

# TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 50,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 43rd year | No. 14007 | Saturday | **AUGUST** 7, 2021 | Mordad 16, 1400 | Dhul Hajjah 27, 1442

## POLITICS Page 2

- President Raisi starts work seriously
- World leaders congratulate Raisi over taking office
- Qalibaf meets Afghan president, Hamas leader

## IRAN IN FOCUS Page 3

- I will make you happy once again: Yazdani
- Iran to start for World Cup qualification on Aug. 25

## ECONOMY Page 4

- Exports to Afghanistan fall 85% amid unrest in Kabul
- Desalination plants providing 600,000m<sup>3</sup> of drinkable water to southern Iran

## TOURISM Page 6

- Archaeological museum under construction in UNESCO-registered citadel
- 13 cultural elements added to national heritage list

## SOCIETY Page 7

- Iranian scientist receives Cuba's Carlos J. Finlay Award
- Autumn expected to be warmer than normal

## CULTURE Page 8

- Stuntman Arsha Aqdasi dies, organs donated to save lives
- Anti-Zionist director Parviz Sheikhtadi making series on "grandmother of the revolution"
- Toronto International Film Festival to screen Iran's "Zalava"

## Opinion T

By Farrokh Hesabi

## Olympic medal winner Rezaei expects better performance in Tokyo

TEHRAN – Former Iran national team wrestler, Alireza Rezaei, says that he expected more from the freestyle wrestling team in the Tokyo Olympics.

Iran ended the competition with two medals altogether. Amirhossein Zare claimed a bronze medal in the men's freestyle 125 kg of the 2020 Olympic Games. Hassan Yazdani also claimed a silver on Thursday after losing to the U.S. wrestler David Taylor in the final bout of 86kg.

"Personally, I expected three or four medals for our freestyle national team in the Olympics. Of course, we can't deny that the Olympic Games are at the highest level, and it isn't easy to predict. Our wrestlers tried their best, and Iranian people watched their efforts on the mat," said Rezaei, who won a silver medal at the 2004 Olympics in the men's Freestyle 120 kg.

"We cannot criticize our wrestlers and say that they have not put everything on the line in their games. They did what they could do. However, they lacked the necessary freshness and vitality for such crucial moments and seemed to have problems in terms of physical strength," He added in his interview with Tehran Times. ▶Page 3

## Interview T

By Mohammad Mazhari

## Jordan's role is to protect the Zionist regime: Iraqi analyst

TEHRAN – An Iraqi analyst says that the Jordanian kingdom is entrusted by the U.S. with securing the Zionist regime.

"The existence of Jordan is to protect the Zionist regime and secure its eastern borders, as it is a small monarchy that subsists on American aid and oil provided by Iraq under American direction, whether during the time of Saddam Hussein or today. It is a reward to Jordan for its support to Israel," Ali Fahim tells the Tehran Times.

In an interview with CNN's Fareed Zakaria, the Jordanian king struck a note of warning about a range of alleged Iranian hostile activities in the region and hoped that these activities be addressed in the current nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran and its negotiating partners. ▶Page 5



© ICANA/ Hamidreza Rahel

## Report T

## Raisi officially takes oath of office as president

TEHRAN — Ebrahim Raisi was formally sworn in as the eighth president of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Thursday afternoon.

The swearing-in ceremony was held in the parliament, which was attended by senior Iranian civil and military officials as well as a large number of foreign dignitaries from more than 80 countries.

The ceremony started with speeches by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Judiciary chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei.

This is the text of the oath of office by the president:

"I, as the President, upon the Holy Quran and in the presence of the Iranian nation, do hereby swear in the name of Almighty God to safeguard the official Faith, the system of the Islamic Republic and the Constitution of the country; to use all my talents and abilities in the discharge of responsibilities undertaken by me; to devote myself to the service of the people, glory of the country, promotion of religion and morality, support of right and propagation of justice; to refrain from being autocratic; to protect the freedom and dignity of individuals and the rights of the nation recognized by the Constitution; to spare no efforts in safeguarding the frontiers and the political, economic and cultural freedoms of the country; to guard the power entrusted to me by the nation as a sacred trust like an honest and faithful trustee, by seeking help from God and following the example of the Prophet of Islam and the sacred Imams, peace be upon them, and to entrust it to the one elected by the nation after me."



## Iran's population on upward trend till 2040, UN predicts

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Iran's population will be on an upward trend until 2040, then it begins to experience a downward trend based on three scenarios by the UN World Population Prospects report revised in 2017.

The results on fertility growth show that in all three scenarios (low, medium, and high) until 2040, Iran's fertility rate will not increase to the level of replacement and the population growth rate of Iran will decrease based on all three scenarios.

The lowest scenario predicts that in 2030, the population growth rate of Iran reaches zero and the medium scenario suggests that in 2050, the rate becomes negative.

Also, the changes in the population show that if the current trend of fertility decline continues, according to the low scenario, the population of Iran will reach about 82 million by 2050, and about 77.6 million people in 2060, and by 2100 it will be reduced to about 42 million people.

Also, if the medium scenario is realized, the population of the country will decrease to about 93 million by 2050, then to about 72 million by 2100. ▶Page 7

## Projects worth \$3.5b ready to be inaugurated in free trade, special economic zones

TEHRAN- The secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council says projects worth 150 trillion rials (about \$3.571 billion) are ready to be inaugurated in the country's free trade zones (FTZs) and special economic zones by the next two months.

As announced by Hamidreza Mo'meni, the trade balance of the country's free trade zones and special economic zones has been positive over the past three years.

"With the measures taken for the promotion of exports in the country, the trade balance of the free trade and special economic zones has become positive over the past three years," the official has said.

In early July, Mo'meni had announced that some new free trade zones are planned to be set up in the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2022). ▶Page 4

## 'Don't test us:' Iran responds to Israeli threat of military action

TEHRAN – Tehran on Thursday reacted to remarks by a high-ranking Israeli official who had threatened Iran with a military strike to stop its nuclear program, saying any adventurism against the country will be met with a decisive response.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh warned Israel against any "foolish move," saying that Iran will decisively respond to any such move.

"In another brazen violation of Int'l law, Israeli regime now blatantly threatens Iran with military action. Such malign behavior stems from blind Western support," Khatibzadeh said on Twitter. "We state this clearly: ANY foolish act against Iran will be met with a DECISIVE response. Don't test us."

He was responding to a threat issued by Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz against Iran. ▶Page 3

## Don't play the victim

TEHRAN — The devious Israeli regime is devastatingly trying to play the role of a victim, while it was the child-killer regime that started the aerial aggression on Wednesday.

Three rockets were fired on Wednesday, two of which reached Israel, striking near the northern town of Kiryat Shmona. No casualties were reported.

The Israeli army stated that it carried out three rounds of what it called "retaliatory" shelling. The Lebanese army stated that 92 artillery shells fired by Israel had fallen in southern Lebanon after the rockets were fired on Wednesday.

Multiple wildfires in dry conditions caused by the Israeli bombardment, but no casualties were reported. After firing rockets, Israeli warplanes launched airstrikes on neighboring Lebanon.

"Earlier today [Thursday], rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israeli territory," the Israeli air force tweeted.

"In response ... fighter jets struck the launch sites and infrastructure used for terror in Lebanon from which the rockets were launched. ▶Page 2  
STAY UPDATED #Lebanon



© Reuters

## Wrestler Zare takes bronze medal: Tokyo 2020

TEHRAN – Amirhossein Zare from Iran claimed a bronze medal in the men's freestyle 125 kg of the 2020 Olympic Games on Friday.

Zare defeated Chinese wrestler Deng Zhiwei 5-0 and won the bronze medal.

It was Iran's second medal in freestyle wrestling.

Hassan Yazdani claimed a silver medal in the 86kg on Thursday.

## TENDER INVITATION No: 400-02 MS

**IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO),** Would like to invite eligible producers/suppliers for the supply of 140 tons cold ramming paste and 40 tons paste of steel bar (totally 180 tons paste) on the basis of tender document (instruction and contract template). Interested companies are allowed to send their competitive offer till 31st August 2021, to below mentioned address. Address: PO Box 31, opposite Bahonar Park, Natural Resources Boulevard, Arak- Iran; Postal code: 3818998116 Name of office: Secretariat of the Transaction Committee, Iranian Aluminum Company. Tel: +98 86 32162014 +98 86 32162181 Attention: Mr. Omid - Mr. Nabuini; Mrs. Mohammadi (Spare part & Machinery department) Tel: +98 8632162402 For more information, please visit our website <http://www.iralco.ir/> then click tender.

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminium Company





## Qalibaf meets Afghan president, Hamas leader

**TEHRAN** — In separate meetings with the Afghan president and the leader of the Hamas political bureau, Iranian Parliament Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf has stressed the importance of establishing peace in the region.

In his meeting with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Thursday night, Qalibaf said that peace can be achieved in Afghanistan through dialogue.

President Ghani attended the inauguration of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on Thursday. After a ceremony in the Iranian parliament, he met with Qalibaf.



The top parliamentarian pointed out that Iran and Afghanistan share profound historical, religious, cultural, and linguistic bonds, saying they serve as a suitable basis for expanding political, economic, and cultural ties.

He said that Iran supports any measure that helps promote sustainable peace and security and prevent bloodshed in Afghanistan.

The speaker discussed the joint border market and Iran's water rights from the Helmand River, emphasizing that the presence of foreign powers in Afghanistan is the source of insecurity in the country.

For his part, Ghani responded to Qalibaf's remarks on the common ground between Iran and Afghanistan, arguing that this is an appropriate basis for strengthening the relationship.

Ghani stressed that the Afghans will never forget the sympathy and help that the Iranian people and government have shown in different periods, especially in hosting Afghan refugees.

He said war is not the solution to current problems in Afghanistan, saying that the killing of innocents cannot compensate for the country's underdevelopment.

### Qalibaf praises Palestinian resistance

In his meeting with Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh on Friday, speaker Qalibaf praised the resistance displayed by the Palestinians during the 12-day war and emphasized Iran's commitment to redeem the occupied Palestinian lands.

Haniyeh raised the same issue and thanked the Iranian people and government for supporting the position of the Palestinians in various situations.

The Hamas political bureau chief had also visited Tehran to be present at the inauguration ceremony of Raisi.

## Raisi calls for regional dialogue to solve problems

Iranian newly-elected President Ebrahim Raisi says promotion of dialogue and interaction among regional countries along with prevention of foreign interference are key to solving issues of the region.

"If there is a problem or an issue among regional countries, they should be resolved through dialogue and interaction and no room should be allowed for foreign powers to interfere in the region," Raisi said in a Friday meeting with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nasser al-Mohammed al-Ahmed al-Jaber Al Sabah, who is in Tehran to attend the president's swearing-in ceremony.

He added that regional countries should further improve ties because enemies and ill-wishers are against cordial relations among them.

The president said the relations between Iran and Kuwait are much longer than the 60-year-old diplomatic ties and are rooted in the two nations' common beliefs.

"There is no obstacle in the way of developing interaction between the two countries and I believe that a new era has begun in [promoting] cooperation among regional countries," Raisi pointed out.

Raisi took the oath of office on Thursday to be officially inaugurated as the eighth president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, two days after having his mandate endorsed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

For his part, the Kuwaiti foreign minister expressed hope that Tehran and Kuwait City would open a new chapter in ties, and said his country is ready to start cooperation with the new Iranian administration to draw up an operational plan aimed at enhancing all-out relations between the two countries.

Sabah also conveyed the congratulations and a written message from the Emir of Kuwait to the Iranian president and said the two countries should draw up new areas for cooperation in the region given their experience in the fight against COVID-19.

(Source: Press TV)

## Don't play the victim

From page 1 ► "An additional target in the area from which rockets have been launched in the past was struck as well."

Speaking to Israel's YNet TV, War Minister Benny Gantz said: "This was an attack meant to send a message ... Clearly we could do much more, and we hope we won't arrive at that."

Gantz said he believed that the Palestinian faction launched the rocket. In the past, small Palestinian factions in Lebanon had fired on Israel from time to time.

The Zionist regime's air force confirmed that this was the first time they had hit a target in Lebanon since 2014. Previously recognized military operations mainly involved shelling.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun said that Israel's air strikes against the Lebanese people were the first air strikes since 2006, indicating the escalation of its "aggressive intentions" against Lebanon.

Aoun also stated in a tweet that the attack directly threatened the security and stability of southern Lebanon and violated UN Security Council resolutions.

In retaliation, Hezbollah stated that it had fired rockets into open space near Israeli positions in response to Israeli air strikes in southern Lebanon.

In a statement on Friday, Hezbollah stated that it had launched a rare airstrike in neighboring occupied lands early Thursday after Israeli warplanes fired rockets across the border. "Dozens" of rockets were launched in the area.

Israel said it did not want to escalate to a full-blown war, even though it was prepared.

"More than 10 rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israeli territory. Most of the rockets were intercepted by the aerial defense system while the rest of them landed in open areas adjacent to Har Dov," the Shebaa Farms border district, the air force said on Twitter, although local sources claimed that 21 rockets were launched into the Israeli open ground.

Figures close to Hezbollah told Al Jazeera that the movement's response was "a message" and "warning" to Israel.

"They are telling the Israelis they cannot change the rules of engagement since the last war in 2006," said Al Jazeera reporter in Lebanon.

"Hezbollah is saying the ball is in Israel's court. They can escalate the situation or calm it down," Al Jazeera reporter said of his conversation with the source close to Hezbollah.

Israel fought a 2006 war against Hezbollah, which is the dominant force in southern Lebanon. The border has been mostly quiet since then.

The escalation came as thousands of grief-stricken Lebanese marked the first anniversary of a devastating explosion in Beirut port that killed more than 200 people and scarred the nation's psyche.

It is important to note that Israel started the aggression first, violating all kinds of humanitarian and international laws. Hezbollah acted in self-defense. Therefore, the Israeli regime cannot buy sympathies for itself, as no one cries for the oppressor.

The decision is up to Bennett and his team. They can calm things down and seize the opportunity, or, they can keep the tensions ongoing.

## World leaders congratulate Raisi over taking office

**TEHRAN** — In separate messages, three European leaders have congratulated Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi for starting his job as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, and Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo wished success for the president and announced their readiness to develop relations with Tehran.

In a message on July 30, the Finnish President Sauli Niinisto also congratulated Raisi for being elected as the Iranian president.

Earlier, a number of European countries, including Austria, France, Croatia, Britain, Serbia and Switzerland, had sent separate messages congratulating Raisi on his victory in the June 18 presidential election.

### Japanese PM congratulates Raisi over presidency

According to the Japanese embassy in Tehran, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga also sent a message to Raisi, sending the congratulations of himself, the people and government of Japan on the inauguration of the Iranian president.

In the message, Yoshihide Suga emphasized that he is willing to work and cooperate with the Iranian president to develop the relations between the two countries, which have been long-standing and friendly.

The relationship can continue for a long time, he added.

Raisi won the June 18 elections by a landslide, winning 62% of the votes.

# Raisi officially takes oath of office as president

From page 1 ► "We must solve problems and avoid resorting to excuses"

At the inauguration ceremony, Qalibaf first greeted the Iranian nation on the successful holding of the presidential election and welcomed foreign guests who had taken part in the inauguration ceremony.

Then the top parliamentarian pointed to the challenges facing the country and the people, especially economic ones, and emphasized the importance of taking decisive action to solve them without any making excuses.

"We have entered a new stage of management in the country. The people participate in parliamentary and presidential elections, give us the opportunity to solve the problems of the people, especially the problems that plague the middle class and the disadvantaged, in order to show that the jihadi (strong and firm) management system is the solution to all the material and spiritual problems of the country," stated Qalibaf who was Tehran mayor for 12 years.

The speaker emphasized the importance of advancing national efficiency and accountability in the new era, and stated that all Iranian officials are responsible to restore economic stability and create hope and joy among the public.

The government assumes the main responsibility in this regard because it has the highest executive capacity, Qalibaf said. However, he



added, coordination and cooperation among all government branches play a leading role in overcoming challenges.

"We know that threats and sanctions from the enemy have brought difficulties to the management of the country, but there are also considerable sacred, popular, economic and international capabilities that can help us overcome these challenges," said the top parliamentarian.

### "Judiciary ready to help the new government in corruption fight"

Mohseni Ejei also said the Judiciary is ready to help the government in fighting corruption.

He added that according to the

constitution, the president is the highest-ranking official after the Leader and has the responsibility to implement the constitution.

The Judiciary chief wished the president success in fulfilling such an important duty in cooperation with other government bodies, the elites, and the public.

The Judiciary chief expressed hope that Raisi will take measures as soon as possible to solve the people's problems, counter corruption and discrimination, and modify the complex administrative structure.

Mohseni Ejei emphasized that the Judiciary is ready to support the new government, help spread justice, support the legal rights and freedoms of the people and fight cor-

ruption.

He added, "The Judiciary will fight corruption more seriously than ever."

### 82 countries send delegates to the inauguration ceremony

More than 100 officials from 82 countries took part in the Raisi inauguration ceremony, including 10 heads of state, 20 parliament speakers, 11 foreign ministers and 10 other ministers, as well as special envoys, deputy parliament speakers and chairmen of parliamentary commissions and parliamentary delegations.

A high-level delegation from the European Union (EU) led by European External Action Service the Deputy Secretary General Enrique Mora also participated in the inauguration. Mora was accompanied by Stephan Klement, head of the EU delegation to the international organizations in Vienna, and Head of Task Force European Union Bruno Scholl.

Two days prior to the swearing-in ceremony, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei endorsed Raisi who won the June 18 presidential election overwhelmingly. He won nearly 62% of the votes, succeeding Hassan Rouhani.

The Leader urged the new president to work to activate the country's capabilities and pave the way for large-scale development in all fields, with special emphasis on the economy.

# President Raisi starts work seriously

**TEHRAN** — On his first day as the Iranian president, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi met with several high-ranking foreign officials, marking a busy day for himself.

Foreign officials had visited Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of Raisi.

During a meeting with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Friday, Raisi said that the Iranian government will pursue a policy of developing relations with neighboring countries and the region, especially India.

"In particular, there are economic, commercial and new technologies which we must use to strengthen the level of our relations," he added.

Emphasizing the need for a joint program to increase the level of Tehran-New Delhi relations, the president said, "By moving in the direction of a joint cooperation program, we can shape up a different direction at the level of relations between the two countries, and it certainly is in the interests of the two nations."

President Raisi also stressed the importance of close cooperation between the two countries in promoting peace and stability in the region, saying, "Iran and India can play a constructive and useful role in ensuring security in the region, especially Afghanistan, and Tehran welcomes New Delhi's efforts for establishing security in Afghanistan."

Raisi went on to say that the fate of Afghanistan must be decided by the Afghans themselves.

"We believe that this issue will be resolved quickly if the Americans do not commit sedition" in the country, the president remarked.

Appreciating Raisi's speech at the inauguration ceremony regarding the Iranian government's will to develop relations with neighboring countries, Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar said he will reflect Raisi's views to the president and prime minister of India.

"We will try to maximize our cooperation," the foreign minister said, adding the current level of relations is not favorable.

"We are determined to establish long-term cooperation in the interests of our nations, given the serious will of the Iranian side," the foreign minister underlined.

### "Sanctions cannot stop development and cooperation of independent countries"

In his meeting with the Chairman of Belarussian House of Representatives Vladimir Andreichenko, Raisi said that sanctions cannot stop the development and cooperation of independent nations.

Raisi also said a change must be made in the relations between Iran and Belarus by considering all capacities.

"The United States thinks that sanctions can hinder the progress of nations, but it is utterly mistaken, and Iran, with the cooperation of its friendly countries, will continue to make strong progress, and in doing so, we regret the United States," he underlined.

Referring to Raisi's speech at the inauguration ceremony, Andreichenko said, "In this speech, your determination for rapid development of your country was revealed to everyone, and Belarus stands by Iran in this direction."

"Belarus seeks to establish comprehensive relations with Iran," he said.

Andreichenko added that the "cowardly" sanctions imposed by the West, especially the United States, are obstacles to the development of relations between the two countries.

### "Suitable conditions have been provided for strengthening relations with Iraq"

During a meeting with Nechirvan Barzani President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, President Raisi called the relations between Iran and Iraq "deep rooted and heartfelt", saying the sides must tap new opportunities in different sectors in line with economic prosperity.

Referring to the role of martyr Gen. Qassem Soleimani during the ISIL invasion of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, Raisi said, "Soleimani was present at the scene as if one of the cities of Iran had been attacked at that time."

Emphasizing that the security and stability of the region should be established by the countries in the region, the president said the countries that seek hegemony and have an arrogant temperament have never taken effective steps to solve the insecurity in the region.

Rather, he added, they add fuel to the fire through "sedition".

Raisi stated that the ground for insecurity is provided by the conspiracy and sedition of foreigners, suggesting that the countries of the region should be careful against the sedition and soft influence of the hegemon and should not allow them to interfere.

For his part, Nechirvan Barzani congratulated Raisi on his presidential election win and said, "Not only we, but the whole region was happy with your views at the inauguration ceremony and it will definitely be welcomed."

Barzani added that he is determined to open a new chapter in economic, cultural and political relations between the Kurdistan region and Iran.

Emphasizing that they consider themselves as part of Iran and the Islamic Revolution, Barzani said, "We hope that with the presence of the new government in Iran, existing relations in all fields will progress because there are many capabilities to strengthen and increase relations, especially at the level of economic relations."

### "Iran serious and sincere to develop ties with the UAE"

Raisi also praised the UAE's serious will to deepen and strengthen relations with Iran in various fields, especially economic and trade.

The United Arab Emirates had sent a special envoy to attend the Raisi inauguration ceremony.

In the meeting, Raisi said, "The mechanism is appropriate to accelerate the development of relations."

He called for establishment of a joint venture to activate the capacities to strengthen relations and cooperation between the two countries in various fields.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is a 'true and sincere' friend of the Emirates and other countries in the region," Raisi underlined.

He mentioned support for the oppressed people of Palestine as an example of the true friendship of the Iranian people and said, "Despite all the pressures and restrictions we have, we are fulfilling our religious and humanitarian duty in defending the Palestinian people and we expect Muslim and the Arab countries also take the lead in this regard."

Raisi said that the aggression of the Zionists against the Palestinians will finally disappear.

The president also noted that the future of Yemen should be decided by the Yemenis themselves, adding that the common vision of the countries in the region in this regard can be in the interest of peace and stability in the region and guarantee the interests of the countries in the region.

Raisi pointed out, "The Zionists do not like the nations of the region and seek to weaken the capacity of the Islamic world by normalizing rela-



Nechirvan Barzani (L) meets President Raisi

tions."

For his part, the UAE special envoy congratulated Raisi and delivered the regards of the Head of the State, Crown Prince and Commander of the Armed Forces to him.

The special envoy praised Raisi for "wise" views at the inauguration ceremony, especially in regard to friendship with neighboring countries.

"We are very happy," he said.

Referring to the deep-rooted relations between the two countries, the special envoy said, "Considering the wisdom and tact we witnessed in the speech, we are confident of the future of relations and the establishment of peace and stability in the region, and we are determined to increase the level of relations with Tehran."

The envoy stated that he had come to Iran at the behest of the UAE leader to show serious will to deepen relations with Iran.

"The message of our presence in this trip is to promote cooperation in various fields and to deepen and we will try to institutionalize relations with Tehran for the benefit of the two brother nations."

### "Insecurity in Afghanistan rooted in foreign plots"

In a meeting with Afghan President Asharf Ghani on Thursday, Raisi also said the current state of insecurity in Afghanistan is rooted in foreign plots.

The new president reiterated Iran's long-held policy that security in Afghanistan must be established only by the regional countries.

"With the reduction of the presence of American forces in Afghanistan, their acts of provocation and sedition will undoubtedly continue in different ways because their interests and existence depend on insecurity," Raisi said, according to Press TV.

Raisi said the presence of foreign forces was the root cause of insecurity and tension in Afghanistan.

"The Islamic Republic is ready to use its capacities to establish lasting peace and prevent bloodshed in Afghanistan," the new president added.

Underscoring the importance of Tehran's cooperation with the legitimate government in Kabul to establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan, Raisi said, "Afghanistan's security must be provided by the Afghans themselves and Iran is ready to assist and cooperate in this regard so that lasting peace and justice will be established and the people of Afghanistan be freed from suffering."

President Ghani, for his part, congratulated Raisi on his election and expressed hope for the beginning of a new chapter in Tehran-Kabul relations, saying Afghanistan wishes to expand political and economic ties with Iran in all fields.

Stressing that Tehran enjoys pivotal capacities in creating regional security, the Afghan president said, "Iran has a prominent role in establishing regional stability and [Kabul] intends to use Iran's capacities for cooperation in that regard."



**TEHRAN** – As new Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi assumes office, Iran is widely expected to move in a new direction both domestically and globally. After eight years of ambivalence under Hassan Rouhani, an already revolutionary state appears ready to be revolutionized by Raisi.

Ayatollah Raisi formally started to discharge his duties as president of Iran on Thursday after taking the oath of office during a swearing-in ceremony held at Iran's Majlis. Earlier, he was endorsed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei as president during a ceremony known as "Endorsement" (in Persian: Tanfiz).

Raisi won Iran's presidential election in June by a landslide to become the eighth president of Iran. He will form the 13th government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The former chief of the Judiciary campaigned on a platform of what can be called a national salvation government. Drawing on his anti-corruption drive in the Judiciary, Raisi vowed to eradicate corruption in the executive branch. He promised to revive the economy and lift millions out of abject poverty as well as set the country's foreign policy on the right track based on principles of dignity, expediency, and wisdom.

During his swearing-in ceremony, Ayatollah Raisi elaborated on his incoming government's agenda. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony before dozens of foreign delegations, Raisi put his election win in the broader context of change in Iran's course of history. "At the beginning of the new century and the beginning of the second step of the revolution, I am very proud to have been honored by the people and with their vote to protect such a heritage," he said, referring to the start of the century in Iran's calendar and Ayatollah Khamenei's proclamation of the Second Step of the Revolution, a strategy outlined by the Leader that determines Iran's future path for decades to come.

Ayatollah Raisi made it clear that his election to the presidency was another collective effort on the part of the Iranian people to bring about prosperity. The new president himself underlined this effort. "The message of the Iranian people in the 18 June election was the message of change and justice," he said, noting, "The Iranian nation stood against the East and the West to prove that religious democracy is a new way of governing that can bring independence and freedom, religion and the world, tradition and progress together."

Ayatollah Raisi pointed out that great Iran is entering a new century in which the sun of religious democracy has risen for more than 40 years and is now in the period of excellence and completion of its movement at the beginning of the Second Step.

"The dawn of the Islamic Revolution of Iran marked a new chapter of



# A new day has come

freedom, political participation and democracy in the history of our country," he said, according to a readout of his swearing-in speech published by the Iranian presidency's website.

Raisi takes office at a time when Iran is moving toward a resuscitation of the economy using domestic capacities as a solution for existing problems after years of Western renegeing on their commitments under a 2015 landmark deal between Iran and world powers known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Using domestic capacities was one of the pieces of advice given by the Leader to Raisi during the Endorsement Ceremony. "These days, if you look at the comments, essays and writings, you notice that they focus on the shortcomings and problems. Yes, there are many shortcomings and problems, but the existing capacities are greater in number. There are myriad capacities in the country. We have extraordinary capacities in the area of water, oil, mining, extensive domestic markets, relations with neighbors, and the astonishing talents and enthusiasm of our youth. These are our capacities. Undoubtedly, they can overcome the problems provided that they are identified correctly, worked on and utilized efficiently. This requires round-the-clock and untiring diligence. Surely will the utilization of these capacities help overcome the current shortcomings," the Leader said.

But relying on internal empowerment does not mean a cessation of interaction with the outside world. On contrary, Raisi underlined his willingness to work with foreign countries and boost Iran's relations with the world. "The will of the people was independence and resistance to

the extravagance of the arrogant and oppressive powers. At the same time, one must be committed to constructive and extensive interaction with the whole world," he stressed.

Speaking before dozens of foreign guests, Raisi said, "We use all the tools of national power, including diplomacy and intelligent interaction with the world, to ensure the national interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

To this end, the new president voiced his readiness to engage in any meaningful, credible process to lift U.S. sanctions on Iran. "Sanctions against the Iranian nations must be removed and we welcome any diplomatic initiative to bring about this," Raisi pointed out.

But he let it be known that sanctions can't force Iranians into giving up their legitimate rights. "The policy of pressure and sanctions will not cause the Iranian people to give up pursuing their legal rights, including the right to development," the president said.

This message of defiance came against a backdrop of increasing pressure by the U.S. and its allies to make Iran agree to a less profitable version of the JCPOA. Iran has called on the U.S. to lift all the sanctions it imposed, reimposed, or relabeled after former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in May 2018. However, the U.S. insistence on preserving part of the sanctions with the purpose of pursuing follow-on negotiations over non-nuclear issues brought the Vienna nuclear negotiations to a near collapse.

Raisi is unlikely to give the U.S. more than what it has already exacted from Iran. If history is any guide, he

will likely show the U.S. that there is a new sheriff in town.

Of course, this is not to say that Raisi will turn his back on cooperation and engagement. On the contrary, the new president seems to be eager and willing to pursue dialogue and relations based on mutual respect.

Raisi extended his hand to Iran's neighbors and other countries. "I extend a hand of friendship and brotherhood to all countries in the region, especially neighbors, and I warmly shake their hands," he said.

The president called the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region a security-building factor and said, "Iran's regional capacities support peace and stability in the countries and will be used only to counter the threat of domineering and oppressive powers. The crises of the region must be resolved through real intra-regional dialogue and on the basis of ensuring the rights of nations."

Ayatollah Raisi stated that the meddling of foreigners in the region not only does not solve any problem, but is the problem itself. He added, "We consider the promotion of relations with neighboring countries as the most important and main priority of our foreign policy and we favor their dignity and excellence. Diplomacy must strengthen the bonds among nations of the region and strengthen their common grounds in the fields of economy, culture, science and technology."

He pointed out, "The world is changing and the interests of nations depend on understanding the new world and strategic interaction with emerging powers, and a successful foreign policy will be a balanced foreign policy."

## SPORTS

### Olympic medal winner Rezaei expects better performance in Tokyo

Page 1 ► Six Iranian freestyle wrestlers competed in Tokyo, but they failed to win a gold medal. The Iranian people had high hopes of winning a gold medal in freestyle wrestling.

Freestyle wrestling is considered a national sport in Iran and is the country's most decorated sport in the Olympics.

When asked about the tactical issues of the Iranian team, Rezaei said: "I don't want to comment about it. We had some problems, especially in physical condition as I said. The technical staff of the national team should answer many questions regarding the performance of the national team."

"Mohammadhossein Mohammadian and Morteza Ghiasi made some mistakes against their rivals and lost their games while both of them deserved to win."

"Reza Atri in the 57kg was not recovered well after the defeat at the semifinals and lost 9-1 in the bronze medal battle against American Thomas Gilman, while the difference between them was not that much at all," Rezaei explained.

Speaking about Hasan Yazdani's defeat at the final of 86 kg, he said: "We should not forget that he had lost to David Taylor in the previous two matches by a huge margin, but this time he was only 17 seconds away from winning. I think he did a great job in the match against the American wrestler."

"I congratulate Amirhossein Zare for winning the bronze medal. His first appearance at the Olympics led to his first medal. Amirhossein has a bright future ahead of him," Rezaei concluded.

### Bijan Heydari chosen to referee Iran's Hazfi Cup final

**TEHRAN** – Bijan Heydari has been appointed as referee f Iran 's Hazfi Cup final between Esteghlal and Foolad.

Esteghlal, the most successful Iranian club in Hazfi Cup with seven titles, ill play Foolad on Sundai in Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium.

Mohammadreza Mansouri and Hassan Yousefi will assist Heydari in the final.

The Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975.

Tractor are Hazfi Cup defending champions.



### I will make you happy once again: Hassan Yazdani

**TEHRAN** – Iranian freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani says that he wants to make his nation happy once again.

Yazdani could have won his back-to-back Olympics gold but American wrestler David Taylor got a two-point takedown to give him a 4-3 lead less than 20 seconds in the final bout of 86kg.

"I wished to repeat my Olympics gold once again to share happiness with you and I am ashamed that I failed to accomplish that," Yazdani said. "I feel motivated and encouraged by you for all these years. It will be a reason to stay motivated in the upcoming competitions and fight for medal to make you happy once again."

"In the end, I would like to thank everyone who sent me encouraging message," Yazdani added.

### Iran to start for World Cup qualification on Aug. 25

**TEHRAN** – Iran national football team will start training camp for the third round of the 2022 World Cup qualification from Aug. 25.

The 'Persian Leopards' will play Syria eight days later in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Head of The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) Shahabeddin Azizi Khadem met Iran coach Dragan Skocic on Friday and talked about the team's preparation program for the competition.

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

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

Group winners and runners-up will qualify for the 2022 World Cup. The third teams will play a two-legged playoff. The winners then advance to an inter-confederation playoff, to be played June 2022.

### West Brom, Nottingham Forest and Watford eye Mohammadi

**TEHRAN** — Nottingham Forest, Watford and West Brom have set their sights on signing Iran left-back Milad Mohammadi.

The 27-year-old is available on a free transfer from Gent as the Belgian outfit wants him off the wage bill. Mohammadi has already turned down moves to AEK Athens and Ferencvaros this summer.

The full-back has entered the final year of his contract at Gent, Football Insider reported. West Brom and Nottingham Forest both want Mohammadi to boost their Championship promotion hopes.

### ACL 2021: Moghanlou's goal nominated for Best Team goal

**TEHRAN** — The-AFC.com's '5 of the Best' spotlight on 2021 AFC Champions League group stage action this week highlights goals that are far more about the collective than the individual.

Having already reviewed some sensational strikes in the form of long-range rockets and set-piece specials, the-afc.com turns to moves that were perfected on the training ground before being played out on the continental stage.

Yahya Golmohammadi's side broke the deadlock in some style against Al-Rayyan when Shahriyar Moghanlou finished off a rapid break that saw Omid Alishah feed Mehdi Torabi down the left before receiving the return pass and setting up Moghanlou to score from the edge of the area.

Moghanlou must compete with Abdou N'Diaye (Al-Wehdat), Diogo (BG Pathum United), Modou Barrow (Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors) and Felipe Amorim (Chiangrai United) to win the accolade.

## 'Don't test us:' Iran responds to Israeli threat of military action



Page 1 ► The remarks came amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel over a mysterious attack on an Israeli-operated oil tanker off the coast of Oman nearly nine days ago.

The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street was attacked off the coast of Oman on July 29 while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime, was reportedly attacked by suicide drones. Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and 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," the UK-based Israeli company said in a statement on Friday afternoon, a day after the attack.

Israel, the U.S. and the UK blamed Iran for the attack without presenting any evidence to support their accusations.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett claimed that Tel Aviv knows with certainty Iran attacked the Mercer Street ship and will respond to it.

"I determine, with absolute certainty – Iran carried out the attack against the ship," Bennett stated, according to the Jerusalem Post. "The intelligence evidence for this exists and we expect the international community will make it clear to the Iranian regime that they have made a serious mistake."

He noted, "In any case, we know how to send a message to Iran in our own way."

The UK also followed suit. "We believe this attack was deliberate, targeted, and a clear violation of international law by Iran. UK assessments have

concluded that it is highly likely that Iran attacked the MV Mercer Street in international waters off Oman on 29 July using one or more unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)," said a UK statement last week. "The UK is working with our international partners on a concerted response to this unacceptable attack."

Iran said it was not behind the attack on the Israeli ship. Khatibzadeh has responded to allegations by U.S. and UK top diplomats against Iran about last week's attack on an Israeli oil tanker off the coast of Oman.

Khatibzadeh said the statements issued by U.S. and UK top diplomats contain "contradictory" claims and "provocative and false accusations." He condemned these statements and called them "deeply regrettable."

"Such coordinated statements (from Britain and the U.S.) include contradictory phrases per se, in a way that they first level accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran without providing any evidence and document and then talk about the 'possibility' of this," Khatibzadeh said.

The spokesman described Iran as an advocate and supporter of the safe navigation of ships in the Persian Gulf and international waters, and said as a country that has the longest sea borders in the Persian Gulf, Iran is always prepared for cooperation with regional countries to ensure maritime security.

He also noted that Iran considers the presence and interference of the extra-regional forces in the Persian Gulf waters and its littoral states to be harmful to the region's stability and security.

"It is a pity that these countries (the U.S. and Britain) have remained supportively silent about the terrorist attacks and acts of sabotage against Iranian trade vessels in the Red Sea and international waters, but have raised bogus allegations against Iran with political bias in a brazen manner. If these countries have any evidence for their bogus claims, they should present them," he added.

In a tweet on Monday, the spokesman warned, "As guarantor of Persian Gulf security, Iran strongly condemns provocative & orchestrated UK/US statements. Having kept silent abt REPEATED terrorist attacks on IRANIAN ships, they now baselessly accuse IRAN. Any anti-Iran adventurism will receive IMMEDIATE & DECISIVE response."



## TSE's main index climbs 8.5% in a week

**TEHRAN** - TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 90,000 points, or 8.5 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1,406 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Group, National Iranian Copper Company, Social Security Investment Company, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

A capital market analyst says that TEDPIX is going to improve in the second half of the current Iranian calendar month (ends on August 22).

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 trans-

actions 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.

## Value of exports from Markazi province increases 99%



**TEHRAN** - The value of exports from Markazi province, in the center of Iran, has risen 99 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.

Esmail Hosseini, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that over 477,000 tons of products worth over \$371 million has been exported from the province in the four-month period, indicating also seven percent rise in terms of weight.

The official named types of hydrocarbons, heavy and light polyethylene, food and beverages, kitchen and home appliances, disposable plastic products, crystals, aluminum cans, paper towels, steel sections, electric poles, aluminum ingots and apartment flowers as the main products exported from the province in the said time span.

He said the products have been exported to 80 countries and named Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan as the major export destinations.

Hosseini further announced that 42 tons of goods valued at \$155.4 million have been imported to the province in the first four months of the current year, indicating four percent and 67 percent growth in terms of value and weight respectively.

He named raw materials for the production of diapers, bags, juices, machinery, components and parts, edible essential oils, edible raw materials, green bananas, steel wire and aluminum coils as the main imported items and said the products have been imported from 41 countries including the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China, India, and Germany.

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 ex-

port 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.

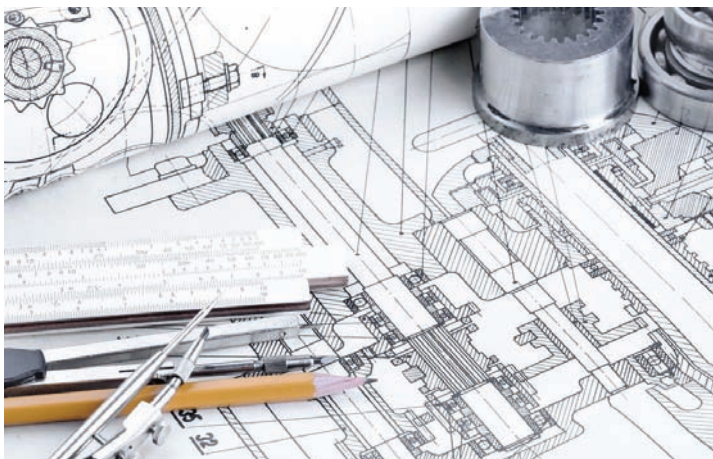
# Exports of technical, engineering services stand at \$500m in a year

**TEHRAN** - The value of the Iranian exports of technical and engineering services in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) stood at only \$500 million despite the great capacities in this area, Head of the Association of Iranian Exporters of Technical and Engineering Services Bahman Salehi told IRNA.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, as well as developing African countries are the main target markets for the export of technical and engineering services, Salehi said.

"Iran's neighbor Turkey, despite lower capacities in technical and engineering services, has snatched the lead from the Iranians and recorded an annual export of \$35 billion," he regretted.

Underlining Iran's great capacities and capabilities in this field, the official noted that the exports of technical and engineering services reached \$5 billion in the Iranian calendar year 1390 (ended in March 2012), saying: "that year we planned a 38 percent annual growth in our exports to reach



the target of \$25 billion of exports per year, but this goal was not realized."

Salehi expressed hope that by removing the obstacles and problems in the way of exporters of services including banking and insurance guarantees, the presence of Iranian companies in the target markets would be strengthened and non-oil exports will be improved.

He referred to the reconstruction of Karabakh region in Azerbaijan as an example and added: "Considering the two countries neighborhood and lower transportation costs, as well as long-standing political relations [between Iran and Azerbaijan], the reconstruction of this region can be a good opportunity for exporters of Iranian technical and engineering services."

## Projects worth \$3.5b ready to be inaugurated in free trade, special economic zones

From page 1 ► "If we can settle the subject of the comprehensive plans of these zones, I think by the end of this year, the new free zones will be added to the existing ones," he said on July 12.

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

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

Some five other free trade zones have been

also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azerbaijan Province, and Maku in West-Azerbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

While near three decades have passed since the start of free trade zones activity in Iran, their planned objectives have not been fully achieved and their development is still facing some impediments.

Lack of proportion between the facilities and the objectives, lack of a national definition for free trade zones' performance, limited resources for establishment and completion of infrastructures, no comprehensive management between the zones, and not complete implementation of zones



management law are some of the barriers in the way of free trade zones' activity and development in the country.

## Iranian exports to Afghanistan fall 85% amid unrest in Kabul

**TEHRAN** - Head of Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce has said exports from Iran to Afghanistan have declined more than 85 percent due to the increasing tensions in the country, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Friday.

"With the escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan, the number of trucks carrying Iranian goods to this country has decreased from 100 trucks every day to two or three trucks per day," Hossein

Salimi said.

According to Salimi, Iranian exports to Afghanistan over the past two weeks have been only 15 percent of the figure for the same period in the previous year.

"When turmoil or conflict arises in a country, the first area that will suffer is that country's economy and trade," he said, adding: "Unfortunately, the situation is so bad that at the moment it is not easy to predict what awaits us. We still do not have an accurate estimate of the amount of damage inflicted

on Iranian traders. We have to see how long this situation will last."

In response to the question that if the Taliban finally takes control and peace is restored, the economic relations between Iran and Afghanistan will continue in the same way or not? Salimi said: "In any case, the needs of that country will not be eliminated. Any group that gains power in Afghanistan, the country will still need food and construction materials and so on and their best option [for meeting those needs] would be Iran."

Underlining the probable decline in the two countries' trade in case of the ongoing conflict, Salimi said: "If this situation continues for even another month, we will not reach 50 percent of our normal export volume to Afghanistan this year."

According to the official, Iran has targeted \$2.7 billion of exports to Afghanistan in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), but considering the current situation realizing this goal will not be possible.

## Average daily gasoline distribution reaches 90m liters

**TEHRAN** - Average daily distribution of gasoline in Iran reached 90 million liters in the Iranian calendar month of Tir (June 22-July 22), according to the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC).

The NIORDC's average daily gasoline distribution stood at 83 million cubic meters since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21) up to August 4, Shana reported.

NIORDC Managing Director Keramat Veis-Karami had previously said that gasoline consumption in the country exceeded 107 million liters in some days of the Iranian calendar month of Tir, despite the pandemic-related travel restrictions.

Gasoline consumption in Iran has fluctuated since the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

In the early days of the pandemic, concerns over the virus minimized the travels across the country and led to a record decrease in consumption in the last Iranian calendar year's first month (March 20-April 20, 2020).



On some days in April 2020, gasoline consumption even fell to 40 million liters and the average daily consumption did not exceed 50 million liters that month.

In general, gasoline consumption in the country declined 20 percent in the past Iranian calendar year, as compared to its preceding year due to

rationing this fuel and also the coronavirus pandemic.

The Islamic Republic, which was an importer of gasoline for decades, exported over \$1.4 billion worth of the fuel in the first seven months of the past Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21, 2020).

The significant increase in the country's gasoline production and exports comes despite the fact that nearly two years ago Iran was shipping in over 4.5 million liters per day of the strategic product.

Iran became a net gasoline exporter in February 2019, after the inauguration of the third phase of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery (PGS) project which added 120,000 barrels to the country's daily gasoline production.

The increase in the exports of the mentioned commodity is a result of the increase in the country's refining capacity and the decline in domestic consumption following the implementation of a rationing program.

## Desalination plants providing 600,000m3 of drinkable water to southern Iran

**TEHRAN** - Desalination plants in southern Iran are currently providing 600,000 cubic meters of drinkable water for the region's coastal provinces, and the figure will be increased to one million cubic meters in the near future, the spokesman of Water and Wastewater Company of Iran told IRIB on Thursday.

According to Hamidreza Kashfi, the one-million-cubic-meters target should be achieved under the framework of the country's Sixth Five-year National Development Plan (2016-2021).

"Currently, the government purchases the water produced in desali-



nation plants through guaranteed purchase deals with the investors, and with the required credit being supplied [by the government], we can supply up to one million cubic meters of drinking water in the southern

regions of the country," Kashfi explained.

The official noted that according to studies conducted in recent years, it is possible to supply drinking water to the southern coastal regions of the country through desalination plants.

He put the cost for producing each cubic meter of water in a desalination plant at one dollar, saying that since the knowledge for the construction of the necessary equipment in this field has been indigenized the costs have been reduced to 70 cents in Iran.

Over the past decade, Iran has been preparing a plan to deploy de-

salination plants on the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in order to supply drinking water to the coastal provinces.

Back in November 2020, President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated the first phase of a major water desalination and transfer project which is aimed at supplying Persian Gulf waters to central Iran through a pipeline.

According to Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian the Government has earmarked the budget for desalination of 8.2 billion liters of water a year and the operational work for 760 million liters of the mentioned figure has already been started.



# Jordan’s role is to protect the Zionist regime: Iraqi analyst

From page 1 ▶ “There are legitimate concerns in our part of the world on a lot of portfolios that the Americans are hopefully going to be able to discuss with the Iranians,” King Abdullah said.

The Jordanian king went so far as to claim that his country has been targeted by Iranian-made drones, a bizarre claim that was made for the first time by Abdullah.

In this regard Ali Fahim notes that “the King Abdullah II plays exactly the role entrusted to Jordan as a monarchy. In fact, the reason for its existence in this part of the Arab body is to protect the eastern front of the Zionist regime since its establishment by King Abdullah bin Sharif Hussein.”

“The Jordanian authorities consider providing the Palestinian resistance with weapons as a crime and deal with any support to the resistance as a violation of Jordanian sovereignty and a betrayal of the state,” Fahim argues.

Following is the text of the interview:

**During an interview with CNN anchor Fareed Zakaria aired some two weeks ago, Jordan’s King Abdullah II claimed Iranian drones have attacked Jordan. Why does once in a while the Jordanian king remembers to talk about the Shias or the Iranian missiles and drones?**

Of course, the last remarks of the Jordanian monarch with the American network CNN reminds us of his statement in 2004 with the Washington Post newspaper on his visit to the United States of America when he warned of what he called the emergence of an ideological Shia crescent from Beirut to the (Persian) Gulf and he meant that Iranian support would reach the front lines with the Zionist regime through Iraq and Syria to complete the line of resistance axis.

Here, the King Abdullah II plays exactly the role entrusted to Jordan as a monarchy. In fact, the reason for its existence in this part of the Arab body, is to protect the eastern front of the Zionist regime since its establishment by King Abdullah bin Sharif Hussein, who was assassinated on charges of betraying the Palestinian cause and his relationship with Golda Meir (the fourth prime minister of Israel) and Britain to serve the Zionists.

He made every effort to annex the West Bank to Jordan and then the division of Palestine.

The existence of Jordan is to protect the Zionist regime and secure its eastern borders, as it is a small monarchy that subsists on American aid and oil provided by Iraq under American direction, whether during the time of Saddam Hussein or today. It is reward to Jordan for its support to Israel.

Therefore, the Jordanian authorities consider providing the Palestinian resistance with weapons as a crime and deal with any support to the resistance as a violation of Jordanian sovereignty and a betrayal of the state.

King Abdullah II’s statement coincides with two important and inseparable developments:

The first is the transfer of American bases from the Al-Sailiya region in Qatar to Jordan, and the second is the establishment of what is known as the new Levant, which means establishing cooperation zone between Iraq, Jordan and Egypt.

The U.S. military announced in a statement the closure of the main Al-Sailiya army base, along with the southern Al-Sailiya base, and an ammunition supply point called “Falcon”, which was serving as a forward staging area for American supplies in the Middle East (West Asia), as it contained 27 depots for storing tanks and armored personnel carriers, and a variety of equipment.



Thus, these bases would be safe from Iranian missiles in the event of any possible war, instead of being an easy prey under the Iranian range of fire. On the other hand, this move can protect them from the strikes that affect the logistical support lines coming from the (Persian) Gulf, passing through the central and southern Iraqi provinces to the Ain al-Assad base, which is located close to the Jordanian border in western Iraq.

It also allows the U.S. to devote all its energy to contain the Chinese dragon in East Asia.

The presence of American bases and warehouses on Jordanian territory brings them within the range of Iranian missiles and also protest marches towards these bases.

This statement may be seen by Jordan as a preemptive blow and reaction to this possibility, albeit on a media or political level.

On the other hand, the new Sham (Levant) project links Iraq with Israel through Jordan and Egypt and pushes it out of the Chinese Silk Road project in an attempt to tighten the siege on the Islamic Republic of Iran to satisfy the United States.

America gives privileges to Jordan at the expense of the Iraqi interest that it does not deserve, especially exempting Jordanian goods from customs tariffs.

In fact, they are Israeli goods whose packaging is changed only. Thus, Israel takes over the reins of the Iraqi markets with facilities and exceptions that do not serve the Iraqi industry, but rather affect it.

All of these roles are played by Jordan in the service of American regional projects, so we are not surprised by a statement that reveals the aforementioned goals and plays the roles entrusted to it.

**How do you evaluate Jordan’s relations with Israel and the role that the Jordanian government plays in security coordination with Israel?**

As I mentioned to you, Jordan’s ties with Israel is essential to protect the Zionist regime, and this relationship is inexhaustible as an organic link.

Without this relationship, Jordan cannot survive; given the composition its political system in which a royal family dominates people does not like it. It is a tribal composition, 70% of whom are Palestinians who have been displaced from their lands.

The Jordanian people reject this subservience and complicity in crimes committed by the Zionist regime, but they live under an iron security fist.

This is obvious in Jordan’s strange coldness in the interaction with the Arab countries and their causes, while it is in the middle of an area, to say the least it is inflamed in terms of security and stability due to the existence of an illegitimate regime.

Jordan is an exception in its Arab periphery i.e. Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon. Jordan has established a strong tie with Israel under an American umbrella that supports its Arab puppets in the region.

The Jordanian government today has linked its existence to the security of Israel, so it is natural that it cooperates to preserve Israel’s security.

King Abdullah is the best who can play this role after America gave him the throne when he seized it from his father’s crown prince, Prince Al-Hassan bin Talal, in the last days of former King Hussein bin Talal.

That is why King Abdullah feels deeply indebted to the Americans for their help to ascend the throne and to preserve his position, so how can he disobey their orders and will?

**Why are some Arab countries such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia worried about the Iran nuclear agreement?**

Some countries in the region have become deeply involved in the American project in a way they have lost all independence in terms of decision-making. Rather, they are racing to please their lord (America) and to prove their loyalty to her, so they adopt the views of America and Israel.

One of U.S. projects in the region is to demonize the Islamic Republic of Iran through replacing hostility with the usurper Zionist regime to hostility with Iran by an extremist propaganda.

All the attitudes of these countries are in line with Israel’s interests, so it is not strange for them to be worried about the Iran nuclear program and are more concerned about the nuclear talks in Vienna because it can lead to an agreement that lifts part of the siege and unjust sanctions on the Islamic Republic and allows it a greater space for development and progress in various scientific fields.

This is what distinguishes Iran from the rest of the countries in the region that have turned into consumer countries that sell oil and consume Western products.

On the other hand, Iran is emerging as a regional power that confronts arrogant hegemony and strengthens the axis of resistance, which these regimes are openly hostile to.

**In response to CNN anchor Fareed Zakaria, when asked about the role of Bin Salman in the failed coup attempt, the Jordanian monarch preferred to pass unnoticed when it comes to the Saudi role. King Abdullah said we do not want new crises and consider the failed coup an internal affair despite evidence of external involvement. Why did he turn a blind eye on the Saudi role in the coup attempt?**

The Jordanian king could not deny

the Saudi role, especially the role of bin Salman in the coup attempt. He confirmed it implicitly, but at the same time he made every effort to distract attention from Saudi Arabia by trying to downplay Riyadh’s role as much as he could.

Imagine if another country had a role in coup attempt in Jordan, how the reaction would have been indescribable. It is not a simple event at all; it is a conspiracy against a state and an attempt to overthrow a regime. How can the reaction be with this unusual and unjustified coldness?

If we follow the relationship between the two countries recently, we find that it has almost been a kind of political dependency on Saudi Arabia. The best example is the closure of the Jordanian embassy in Tehran after the Saudi embassy in Tehran was stormed (in protest to executions of human rights defenders).

In all Saudi positions on the Islamic Republic, the Syrian issue and the Palestinian cause, Jordan was largely in consensus and along the line with the Saudi approaches without question.

But I think that this incident would affect greatly Saudi-Jordanian ties, even if it is not visible. The Hashemite Kingdom has lost a large amount of confidence in Bin Salman, even if he did not declare it. Despite a pressure by the U.S. to bridge the rift and stop the aftershocks, it will affect the relationship between Amman and Riyadh in the future.

**How do you assess Jordan’s role in terms of stability in West Asia and its surroundings?**

Due to the geographical location of the Kingdom of Jordan, it can play a major role in establishing security in the region.

However, it has played a destructive role in its Arab surroundings; this is the case when it comes to the Syrian crisis, when the armed conflict broke out in Daraa.

In a misreading of developments, the decision-makers in Jordan expected a different outcome in Syria while Bashar al Assad could restore stability to the country.

Jordan supported the opposition and provided them with weapons, equipment and logistical support, but it was fraught with caution. And although the support was not public at first, it turned into a public support to Syrian opposition and hosting defectors from the Syrian government.

At the same time Jordan tried to protect its borders from the spread of the Islamists so as to protect its cities from being infected where fundamentalist movements, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, were strengthened.

These movements were closely monitored because of their organizational links with Hamas in Gaza and the Kingdom’s duty to protect the eastern occupied territories (Palestine) from any unrest or instability.

Jordan also had another negative role after the American invasion of Iraq by deploying Salafist armed groups into the depth of Iraq, especially al-Qaeda and its Jordanian leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was very much in harmony with King Abdullah II’s concerns of the Shia movement.

Al-Zarqawi shifted the direction of the battle of al-Qaeda from confronting the Americans to fight the Shia (what they call Safavid) presence in the region.

Meanwhile Jordan has its own goal, which is internal security; it tries to penetrate its neighbors exploiting flaws but stops if it faces strong resistance. All of Jordan’s measures are according to agendas that are planned by Americans.

ital.

It was caused by the ignition of tons of highly explosive ammonium nitrate, stored in a port warehouse filled with other hazardous material since 2014.

Rights groups and families of victims accuse officials of obstructing the probe into the explosion, which has so far failed to hold high-level officials to account or reveal the exact causes of the disaster.

Officials have so far rejected lead investigator Judge Tarek Bitar’s requests to lift the immunity of several high-ranking lawmakers and security chiefs so they can be questioned on the suspicion of criminal negligence, as well as homicide with probable intent.

The officials include caretaker Prime Minister Hasan Diab, ex-Public Works and Transport Ministers Yousef Finianos and Ghazi Zeiter, ex-Interior Minister Nuhad Machnouk, as well as General Security chief Major-General Abbas Ibrahim.

(Source: Press TV)

## Brazil’s Bolsonaro is in the fight for his political life

The self-styled Donald Trump of Brazil is following similar tactics that led to the former American president failing to secure a second term in office.

As his popularity tumbles, Jair Bolsonaro, like Trump, is sowing doubts over Brazil’s upcoming Presidential election, with the goal of allowing him to dispute or reject the outcome.

In a social media webcast to supporters, Bolsonaro claimed potential voter fraud in Brazil’s elections saying “I want elections next year, but clean, democratic and sincere elections”

The far-right president has called for the adoption of printed ballots that can be counted, alleging that it is necessary to avoid fraud in an electronic voting system.

Despite vowing to provide evidence to back up his claims, Bolsonaro, who openly admires, Brazil’s 1964-1985 military dictatorship, has failed to do so. He has admitted to not holding any proof, only “indications.”

That has prompted the top electoral authority to investigate potentially “criminal” propagation of groundless vote-rigging claims.

Brazil’s Superior Electoral Court (TSE) unanimously voted to launch the inquiry and asked the Supreme Court to also investigate Bolsonaro over “possible criminal conduct” for spreading fake news.

The court says it will investigate the President over improper use of official communication channels, corruption, fraud and other potential crimes in his attacks on electronic voting.

In a statement, the 18 judges who sit on the TSE said “Brazil has eliminated a history of election fraud”

The judges argued that all the election steps are monitored by political parties, prosecutors, federal police, universities and the Brazilian Bar Association saying “the electronic voting system is subject to audits before, during and after the election.”

The statement added printed ballots are less safe than electronic voting, and that if Brazil goes back to manual counting of 150 million printed ballots, the chances of fraud would be higher.

Nevertheless, on Thursday a congressional committee voted on the proposal to introduce paper ballots, but the president suffered a defeat.

The TSE president, Luis Roberto Barroso says “Threatening the realization of an election represents anti-democratic behavior... Polluting the public debate with disinformation, lies, hatred and conspiracy theories represents anti-democratic behavior.”

He added that “wrong things are happening in our country and all of us must be alert”

The outcome of the probe may put Brazil’s president at risk of being disqualified from running in next year’s election race.

The president has hit back at the probe pledging not to be “intimidated” saying “this investigation is not within the bounds of the constitution, so the antidote to this is also not within the bounds of the constitution”

He has also suggested he might not accept the electorate’s final decision, calling on his supporters to take to the streets. The statements will bring back memories of the way former U.S. President and top ally, Donald Trump, called on his supporters to march on Capitol Hill; a dark deadly chapter in America’s political history that led to an insurrection.

Bolsonaro’s campaign to undermine confidence in the election has all the echoes of Trump’s “stop the steal” campaign.

In an editorial, top Brazilian newspaper, O Globo, has praised efforts to challenge Bolsonaro’s campaign against Brazil’s voting system, which it described as “nothing more than an attack on democracy”

The paper warned that “Bolsonaro is lying shamelessly in order to be able to challenge the election result in case he is defeated next year, just as Donald Trump did in the United States”

The new investigation means the former army captain’s legal problems have intensified. A criminal court is already probing possible corruption amid accusations he failed to act on warnings over alleged irregularities by aides who purchased Covid vaccines.

New information from a senate probe has shown how vaccine shortages are linked to corruption. The investigation is looking into potential multimillion-dollar kickback schemes. Bolsonaro rejects the accusations.

In any case a disaster has already taken place in Brazil.

Just like his political icon Trump, Bolsonaro downplayed the coronavirus Pandemic calling the deadly

highly transmissible disease “a little flue”. He also mismanaged the virus, while showing bad leadership by publicly not adhering to health protocols and calling on Brazilians to follow suit.

That has caused the Latin American nation to become the second worst hit country in the world in terms of containing Covid with 560,000 people dead so far and 20 million others infected. Only the United States has a higher death toll.

Meanwhile, in an apparent rebuke of Bolsonaro’s threats against the 2022 elections, Hundreds of Brazilian business leaders, who represent large banks and other companies have published a letter titled “Elections will be respected”.

The letter reads “The principle of a healthy democracy is that elections are held and all involved accept its results”. The letter has also been signed by economists, diplomats and representatives of civil society; and will pile the pressure on the government.

The human and economic pain with rising living costs have also damaged Bolsonaro’s standing.

In the last two months, protesters have staged demonstrations nationwide calling for Bolsonaro’s impeachment, who is trailing in the polls to former leftwing president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, also a likely frontrunner in next year’s election.

Bolsonaro is now following the same playbook as that of Trump; with his approval ratings at an all-time low, he is preparing excuses as polls indicate the Brazilian president is facing an electoral loss.

But how will this set the stage for the outcome of the elections?

Bolsonaro retains a contingent of hardcore supporters; which raises the fear of deadly post-election violence.

Just like Trump won the votes of the large Christian American evangelical community in the election, the former American president was never a religious individual himself, despite claiming to be one.

Likewise Bolsonaro, despite his far-right views, came to power vowing to put “Brazil above everything and God above all”. He won around 70% of Christian voters.

Now, the country’s 100 million Christians; of which Bolsonaro claims to be one, are extremely polarized on the politician. Many Christians are appalled at Bolsonaro’s claim to be the defender of their faith.

At the last election, following a graft scandal, involving former President Dilma Rousseff, Brazilians split with two-decades of 21st century socialist rule.

They may be ruining that decision now.

More than half a million lives could have been saved with a leadership that advocated health protocols amid a pandemic, not encouraged the public against following them. The economy is in shambles, while regular protests among the working class who feel abandoned are taking place.

The left wing Worker’ Party’s 21st century social democracy brought to power President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the country most popular ruler in history, more commonly referred to as simply President Lula.

In 2002, when Lula’s Workers’ Party took the helm, 22 million Brazilians, were considered by the World Bank as living below the poverty line.

During his eight-year presidency, Brazil’s economy boomed, with the low and middle working class reaping the benefits. Poverty plunged and incomes and living standards soared. Lula left a legacy with the worker’s party’s that dropped the poverty rate from 22 million Brazilians to 9 million.

His administration took important steps to ensure the poor were fully incorporated into a growing economy. It strengthened the national minimum wage as well as social security and unemployment insurance programs. The changes meant that the living standards of 50 million low-income Brazilians had been protected.

Lula used the economic boom to give a monthly payment to poor mothers on the condition they keep their children in school and ensured they get regular health checkups.

Lula’s goal of investing in future generations while raising incomes of poor families won international praise.

Today, under Bolsonaro’s handling of the economy, think tanks estimate at least 27 million are living below the poverty line.

If the current president does make it to Election Day, Brazilians have an important decision to make.

## Thousands more flee blaze outside Athens as ‘extreme fire warning’ issued

Thousands of people in Greece have fled to safety from a wildfire burning for a fourth day north of Athens, amid the worst heatwave in the country for decades.

Greek authorities have warned of more fires, with emergency services forecasting strong winds and searing temperatures.

Fire crews, water-dropping planes, helicopters and vehicles from France, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland are due to arrive today and throughout the weekend.

There are 56 active fronts across Greece, from the Peloponnese to the island of Evia near the capital, where hundreds of people had to leave by boat as flames burned through forestland to the shore.

In neighboring Turkey, hundreds of volunteers have joined efforts to contain fires that swept through the country’s southern and southwestern coasts. At least eight people have been killed in the fires, described as the country’s worst in living memory.

Thousands of people fled to safety from a wildfire that burned for a fourth day north of Athens, amid the worst heatwave in the country for decades.

On the nearby island of Evia, the coast guard mounted a massive operation with patrol boats and private vessels to evacuate hundreds of people by sea as dozens of fires burned across the country.

Firefighters have been battling for days to stop the flames from reaching populated areas, power stations and historic sites.

One of the most severe blazes raged through forest areas 12.5 miles north of the capital, destroying more homes. Ground crews of several hundred firefighters dug fire breaks and hoses the flames.

Fire Service Brig. Gen. Aristotelis Papadopoulos said: “We are going through the 10th day of a major heat wave affecting our entire country, the worst heat wave in terms of intensity and duration of the last 30 years.”

(Source: Independent)

## Anti-Hezbollah accusations over Beirut port blast politically-motivated: official

A senior Hezbollah official has strongly dismissed accusations against the Lebanese resistance movement over last year’s Beirut port explosion that killed more than 200 people, stating that such claims are politically-motivated and meant to tarnish the image of his group.

“One should refer to the reports that American, French, German and Lebanese investigators have drawn up. All of them state that Hezbollah had nothing to do with the blast,” Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem said in an exclusive interview with Arabic-language al-Khanadeq news website on Wednesday.

“They want to hold the movement responsible for whatever goes wrong in the country as they [furiously] try to undermine the party and sully its image. Ever since the explosion struck, they have been claiming that Hezbollah was behind it. Intelligence services and experts from all over the world have come [to Lebanon], and proven to anyone that Hezbollah had no role



whatsoever in the incident.”

He continued, “They have now started playing a new blame game: Who brought ammonium nitrate to Beirut port? You well know who did it. Where was the cache of unexploded ammonium nitrate taken to? You know much better than anyone else. The judge must be aware of the facts and present them. By not stating the facts, they are taking advantage of any possible opportunity to hold Hezbollah responsible. They

will clearly fail to tie Hezbollah to the explosion. Such accusations are politically-motivated.”

Sheikh Qassem noted that Hezbollah considers it as unnecessary to file slander lawsuits against any party who allegedly claims the resistance movement was responsible for the port blast.

The August 2020 explosion killed more than 200 people, wounded thousands and flattened several neighborhoods in the Lebanese cap-



## Campervans, caravans stage rally under COVID protocols

**TEHRAN** — On Thursday, owners of over 40 campervans and caravans started a three-day parade to promote tourism under health protocols to help curb the coronavirus.

Organized under the supervision of the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI), they left Tehran for an itinerary that stretches to Alborz, Qazvin, and Gilan provinces.

Participants are set to clean nature and collect garbage and waste left in the environment along with certain spots of their itinerary, CHTN reported.

Moreover, they plan to stage other rallies across the country to promote tourism.

Iran's tourism industry has enormously suffered from the coronavirus pandemic as the average of international travels to and from Iran fell by 80 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20, 2021) from a year earlier.

International tourist arrivals to Iran plunged 72% during the first eight months of the year when compared to 2019, according to data compiled by the World Tourism Organi-



zation. Restrictions on travel introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to hit global tourism hard, with the latest data from the UNWTO showing a 70% fall in international arrivals for the first eight months of 2020.

Optimistic forecasts, expect the country would achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus is contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

UNWTO's Panel of Experts foresees a rebound in international tourism in the current year, mostly in the third quarter. However, some experts suggest the rebound could occur only in 2022.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

## Visit Javaherdeh, a jewel of northern Iranian villages



**TEHRAN** — Teeming with colorful houses and scenic views, Javaherdeh is one of the most charming villages in northern Iran. It is situated in Ramsar county of Mazandaran province.

Javaherdeh, literally "the village of Jewel", draws many people to it thanks to the cool weather in summer, the fresh air, and the lush vegetation.

During the cold months of the year, it is almost uninhabited, but at the beginning of spring, along with the local inhabitants, tourists also flock to the village.

Agriculture, livestock farming, and gardening are the main occupations of the people of Javaherdeh. The village also produces handicrafts such as felt, pottery, and metalwork. Among the village's souvenirs are homemade pickles, women's hand-woven clothing, and bread.

Local traditions and ceremonies like Golkar and

Tir-mah Sizde-sho are held there, and the villagers still adhere to the ancient rituals.

Many springs are located in and around Javaherdeh, providing water to the village. The springs include "Soleymaan", "Barshi", and "Kouh Kin".

Javaherdeh is connected to Ramsar and Qazvin only through the mountains; some climbers reach it through the Alborz range.

Waterfalls are found around the Javaherdeh both permanently and seasonally. The Safarood Forest Park can also be found nine kilometers along Javaherdeh Road.

In addition to natural beauties and sceneries, the village is home to several historical monuments such as Adineh Mosque. It was originally a Zoroastrian fire temple built as a place of worship for the goddess Mitra before the advent of Islam.

## Tourist complexes, hotels, eco-lodges under construction in Markazi province

**TEHRAN** — A total of eleven tourism-related projects are currently underway across Markazi province, the provincial tourism chief announced on Thursday.

An investment value of 5.5 trillion rials (over \$132 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been channeled into the projects, Mostafa Marzban said.

The projects, which include tourist complexes, hotels, eco-lodge units, apartment hotels, and traditional restaurants, are expected to generate some 300 job opportunities, the official added.

He also noted that environmental risks and benefits have been taken into account for the designs and implementation of the projects.

Last September, the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said that over 2,400 tourism-related projects are currently being implemented across the country with a total estimated cost of 1,370 trillion rials (around \$32 billion).

This volume of investment indicates that investors recognize the growing tourism sector as a new economy in the country and have high hopes for it, he added.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in



2014 to 20 million in 2025.

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

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

# Friday Mosque of Sojas: different from what you have already seen!

**TEHRAN** — Full of mystic but modest in size and architecture, the Friday Mosque of Sojas was built sometime in the early 12th century during the Seljuk era.

The mosque is located approximately fifty-six kilometers south of Soltaniyeh in northwestern Iran. Although no date is mentioned in any of the inscription friezes found in the mosque itself, the articulation of its brick structure and decoration indicates that its approximate construction date has been determined to be around 1100.

Three elements are most prominent in the overall shape and design of the ancient mosque: a large square chamber, a dome, and the transition between the two. In plan, the square-shaped mosque is oriented towards the qibla, approximately north-south. It is entered from the north through an opening in the center of the elevation, directly opposite the mihrab in the center of the southern wall.

Typical of Seljuk structures, most of the decoration of the interior is achieved with brickwork patterns. Diamond-shaped brickwork patterns can be seen below the inscription band at the top of the cubic volume and on the surfaces between the arches and squinches in the zone of transition.

Some travel insiders say that for many avid sightseers, it could be a rewarding, unmatched experience; different from what they have already visited!

According to Archnet, the structure is symmetrically organized with two large pointed arch window openings at the edges of each of the lateral walls and a single large entrance opening, also a pointed arch on the northern elevation.

Four small window openings pierce the dome above, at the center of each of the sides. Further emphasizing the symmetry of the interior, at either side of the entrance and on either side of the mihrab, the surfaces are decorated with a shallow inset arch with small muqarnas above it and a diamond-shaped pattern on its surface. Each of these is set within a rectangular frame with a floral and vegetal pattern carved in the brick on either side of the arch.



The mihrab is also set within a larger rectangular frame with a perimeter inscription band that is rounded in section and a second band with a floral design. Within these two bands fits a semi-vault that is recessed within the wall of the square chamber. At the center of this and smaller in scale is an arch that is further recessed in the wall of the structure. An earlier, narrower mihrab can be seen through the gaps where stucco has broken off the existing mihrab. The use of pigment and plaster found in the existing mihrab imply that it was built later, ca. 1295-1300 when these materials were commonly used.

In addition to the inscription band outlining the mihrab, there are two more inscription bands found in the interior of the mosque, both dating from the beginning of the 12th century. One inscription band follows the perimeter of the top edge of the cube volume, while the other encircles the perimeter at the base of the

dome. Between the two inscription bands is the transition of the square to circle. The transition of the cube base to the dome of a smaller diameter above is achieved by large squinches at the corners. Above the inscription, frieze is a row of four large squinches, one at each of the corners, and four squat pilastered pointed arches between these, located at the center of each of the sides. Above this is yet another row of sixteen smaller squinches which further reduces the square to a circular form. The dome sits on a perimeter band of brick above these squinches.

Soltaniyeh is an ancient city in the west-central Zanjan province. Meaning "Town of the Sultans", it was briefly the capital of Persia's Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century.

The city, which is home to many historical structures, sites, and monuments including the UNESCO-designated Dome of Soltaniyeh, which is the highlight of the city's tourist attractions.

## Archaeological museum under construction in UNESCO-registered citadel

**TEHRAN** — An archaeological museum is currently under construction in Arg-e Bam, a quake-stricken UNESCO-registered citadel in Iran's southeastern Kerman province.

Covering an area of 1,200 square meters, the museum is expected to open in the next six months, the provincial tourism chief has said.

In addition, some restoration projects are being carried out on the citadel and its surroundings, Fereydun Faali announced on Thursday.

The origins of the citadel of Bam ("Arg-e Bam"), can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) and even beyond. The

heyday of the citadel was from the 7th to 11th centuries, being at the crossroads of important trade routes and known for the production of silk and cotton garments.

The citadel, which contains the governor's quarters and the fortified residential area, forms the central focus of a vast cultural landscape, which is marked by a series of forts and citadels, now in ruins. The existence of life in the oasis was based on the underground irrigation canals, the qanats, of which Bam has preserved some of the earliest evidence in Iran and which continue to function till the present time.

According to UNESCO, Arg-e

Bam is the most representative example of a fortified medieval town built in vernacular technique using mud layers (Chineh), sun-dried mud bricks (khesht), and vaulted and domed structures.

Bam and its Cultural Landscape represents an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement that developed around the Iranian central plateau and is an exceptional testimony to the development of a trading settlement in the desert environment of the Central Asian region. This impressive construction undoubtedly represents the climax and is the most important achievement of its type not only in the area of

Bam but also in a much wider cultural region of Western Asia.

The cultural landscape of Bam is an important representation of the interaction between man and nature and retains a rich resource of ancient canalizations, settlements, and forts as landmarks and as tangible evidence of the evolution of the area.

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

## 13 cultural elements added to national heritage list

**TEHRAN** — A selection of 13 cultural elements, which are practiced in Gilan, have recently been added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Thursday announced the inscriptions in an official document it submitted to the governor-general of the northern province, IRNA reported.

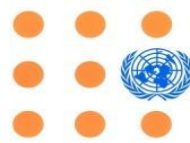
The skills of making local food of Loonegi chicken, the talent of making traditional deserts of Reshteh Khoshkar and Layeh Layeh Halva, as well as rosewater distillation ceremony, commonly known as "Golab-giri" were among the elements added to the significant list.

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

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta



of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.



## Vacancy Notice

**The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R.Iran, intends to recruit a Programme Assistant 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 20 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 to apply and they will be given serious consideration".



# Iran’s population on upward trend till 2040, UN predicts

From page 1 ►  
**Population growth becomes negative within 20 years**

Mohammad Javad Mahmoudi, chairman of the population policies committee of the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution said that given that the fertility rate is now below the replacement limit, it is predicted that from 2036-2041, the population growth rate will reach zero and then becomes negative.

From 2001 to 2005, there has been an increase in births in the country, but after that, the number of births has started to decrease with an almost steep slope, so that in 2020 the number of births in the country (1.114 million) compared to 2005 (1.570 million) has been associated with a decline of over 29 percent (reduction of more than 450 thousand births), a trend that has been unprecedented in recent decades, he explained.

He went on to lament that the birth rate from about 20 per thousand population in 2005 dropped to 13.3 per thousand population in 2020, which is the lowest level in the past 50 years.

Mahmoudi believes that due to the decrease in the number of births over the first three months of this year (March 21- June 21), the population growth rate is expected to decline.

**Natural population growth rate less than 1%**

Referring to the difference between natural population growth rate and population growth rate, he explained that in the population growth rate, the migration rate is also calculated, but in the natural population growth rate, the birth rate and the mortality rate are estimated.

In 2019, the natural population growth rate was about 0.95 percent, but in 2020, the rate has reached 0.73 percent, he noted.

“The population of Iran stood at 84 million people in 2020; however, according to the census results, the growth rate has dropped to 1.24 percent in 2006 from 3.2 percent in 1986.

It is predicted that in the coming years we will face a further decline in population growth; The disadvantage of this is that whenever the rate of population growth decreases, the elderly population increases, and the working population decreases,” he said.

**Fertility rate decline**

In 1986, the fertility rate was estimated at 6.5 children per woman, but in 2001, the figure decreased to 1.75 children and to 2.01 children in 2005, Mahmoudi stated.

According to the trend of previous years, it is estimated that the fertility rate in 2020 is 1.65 children per woman, he added.

The fertility rate in Iran has been declining over the past eight years, the lowest of which was related to the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019-March 2020) with a birth rate of 1.2, according to the data published by the Statistics Center.

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in



Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) wrote in an article in July 2020 that the fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history.

Melinda Gates, an American philanthropist and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, also wrote on her Twitter account that “The fastest decrease in the rate of childbearing per woman in the history of the world has happened in Iran!”

**Population growth policies**

Some 14 policies to support childbearing and the family were announced by the Leader in [the Iranian calendar year] 1389 (March 2014-March 2015) when he stressed that social, cultural, and economic development should be done in accordance with these general policies to support families.

The policies address the need to increase the population and the various dimensions of it, including childbearing, facilitating marriage and strengthening the family, reproductive health, promoting the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle, empowering young people, honoring the elderly, and the environment, which can lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of the population if it is timely and continuous implemented.

The Majlis (Iranian Parliament) approved on March 16 to implement a population growth and family support plan for 7 years to change the declining trend of childbearing.

The plan stipulates health insurance for infertile couples, providing services and facilities to working women, providing health and nutrition support packages to mothers and children, educational opportunities for student mothers, providing livelihood support to families, and ongoing medical services to pregnant women.

According to the law, all higher education institutions in the country are obliged to raise awareness about the positive aspects of childbearing, take the necessary measures such as producing content and learning packages, as well as holding festivals, workshops, temporary and permanent exhibitions.

The Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Culture, and other relevant institutions are obliged to allocate 30 percent of their budgets to those NGOs that work to reduce the age of marriage, facilitate youth marriage, encourage childbearing and strengthen families.

Employees with three to five children will be promoted. Maternity leave will be extended to 9 months by paying all salaries and related extras.

The government is obliged to establish a life insurance and investment fund for unemployed housewives with 3 or more children living in rural and nomadic areas by paying 70 percent of the life and investment insurance premiums.

The Ministry of Health is obliged to provide quality natural childbirth in state-run hospitals in a way that is completely free for people covered by insurance and people without insurance coverage.

Municipal public transportation services and cultural, sports, and recreational tariffs will be halved.

Tuition for children in private schools and educational centers will include a 20 percent discount.

All production, distribution, and service units are obliged to include phrases with the content of childbearing support on products and goods.

Evaluating the plan, Mahmoudi concludes that given the financial and incentives proposed in this plan, it is expected that if approved by the Guardian Council, we will have a minimal tool to encourage and help the people in order to prevent population decline.

## Iranian scientist receives Cuba’s Carlos J. Finlay Award

**TEHRAN** – Alireza Biglari, director of the Pasteur Institute of Iran, was awarded by the Cuban Carlos J. Finlay Order for his contribution to biotechnology, teaching, and scientific activity in both countries.

At the proposal of the Cuban Minister of Science, Technology and Environment Elba Rosa Pérez, the Order recognizes Biglari’s collaboration in the development of the immunogen against Covid-19 Soberana O2, a project promoted by the Finlay Institute of Vaccines (IFV).

The scientist’s support made it possible to carry out phase III of clinical studies with that vaccine candidate and then obtain approval for the emergency use of this product in Iran.

Soberana-O2 vaccine (called Pastu Covac in Iran) is jointly developed by Cuba’s IFV and Pasteur Institute of Iran.

The Council of State grants the Carlos J. Finlay Order to national and foreign personalities, as well as to groups for their merit and contribution to the development of natural or social sciences in Cuba.

Also deserving the distinction are research activities that made an exceptional contribution to scientific progress and for the benefit of humanity.

Previously, Biglari said the Pastu Covac coronavirus vaccine is the only vaccine in the world that can fight several mutations simultaneously.

Due to the vaccine’s capabilities, the global demand is increasing day by day, because it is the only



vaccine in the world that can fight several mutations simultaneously, he highlighted, IRIB reported on July 25.

The third phase of the clinical trial of the vaccine is underway in eight cities. It is going to be administered to 24,000 people by August 20. Results of the evaluation will be announced, which will help obtain sufficient documentation for the approval of the World Health Organization, Biglari said.

In previous weeks, 130,000 doses of vaccines produced in Iran and Cuba were delivered to the Ministry of Health and have been distributed in several provinces across the country, he noted.

In September, the installation of the production line will be completed with a capacity of 3 million doses and will begin operation in early autumn.

## PEOPLES OF IRAN

**Part 1**

In the following discussion of “Iranian peoples,” the term “Iranian” may be understood in two ways. It is, first of all, a linguistic classification, intended to designate any society which inherited or adopted, and transmitted, an Iranian language.

The set of Iranian-speaking peoples is thus considered a kind of unity, in spite of their distinct lineage identities plus all the factors which may have further differentiated any one group’s sense of self.

These include: (1) divergent specializations in economic organization, environmental adaptation, and other aspects of material culture, emergent differences in oral traditions and folkways; (2) hand in hand with the preceding: different conditioning by already established populations encountered in the area of settlement or absorbed in the course of migrations; (3) further conditioning by the later introduction of non-Iranian-speaking populations.

These factors, fostering some degree of diversity within a region’s society, may have worked toward distinctions in dialect, social organization, law, religion, and other aspects of culture. The management of marked regional diversity, in the absence of an established political infrastructure, would have been especially challenging to the earliest efforts at a real hegemony by the Medes and the Persians.

Secondly and inevitably, “Iranian” also acquires the broader sense of “[a people] resident on the Iranian plateau,” since the ethnicity of various peoples who are only briefly mentioned in historical sources often is not definitely known. In qualification of the first point, difference in language is not viewed as necessarily a barrier to community cohesion and communications.

This entry is divided into three sub-articles:

v(1), a general survey of major peoples of Iran from the ancient times to the present.

v(2), a survey of major ethnic groups in the pre-Islamic period.

v(3), the Islamic period (forthcoming).

v(1), A General Survey

Anthropological research. If we begin by seeking to define the category of race in ancient times, an important model used by physical anthropologists is the cephalic index of rela-

tionship between head length to head breadth, which differentiates different peoples with dolio-, meso-, and brachycephalic skulls.

This category is applied to the three races in popular parlance—Caucasian or white, Negroid or black, and Mongoloid or yellow. The earliest evidence of human habitation reveals that the people of the present countries of Iran and Afghanistan were overwhelmingly Caucasian in race with little trace of Negroid or Mongoloid mixtures.

Applying the cephalic index to Caucasoids in Europe, we find that in the north the population was predominantly long-headed or doliocephalic, sometimes designated as Nordic, while in Middle Europe the majority of people were round-headed or mesocephalic, also called Alpines (Coon, 1971, passim). In the south were wide-heads or Mediterraneans, so-called after the sea around which most of them lived.

On the Iranian plateau the most ancient populations had perhaps a dominance of brachycephalics with fewer Alpine or Nordic types. This discussion of race, however, tells us little about peoples in historical times or the present, when physical characteristics have been mixed.

Since people are distinguished by language or social structure (settled, nomadic, tribal), these are the categories to which our analysis is devoted. The earliest inhabitants of the Iranian plateau were hunters and gatherers; presumably they spoke a range of languages and dialects, of which we have no information. After the Neolithic revolution, estimated to have been about the eighth millennium B.C.E. on the plateau, we find settlements and traces of material culture, primarily pottery, which reveal little of the inhabitants’ identity.

One can only say that differentiation between agriculturists and pastoralists occurred at much the same time, but the development of extended families into clans and tribes must have taken place much earlier. One may presume that tribal organization continued to be the basis of social forms in both villages and pastoral groups, and we can begin to speak of linguistic divisions; some clans may have developed dialects of a shared tribal language. What was the population of the plateau before the coming of the Aryans?

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

## COVID19- UPDATES ON AUGUST 6

New cases	34,913
New deaths	458
Total cases	4,092,671
Total deaths	93,086
New hospitalized patients	4,381
Patients in critical condition	6,279
Total recovered patients	3,492,468
Diagnostic tests conducted	26,305,528
Doses of vaccine injected	14,736,197

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

#### Tehran to host INOTEX 2020 in June

The 9th International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX 2020) will be held at Tehran Permanent International Fairground on June 7-10.

It is expected that more than 18,000 people will attend the event which is aimed to attract investment for startups and introduce investment opportunities to them.

Over 500 companies, startups, and investors will set up booths at the exhibition representing their latest achievements, with more than 600 B2B sessions and 20 side events to be held during the three-day event.

Established in 2012, INOTEX is a platform for innovation and technology, which seeks to introduce latest technologies to large and medium-sized industries in addition to connecting customers of technology products to their manufacturers, and also introduces investors to the opportunity to invest in technological projects or start-ups.

#### تهران میزبان نمایشگاه اینوتکس ۲۰۲۰ در خرداد

نهمین نمایشگاه بین المللی نوآوری و فناوری (اینوتکس ۲۰۲۰) با شعار «اکوسیستم نوآوری و فناوری زیر یک سقف» ۱۸ تا ۲۱ خرداد ماه سال ۹۹ در محل دائمی نمایشگاه‌های بین‌المللی تهران برگزار می‌شود.

به گزارش ایرنا، نمایشگاه اینوتکس با هدف اصلی «جذب سرمایه برای استارت‌آپ‌ها و شرکت‌ها و نیز معرفی فرصت‌های نوین سرمایه‌گذاری» برگزار می‌شود.

این نمایشگاه بر سه حوزه «هوشمندسازی»، «دیجیتال» و «توسعه پایدار» تمرکز می‌کند. اطلاع از آخرین تغییرات نوآوری منطقه، آموزش آخرین استراتژی‌های کارآفرینی با حضور فعال کارشناسان و صاحب‌نظران ملی و بین‌المللی، یافتن بازار جدید برای محصولات و خدمات، و نیز جذب سرمایه برای استارت‌آپ‌ها و شرکت‌ها، از دیگر فرصت‌هایی است که برای شرکت‌کنندگان در نمایشگاه اینوتکس وجود دارد.



