Iranian companies, including those from East Azarbaijan Province, in the reconstruction of Azerbaijan's liberated territories in the Karabakh region was discussed with Azeri officials.

Industrial, mining projects worth over \$9.5b inaugurated

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday inaugurated five major industrial and mining projects worth 400 trillion rials (over \$9.5 billion) in four provinces through video conferencing, IRNA reported.

Belonging to the Middle East Mines and Mineral Industries Development Holding Company (MIDHCO), the mentioned projects were inaugurated in Kerman province in the 79th series of inauguration ceremonies since the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

The projects included a steel production complex, a copper cathode production complex, a project for equipping mining fleet, a lime and dolomite baking plant,



and a coke cooling unit using Coke Dry Quenching (CDQ).

As reported, the mentioned projects have created job opportunities for 4,150 people.

The steel production complex is com-

prised of six operational units namely material transportation, sintering, oxygen production, utility unit and auxiliary materials, blast furnace and steelmaking. The complex has the capacity to produce 1.7 million tons of steel ingot per year.

The copper cathode production complex has the production capacity of 50,000 tons per year and is going to create jobs for 400 people.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior industry officials and some officials from the mentioned provinces.

Having 68 different types of minerals, including the world's largest copper, zinc and iron reserves, Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries across the globe. In this regard, the Iranian government

has been seriously pursuing several programs for promoting the mining sector as a major contributor to the country's economic growth.

Last week, Rouhani had inaugurated six major industrial and mining projects worth 35.77 trillion rials (over \$851 million) in four provinces through video conferencing.

The mentioned projects were inaugurated in Zanjan, Yazd, Hormozgan, and East Azarbaijan provinces in the 78th series of inauguration ceremonies.

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

ICCIMA calls on govt. to extend tax payment dues

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), in a letter to President Hassan Rouhani, has called on the government to extend the tax payment due dates for legal entities to September 22.

Gholam-Hossein Shafeie has made the mentioned request on behalf of the country's private sector which has been negatively affected by the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions, the ICCIMA portal reported.

"The country's private sector, who were already facing major problems due to the international sanctions, have also been facing the challenges resulted from the outbreak of the coronavirus since the previous year," Shafeie wrote in his letter.

"Due to the outbreak of the disease, the production and service units of the country have repeatedly closed their enterprises or reduced their manpower in order to comply with the safety standards dictated by the National Headquarters for battling Coronavirus, and to maintain the health of their employees," he added.

Shafeie stated in the letter that the production units' closures and the reduction of their production capacity



have led to a sharp decline in their income and increased their production costs, making it almost impossible for such enterprises to fulfill their administrative and financial obligations on time.

Back in April, Shafeie had written another letter to Rouhani, suggesting ways for supporting domestic production against the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

In the letter, Shafeie had stressed that the cabinet's

decision to support 10 major business categories did not include the production sector and this sector was largely neglected.

Extension of the tax deferrals offered by the government, returning of at least 50 percent of the value-added tax that exporters paid in the previous year, granting tax exemption or tax reduction of at least 5 percent for the previous year, and extension or renewal of all business licenses without the need to obtain a tax certificate subject to Article 186 of the Law on direct taxes, were some of the supportive measures suggested by the ICCIMA head.

The suggestions also included providing working capital facilities with easy conditions and low rates for those production units and production support services that have been unable to pay their debts and settle their payments due to reduced sales, releasing a part of the deposits that have been blocked in the banks as guarantees and receiving non-cash guarantees by the banks, and obligating the executive bodies to adjust the duration and amount of their contracts with the production units in accordance with force majeure conditions to protect them and prevent them from bankruptcy.

Quarterly loading, unloading of goods up 7% in Iranian ports

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose seven percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), as compared to the first quarter of the previous year, the deputy head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (MPO) announced.

Farhad Montaser Kouhsari said despite the limitation due to the sanctions and coronavirus pandemic, the loading and unloading capacity of the country's commercial ports has increased to 44.9 million tons in the current year, from 42 million tons in the past year.

The official further announced that 21 million tons of oil products was loaded and unloaded in the ports of Iran during the three-month period of this year, rising 17 percent as compared to the same period of

the previous year.

He said 536,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of container products were loaded and unloaded in the said time span of the present year, one percent more than 536,000 TEUs in the first quarter of the past year.

The condition created by the coronavirus outbreak has had some devastating effect on different aspects of global trade.

In Iran, the condition has been even worse, as the country has been tackling the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy.

But despite all limitations and barriers, the country has managed to act successfully in running its economy and trade.

Iran's port activities, which play some major part in the country's trade, have been noticeable in this due.

The reports released in terms of the loading and unloading operation in the

ports of the country are an indication of such successful trend.

As previously announced by the head of PMO, loading and unloading of commodities at the ports of Iran have risen six percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Mohammad Rastad also announced that the entrance of ocean vessels to the ports of country has increased eight percent in the previous year, PMO published on its website.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play some significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of



the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitate loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that PMO has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in a course of five years.

Iran-China deal mostly carries geostrategic importance: Pakistani expert

→ **1** the Chinese economy continued to grow with an average GDP growth rate of 9.5 percent over the decades. In an effort to wake up a dormant economic giant, it encouraged the emergence of rural enterprises and private businesses, free trade and investment, capitalizing on the industrial sector and the education of its workforce. Moreover, China has set a future vision to further embolden its economic growth in the future. The Chinese government has placed innovation at the top in its economic vision, such as “Made in China 2025,” a plan announced in 2015 to upgrade and modernize China’s manufacturing in key sectors through extensive government assistance.

What opportunities can China provide for Asian countries?

In the past four decades, the Chinese economy has been more focused on industrialization and manufacturing, as once it was predominantly focused on agricultural one and is now increasingly service-oriented. China’s rapid growth has surely served as an important instrument in connecting economies across the region and supporting the rise of a greater Asia. China’s rapid growth, its trade expansion, and increased inflows of FDI have influenced the Asian economy massively. China’s ambitious Road and Belt Initiative (BRI) would further embolden regional production and transportation chains across Asia. As the BRI reduces the obstacles in the way of movement of goods and services, factors of production are dropped further. Thus, Asia would integrate more with each other as well as with the global economy.

How do you evaluate U.S. -China trade row? Is the U.S. capable to contain China?

China’s economic and political power rise has made it the main U.S. rival. China’s economic rise has first led to a trade war between both countries as the trade deficit widened. This has impacted the supply chain, threatening new and ongoing foreign direct investment. The U.S. faces a \$436 billion trade deficit with China. Therefore, under the pretext of reducing this gap, the



U.S. imposed additional tariffs on imports coming from China. As a result, China adopted a tit-for-tat policy and retaliated against the U.S. with the same and equal strength. The Trump administration commenced and intensified this trade war with China. Now, the Biden administration is pursuing more aggressive policies against China. Washington continues to retain the world’s largest and most capable military force. But the present doctrine, which assumes that America will continue to dominate every region across the world, is no longer realistic. At present, China is still developing its advanced military capabilities to compete with the U.S. military might, but the U.S. and economic interdependence with its allies, (be it with Germany, UK, France, South Korea, or Japan) lags behind the Chinese economic potential,

which gives China the upper hand vis-à-vis the U.S. The group of seven (G-7) split on Biden’s anti-China push also implies the U.S. failure to build consensus among European powers against China because if the democratic world pushes against China, it would be a loss-loss for all.

Do you think China can lead the global economy in near future? Don’t you expect emerging Asian powers, like India and Turkey, to form a coalition with China?

Chinese history was marked by foreign occupation and a prolonged civil war in the 20th century. This experience has fueled its strong desire for attaining ‘Great Power’ status. China is now a major economic powerhouse that has built up impressive foreign currency reserves and is slated to be the world’s largest economy by 2028. China

recognized the fact that economic reform is the only way to gain the status it wishes on its own terms. China’s economic growth and its expanding FDI across the world is an unprecedented phenomenon. It infers that greater economic transformation has led Beijing towards the status of an economic leader of the world. Recent developments in Sino-India relations portray two pathways for the future bilateral relationship. First, China and India relations are experienced profound challenges as both are expanding in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. It is imperative for India to manage its competition with China to find space for strategic growth. With Turkey, the current changing regional environment can lead to more convergences with China. Both are opposing aggressive U.S. policies in the Middle East (West Asia).

How do you assess the 25-year Iran-China partnership? Can it curb the U.S. sanctions?

China and Iran, signed a 25-year co-operation agreement to strengthen their long-standing economic and political relations. It comes on a special occasion, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Iran. The deal articulated a plan for bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The deal reflects China’s intention to play an enhanced role across the region that has been a strategic preoccupation of the United States for decades. It is widely believed that the deal between Iran and China carries more geostrategic importance than having geo-economic implications. The deal enables both China and Iran to advance their respective interests across the region through mutual cooperation. The China-Iran agreement will enable Iran to focus on economic revival as it deals with the impact of crippling U.S. sanctions. The deal could deepen China’s influence in the Middle East (West Asia) and undercut the U.S. efforts to keep Iran isolated. But, at this stage, it is unclear how much of the deal can be implemented as the Iran nuclear issue remains a contentious matter.

Academic says West has interest in continuation of status quo in Lebanon

→ **1** Add to it the sterility of the Lebanese political system, which is facing now great challenges, as it has failed more than once to manage itself.

There are also personal, political and electoral interests of the two sides involved in failing to form government. The combination of all these factors have opened a dark chapter in the Lebanese political scene.

How do you evaluate international efforts to help Lebanon’s economy and formation of a government?

It is clear that there is an American reluctance to any aid to Lebanon at the present time, while the country is struggling to save its economy from the abyss.

Meanwhile the Americans want to take advantage of this crisis to extract political concessions, and to put pressure on the resistance axis in Lebanon by inciting

their social base and political allies against the axis.

As for the issue of forming a government, the international efforts are verbal and not serious. The West also has an interest in the continuation of this existing status quo.

However, the Western powers prefer Lebanon not to slip towards a comprehensive collapse that can create security threat which contradicts the interests of the West in Lebanon.

Is there a Russian desire to expand its influence in Lebanon and confront America there?

Russia is present in the Lebanese scene but cautiously because it knows the complexities of the political scene, and is aware of the deep American influence in Lebanese institutions and among Lebanese politicians.

Moscow has tried to offer profitable investment projects for both Lebanese and Russian sides, but it has faced

repulsion by the Lebanese deep state with an octopus network of political and financial interests, in addition to the United States’ reluctance to any investment that comes from the East, China, Russia, Iran and others.

How do you see the U.S. policy towards Lebanon under the Biden presidency?

The Biden administration wants to cool the tensions in the region, but it does not want to lose the points that the Trump administration has achieved through the siege of Lebanon. The Americans today want to get rid of the region’s burdens and concerns, but at the same time they want to preserve their interests and keep Israel secure through restricting its opponents. They make every effort to obstruct Chinese-Russian extension to fill the void that Washington will leave in the region.

Should the U.S. forces remain or leave West Asia?

By Elijah J. Magnier

The feasibility of U.S. forces remaining in West Asia or their departure and the price they must pay for the consequences of the decision is at the center of discussion. These views express a reality that the U.S. administration looks at more seriously for the first time with impartiality, especially since it has become clear that all the goals and results that the U.S. wanted to achieve have failed and led to counterproductive results. Reducing or pulling out combat forces and relying on diplomacy are two steps sufficient to preserve the gains that have been achieved until today in a less aggressive approach. However, the fear among many western officials is that such a step could be interpreted as an abandonment of West Asian quagmire and a way for the U.S.’ enemies and competitors – China, Russia and Iran – to take over and replace the U.S. vacuum.

America has fought directly or through the support of its West Asian allies (i.e., the war in Yemen) many conflicts in the last twenty years that were very costly to the American treasury and did not result in peace or stability. Somehow, these wars produced greater hostility to the U.S. forces and image. Washington won fewer friends than they had hoped and exposed the U.S. forces stationed in countries (Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan) to dangers of varying severity. Consequently, western decision-makers believe that it is imperative to close down several military bases spread throughout West Asia and withdraw unnecessary naval fleets stationed in friendly Gulf countries.

This idea of freeing West Asia from the U.S. military presence is opposed by those who claim that U.S. forces must remain to protect U.S. allies, especially Israel. Many Arab states and monarchies wouldn’t survive one week without the U.S., as former President Donald Trump said. These Monarchies are the

U.S.’ protégés and enjoy the U.S. protection against domestic uprising and the request for freedom by their populations.

The realistic answer to those concerns is not complicated. When news emerged of the three meetings between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Baghdad, exaggerated optimism dominated and still prevails. Inhabitants of the region believed a solution to multiple outstanding problems and wars might emerge soon. Iran and Saudi Arabia have never been on a honeymoon. However, they were undeclared enemies, and the U.S. took every opportunity to seed a fertile ground of animosity and hatred between the two countries to prevent the rapprochement. The meetings in Iraq took place without the presence of a U.S. sponsor or participant, or mediator.

In addition, the U.S. presence in West Asia did not protect Israel from the continuous bombardment of Hezbollah in the July 2006 war of Israel, nor did it prevent “Hamas” from bombing Israeli areas and cities from north to south during the “Sword of al-Quds” operation. Consequently, “protecting Israel” is a flimsy excuse, because the U.S. supplies Israel with the weapons it wants, trains its officers with the latest military equipment, and shares intelligence information without necessarily being geographically close to it.

Concerning the necessity to remain in West Asia to prevent attacks against the U.S., President Barack Obama introduced the doctrine and practice of drones that U.S. forces extensively used in their wars against targets and targeted killing individuals they wanted to eliminate. The presence of 60,000 U.S. military in West Asia in dozens of bases did not prevent bombings against the USS Cole in 2000 and the Twin towers in New York in 2001, nor prevented attacks against U.S. embassies and interests around the world (U.S. embassies and consulates in 2004 in Saudi Arabia; Pakistan 2006; Turkey 2008;

Pakistan 2010; Afghanistan 2011; Egypt 2012, Turkey 2013; Afghanistan 2013).

As for the so-called export of democracy, President Donald Trump himself said that he does not care about exporting it and loves the dictators. Trump spoke through the experience of the administration he headed about the failure of the Afghanistan and Iraq war to export democracy and that America’s wars under various names did not prevent the Taliban from advancing to control several cities despite the presence of 100,000 American soldiers in the country. Moreover, the 2003 U.S. occupation of Iraq did not avert the emergence of Iraqi factions that fought the U.S. forces and are still chasing them to force them out of Mesopotamia.

As for the fight against corruption, West Asia is full of political parties, leaders and decision-makers whom their people accuse of corruption. These corrupted politicians are Washington’s oldest and closest allies who enjoy its protection and its financial support in some cases. Indeed, David Hale, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, stated that his country spent ten billion dollars on parties and organizations that failed to achieve America’s goals in Lebanon.

America has not been able to end any armed conflict it has engaged in West Asia. During the war on ISIS, the Syrian army and its allies fought and defeated the terrorist group in 70 percent of the Syrian territories. In the occupied northeast of Syria, the U.S. forces prevented the Syrian army from crossing the Euphrates to pursue ISIS and asked the Syrian Kurds to do the job, supported by the U.S. forces in 23 percent of the territory. The remaining 7 percent is still under the Turkish occupation.

In Iraq, the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) and the Iraqi army and Federal Police fought and defeated ISIS and regained a third of the country it lost to the terrorist group in

2014. The U.S. support was far from being the driving force, but an added value to it.

By occupying Iraq and northeastern Syria, America was not able to prevent the expansion of Iran and Hezbollah’s influence in Syria. Consequently, U.S. forces in West Asia did not achieve deterrence but somewhat helped increase hatred towards its troops, and gave birth to a new well-armed and trained resistance. These have the objective to expel the U.S. forces from West Asia.

In concerns about the freedom of navigation, it is only secured in the event of no war or no hostility between the U.S. and Iran. Tehran possesses accurate, supersonic anti-ship missiles and armed drones. Moreover, the U.S. has begun to find an alternative to its navigation in the Strait of Hormuz towards Yanbu on the Red Sea to escape the reach of Iran’s ballistic missiles. Also, all oil-rich countries bordering the strait of Hormuz found a way to bypass the Strait of Hormuz to the Red Sea terminals to transfer energy resources in the event of a general war or a tanker war as happened in past years.

Therefore, what is the point of keeping tens of thousands of American troops in West Asia? It is not the significant physical presence of the military force that prevents West Asian countries from establishing trade relations with China, Russia, or any country other than America. Instead, soft and hard diplomacy is the least costly and most effective weapon. When needed, the U.S. is in a position to ship in the necessary forces as it did in the [Persian] Gulf War, Afghanistan, and the occupation of Iraq.

The military presence in West Asia has become a source of concern for Washington and is causing more harm than good to the U.S.’ national security and interest. The harassment of the U.S. troops is expected to escalate in Iraq, and we cannot exclude the same scenario in Syria sometime in the future.

Taliban captures key Afghan border crossing with Iran

Taliban fighters have seized control of a key district in western Afghanistan that includes an important border crossing with Iran, Afghan security officials said, as the armed group continues its rapid military advances around the country.

In the last week, the Taliban has overrun areas bordering five countries – Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China and Pakistan – as foreign forces end their 20-year intervention and the domestic security situation deteriorates.

According to al Jazeera, pitched battles between Taliban fighters and Afghan government forces were also under way in the northern Balkh province bordering Uzbekistan.

Two senior security officials told Reuters news agency on condition of anonymity that the Islam Qala border crossing with Iran, located in Herat province, had fallen to the Taliban and that Afghan security and customs officials had fled across the border.

Al Alalam TV, also reported that Afghan soldiers had entered Iranian territory via the border crossing to escape the Taliban.

Tariq Arian, spokesman for the Afghan interior ministry, denied the reports and said the border crossing was still under the control of government forces.

Calls by Reuters to the offices of the provincial governor and police went unanswered.

Another security official said Taliban fighters had seized five districts in Herat without a fight.

Earlier this week, more than 1,000 Afghan security personnel fled into Tajikistan as the Taliban captured most of the northern province of Badakhshan, which also borders China and Pakistan.

The defence ministry said Afghan government forces earlier on Thursday wrested back control of Qala-e-Naw, capital of the western province of Badghis, which had been stormed by the Taliban on Wednesday.

Over 600 world academics, intellectuals call for end to ‘Israel’s apartheid regime’

More than 600 scholars, artists, and intellectuals from over 45 countries across the world have lambasted the Israeli practices against Palestinians, calling for an immediate end to “Israel’s apartheid regime” in the occupied territories.

In a petition, organized by the Association of Academics for the Respect of International Law in Palestine (AURDIP), the signatories called for a “democratic constitution” that ensures equal rights and an end to discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, or religion. Palestine’s official Wafa news agency reported on Thursday.

“Israel has established an apartheid regime over the entire territory of historic Palestine, directed against the entire Palestinian people, which it has deliberately fragmented,” the signed petition reads.

“Israel no longer seeks to conceal the character of its apartheid regime, asserting Jewish supremacy and self-determination rights reserved for Jews throughout historic Palestine under the new Basic Law passed in 2018 by the Knesset,” it added.

The signatories also called for an immediate end to the “apartheid regime”, urging equal rights for all and the need to prioritize the “long-delayed right of return of Palestinian refugees driven from their towns and villages during and after the creation of” the Israeli regime.

Back in July 2018, Israel’s parliament (Knesset) adopted a controversial bill that declares the occupying entity as the so-called “nation-state of the Jewish people.”

Founder of Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine-General Command passes away in Syria

Leading Palestinian figure Ahmed Jibril has passed away at the age of 83 in a hospital in the Syrian capital.

Jibril, the head and founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), died of an illness on Wednesday, his son said.

“He died of natural causes after suffering from illness,” Bader Jibril said. Born in 1938, Jibril founded the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command in 1968 after breaking away from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Known as Abu Jihad, he was one of the oldest and most prominent Palestinian military leaders and he believed in the “armed struggle to liberate Palestine.”

He was famous for his opposition to any Palestinian negotiations with Israel.

The Popular Front - General Command carried out several operations against the Israeli occupation, most notably the famous “Night of the Gliders” in 1987.

He administered two deals to swap prisoners with Israel in 1979 and 1985, according to which around 1,200 Palestinians were released from the Israeli jails.

He was a notable supporter of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government in its fight against terrorists and militants wreaking havoc in Syria since 2011.

Resistance News

Bogdanov, Abu Marzouk discuss situation in Gaza

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**—Mikhail Bogdanov, Russia’s deputy foreign minister and Middle East envoy, spoke over the phone with member of Hamas’s political bureau Mousa Abu Marzouk and discussed with him the current situation in the besieged Gaza Strip.

“On July 7, at the initiative of the Palestinian side, a telephone conversation took place between the Russian deputy foreign minister and special presidential representative for the Middle East and Africa, Mikhail Bogdanov, and the deputy head of Hamas’s political bureau, Mousa Abu Marzouk,” a press release issued by the Russian foreign ministry said.

The foreign ministry also said that Abu Marzouk stated his opinions about the latest developments in the Palestinian arena and highlighted the need for finding solutions to the Palestinians’ economic and humanitarian problems.

Bogdanov also expressed his opinions about different issues of mutual interest and stressed the importance of restoring the inter-Palestinian unity as a pivotal step towards reaching a settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Summer festivals in Iran

Iran’s culture offers a wealth of ancient festivals and ceremonies celebrating a variety of subject matters and seasonal events. No matter how big or small, these celebrations bring people together in their communities and neighborhoods.

Feast of Gol o Giah (flowers and plants)

Having the biggest greenhouse complex in the production and cultivation of ornamental plants, Mahalat (city of flower) is known as the Netherland of Iran. This city is one of the main centers for producing natural flowers and plants in Iran and includes a huge part of flower production and its distribution in Iran. As one of the oldest cities in growing flowers which is located in hillsides and it is far from the factories which produce pollution, this city is also known as “the mythical paradise”.

Mahalat has a long history in producing flower and ornamental plants in Asia, hence, it owns a special and proper situation in export and it has gained the world markets. Besides, having a beautiful nature, some hot springs, historical and ancient monuments, this city considered a touristic attraction.

Since 1999, the feast of flower and plants was hold annually for who were interested in natural flower and plant during three or four days in early Shahrivar (the sixth month of Solar Hijri calendar) as a very beautiful exhibition with other activities while representing the city’s high potential and its accomplishments during the festival.

Regarding the pleasant climate of this area in spring and the variety and persistence of most of the flowers, after studying the conditions this feast was transferred from Shahrivar to Ordibehsh (the second month of the Solar Hijri calendar).



There are a lot of people in this province and also from other cities in Iran as well as foreign visitors from neighboring countries and some European countries such as the Netherlands who come to Mahalat to visit and to buy some flowers and plants every year although there are exhibitions in other cities of Iran.

The festival offers a wide variety of direct sales and supply of all kinds of flowers and herbs in a variety of colors and flavors.

Also it includes representing apartment flower, cut flowers, the flowers of gardens and greenery, related industries, production and maintenance equipment, training, floral design in different forms and shapes, park equipment and gardening machines, research departments, and abilities of Mahalat which is accompanied by special programs coordinated to the performance of the fair and happy celebrations.

The effects of the ceremony are also evident in the use of flowers and plants in different parts of the city. Introducing local flowers and plants through this festival has had a significant impact on introducing this region in Iran to attract and develop tourism and economic, cultural and social growth in this small city.

Tiregan

Tiregan is one of the biggest festivals in ancient Iran. Traditionally, it is held on the Tir day (ancient days) of Tir month, equal to the 13th of the month in the Zoroastrian calendar, and equivalent to the 10th of Tir in Shamsi year.

Each year the Zoroastrians celebrate this day in honor of Tishtar and perform some special rituals. Tishtar is a star that brings news of rain, and in the Iranian culture and believes it is the brightest star in the sky and it soon will rain once it appears. Tiregan day is the annual celebration of the day that Arash the archer, the legendary hero of Iran, fired his arrow to determine the border of Iran and sacrificed himself for his country. This day is also the celebration of the writers in ancient Iran.

The date of this festival is not the same in all the regions and all the calendars. Tiregan is celebrated on 13th on Tir in the foothills of Rineh city of Larijan in Amol, Mazandaran Province. In Farahan of Markazi Province, at the beginning of the summer, 1st of Tir, they celebrate the ripening of the wheat and its harvest as the first Tiregan.

In Gilan, a day named Tirmasinezeh is registered as a spiritual heritage f Iran. In Mazandaran, according to Tapuri calendar (Tabari or Mazandarani), Tiregan is celebrated on the 13th of Aban and is called the Tir Mah Sizdahso festival, and in Ardehal of Kashan Province, on the 13th of Mehr. In Mehdisahr of Semnan Province, it is called Tir Mo Ee Sizdah on the 22nd of Aban, and in Karizat of Yazd it is celebrated on the first day of Tir and is called Ab, Tir, Mahi.

The Armenians of Isfahan celebrate it on the 13th of January, and the Zoroastrians of Kerman they celebrate it on the second week of Tir and call it Tir o Jashn. In some parts of Iran, it is celebrated on the 13th day of Farvardin. In many cities, since this day is not an official holiday, it is celebrated on the closest weekend to it.

This celebration is held near water sources, and people gather there exciting and pour water on each other, and call it Ab Rizan, Ab Pashan, or Sarshuran. It is accompanied by wishing for abundant rains and no draughts. Another part of these celebrations is Fal Kuzeh. On the day before Tiregan, each of the attenders, especially women, fill a green vase called Dulleh, pull a green silk handkerchief on it, and put it with unmarried young girls. Then, they put a small object like a ring or an earring in it.

The vase is put under an evergreen tree. On the day of Tiregan, after the Ab Rizan, all the people who had put an object in the vase gather around it, and they sing songs one by one. The young girls put out one of the objects, and it is cleared that the poem relates to the wish of the owner of that object.

Dastband-e Tir o Bad is another attractive tradition of this celebration and is accompanied by the singing of some special songs. At the beginning of the festival, after having some sweets, people tie a thread weaved with seven different yarns called Tir o Bad to their wrists.

Nine days later they untie the thread and put it in a high location like a rooftop so that the wind would carry their wishes like a messenger. There are other traditions related to Tiregan, and they vary in each region. They include staying up all night, playing games, and local competitions, having sweets and fruits, singing songs and reading poems of Hafiz, Shahnameh, etc.

(Source: Visit Iran)

Experience beauty and excitement of cave tourism in Iran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – It may seem d e s k that cave tourism is a new branch in the tourism industry, but it’s actually older and more traditional than popular contemporary varieties.

In cave tourism, visitors pick their destination based on their attraction to caves: whether they’re interested in visiting cave houses or try their hand at caving. Get in touch with the Neanderthal side of you by sleeping inside a cave or unleash your adventurous side by exploring beautiful underground cave networks.

Caves have a significant impact on tourists when choosing their destination and looking for new experiences, whether they are used for sports or as accommodations.

There are several historical and natural caves worth seeing in Iran, as in many other countries.

Here is a list of some of the most famous caves in the country.

Ali Sadr Cave

Located in the west-central province of Hamedan, Ali Sadr water cave is a top destination for domestic and foreign sightseers, researchers, history buffs, and day-trippers.

Ali Sadr Cave is a gigantic water-filled cavern widely believed to date from the Jurassic era. It embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes, and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.

The entrance to the lengthy cave is situated some 70km north of Hamadan. Sightseeing there is connected with traversing in well-lit labyrinths of waterways via paddle boats, walking on subterranean islets, as well as observing rock carvings of hunting scenes, artifacts, paintings, and vessels that are associated with prehistoric troglodytes.

Katale-Khor Cave

Katale-Khor, a limestone cave full of natural crystals believed to date from the Jurassic era, is located in the northwestern Zanjan province.

Literally meaning “Mountain of Sun”, the cave is said to date back to some 120



million years ago, so that it has embraced lots of natural and artificial changes during this lengthy period. The cave was reportedly discovered some seven decades ago by a group of Iranian cavers.

The cave interiors embrace huge hallways and corridors, which are impressively lit by flashlights.

Some three-seventh of the prolonged cave have been explored so far. A length of about 3km of the cave is open to the public while a 4km-route is accessible to experienced cavers and researchers.

Karaftu caves

Set on the side of a large cliff, 42km from Takab, western Kordestan province, the Karaftu cave ensemble was used for habitation from early Sassanid times (224–651).

The enigmatic caves were formed naturally but were modified by inhabitants over the centuries. In ancient times, these caves were important from an economic point of view, as they were situated on the Silk Roads.

Today, the caves are also significant for a Greek inscription found in them, as

this is one of the few examples of such a script preserved in situ in Iran.

Quri Qaleh Cave

Quri Qaleh or Quri Qala Cave is located in the foothills of the Shaho mountain range, 86 kilometers from the western province of Kermanshah.

The water cave, which is formed some 65 million years ago, is 12 kilometers long and 3140 meters deep. Being explored for the first time in the 1950s, the cave is one of the longest caves in western Asia.

Where there is more humidity and waterfalls, limestone crystals and stalactites are created inside the cave.

There are some historical signs from the Sassanid era (224-651 CE) found in the cave including silver plates, some pieces of potteries, and 15 coins from the Yazdgerd III period. There are also some words in Pahlavi on plates and coins.

Archaeology excavations have revealed that the Quri Qaleh Cave was a hunting lodge during the Stone Age.

Sarab Cave

The historical cave of Sarab is situated in

Museum dedicated to Sardasht chemical attack victims to be established

→ 1 The museum has been designed to illustrate the effects of the chemical bombing of Sardasht on nature in its building structure, he explained.

Chemical weapons, their deadly effects, and the effects of these weapons on Sardasht’s inhabitants from the time of the bombing to the present are the main focuses of this museum, he noted.

He also mentioned that the other sections of the museum are dedicated to peace, including introducing peace-promoting figures from around the world and from Iran, as well as individuals who have contributed

to the cause of peace throughout history.

In 1987, the Iraqi warplanes dropped chemical weapons on the Iranian town and the surrounding regions, killing over 1000 and injuring over 8000 civilians, many of whom were permanently disabled.

Iran was subjected to several violent attacks with chemical weapons by Iraq during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

According to a study, about 6,000 Iranians were killed during the attacks, and today, about 55,000 survivors of these attacks are still suffering from the aftereffects.



Bushehr to boost tribe tourism



support and attention in the country by both the government and the private sector, as well as sightseers and local communities.

Each month, several tribal festivals are held across the country. Moreover, tens of collective tours bring visitors to experience life among the tribespeople.

Iranian nomads surprise visitors with the dignity in their rough and overworked hands and integrity in their compassionate eyes at first sight.

According to Let’s Visit Persia, there are several nomad tours in Iran offering different types of activities. Living in the tent beside the nomads starts from one

night to a week, trekking and following them during their migration. During your stay with the family, you will experience their daily life, sleeping, eating, and living as they live. You can trek in the beautiful Zagros Mountain and experience the nomadic culture. Milk the goats, bake bread, learn how to make handicrafts, and play with the kids.

Apart from modern roads, highways, and bridges that are ubiquitous in modern Iran, there are still arduous paths, flattened by the feet of nomads and the hooves of their livestock in the ever-repeating movement of migration for millennia.

Migration is a way of life for nomads because herding cattle is their main source of income. In spring they with all their belongings head for the cooler pastures usually in mountain hillsides where the grass is abundant for their flocks of sheep and goats. And in autumn they return to previous tropic plains as their well-fed livestock getting stronger to bear the winter.

Accompanying nomads during their migration, even for a day or two, may

the small city of Baba-Heidar, southwestern Kohgiluyeh, and Boyer-Ahmad province.

The limestone cave is considered one of the most beautiful and pristine attractions of the region. Entering this cave and going all the way is a very exciting and technical task as it is located in a place with a narrow path and paralleled to a valley.

Even if one cannot enter the cave, one can enjoy the cold and refreshing water of a spring at the entrance of the cave.

The small entrance of the cave opens into a beautiful corridor with stalactite-covered tops, which look like chandeliers hanging from the roof.

Chama Ice Cave

One of the top destinations for nature travelers in southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province is Chama Ice Cave, which despite its natural beauty, is very dangerous.

Located in the central part of Koohrang city, the ice cave is a popular spot for people wanting to get away from the heat.

The icy layers of this cave are slightly thick in hot seasons and it is necessary to avoid passing over them and inside the cave. Chama Ice Cave is one of the most amazing caves in the province. Its location in deep valleys and the accumulation of snow for many years in this cave has caused the ice caps and huge masses of snow to remain permanently in all seasons.

However, almost every year, ice collapse in this cave causes unfortunate incidents.

Exploring a cave may not be on the “to-do list” of travelers in Iran. However, Karaftu, Ali-Sadr and Quri Qaleh, and Katale-Khor are amongst the most visited caves.

Iran is geologically a part of the Alpine-Himalayan organic belt. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the enigmatic evidence of human presence on the Iranian plateau is as early as Lower Paleolithic times.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Iranian scientists produce first COVID-19 kit to detect both genes, mutants

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iranian scientists succeeded in designing and producing the new generation of coronavirus test kit which is able to simultaneously detect the genome and mutation, for the first time in West Asia.

With the outbreak of the pandemic, Iran surged its production to meet the country's need for self-protective equipment along with medical and pharmaceutical items to fight against the virus.

Now, the country is one of the top five manufacturers of coronavirus antigen-based rapid detection kits in the world; as homegrown antibody rapid test, which can detect coronavirus in 15 to 20 minutes, was unveiled in Tehran on November 17, 2020.

The new generation of this kit has already been designed and produced domestically, IRNA reported on Friday.

Previously produced kits were able to detect two genes of the virus, but the newly designed kit identifies three genomes or virus structures; Therefore, this one is more sensitive than the existing kits, Hamzeh Choobin, a PhD in Medical Virology said.

Stating that the sensitivity of this kit is twice that of its foreign counterpart, he said that this kit is the first kit that, in addition to detecting three genes of the virus in a sample, is also able to detect the type of the mutant.

Detection of the type of mutation might not be very important clinically, but it can be helpful in prevention and national controlling programs, he noted, adding, currently the testing time of foreign kits available in the market is one hour and 45 minutes. But this kit takes an hour and 10 minutes.

Similar foreign kits cost around 7 to



13 euros, but we offer this kit to domestic laboratories for less than 2 euros, he highlighted.

Iran is one of the few countries that has achieved this technology in the world, and the leading country in West Asia, he announced.

So far, 100,000 tests have been produced and entered the market, we can produce one million tests per month, Choobin emphasized.

Although the export of items needed to deal with the coronavirus is prohibited in the country, if the production meets the country's needs, we will be able to export, he concluded.

Sepideh Golbaz, an official with the Food and Drug Administration said in April that imports of coronavirus detection kits have dropped to zero as some 24 knowledge-based companies are producing kits to meet the domestic needs.

There are currently over 5 companies in the field of molecular detection kits, 9 companies in the field of rapid antigen test kits, and 10 companies in the field of RNA kits, she stated.

Not only has it fully met the country's needs, but it has also the capacity to be exported, she noted, adding, serology kits are currently being exported.

Self-sufficiency

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, told the Tehran Times in September 2020 that some of the knowledge-based companies reached a production capacity of more than 200-300 thousand diagnostic kits per day, which surpassed the country's need for diagnostic kits, and there is a great export potential.

Pointing out that multiplying the production of COVID-19 equipment led to significant measures that led to foreign

currency saving for the country, he said "it also helped us cope with problems and not to run out of equipment because no matter how much money we gave, no country had the equipment to sell."

He also announced that two types of diagnostic kits are now mass-produced by knowledge-based companies, first one is the RT-PCR tests, 8 million of which are being produced per month; while the other is serology-based tests that a total of 400,000 are being manufactured monthly and is expected to reach up to 2 million.

At present, 40 advanced ventilators are manufactured daily in the medical equipment sector, he explained.

Knowledge-based companies can produce any medicine effective in countering coronavirus or approved by the scientific committee within a week to 10 days, he noted.

Mehdi Kashmiri, director for technology and planning at the science ministry, said in July that about 450 knowledge-based companies were active in the country for manufacturing protective equipment and treatment products to fight the coronavirus.

Production of more than one million face masks per day, production of more than 1.5 liters of disinfectants per day, diagnostic kits, non-contact thermometers, protective clothing, ventilator are among the products manufactured by these companies, he added.

Iranian-made innovative products in the field of diagnosis, screening, and fighting coronavirus were also unveiled to combat the disease, namely, ozone generator, nanotechnology face shields, disinfection gate, and molecular COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

COVID-19 UPDATES

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

New cases	16,596
New deaths	146
Total cases	3,344,122
Total deaths	85,543
New hospitalized patients	1,759
Patients in critical condition	3,506
Total recovered patients	2,995,195
Diagnostic tests conducted	24,358,872
Doses of vaccine injected	6,658,695

Climate characteristic of Iran

(Part 2)

In the winter the clash between cold continental air masses from Siberia and Central Asia, on one hand, and not uncommon warm, moist Mediterranean currents from the west, on the other, is the prime determinant of prevailing weather patterns in Iran.



Local factors can, however, cause extreme variations, ranging from high-pressure areas over the wintry northern plateau (1,204 mb) to warm low-pressure areas over the Caspian Sea in the north (1,018 mb) and Larestan on the Persian Gulf coast (1,016 mb).

This characteristic contrast in atmospheric pressure between northern and southern Iran is even greater in the summer, when a powerful local high-pressure area (1,012 mb) occurs over the relatively "cool" Caspian Sea and at the same time one of the most extreme thermal low-pressure areas (994 mb) on earth develops in the south. Throughout the year, then, more or less powerful contrasts in atmospheric pressure between north and south dominate the climate and weather patterns of the country.

These zones of atmospheric pressure, which are extensive and for the most part clear-cut, are modified to some degree by regional and local wind systems. Among a large number of such systems in Iran two call for particular comment: one is a system of mountain winds that are channeled down the slopes and through the valleys, thus intensifying the effects of the steep terrain, the other is a coastal system that affects a relatively limited expanse of territory.

In autumn the mountain winds blow along the margins of the Alborz and the Zagros, bringing warm, dry currents especially to the Caspian lowlands but also causing occasional breaks in the prevailing humidity of Khuzestan and parts of the Persian Gulf coast.

In Khuzestan they often bring frosts, which endanger the subtropical sugarcane crop; in the highlands, however, it is their great velocity that causes damage, particularly in the Alborz passes at elevations of 2,000-2,500 m, the fluctuating boundary zone between these dry mountain winds and moister currents from the Caspian.

In the upper Safidrud valley near Manjil and in the Talar valley near Gaduk and Firuzkuh, where these broad-scale wind systems overlap with more localized systems, the interpenetrating air masses are channeled through the narrow mountain passes, and the wind velocity often builds to extreme levels before sweeping onto the Iranian plateau with enormous power.

Two lesser regional wind systems also call for comment, the so-called bad-e sad o bist ruz (lit. "120-day wind"), noted for its stability and regularity, and the Shomal (lit. "north (wind)"). Both originate in the northwest during the summer, in response to extreme low pressures over the Persian Gulf and the Indus basin. The Shomal blows across Mesopotamia and sweeps the northern coastal region of the Persian Gulf.

The "120-day wind" blows with great predictability from about mid-May until September across the northern part of the Iranian plateau, eastern Khorasan, Sistan, and parts of Dasht-e Lut (q.v.). It occasionally combines with other, more sporadic local wind systems on the plateau, with results that are felt mainly in the eastern and southeastern parts of the country.

Among the most noteworthy of the lesser coastal winds in Iran is one that blows from Arabia north across the Persian Gulf, almost as a winter counterpart to the Shomal. It originates as a hot, dry west wind laden with dust and sand but picks up a great deal of moisture while crossing the Persian Gulf and thus produces, through the combination of fine sand and high heat, extremely unpleasant weather in Khuzestan and the Zagros foothills.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)



Without water, everything withers

Foreign students in Iran to get coronavirus vaccine

→ 1 In 2013, 35 centers were allowed to admit foreign students, which has increased to 77 in 2021.

According to the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), Iranian universities are projected to attract about 75,000 foreign students.

The universities have the capacity to admit up to 90,000 foreign students, however, it requires the creation of appropriate educational infrastructure, the expansion of diplomacy, appropriate publicity, and so on, Rahimi explained.

Currently, foreign nationals constitute 1.64 percent of the country's student population.

According to the 20-Year National Vision Document (ending 2025), foreign students should account for 1.8 percent of the whole student population, which is likely to even reach 2 percent.

UN appreciates Iran for vaccinating foreign nationals

Iran has generously considered refugees over the



age of 75 for vaccination against coronavirus, Indrika Ratwatte, Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said in May, appreciating Iran for over four decades of hosting refugees.

Iran cooperates with the United Nations on hosting refugees, and the main focus of the UNHCR is to help the country to find a solution for the foreign nationals, Ratwatte stated.

Pointing out that over the last 20 years, a large number of foreign nationals have returned to their homeland voluntarily, he said that however, in recent years, there has been a significant decline in the voluntary return of citizens to their country, and despite efforts in Afghanistan to restore stability to security.

Our focus is on supporting the services provided to Afghan refugees, especially in the field of health in Iran, he highlighted.

He expressed appreciation for generously vaccinating the foreign national aging 75 or above, adding, the UNHCR has also supported Iran's activities, especially in the field of personal protective equipment and disinfectants, and is working closely with the Ministry of Health.

Over 27,000 soldiers receive vocational training in 3 months

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Over 27,000 soldiers have received vocational training in the first three months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-June 21), Habib Erfanmanesh, director of education management at the Technical and Vocational Training Organization, has said.

The comprehensive plan for vocational training of soldiers, which started in June 2017, was launched with the aim of promoting attractiveness and vitality in the military service, as well as training of soldiers in the period before, during,

and after the service.

Based on a 5-year plan, approved for the comprehensive skill training, targets 100 percent coverage of soldiers through general, basic, and specialized skills training.

There are two types of skills for soldiers and in various economic sectors including industry, services, agriculture, culture, and art, which include many jobs, he said, YJC reported on Friday.

On average, the training courses are about 100 hours for soldiers, from short courses of 40 to 50 hours to 150 to 160



hours, he explained, adding, the soldiers receive a valid certificate, that can be

translated and provided to organizations abroad.

The plan has so far trained over 250,000 soldiers, he stated.

He went on to note that this year, we tend to expand training courses to provide soldiers in deprived areas with vocational skills.

"Of course, the goal is not just training, but employment, so we will be with the soldiers after the end of military service and support them to find a suitable job and provide them with the necessary facilities," he concluded.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

International environment exhibition to be held in Tehran

The 19th International Exhibition on the Environment will be held in Tehran on March 4-7, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

At this year's exhibition, various industrial, business and service units will be presenting their environmental achievements, as well as environmental science centers and universities specializing in the environment.

The exhibition will be held under the theme of "environment, social responsibility of 80 million rangers".

نمایشگاه بین‌المللی محیط‌زیست در تهران برگزار می‌شود

نوزدهمین نمایشگاه بین‌المللی محیط‌زیست از ۱۴ تا ۱۷ اسفندماه در محل دائمی نمایشگاه‌های بین‌المللی تهران برگزار می‌شود.

به گزارش ایرنا، در نمایشگاه امسال واحدهای مختلف صنعتی، تجاری و خدماتی دستاوردهای زیست محیطی خود را ارائه می‌دهند و از سوی دیگر مراکز دانش بنیان و دانشگاه‌هایی که در زمینه محیط زیست به صورت تخصصی فعالیت می‌کنند نیز در این نمایشگاه حضور خواهند داشت.

شعار امسال این نمایشگاه، «محیط زیست، مسوولیت اجتماعی ۸۰ میلیون محیط بان» تعیین شده است.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When this world favors somebody, it lends him the attributes, and surpassing merits of others and when it turns its face away from him it snatches away even his own excellences and fame.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



■ Golar Dashti is currently showcasing her 17 landscape paintings and a video in an exhibition at Saless Gallery. The exhibit will be running until July 27 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



■ Ehsan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings Mahbubeh Barzi. The exhibit named "Quarantine" will run until July 14 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.



■ A collection of paintings by Raha Khosroshahi is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery. The exhibitions will run until July 13 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.

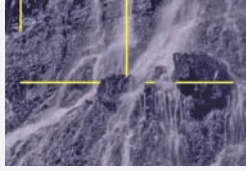


■ Artibition Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a number top Iranian artists, including Ahmad Esfandiari, Nasrollah Afjei, Parvaneh Etemadi, Mansureh Hosseini, Moharrameh Qanbari and Sadeq Tabrizi. The exhibit named "Collector 8" runs until July 23 at the gallery located at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golsnabi St., off Shariati Ave.



■ Paintings by Elnaz Abbasi, Hamid Musavi, Mohammadreza Musavi, Ehsan Elyasi, Fatemeh Jmalian, Samira Talebi and several other artists are on view in an exhibition at Golhayeh Davudi Gallery. The exhibition will be running until July 14 at the gallery located at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.

Multimedia



■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Ali Shayesteh, Abolfazl Haruni, Afsaneh Modir-Amani, Soheil Mokhtar, Nariman Farrokhi, Rana Dehqan and several other artists is underway at +2 Gallery. The exhibitions will run until July 23 at the gallery located at 8 Bidar St. off Fereshteh St.



■ Artworks in various media by a group of artists, including Hamid Mirzai, Helia Nasrollahi, Zahra Jafari, Khosro Torkaman, Akram Sadeqian and Hedyeh Sabbaghi, are on view in an exhibition at Zarna Gallery. The exhibit will continue until July 20 at 10 Esko Alley near Daneshgah St. and Enqelab Ave.



■ Entezami Gallery is hanging paintings by a group of artists, including Azita Ahmadi, Reyhaneh Javidi, Bita Chegini, Saber Akbari, Sahar Rezaei and Mahsa Khosravi, in an exhibition entitled "Qoqnus". The exhibit will run until July 14 at the gallery located at 608 Shariati Ave. near Motahhari St.



■ Artworks in various media by Meriem Bennani, Christian Boltanski, David Claerbout, Ariane Michel, Ange Leccia, Angelika Markul and several other artists are on view in three separate exhibitions at Argo Gallery. The exhibits will continue until April 30 at the gallery located at 6 Behdasht Alley, Taqavi St. off Ferdowsi St.

Mahmud Maddah, Living Bearer of Intangible Heritage, dies at 79

A R T **TEHRAN** — Mahmud d e s k Maddah, an Iranian artist who had been named a Living Bearer of Intangible Heritage for his pardeh-khani performances, has died of heart disease. He was 79.

He was living in Vazvan, a small town in the central Iranian province of Isfahan, and received the title along with his brother, Ali, on February 28, 2018, Shahinshahr Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handcrafts Office director Javad Chehrizi announced on Wednesday.

"These brothers had learned the art from their father and their ancestors such as Khadbakhsh, Hosseinali, Yadollah and performed naqqali and pardeh-khani across the country for over 70 years," he added. Pardeh-khani is a form of traditional Iranian storytelling which is performed by a pardeh-khan (scene narrator) or morshed. It is a form of naqqali, Iranian dramatic story-telling that is mostly dedicated to tragic stories of Muslim leaders, especially the Imams of the Shia.

In a letter of condolences published on Thursday, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handcrafts Deputy Minister Mohammad-



This file photo shows Morshed Mahmud Daddah performing a pardeh-khani show.

Hassan Talebian said, "Master Mahmud Maddah and his brother made great endeavors to protect the art of naqqali and pardeh-khani with performances on religious events, especially on the Ashura event."

Naqqali is the oldest form of dramatic

performance in Iran and has long played an important role in society from the courts to the villages.

It was added to UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2011.

Armenian Ambassador Artashes Toumanian visits Farabi Cinema Foundation

was extended for three years in February.

The acclaimed drama "Yeve" was directed by Iranian-Armenian filmmaker Anahid Abad based on the MOU and garnered several awards at international events, including the award for best foreign-language feature film at the 11th Downtown Los Angeles - DTLA Film Festival.

Speaking at the meeting, Tabesh called "Yeve" the first successful outcome of the MOU and said that the agreement can pave the ground for more joint productions between Iran and Armenia.

"Iran has pursued effective film diplomacy, and Armenian filmmakers have been frequent visitors to Iranian international events, including the Fajr festival and Isfahan children's film festival, and we hope these relationships will be expanded," he added.

Toumanian pointed to the multi-layered nature of relations between Iran and Armenia and said that his country is ready

to foster the close relationship.

He called the Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival the country's most important film event and asked for more active participation of Iranian filmmakers and film organizations in the festival.

"Yeve", a co-production between the Farabi Cinema Foundation and the National Cinema Center of Armenia, premiered at the Moscow Cinema in the Armenian capital of Yerevan in September 2017.

Tabesh and National Cinema Center of Armenia director Shushanik Mirzakhanyan also attended the screening of the film.

"The cinema of Iran can pave the ground for cinematic growth based on morality through joint productions not only with Armenia but also with the neighboring countries with shared commonalities," Tabesh said.

"Yeve" was also selected to represent Armenia at the Oscars.

San Francisco Frozen Film Festival picks movies from Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Seven movies d e s k from Iranian filmmakers will be showcased at the 15th San Francisco Frozen Film Festival, which will be held online from July 14 to 18.

"Sky Sun, Tile Sun", "Gazing", "The Recess", "The Gull's Shriek", "Paper God", "The Wound" and "Performance" will be screened in various categories of the festival. "Sky Sun, Tile Sun" by Ziba Azhang has been selected for the animation films competition.

In this movie, due to the intensity of the explosion and bombardment of the sun, the tiled wall breaks and it gets dark everywhere. People help each other to build a new sun for the sky.

"Gazing" is about Siavash, a man in his 30s who lost both of his parents during a traumatic

childhood event. In early life, this trauma induced within him a lack of perspective in the reality of his day-to-day life.

Directed by Namira Hafizi, the film is competing in the experimental films section. Five other movies have been selected for the short dramas category.

"The Recess" by Navid Nikkhhah-Azad tells the story of Sahar, a 17-year-old student who is determined to skip high school during recess and go to the football stadium to watch the football match between Esteghlal F.C. vs. Al-Ain as part of the AFC Champions League, which is against the national ban prohibiting women from entering football stadiums in Iran.

Directed by Ava Qahremanifar, "The Gull's Shriek" is about Susan and Raha, two senior students who are studying dramatic arts in an

art school. They are both candidates for the role of Johnathan Livingston from Richard Bach, but soon after the audition some peculiar events begin to arise and take place, more peculiar than Susan's appearance.

"Paper God" by Danial Mahmudnia is about Ali, a disabled boy in a wheelchair who aspires to go to the top of a cliff from which he can launch his paper plane like the other boys.

Directed by Sahar Nurmonavar, "The Wound" is about a 9-year-old girl who menstruates after an earthquake. Having lost her family in the quake while she knows nothing about menstruation, she thinks she has been wounded.

"Performance" is about Paria who has become pregnant unwillingly. Mentally, she is lost and she doesn't want to share



"Sky Sun, Tile Sun" by Ziba Azhang

her pregnancy neither with her parents nor with any teachers/nurses at school. With the help of a classmate, she tries to abort her pregnancy. Behnaz Eskandarnajad is the director of the movie.

New Persian translation of Dostoevsky's "The Gambler" comes to Iranian bookstores

of Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky's novella "The Gambler" by Hamidreza Atashbarab.

The story is about a young tutor in the employment of a formerly wealthy Russian general.

It reflects Dostoevsky's own addiction to roulette, which was in more ways than one the inspiration for the book.

Dostoevsky completed the novella in 1866 under a strict deadline to pay off gambling debts.

In this dark and compelling short novel, Dostoevsky tells the story of Alexey Ivanovitch, a young tutor working in the household of an imperious Russian general.

Alexey tries to break through the wall of the established order in Russia, but instead becomes mired in the endless downward spiral of betting and loss.

His intense and inescapable addiction is accentuated

by his affair with the General's cruel yet seductively adept niece, Polina.

In "The Gambler", Dostoevsky reaches the heights of drama with this stunning psychological portrait.

Several films have been inspired by the book. "The Great Sinner", a loose adaptation, starred Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner under the direction of Robert Siodmak in 1949.

"Le Joueur", a 1958 French film adaptation by Claude Autant-Lara, starred by Gerard Philipe.

A 1972 co-production of the USSR and Czechoslovakia by Lenfilm Studio and Barrandov Studios, directed by Alexei Batalov, follows the book closely.

There are at least three other Persian translations of the novella by Jalal Ale-Ahmad, Soroush Habibi and Saleh Hosseini.



A poster for the Persian translation of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novella "The Gambler" by Hamidreza Atashbarab.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Elmi Farhangi Publications d e s k in Tehran has released a new translation

Art, architecture during Qajar period

Part 8

A specialty of Kerman was a fine wool twill woven with a polychrome design of repeating botteh or floral cone motifs. These Kerman twills were woven in a rich color scheme dominated by red, yellow, blue, and green; they were much used for men's frock coats and long robes.

Another textile mass produced in large quantities was block-printed cotton calico or qalamkari, a specialty of the Isfahan bazaar, where its production still continues.

Designs were printed on a cloth using pear wood blocks variously carved with peonies, lotus, carnations, cypress trees, peacocks, tigers, floral stripes and bands.

These units were combined to form a wealth of patterns printed in indigo blue, deep red, and yellow.

Pieces were frequently stamped with the

maker's name and date so that some idea of the chronological range can be deduced; most of the surviving pieces date from about 1870 through to the early 20th century. Qalamkari was much in demand for covers and hangings and was also used for women's jackets and linings to silk brocade garments.

Great versatility was also shown in the embroidered textiles that ranged from domestic needlework to the work of professional craftsmen.

Velvets and silks embroidered with floral motifs in couched gold and silver threads were used for luxurious covers and saddlecloths and were clearly professional works.

A lighter form of colored embroidery attributed to Kashan, Isfahan, Yazd, and Shiraz were the cloths and covers worked with graceful compositions of floral medallions, sprays, and scrolls in silks on a cream

background.

Kerman produced a type of wool embroidery that resembled the design and color scheme of the famous woven textiles. Here motifs of cypress trees, floral cones, and so forth were worked on a fine twill in small flat stitches to imitate the effect of the Kerman weave.

A type of embroidery that seems to be confined to the 19th century is wool work of Rasht, featuring elaborate compositions based on flowers and birds and sometimes figure subjects built up in a combination of patchwork and appliqué with details embroidered in silk. An elaborate example of Rasht patchwork is a hanging at the Bern Historical Museum worked into a portrait of Fath-Ali Shah.

An important category of domestic embroidery was white work, where

combinations of small geometrical motifs were worked into a formal repeating pattern using the techniques of needle weaving and cut and drawn threadwork in white silk on finely woven cotton.

This type of needlework was used for small covers, cloths, and the face veils that featured a drawn thread lattice at eye level.

Finally the production of a class of textile, the knotted pile carpet, perhaps considered most characteristic of Persia continued. Fine pieces were produced, especially in the centers of Khorasan and the nomad areas of Kordistan, but the indigenous tradition had increased to contend with Western influence introduced through the agents of European carpet enterprises and the import of aniline dyes in the mid-19th century.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
Concluded