



Raisi reaffirms support for Palestinians *Page 2*



Alireza Faghani to referee Tehran derby *Page 3*



Quarterly tire production rises 10% yr/yr *Page 4*



Lake Urmia level declines by 30cm in Q1 *Page 7*



On Erdogan's phone call with Israeli president

See page 3

U.S. cannot work with its foes, says professor

BY M.A. SAKI
An American academic says that the U.S. can't work with its foes because it could leave her in a weaker position. "Some people think we shouldn't legitimize 'pariah states' (those who don't follow the Western order); we can't trust our foes; working with our foes could leave us in a weaker position," Brian Warby, the associate professor of political science at the University of Northern Iowa, tells the Tehran Times.

The U.S. military has withdrawn more than 90% of its troops and armaments from Afghanistan. At the same time Taliban is advancing in various districts in the war-ravaged country. The move has raised questions about the future of Afghanistan.

Taliban fighters in Afghanistan announced on July 14 that they had taken control of one of the main border crossings with Pakistan, perhaps the most strategic objective they have captured so far in a rapid advance across the country.

According to Reuters, a Pakistani official said fighters had taken down the Afghan government flag from atop the Friendship Gate at the border crossing between the Pakistani town of Chaman and the Afghan town of Wesh.

Many in Afghanistan and other countries in the region are of the opinion that U.S. unilateral policies ended in such a situation. However, some claim that partnership with Afghanistan's neighbor and regional powers, including Russia and China, could have saved the country to degenerate into anarchy. But it is not easy for the Americans to work with their rivals.

"Diplomacy is slow and we need quick action; diplomacy requires compromise and many Americans don't want to compromise with the 'axis of evil' (a term used by George W. Bush to describe Iran, N. Korea and Venezuela, but represents some Americans' feelings about Russia and China as well)," Warby notes.

Following is the text of the interview:
How do you read U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan?

This is a really broad question, so I'll give you my take on it. The U.S. has had a presence in Afghanistan for a long time. There has been talking about wanting to "get out" of Afghanistan for a long time. Even though the U.S. was mostly out of Afghanistan already, especially compared to the "surge" under Obama where we had more than a hundred thousand soldiers on the ground.

Continued on page 5

Visit Khuzestan, land of sunshine, palm trees and history

TEHRAN – The southwestern Iranian province of Khuzestan is one of the oldest regions on the Iranian plateau. Due to its oil refineries, Khuzestan is considered to be the heartland of Iranian energy production.

There is nothing like this land for its hospitality, with its kind-hearted and loving people. A place where the soil is blessed with goodness and generosity.

Known for its warm climate, Khuzestan is the land of palm trees and sunshine.

The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) involved the province heavily. As a result, it suffered many damages, traces of which are still evident today.

In spite of this, it is one of the most popular tourist destinations of the country, as it is home to the World Heritage Sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Hydraulic System, as well as several other historical sites and natural features.

Here is the list of some important tourist

attractions of the province.

Susa

The UNESCO-registered Susa was one of the city-states of ancient Elam (2700 – 539 BC), which later became the winter capital of the Persian Achaemenid kings, who ruled Iran from c. 550 to 330 BC. Elam was an ancient country in southwestern Iran approximately equivalent to the modern region of Khuzestan province.

Part of Susa is still inhabited as Shush on a strip of land between the rivers Shaour (a tributary of the Karkheh) and Dez.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Susa has been continuously inhabited since 4,200 BC placing it among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. In addition, there are traces at Susa of a village inhabited around 7,000 BC and painted pottery dating from ca. 5,000 BC at the site.

Continued on page 6

How did Yemen become world's worst humanitarian crisis?

Over the years, Saudi Arabia's blockade of Yemen has been widely documented as the main reason behind the crisis. However, this policy of placing an entire region or country under siege or economic blockade did not originate from Riyadh.

Rather the policy reflects how the Israeli regime has treated the Gaza Strip by placing it under blockade since 2007 after the Hamas political party won the elections in the coastal enclave. What Israel wanted the people of Gaza to know is that you won't see any economic prosperity as long as Hamas controls the strip (despite the fact the people voted for the party). Tel Aviv's siege on Gaza is not because Hamas is Israel's enemy, but because Hamas is an Israeli enemy that Israel cannot militarily defeat, despite its many attempts. By placing the entire population of territory under an all-out blockade, Israel to this day hopes it will weaken Hamas's popularity and the people of Gaza will turn on

their own government. Not only has this policy failed; it's also a war crime, where Gaza is now the world's largest open-air prison with some 2 million people locked in a cage.

Another example of this can be seen in America's so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran. The reality on the ground is that this campaign affects the ordinary people of Iran. As many observers have noted, Washington is incapable of militarily toppling the Islamic Republic, a country that stands in the way of America's imperialist goals, the former administration resorted to what Iranian officials refer to as economic terrorism. A campaign that the current U.S. administration continues to deploy today. Essentially it hurt ordinary Iranians and hopes for domestic unrest until Tehran goes back to the days of answering to Washington (pre-1979).

Continued on page 5

Wind erosion incurs annual loss of \$714m

TEHRAN – Wind erosion brings an annual economic and environmental damage of 30 trillion rials (nearly \$714 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to the country, according to the latest studies in 2019.

Strong winds move sand in desert areas, leading to wind erosion and damage to infrastructure such as roads, railways, and farmland, Vahid Jafarian, director of the desert affairs of the Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization said.

About 30 million hectares of natural resources are affected by wind erosion, 13.5 million hectares of which are the hotspots, he further added.

Jafarian went on to note that wind erosion hotspots are scattered in 22 provinces of the country and Semnan is one of the provinces with the highest wind erosion sources, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Desertification and wind erosion in natural resources is a dynamic phenomenon that changes

with drought and rainfall conditions, he said, adding, Iran is located in arid and ultra-arid climate and 88 percent of the country is covered by this type of climate.

This year, a total of about 3 trillion rials (around \$71 million) has been proposed for fighting desertification, but due to the drought, more funds should be spent on desertification compared to the previous years, he highlighted.

Continued on page 7



© ISNA / Masoud Moheghhagh

Public vaccination using COVIRAN BAREKAT underway

The immunization of people against the coronavirus using homegrown COVIRAN BAREKAT vaccine is underway across the country for the age group above 68 years.

On June 14, COVIRAN BAREKAT received the license for public use. Results of the second human trial phase showed that the vaccine creates immunity by 93.5 percent, he noted.

Eleven countries from Asia and South America, and a European country have asked for importing the vaccine.

Iran: U.S. must stop interfering in Cuba

TEHRAN — In a statement late on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh called for an immediate end to U.S. unilateral sanctions against other countries, including Cuba.

Cuba has faced extensive U.S. sanctions for more than six decades, which has affected the people's economy and livelihoods, especially in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Khatibzadeh said, "In this situation, in which the United States is mainly responsible for the many problems created for the Cuban people, it has appeared as a supporter of the Cuban protests and, in clear violation of explicit international rules, has sought to interfere in the internal affairs of this country."

The Foreign Ministry spokesman emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran, within the framework of its principled positions, while condemning the illegal U.S. sanctions, which is an important factor in the economic hardship for the Cuban people, condemns any interference in the internal affairs of the country.

"As a country that is facing the United States' oppression, we express solidarity with the Cuban people and government and call for an immediate end to unilateral U.S. sanctions against Cuba," Khatibzadeh said.

Hundreds of Cubans began protesting on Sunday in the towns of San Antonio de los Banos, near the capital of Havana, and Palma Soriano, in the country's southeast, against extended electricity blackouts, the worsening economic condition, and to demand Covid-19 vaccines.

Leader's letter to Putin was 'very important': ambassador

TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has given more details about the letter Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei sent to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Speaking in an interview with Iranian state TV, the ambassador said the letter was in the direction of boosting Iran-Russia ties in various fields.

"This letter that the Leader wrote to Putin was very important, it was aimed to expand the relations between the two countries and there are different areas in this letter, both in terms of the future

agreement that should be reached and in terms of economic cooperation," Jalali said, according to Fars News.

He stated that the relations between the two countries are expanding in different dimensions and our main weakness is in our relations in both cultural and economic sectors. "Therefore, these two issues have been mentioned so that we can take steps to develop economic relations. The letter also addresses regional and international cooperation," Jalali continued.

Continued on page 3

Power plant construction permits issued for big industries

TEHRAN- The managing director of Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) announced that the necessary permits for the construction of the power plants were issued for the big industries.

Making the remarks in a press conference on Wednesday, Mohsen Tarztalab said that the big and high-consuming industries of steel, metals, and mining have been previously supplying for the permits to

construct the electricity self-supply and self-consumption units, and their requests have been examined.

The minister of industry, mining, and trade examined 13 applications in this regard in a meeting with the mentioned industries, and finally a list was prepared and sent to the Energy Ministry, the official explained.

Continued on page 4

Book of Leader's opinion on human rights issues published in Azerbaijani

TEHRAN – A book carrying the views of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on human rights issues has been published in Azerbaijani.

"Views of Hazrat Ayatollah Khamenei on Human Rights Issues" compiled by Akram Fazlikhani was released by the Iran Cultural Center in Nakhchivan, which is the publisher of the book.

"The Leader has addressed the world on

his views of human rights during various meetings, and this book explores some of the views and also examples of human rights violations by the U.S., the greatest bogus human rights supporter," the Iranian cultural attaché in Azerbaijan, Abolfazl Rabei, said in a press release published on Wednesday by Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

Continued on page 8

U.S. is responsible for crisis in Afghanistan

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In a meeting titled “Recent Developments in Afghanistan,” Deputy Foreign Minister Seyyed Rasoul Mousavi elaborated on the situation in Afghanistan, holding the United States chiefly responsible for the new emerging conflict in Afghanistan.

Mousavi began by saying that in one of the reports that was sent to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, he stated that in any policy-making and decision-making process in the Afghanistan issue, the Foreign Ministry should consider the interests of the two countries.



Pointing to the current situation in Afghanistan, he said according to reports 207 districts are currently under the control of the Taliban, with 70 districts in conflict and 102 districts under the control of the government. In terms of population, the Taliban-controlled areas are approximately 16 million, while the government-controlled areas are 10 million, and six million are settled in areas of conflict.

He said, “If we want to consider in terms of area, 45% of the area is in the hands of the Taliban, there is a conflict in 29% of areas, and 26% of the country is in the hands of the government. If we look at the district, population, and territory, the Taliban have the upper hand. Indeed, the main cities are not under the control of the Taliban, but it can be said that the Taliban have the upper hand.”

The deputy minister referred to the upcoming scenarios, including the revival of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan by the Taliban, saying, “This scenario is likely, but it should be noted that the Emirate was announced in 1997-2001, but an important weakness was that it was not recognized by the international community. Only Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan recognized it.”

Mousavi, director-general of the South Asia department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also referred to the inter-Afghan dialogue meeting last week in Tehran and said, “The participants in the Tehran meeting were a unique team. A group that believed in a republican system.”

A two-day inter-Afghan dialogue meeting was held in Tehran on Wednesday and Thursday (July 8-9). Representatives from the Afghan government, high-ranking Republican figures, and the Taliban’s high political delegation were present at the meeting.

Regarding the Tehran meeting, the deputy foreign minister added that five years ago when Haneef Atmar, Afghanistan’s then-national security adviser, visited Tehran and met with Admiral Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, there was a discussion on good offices between the central government and the Taliban. Iran agreed to act as a mediator, and the Taliban agreed to talk to the government.

He continued, “At that time, the Taliban had small demands, for example, that governors be from them and so on. The Taliban’s readiness and their demands in January 2018 and during Shamkhani’s visit to Kabul he raised this issue with Hamdullah Mohib, the central Afghan government thanked Iran and said, ‘let us answer.’ Of course, we know that the Americans stopped them.”

He said that the United States accused Iran of having ties with the Taliban.

“I leave the responsibility to the United States, which did not allow these negotiations to take place in 2018, and then it itself formed the peace negotiations and labeled it as the peace negotiations.”

“Peace must be achieved between those who are at war,” he said. The Iranian diplomat proposed the question, “How is it that one country has a strategic alliance with another, but concludes a peace treaty with an insurgent group against it?”

Mousavi said the United States must have built structures before it had left.

No peace was formed, and the security structures did not become what they should be, he regretted, adding a five-star army was created that had no operational capability,

“An army that could not resist.”

He added, “For me, Afghanistan is my second country and we should all try to understand the reality in this situation.”

While assessing the role of the United States in Afghanistan and their plans for the period after leaving Afghanistan, the Foreign Ministry official said, “I believe that the United States has suffered a definite defeat in Afghanistan. The United States had no choice and the return of America was inevitable.”

Mousavi said that The Doha talks were meant to turn this defeat into a new political and security opportunity, but whether it can or not is another matter.

The U.S. and the Taliban held a series of talks in Doha, Qatar. The talks started during the Trump presidency.

Mousavi said he believes the Doha agreement was for the U.S. to manage the defeat and pull itself out of the situation.

He also said that the United States “did not have a strategy for Afghanistan, but a set of strategies.”

“U.S. is conspiring”

Mousavi said that the United States is now conspiring and wants to engage Afghanistan in a new war.

“The new U.S. war in Afghanistan is an inter-Afghan war and the inter-Afghan war is very dangerous for the future of the region and its neighbors, and efforts must be made to prevent a new war,” the diplomat insisted.

Chief of staff meets president-elect

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN**— Mahmoud Vaezi, the outgoing presidential chief of staff met with the President-elect, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, on Wednesday to brief him about the latest developments in the country.

Vaezi also wished success for Raisi.

The meetings are within the framework of civilized transition of power that the Rouhani administration had promised.

So far, most of Rouhani’s cabinet members have met Raisi to brief him about their areas of responsibility as well as current and future opportunities and challenges.

Raisi will be sworn as president in early August.

Zarif urges NAM to resist unilateralism that threatens global peace

“Multilateralism has been undermined”



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday urged the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to establish a “united front” to counter unilateralism that “continues to undermine the rule of law” and “threatens peace and stability throughout the world.”

Zarif made the remarks in an online speech to the NAM mid-term ministerial meeting through a videoconference.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif said Iran continues “to advocate the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in West Asia.”

He cited Iran’s efforts to put an end to the crises in Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan as examples.

Following is the text of Zarif’s speech:

The surging global challenges we face today have reinforced the need for greater collective action at the international level. In fact, multilateralism is no longer the prudent alternative. Rather, it is the only viable response to the world’s pressing crises. There can be no doubt that the Non-Aligned Movement—as a prominent intergovernmental platform—can provide a good opportunity to enhance and strengthen global partnerships at a time of rising unilateralism and protectionism in the international arena.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the greatest test of worldwide solidarity in generations. It has reminded us of how interdependent we actually are, and how crucial international co-

operation is to our collective health, prosperity and security. This pandemic—as any other—calls for a strong coordinated international response that can rapidly expand access to tests, treatments and vaccines while recognizing extensive immunization as a public good that must be available and affordable for all, including—and perhaps especially—developing countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently and continuously demonstrated its commitment to multilateralism as the tenet of a robust foreign policy. As such, we continue to advocate the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in West Asia. In this context, we are engaged in active cooperation with the UN in peace efforts in

Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan. We proposed the “Hormuz Peace Endeavor—HOPE” as well as a “Regional Dialogue Forum” in the Persian Gulf, as inclusive approaches to cooperation and dispute settlement.

And globally, we have demonstrated our resolute commitment to dialogue and diplomacy by actively participating in different international fora to tackle a multitude of international challenges, including in recent months the negotiations to revive and resuscitate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This, in spite of abject failure of Europe to provide the promised economic dividends to our people following the unlawful U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA, and the reluctance of the new U.S.

administration to abandon Trump’s failed “maximum pressure” policy.

Multilateralism has been undermined and its practice threatened by unilateralism and bullying practices of certain powers. The extreme unilateral adventurism of the U.S. is the most important challenge that almost all of us have been facing—one way or another. It continues to undermine the rule of law at the international level and threatens peace and stability throughout the world. While some nations are threatened by economic terrorism and military aggressions, others bear the brunt of a crude American protectionist impulse.

The blind and unbridled support for apartheid in Palestine, and the denial of the basic rights of the Palestinian people, further exacerbate the unstable situation in the entire Middle East region. The very few Arab countries who have aligned themselves with these and other U.S. schemes not only betray the Palestinian people, but further jeopardize peace and security in the whole region.

To defend multilateralism, it is imperative to reject and prevent any perceived benefit and advantage drawn from unlawful unilateral actions and to reject any pressure in contravention of international law and UN Security Council resolutions.

And, today it is more incumbent upon NAM than ever to form a united front to reject unilateralism and promote multilateralism in order to collectively tackle all the complex challenges facing our movement today.

Raisi reaffirms support for Palestinians

President-Elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi has reiterated Iran’s support for the Palestinian nation until the liberation of Jerusalem al-Quds from Israeli occupation.

Raeisi had telephone conversations with Ismail Haniyeh and Ziyad al-Nakhalah, leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the Palestinian resistance movements based in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon’s al-Mayadeen TV channel reported on Tuesday.

“Rest assured that Iran will continue to defend Palestine and support its nation until the liberation of Jerusalem al-Quds,” the president-elect told the resistance leaders.

Raeisi also congratulated the Palestinians on their victory

against the Israeli regime during the latest war on Gaza, stressing that the oppressed nation and the heroic resistance of Palestine once again shone in a decisive test as they forced Israel to retreat in their push towards liberating al-Quds al-Sharif.

Tel Aviv launched the bombing campaign against Gaza on May 10, after Palestinians retaliated against violent raids on worshipers at the al-Aqsa Mosque and the regime’s plans to force a number of Palestinian families out of their homes at Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem al-Quds.

Apparently caught off guard by unprecedented rocket barrages from Gaza as part of Operation al-Quds Sword, Israel

announced a unilateral ceasefire on May 21, which Palestinian resistance groups accepted with Egyptian mediation.

According to Gaza’s Health Ministry, at least 260 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli offensive, including 66 children and 39 women, and 1948 others were wounded.

Haniyeh, for his part, congratulated Raeisi on his victory in Iran’s presidential election and appreciated the Islamic Republic’s support for the Palestine issue.

Similarly, Nakhalah wished success for Raeisi and thanked Iran for backing the Palestinian nation and its resistance movement. *(Source: Press TV)*

‘NATO chief’s remarks misguided, irresponsible spinning of facts’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s diplomatic mission to the European Union on Monday vehemently responded to recent remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg regarding Iran’s dealing with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the nuclear safeguards.

The diplomatic mission, based in Brussels, capital of the European Union, made the remarks after Stoltenberg addressed Iran’s nuclear agreement and cooperation with the IAEA following a meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid in Brussels.

“The NATO Secretary-General has reportedly ‘restressed Allies’ continued calls on Iran to uphold and fully implement all its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency,” the Iranian mission said in a press release posted on its Twitter account.

It added that utterance of such remarks by the NATO chief would require the “moral high ground,” emphasizing that standing next to a man whose respective regime is neither a member of the NPT, nor any other international disarmament instrument of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), does not help Stoltenberg in terms of the credibility of what he states.

“Such remarks are either misguided or a grossly irresponsible spinning of facts, not to mention highly irrelevant,” the mission added, according to Press TV.

It reiterated Iran’s full compliance with the NPT and its complete implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

According to the press release, making such statements while standing next to the representative of a regime that “flouts international humanitarian law and violates the fundamental human rights of the people on the one hand, and has made a mockery of non-proliferation and disarmament mechanisms on the other hand, is only an indescribably sad irony.”

The Iranian mission concluded by calling on the NATO secretary general to “practice what he preaches specifically as regards this ‘ally’ and invite it to accede to the NPT,” while refraining from such misguided calls on Iran.

In the meeting with the Israeli foreign minister, the NATO secretary general restressed Allies’ continued calls on Iran to uphold and fully implement all its obligations under the NPT and the IAEA Safeguard Agreement, and refrain from all activities he claims are inconsistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran is among the first countries to have signed the NPT. The country has also put its nuclear program under surveillance of the UN nuclear watchdog.

This is while Israel, the sole nuke-armed entity in the region, is estimated to have 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal. The regime, however, refuses to either accept or deny having the weapons.

It has also refused to sign the NPT amid staunch endeavor by the United States and other Western states on international levels in favor of its non-commitment to the accord.



On Erdogan's phone call with Israeli president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – In a diplomatic turnabout that shocked, and in some cases disappointed, many in the region including Turkey's allies, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke by phone with Israeli President Isaac Herzog after over a decade of Israel-bashing rhetoric from Ankara.

During the phone conversation, "President Erdogan underscored that Turkey-Israel relations were of great importance in terms of security and stability in the Middle East [West Asia], and that there was a great potential for cooperation" between Ankara and Tel Aviv "in various areas, notably energy, tourism and technology," according to a statement put out by the Turkish presidency.

"Pointing out that the bilateral trade volume increased despite the pandemic, President Erdogan said that it was of mutual interest to benefit from that potential," the statement continued.

Herzog's office also issued a similar statement, saying, "The presidents emphasized in their call that the ties between Israel and Turkey are of great importance to the security and the stability of the Middle East."

The Israeli readout also noted that Erdogan and Herzog underlined "the great importance of maintaining contact and ongoing dialogue despite the differences of opinion, with the goal of making positive steps toward a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which will also contribute to the improvement of Israeli-Turkish relations."

The 40-minute call came against a backdrop of a renewed Turkish desire for mending ties with Israel and some other countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Erdogan had already spoken by phone with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz. Meanwhile, Turkish diplomats have been busy negotiating a deal to restore ties with Cairo. Turkey's effort with regard to the restoration of ties with Egypt ended in



failure given the deep mistrust between Cairo and Ankara because of the latter's support of the Muslim Brotherhood, a group that has been at loggerheads with the Egyptian government ever since the ouster of former Egyptian President Mohammad Morsi. And the level of Ankara's ties with Riyadh didn't measure up to Turkish expectations.

Then Turkey turned to Israel. Although they were strained for more than ten years, Israel-Turkey relations had never been brought to a total halt. Tourism and trade ties between the two never stopped even when Erdogan was launching into vociferous diatribes against Israeli leaders for murdering Palestinian children and pummeling Palestinian homes with airstrikes.

Now, Erdogan seems to be aspiring to have better relations with Israel, even though his country and he himself have been touting themselves as the champions of defending the Palestinian cause. "Our heart desires that we can move our

relations with [Israel] to a better point," Erdogan said in December 2020, adding, "Our relations with Israel on intelligence have not ceased anyway, they are still continuing."

The Turkish president implied at the time that the improvement of his country's ties with Israel hinged on the change of some Israeli people "at the top," a reference to then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose relations with Erdogan deteriorated to a rarely seen level. With Netanyahu gone and new Israeli leadership taking office, Erdogan saw an opportunity for better relations with a regime he kept denouncing its "terrorism" against the Palestinians. During the May flare-up between Israel and the Gaza Strip, Erdogan castigated Israel for their careless ill-treatment of the Palestinians.

These positions, and earlier rebukes, often pulled on the heartstrings of millions of ordinary Arabs across the Arab world.

Many of them still proudly remember how then-Prime Minister Erdogan grilled then-Israeli President Shimon Peres at the World Economic Forum in 2009. "When it comes to killing, you know very well how to kill. And I know very well how you killed children on the beaches," Erdogan angrily told Peres in an intense argument over Israel's war on Gaza, and then walked off the stage.

Turkish officials knew how to earn praise from Arab public opinion. With every Israeli-Palestinian flare-up, they quickly seized on the opportunity to receive a standing ovation in the Arab world.

This, however, may soon come to an end. For millions of Arabs, the Palestinian cause is not something to be measured with economic potentials. Erdogan may succeed in persuading his fellow compatriots that renewed ties with Israel would result in economic benefits for Turkish citizens, but he can never justify his ties with Israel to millions of Arabs who thought that they finally found a leader who can rise up against the Israeli oppression.

The Turkish government seems to be aware of this issue and has taken precautionary measures by underlining that Turkey would continue to support the Palestinians. Earlier this week, Erdogan met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Istanbul. "During the meeting, President Erdogan underlined that Turkey will not remain silent to Israel's oppression in Palestine and that lasting peace and stability cannot be established in the region so long as Israel continues its policies of occupation and annexation," according to a Turkish readout of the meeting. "Turkey will continue to support intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts, the President further stressed, expressing his pleasure over the positive course of the bilateral relations in every area extending from economy and trade to culture, education and tourism."

Leader's letter to Putin was 'very important': ambassador

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has given more details about the letter Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei sent to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Speaking in an interview with Iranian state TV, the ambassador said the letter was in the direction of boosting Iran-Russia ties in various fields.

"This letter that the Leader wrote to Putin was very important, it was aimed to expand the relations between the two countries and there are different areas in this letter, both in terms of the future agreement that should be reached and in terms of economic cooperation," Jalali said, according to Fars News.

He stated that the relations between the two countries are expanding in different dimensions and our main weakness is in our relations in both cultural and economic sectors. "Therefore, these two issues have been mentioned so that we can take steps to develop economic relations. The letter also addresses regional and international cooperation," Jalali continued.

In February, Speaker of Iran's Parliament Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf paid an important visit to Russia during which he delivered a letter from Leader of the Islamic Revolution. The visit was successful, marred only by careless speculations and inaccurate reports on the scheduled meetings of the speaker during his stay in Moscow.

Qalibaf met with his Russian counterpart Vyacheslav Volodin and other officials. Volodin also served as Putin's special representative in receiving Ayatollah Khamenei's message.

"My today's visit to Russia is being done at the invitation of the chairman of the Russian State Duma. The Leader has always underlined our strategic relations with Russia.... One of the outstanding aspects of this visit is that I'm carrying an important message about strategic issues," Qalibaf told reporters at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport before leaving for Moscow.

The message's details are yet to be disclosed. Some Iranian officials suggested that the message was about the current state of play in the region. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, noted that the message had something with Iran's relations with the West after Joe Biden assumed office in the U.S. and the impact of these relations on Tehran's ties with the emerging powers in the East.

Amir-Abdollahian, who accompanied Qalibaf during his visit to Moscow, said the visit was done in a "sensitive period of time" when new people are moving into the White House.

"The visit... will send a message to the Islamic Republic's regional allies that Iran will no longer waste time waiting for the game of the White House's new people or the three European signatories to the JCPOA (France, the UK and Germany)," Amir-Abdollahian said in an article for the khamenei.ir, referring to the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major world powers by its acronym.

"Any decision in the White House will not change the Islamic Republic's approach to maintaining, strengthening, developing and consolidating Tehran's strategic relations with Moscow and Beijing, and the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic and long-term view of Asia as an important player in the last century," the special



aide continued.

The message came against a backdrop of renewed efforts to strengthen strategic ties between Iran and Russia on the one hand and with China on the other.

These efforts were being made in the midst of a public debate in the West over the U.S.'s possible return to the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Putin gave detailed answer to the Leader's letter"

Jalali said Putin gave a detailed answer to the Leader's letter that could open a new chapter in Tehran-Moscow relations.

"Both the content of the letter and what the Supreme Leader mentioned were very important for the development of relations, and Putin also gave a detailed answer in this regard, which could be considered a new chapter in the relations between Iran and Russia," the ambassador said.

He also addressed other issues related to Iran-Russia ties, calling for the deepening of the Iranian understanding of "the new Russia" under Putin.

The Iranian ambassador spoke about the expansion of cultural relations between Iran and Russia. He said the level of the knowledge of the two nations about each other is very low and is not commensurate with the capacity of the two countries' neighborhood and past history.

He pointed out, "We do not have one language to introduce each other, for example in the field of national security and Iran's neighborhood, 300 million people speak Russian as their first language and 500 million as their second language, but we do not yet have a Russian-language television network; of course, this important event will happen soon with the follow-up of the head of the Radio and Television Organization. We have to introduce Iran to the Russians, and on the other hand, the Russians have to introduce themselves to us, and we are seriously weak in this regard."

"We should know the new Russia, but we did not know it, because our relations with Russia are weak and our elite society does not have much contact with Russia. Today there is a mutual need between Iran and Russia. We can cooperate in many areas of technology," he said.

As for trust in the field of international relations, Jalali said, "In the field of bilateral, multilateral and international relations, the discussion of interests is mutual. If we have no interest anywhere, will we have a special relationship with Russia?"

He pointed to a law passed by the Americans to de-

stroy Iran-Russia relations, which also includes annual budgets. "They have budgeted \$1,900 billion to destroy Iran's relations with Russia and China as well as relations with Europe."

"The Supreme Leader has always emphasized that Iran is independent, at the same time Russia is our northern neighbor, and we also want a powerful Russia, and it can be useful for the world arena today, because our views on the world arena are common. We are not defined as a subordinate to Russia, we are today a great regional power alongside Russia," Jalali stated, adding, "If we are fighting terrorism in the region, the main flag of this struggle is in the hands of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The important role of the martyr General Soleimani and the subsequent involvement of Russia in the fight against Daesh and terrorism is quite clear. The Islamic Republic of Iran is completely independent in its foreign policy. These are misperceptions that intend to destroy Iran's relations with Russia, as well as Iran's relations with China."

According to Jalali, a new bloc is taking shape in the East comprising of countries under U.S. sanctions. "Today we can form a bloc of sanctioned countries. Russia, China and we are under sanctions. The Eastern bloc is being formed. Those who speak with U.S. money against Iran today should know that the Chinese are the power of the future," he pointed out.

Responding to a question on whether the idea of the club of sanctioned countries has been raised with the Russians, Jalali said, "We have raised it several times so far and we are trying. For example, very good progress has been made in the field of domestic messaging apps of the two countries, the use of national currencies and connecting some banks to a joint acceleration system between Iran and Russia."

According to the Iranian ambassador, currently, 40% of trade between Iran and Russia is done in their national currencies. "We are now moving towards a free trade agreement and negotiations are underway, and the new government (the Raisi government) must act wisely because we do not have much time ahead and we must complete all the formalities by March so that we can join the free trade agreement in three years," he said.

Jalali called for the expansion of economic ties between Iran and Russia, saying, "Of course, we are weak in the economic field. We have three air, land and sea routes to reach the Russian market. We do not have a land border with Russia, and to use the land border we have to go through intermediary countries such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia."

Jalali also said that a decades-long bilateral agreement has been automatically renewed for another five years. "In 2001, we signed a 20-year agreement with Russia, and it was approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly. And it was decided that if one of the two countries had something to say about the contract and its extension, they would raise it one year before the end, otherwise it would be renewed every five years. The agreement has now been automatically extended for five years, and at the highest levels in the country, in the letter written by the Supreme Leader to Russian President Vladimir Putin and the response Putin gave, it was discussed that the agreement should be extended by more than two decades," he noted.

SPORTS

Alireza Faghani to referee Tehran derby

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iranian international football referee Alireza Faghani will take charge of Persepolis vs Esteghlal in Tehran derby on Thursday.

The Iranian giants will lock horn in quarterfinals round of Hazfi Cup in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Faghani will be assisted by Mohammadreza Mansouri and Mohammadreza Abolfazli.

Mohammadhossein Zahedifar is the fourth official.

This is for the first time Faghani is going to officiate a match in Iran since moving to Australia in September 2019 for the family reasons.

Faghani officiated at FIFA World Cup Russia 2018. He has also officiated at the 2015 FIFA Club World Cup Final and 2016 Olympic football final match.



Iran sitting volleyball team defeat Russia in friendlies

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran sitting volleyball team defeated Russia in two friendly matches in Tehran.

The first match was held in the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled's headquarters and the Persians overpowered Russia 3-0.

On Wednesday, Hadi Rezaei's men defeated Russia 3-1 in their second encounter.

The matches were held as part of preparation for the 2020 Paralympic Games, where the event will see Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Iran and RPC.

Iran sitting volleyball team are the most successful side at the Paralympics with six gold medals. They have faced Bosnia and Herzegovina in every men's sitting volleyball gold medal match since Sydney 2000.

Hamed Amiri withdraws from Tokyo Paralympics due to injury

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iranian thrower Hamed Amiri will miss 2020 Paralympic Games after suffering a back arm injury.

The thrower said that he cannot train because of the injury which suffered in the training camp.

Amiri won a silver medal at the men's shot put F55 in the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio.

His withdrawal will be a huge blow to Iran in Tokyo since he was a favorite to win a gold medal in the Games.

The Tokyo Paralympic Games – the 16th Summer Paralympic Games – will be held from Aug. 24 to Sept. 5. A total of 540 events and 22 sports are scheduled for the Games.

Iran's Pourrahnama among ones to watch for Para taekwondo

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Since picking up his first Worlds medal in 2009 at the age of 13, the "Iranian Hurricane" has strung together one of the best resumes in the sport – four World Championships, six Asian Championships and two IWAS World Games titles.

Mehdi Pourrahnama has been so dominant that he has – at times – looked simply unbeatable, Paralympic.org reported.

Still, in the ultra competitive -75 kg division, he has run into trouble. Since ascending to the top of the division in 2012, he has been bested just twice – famously to No. 1-ranked Mago-medzagir Isalidibirov (RUS) at the 2016 European Open final and then a shock golden point round of 16 exit at the 2019 World Championships.

However, he showed why he is still the man to beat by crushing his competition 78-10 in three fights to pick up his fifth straight Asian title in his very next tournament and added a sixth in 2021 with a 31-15 win over rival Isalidibirov.

Born without a hand, the sure-fire medal threat picked up the sport as a child.

IPL: Nassaji drag themselves clear of relegation zone

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Nassaji football team defeated Shahr Khodro 1-0 and moved six points clear of the relegation zone.

In the match held at the Vatani Stadium in Ghaemshahr Tuesday night, Nassaji edged past Shahr Khodro 1-0 courtesy of Amir Mehdi Janmaleki's goal in the 14th minute.

Nassaji moved up to 12th place in the 16-team Iran Professional League (IPL) with three weeks left.

Another struggling team Zob Ahan also earned an important 3-2 victory over Naft Masjed Soleyman.

Vahid Mohammadzadeh (penalty), Sina Asadbeigi and Peyman Ranjbari scored three goals for the visiting team in the first half and Sasan Hosseini and Emad Mirjavan pulled two goals back in the second half.

Zob Ahan sit 14th, three points above Saipa. Mes and Paykan also shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw. Ebrahim Salehi scored for Paykan in the 30th minute and Aghil Kabi leveled the score four minutes later.

Machine Sazi relegated from Iran Professional League

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Machine Sazi football team were relegated from Iran Professional League (IPL) Tuesday night.

The Tabriz-based team sit 16th in the 16-team table, 12 points adrift of Zob Ahan with three games to spare. It means Machine Sazi have no chance of remaining in the league even though they earn nine points from their three matches.

One team from Saipa, Zob Ahan, and Naft Masjed Soleyman will also be relegated from IPL. Nassaji almost stay up in the league with a 1-0 win over Shahr Khodro.

Quarterly tire production rises 10% yr/yr

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The number of tires produced in Iran has risen 10 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Over 11.137 million tires weighting 70,447 tons have been produced during the three-month period of this year, indicating also six percent growth in terms of weight.

According to the statistics, in the first three months of this year, the highest growth was due to the production of bicycle tires, which increased by 58 percent in number and 41 percent in weight compared to the same period last year.



During this period, more than 2,062 bicycle tires weighing 4,241 tons have been produced in the country.

Meanwhile, over 5.895 million of all types of cars (light and heavy) equivalent to 63,848 tons have been produced in the first three months of this year in the country, which in terms of number a one-percent growth and in terms of weight a two-percent rise is seen.

Of the mentioned amount, over 5.107 million were the passenger car tires, with one percent growth in terms of weight.

Some 6,848 tons of van tires were produced, indicating a 25-percent growth.

Also, 13,470 tons of truck and bus tires were produced, showing a 13-percent rise.

Production of the tires of light agricultural vehicles experienced a decline of 26 percent to stand at 802 tons, while that of the heavy ones rose one percent to stand at 4,714 tons.

Meanwhile, 1,124 tons of road building and industrial vehicle tires were produced, with a 26-percent drop compared to the first three months of the past year.

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance.

Selecting the motto of "Pickup in Production" for the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of "Surge in Production" for the year 1399 (March 2020-March 2021) indicates the Islamic Republic's determination to achieve this goal.

To this end, the Iranian ministries besides the private sector outlined their programs for the surge in production in the past year, and pursued the set objectives seriously in this due.

It is clear that among different ministries, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade was one with a somehow heavier responsibility to materialize the motto of the year.

The ministry managed to fulfill its duty as the production of some major industrial products was noticeably increased in the previous year.

One of the sectors, which achieved outstanding output growth, was the tire production industry.

The country's tire industry, despite the continuation of sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic conditions, as well as some domestic restrictions, has had a thriving and successful year overall; a year that was accompanied by record-breaking production and entry into some new fields.

In this regard, breaking of production records in the production of various types of tires was witnessed, and for the first time the annual output surpassed 24 million tires.

In addition to the successes achieved in terms of the output amount, the tire manufacturers entered new areas including production of the wide base tires and the tires of SUVs.

Wide base tires, which are a new generation of the heavy vehicles' tires, were produced for the first time in the West Asia by the Iranian producers.

In recent years, with the high investment making of domestic companies and with more emphasis on research and development (R&D), the production of this type of tires with a high-quality standard has been on the agenda, it is while in the past, Iran had to rely on foreign aid to change the generation of tires.

Mostafa Tanha, the spokesman of the Iranian Tire Syndicate, has recently said, "The investments made by companies in the past years in the field of research and development (R&D) and equipment and machinery, are now bearing fruit and we are witnessing the prosperity of companies."

Now, as the approach of strengthening domestic production is also pursuing in the current Iranian calendar year, which is named "Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles", tire production industry is among the sectors focused for the materialization of this motto.

Iran accounts for 41 percent of tire output in West Asia, according to Mohsen Safdari, the deputy director of the non-metal industries office of the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Development of the country's tire production industry, not only is to materialize self-reliance, but also is to boost non-oil export and get a larger share of the regional market for Iran.

TEDPIX climbs 1,600 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 1,602 points to 1.305 million on Wednesday.

As reported, 7.664 billion securities worth 60.165 trillion rials (about \$1.432 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market's index rose 1,295 points, and the second market's index increased 11,006 points.

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.

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

Power plant construction permits issued for big industries

→ 1 On July 7, the deputy industry, mining, and trade minister applied for the permits for constructing power plants with the total capacity of 10,536 megawatts (MW), and related agreement in principle was issued yesterday, he added.

Mobarakeh Steel Company for 1,500 MW of new capacity, the Persian Gulf Special Zone for 1,500 MW, Al-Mahdi Aluminum Company for 500 MW, Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company for 1,000 MW and Golgozar Mining and Industrial Company Phase 2 for 1,300 MW were among the industries that applied, the official further announced.

Deputy Industry Minister Saeed Zaran-di had told Mehr News Agency on Sunday that the Ministries of Energy and Industry, Mining and Trade are going to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) within a week for collaboration in constructing 13 power plants for industrial units across the country.

"This week or during the next week, a memorandum of understanding will be signed between the two ministers of industry and energy to start the construction of 13 power plants for industrial units across the



country," the official had stated.

"Since earlier this year, the Industry Ministry, on behalf of the industrial sector, started seeking a permit for building 13 power plants. We held several meetings

with Tavanir [Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company] and the Energy Ministry and proposed to sign a memorandum of understanding with the ministry. We also sent a letter to the Energy

Over \$3b of bank loans paid to knowledge-based firms in 3 months

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian banking system has paid 127.1 trillion rials (about \$3.02 billion) of facilities to knowledge-based companies during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21).

According to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) data, the amount of the mentioned facilities, paid to 558 companies, has increased by 247.4 percent compared to the previous year's same period.

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) accounted for the biggest share of the paid facilities with 30.2 trillion rials (about \$719.4 million), followed by Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) with 19.7 trillion rials (about \$397.6 million) of offered facilities.

Iranian banks had paid 191 trillion rials (about \$4.54 billion) of facilities to knowledge-based companies during the first nine months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020).

The Islamic Republic has developed plans to support and empower knowledge-based companies as a step forward to materialize the goal of the year which is "Production:

Support and Elimination of Obstacles", as the economy is fighting the U.S. sanctions.

The law for promoting and supporting knowledge-based companies was approved by the Majlis (Iranian parliament) in 2010, paving the way for a jumpstart in the march toward scientific progress.

Over the past couple of years, the concept of 'knowledge-based company' has changed to 'knowledge-based society', meaning that supporting knowledge-based companies will lead to many social and economic advantages for the public.

The deputy vice president for science and technology, Mehdi Elyasi, says the number of knowledge-based companies has increased from around 50 in 2013 to more than 5,700 in the previous Iranian calendar year.

Currently, many knowledge-based companies are active in different fields, ranging from information and communication technology to health, agriculture, and energy, according to Elyasi.

Various knowledge-based companies have made advance-



ments in different fields, however, the level of progress in the fields of health, ICT, agriculture, and energy has been more noticeable. Of course, other sectors such as the automotive industry have removed many bottlenecks so far. At present, 40 knowledge-based companies with large turnovers are listed on the stock market, Elyasi explained.

Exports of medical, edible herbs reach \$49m in Q1

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran exported 29,000 tons of medicinal, edible, decorative and industrial herbs and plants valued at over \$49 million in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), a senior official at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said.

According to Mahmoud Bazari, director-general of TPO's Export Coordination Office for agro crops and processing industry products, saffron accounted for 53 percent of the total value of the exports with 52 tons of the products worth \$26 million exported in the first quarter of the current year.

Some 4,000 tons of teas worth four mil-



lion dollars were also exported during this period, which compared to the same period last year increased by 728 percent in value and 642 percent in weight.

Saffron, licorice root and extract, cut

flowers and flower buds, as well as other ornamental plants, medicinal plants, tea, and other products including fodder plants and industrial herbs, were among the items exported in this sector.

China, UAE, Spain, Pakistan, Iraq, and Germany were among the major export markets for these products in the mentioned period.

Based on the Iranian Vice Presidency for Science and Technology data, Iran earns some \$500 million annually by exporting medicinal herbs, of which about \$350 million is related to saffron and the rest is the share of other medicinal herbs.

Iran is one of the world's top saffron pro-

ducers and over 90 percent of its production is exported to foreign destinations.

Iranian saffron farmers exported 324,589 tons of products worth over \$190 million to 60 foreign destinations during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to the Spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Rouhollah Latifi.

Based on a multilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) and three of the country's banks in early October 2020, 10 trillion rials (about \$238.09 million) was allocated for supporting the saffron industry.

6.5m tons of basic goods distributed from ports

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Over 154 million tons (mt) of goods were transported through Iran's roads in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) of which 6.5 million tons of basic goods were distributed from the country's ports, according to the head of Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization.

"Some 62 percent of these basic goods were distributed from Imam Khomeini port and the rest from Bandar Abbas and Amirabad ports," Darioush Amani told IRIB.

According to Amani, last year, a total of 502 million tons of goods were transported through the country's road network, which was unprecedented and grew by 5.6 percent compared to the preceding year.

Over 25 million tons of the transported goods in the previous calendar year were basic goods, the official explained.

Amani stated that currently, 2,000 trucks transport 50,000 tons of goods per day from Imam Khomeini Port, adding that the number of trucks should be increased to 2,400 vehicles a day in order to offset imports and increase



the clearance process of the goods in the said port.

The official added that over 3,600 vehicles and machines are currently operating to unload goods at the country's ports.

Back in May, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani ordered

the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) to take the necessary measures to accelerate the clearance of basic goods deposited at the country's customs.

According to IRICA Deputy Head Mehrdad Jamal Orounagi, in a meeting of the government economic coordination headquarters, some problems and issues were raised regarding the clearance of goods in the country's customs, and a report was presented to the president.

Following the mentioned meeting, Rouhani issued a decree ordering to investigate and resolve the mentioned problems and also agreed with the IRICA and Industry Ministry's proposals in this regard.

According to Orounagi, currently, over 5.2 million tons of basic goods were piled up in the country's ports at the time, of which 3.8 million tons were deposited at Imam Khomeini Port.

Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad had earlier said that the outbreak of the coronavirus was the main reason for the delay in the clearance of goods from ports and customs.

U.S. waivers Iranian oil trade, allowing access to frozen assets in S.Korea, Japan

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The U.S. State Department has waived sanctions on Iran's oil trade allowing the Islamic republic to access its frozen funds in South Korea and Japan to use them for importing goods from the mentioned countries, the Washington Free Beacon reported.

The waiver, signed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, allows the transfer of Iranian funds to exporters in Japan and South Korea, according to a notification sent to U.S. Congress by the State Department.

The waiver allows Iranian money that had been frozen as a result of American sanctions



to be freed up without violating the law.

"Allowing these funds to be used to repay exporters in these jurisdictions will make those entities whole with respect to the goods and services they exported to Iran, address

a irritant recurring in important bilateral relationships," the waiver states.

As reported, the waiver has been given to the Japanese and South Korean governments for 90 days allowing them to complete their transactions.

"The secretary of state previously signed a waiver to allow funds held in restricted Iranian accounts in Japan and Korea to be used to pay back Japanese and Korean companies that exported non-sanctioned items to Iran," a State Department spokesman said.

The waiver comes during an almost one-month pause in the talks in Vienna to

revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, from which the former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew in 2018 and reimposed sanctions mainly targeting Iran's oil sector.

Last week, senior economy officials from South Korea and the United States held talks on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Venice, Italy to discuss releasing Iran's frozen oil money in Korean banks.

Several billions of dollars of Iranian oil revenues have been frozen in South Korean and Japanese banks since September 2019, when Washington's sanctions waiver for the Asian countries' imports of Iranian oil expired.

How did Yemen become world's worst humanitarian crisis?

➔ The facts on the ground do indicate that ordinary Iranians are suffering such as children dying from preventable diseases because foreign pharmaceutical manufacturers are wary of making financial transactions with Tehran as all of Iran's banking sector is under American sanctions. So, companies trading even humanitarian supplies face the risk of secondary sanctions by the U.S. treasury department. Here again, the U.S. underestimated the willpower of the Iranian nation, which has stood by its leaders.

Nevertheless, it is similar tactics that Saudi Arabia deployed in its war on Yemen.

Following the 2014 revolution that saw former President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi flee to Saudi Arabia, the initial Saudi prediction that a military intervention would take no longer than six weeks of airstrikes to complete did not materialize. The richest Kingdom in the region underestimated the popularity of the Ansarullah movement which is spearheading the armed resistance in the region's poorest nation. And so, after the initial six weeks of airstrikes failed, Riyadh began imposing a blockade in the hope that poverty will weaken the popularity of the National Salvation Government in Sana'a. Again, another pipe dream has failed to materialize. Riyadh, to this day, underestimates the popularity of the National Salvation Government.

Wherever a government has the support of the people, it can't collapse as the source of its power stems from the people. Unless, a dictatorship starts detaining activists of course, such as activists fighting for the right of women to drive.

Saudi Arabia's intentions were evident, observers note that whenever Yemeni armed forces made military gains on the ground, Riyadh would expand the blockade on its southern neighbor.

In essence, after more than six years of Saudi Arabia's war on Yemen and nearly 60,000 Saudi airstrikes (according to the Yemen Data Project) where residential areas, health facilities, homes, schools, markets, food stores and vital infrastructure have been blown up. Yemen remains the world's worst humanitarian crisis but continues to defend its national sovereignty. The damage and destruction from Saudi Arabia's bombing campaign, using mostly American and British weapons, has cut off Yemenis from not just access to healthcare but also clean water. At one point, the poor sanitation saw the country witness the worst cholera outbreak in modern history. Yemen is one of the most water-poor nations on the planet as it lacks any rivers and rainfall has been on the decrease. The aerial attacks are not only in violation



of international humanitarian law but also make it difficult for international humanitarian organizations to operate in the country. Indeed, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) says the war on Yemen is preventing women and children from receiving life-saving medical care on time, contributing to the increasing death toll among civilians in particular pregnant women, newborns and children.

Yet the biggest contribution to what the United Nations describes as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world is Saudi Arabia's all-out blockade. A land, air and sea blockade and a pressure tactic the Kingdom hoped would starve the Yemenis into submission and reinstate a Saudi-friendly regime back into power. The starvation policy worked but the latter part has failed. After nearly seven years of blockade backed by almost daily bombing campaigns, the National Salvation Government remains in power in the capital Sana'a. It also controls the majority of the territory where Yemenis reside. However, many human rights groups and international organizations have slammed the Saudi siege as a war crime, saying Riyadh is responsible for the humanitarian crisis. Despite attempts by Saudi Arabia this year to try and portray itself as providing aid to Yemen. Humanitarian groups are not buying it.

The all-out blockade is still in place while Riyadh has laid siege to the most important entry points for Yemen. One of these is Hodeidah port on the Red Sea, where 90% of vital goods, medicine and other essential commodities enter the country. What happens here is that cargo ships would be inspected by the United Nations, then taken to a Saudi controlled area, where they faced another round of inspection and at times extreme delays before being allowed to dock

at Hodeideh.

Since the beginning of this year, in what has been viewed as another desperate attempt by the Saudis, the Kingdom has prevented vital fuel tankers from docking. Fuel that is desperately needed in Yemen and measures that have further exacerbated the dire humanitarian crisis. Some fuel tankers have been waiting for six months to dock. Under pressure, Riyadh allowed a few of these ships to unload their cargo; but this was far from enough. Rights groups and international charity organizations accuse Saudi Arabia of using starvation as a weapon of war. Indeed, more than 80% of the population of some 30 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, with the most vulnerable being children, women and the elderly. This year, one Yemeni woman is dying every two hours during childbirth, from causes that are almost entirely preventable.

Another vital entry point for Yemen is Sana'a international airport, which again, Riyadh has prevented from operating. The reopening of the airport can strongly help facilitate those in need to lifesaving medical treatment which they can only access abroad. Meanwhile, the war has ravaged Yemen's economy. Millions of civilians have lost their income as one business closed after the other. Even those working in the public sector rarely receive their salaries, another contributing factor to the increasing poverty. It's impossible to say how many civilians have been killed from the Saudi blockade, at one point, the United Nations estimated that one child dies every 10 minutes from preventable diseases. 400,000 children under the age of five are currently severely malnourished. But children over five are also dying from malnutrition and starvation.

International Charity Group, Oxfam, says Yemen is not starving but rather the country is being starved. More than four million people are internally displaced within Yemen, these are literally the forgotten ones despite the fact that 73-percent of them are women and children. In 2018, Save the Children said 85,000 children may have died from hunger as a result of the Saudi war. A 23-page research study conducted by Martha Munda, a Professor Emeritus at the London School of economics included the world's worst kept secret by an anonymous Saudi official, who said 'once we control them (the Yemenis), then we will feed them'.

Earlier this year, the UN aid chief to Yemen, Mark Lowcock, said 16 million people, more than half of the population, are going hungry. From that devastating number, Lowcock says five million are on the brink of famine. Lowcock says Yemen could face the worst 'man made' famine that the world has seen for decades.

The situation has worsened dramatically with the coronavirus pandemic. According to the UN and aid agencies, official figures from the disease are underestimated. This is largely because of the lack of proper medical facilities. The real figure is believed to be much higher than what is being stated.

And even worse, the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, despite all the disturbing facts on the ground, have so far failed to use their leverage as top diplomatic allies and military supporters of the Saudis to end the violence.

This humanitarian crisis will only continue to grow as Saudi Arabia's war rages on and those in vital need of assistance are prevented from receiving life-saving help. This is, after all as noted, a man-made disaster. The United Nations Security Council must live up to its responsibility and take punitive actions against Saudi Arabia for cussing what the UN itself calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. However, as long as the top Saudi ally the United States holds veto power, it is difficult to see any action, such as sanctions, being imposed on the Saudis. Unfortunately, this will only give Riyadh the green light to continue its blockade and attempts to strangle its southern neighbor.

Analysts have noted that the only real answer to breaking the Saudi blockade lies with the Yemeni resistance. The increasingly sophisticated retaliatory attacks on Saudi targets including the state-owned Saudi Aramco might be the only answer to break the siege and bring the Saudis to the negotiating table to discuss serious terms on how to end the war they started.

U.S. cannot work with its foes, says professor

“Diplomacy requires compromise and many Americans don’t want to compromise”

➔ The U.S. has also seen very few casualties over the last several years. The U.S. continued to spend quite a bit of money though. I think that Americans' feeling about our presence in Afghanistan and the general desire to leave is based more on an imagined or fabricated war exhaustion than on the actual demand on U.S. resources. Of course, as my psychologist friends like to say, perception is reality. In other words, Americans are tired of our military presence in Afghanistan, especially because it doesn't seem like things have improved much over the last 8-9 years. Also, the idea that we have been “fighting” (we haven't actually done all that much fighting for the last few years) this war for 20 years is disturbing to a lot of Americans.

Do you predict China and Russia to fill the power vacuum in Afghanistan after U.S. withdrawal?

China and Russia have the capacity to fill the power vacuum, but I don't think they will. I don't think Russia has very much interest in Afghanistan, and after the 1980s Soviet-Afghan war, I don't think Russians would have much of a taste for another long-term involvement. China has some interest, but administering Afghanistan (i.e., filling the power vacuum) requires a lot of resources, especially since the Taliban is on the rise. I think it is likely, however, that China will make deals with Afghanistan for resource extraction and infrastructure construction. I think China will have few qualms about working with the Taliban.

What are the implications of U.S. pullout from Afghanistan for Washington's allies in the Arab world?

I imagine that U.S. allies in the Arab world are a bit uncomfortable with the U.S. withdrawal, but I think they also realize that the Arab world is more strategically valuable to the U.S. than Afghanistan.

American media outlets are promoting the idea to pull out of West Asia and instead focus on China? Why has China been so important for the U.S.?

China is the U.S.'s closest peer in terms of economic power and military power. The relationship has been somewhat tense, with the trade war, South China Sea disputes, intellectual property protections (or lack thereof), etc. Personally, I don't think that China represents a great threat to Americans' safety or even our wellbeing, but China will almost certainly continue to chip away at American hegemony. Many Americans, including many politicians, perceive that as a threat.

The U.S. mostly tries to solve crises through unilateral steps or in the best-case scenario with the support of its Western allies. Why doesn't the U.S. try to work with its foes including Iran, Russia and China in critical regions like Afghanistan?

That's a good question but I'm not sure I can give you a good answer. I think there are many different reasons that different people use to justify unilateral or Western-centric interventions. I don't think there is actually much discussion about why we don't work with our foes on most things, it's just generally accepted that we don't. Some people think we shouldn't legitimize “pariah states” (those who don't follow the Western order); we can't trust our foes; working with our



foes could leave us in a weaker position; diplomacy is slow and we need quick action; diplomacy requires compromise and many Americans don't want to compromise with the “axis of evil” (a term used by George W. Bush to describe Iran, N. Korea and Venezuela, but represents some Americans' feelings about Russia and China as well). There are likely other half-formed reasons that people hold in their minds, but most of these ideas seem to be half-formed and rarely discussed openly.

Afghan Taliban claim control of strategic border crossing with Pakistan

The Taliban militant group in Afghanistan says it has gained control over a strategic route linking the south of the country to Pakistan.

The Taliban “have captured an important border town called Wesh in Kandahar,” spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid claimed in a statement on Wednesday.

The town of Wesh is in Spin Boldak district in Kandahar Province, situated next to the Durand border with Pakistan.

“With this, the important road between (Spin) Boldak and Chaman and Kandahar customs have come under Mujahideen (Taliban) control,” he said.

The Taliban spokesperson assured traders and residents there that along the trade route, their “security is guaranteed.”

Afghan officials, however, insisted that the government troops still had control. “The terrorist Taliban had some movements near the

border area... The security forces have repelled the attack,” Interior Ministry spokesman Tareq Arian told AFP.

The situation in the region has yet to be confirmed by other Afghan officials.

Earlier, Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani expressed hope that the security situation in his country would improve. The Taliban have also talked of plans to limit fighting to the areas outside Afghan cities.

Ghani, blamed the Taliban militant group for the ongoing “bloodshed and destruction” in Afghanistan, and vowed not to “surrender” to their demands.

The Afghan president, who was visiting Balkh Province on Tuesday to inspect the security situation of the northern areas amid reports of heavy clashes between government troops and the militant forces, insisted that soon “the Taliban's backbone will be broken.”

Ghani, who met with a number of civil society activists, women's rights activists, and journalists during his visit to Balkh, said that the security situation across the country would improve significantly in the next three months, according to Afghanistan's Tolo news agency.

In related news, a government official told Reuters on the condition of anonymity that senior Afghan leaders were set to fly to the Qatari capital, Doha, to resume peace talks with the Taliban representatives this week.

The high-level eight-member delegation will include senior Afghan peace official Abdullah Abdullah and former president Hamid Karzai.

The delegation from Kabul and the Taliban representatives are expected to discuss ways of expediting the peace talks.

Meanwhile, the Taliban have intensified their offensives across several provinces, with their primary focus in the past months being

the north despite advancements elsewhere.

In the north, the violence has forced Afghan families to flee their homes.

Meanwhile, Amir Khan Muttaqi, a senior Taliban leader, claimed that the militants did not want to battle government forces inside cities, urging troops to surrender to the Taliban.

“Now that the fighting from mountains and deserts has reached the doors of the cities, Mujahiddin (Taliban) don't want fighting inside the city,” the senior militant leader said in a message tweeted on Tuesday.

Hours after Muttaqi's remarks, a bomb blast in the center of the capital Kabul killed four civilians and wounded 11 others, police reported.

The United Nations refugee agency has warned that the surge in violence has put the war-ravaged country on the brink of a humanitarian crisis.

Fears of food and fuel shortages as unrest rocks South Africa

South Africa has been rocked by violence and looting for six consecutive days, with more than 70 people killed as grievances over the jailing of former President Jacob Zuma spiraled into the worst unrest in decades.

Following the jailing of the former leader, protests and mass looting have widened into an outpouring of anger over the inequality that remains 27 years after the end of apartheid.

Poverty has been exacerbated by severe social and economic restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19.

More than 1,200 people have been arrested in the lawlessness that has raged in poor areas of two provinces, where a community radio station was ransacked and forced off the air on Tuesday and some COVID-19 vaccination centres were closed, disrupting urgently needed inoculations.

According to al Jazeera, many of the deaths in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces occurred in chaotic stampedes as thousands of people stole food, electric appliances, liquor and clothing from stores, police said.

The deployment of 2,500 soldiers to support the overwhelmed South African police has so far failed to stop the rampant looting.

UAE embassy officially opened in Tel Aviv following normalization deal with Israel

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has officially inaugurated its embassy in Israel, less than a year after the two sides agreed to establish formal relations under a U.S.-brokered deal.

The inauguration ceremony on Wednesday was hosted by UAE's Ambassador to Israel Mohammad al-Khaja, with the regime's President Isaac Herzog in attendance.

The embassy is situated in the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange building, also known as the Bursa.

Israel opened its embassy in the Emirati capital in late June. Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid inaugurated the Israeli embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Israeli consulate in Dubai during a two-day visit.

Israel and the UAE have signed a raft of deals in various areas, ranging from tourism to aviation and financial services, since they signed the normalization agreement in August last year.

Israeli ministers had previously visited the UAE, but Lapid is the most senior Israeli diplomat to have made the trip, and the first to travel on an official mission.

In March, a planned official visit by then Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the UAE was canceled due to a “dispute” with Jordan over the use of its airspace, according to Israeli officials.

Netanyahu signed agreements with the Emirati foreign minister and Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdulatif Al Zayani during an official ceremony hosted by former U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House on September 15 last year.

Palestinians, who seek an independent state in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital, view the deals as a betrayal of their cause.

A member of the Palestinian Fatah movement's Central Committee has censured Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (MBZ) as “a traitor” to the Palestinian cause, saying the United Arab Emirates must be expelled from the Arab League due to normalization with Israel.

Abbas Zaki said if the UAE's doors are opened to “naturalize the Zionists, you will perish.”

“The people of the Emirates are free and great and we do not attribute this betrayal to them, because the only traitor is Mohammed bin Zayed,” Zaki stated.

Erdogan, China's Xi discuss Uighurs in phone call

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has told his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping it is important to Turkey that Uighur Muslims live in peace as “equal citizens of China” but said Turkey respects China's national sovereignty.

Erdogan made the comments during a phone call with Xi on Tuesday in which the two leaders discussed bilateral and regional issues, according to a statement from the Turkish presidency.

UN experts and rights groups estimate that more than one million people, mainly from the Turkic language-speaking Uighurs and other Muslim minorities, have been detained in recent years in a vast system of camps in China's western Xinjiang region.

China initially denied the camps existed, but has since said they are vocational centers and are designed to combat “extremism”. It denies all accusations of abuse.

“Erdogan pointed out that it was important for Turkey that Uighur Turks live in prosperity and peace as equal citizens of China. He voiced Turkey's respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity,” the Turkish presidency statement said.

Resistance News

Several Palestinians kidnapped in W. Bank and J'lem

INTERNATIONAL DESK **TEHRAN** — The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) last night and at dawn Wednesday kidnapped several Palestinian citizens, mostly from the West Bank.

According to local sources, 11 young men from Beita town in southern Nablus were kidnapped by the IOF from their homes.

Three of those young men already suffered injuries during their participation in night rallies staged recently in the town to protest the establishment of a Jewish settler outpost on Mount Soeib.

In Tubas, the IOF kidnaped a citizen identified as Bader al-Aydi from his home and raided other homes in al-Fari'ah refugee camp.

Meanwhile, the IOF clashed with local youths, wounded a young man in his leg and prevented other citizens from going to Mosques to perform the dawn prayer.

During the violent events in Fari'ah camp, local youths were able to target and crash an Israeli military drone.

In Tulkarem, the IOF kidnapped two young brothers from the family of Odeh after raiding their home in the southern neighborhood.

Another young citizen identified as Khaled Adnan was kidnapped from his home in Shuweika suburb in the north of Tulkarem City.

In Bethlehem, the IOF kidnaped a young man called Abd Adel from his home in Teqoa town.

In Jerusalem, one young man identified as Dahoud Abul-Hawa was taken prisoner during a police raid on his house last night in at-Tur neighborhood.

Sassanid-era Qa'leh Dokhtar castle being restored

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Parts of the ancient Qa'leh Dokhtar castle in the southern province of Fars have undergone some rehabilitation works, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The project involves repairing the rooftop and strengthening the structure using cob materials, Hadi Shahdust announced on Wednesday.

Additionally, the project will preserve the original characteristics of the monument, the official added.

Situated on a mountain slope neighboring the Firuzabad-Kavar road in southeastern Kerman province, Qa'eh Dokhtar (literally meaning the Maiden Castle) was made by Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian Empire (224–651) in 209 CE.

Based on narratives, the monument is named after the ancient Iranian goddess Anahita, to whom the term “Maiden” refers.

The entrance to the castle is through a tall gateway within a large,



rectangular tower. Inside, a broad stairway leads up to a rectangular hall, with blind niches on either side of two large buttresses at the east end.

The fortified palace contains many of the recurring features of Sasanian architecture such as long halls, arches, domes, recessed windows, and stairways.

The historical monument along with several ruined royal palaces, strongholds, and fire temples in Bishapur, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan has been registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List as Sasanian-era Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region.

It was also added to the national heritage list in 1936.

Under the Sassanians, Iranian art experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as the palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, one of the most characteristic and striking relics of Sasanian art are rock sculptures carved on abrupt limestone cliffs, for example at the historical sites Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rostam.

Metalwork and gem engraving became highly sophisticated. The scholarship was encouraged by the state, and works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

Moveable properties in Khorasan Razavi made national heritage

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A total of 19 historical moveable properties in Khorasan Razavi province, have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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



Ancient potteries, historical Quran manuscripts, wooden doors, tiles, and coins were among the properties added to the prestigious list.

The provincial capital of Mashhad attracts hundreds of pilgrims each day from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe; the raison d'être is the striking massive shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam.

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted across Mashhad. The city has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded. The metropolis is also a good place to buy top handwoven rugs and carpets, and it's a staging post for travel to Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and little-touristic Khorasan regions.

Iranian police seize relics from smuggler

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – Some historical objects have recently been confiscated from an antique dealer in Alborz province near the capital Tehran, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage said on Wednesday, CHTN reported.

After days of intelligence operations, the illegal dealer was traced and arrested after police received reports from cultural heritage aficionados about his misdeeds, Ali Fathian announced.

Recovered relics include coins, jewelry, tiles, precious and semi-precious stones, and statues, he added.

The official, however, did not refer to the exact age of the relics. The culprit was detained and surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, he noted.

Alborz province is surrounded by Mazandaran, Tehran, Markazi, and Qazvin provinces. Its name is driven by the Alborz Mountains. A significant part of the mountains is located in the north part of the province.

Historical resources and documents as well as archeological studies indicate that Alborz has a rich culture dating back to prehistoric times.

Visit Khuzestan, land of sunshine, palm trees and history

→ 1 The archaeological site includes the ruins of the Achaemenid palace complex of Darius I, the Great, and is located on a fifteen-meter-high artificial raised 100-hectare terrace. It has suffered greatly in the past seventy years.

Susa became part of the Persian Empire under Cyrus II, the Great in 538 or 539 BC. During the balance of the Achaemenian period (to 330 BC), Susa functioned as one of the rotating capitals (a winter capital) of the Achaemenian Kings.

It is said that Alexander of Macedonia captured Susa in 330 BC and plundered the city, seizing some 40,000 talents of gold and silver from the treasury.

According to UNESCO, “the excavated architectural monuments include administrative, residential, and palatial structures” and the site contains several layers of urban settlement dating from the 5th millennium BC through the 13th century CE.

Relics unearthed from the region demonstrate that even the earliest potteries and ceramics in Susa were of unsurpassed quality, decorated with birds, mountain goats, and other animals designs.

The finest pottery was found in the lowest strata and belonged to two different civilizations, both Neolithic, according to Britannica.

After the fall of the Achaemenid Empire and the reign of Alexander the Great, who married in Susa, the city became part of the Seleucid empire. It was now called Seleucia on the Eulaeus. A palace in Greek style was erected, next to Darius' palace. The administrative center, however, was in the southern part of the city, where nearly all Greek and Parthian inscriptions were discovered. In the Parthian age, the city minted coins.

During the Sasanian age, the city had a large Christian community. It was sacked by the Sasanian king Shapur II, who transferred the population to Iwan-e Karkheh, but Susa was sufficiently recovered in the early seventh century to fight against the Arabs, who nevertheless captured the city which remained important until the thirteenth century CE.

Different archaeological seasons in Susa have yielded ample relics including pottery, arms, ornamental objects, metalwork, bronze articles, as well as clay tablets. Susa is also a gateway to several worthy destinations such as the UNESCO-tagged ziggurat of Tchogha Zanbil, the ruins of Achaemenid Apadana Castle, Shush Castle (Akropol), Prophet Daniel Shrine, Museum of Susa, the archaeological mount of Haft Tapeh.

Tchogha Zanbil
The UNESCO-tagged prehistoric ziggurat of Tchogha Zanbil is considered by many the finest surviving example of Elamite architecture in the globe.

Its construction started in c. 1250 BC upon the order of the Elamite king Untash-Napirisha (1275-1240 BC) as the religious center of Elam dedicated to the Elamite divinities Inshushinak and Napirisha.

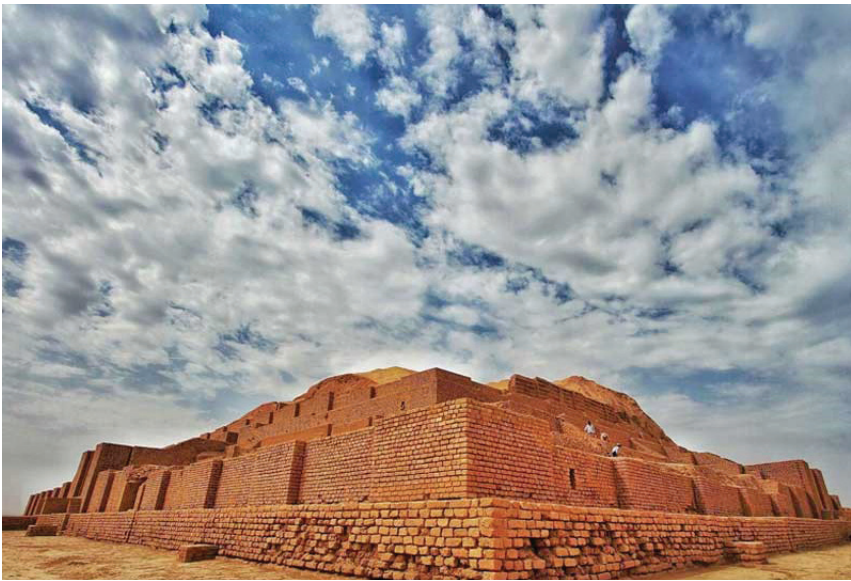
The prehistoric mud-brick complex bears testimony to the unique expression of the culture, beliefs, rituals, and traditions of one of the oldest indigenous communities of Iran.

The ziggurat overlooks the ancient city of Susa (near modern Shush). Reaching a total height of some 25m, the ziggurat was used to be surmounted by a temple and estimated to hit 52m during its heyday.

UNESCO says that Tchogha Zanbil is the largest ziggurat outside of Mesopotamia and the best preserved of this type of stepped pyramidal monument.

Tchogha Zanbil was excavated in six seasons between 1951 and 1961 by Roman Ghirshman, a Russian-born French archaeologist who specialized in ancient Iran.

Shushtar Hydraulic System
The Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, a UNESCO-registered prehistorical ensemble in southwest Iran, is known globally as a masterpiece of creative genius.



A view of the UNESCO-tagged prehistoric ziggurat of Tchogha Zanbil

The ensemble comprises bridges, weirs, tunnels, canals, and a series of ancient watermills powered by human-made waterfalls. It is named after an ancient city of the same name with its history dating back to the time of Darius the Great, the Achaemenid king.

Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2009, the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System may testify to the heritage and the synthesis of earlier Elamite and Mesopotamian knowhow. According to UNESCO, the ensemble was probably influenced by the Petra dam and tunnel and by Roman civil engineering.

UNESCO says that the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System demonstrates outstanding universal value as in its present form, it dates from the 3rd century CE, probably on older bases from the 5th century BC. It is complete, with numerous functions, and large-scale, making it exceptional.

The property is as rich in its diversity of civil engineering structures and its constructions as in the diversity of its uses (urban water supply, mills, irrigation, river transport, and defensive system). The Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System testifies to the heritage and the synthesis of earlier Elamite and Mesopotamian knowhow; it was probably influenced by the Petra dam and tunnel and by Roman civil engineering.

“The hydraulic system has been considered a Wonder of the World not only by the Persians but also by the Arab-Muslims at the peak of their civilization,” according to the UN cultural body.

Furthermore, one of its main canals is a veritable artificial watercourse that made possible the construction of a new town and the irrigation of a vast plain, at the time semi-desert.

The Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System sits in an urban and rural landscape specific to the expression of its value.

Karun River
Karun, the largest and most abundant river in Iran, flows from deep gorges in the Zagros mountain range to Khuzestan Plain in the southwest of the country.

The river is a major source of water for the country, as well as a popular tourist attraction.

In its former state, it was the route for ships, but now it's occupied by a number of bridges, nine to be precise, making it almost impossible for vessels to pass.

At 950 kilometers in length, Karun is the longest river in Iran and the only one that is connected to oceanic waters.

Khuzestan province is one of the most popular tourist destinations of the country, as it is home to the World Heritage Sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Hydraulic System, as well as several other historical sites and natural features.

Saba Home Museum in Tehran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Saba Home Museum is one of the spectacular museums of Tehran that is located in an old house in the heart of the historic district of the capital of Iran.

The museum was the house of Abolhasan Saba with a beautiful architectural style. He bequeathed his house to the College of Fine Arts.

Abolhasan Saba was one of the prominent musicians and composers of Iran. He was born in 1902. He was a genius artist that had different skills in painting, casting, and carpentry. He played violin professionally. Also, he learned to play Santur, Ney, Kamancheh, Tonbak, Setar, and Tar from the famous musicians.

The Saba house was turned into a museum, due

to the commemoration of Abolhasan Saba and his prominent works in the field of Iranian music.

This house has five rooms, a basement and a small yard. When entering the yard, you will see a beautiful pond in the middle, the visiting process of the museum, starts with passing the security guard.

The interior part of the museum consists of two different sections. The first section includes musical instruments and work of Abolhasan Saba, and the other one involves handicrafts of his wife.

Some objects of this museum, which have been exhibited are the personal stuff of Abolhasan Saba such as his calligraphy pen and inkwell, glasses, picture frames, formal suit, and a plaster mask of his face.



Trees such as oak, willow, and fig are among the variety of vegetation around the waterfall.

Zaras Village
Once an intact village in the heart of the Zagros Mountains, Zaras is a favorite travel destination in Khuzestan province.

The temperate climate in winters or scenic nature seems to be the raison d'être. However, the village was put on the map for nature lovers when became equipped with tourist facilities over the past couple of years.

Situated adjacent to a lake, the village is teemed with oak trees and is surrounded by rouged mountains. The lake is a place to sail and catch fish.

There are also tourist attractions near the village, including historic monuments such as Tagh-e Tavileh and Atabaki citadel, as well as Shivand waterfall, villages, and gardens where various fruit trees grow.

Kul-e Farah rock reliefs
Elamite bas-reliefs of Kul-e Farah are located near the ancient city of Izeh.

The prehistorical site, which was probably home to an Elamite temple and place of worship, includes six bas-relief carvings depicting graves, buildings, and a water canal.

Elam was an ancient pre-Iranian civilization centered in the far-west and south-west of what is now modern-day Iran, stretching from the lowlands of what is now Khuzestan and Ilam provinces as well as a small part of southern Iraq.

Kul-e Farah ancient area was registered on the National Heritage list in 1999.

Rangoonis Mosque
The mosque of Rangoonis, or as the villagers call it, Rangooni ha, was built southwest of Abadan by Indian architects in 1922.

People from different cities and countries came to Abadan after the discovery of oil and the establishment of a refinery, making it an industrial town.

Muslim employees of Rangoon (Yangon), the then capital of Burma (Myanmar), along with British, Indian, and Pakistani immigrants, constructed the mosque and gave it the name of their hometown.

The Rangoonis Mosque has Mughal architecture and extensive cement reliefs. The Mihrab (prayer niche) of this mosque is adorned with arabesque and geometrical motifs as well as an embossed depiction of heaven. The mosque has a Shabestan (inner sanctum), a courtyard, and minarets.

Since 2010 the mosque has served as the location of the Historical and Handwritten Documents Museum and houses handwritten Qurans as well as historical documents dating back to the Qajar (1789-1925) and the first Pahlavi (1925-1941) eras including financial documents and correspondence belonging to Iranian merchants in India and Britain with Iranian merchants, promissory notes, negotiable instruments, and business letters.

The Rangoonis Mosque was registered as a National Heritage Site in 2000.

Dez coastal resort
Dez coastal resort, also called Ali Kalleh, is a popular coastal park in Khuzestan. The seafont attracts large numbers of visitors from neighboring cities and provinces per year, especially during spring and summer.

A series of alcoves have been made along the beach for the comfort and convenience of passengers on their journey.

There is also a park and greenery area, along with playground and entertainment facilities, which makes it a place for people to entertain in other seasons. Another attraction of this place, especially for children, is the existence of several types of slides on the riverside.

The resort is situated northward of Dezful, adjacent to the Dez Dam, which is built over a river of the same name originating from the Zagros Mountain range.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. July 13

New cases	23,371
New deaths	184
Total cases	3,440,400
Total deaths	86,391
New hospitalized patients	2,452
Patients in critical condition	3,963
Total recovered patients	3,069,943
Diagnostic tests conducted	24,745,601
Doses of vaccine injected	7,523,716

Ayatollah Araki: Islamic society’s power depends on returning to divine identity

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Mohsen Araki, a member of the Assembly of Experts, has said if the Islamic society wants to be strong, it must return to its faith and divine identity.

He made the remarks at the 14th meeting of Islamic Unity – London- which was held on Saturday, July 10, according to Ayatollah Araki’s public relations office.

Prominent personalities and a number of thinkers of the Islamic world, including Sheikh Maher Hammoud, the president of the Union of Resistance Scholars; and Najmuddin Chalashkan, a member of the Turkish Sa’adat Party, also attended the meeting, which focused on the role of Islamic values in the realization of world peace.

Ayatollah Araki referred to the identity of the Islamic community and said: “The identity of each community is shaped based on its origin and the will that leads it to move and communicate with others.



The identity of the Islamic society is formed by the will of God, that is, the Islamic society plans and moves according to the command of God, and is formed in terms of faith in the will of God.”

The Islamic society establishes its relations with the members of the society and with other societies according to the command of God, Ayatollah Araki who is also a member of the Supreme Council of Seminaries, added.

Referring to a verse of the Holy Quran, which says: “Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then settled on the Throne. He draws the night’s cover over the day, which pursues it swiftly, and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, [all of them] disposed by His command. Look! All creation and command belong to Him. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of all the worlds,”

He explained: “Almighty Allah in this verse emphasizes that Creation and command belong to Him. This is contrary to the secular view of God; they consider God the Creator of the universe but do not see the command in His hands.”

It is an Islamic society that follows its route by commands and prohibitions of God, and in this regard, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the enlightener of the path and he is the one who, according to the command of God, we must accept everything he says and avoid everything he forbids: “Whatever the Messenger has given you, take it and abstain from what he forbids you”.

Referring to another verse of the Quran which says: “Those who divided their religion and became sects, you are not one of them”, Ayatollah Araki stated: “In this verse, God considers those who have sworn allegiance to their religion to be far from the Prophet and says: “You are not one of them” Because when they disagree on these matters, it means that they do not follow the commands and prohibitions of God, as the religion of Islam calls everyone to unity.”

He pointed out that those who oppose the Islamic identity are followers of unbeliever ruler and the unbeliever ruler identity, he said: Two identities are opposed to each other, the identity that follows the will of God and the identity that follows the will of unbeliever ruler.

Then, he referred to the verse: “Those who have faith fight in the way of Allah, and those who are faithless fight in the way of fake gods. So, fight the friends of Satan. Indeed, the stratagems of Satan are always flimsy. Those who are infidels fight in the way of unbeliever ruler and they are the guardians and followers of Satan.”

Ayatollah Araki further explained the way to strengthen Islamic society from the perspective of the Holy Quran, and emphasized: “If the Islamic community wants to become strong, it must return to its faith and divine identity, in the Holy Quran Allah (swt) says: “Do not weaken or grieve: you shall have the upper hand, should you be faithful.”

Referring to the issue of normalization of relations with the Zionist regime, the member of the Supreme Council of seminaries said: “Those who seek to establish relations with this criminal regime and are after following the Jews and Christians to secure their dignity, according to the verses of the Holy Quran, are all hypocrites. And they should know that they will never attain true glory, for the true glory belongs to God, His Messenger, and the believers; “Inform the hypocrites that there is a painful punishment for them, those who take the faithless for allies instead of the faithful. Do they seek honour with them? [If so,] indeed all honour belongs to Allah.”

In the end, referring to the power of the resistance axis, he said: “Today, dignity and power have been achieved in the axis of resistance countries. Today, dignity is in strong Gaza, victorious Lebanon, strong Iraq, Syria and Yemen. True dignity today is in the Islamic Republic and the countries that stand against tyranny.

Lake Urmia level declines by 30cm in Q1

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** – The water level of Lake Urmia has decreased by 30 centimeters in the first three months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-June 21) compared to the same period last year.

Due to the decrease in rainfall over the last two years, this catchment is experiencing a decrease in water level again, Ali Soltanpour, director of the hydrography of the National Cartographic Center said.

A study of Lake Urmia over the past three decades shows that the level of the lake has increased significantly in the early 1990s so that in 1995, it reached 1278.5 meters and many urban and coastal infrastructures were threatened.

After this time, the water level of Lake Urmia gradually dropped due to reduced rainfall and water entering the lake, so that during 3 years, the lake level decreases by about one meter, he added.

According to Soltanpour, since 1998, the lake continued to shrink more rapidly and for 4 consecutive years, the level reduced by another 3.5 meters reaching 1274 meters in 2002.

In 2017, the level even declined to 1271 meters. However, increased rainfall caused the lake level to rise by more than one meter in only several months and exceed 1272 meters.

The Lake Urmia shrank by 30 cm in the first three months of this year compared to the same period last year, due to reduced rainfall and increased evaporation, he lamented, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Pointing out that since the last two years, the lake has been experiencing a downward



trend, he stated that lakes, because they are enclosed water bodies, are therefore affected by climate change.

Sustainable development means replacing harvested resources, but the current situation of the lake shows that sustainable development has not been pursued in this region and other similar areas, and we have damaged the existing resources in the country so that natural resources have not been able to cope with the existing problems, he lamented.

Earlier in July, Omid Yousefi, head of the wildlife surveillance of West Azarbaijan’s department of environment, stated that

the population of flamingos in Lake Urmia National Park has decreased by 30 to 35 percent due to the lack of proper living conditions, mainly as a result of the lake’s high salinity.

Noting that this year, 35 to 40 thousand flamingos were counted in Lake Urmia islands, he highlighted that in recent years, the lake was host to 50 to 60 thousand flamingos, which significantly dropped this year due to lack of living conditions and high salt concentration.

According to field studies, the population of birds in this habitat has decreased significantly.

Lake Urmia condition

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in West Asia. It was home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets, and ducks, and attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in the agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically. In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one-tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

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

The level of Lake Urmia has reached 1,271 meters, which indicates an increase of over 1.39 meters compared to the lowest volume recorded. However, it still needs 9.5 billion cubic meters of water to reach its ecological level.

The above normal levels of rain came to help conservation measures to preserve Lake Urmia, but, this year, the drought and low rainfall are threatening the lake again.

Wind erosion incurs annual loss of \$714m

➔ **1** Panting vegetation and improving the way of dealing with nature is the solution to desertification, as well as mulching, wastewater control, creating windbreak on farms, and planting seedlings.

Last year, Reza Bayani an official with Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization, said between 2015 and 2020, approximately 12,000 hectares of forests across the country were wiped out annually.

He went on to say that the country’s forests are estimated at 14.3 million hectares, lamenting, deforestation occurs for a variety of reasons, including dam construction, road construction, fire, and wood smuggling.

2 billion tons of soil erodes annually in Iran

According to estimates, 16.4 tons of soil erodes in Iran per hectare, which is more than three times the global average. A total of 2 billion tons of soil erosion occurs in Iran annually, and the volume has been on the rise in recent years due to heavy floods.

Each ton of soil is valued at \$28 in terms of metal ores, so the loss of two billion tons of soil annually means the annual loss of \$56 billion, which is more than revenues from the sale of oil and agricultural products, gardens, livestock, poultry, and fisheries.

Meanwhile, according to the Standardized Precipitation



Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI), 11 percent of the Iranians are affected by mild drought, 21.5 percent of whom also are under pressure of moderate drought; while severe drought is exerting pressure on 32.5 percent of the people.

The country has been repeatedly exposed to sand and dust storms due to its presence in the arid and semi-arid part of the world, so that in 2006-2007, the dust storms originating in Iraq and Syria affected Iran, haunting a wide area of the country so that it reached the central areas and southern slopes of Alborz and also included Tehran.

Abdolreza Daneshvar Amoli, an official with Iranian Biological Resource Center affiliated to the Academic Center for

Education, Culture, and Research (ACECR) said in 2019 that 150 species of animals in Iran are on the verge of extinction.

National document on promoting environmental protection culture

A national document was unveiled on June 13, to protect the country’s environment and preserve its natural resources by promoting the culture of environmental protection in society.

This document defines seven strategies and fifty-four actions aimed at increasing cross-sectoral and inter-institutional partnerships. It addresses issues such as the environment, environmental protection, culture of environmental protection, environmental education, and social responsibility, life resources, pollutants, clean energy, green economy, environmental literacy, sustainable development, green jobs, and green management.

It is prepared to implement Article 50 of the Constitution, which focuses on issues such as the establishment of an integrated national environmental system, coordinated and systematic management of natural resources, criminalization of environmental degradation, preparation of ecological atlas, strengthening environmental diplomacy, expanding green economy, promoting environmental culture and ethics.

Iran’s ecology

(Part 2)

Subdesert flora consists of scattered vegetation in the most arid regions, notably the deserts of endorheic central Persia, with high salt concentrations in the moist basins (kavir), shifting sands, and the scars of human interference. Halophilous plants predominate, and perennial grasses are generally absent.

Steppe flora covers areas with mean annual precipitation of 100-250 mm and consists of varied vegetation, determined by winter temperatures. Grasses of different kinds were very common in the past but have been greatly reduced by human activity, particularly grazing of animals.

Artemisia herba-alba is the predominant shrub and Aristida plumosa normally the predominant grass.

Substeppe flora, an originally very rich

vegetation, has been greatly altered by dry farming and other forms of human intervention.

According to Pabot (p. 29), “numerous species originating from the steppic zone have penetrated into this substeppic zone, frequently giving the impression that the rainfall is lower than it in fact is.”

Herbaceous flora (including Compositae, Labiatae, Umbelliferae, Leguminosae, Graminaceae, Cruciferae, and other genuses) is much richer here than in the steppe zone. It may well be that pistachio forests of varying density are the “climax” vegetation of this zone, with perennial grasses equally common and widespread.

High mountain flora with limited growing seasons is restricted to the upper reaches of the mountain systems. It is characterized by the spiny, cushion-like tragacanth

species (Astragalus spp. and others) and many other endemic plants.

Topography. Both climate and vegetation are strongly dependent upon topography, including relief. The Alborz and Zagros are probably the most striking examples of topographical influence on the natural habitats of flora and fauna. Owing to abundant rainfall on the northern slopes of the Alborz and the western slopes of the Zagros, those regions developed more or less dense forest cover.

Bobek (1952) has thus suggested a vertical classification of vegetation, using Persian terms to characterize the thermal regime: sarhadd, subtropical high regions with very cold winters and cool summers; sardsir, subtropical moderately high regions with very cold winters and warm summers; subtropical highlands



with three climatic subtypes (cold winters, hot summers, and strong frosts; mild winters, hot summers, and short frosts; mild winters, hot summers, and rare frosts); and garmsir, subtropical lowlands with warm winters, hot summers, no frosts, and no snow.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION



Water ambulances to join medical emergency fleet

Five water ambulances will be added to the current medical emergency fleet in provinces neighboring the Persian Gulf, southern coast of the country, head of Iran’s Emergency Medical Services Organization Pir Hossein Koulivand, said on Wednesday. Since air emergency fleet have been developed, the Organization is looking forward to develop the marine medical fleet, he said, adding that in recent years, there were only five helicopters in service of the Organization, which have already added to 40.

شناورهای دریایی به اورژانس کشور می پیوندند

رئیس سازمان اورژانس کشور با بیان اینکه در حال توسعه اورژانس دریایی هستیم، گفت: در حال حاضر اضافه کردن پنج فروند شناور دریایی اورژانس به استان های همسایه خلیج فارس در دستور کارمان قرار دارد. دکتر پیرحسین کولیوند در گفت وگو با ایسنا، گفت: همانطور که ناوگان هوایی اورژانس را توسعه دادیم، در حال حاضر هم به دنبال تکمیل و توسعه ناوگان دریایی اورژانس هستیم. باید توجه کرد که در گذشته فقط پنج بالگرد اورژانس داشتیم، اما در حال حاضر با اقداماتی که انجام شده ۴۰ بالگرد و پایگاه اورژانس هوایی تامین و ایجاد شده که واقعا افتخاری برای کشور است.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
info@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Born - 44197737

Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is no greater wealth than wisdom, no greater poverty than ignorance; no greater heritage than culture and no greater support than consultation.

Imam Ali (AS)

Joseph (AS) in Persian literature

Part 1

As a love story with religious overtones, the romance of Yusof and Zolaykha has always been among the very favorite themes of Persian poets who, with direct or oblique references to its various episodes, created a desired imagery, expanded on a particular point in the poem, conveyed a poetic message or reinforced it.

For instance, a poet may use the sale of Joseph (AS) into slavery by his jealous brothers to create the impression that “there is no replacement for a beloved” and, at the same time, articulate his/her own emotional feelings towards the beloved.

In some cases, a king, or even a vizier, has been likened to Joseph (AS) in order to highlight the hardship that he had endured before coming to power and, at the same time, to make a clever allusion to his status as a person who is divinely anointed like a prophet.

The representation of Joseph (AS) in Persian literature will be treated in two separate sections in this article. The first one will focus on the episodes of the story in various genres of Persian poetry, specially in ghazals and qasidas, while the second section will be devoted to introducing the versified narratives of Yusof and Zolaykha.

In genres of Persian poetry

This section, in terms of the poet’s exoteric or esoteric approach, will be divided into three periods: naturalistic exotericism, aphoristic-religious esotericism, and Sufi/mystic esotericism.

A) Exoteric poetry: In this genre, the poem usually starts with a cheerful description of nature leading to a panegyric.

It rarely implies any sense beyond the literal meaning of the phraseology used. It is a laudatory instrument, through which the poet often explicitly, and occasionally by implication, compares to Joseph (AS) the object of his panegyric in traits that Joseph (AS) is usually considered exemplary of (e.g., physical beauty, benevolence, noble temperament, deeds, sagacity, etc.).

A poet may employ this comparison in an obviously exaggerated sense, referring, for instance, to his object of praise as the true incarnation of Joseph, or saying that the weather is so nice that it can cure blindness, as the scent of Joseph’s shirt cured Jacob’s blind eyes.

Farrokhi Sistani, panegyricizing Amir Abu Mohammad Ghaznavi, has called him the true successor of Joseph (AS) in cleansing the world of its defects and shortcomings.

Allusions or direct references to the story of Joseph (AS) is only occasionally encountered in the panegyrics of the early Khorasani-style poets, that is, up to the end of the 10th century.

Then, due to the spread of religious ideas and narratives, references to various episodes of the Joseph (AS) story increase. For instance, there are twenty-two explicit mentions of the story in the divan of the fifth-century poet Qatran Tabrizi, mostly as an exaggerated point in a panegyric; but, a century later, we find seventy-eight such implicit, figurative, and explicit references in the poetry of Khaqani Sharvani/Shervani.

B) Aphoristic, religious esoteric literature: With the end of the period that is called the golden age of Iranian culture in the Islamic period, the age of rationalism in Iran gave way to that of the so-called philosophy based on the principles of religion.

Kalam, or theology, which is considered the philosophical defense of religion, employed intellectual discourse in the service of religion and overshadowed philosophy based on rational reasoning.

Aristotelian philosophy was relegated to the realm of myths and legends, and the philosophy of Plato was considered outdated and worn out.

An antagonistic view of rationalism and Greek philosophy, which was common among theologians (motakallemun), found its way into Persian poetry.

Authors of aphoristic poetry, made the most of stories with religious content, including the biographical notices about prophets, particularly the story of Joseph (AS). Thus, there appeared a new genre of poetry that has been referred to as religious (dini, shar’i), aphoristic (hekmi) poetry.

The most distinguished poets of this genre are the Ismaeili poet Nasser-e Khosrow Qobadiani (d. 1088), Khaqani Sharvani (d. ca. 1198), and Nezami Ganjavi (d. ca. 1217).

Nasser-e Khosrow has used the rejuvenation of Zolaykha with a prayer of Joseph (AS) for a figurative description of the aging nature (i.e., in winter) that is revitalized and youthful in spring.

The same theme is employed more creatively in a verse by Sadi, where the rose with its beauty in the meadow is likened to Joseph (AS) ruling Egypt, while the spring breeze spreads its fragrance (lit. the scent of his shirt) across the city.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Book of Leader’s opinion on human rights issues published in Azerbaijani

→1 “According to the Leader’s remarks, the U.S. government cannot talk about human rights while they have been involved in scandals such as the crimes at the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp and Abu Ghraib prison and the bombing of civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan,” he added.

A chapter of this book, which was originally published in 2016, discusses the differences between Islamic and Western human rights based on the Leader’s opinion.

The Leader’s examples of women’s rights violations, violation of minorities’ rights in the West and topics such as the Palestine issue have also been studied in the book.

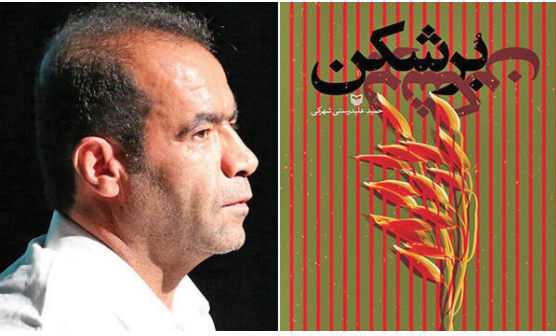
A PDF copy of the book can be downloaded on <https://nakhchivan.icro.ir> in the near future.

The Leader’s opinion on human rights has also been published on his official website <https://english.khamenei.ir/Opinions/hrights>.

In a speech made on September 16, 2016, Ayatollah Khamenei said that one of the major problems of the U.S. is supporting regimes



A poster for the Azerbaijani translation of the book “Views of Hazrat Ayatollah Khamenei on Human Rights Issues”.



This combination photo shows writer Hamid Alidoosti Shahraki and the front cover of his book “Bor Shekan”.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Writer Hamid Alidoosti Shahraki died of heart failure at Ayatollah Kashani Hospital in Shahrekord on Tuesday a week after winning the Golden Pen Award for “Bor Shekan”. He was 51.

“His death is great sadness for artists’ community in Chahar-Mahal and Bakhtiari, because Alidoosti was in his best writing phase as he won a prestigious national literary

“Bor Shekan” writer Hamid Alidoosti dies week after winning Golden Pen

award last week,” the director of the Chahar-Mahal and Bakhtiari branch of the Art Bureau, Hojjatollah Shirvani, said in a press release on Tuesday.

Alidoosti Shahraki shared the Golden Pen Award in the Adult Story category with “Without Father’s Name” by Seyyed Meisam Musavian on July 5.

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

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

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

“Today’s stories revolve around the stereotype of the romantic relationship, which has repeatedly been shown on TV and in cinema and has become boring for the audience,” Alidoosti Shahraki said after winning the Golden Pen Award.

“In ‘Bor Shekan’, I did my best to write a story that both has something new and tells about a modern issue, and talks about people’s pains,” he added.

The Iran Pen Association, which has been established by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, organizes the Golden Pen Awards every year.

Alidoosti was also the author of “Dramatic Situations in Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh” published by Sureh-Mehr in 2019. He wrote the book based on the Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations, a descriptive list that was created by French writer Georges Polti to categorize every dramatic situation that might occur in a story or performance.

Italian festival Visioni Corte dedicates Meridiani to Iranian shorts

A R T **TEHRAN** — The 10th edition of the Visioni Corte International Short Film Festival in Italy has dedicated its Meridiani section to movies from Iranian filmmakers.

Short films from a single country are reviewed every year in this non-competitive section, which will screen eight films from Iran this year.

The acclaimed movie “Better Than Neil Armstrong” by Alireza Qasemi is one of the films.

“Better than Neil Armstrong” is about four kids who start their journey to the Moon with the mission of finding a mysterious place called “Redland”, but the gates of the place are being guarded by a mischievous snake.

The sci-fi movie brought Qasemi the award for best director at the Via dei Corti Independent Short Film Festival in the Italian

city of Catania in January.

He also won the Best Live Action Short Film Director’s Award at the 18th Pune International Film Festival in India in January 2020.

Visioni Corte also will showcase Qasemi’s movie “Solar Eclipse”. The film is about Sagh and her two friends, who have come to the largest park in Tehran to take pictures of the one-in-a-century total eclipse announced later in the afternoon.

Mischievous and rebellious, they steal a camera stand, lie to their parents and discuss boys as well as an upcoming party. Their wanderings lead them to a remote part of the park. As the sun disappears, Sagh sees something that should have stayed hidden.

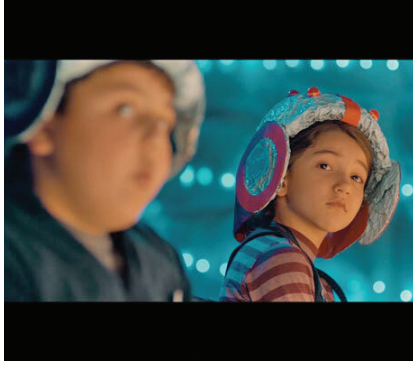
Directed by Mohammad Hormozi, “Inner Self” has also been selected for the Meridiani section.

The film shows music as the language of the human soul. A female violinist wants to enter an administrative building but as she lacks the formal hijab, she must stay in the waiting room. She is inspired by the events in the room to compose her new piece.

The Meridiani category also features “Haleh” by Jafar Mahyari, “The Blue Bed” by Alireza Kazemipur, “The Visit” by Azadeh Musavi, “Vedas” Dariush Jafari and “World Cup” by Maryam Khodabakhsh.

Three other Iranian shorts will also compete in the various sections of the festival, which will be held in Gaeta from September 18 to 25.

“Pilgrims” by Farnush Samadi and Ali Asgari will compete in Kiddos, a section exclusively dedicated to children and adolescent protagonists with all different and often difficult stories.



“Better Than Neil Armstrong” by Iranian director Alireza Qasemi.

“The Recess” by Navid Nikkhah Azad and “Witness” by Ali Asgari will be screened in the international competition.

Melbourne Intl. Film Festival spotlights Iranian cinema



“Sun Children” by Majid Majidi.

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Melbourne International Film Festival has spotlighted Iranian cinema as the organizers of the prestigious Australian event plan to screen several movies by Iranian filmmakers in the 2021 edition.

“Ballad of a White Cow” by Behtash Sanaeiha and Maryam

Moqaddam is a highlight of the Iranian film lineup.

The film is about Mina, a young woman who lives alone with her deaf child as her husband was executed for a murder charge a year ago. She tries to get her life together, take good care of her child and make both ends meet. However, her life gets more sorrowful when she finds out that her husband was innocent.

The film won third place in the 2021 Berlinale Competition Audience Award this year.

“Sun Children” by Majid Majidi is another Iranian film that has been selected to be screened at the event, which will be running from August 5 to 22.

The film depicts the rough-and-tumble streets of Tehran where 12-year-old Ali and his crew of adolescent street urchins are recruited by a crime boss to steal some treasure buried beneath a local school. The kids will have to enroll in the school to gain access to the tunnels underneath. With the plan set in motion, these juvenile miscreants are soon exposed to a different kind of education.

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

Mastroianni Award.

The organizers also will screen “The Wasteland” by Ahmad Bahrami.

It depicts the mounting tensions among the ethnically diverse workers of a crumbling, archaic brick manufacturing plant seemingly removed from civilization. The story focuses on 40-year-old Lotfollah, who has lived his entire life within the building and acts as a mediator between the workers and their boss.

Directed Kurosh Ahari, “The Night”, a co-production between Iran and the USA will also be showcased.

In this film, Badak and Neda, lost and low on gas on their way home after dinner, decide to spend the night at the Hotel Normandie with their baby daughter. The 1920s-built LA establishment is eerily deserted, but they book a room anyway. There, inexplicable happenings coax tensions – some brewing since a period of separation while Neda was still in Iran – to surface, forcing the couple to face the fractures in their marriage on top of the malicious forces that are inching ever closer.

The lineup also includes “Bandar Band” by Manijeh Hekmat, “Chess of the Wind” by Mohammad Reza Aslani and “Radiograph of a Family” Firuzeh Khosravani.

“Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism” published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — “Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism” from economist Anne Case and Nobel Prize winner Angus Deaton, a groundbreaking account of how the flaws in capitalism are fatal for America’s working class, has been published in Persian.

The book has been printed at Sorush, a publishing house affiliated with Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, and Parnaz Talebi is the translator of the book originally published by Princeton University Press on March 17, 2020.

Life expectancy in the United States has recently fallen for three years in a row — a reversal not seen since 1918 or in any other wealthy nation in modern times.

In the past two decades, deaths of despair from suicide, drug overdose and alcoholism have risen dramatically, and now claim hundreds of thousands of American lives each year — and they’re still rising.

Anne Case and Angus Deaton, known for first sounding the alarm about deaths of despair, explain the overwhelming surge in these deaths and shed light on the social and economic forces that are making life harder for the working class. They demonstrate why, for those who used to prosper in America, capitalism is no longer delivering.

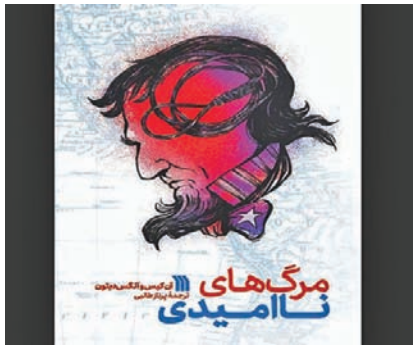
“Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism” paints a troubling portrait of the American dream in decline. For the white

working class, today’s America has become a land of broken families and few prospects.

As the college-educated become healthier and wealthier, adults without a degree are literally dying from pain and despair.

In this critically important book, Case and Deaton tie the crisis to the weakening position of labor, the growing power of corporations, and, above all, to a rapacious healthcare sector that redistributes working-class wages into the pockets of the wealthy. Capitalism, which over two centuries lifted countless people out of poverty, is now destroying the lives of blue-collar America.

This book charts a way forward, providing solutions that can rein in capitalism’s excesses and make it work for everyone.



Front cover of the Persian translation of “Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism”.