



Iraqi FM calls Iran-Saudi talks satisfactory *Page 2*



Iran ranks third in mastering technology to diagnose cancer through isotopes *Page 2*



Persepolis claim IPL title for fifth successive time *Page 3*



Book on Iran's Armenian churches introduced in Ejmiatsin *Page 8*

Israeli ship attacked off the coast of Oman

See page 3



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Iran steps up for regulation of cyberspace

TEHRAN — In recent months, there have been talks on the parliament floor about regulating internet usage. This report examines the very core of the issue. Should governments regulate the use of the Internet and why?

According to the Oxford dictionary, the Internet is "a global computer network providing various information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication

protocols." Building on this definition, it can be beneficial and harmful at the same time. As will be shown below, several countries have had to amend their laws to finesse the Internet to their interests.

France

France has attempted to regulate the Internet by using a mechanism established for policing the Minitel. It has proposed using inspectors of its famous Minitel to

Continued on page 2

Car manufacturing rises 11% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN — Car manufacturing by Iran's major carmakers rose 11.2 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the data released by Codal website showed.

Three major carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 289,311 vehicles during the first four months of this

year, rising from 260,235 cars manufactured in the same time span of the past year.

During the said four months, IKCO manufactured 145,045 vehicles, registering a rise of 37.7 percent compared to the same period last year.

SAIPA manufactured 109,258 vehicles in the mentioned period, 7.2 percent less than the figure for the four-month period of the previous year.

Continued on page 4

Excavations continue at Iron Age cemetery in Semnan

TEHRAN —The third round of archaeological excavation has recently commenced at Iron Age Mersin cemetery in Mahdishahr county, Semnan province.

The project, which will last for two months, aims at saving and protecting the historical site, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Furthermore, during the current season of excavations, two archeological teams will

be formed to expedite work and excavate a larger area of the site, Hamidreza Dust Mohammadi announced on Saturday.

Last September, a team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts commenced an excavation survey on the historical site, trying to retrieve relics before the ancient cemetery sinks into the waters of a dam nearby.

Continued on page 6

COVID-19 highlights benefits of breastfeeding

BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI

Breastmilk is the best source of nutrition for babies and protects them against illness, disruption of breastfeeding can lead to a decrease in protective immune factors contained in breastmilk so that the next generations could be more vulnerable to future pandemics.

The COVID-19 pandemic drew special attention to strengthening the immune system, which basically comes from childhood nutrition.

August marks the start of World Breastfeeding Week, an annual campaign to raise awareness for breastfeeding around the world. Founded by World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), it works to support, empower, and encourage individuals in their breastfeeding journeys.

World Breastfeeding Week was first celebrated in 1992 and is now observed in over 120 countries by UNICEF, WHO, and their partners including individuals, organizations, and governments.

This year, the theme highlights the links between breastfeeding and survival, health and wellbeing of women, children, and nations.

Breastfeeding is the best way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of babies. However, there are instances where a mother is unable to breastfeed or where she has decided not to breastfeed.

In addition, the widespread marketing of formula milk undermines the confidence of many mothers and encourages them to feed their babies using bottles and formula milk.

However, this might affect the children's immune system and make them more prone to newly emerging infectious diseases.

In Iran, World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated annually on August 1-7, aiming to inform people about the link between breastfeeding and good nutrition, food security, and poverty reduction, establishing breastfeeding as a basis for a healthy life, participation of individuals and organizations for greater impact, strengthening the situation to promote breastfeeding as part of good nutrition, food security, and poverty reduction.

Continued on page 7

Ex-taekwondo player Aflaki criticizes Iran's performance at Tokyo

BY FARROKH HESABI

TEHRAN — Former Iran taekwondo player Majid Aflaki criticized the technical staff of Iran's taekwondo national team following poor results in the 2020 Olympic Games.

Iran finished the Games without winning a medal in Tokyo. It was the first time that the country's taekwondo failed to win any medal since 1988.

Former national team practitioner, Aflaki, in an interview with Tehran Times, said: "We failed because we did not have enough strength to fight against our opponents. Iran national team were not well prepared for a big tournament like the Olympics. In fact, we went the wrong way a long time ago, when we selected the current technical staff and technical manager of the national team."

Iran's three-member taekwondo team, including Mirhashem Hosseini, Armin Hadipour at Men's category, and Nahid Kiani at Women's,

displayed poor and lower-than-expected performance in Tokyo.

When asked about the role of the Iranian federation's management in the failure at the Olympic Games, Aflaki responded: "When you select a coach for the national team, you give him all the responsibility, and you trust him and his staff. The federation fully supported the current technical staff, and in this regard, they did their best. However, the main problem was the mistake that the federation made in choosing the head coach of Iran's national team."

"We made a series of tactical mistakes in these competitions. Our training methods are flawed and are not up to date," Aflaki added.

"Mirhashem Hosseini was far from his own standards in the 2020 Olympics. He, like our two other taekwondo practitioners, was not mentally prepared for the tournament.

Continued on page 3

U.S. imposes fresh sanctions on Cuba, pledges more measures

The United States has imposed fresh sanctions on the Cuban police force and two of its leaders in response to the police's alleged human rights violations during rare protests on the Island. During a meeting with Cuban-American leaders, U.S. President Joe Biden promised more punitive measures are on the way against Havana.

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, the sanctions also targeted the Cuban interior ministry's national police force.

Biden's meeting came as Cuban-American community leaders made a call for more support for protests in Cuba. Just last week, Washington announced sanctions on Cuba's defense minister and an interior ministry Special Forces unit.

Among the anticipated upcoming American measures, Biden says he has instructed the Treasury and State departments to report back in a month on how to allow remittance payments from Americans to Cubans without

the Cuban authorities profiting.

A senior administration official also says Biden has been working on plans to provide wireless communications to Cubans and augment U.S. embassy staff in the country.

The protests took place on July 11th and 12th as Cuba suffers from economic problems amid a record surge in coronavirus infections.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel has blamed the unrest on the United States, which in recent years has tightened its decades-old embargo on the island. Diaz-Canel says the protester's demands had been sincere but many had been manipulated by American disinformation campaigns on social media and financial support from Washington.

Since the revolution, outbursts of public discontent have rarely been seen in Cuba, nevertheless, top U.S. politicians were very quick to seize on the rallies, praising them and pledging support.

Continued on page 5

Iran and Azerbaijan have great potential for cooperation in post-war Nagorno-Karabakh: Azeri expert

BY PAYMAN YAZDANI

TEHRAN — As Azerbaijan moves forward with reconstruction projects in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, new spheres of cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan have emerged, an Azerbaijani expert tells the Tehran Times.

Decades-long disagreements between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh came to an end in November last year, when the two warring sides agreed to a

Russian brokered ceasefire deal that put an end to a 44-day devastating war between Baku and Yerevan.

The war wreaked further havoc on a region already suffering from destruction and rubble. But the Russian-brokered ceasefire paved the way for Azerbaijan to reconstruct the region and prepare it for the return of the displaced people who fled the region as a result of the war in the 1990s.

Many foreign firms are involved in the Na-

gorno-Karabakh reconstruction, with Iran being a geographically well-positioned party to play a role in that regard.

The Azerbaijani expert, Seymour Mammadov, who is the director of the international expert club EurAsiaAz and editor-in-chief of Azerbaijani news agency Baku Tribune, explained to the Tehran Times how Iran can play a role in the reconstruction.

Continued on page 3



© Reuters

Taftian fails to advance to 100m semis: Tokyo 2020

TEHRAN — Iran sprinter Hassan Taftian failed to progress to the semifinals of the men's 100m event at the Olympic Games.

He finished in fourth place with a time of 10.19 seconds.

South African sprinter Akani Simbine finished in first place with 10.08. Arthur Cisse gets Cote d'Ivoire a spot in 10.15, and Paulo Andre Camilo from Brazil in 10.17.

The sprinters had to overcome a nervy start to the race after a false start. The semifinals and final are Sunday.

Is a new war on Lebanon in the offing?

BY ABIR BASSAM

On the 23rd of this month, there was a report about the Lebanese financial crisis on CNN. When the anchor asked the CNN reporter in Lebanon about the means to fix the problem in Lebanon the reporter said that Lebanon needs to radically change its politicians. The reporters said they are corrupt.

Indeed, the Americans are seeking to change the Lebanese political landscape; however, this is another step before forcing the change. What is happening in Lebanon is part of a plan declared by Mike Pompeo, the former American secretary of state during Trump's presidency, to defeat Hezbollah in its own social base in preparation to disarm it and battle its missiles.

When Pompeo came to Lebanon on the 22nd of March 2019, he stressed the following provocative points:

1. He said that Hezbollah is taking his orders from Iran and sending young men from the South and Bekaa to die in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

2. He reminded that Hezbollah is supporting the Syrian government of which Rafiq al-Hariri was one of its victims.

3. He said America spent 800 million dollars in aid in Lebanon, while Hezbollah is stealing the Lebanese resources and spending it on weapons and war against Israel, which have led to destabilizing the region.

4. He accused Hezbollah of illegal international actions.

All the four mentioned points are provocative points that aim to ignite a civil war, or at least rides against Hezbollah, which happened in 2019, and then again after the explosion of Beirut Harbor. Selected anti-Hezbollah people went out on the streets and started swearing at Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

Continued on page 5

Iran ranks third in the world in mastering technology to diagnose cancer through isotope

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran emerges as the third country in the world that has mastered the technology to diagnose cancer through isotopes, the IRIB news agency reported on Saturday.

The story broke out as the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) opened a biotechnology laboratory in the Arak heavy water reactor on the same day.



The use of isotopes helps to diagnose cancer sooner and produce Deuterium Metabolic Imaging (DMI) in the laboratory. Tapping such a technology started in the world in 2019. Iran also started work on the technology in the same year. The isotopic method has replaced positron emission tomography (PET) scans. It is more precise with no side effects. It closely scrutinizes cancer cells and gives specialists better chance to treat patients more easily and with higher speed.

Zarif says affected by deadly forest fires in Turkey, offers Iran's help to contain fires

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday said he was saddened by the deadly forest fires in Turkey, offering that Iran is ready to provide whatever assistance needed in the efforts to contain the raging wildfires in Turkey.



"I was very affected by the fire that broke out in some parts of Turkey. We share the pain of the government and people of Turkey and we will stand by them," Zarif tweeted.

"May God have mercy on the deceased. I wish a speedy recovery to the injured," he added.

"Our prayers and opportunities will be at the service of our brothers in Turkey," Zarif underlined.

Also on Friday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh announced Tehran's solidarity with the brotherly country of Turkey and expressed condolences to the families of the victims.

At least four people have been killed in southern Turkey as forest fires raged near tourist coastal regions for a third day.

Firefighters were still tackling wildfires in six provinces in Turkey's Mediterranean and southern Aegean region, Turkey's Agriculture and Forestry Minister Bekir Pakdemirli said.

But authorities say the majority have been brought under control.

More than 50 others wildfires that broke out since Wednesday amid strong winds and scorching heat were extinguished.

The worst fires hit the Manavgat and Akseki regions in Antalya province, where an 82-year-old man and a married couple died. More than 50 people were hospitalized and at least 25 villages or districts were evacuated.

Images showed flames briefly threatening holiday homes and beach resorts near the town of Bodrum, where some guests were evacuated by boat.

More than 4,000 firefighters, assisted by helicopters and planes, are trying to bring the fires under control. The Russian embassy also said on Thursday that three water bombers were assisting in the firefighting operations.

Azerbaijan has also sent 500 emergency workers, helicopters and other equipment to help. Neighboring Greece and France have also offered help.

Janez Lenarcic, the European Commissioner for Crisis Management, said on Friday that the bloc is "following the wildfires on Turkey's Mediterranean and Aegean coasts with great concern."

"I am conveying my condolences to all those who have lost their loved ones."

"We stand ready to help," he added.

The mayor for Marmaris said he couldn't rule out "sabotage" as a cause for the fire there. In other provinces, authorities declared a ban on people entering forests in a bid to prevent more fires.

Wildfires are common in Turkey's Mediterranean and Aegean regions during the arid summer months.

According to The New York Times, the blazes are part of a broader pattern of wildfires afflicting the Mediterranean this summer, with areas in Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Italy and Cyprus also battling fast-moving fires.

They are also the latest in a series of extreme weather events around the planet — from deadly floods in Europe and China to raging fires in the United States, Canada, and Siberia — that scientists believe are linked to changes in the climate resulting from global warming.

Cagatay Tavsanoglu, a biology professor specializing in fire ecology at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey, said fires in the Mediterranean basin are an annual occurrence, but the extent of the blazes this year should serve as a warning.

"Many fires could not be put out, and with the influence of dry winds, burning happened too fast," Tavsanoglu said. "It is just the first indications of what climate change would do to the Mediterranean region in the future."

Lebanese firefighters struggled for the second day on Thursday to contain wildfires in the country's north that have spread across the border into Syria, civil defense officials in both countries said.

The fires killed at least one person, a 15-year-old boy, who was helping firefighting efforts in Lebanon, The Globe and Mail reported.

Iran steps up for regulation of cyberspace

→ **1** prowling the Minitel system inspecting content to ensure that information provider comply with the terms of their contract with France Télécom. If the approach is implemented, France will join countries in the Communist bloc to manually inspect Internet content as a matter of course.

Currently, however, the legal position is uncertain because the section of the French law that created the policing mechanism was declared unconstitutional for vagueness by the French Conseil Constitutionnel (Constitutional Council).

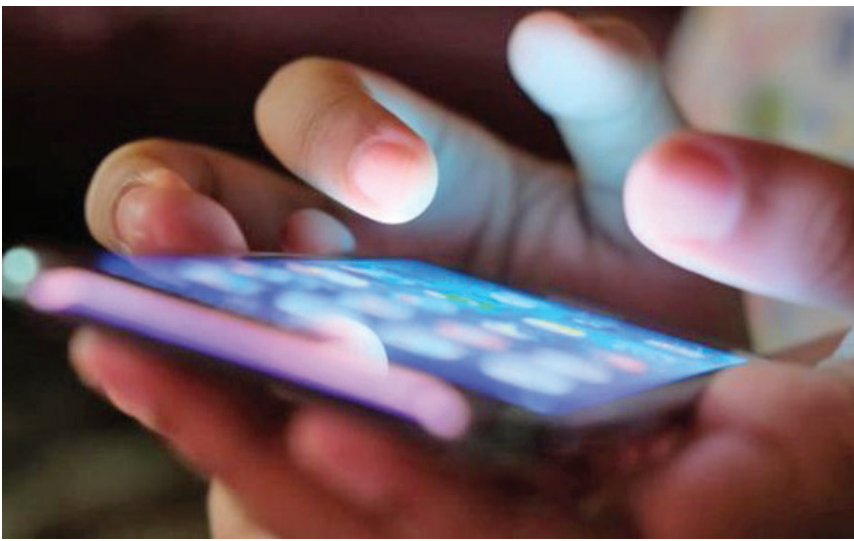
France's well-used Minitel system is regulated by the CST (le Conseil Supérieur de la Télématique). This body ensures that each content provider abides by the contract signed with France Télécom. The surveillance function is reportedly done by five to eight persons working in France Télécom.

In early 1996, the French government set up a commission to study regulating the Net. In the main, it recommended self-filtering as opposed to filtering at the source. Where necessary, it urged international cooperation in policing the Net. It also recommended regulations to enhance French presence and language on the Net.

The recommendations, however, were overshadowed by a proposal, called the Fillon amendment, named after the minister of telecommunications, François Fillon, to regulate the Internet. In style perhaps peculiar to France, regulation is through a "negative option"—IAPs do not have to abide by the code of conduct drawn up by the CST. Still, those who abide by the code will be absolved of legal liabilities for text, images and documents transmitted. As legal liabilities are uncertain, the implications of such a law are uncertain.

Internet organizations and professionals were scheduled to be members of the new CST. In its "Minitel" form, the CST has 20 members made up of magistrates, ministry officials, France Télécom representatives, Minitel providers, family, and consumer organizations. IAPs who do not respond to the blacklist of Internet sites or newsgroups will be held responsible for carrying it. It is this law that empowered the CST to censor that has been ruled unconstitutional.

In the wake of the promulgation of the law and the arrest of two managers of French IAPs, the French Association of Internet Professionals (AFPI), an ISP interest group, has decided to ban 18 obscene, pedophile, and neo-Nazi newsgroups from their servers. The AFPI, which has four members but claims to represent "more than 50 percent" of the French market, was afraid that IAPs could be held responsible for the content they transmit. A representative of the AFPI



said that this ban could not be called censorship because "every subscriber is free to choose another Usenet server."

France has proposed developing a code of conduct for the Internet. Users, however, have not been invited to participate.

South Korea

Probably the first country to have any Internet-specific censorship law is South Korea. In 1995, South Korea passed the Electronic Communication Business Law, which established the Information & Communication Ethics Office. The Office has broad powers to censor: its scope of coverage encompasses material on bulletin-board services (BBS), chat rooms, and other "public domain services" that "encroaches on public morals," "may cause a loss of national sovereignty," and "information that may harm youths' character, emotions and the sense of value."

Under the law, the Minister of Communication can order an information provider to delete and restrict the material. By one count, one of the three service providers for online and Internet content counted more than 220,000 deleted messages in the first eight months of 1996.

South Korea stands out for its unique regulation of political speech: contact with and even expressions of sympathy toward North Korea is forbidden. Prosecutors in South Korea have stated that stern measures would be taken against anybody trying to access North Korean home pages on the World Wide Web.

Germany

Germany recently drafted a "multimedia" law that, among other things, censors pornography and anti-Semitic propaganda. Acts already prohibited in Germany—such

as denying the Holocaust, distributing hardcore pornography to minors, and conducting fraudulent business—will also be illegal in electronic form.

The German law puts responsibility for suspect content on "suppliers," but this is not clearly defined. One interpretation of the new provision is that online services such as CompuServe and America Online could be held liable for legally questionable material after being warned that such material can be accessed through their systems if they have the technical means to block the material fail to do so.

The European Union

The European Commission has recommended a voluntary code of conduct on the Internet and suggests using labeling and filtering along PICS lines (Platform for Internet Content Selection). There are, however, at least two problems. First, the labeling and filtering systems are not compatible. Second, the European Union has to develop a framework to clarify the administrative rules and regulations applicable to access and content providers.

As discussed above, many countries in the world have felt the need to regulate Internet usage since it began to spread widely around the globe. Iran is no exception to this natural rule.

Members of the parliament have proposed a bill to regulate the usage of the Internet in Iran. It is said that they have been working on this bill for over 15 months.

Like all countries, Iran is not trying to block the Internet, as it is impossible to do so. What is merely discussed in the proposed bill is to boost localization of the Internet by providing equal opportunities for the domestic platforms to compete with the

international ones.

In a tweet posted on Friday, Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf explicitly said that widely used platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp would not be blocked. The proposed bill is not suggesting the blockade of any social media platforms whatsoever.

In recent years, popular social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter have been acting as a tool for the U.S. government, despite being an international platform. A case in point is the widespread censorship of the Iranian martyr, late Gen. Qassem Soleimani. Since his cowardly assassination in January 2020, Instagram has been deleting pictures and hashtags of Soleimani. Posting a picture of him regardless of political position could result in having an account deleted. Owned by Facebook, Instagram followed the policy of its father. Facebook permanently deleted the Tehran Times account after using a picture of martyr Soleimani along with his hashtag. This double standard comes amid claims of "free access to data" by free speech advocates in the West.

Iran feels another need to regulate the Internet. Examples of misusing people's protests by terrorist groups such as the Mujahedin-E-Khalgh organization (MEK) in the November 2019 protests show that Iran needs to regulate the use of the Internet to prevent spreading misinformation. The MEK and other foes have been trying hard in cyberspace to disrupt the lives of the Iranian people. During the recent protests in Khuzestan province over water shortage, MEK members spread misinformation and bold lies about the core of the problem, linking the protests to dissatisfaction with the establishment, which was false. This propaganda did not and will not end here. With every single demonstration, they try to spread controversy in Iran.

Another reason for Iran to regulate the use of the Internet is that much personal data is in the hands of the social media platforms such as Instagram, which ironically do not even respect their users. On Wednesday, Iran's chief justice, Gholam Hossein Moshen Ejei, opened an Instagram account. On Thursday night, Instagram closed his account due to "unknown reasons." The platform did not even consider its users worthy of an explanation. There is a possibility of espionage on Iranian users with the amount of data in hand.

The bottom line is that the Internet's regulation is not something strange and unknown. Yet, the mainstream media seems to portray that Iran will block the Internet in its entirety. It is needless to say that this is a baseless claim.

Iraqi FM calls Iran-Saudi talks satisfactory

Iraqi President Barham Salih to travel to Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In an interview with the **d e s k** Saudi Al-Arabiya news network published on Saturday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Foad Hussein said that President Barham Salih will soon travel to Iran.

Asked if Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi is due to travel to Tehran after Ebrahim Raisi officially takes office, the Iraqi foreign minister said the visit to Tehran has not been planned yet.

"The Iranian side has invited our prime minister to visit Tehran, and he will leave Baghdad after Ebrahim Raisi comes to power. But in the next few days, Iraqi President Barham Saleh will travel to Tehran as the head of a delegation that I am accompanying. We will have discussions and consultations with the Iranian side," he noted.

He said that the two sides would hold consultations on various issues.

The new situation in Iran entails fresh talks, the chief Iraqi diplomat commented.

Hussein said they would consult with the Iranian side on Tehran-Baghdad relations and Iran-U.S. relations, as these relations could have both positive and negative effects on the political situation in Iraq.

On Tehran-Washington relations, Hussein stressed that this issue directly affects Iraq.

"Iraq is satisfied with Tehran-Riyadh talks"

Regarding Baghdad's efforts in hosting talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Foreign Minister Hussein said, "Naturally, I should not speak on behalf of Iran and Saudi Arabia, but according to my information, the third round of Iran-Saudi talks is over, and these talks are satisfactory. The important thing is that the two sides began to consult on issues related to bilateral relations, and Iraq played an essential role in this regard."

With President-elect Raisi preparing to take the helm



in less than a week, relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are poised to be fully restored.

Ayatollah Raisi has made it clear that he wants better relations with Iran's neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, whose ties with Iran were severed in 2016 in the wake of the storming of its diplomatic missions.

"As for Saudi Arabia, I say that there is no obstacle to having a dialogue with Saudi Arabia and relations with all countries. We are ready to reopen embassies," the president-elect said in his first presser after he won the June 18 presidential election.

The remarks came in the midst of Iran-Saudi security talks in Baghdad, which was confirmed by both sides. Security and intelligence officials from both sides sat at the negotiating table in the Iraqi capital to address each other's concerns. The Yemen war was discussed in detail, while other thorny points of contention, such as Lebanon and Iraq, were also touched on.

The talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia began in Baghdad in April. Since then, several rounds have been

held, and lately, there have been unofficial reports that the venue of negotiations has been moved to Oman. Over the past few weeks, no updates have been given on the latest status of the talks, but Iran hinted at their continuation.

The Raisi team showed its support for improving ties with Riyadh by inviting Saudi officials to the inauguration ceremony, which will be held on August 5. Iranian media outlets reported that Saudi Arabia is likely to dispatch a representative to Iran to attend the inauguration. "Due to the resolution of all bilateral disputes, it is possible to announce the improvement of relations between Tehran and Riyadh and the reopening of embassies at any time," an informed source was quoted by the Etemad Online as saying. The source said the Iran-Saudi talks are ongoing in Arab capitals, and the remaining issues do not pertain to bilateral issues.

Instead, the unresolved issues have something to do with Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq. "The two sides are negotiating a symbolic move at the inauguration ceremony, after which relations will begin," the source said.

Raisi himself made sure to signal his openness to improving relations with the region's countries after winning the presidential election. He spoke on the phone with a number of regional leaders. Most recently, he held a telephone conversation with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman, who recently paid a vociferous visit to Saudi Arabia.

"Engagement, dialogue, consultation, and brainstorming with neighbors about the important issues of the region are a priority of the thirteenth government," Raisi told the sultan in their phone conversation.

After years of bitter diplomatic tensions, Iran and Saudi Arabia are inching slowly toward a full resumption of diplomatic ties. Iran is ready to do it in a matter of hours, but is Saudi Arabia prepared to do the same?

Ambassador promises to pursue case of Iranian beaten in Swedish custody

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to Stockholm said on Friday the embassy under his leadership will follow up the case of an Iranian national beaten in Swedish custody until perpetrators are punished, Press TV reported.

"Today, I found out that an Iranian was severely beaten on Eid al-Ghadir by officers at a Swedish detention center. I requested an

immediate visit to ensure his health," Ahmad Masoumifar tweeted.

Ambassador Masoumifar added, "I will not tolerate disrespect and violation of the rights of my country's nationals. I will pursue the issue until its perpetrators are identified and punished."

The beating of the Iranian citizen in custody in Sweden, which is internationally famous for its good record in upholding

human rights, is something unexpected.

According to Press TV, European countries, through cooperation with the anti-Iran Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO), have arrested and imprisoned many Iranians under false pretexts.

The European Union removed the cultist terrorist MKO, also called MEK, from a list of banned terrorist organizations. The U.S. also did so in 2012.



Israeli ship attacked off the coast of Oman

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – An Israeli-operated ship came under attack off the coast of Oman on Thursday night in the latest case of tit-for-tat retaliatory strikes between Israel and the Resistance Axis.

The oil tanker, Mercer Street, which is managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime, was traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The Israeli-owned UK ship was attacked by what American sources say a drone in the north of the Sea of Oman. The Israeli company said two crewmen, a British and a Romanian national, died in the attack.

"With profound sadness, we understand the incident onboard the M/T Mercer Street on 29 July, 2021 has resulted in the deaths of two crew members on board," Zodiac Maritime said in a statement on Friday afternoon, a day after the attack.

No country claimed responsibility for the attack but the Iranian news channel Al-Alam said the attack came in retaliation for an earlier Israeli strike against the al-Dhaba'a airport in the Syrian city of al-Qusayr which killed two men from the Resistance.

Citing informed sources in the Resistance, Al-Alam said the attack on Mercer Street was in response to the al-Dhaba'a strike. Although no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, Al-Alam, citing Resistance sources, said the attack on the Israeli ship off the coast of Oman was carried out by



resistance groups in response to the Tel Aviv attack on Syria's al-Dhaba'a airport. "This announcement seems to have come to confirm in practice that the axis of resistance is greater than geography, and that the front of this axis is one front, as is the front of America, Israel and the Arab backwardness, headed by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, one front," the Iranian broadcaster commented on its scoop.

Reuters quoted Western intelligence sources as saying that the main suspect in the attack is Tehran, but the same sources stressed that governments are still seeking compelling evidence; The U.S. State Department expressed its alarm over the

incident, and confirmed Washington's work with its international partners to find out the circumstances, and that it is closely monitoring the situation.

In Israel, there was no unified reaction to the attack. First, Israeli media sought to downplay the incident but as the story developed, they highlighted the Israeli allegations against Iran, though it did not claim responsibility for the attack. An Israeli security official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity that Israel believes Iran was behind the attack on the ship, citing similar attacks in the past.

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid put the blame on Iran for the incident.

"Iran is not just an Israeli problem, but an exporter of terrorism, destruction and instability that harms us all. The world must not be silent in the face of Iranian terrorism that also harms freedom of shipping," he claimed in a statement without providing any evidence to support his claim.

Israeli news website Ynet said the assessment in Israel was that there were two attacks on the ship, spaced several hours apart. The first caused no damage, and the second hit the bridge, causing the casualties. It quoted an unnamed Israeli official as saying "Israel will find it hard to turn a blind eye" to the attack, according to Reuters.

Another Israeli news website DEBKAFle which is known for its close ties with Israel's intelligence community claimed that the Israeli vessel was attacked by an "Iranian kamikaze drone," something that took place for the first time. All previous alleged cases of Iran's attacks on Israeli vessels involved allegations that Iran used other means to mount an attack.

DEBKAFle reported that what happened in the Sea of Oman marked the "first direct armed drone attack on an Israeli merchant vessel."

According to the Israeli news website, Israel's Defense Minister Benny Gantz called an urgent conference on Friday night with Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi and other senior commanders, following which Gantz announced that Israel would make an "appropriate response" to the attack.

Iran and Azerbaijan have great potential for cooperation in post-war Nagorno-Karabakh: Azeri expert

→1 "Iran and Azerbaijan have great potential for expanding cooperation in many areas. In the post-war period, there is a possibility of increasing bilateral trade turnover several times. At the moment, there are new conditions for expanding bilateral cooperation in the field of rehabilitation of the recently liberated areas," Mammadov told the Tehran Times.

"For example, Iranian companies producing industrial and building materials could participate in construction projects in the liberated areas. As far as I know, Iran intends to create a market for building materials near the liberated territories of Azerbaijan," he continued.

Following is the full text of the interview:

In what stage is the process of reconstruction of the liberated cities of Nagorno-Karabakh? What are the plans of the Azerbaijani government in this regard? Is there a specific deadline for reconstruction projects?

The process of restoration of the liberated regions of Azerbaijan is being actively pursued and taking into account the historical traditions of the region. Azerbaijan has developed comprehensive programs to restore the liberated territories of the country, taking into account the most modern trends in the field of urbanization. On the lands liberated from the 30-year-old Armenian occupation in the Karabakh region new settlements will be built and large infrastructure projects will be implemented. Most of the settlements in the liberated regions of the country, including the cities of Aghdam, Fizuli, Jibrail and Zangilan, were virtually wiped out and turned into "ghost towns".

In the liberated territories of Azerbaijan, it is planned not only to restore and reconstruct [the] destroyed and abandoned settlements, but also to implement modern concepts for their arrangement, including such as Smart City and Smart Village. The foundation of one of the first "smart villages" was laid in the Zangilan region. The first smart village in the area will be ready by January 2022. Internally displaced persons will be provided with new housing completely free of charge. The creation of "smart" villages in the liberated territories consists of five components: "smart housing", social security facilities, agricultural functions, production and ecology. Solar energy, wind energy and hydroelectric power plants will be used to support the new settlements. According to the state program until 2030, "green" alternative energy should become the main priority of the country. What is the concept of "Smart Village" for? One of the main goals of creating such villages in the world is to prevent urbanization. The second important point is that the "Smart Village" concept allows people to earn more than in the city.

As for the specific deadlines for the implementation of projects, it all depends on how quickly the process of demining the liberated territories will proceed. In order to resolve this issue, Yerevan should transfer all minefield maps to Baku. The Armenian side has handed over to Azerbaijan all the maps of minefields in the Aghdam, Fizuli and Zangilan regions. Of course, the availability of these maps will facilitate and speed up the work of the repair and construction companies involved in the restoration of the liberated areas. However, as the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said, by the end of 2021, the entire electric economy will be established in the liberated lands - both in Karabakh and in "Eastern Zangezur."

Is Iran involved in the Karabakh reconstruction projects? If so, in what areas is it involved? What plans does the Republic of Azerbaijan



have for reconstruction in the liberated areas bordering Iran? Does the Republic of Azerbaijan have joint projects with Iran?

As you know, the Azerbaijan-Iran border was completely restored after the Second Karabakh war. And in 2016, an Iranian-Azerbaijani agreement was signed on hydropower facilities and reservoirs Khudafarin and Giz Galasy.

After the end of the war, President Ilham Aliyev instructed the government to create a working group from the Azerbaijani side. And today the construction of the Khudafarin and Gyz Galasy reservoirs on the Araz River is already being completed in Azerbaijan. In accordance with the agreement signed with Iran, Baku and Tehran will jointly use these reservoirs.

Today Iran and Azerbaijan have great potential for expanding cooperation in many areas. In the post-war period, there is a possibility of increasing bilateral trade turnover several times. At the moment, there are new conditions for expanding bilateral cooperation in the field of rehabilitation of the recently liberated areas.

For example, Iranian companies producing industrial and building materials could participate in construction projects in liberated areas. As far as I know, Iran intends to create a market for building materials near the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. It is also expected that in the near future a Khudafarin border-customs point will open on the state border of Iran with Azerbaijan.

In addition, I would like to add that after the Second Karabakh War, cases of illegal drug trafficking from Iran to Azerbaijan have become more frequent. Border guards are killed during the shootings from the Azerbaijani side. This factor causes concern in Azerbaijani society. It seems to me that Baku and Tehran should create a joint working group of law enforcement agencies to prevent such incidents on the Iranian-Azerbaijani border.

Israel is said to be involved in the Karabakh reconstruction and even intends to build a smart town in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. What Israeli companies are present in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and what projects are they involved in?

It's no secret that Azerbaijan and Israel cooperate in many areas, including cooperation in the military sphere. Modern Israeli weapons purchased by Azerbaijan, especially drones, played an important role in the Karabakh conflict. Therefore, it is not surprising that today Israeli companies are interested in cooperating

with Azerbaijan in the liberated territories. Azerbaijan, in turn, is interested in attracting foreign investments to restore the liberated territories. Of course, official Baku will give preference, first of all, to those countries that supported Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War. An Israeli company intends to create a buffalo farm in the liberated Zangilan. This project will be managed by an Azerbaijani company. The essence of this project is that an Azerbaijani company is building housing and all the infrastructure in the area, and an Israeli company is building a dairy farm for breeding buffaloes. The products will be transferred to an Italian company, which will open a processing plant to use this milk to produce cheese that will be sold on the local and foreign markets.

Is the speed of accomplishing transportation projects in Karabakh has something to do with the corridor connecting the region to the Nakhchivan exclave? Does the Azerbaijani government have a plan to build trade links between Nagorno-Karabakh and the Nakhchivan region?

Today, Azerbaijan is interested in the early implementation of transport projects in the liberated territories. Most of the road and rail projects are implemented here. An international airport in Fizuli is also under construction. All these projects in the future will be integrated into the transport project "Zanguzur corridor", which will connect Azerbaijan with the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the territory of Armenia.

On November 9, 2020, the heads of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia signed a tripartite ceasefire statement. According to the 9th paragraph of the statement, "The Republic of Armenia guarantees the safety of transport links between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic in order to organize the unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions."

By agreement of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as noted in the statement, the construction of new transport communications linking the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic with the western regions of Azerbaijan will be provided. Unblocking of transport communications will allow Azerbaijan for the first time in 30 years to establish communication with the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, and Armenia through the territory of Azerbaijan will receive railway access to Russia and Iran, and potentially to Turkey. This will create additional opportunities for the development of Armenia. In addition, there will be access to the Turkish market and to the Turkish and Russian railway arteries. Thus, a new five-sided cooperation platform with the participation of Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran and Armenia can be created in the South Caucasus region.

Several road projects have already been launched in the territories liberated from the occupation and are being successfully continued. These projects will play an important role in the socio-economic development of the regions and villages liberated from the occupation. The Horadiz-Jibrail-Zangilan-Aghend road is also of strategic importance, since it is part of the Hajigabul-Horadiz-Aghend-Zangezur transport corridor and is very important in terms of connecting Zangilan with other regions of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

In addition, Azerbaijan plans to complete the construction of a railway to the border with Armenia within two, maximum 2.5 years. Budget funds have already been allocated for this and work is underway.

SPORTS

Ex- taekwondo player Aflaki criticizes Iran's performance at Tokyo

→1 In terms of technical level, the Olympics' taekwondo are somehow lower than the World Taekwondo Championship, but the mental pressure and stress in the Olympics is very high, and all the athletes must put into proper condition to be able to cope with the pressures," Aflaki, who represented Iran in 2000 Olympic Games, stated.

"Armin Hadipour had the same problem in terms of mental preparation. Moreover, he had not analyzed his rival; it was the technical coach's responsibility. So, he made similar mistakes and lost the game," Aflaki said.

Iran taekwondo could enter Olympics in 2000 Sydney Olympics for the first time in the history of the Games when Aflaki was a national team member. Since then, Iran has been able to secure at least a medal in the past five rounds so far except for this year.

Persepolis claim IPL title for fifth successive time

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Persepolis football team defeated d e s k Paykan 2-0 to win Iran Professional League (IPL) for the fifth successive time.

Mehdi Abdi and Ahmad Nourollahi scored twice in the first half at the Shahr-e Qods Stadium in Tehran.



In Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Sepahan defeated Esteghlal 2-1. Reza Mirzaei and Sajad Shahbazzadeh scored for Sepahan. Mehdi Mehdipour pulled a goal back in the added time.

Also, Sanat Naft defeated already-relegated Machine Sazi 2-1 in Abadan.

Aluminum lost to Naft Masjed Soleyman 1-0 in Arak. Gol Gohar shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw with Nassaji in Sirjan. Zob Ahan suffered a 1-0 home defeat to Mes in Isfahan.

Padideh and Foolad played out a goalless draw in Mashhad. And in Tabriz, Saipa lost to Tractor 5-1 and were relegated from IPL.

Persepolis finished the 20th edition of the IPL with 67 points, two points above Sepahan. Esteghlal came third with 56 points.

Faraz Kamalvand officially named Tractor coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Faraz Kamalvand was appointed as d e s k new head coach of Iran's Tractor football team.

The Tabriz-based football team finished in fourth place in 2020/21 Iran Professional League season.

Tractor will meet Al Nassr of Saudi Arabia in Round of 16 of the 2021 AFC Champions League on Sept. 14.

It's Kamalvand's second stint at Tractor. He led the Reds from 2008 to 2011.

"I am very happy since I return to my home after 10 years. I will do my best to make all Tractor fans happy. We want to shine not only in Iran league but also in the AFC Champions League," Kamalvand shared on his Instagram account.

Kamalvand has most recently worked at Saipa.

Iran basketball forward Kazemi hopes for better future

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran 6-foot-7 forward Arsalan d e s k Kazemi hopes the things go better for his team in the future.

The Persians lost to France 79-62 in Group A of the men's basketball in 2020 Olympic Games. Iran went 0-3, which was also expected.

Former NBA center Hamed Haddadi had 18 points and 12 rebounds for Iran. Kazemi finished with 11 points and hopes that things would be better for Iran next time it qualifies for the Olympics.

"It's really tough," Kazemi said. "It's really sad and I'm just hoping for a better future."

He said Iran had a couple tune-up games against Spain and three against host Japan. Meanwhile, the USA hosted Spain, Australia, Argentina and Nigeria in Las Vegas for exhibition opponents that were good enough to make up an Olympic semifinals.

"They have their training came in Las Vegas, they stay in one time zone," Kazemi said of those clubs. "These five games that we played, I traveled through maybe six different time zones to be able to play in these games."

Azmoun second best foreigner goalscorer

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Sardar Azmoun's goal against Kh- d e s k imki moves him up the ranks of the top goalscorers not from former Soviet Republics.

Azmoun has now scored 96 goals in the Russian Premier Liga with 17 goals for Rubin Kazan, 25 for Rostov and 54 for Zenit.

The best goalscorer is Brazilian Wagner Love and Azmoun sits second in the table.

The top 10 overseas goalscorers in the Russian Premier Liga are:

1. Wagner Love (Brazil) - 124 goals in 259 matches
2. Sardar Azmoun (Iran) - 96/239
3. Seydou Doumbia (Ivory Coast) - 95/150
4. Ari (Brazil) - 90/305
5. Danny (Portugal) - 88/369
6. Hulk (Brazil) - 77/148
7. Christian Noboa (Ecuador) - 71/385
8. Quincy Promes (Holland) - 69/147
9. Welliton (Brazil) - 61/133
10. Ahmed Musa (Nigeria) - 61/184

TEDPIX jumps 34,000 points on Saturday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), climbed 34,962 points to 1,351 million on Saturday, which is the first day of Iranian calendar week.

As reported, over 7.542 billion securities worth 58.18 trillion rials (about \$1.385 billion) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.



The first market's index rose 28,642 points, and the second market's index increased 60,961 points.

TEDPIX had risen 5,000 points in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.316 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

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

Value of exports from Golestan province increases 52%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The value of exports from Golestan province, in the northeast of Iran, has risen 52 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Ebrahim Hosseini, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that 160,666 tons of products worth \$46.228 million were exported from the province during the four-month period, indicating a 268-percent growth in terms of weight as well.

Polystyrene, cheese, dates, pistachios, cement, potatoes and iodine were the most important export items of Golestan in the said four months, respectively, which were exported to different countries including Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan, the official stated.

He also announced that 2,389 tons of products worth \$8.487 million were imported to the province in the first four months of the present year, showing 24 percent rise in terms of value and 39 percent growth in terms of weight, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

According to him, the main imported goods included stabilizers, fabrics, synthetic waxes and antistats, which were imported from China, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Poland and Vietnam.



As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 47 percent during the first four months of the current year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi has said that Iran has traded 50.8 million tons of non-oil products worth nearly \$29 billion with other countries in the mentioned four-month period, which indicates also 21 percent growth in terms of weight on an annual basis.

The official put the four-month non-oil export at 38.3 million tons valued at \$14.3 billion, with a 65-percent rise in value and a 27-percent growth in weight.

The IRICA head mentioned liquefied gas, polyethylene, iron semi-finished products, methanol, gasoline, iron and steel ingots, steel products, iron rods, liquid propane, bitumen, and copper cathode as the main exported products in the said time span.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China with about 10 million tons worth \$4.3 billion, Iraq with 10.9 million tons worth \$2.8 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 4.3 million tons worth \$1.6 billion, Turkey with one million tons worth \$923 million, and Afghanistan with 1.8 million tons worth \$728 million.

The official further announced that Iran has imported 12.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$14.5 billion in the first four months of the present year, with 32 percent growth in value and five percent rise in weight year on year.

He said that the basic goods accounted for 9.4 million tons of the imported items.

Mir-Ashrafi named cellphones, livestock corn, sunflower oil, barley, meal, wheat, soybeans, sugar and rice as the main imported commodities.

The United Arab Emirates with four million tons of goods worth \$4.7 billion was the first largest exporter of goods to Iran in the four-month period, followed by China with one million tons of goods worth \$3.1 billion, Turkey with 1.3 million tons worth \$1.5 billion, Germany with 351,000 tons worth \$563 million, and Switzerland with 672,000 tons worth \$539 million, the official stated.

As Mir-Ashrafi has previously announced, the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

He has put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons, and said that the figure shows a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the result of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic.

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

Car manufacturing rises 11% in 4 months on year

→ 1 Pars Khodro also manufactured 35,008 vehicles in the period under review, 5.6 percent lower than the figure for the same time span of the past year.

Three mentioned major Iranian car-makers, IKCO, SAIPA, and Pars Khodro, had manufactured 900,714 vehicles in the previous year (ended on March 20), which was 4.3 percent more than the figure of its preceding year.

According to Codal data, during the past year, IKCO manufactured 480,338 vehicles, which was 21.9 percent more than the output in its preceding year, which was 393,812 vehicles.

SAIPA manufactured 317,321 vehicles, with a 12.6-percent fall from 363,379 vehicles manufactured in 1398. And Pars Khodro manufactured 103,055 vehicles in the past year, showing a 2.8-percent drop from the output of its previous year, which was 106,072 vehicles.

Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's programs for the current Iranian calendar year show that the manufacturing of 1.2 million cars has been put on the agenda.



According to the Industry Ministry data, since Iranian automakers had produced 984,200 such vehicles in the previous calendar year, the country's car output

is planned to increase by over 21 percent in the current year.

The production of 8,968 buses, minibuses, and vans is also planned for the

current year, which would be an increase of 378 percent in this sector. Last year, domestic automakers managed to produce only 1,873 units of such vehicles.

As recently stated by the director-general of automotive department of Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, domestic manufacturing of each car saved the country \$400-\$500 in the past year.

Soheil Memarbashi said that it was achieved through setting up the domestic production desks by the ministry in line with strengthening domestic production.

The ministry has planned a \$10-billion saving programs through domestic production during three Iranian calendar years of 1398, 1399, and 1400 (since March 2019 until March 2022), of which \$1.4 billion is for the automotive industry, the official stated.

To this end, four desks have been already held, while the fifth one was not still held due to the coronavirus pandemic, he said, adding the related contracts were signed and 14 out of the 20 specified parts have been already manufactured domestically.

Transport, culture ministries ink MOU to build 10,000 houses for journalists, artists

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Transport and Urban Development Ministry has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for constructing 10,000 affordable housing units for the country's journalists and artists, under the framework of the National Housing Action Plan.

The MOU was signed on Saturday in a ceremony attended by Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami, IRNA reported.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Eslami noted that all the necessary preparations have been made in collaboration with the culture ministry and the location and land for the project have been determined.

"We have a duty to provide the ground for people to become homeowners, and in this program [the national housing plan] we have defined the mechanisms in such a way that it reflects a stable policy and a firm determination

to realize this goal," the minister said.

Eslami further pointed to the close communication between the two ministries for the signing of the said MOU, saying: "The signing of this memorandum has been pursued with the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mr. Salehi for a year; it took a long time for this memorandum to be signed today."

"Preliminary steps have been taken and those who are eligible for the projects have been identified. By Mordad 17 [August 8], the people introduced to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development will be allowed access to the registration system and a text message will be sent to the approved journalists," he explained.

The official noted that the memorandum also includes constructing affordable houses for other groups of people including artists and in the next step the program will be pursued for those groups.

The National Housing Action Plan aims to construct



400,000 small and medium-size apartments (70-100 square meters in size) across the country and particularly in Tehran, where housing prices have risen most sharply.

NISOC's oil desalination plant in southern Iran to go operational by Mar. 2022

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The director of engineering and construction at the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) announced that the company's crude oil desalination plant has reached progress of more than 90 percent and is expected to go operational in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2022).

According to Ebrahim Piramoun, the project is comprised of a desalination unit with a capacity of 20,000 barrels per day (bpd) and sweetening of 42,000 bpd of crude oil which is going to desali-



nate the oil from Ghale Nar field near Andimeshk city, Khuzestan Province.

The project also includes constructing

5.5 kilometers of high-pressure power line and drilling of wells for waste disposal which have already been completed and are ready to be commissioned, the official explained.

"The civil and construction works of the project have been fully implemented and all pressure and atmospheric tanks, pipelines inside the factory, and connection lines have been completed," he added.

He went on to say that despite the sanctions, all the necessary equipment for the plant including process pumps,

control valves, welding package, diesel generators, power transformers, heat exchanger, desalination package, skimmer tank, and tow tower have been provided and installed.

"Other required equipment, including the remaining part of the pipes and instrumentation equipment, control system, and air conditioners, have been purchased and are ready to be transported to the project site. Equipment such as fire pumps and wastewater treatment packages are also under construction," he added.

TSE index expected to continue rising: analyst

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — A capital market analyst says that TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), is going to improve in the second half of the current Iranian calendar month (ends on August 22), IRNA reported.

Mehdi Bayat-Manesh noted that considering the current trend of capital inflow into the market TEDPIX is expected to rise in the current month.

"It is expected that the upward trend of the market in the last one month, when the stock index rose from 1.4 million points to 1.8 million points, will continue, and it is also likely that according to the forecasts, the stock index will once again enter the 1.4 million-point channel by the end of the current month," he said.

According to Bayat-Manesh, the government policies for supporting the upward trend of the market should continue in the coming months in order to ensure this upward trend.

"It is also better for the managers of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to also take the necessary measures for supporting the market so that the stock market index can once again reach more than two million



points, which takes at least a few months to happen."

He pointed to the continuous increase in inflation rate in recent months and its effect on capital market transactions and added: "Shareholders' fears and worries about investing in the market will be eliminated by increasing government support and will increase their willingness

to invest in this market."

Following the supportive measures taken by the government, the Iranian stock market has been gradually getting back on track and experts believe that the market is regaining people's trust.

In early July, Market Expert Reza Alavi said that the inflow of liquidity into the market and the increase in the value of transactions indicate that people are once again trusting the capital market.

"At present, other markets such as gold, foreign currency, and cars are not attractive enough for investors, and the stock market is still a good place for people's investments," Alavi said.

"After the election debates, people have come to the conclusion that the stock market is one of the priorities of the new government, and for this reason, they have re-trusted this market, and as a result, the inflow of new capital into the market has increased," he noted.

The analyst further mentioned the rise in the global oil prices and the stability of the foreign currency exchange market as factors that resulted in the stability of the stock market.

Housing price in Tehran city up over 43%

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Housing prices in Iran's capital increased 43.7 percent in the fourth month of the current Iranian calendar year (June 22-July 22), from the same month in the previous year, a report by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) showed.

Based on the CBI data, the year-on-year increase of the average price per square meter of housing units in Tehran over the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) were 91.7 percent, 69.7 percent, and 56.6 percent, respectively.

The average per square meter price of residential units in the capital also increased 1.3 percent in comparison to

the previous month.

As reported, over 5,100 housing units were traded in Tehran during the fourth calendar month, which was 0.6 percent more than the previous month, and 63.9 percent less than the same month in the previous year.

Housing prices in Iran have been constantly rising over the past year due to various internal and external factors.

Coronavirus has been reported to be a major factor affecting the housing prices in Iran as the pandemic has stoked concerns about losing one's savings and more people entered the housing market.

"People are turning to the housing market in order to protect their savings in the

face of rising inflation. No one sees housing as a short-term consumer commodity. Even real consumers view purchasing a home as a long-term investment," Mehdi Soltan-Mohammadi, a housing expert, said.

The housing market in Tehran was the second-highest returning market in Iran among the country's four major markets in the previous Iranian calendar year with 85 percent annual growth.

The information obtained from Kilid website (which is a major platform for housing trades) indicated that the housing price index in Tehran grew by 85 percent in the previous year compared to its preceding year.

The highest monthly price increase



of 12.5 percent occurred in the Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22-August 21, 2020), while the biggest monthly price decrease occurred in Azar (November 21-December 20, 2020) with a decline of 8.1 percent.

U.S. Afghan exit marks end of the unipolar model in recent history: professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, a London-based professor, says that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is a sign of the beginning and the end of the unipolar model in recent history.

"It marks the beginning and the end of the unipolar model in recent history when the United States tried to dominate the world order by sheer military force," Professor Adib Moghaddam tells the Tehran Times.

President George W. Bush, whose administration began the U.S.-led war against the Taliban in 2001, has told DW on 14th July that he fears for the fate of Afghanistan after American and NATO troops leave the country.

However, professor Adib-Moghaddam says, "When Afghanistan was invaded two decades ago, the George W. Bush administration institutionalized several dangerous unilateral norms that have been rejected by other countries ever since, even close allies such as Germany."

Adib-Moghaddam, professor in global thought and comparative philosophies at the Department of Politics and International Studies in the London Middle East Institute, says "after two decades, the militarized approach to Afghanistan (and Iraq) has clearly failed."

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you evaluate the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan after two decades of war?

For me, it marks the beginning and the end of the unipolar model in recent history,



when the United States tried to dominate the world order by sheer military force. When Afghanistan was invaded two decades ago, the George W. Bush administration institutionalized several dangerous unilateral norms that have been rejected by other countries ever since, even close allies such as Germany.

After two decades, the militarized approach to Afghanistan (and Iraq) has clearly failed. The Taliban are in ascendancy and the United States was forced to accept this. In short: The war taught us that military advances

don't translate into strategic success. The same happened in Iraq. Thousands of people died, millions were displaced and the decision-makers have nothing to show for.

Do you think Afghanistan's neighbors can devise an initiative like the Astana process to restore peace in the country?

I believe Russia and China will take a lead in this and insist on two issues: First, that the Taliban would outlaw "jihadist" extremism and does not destabilize neighboring countries and

secondly that the United States is marginalized in any future solution for Afghanistan and the region. Afghanistan plays an important role in China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's North-South corridor, so what we will experience is the "Eurasianisation" of the geo-politics embedding Afghanistan.

What are the implications of the U.S. pullout from Afghanistan for Washington's Arab allies? Can they rely on America in times of crisis?

I don't think that the Arab allies of the United States are in any doubt that their political fate has to be engineered by themselves at least since the Shah and probably even earlier. The United States is a convenient security guarantor and business partner, but not an insurance policy for regime survival.

Do you predict a long-term civil war in Afghanistan? In that case, what will be its repercussions for neighbors?

I think this transitory phase will be particularly bloody, but in the end, the Taliban is likely to emerge as the winner which may stabilize the country albeit under a problematic banner. Afghanistan needs a long-term strategy embedded in an UN-sponsored regional security architecture that is inclusive and realistic. Alas, I don't see any of the governments surrounding Afghanistan as capable enough to spearhead such a strategic peace initiative.

What are the main misconceptions of Western leaders when they decide to be engaged in West Asian woes?

Ignorance, bad advice, combined with the hubristic attitude to know.

Is a new war on Lebanon in the offing?

→ 1 Pompeo demanded the Lebanese politicians to put an end to Hezbollah's existence as part of the government. And he announced the end of the green line that separated families and friends.

It is clear that Pompeo was drawing a red line in Lebanon, a line of war. While standing next to the foreign minister, Gebran Bassil, he plainly said in a speech in March 2019: "Lebanon and the Lebanese people face a choice: bravely move forward as an independent and proud nation or allow the dark ambitions of Iran and Hezbollah to dictate your future."

Then he added that it would "take courage" for Lebanon to stand up to what he called Hezbollah's "criminality, terror, and threats."

But, let us not forget that the trip made to West Asia on that week, had its own aims, one of them was to show support to Israel.

From Jerusalem, Pompeo sent anti-Iran and anti-Hezbollah messages, considering Hezbollah as a major threat to Israel.

However, the real reasons behind the visit revolved around the demarcation of maritime borders between Palestine and Lebanon. His visit was an attempt to push the discussions further ahead after it had been stopped by Israel after a dispute over the demarcation of borders. Furthermore, "dayan.org", an Israeli study center, explained Pompeo's drives from the visit to Lebanon and the current reasons behind the American economic siege of Lebanon in a study published on the 3rd of March 2021.

When Pompeo visited Lebanon after the explosion in Beirut Harbor, it was clear that he was there to closely observe the execution of his plan. He was clear that the plan is going to lead to political change in Lebanon, and secure the American Agenda: "the security of Israel". He emphasized the fact that any American administration's first priority will be ensuring Israel's security.

Accordingly, Lebanon today has reached an advanced stage in Pompeo's plan, mainly reaching the verge of economic collapse. However, this has not led to Hezbollah's resentment among his partisans, or to the end of the formula that has prevailed in Lebanon since 2007, which is the unity of the Army, people, and resistance. For the Americans, the link needs to be broken, especially between the resistance and the Lebanese army before any coming third Israeli war on Lebanon, and before the coming elections in Lebanon in April 2022.

Pompeo's plan was aimed to corner Lebanese politicians that are considered to be Hezbollah's allies. Hence, the Americans imposed sanctions on former foreign minister and parliamentarian Gebran Bassil, and two others, who are recognized as Hezbollah allies: minister and parliamentarian from Amal Movement Ali Hassan Khalil, and minister Youssef Fenianos from al-Marada party, i.e., Suleiman Frangieh. The American step was taken last year, after the explosion of Beirut Harbor.



Its main aim was to shake and disturb the relationship between Hezbollah and its allies.

The plan was set after the Syrian victory in fighting terrorism on its territory and freeing more than 70% of its occupied lands from the terrorist groups, which were supported by the Americans and their allies in some of the (Persian) Gulf countries and Turkey. Once the U.S. failed to knock down the strategic relation between Syria-Iran-the Islamic resistance, the U.S. regime decided to set further steps before any American troop's departure from Iraq and Syria to safe guard Israel from Hezbollah.

The plan aims to a state failure driven by three factors, riots and disturbances, political void, and economic failure, which will lead to the collapse of the state's administrations and eventually to chaos and eruptions.

It started the campaign on the 7th of October 2019. The plan depended on creating organized chaos, especially after the resignation of the Saed al-Hariri government when the country was supposed to go into a total state of political void.

However, the Hassan Diab government was assigned. Once this step did not lead to chaos, the harbor explosion occurred. Nonetheless, the escalation of events was delayed when the country locked down due to the Covid-19 epidemic.

Once the lockdown was partially released, prices of goods and food were excessively going higher due to the deterioration of the Lebanese lira, which further exacerbated the economic crisis. The government since January 2021 became less and less able to support food the important commodities such as flour, rice, sugar..., medicine, and oil prices. The current living situation in Lebanon shows that it is one step away from state failure. In recent months, following the Beirut blast on August 4th, 2020, Lebanon has been on the verge of collapse, with its lira losing 80% of its value last year alone. Frustrated Lebanese are coming back to the streets in recent months, despite the rising number of Covid-19 cases again. Prospects appear to be bleak. Unless a new government is quickly formed, and important economic plans are put to action.

The aim of the Lebanese descendent economic situation to such a retched stage is to drive the population to believe

that Hezbollah is the problem. This problem is reinforced by the repeated speeches of high American politicians. It is what is called in Arabic "repetitions in the ears", meaning: you keep telling and repeating the same lie or demands until all the people believe as the absolute truth. As a result, the Americans are hoping that the other parties will need to denounce any coalition with Hezbollah in the next election; in addition, the party's partisans may condemn critical attitude on Hezbollah, and eventually will lose its place as part of the Lebanese political life. This would facilitate any Israeli-American attempt to topple and disarm Hezbollah.

However, if the plan failed and Hezbollah won the elections, the Americans would be able to execute plan B, which is the continuity of economic pressure until the state failure was achieved in Lebanon. This would lead to security disturbances, and then it's most likely that an "Israeli" would lead the third war on Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah.

In 2016, Timor Goksel, the previous commander of UNIFIL forces in Lebanon, was interviewed on al-Arabia online. He was less sure that the stability on the boards can be maintained. He said: "With UNIFIL unlike 30 years ago there are no small skirmishes – 10 rounds here, 10 rounds there – but the next war will be big, this is very scary. Israel will go after Lebanon not just Hezbollah, but it will come at an extremely high price." Actually, what has been going in Lebanon since 2019 is to denounce the high price for "Israel", and make Lebanon go to easy negotiations on the maritime borders, which will enable both the American and the "Israeli" companies to start benefiting from gas and gas pipelines between "Israel" and Cyprus all the way to Europe, which will compete with the Russian gas.

Finally, the Americans are aiming high. What is needed of Lebanon today is to go straight forward towards signing Abraham accords as the main step to enforce peace for Israel. Clearly, if anyone thinks that the Americans are not preparing to reach this point, he/she is mistaken. In his speech with the Korean president during the "Saif al-Quds" operation, Biden said that peace will not prevail in the region until everyone recognizes the "Israeli" right to exist.

In theory, reaching an agreement with Israel would allow Lebanon to take part in different fora, such as the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) alongside Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan and so on.

Unfortunately, the prospects of peace between Israel and Lebanon, as opposed to limited agreements stemming from shared interests, seem far off, due to the extent of Hezbollah and Iranian influence on Lebanese political decision-making, and the continued military threat they pose to Israel's security.

It is clear for the Americans: there is no peace for Israel, as long as Hezbollah continues to exist as a resistance force on the northern borders of Palestine. Therefore, if Americans are insisting on disarming the resistance movement, then the war is inevitable.

Tunisia president denies coup, vows not to turn into 'dictator'

The Tunisian president has denied allegations of staging a coup and insisted he would not turn into a dictator after ousting the nation's premier and suspending the parliament and subsequent arrest of two lawmakers after the lifting of their immunity.

"I know the constitutional texts very well, respect them and taught them and after all this time I will not turn into a dictator as some have said," said President Kais Saied in a statement issued by his office on Friday.

However, the former law professor has yet to carry out steps that critics insist are needed to reassure Tunisians, namely the appointment of an interim prime minister as well as a roadmap to remove the imposed emergency measures.

The statement was issued just days after the North African country was thrust into a political crisis by Saied's sudden dismissal of Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi and suspension of the legislature for 30 days on Sunday, leading major political parties

to accuse him of engineering a coup amid rival protest rallies and clashes by supporters and opponents of the president.

Concerns over rights and freedoms in Tunisia that toppled former Western-backed dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011 aggravated on Friday following the arrest of legislator and influential blogger Yassin Ayari as well as the unveiling of a probe into alleged violence by people protesting Saied's actions during a rally on Monday.

The country's military judiciary then claimed that Ayari had been imprisoned by a judicial ruling issued three years ago for defaming the army after Saied removed the immunity of lawmakers, leaving any with cases against them vulnerable to arrest.

Another legislator, Maher Zid of the Muslim Karama party, was also arrested late on Friday, his lawyer unveiled, after being sentenced to two years in prison in 2018 for "offending people on social media" and

"insulting" the then-president.

Also on Monday, the largest party in Tunisia's parliament, the Ennahda, held a sit-in protest outside the legislative building after it was surrounded by military forces, with hundreds of its supporters clashing with pro-Saied demonstrators using stones or bottles.

The country's judiciary then declared that it had opened investigations into four people linked to Ennahda for "attempting to commit acts of violence" during the protest, including a member of a party council and two members with connections to its leader.

The development came a day after Saied appointed his former national security adviser Ridha Garsalaoui as the new interior minister and vowed to implement the constitution and safeguard people's rights and freedoms.

"I tell you and the whole world that I am keen to implement the constitutional text and keen more than them on rights and freedoms," Saied declared. "No one has been arrested.

No one has been deprived of his rights, but the law is fully applied."

Also on Tuesday, the Tunisian president dismissed more officials amid the political crisis, including Defense Minister Ibrahim Bartaji and Hasna Ben Slimane, the acting justice minister.

The move came after he imposed a night curfew for a month after clashes between the supporters and opponents of his dismissals left several people injured.

Years of paralysis, corruption, declining state services and growing unemployment had agitated many Tunisians on their political system before the COVID-19 pandemic smashed the economy last year and infection rates surged this summer.

The Tunisian president and parliament were both elected in separate popular votes in 2019 while the prime minister took office last summer, with Saied swearing to overhaul a complex political system plagued by corruption.

U.S. imposes fresh sanctions on Cuba, pledges more measures

→ 1 The immediate reactions from American politicians give credibility to Diaz-Canel's statements that foreign forces have tried to amplify the demonstrations.

The blockade and sanctions on Cuba appear to be a bipartisan issue in the United States, as both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have urged more sanctions.

But are congress members actually concerned about the Cuban people or is this a more internal American political affair?

Florida's 1.5 million Cuban-Americans strongly voted for Republican Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election. In order to secure the swing state in the 2024 election, winning back this Cuban-American support is crucial and of utmost importance for the Democratic Party.

If the U.S. cared for the Cuban people as it claims; it would not have placed the country under decades of blockade. Cuban officials say this has crippled the country's economy.

The U.S. is also isolated on the international arena in its position towards Havana while Cuba has overwhelming backing from the international community. For nearly three decades, this has been reflected in the United Nations.

Ever since 1992, the UN General Assembly has annually approved a resolution demanding an end to the U.S. economic blockade. That means this year, the General Assembly called on the U.S. to end the Cuba embargo for the 29th consecutive time.

During this year's meeting held at the UN headquarters in New York, 184 nations voted in favor of the resolution. Meanwhile, three countries - Colombia, Ukraine, and Brazil - abstained from the vote. All three are either heavily dependent on American military aid and/or diplomatic support.

While the Assembly's vote sends a strong message in terms of how the world views America's six-decades old blockade, only the U.S. Congress can lift the economic, commercial, and financial embargo. Despite the UN pressure, Washington has defied international calls and refused to do so.

Cuba says the blockade is a "massive, flagrant and unacceptable violation of the human rights of the Cuban people"

In 2018, a United Nations agency (the UN's regional economic body for Latin America) called the embargo "unjust" and had cost the country's economy \$130 billion over nearly six decades.

Havana also says its "an economic war of extraterritorial scope against a small country already affected in the recent period by the economic crisis derived from the pandemic... like the virus, the blockade asphyxiates and kills, it must stop"

Despite all the pressure, Cuba is the first nation in Latin America and the Caribbean to successfully develop not only one but two Covid-19 vaccines. It has also managed to vaccinate over a quarter of the population with at least one dose. However, the U.S. sanctions means Cuba cannot even import the syringes it needs to further inoculate its population. The issue of vaccines was one of the main reasons Cubans took to the streets.

One of the more ironic aspects of the short-lived rallies in Cuba is that U.S. allies in the region expressed their support for the protests. For example, the Colombian government voiced its "solidarity" with the people of Cuba. This is despite the fact that human rights organizations have strongly condemned the government of President Ivan Duque's heavy-handed and deadly crackdown on protests in Colombia itself.

These are far larger demonstrations than anything Cuba has seen. They began in November 2019 when hundreds of thousands took to the streets nationwide over a proposed tax hike. However, since then, the protests have continued and morphed into demands for basic rights and anger at corruption among the Colombian government.

Last month, an international human rights body had condemned Colombia for "excessive and disproportionate" use of force in response to the anti-government protests, in which dozens died.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights says Colombian security forces used "lethal force" in many situations. Yet, there has been no such response from the United States towards Colombia as Washington's response towards Cuba; Washington maintains very close ties with Bogota.

In fact, according to the international rights organization, Amnesty International, American weapons and equipment are being misused by Colombian Security Forces to commit Human Rights Violations against the protesters.

In essence, wherever a country shows independence, opposes American foreign policies or meddling in the region they are met with sanctions and other forms of pressure by Washington.

Wherever a country cracks down on its people but allows America to set up military bases on its territory, supports America's interference in neighboring states and follows Washington's orders, those governments enjoy the freedom to kill their people and starve their people without having to worry about U.S. sanctions.

As soon as Venezuela ended the era of American companies taking control of its mass oil resources, Caracas faced U.S. attempts at regime change. The late Hugo Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro have hit out at the American interference as well as sweeping sanctions America imposed, pledging to protect the country's territorial integrity.

In January 2019, Venezuela witnessed something quite unprecedented. A man, by the name of Juan Guaido, who many (if not anybody) had even heard of before, stood in the middle of a Venezuelan street, lifted his hand to the air and swore himself in as the President of the nation. In what is widely believed to have been an orchestrated move, former U.S. President Donald Trump immediately recognized Guaido as the President of Venezuela, despite the fact that he had not contested in any elections. Trump's successor Biden says Washington will continue to recognize Guaido as the Venezuelan President, regardless of the fact that the man has lost whatever support he had among the Venezuelans themselves. That's American democracy for you.

The same applies elsewhere in the region such as Bolivia, where investigative research indicates Washington played a pivotal role in the coup that led to the ouster of President Evo Morales. He was replaced by Washington's favorite Jeanine Anez, who pledged early elections but suffered an embarrassing defeat; While the party of former President Morales came out on top, and Morales's short exile abroad came to an end. Anez and her former ministers are now facing wide-ranging charges from corruption to the slaughter of indigenous supporters of Morales who protested against his ouster.

Elsewhere, the rulers in Chile or Brazil for instance enjoy U.S. support to crackdowns on demonstrations. In essence, the protests in Cuba did not last long, evidence points to heavy U.S. involvement in any areas of unrest.

But that's Washington's double standards in Latin America and the Caribbean.

U.S. allies enjoy sanctions immunity despite savagely suppressing protests because the reality is, America can't invade the places it has already invaded.

Hydrotherapy center opens in northwestern tourist city

TOURISM **TEHRAN** —A modern hydrotherapy center was inaugurated in the tourist city of Meshkinshahr, northwestern Ardebil province, on Friday.

A budget of 160 billion rials (\$3.8 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the project, the provincial tourism chief announced during the inauguration ceremony.



Situated in the Qutursui tourist area, the center has the most acidic mineral spa in the world, CHTN quoted Nader Fallahi as saying.

Water for the hydrotherapy center is sourced from hot water springs in the area, which is beneficial for skin ailments, the official added.

This new complex, which features separate sections for women and men, will allow Meshkinshahr to attract more tourists from abroad and grow its tourism industry twice as fast as before, he noted.

Meshkinshahr embraces several historical sites including Qale Khohneh ("Old Castle"), the ancient site of Shahr-e Yeri, and Qahqaheh castle.

Situated near the high Mount Sabalan, Meshkinshahr enjoys a moderate mountainous climate and the Sabalan summit can be seen in the south of the city with eye-catching sceneries. The antiquity of the city dates back to the early centuries of Islam but in the Safavid era, it was thriving even more. The city is well known for its rugs and its mineral springs.

Meshkinshahr suspension bridge with 345 meters long, 3 meters wide, and 80 meters high, which was inaugurated in 2015 and is said to be the largest of its kind in West Asia, is also one of the top tourist destinations of the city.

Dez, Karkheh national parks in Khuzestan

HERITAGE **TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Dez and Karkheh National Parks are both located near the ancient city of Susa, in Khuzestan province, in the southwest of Iran.

Interesting among the special features of these two parks is the program of regeneration and reintroduction of Persian Fallow Deer that is pursued seriously.

The National Park of Dez is located 20 kilometers east of Ahvaz road to Susa. The protected area of Dez is 17895 hectares and the area of National Park of Karkheh is 50301 hectares. Dez National Park extending 150 kilometers along the river of Dez is known to be one of the last remainings of Iran Tropical Forests.

Having large and small lagoons such as Mianrood, Khouzineh Baqer, the small and the great, and Jacob, Dez National Park is the shelter of those migrating birds like stork, bitterns, goose and coot that come here every year with the beginning of the cold season in Azar (November). The more the autumn rainfall is in the lagoons of this park, the more migrating birds come here in the winter. It makes the area a special region for birdwatching in Iran.



Interesting among the animal species of Dez National Park are Persian fallow deer, wolf, fox, honey badger, jungle cat and hedgehog. Desert poplar, raspberry and Calotropis Procera are the main shrubs and bushes of the region. In addition, some shelter hills have been established in this park in order to save Persian fallow deer from the river floods.

Karkheh National Park is located five kilometers west of Ahvaz road to Susa, along the southern coast of Karkheh river, on both sides of the river. Totally, the park has three parts: the southern national park of Karkheh and the northern national park of Karkheh with the area of 7476 hectares and the protected area of Karkheh with 8352 hectares. The protected area of Karkheh was recognized since 1354 SH and its main sections were named National Park of Karkheh in 1389 SH.

Qaleh Nasir jungle and the source of Shavur River are placed in the north of Karkheh National Park and the plain in its south. Interesting among the animal species are wolf, fox, jungle cat, jackal, badger, caracal, hyena and wild boar as well as birds like eagle, Circinae, Francolinus, white-eared bulbul, heron and stork. Lycium Shawii, willow, caper, Calotropis Procera and clover constitute the main part of its vegetation. A main part of jungles is covered with Tamarisk. Shabout, Barbus Sharpeyi, Barbus Esocinus, Luciobarbus Pectoralis Heckel, common carp, Barbus Xanthopterus and Carasobarbus Luteus are the most wonderful fishes in this park.

Khuzestan is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System yet it is a region of raw beauty where its visitors could spend weeks exploring. The province is also a cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.

Lying at the head of the Persian Gulf and bordering Iraq on the west, Khuzestan was settled about 6000 BC by a people with affinities to the Sumerians, who came from the Zagros Mountains region. Urban centers appeared there nearly contemporaneously with the first cities in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium. Khuzestan, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, came to constitute the heart of the Elamite kingdom, with Susa as its capital.

Excavations continue at Iron Age cemetery in Semnan

→ 1 Some 25 tombs and ancient graves were discovered at the site, the senior archaeologist Mehrdad Malekzadeh announced at the time.

The cemetery bears corps and relics from Medes, a branch of Indo-European people, who entered northeastern Iran probably as early as the 17th century BC and settled in the plateau land that came to be known as Media. And it was also used during the Achaemenid era (c. 550-330 BC), according to Malekzadeh.

A number of potteries and personal ornamentals have so far been discovered from the cemetery which bears over 2,000 tomb chambers.

The cemetery at Mersin is located along the southern slopes of the Alborz mountain range, east of the village of Talajim, near the Sefidrud River. The site was discovered during a rescue archaeological survey in the Fenisk Dam basin area. Based on surface materials, the cemetery was dated to the late Iron Age III and early Iron Age IV (c. 600-400 BC). To corroborate this dating, a radiocarbon date was obtained from human collagen from several graves.



As the Iron Age culture in Semnan province has not been well recognized, in August 2014 the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research organized regular excavations at the site under the direction of Malekzadeh. Three trenches were excavated, covering a total of 235 square meters.

Within trench 3 (10x5m) fifteen human

graves were found, distributed in a regular pattern. Some burials were disturbed, but common features were easy to recognize, including the rectangular shape of the grave and the presence of a single body buried in each grave, being interred in an extended position on the back. Most graves had large stones delimiting the burial place and all contained grave goods

except grave 4 that was, however, disturbed.

The graves can be divided into two general categories, being either covered by large flat slabs and wood (like graves 5 and 10) or covered only by soil. There is no uniform orientation of the body within the burial. Grave goods were variable and there were, among others, pottery vessels of different types, such as single-handled pitchers, bridge spout bowls, pots with spouts and handles, small jars, pedestal bowls, and twin joined small jars.

The main population centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad). While few visitors spend much time in the area, driving through you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat), and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating). The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan, and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.

Center for handicrafts to make debut in centuries-old village

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A center for handicrafts will be established in the centuries-old village of Biabanak, Sorkheh county, north-central province of Semnan.

The center aims at holding training courses as well as promoting Iranian handicrafts and works of traditional arts, Sorkheh's tourism chief has said.

The center has been established in the historical Ab-Anbar (cistern) of the village, which has been fully restored, Bahman Akhlagi announced on Saturday.

The historical texture of Biabanak village, which dates back to the Safavid era (1501-1736), has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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

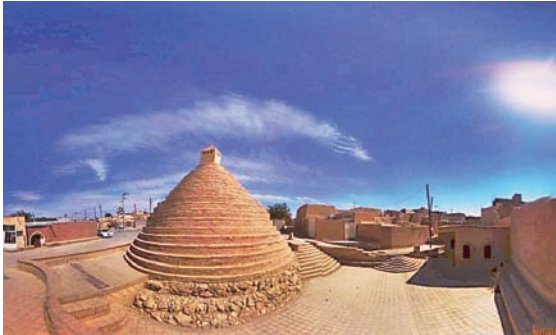
In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qassemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world

crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

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

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

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer)



through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

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

Seymareh open-air museum restored

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The open-air museum site of the ancient city of Seymareh in the western Ilam province has recently been restored and reorganized, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

A budget of 800 million rials (about \$19,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the project, Abdolmalek Shanbehzadeh said on Saturday.

Through the project, the ancient city's tourist routes were improved by using local and traditional materials, the official added.

As one of the province's most important historical sites with several historical monuments within, the ancient city of Seymareh has become the first outdoor museum in the province, he noted.

Back in May, the official announced that architectural sites and agricultural lands inside the ancient city, which were damaged by seasonal rains, were repaired and restored.

A budget of two billion rials (about \$48,000) was allocated to the project, the official added.

Seymareh ancient city, with an area of 200 hectares, is located near Darreh Shahr city. It dates back to the Sassanid-era (224 CE-651) and is believed to be built on remnants of the



Elamite capital, Madaktu.

The first archeologist to visit Seymareh was Sir Henry Rawlinson. He began an expedition to the site in 1836. He was looking for the remaining of Seymareh and considered it to have belonged to the Sassanid dynasty. Jacques de Morgan also visited this historical land in 1891 and introduced it as the same ancient city of Madaktu. Then it was Aurel Stein who attempted to explore it in 1936, according to Visit Iran, the official travel guide of Iran.

The archeological findings show that the city included about 5,000 houses with some modern aspects like a water distribution system through clay pipes and underground sewers. The city was destroyed and deserted after a huge earthquake around 950 BC.

The remnants of the city were inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1931.

Darreh Shahr was once the summer capital of Elamites, a pre-Iranian civilization dated from 2700 to 539 BC. The city also enjoyed centuries of prosperity during the Sassanid era.

Darreh Shahr and its surrounding regions boast vestiges of Sassanid constructions such as arches, ceilings, alleys, and passages that follow a specific order of urban development criteria of the time.

Home to almost half of Iran's UNESCO

sites, western Iran is a land of hospitable people, wild extremes, and wilder history, and it may be an independent traveler's adventure playground. The region also witnessed the rise and fall of many great empires once bordering Mesopotamia, Ottoman Turkey, and Czarist Russia.

From the fecund Caspian coast to the stark, mountainous northern borders, and the crumbling desert ruins of the southern plains, the region hosts everything from paddy fields to blizzards to Persian gardens.

CARS FOR EXCHANGE

The Brazilian Embassy in Tehran will carry out a bidding process for the exchange of two Toyota Rav 4 vehicles, model ASA44L-ANTGKW, year 2018, colors metallic silver and metallic graphite for two similar cars, 0 km. Additional information can be enquired by phone (021-26805298) or by e-mail (administ.teera@itamaraty.gov.br). The offers must be given no later than 12h00 pm on August 15th 2021.

Moveable properties in Zanjan made national heritage

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of 13 historical moveable properties in Zanjan province have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list.

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



Historical coins, gravestones, work tools, and wooden shrines were among the properties added to the prestigious list.

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



Vacancy Notice

The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R.Iran, intends to recruit a Driver for its office in Tehran, Iran.

Details of the vacancy can be found on UNFPA website on the following link: <https://iran.unfpa.org>

Please apply online by 14 August 2021, 5 PM Tehran Time. This vacancy is open only for Iranian Nationals.

Notice:

“There is no application, processing or other fee at any stage of the application process”.

“UNFPA does not solicit or screen for information in respect of HIV/AIDS or disabilities and does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/AIDS status and disabilities”.

“UNFPA is strongly encouraging people from minority groups and people with disabilities who have a driving license, to apply and they will be given serious consideration”

“Noora” vaccine successfully passing first phase of clinical trial

SOCIETY TEHRAN — “Noora” coronavirus vaccine, domestically made by Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), is successfully passing the first phase of the clinical trial.

The recombinant vaccine entered the stage of human trial after 16 months of research work by Iranian scientists; it started the clinical trial on June 27.

The first dose of Noora vaccine has been injected into all volunteers and half of them have received the second dose so far, Hassan Abolqasemi, chancellor of Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, stated.

The vaccine is well undergoing the first phase of human testing, he noted, adding, the first phase of human testing lasts 2 months, so far more than a month has passed.

He stressed the need to integrate the human testing phase of the Noora vaccine



and said that “this must be done to make the vaccine available for the mass vaccination;

while many vaccine producing countries have done the same.”

Abolqasemi further expressed hope that permission would be given to combining the first and second phases of the human test, which could also be done for the second and third phases, IRNA reported on Saturday.

This vaccine has also been proven in the animal stage in terms of safety and immunity, he concluded.

Mass vaccination against COVID-19 started on Iranian citizens with the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine on February 9.

While Iran continues efforts to mass-produce local candidates, over 13 million doses of foreign vaccines have already been imported and others are expected soon.

Iran is also producing vaccines jointly with two countries Russia, and Australia, which may also be released by September.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, 14 vaccines are being domestically developed in the country which are in different study phases.

6,500 houses to be provided to the deprived

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps will provide 6,500 houses for underprivileged families across the country, IRIB reported on Saturday.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Program and Budget Organization regarding the construction of 25,000 housing units, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year (March 2022), although some of these units have now been handed over, Morteza Bakhtiari, Head of the Foundation said.

Most recently, Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to build 50,000 houses for underprivileged families residing in rural areas.

The Foundation also has provided 9,305 housing units to the deprived families during the Ten-Day Fajr celebrations (January 31-February 10, marking the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution).

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation works to provide employment in deprived areas and empowers financially struggling families, other services such as building or buying housing, cultural services, medical services, and other facilities are provided, for example, in the field of treatment, more than 80,000 patients of incurable diseases are currently under the Foundation's coverage.

Support for villagers, underprivileged

Over the past couple of years, more than two million houses have been built in rural areas and some 500,000 houses have been renovated, as well, Azizollah Mahdian,



the Foundation's deputy director, said in July.

Moreover, the Welfare Organization will provide 35,169 residential units for underprivileged families across the country over the current [Iranian calendar] year.

The construction of 10,000 houses will begin this year, Zolfaqar Yazdanmehr, deputy head of the Organization, said in April.

In the Iranian calendar years 1398 (March 2019-March 2020) and 1399 (March 2020-March 2021), 14,700 and 16,500 residential units have been provided to the deprived, respectively, he noted.

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

Rural tourism, agritourism, religious tourism, and

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

The budget for rural development projects has increased by 2.5 times in the current [Iranian calendar] year compared to that of the previous year.

A total of 80 trillion rials (nearly \$1.9 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) were allocated this year for the implementation of rural development projects across the country.

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

Currently, 26 percent of the country's population lives in villages, around 39,000 villages have more than 20 households and 23,000 villages have less than 20 households.

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

Mohammad Omid, the vice president for rural development, said in November 2020 that for the first time in the country, the migration of people from rural areas to cities has reached zero.

The unemployment rate in rural areas has reached 7.4 percent, which has decreased by over one percent compared to last year.

In October 2020, Omid stated that the rural development projects worth 130 trillion rials (nearly \$3 billion) were inaugurated on the occasion of the National Day of Villagers and Nomads.

COVID-19 highlights benefits of breastfeeding

→ 1 Iran ranks first in West Asia for breast milk banks

Iran ranks first in West Asia for breastfeeding of immature newborn infants, as 11 breast milk banks have been established in the country, head of mother's milk bank of Al-Zahra hospital in the northwestern city of Tabriz said in August 2020.

Breast milk donation is as important as blood donation due to saving lives of so many premature babies in hospitals whose best nutrition is breast milk, Mohammad-Baqer Hosseini said.

Recalling that breast milk banks are widely active all over the world, he said that milk banks have been active in European countries for nearly 100 years.

Worldwide, about 600 breast milk banks have been established, with the first established in Austria, he noted, adding, there are currently 210 breast milk banks in Europe and Brazil alone has 210 milk banks.

Human milk is pasteurized so that there is no risk of transmitting infectious diseases, even in case of AIDS or any other diseases, he said.

In July 2016, the first breast milk bank was established in Al-Zahra Hospital of Ta-

briz University of Medical Sciences, with the financial support of the Ministry of Health.

Since then, 10 breast milk banks have been set up in the country, two of which are located in Tehran, and others in Mashhad, Zahedan, Ahvaz, Kermanshah, Shiraz, Kerman, Tabriz, and Yazd are active and one is being launched in Isfahan.

Breastfeeding, a unique process

Breastfeeding provides ideal nutrition for infants and contributes to their healthy growth and development while reducing the incidence and severity of infectious diseases, thereby lowering infant morbidity and mortality, and contributing to women's health by reducing the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, and by increasing the spacing between pregnancies. It also provides social and economic benefits to the family and the nation and provides most women with a sense of satisfaction when



successfully carried out.

Recent research has found that these benefits increase with increased exclusiveness of breastfeeding during the first six months of life, and thereafter with increased duration of breastfeeding with complementary foods, and program intervention can result in positive changes in breastfeeding behavior.

Improving breastfeeding practices could save the lives of more than 800,000 children

under 5 every year, the vast majority of whom are under six months of age.

Beyond survival, there is growing evidence that breastfeeding boosts children's brain development and provides protection against overweight and obesity.

Mothers also reap important health benefits from breastfeeding, including a lower risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and type 2 diabetes.

The life-saving protection of breastfeeding is particularly important in humanitarian settings, where access to clean water, adequate sanitation, and basic services is often limited.

Only about two in five children (42 percent), the majority born in low- and middle-income countries, were breastfed within the first hour of life. While this is a slight improvement from 37 percent in 2005, progress is slow.

Attainment of this goal requires, in many countries, the reinforcement of a “breastfeeding culture” and its vigorous defense against incursions of a “bottle-feeding culture”. This requires commitment and advocacy for social mobilization, utilizing to the full the prestige and authority of acknowledged leaders of society in all walks of life.

Iran ranks first in West Asia for breastfeeding of immature newborn infants, as 11 breast milk banks have been established in the country.

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ع

Wildfire extinguished in northern forests

Wildfire, erupted in northern forests of Gilan province over the past 2 days, has been fully extinguished, commander of the protection unit of natural resources and watershed management organization of Gilan has stated. According to the latest statistics, approximately 130 hectares of forests in Gilan province have been burnt in recent days, IRNA quoted Mohammad Qorbani as saying on Sunday.

He went on to say that 99 percent of fires in 13 cities of Gilan province have caused no serious damage to the trees.

In spite of the complete containment of fire, the protection unit is on full alert, he further noted.

Appreciating all the forces who made efforts to control the wildfire, he concluded that fire broke out in various cities, including Rezvanshahr, Talesh, Roudbar, Siahkal and some others.

آتش سوزی جنگل های گیلان مهار شد

فرمانده یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری گیلان گفت: آتش سوزی جنگل های استان گیلان پس از ۷۲ ساعت تلاش ، کاملاً مهار شد.

سرهنگ محمد قربانی لرد عصر روز شنبه در گفت و گوی اختصاصی با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: بر اساس آخرین آمارها به صورت تقریبی حدود «۱۳۰ هکتار» از اراضی جنگلی استان گیلان در چند روز اخیر دچار آتش سوزی شدند.

وی افزود: ۹۹ درصد از آتش سوزی جنگل های ۱۳ شهرستان استان گیلان سطحی بوده و خسارت جدی به درختان وارد نشده است.

فرمانده یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری گیلان خاطر نشان کرد: به رغم مهار کامل آتش در جنگل های استان ، نیروهای یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری در آماده باش کامل هستند.

وی ضمن قدردانی از تمامی نیروها در مهار آتش در جنگل های استان گیلان اضافه کرد: آتش سوزی در سطح شهرستان های مختلف استان از جمله رضوانشهر، تالش، رودبار، سیاهکل و غیره روی داده.

COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. July 30

New cases	19,846
New deaths	286
Total cases	3,871,008
Total deaths	90,630
New hospitalized patients	2,620
Patients in critical condition	5,455
Total recovered patients	3,367,272
Diagnostic tests conducted	25,917,921
Doses of vaccine injected	12,239,837

Agriculture in Iran

(Part 3)

In spite of several ecological and cultural constraints, Iran has considerably increased agricultural production in recent years. For estimated figures for the beginning of this century. Extensions of land use, development of better seeds and crop rotation cycles, increase in the use of fertilizer and pesticides, and other measures have contributed to this growth, which, however, is not sufficient to meet the increasing needs of the growing population.

Rural settlement and field patterns. In view of the great differences in the natural setting of the country and the impact on agriculture, rural settlements show great diversity in location, distribution, size, and physiognomy. Most of the 40,000 to 50,000 villages have fewer than 250 inhabitants.

The most common form of rural settlement is the clustered village, an irregular agglomeration of farmsteads. Sometimes, especially in larger villages, the buildings are clustered around a central open market, which may even have a little mosque, a tea house, and one or several shops. All forms of private and public services are usually missing.



Typically, especially in cases of irrigation agriculture, the settlements border the arable land and do not cover any potentially usable area.

In many parts of the country, primarily in areas that in the past were exposed to raids and the plundering of nomads, villages were and still are surrounded by high walls and protected by towers. These fortified settlements, also known as qal'a (fort) villages, are nowadays without function, so that many of the ramparts either have been torn down or are decaying. Modern extensions in many cases have been made outside the old fortifications.

Another type of rural settlement, not as common as the clustered settlement but found especially in the Caspian lowlands, is the linear village. They extend along the former shore lines of the ancient Caspian Sea, when it was at a much higher level than today. Similar patterns are to be found on the levees of the Shatt-al-arab and of the Karun in khuzestan.

Finally, isolated rural settlements are numerous, especially in the rice-growing areas of Gilan and Mazandaran. According to our present knowledge these are the only areas of Iran where dispersed individual settlements occur.

Their development has doubtlessly to be connected with the special topography, botany, and history of this region, which never experienced nomadic intrusions and was densely forested until the beginning of this century, thus giving a kind of natural protection to its inhabitants. Many such settlements date only to the 1920s or 1930s, and the process of agricultural colonization is still going on.

Special forms of rural settlements include temporarily inhabited villages found in many nomadic territories, as well as in those high mountains that are grazed by the flocks of the villagers.

Many of these villages serve as a kind of summer refuge for the inhabitants of low-lying and heat-affected areas such as the Caspian lowlands, the margins of the central Iranian deserts or Baluchestan, the Alborz and the Zagros; the central Iranian mountain ranges are also often characterized by this type of periodic settlement.

Iranian field-patterns. The fields, the most prominent physiognomic feature of any rural area besides the settlements, are characterized by three prevailing systems of field patterns—blocks, small strips, blocks and strips. Bobek's rent-capitalistic interpretation holds that each of the three forms expresses a distinct socio-economic situation.

The irregular block fields are interpreted as being typical for regions where rural small-holders who own their own lands predominate. This pattern is especially widespread in ecologically unfavorable or topographically inaccessible regions such as mountains, but it is also typical for many villages in the immediate neighborhood of cities and for their specific forms of intensive agriculture.

In contrast, the system of strip fields is considered to be connected with dominance of landlordism and large land ownership. Due to the annual redistribution of land among the sharecroppers (see the following section on traditional socio-economic structures), the strips have proved to be an easy way to divide farmlands and therefore have been adapted as the dominant form in connection with sharecropping; they represent the most common field pattern in Iran.

The third type, covering both regular block patterns and mixtures between strips and blocks, is seen as the expression of a competition between landlordism and rural small holding, both of which are striving for the ultimate right in the land and its cultivation.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING



One who imagines himself to be all-knowing
will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

Imam Ali (AS)

History of Achaemenid art, architecture

Part 1
The time of Cyrus the Great
The genealogy of the Achaemenid family which has been accepted by most scholars follows Cyrus’ cylinder inscription from Babylon, combined with Darius’ rock inscription from Bisotun; a “Kurash, king of Parsumash,” mentioned by Assurbanipal, was added to this picture by E. F. Weidner.

Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, would in this reconstruction be the great great grandson of Achaimenes, the second of his name.

There are, however, at least, two more possible reconstructions: H. Winckler in 1889 pointed out that Cyrus himself does not mention Achaimenes.

He has been followed by G. Cameron, P. de Miroschedji and, most detailed, J. Wiesehofer, who conclude that Cyrus was not an Achaemenid at all; Darius only pretended to be his relative and consequently must have falsified all the inscriptions at Pasargadae where Cyrus is proclaimed “descendant of Achaimenes”.

The third possibility is offered by the long genealogy given by Herodotus; here Cyrus again appears as an Achaemenid, the third of his name; thus all the inscriptions contain correct, albeit shortened genealogies. Fortunately, the date of only a few of the buildings and reliefs of the period is involved in this discussion.

No work of architecture or art can be attributed with certainty to an Achaemenid earlier than Cyrus the Great. Only a cylinder seal, now lost, but several times used on later bullae at Persepolis, can possibly have belonged to an older member of the family: it bears the inscription “Kurush, the Anzanite son of Teispes,” and a combat scene in the style of the latest Elamite or proto Achaemenid seals; the owner may have been Cyrus’ grandfather as crown prince, or an unknown prince of the same family, as ancient Mesopotamian civilization seals were often reused long after their owner’s death (even royal ones, e.g., that of Ibi Sin of Ur in an Old Assyrian colony).

With the monuments of Pasargadae we are for the first time within the realm of history. On the basis of written sources E. Herzfeld was able to identify the site of Mashhad-e Morghab with Pasargadae; from other Greek sources we know that it was founded by Cyrus the Great to commemorate his victory over Astyages at that place, and bilingual and trilingual, inscriptions point to Cyrus as the owner and builder of the three palaces.

The significance of the inscriptions would be the same, even if they were actually written in the time of Darius I. Moreover, the building technique of all the main constructions at Pasargadae is definitely pre-Persepolitan, as shown by C. Nylander and D. Stronach; the strong Ionian influence makes a date after the capture of the Lydian kingdom plausible.

This is also the case with the buildings without inscriptions: the fortress “Takht-e Madar-e Soleyman” which apparently was left unfinished for a long time after Cyrus; the two plinths in the “Sacred Precinct” west of the palaces, but in the center of the fortified city area probably once crowned by fire “altars”; and the tomb, which until a few years ago was venerated as that of Solomon’s mother and formerly used as a mosque; G. F. Grotefend’s identification of it with the Greek descriptions of Cyrus’s tomb has at times been questioned, but has now been convincingly defended by D. Stronach, who was the first to notice a raised disc in the center of the gable in the form of two concentric rosettes.

This symbol was first noticed in the seventeenth century by J. A. Mandelslo and has been explained as the sun disc, several times connected with the name of Cyrus, and as a further Ionian element.

The “Zendan-e Soleyman,” a tower shaped, enigmatic structure, forms an exact counterpart of the “Kaba ye Zardosht” in Naqsh-e Rostam, with elements inherited both from Urartian and Ionian art. A small fragment of an inscription found there has so far been of little use; it may contain the word Ku u sha, in which case it must be later than the capture of Ethiopia by Darius.

In the area of the palaces, D. Stronach excavated several watercourses, a bridge, and two pavilions; the three main buildings, baptized P (“Pfeiler”), S (“Saule”) and R (“Relief”) by E. Herzfeld, are much better understood now: the most important find was that of the stone substructure of a throne in the southern portico of P, which we may now, confidently, call the residential palace; furthermore, the throne gives a raison d’être for its ground plan, the huge portico, and the non-symmetrical doorways.

The reliefs, a king and an attendant standing on either side of each door, are iconographically and stylistically counterparts of those in the Persepolis Tachara.

According to many scholars the inscriptions “by Cyrus” on those reliefs are actually later than Cyrus, so the reliefs must be dated on the basis of their own features.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica
To be continued

Book on Iran’s Armenian churches introduced in Ejmiatsin

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A book on Armenian churches in Iran has been introduced during a meeting at the Cross of Armenian Unity, a charitable cultural organization in the west-central Armenian city of Ejmiatsin.

The book “Armenian Churches of Iran” has been authored by Sherly Avedian, the Armenian coordinator of Iranian historical churches at Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry, Iran’s Islamic Culture and Relations Organization announced on Friday.

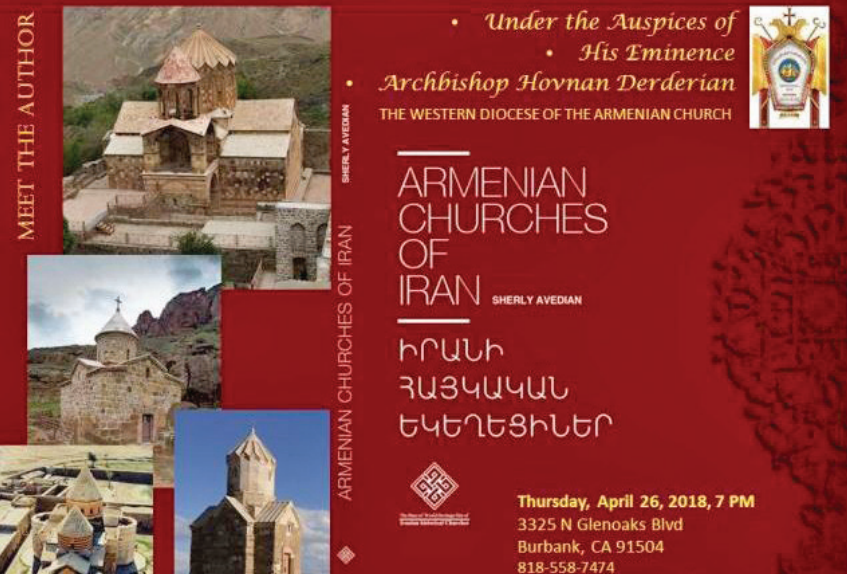
The bilingual book has been published in Armenian and English by the Zangak Publishing House in Yerevan.

Avedian, the Armenian ambassador to Iran, Artashes Toumanian, the Iranian cultural attaché in Armenia, Hossein Tabatabai, and the chairman of the Armenian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, Gagik Gyurjyan, attended the meeting.

Avedian said that she has spent ten years gathering information for writing the book, and said that the book is a clear reflection of the Armenian community’s creative peaceful coexistence in Iran.

Gyurjyan thanked Avedian for writing the book and also expressed his gratitude to Iranian cultural officials for their care and concern for Armenian historical sites in Iran.

In a short speech, Tabatabai praised Avedian for writing the book, and said



A poster for Sherly Avedian’s book “Armenian Churches of Iran”.

that Iranians and Armenians have enjoyed mutually beneficial relationships over their enduring peaceful coexistence.

Due to their attitude for living with respect for others in Iran, the Iranian Armenian community can be considered as a role model for other religious communities in the world, he added.

Toumanian also hailed Iranian Muslims

for their understanding of the followers of other religions in Iran and added, “You must live among the Iranians to recognize their empathy for the others.”

The Iranian churches St. Thaddeus, St. Stephanus, and Dzordzor (Zorzor) in East Azerbaijan Province and West Azerbaijan Province were registered on UNESCO’s World Heritage List in 2008.

“Muhammad(S)” writer Ebrahim Hassanbeigi completes novel on Ashura

by Ketabestane Marefa.

The book tells the story of Ayyub, a blacksmith who works in Kufa. Prior to the departure of Umar ibn Saad, Ibn Ziyad’s commander who is leaving town to fight Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions, Ayyub receives a large order for weapons.

The order appears to advance his life and enable him to marry the daughter of an influential man in the town.

However, his parents are among the ardent supporters of Imam Ali (AS) and his household, therefore he is faced with the dilemma of choosing between a life of luxury and working at his small forge.

Ashura is the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala as a result of their valiant stand against the injustices of the oppressive Umayyad dynasty in 680 CE.

Hassanbeigi’s “Muhammad (S)” has been published in English and several other languages.

He has also fictionalized the life story of Mohsen Hojaji, an Iranian soldier who was martyred by ISIS forces in Syria, in “Morning of the Fateful Day”, which is scheduled to be published by Khate Moqaddam in the near future.

Hassanbeigi is the author of “Two Captions for One Picture”, winner of the prize for best novel for young adults at the Seyed Ali Andarzgu Literary Awards, which are given to books on the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

His credits also include “The Rose on the Rug”, “Gisu and the Magic Lamp”, “Sufi and the Magic Lamp”, “Aladdin and the Magic Lamp” and “Mayor’s Excellency”.

Foliant, a major Kazakh publishing house, Sama Publishing House from Egypt and Zengin from Turkey have acquired rights to eight books by Hassanbeigi.

“It Rains Slowly” director Saeid Nejati on Kazan festival jury

A R T **TEHRAN** — Saeid Nejati, the Iranian director of the acclaimed short “It Rains Slowly”, has been selected for the jury of the 16th Kazan International Muslim Film Festival.

He and nine other jury members will judge movies at the festival, which will be held in the Russian town of Kazan from September 5 to 10, Persian media announced on Saturday.

Nejati has previously been on the juries of several other international film festivals, including the 15th International Short and Independent Film Festival and the 19th Izmir International Short Film Festival.

Iranian movies “Drown” and “The Skin” and the Afghanistan-Iran production “The Dogs Didn’t Sleep Last Night” will be screened in the Russia–Islamic World program of the festival.

“Drown”, also known as “Butterfly

Swimming”, is Mohammad Kart’s directorial debut. After a video of Parvaneh’s class in a women-only swimming pool is leaked, she is brutally murdered by her husband, Hashem, who then seeks a way to redeem his reputation and dignity as the godfather in the neighborhood. Hashem’s brother, Hojjat, embarks on a journey into the labyrinths of the underworld in Tehran to find out who is responsible for this dirty game.

“The Skin” co-directed by Bahman and Bahram Ark is about Araz who lives with his witch mother, Marhamat, and he’s fallen under her spell to stay with her and not to go after his love. However, Araz tries to get rid of his mother’s spell, and as he approaches his love closer and closer, his mother gets weaker and weaker. Araz has to make a choice between his love of his mother or his lover; the evil side leads him toward his lover, while

his conscience leads him toward his sinful mother. The man gives the spell to his lover as she will be the one to make a decision on Araz’s life and his mother.

The story of “The Dogs Didn’t Sleep Last Night”, directed by Ramin Rasuli, is set in a remote area in Afghanistan, where stories of the lives of a young shepherdess, a birdcatcher boy and a mourning teacher are intertwined after their school is burned down. The young shepherdess takes the risk of saving a female U.S. soldier after a helicopter crash. The birdcatcher boy takes shelter in a tank with the birds, the pin-ups and the illegal music that he loves. And the mourning teacher seeks vengeance on the one who has widowed her.

Four Iranian short movies, including “Sami” co-directed by Habib Bavisajed and Meqdad Torfeh, and “The Dolls Game” by



Iranian director Saeid Nejati in an undated photo.

Mehdi Mahaei, will also be competing in various categories of the Kazan festival.

“Kal Fatemeh” by Mehdi Zamanpur and “Parizad” by Mehdi Imani Shahrinori are also among the films.

“Guess How Much I Love You” published for Iranian children



Front cover of the Persian translation of Sam McBratney’s “Guess How Much I Love You”.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — “Guess How Much I Love You”, a British children’s book written by Sam McBratney, has been released by the Elmi Farhangi Publishing Company.

Nayyereh Talebzadeh is the translator of the book, which carries the original illustrations by Anita Jeram.

The book was first published in 1994, in the United Kingdom by Walker Books and then in 1995, in the United States by its subsidiary Candlewick Press.

It follows the story of two hares, Big Nutbrown Hare and Little Nutbrown Hare. It is never stated in the original storybooks that these two are father and son, but this is stated in the animated television series.

Little Nutbrown Hare asks Big Nutbrown Hare the title question, “Guess how much I love you?”, and the book continues as the two use larger and larger measures to quantify how much they love each other in answer to the question.

The book was a 1996 ALA Notable Children’s Book.

According to its publishers, in addition to the ALA award and numerous other awards, it has sold more than 43 million copies worldwide and been published in 57 languages.

Based on a 2007 online poll, the National Education Association in the U.S. listed the book as one of its “Teachers’ Top 100 Books for Children.”

“Guess How Much I Love You” has been published in several different formats, suitable for children from age 1½ to 8. It has been adapted as a television cartoon show in the U.S.

In 2010, an animated adaptation of the story began airing through Canada’s TVO Kids and United States’ Disney Junior. The show is produced by SLR Productions Australia (Suzanne Ryan) and Scrawl Studios and distributed by CCI Entertainment.

Reception for the show has been positive, and in 2013, it received an AACTA Award nomination for Best Children’s Television Series. It was renewed for a second season.

Nic Stone’s “Clean Getaway” comes to Persian bookstores

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of “Clean Getaway” by Nic Stone, an American author of young adult and middle-grade fiction, has been published in Tehran.

Portegal is the publisher of the book rendered into Persian by Rozhina Qavami.

From New York Times bestselling author Nic Stone comes the middle-grade road-trip story through American race relations past and present perfect for fans of Jacqueline Woodson and Jason Reynolds.

This book teaches how to go on an unplanned road trip with your grandmother.

Grab a suitcase: prepacked from the big spring break trip that got canceled. Fasten your seatbelt: G’ma’s never conventional, so this trip won’t be either. Use the Green Book: G’ma’s most treasured possession. It holds history, memories and, most important, the way home.

It also tells us what not to bring. A cellphone: Avoid contact with dad at all

costs, even when G’ma starts acting stranger than usual.

Set against the backdrop of the segregation history of the American South, take a trip with New York Times bestselling author Nic Stone and an eleven-year-old boy who is about to discover the world hasn’t always been a welcoming place for kids like him, and things aren’t always what they seem; his G’ma included.

Stone was born and raised in a suburb of Atlanta, GA, and the only thing she loves

more than an adventure is a good story about one.

After graduating from Spelman College, she worked extensively in teen mentoring and lived in Israel for a few years before returning to the U.S. to write full-time.

Growing up with a wide range of cultures, religions and backgrounds, Stone strives to bring these diverse voices and stories to her work.

Stone lives in Atlanta with her husband and two sons.